

SOCIAL DIALOGIC LISTENING: CONNECTING MARKETING ACTIVITY TO
STRATEGY

by

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ABSTRACT

SUZANNE MARIE COLLINS. SOCIAL DIALOGIC LISTENING:
CONNECTING MARKETING ACTIVITY TO STRATEGY. (Under the direction of
JARED HANSEN)

This research advances knowledge related to the potential role, antecedents, and benefits of social media in relationship marketing. With rapidly changing consumer expectations, technology, and media, the marketplace is quickly evolving and firms are trying to stay ahead. Many firms are explicitly visible on social media using it as another channel for sales and brand enhancement. This research investigates the potential value of using social media to engage in meaningful dialog with customers. In doing so this research introduces, outlines, and empirically examines the construct of social dialogic listening. The research compares two possible, rival conceptual frameworks that include antecedents, moderators, and consequences for different stakeholders. The hypotheses are examined using data from key informants from 341 publicly traded firms in the United States. The structural equation modeling results indicate support for the idea that social dialogic listening enables organizations to increase/improve organizational transparency, integrated social media strategy, and co-creation with customers. These realized internal firm competencies in turn result in improved employee sentiment and customer sentiment. managerial implications, limitations, and future research are detailed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

With rapidly changing consumer expectations, technology, and media, the marketplace is quickly evolving and firms are trying to stay ahead (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Naylor, Lamberton, & West, 2012). As a result, interest continues to increase around the value proposition offered by firm engagement in social media (Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Rapp, Beitelspacher, Grewal, & Hughes, 2013; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Existing focus has primarily examined social media as another yet another channel for sales and broadcasting promotions as it relates to brand, relationships, and ultimately firm value (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Although empirical study does exist, the extant literature has examined specific underlying contributing factors e.g. social media and marketing operations integration (Muninger, Hammedi, & Mahr, 2019; Tafesse & Wien, 2018) or communication methods and use (Valos, Maplestone, Polonsky, & Ewing, 2017). However, the framework by which multiple theoretically proposed influencing factors combine to yield an operational model has yet to be empirically explored. This research examines the other value which social media may provide to organizations. For example, what benefits may accrue when firms use social media to engage more in dialog versus traditional one-way communication and the outcomes experienced within the firm for this activity.

This research makes four contributions. The first contribution relates to explicating what is termed “social dialogic listening” (“SDL”) that combines two underlying themes of Organizational Public Dialogic Communication (OPDC) and organizational listening

literatures. The second contribution relates to the association between organizational transparency and social dialogic listening. Prior research finds that organizational transparency in traditional media channels can influence employee and customer relationships, valuation, and perceptions (Holland, Krause, Provencher, & Seltzer, 2018; Rawlins, 2008a; Rawlins, 2008b); yet scholars have called for future research which examines these perceptions as it pertains to firm engagement in social media activities (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). The third contribution investigates the effects of SDL social media activities and its relationship with overall firm integrated strategy. While theoretically it is posited by practitioners that inconsistent and isolated use of social media should be minimal (Baer, 2014; Harlow, 2015), the outcomes of the efforts to move toward social media activities that unify and mirror firm strategy lacks sufficient empirical substantiation. Forth, the concept of co-creation is examined. Prior studies find positive empirical support with reference to the relationship between On-Line Communities (OLCs) and stakeholder engagement and brand perception (Lusch & Nambisan, 2015; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2016; Zwass, 2010) this research extends the investigation to offer support of the relationship between co-creation and firm engagement in social dialogic listening activities.

Finally, the examination circles back to assess the influence dialogic social listening has on employee and customer sentiment. Notably, firms with enhanced listening and dialogic interactions have empirically demonstrated increased Trust and Commitment from the perception other employees and customers. The Commitment Trust Theory of

Relationship Marketing posits the increased presence of trust and commitment are the keys to relationship success. Trust is defined as the belief in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The result of trust is indicated employee and customer increased commitment which thereby leads to strengthened bonding between the actors. The expected result of such fortified relationships indicates cooperative behaviors enable firm benefit beyond the sale of products whereas the activities create value. The extent of the value perceived positively influences employee and customer sentiment.

The rest of this research is as follows. First, a literature review of major concepts. Second, a model is proposed to that theorizes how the major concepts relate with accompanying logic and hypotheses. Third, description of collected data to examine potential support for the hypotheses. Fourth, reporting of analysis of the collected data and whether or not the hypotheses were supported. Fifth, discussion of the results and implications for scholarship and practice. Sixth, discussion of limitations and opportunities for future research. Last, conclusions are presented.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

This conceptual background section is organized as follows. First, a discussion of the concepts in the model. I will begin with the concept labeled *social dialogic listening*. Second, an overview of *transparency theory* is presented to explain the elements of disclosure, clarity and accuracy and to provide the alignment to suggest these items influence increased social media focus; this construct provides understanding of the mediating influence it has upon the presence of an integrated social media strategy. Third, *integrated social media* is explained in light of examination of those key themes attributable to the presence of an integrated social media strategy; integration with firm messaging, networked relationships and an adaptive culture. Fourth, the construct of *co-creation* is explored to further understand the underlying constructs of relationship duration, presence of an open exchange, engagement and firm innovativeness. The fifth topic of this section is the connection of the expected outcomes resulting in Relationship Commitment when firms actively participate in social media platforms using *social dialogic listening*; thereby providing the framework to evaluate the antecedents to this phenomena.

Having outlined the concepts, I next present a Model which puts forth logic and hypotheses that social dialogic listening permits firms to do better at organizational transparency, integrated social media strategy, and co-creation, and that these outcomes might be related to the other outcomes of employee and customer sentiment.

The hypotheses of the Model are summarized in Figure 1..

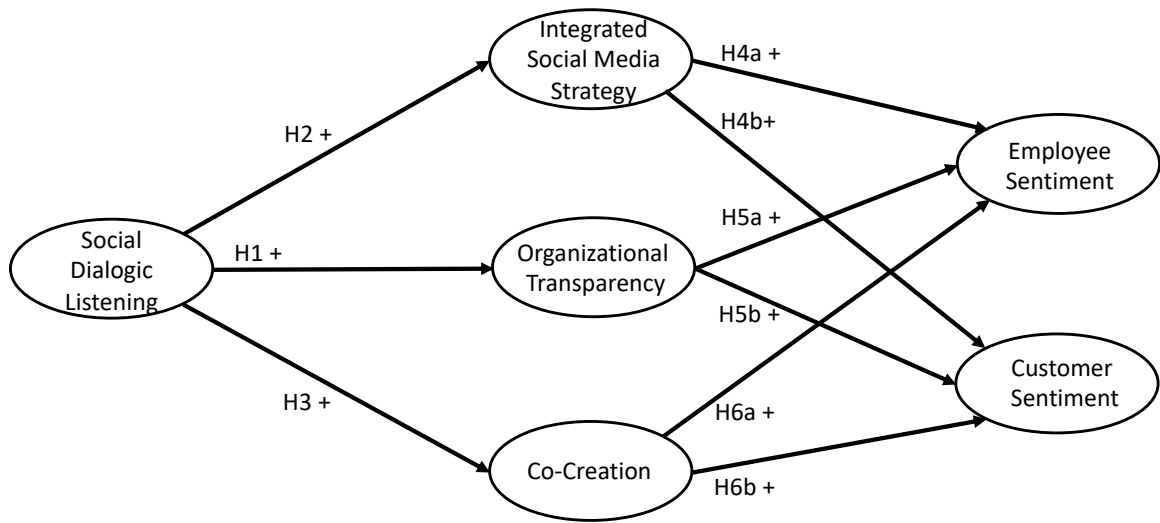


Figure 1. Model 1 Conceptual Framework

The logic of the proposed hypotheses draws upon the Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The proposed model examines the connections between *social dialogic listening* and organizational transparency, integrated social media strategy, and co-creation, and in turn how these elements deepen stakeholder Commitment and Trust through employee and customer sentiment. The Commitment Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing states that two fundamental factors must exist for a relationship to be successful: trust and commitment. Trust is defined as the belief in an “exchange partner’s reliability and integrity” (Morgan and Hunt, 1994, p. 23). The result of trust is increased commitment, thereby leading to a stronger bond between the actors (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The expected results of a committed relationship is that the cooperative behavior of firm and stakeholders create value. As created value increases the degree to which the bonds of commitment and trust have been formulated increases.

Speaking on the foundational premises and outcomes of Relationship Marketing, Hunt, Arnett, and Madhavaram (2006) propose that multiple, important forms of stakeholder relationships need to be considered separately those which include other employees and customers (p.73). Included in the appendix are those relevant examinations and outcomes however, the central examine included herein is that of social dialogic listening.

Social Dialogic Listening

The requisite to partake in social media activity has been continuously reiterated (Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011; Roberts & Piller, 2016; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016), yet little work has focused on what creates the optimal firm environment which exploits the benefits of social media technologies. *Social dialogic listening* is defined in this research as “the intentional, explicitly consistent, firm use of available social media platforms to allow for open and active stakeholder informational exchanges.” The word “intentional” implies that the firm maintains a planned and purposeful use for social media. Planned will be depicted by postings to social platforms that reflects a normalized cadence and frequency. Additionally, the word “purposeful” means the firm directs informational exchange toward revealing firm beliefs and goals. Furthermore, the phrase “intentional, explicitly consistent” means that visible firm messaging minimizes variation as examined across social platforms as well other firm communication channels (e.g. advertisement, news). That is, *social dialogic listening* infers a presence in social media, and although notoriety may increase as presence

increases, the presence on multiple social media forums or posting information to such platforms is not *social dialogic listening*. In *social dialogic listening* messaging includes organizational listening. *Organizational listening* is defined in this research as the open exchange of information with stakeholders (Macnamara, 2016).

Minimally, exchanges include simple acknowledgement of stakeholder posts, although the degree of *organizational listening* increases as the relevancy to the stakeholder message increases; for example, in the case of a complaint, relevancy is not typically indicated by means of a firm responding with “contact us via a personal message”. Whereas, if a firm offers a response that includes the solution to the stakeholder complaint, relevancy is increased; as aligned to the stakeholder need. *Social dialogic listening* engages stakeholders in all spectrums of firm relationships from deeply intertwined to tangential. For purposes of this examine stakeholders include other employees and customers.

Also, *social dialogic listening* is not generic or innocuous statements positioned as announcements that rarely result in the stakeholder’s ability to identify with interests held in common with the firm. Outcomes of non-social dialogic listening are found in the countless misfires by firms eager to engage without relevance. Engagement without relevance results in negative outcomes which in turn create firm reluctance to partake in social media exchanges. By definition, social is to share thoughts and ideas; “social: tending to form cooperative and interdependent relationships with others” (Merriam-Webster, 2019). Although participation in firm social dialogic listening is supported in

extant literature theoretically and empirically, no existing literature has proposed which antecedents influence a more beneficial operationalization.

Organizational Transparency

In this research, “organizational transparency” is defined as “the deliberate attempt to make available all legally releasable information—whether positive or negative in nature—in a manner that is accurate, timely, balanced, and unequivocal, for the purpose of enhancing the reasoning ability of publics and holding organizations accountable for their actions, policies and practices (Heise, 1985)” Rawlins, 2008, page 7. While extant research has not finalized a unanimously agreed upon definition of organizational transparency, the current literature reveals four supporting themes: disclosure, clarity, relevancy and timeliness. In the literature these underlying themes have been empirically demonstrated to influence the receiver’s perception of transparency.

Review of organizational transparency begins with examination of the literature from the domains of Economics and Finance with the concept of Corporate Transparency. Corporate Transparency definition was formulated by examination of those outside influences such as investment partners and governmental regulation to establish an understanding of the influences on the organization (Bushman, Piotroski, & Smith, 2004). Research from the domain was and continues to lean towards the view of transparency that is characterized as reliant upon the timely, accurate and relatable provisioning of financial information by the firm (Christensen & Cheney, 2014; Kundeliene & Leitonienė, 2015b) (Kundeliene & Leitonienė, 2015a).

Whereas the definition of Corporate Transparency is sufficient for such topics of governance and reporting, the application of the definition beyond these domains necessitated expansion to inclusion of non-financial outcomes within the domain of Public Relations. The Public Relations domain extends the breath of Transparency beyond the provisioning of financial data to bring into scope the publics impacted by the firm.

Therefore, the scope of Organizational Transparency further encompasses acts by the firm which are not under regulatory publics lens and includes all actions and non-action by the firm to provide information that could be deemed useful to the stakeholders of the firm. The linkage model describes the interaction points of stakeholders of the organization (Grunig, 1976; Grunig & Grunig, 2008; Zerfaß, van Ruler, & Sriramesh, 2008). Stakeholder relationship “linkage” is categorized as one of five (5) types: Enabling, Functional, Normative and Diffused. Generally, other employees and customers are categorized as functionally linked to the organization (Grunig, 1976).

Functional linkage implies the interaction is part of the product lifecycle: e.g. employees, suppliers and investors offer inputs and customers receive the outputs. However, these stakeholders can also be normatively linked to the organization. Normative linkage is defined as “linkages, with institutions which incorporate norms and values (positive or negative) which are relevant to the doctrine and program of the institution” (Grunig, 1976, p 29). Thus, normative linkage is offered to society as a whole through social media as it explicitly provides firm positioning e.g. norms and values and in turn gives a venue for public comment about the firm constitution to offer approval or

disapproval via sentiment. Linkage may include deeply woven relationships as well as those who can be considered intermittent interactors with the firm. Nonetheless, the interactions with the firm in the defined ecosystem call for Transparency.

Multiple studies have stemmed from the seminal work by Rawlins to evaluate Transparency, and applied the tenants of the theory to multiple sectors e.g. energy, healthcare, financial and channels, e.g. news media (Holland et al., 2018; Rawlins, 2008). The focus of these studies include the perception of the individual as representative primarily of his organization, customer or employee e.g. Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016. This study extends such examine to further understand the perceptions and influence of the relationship for transparency and social dialogic listening.

Summarized in Figure 2 are those journal articles that examine transparency and underlying contained themes. The summary illustrates examples and establishes the existing foundation from which the examination of the relationship between organizational transparency and social dialogic listening was conducted for the study.

Author, year	Theoretical or Empirical / Focus of study	Disclosure	Clarity	Relevancy	Timeliness
Foscht, Lin , and Eisingerich, 2018	Empirical study; influence of transparency and consumer engagement in	Information provided is accessible to the consumer without	The information provided is easily understood and useable by the customers	Relevant information should be uncluttered and easily acted upon by the reader (consumer)	N/A
Leitch, 2017	Theoretical study establishing and maintaining trusted relationships focus study to examine	The needs of the receiver are satisfied	Language is appropriate and understandable by the receiver	Points to underlying themes relevance, clarity, completeness, accuracy, reliability and verifiability of	Information delivery timing gives the receiver ample time to use for
Holland, 2018	Empirical study which compares the disclosure by the firm to when news	Publicly accessible information provided as it	Clear messaging	Provide more than an abundance of information but information that is	Agreed with the need for timely information as a component of
Schnackenberg and Tomlinson, 2016	Examination of Transparency studies	The perception that relevant information is received in a timely manner	How clear and understandable is the information received	User perceives the information is correct to the extent possible given his/her relationship with the	Underlying disclosure

Figure 2. Organizational Transparency

Author, year	Theoretical or Empirical / Focus of study	Disclosure	Clarity	Relevancy	Timeliness
Yang, Kang and Cha, 2015	Empirical study to establish an open communication scale	Transparency includes sufficient information disclosure	Communication is clear to publics	Examines ease of understanding	Examines timeliness as a part of information sharing
Kundeliene and Leitonienė, 2015	Theoretical focus on organizational level Corporate Transparency (Macro)	Information disclosure complies with local regulatory	Included as related to organizational information and financial data	Organizational information and financial data	As related to organizational information and financial data
Christensen and Cheney, 2015	Theoretical focus on organizational level Corporate Transparency (Macro)	Need for flexible methods due to the fast changing environment	Clarity depends upon the context in which it is received	Information provide enables the recipient to ask questions can be answered	Considers timeliness in light of changing dynamics
Auger, 2014	Empirical study of the impact of Transparency on organizational Trust	Participation and Accountability measures, e.g. completeness and forthcoming	Providing information that is relevant	Information is verifiable by a second source	N/A

Figure 2, Continued

Author, year	Theoretical or Empirical / Focus of study	Disclosure	Clarity	Relevancy	Timeliness
Pirson and Malhotra, 2011	Empirical study of impact of internal and external stakeholder trust	Limited inclusion: does the firm explain its decisions	N/A	If firm openly shares relevant information	N/A
Golob, Neilsen, Thomsen, Schultz, Podnar, Holladay, 2013	Theoretical Transparency is a process which requires the evaluation of stakeholders examine of the firm	Reflects firm behaviors and stance	Is understandable and clear to the stakeholders	The information is relevant to the stakeholder	Information is provided to the stakeholders
Michener and Bersch, 2011	Theoretical	Likened to glass, being able to see as needed	Clear and understandable messaging	Receiver can make inferences given the information with some degree of accuracy'	N/A

Figure 2, continued

Author, year	Theoretical or Empirical / Focus of study	Disclosure	Clarity	Relevancy	Timeliness
Hadjikhani & Thilenius, 2009	Influence of Trust with increased level of information sharing for B2B relationships e.g. vendor	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Laud & Schepers, 2009	Theoretical focus at an organizational level call for internal governance (Macro)	Disclosure of financial information is required	N/A	Deficiency in corporate reporting is the lack of adequacy	N/A
Rawlings, 2008a, 2008b	Empirical development of scales	The needs of the receiver are satisfied	Language is appropriate and understandable by the receiver	Information is applicable to the receiver of the message.	Delivered so the receiver can readily use

Figure 2, continued

Examination of organizational transparency literature reveals four primary underlying themes; disclosure, clarity, relevancy, and timeliness. Disclosure is described as an evasive guideline of transparency which is enacted through rules and regulatory governance designed to protect the rights of those to whom the information is most relevant. In other words, if not specified as required for disclosure, we don't know what we don't know. For example, if taken in context of examination of disclosure of items which pertain to the GRI sustainability, items were left out if not requested. Such evaluation also pointed towards the implication that current regulatory specifications are only as strong as what is enforced by the countries in which such disclosures are needed (Dingwerth & Eichinger, 2010).

These findings echoed the results of the corporate transparency examination of numerous nations that reached a similar conclusion (Bushman et al., 2004). Therefore, although organizational transparency may be warranted, unless there are mechanisms in place to govern the information needs of the stakeholders, it becomes a matter of social consciousness as to if firms actually do provide information. Recent marketing literature has further driven the alignment of Rawlins 2009 definition as a well-suited construct by which to examine corporate marketing efforts specifically noting the accessibility of the digital content available today

Furthermore, research of the effects of organizational transparency beyond consumer perceptions and influence is minimal and has been highlighted an area ripe for discovery (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). This examine answers that call for research. In summary, this research examines organizational transparency as it relates to the

perception of social dialogic listening. Furthermore, this need is increased by the fishbowl in which firms are now situated that allows for continuous examination and evaluation by the public eye; social media.

Integrated Social Media Strategy

Integrated social media strategy is defined in this research as the plan for how social media is used as a part of ongoing firm operations. Although the outcomes of social media have been heavily researched firms continue to operationalize social media as yet another form of advertisement and a means by which to understand customer sentiment, a form of client relationship management.

With the inception of social media, firms launched head on into the conversations as firm presence in the realm of chatting without clear vision of how to optimize use; viewed as a compulsory component of success. Theoretical and empirical study directionally have evaluated outcomes as positively influencing brand recognition thus firm value. However, the disconcerted efforts to participate in social media have provided real-time lessons for the firms. Figure 4 includes a sample of the studies which focused on components of the underlying concepts included in integrated social media strategy, however, focus of outcomes of empirical studies have primarily examined a subset of the components versus the overall underlying constructs indicated as influencing social media.

Author, year	Theoretical or Empirical / Study Focus	Intentional / purposeful	Dialogic	Explicitly Consistent	Listening
Schaffer, 2013	Theoretical review of best practices to engage in social media	Concerted multi-platform messaging promotes positive interactions	Responding to mentions engages actors in relevant conversations and builds relationships	Consistent messaging across multiple platforms increases value of social media	The volatile nature of social media requires agility and careful responses
Alexandrov, Lilly, and Babakus, 2013	Empirical review of consumer perceptions of brand which influence consumer WOM statements	The consumer perspective of the likelihood to share as influenced by self and social motives	Not examined	Not examined	Not examined
Hsieh and Hsieh, 2015	Empirical evaluation (survey) of dialogic communications with customers to evaluate the influence on co-creation	Staff awareness and active participation staff positively influence dialogic creation	The presence of dialogic conversations with customers positively influences co-creation	Communications extend throughout the lifecycle of the products	Learning from the conversations creates blue for the firms

Figure 3. Integrated Social Media Strategy

Author, year	Theoretical or Empirical / Study Focus	Intentional / purposeful	Dialogic	Explicitly Consistent	Listening
MacNamara, 2016	Qualitative evaluation of Social Media through interview and coding. Identifies the need to further engages in Social Media interactivity	Implies the need to intentionally leverage social media to be social	Does the firm converse versus respond to exploit opportunities and mitigate risks	Does the firm have a process to guide how it addresses social media	Unequal speaking and listening is viewed by experts as problematic
Tafesse and Wien, 2018	Empirical review of the use of social media and strategic use	Messaging of the firm is consistent with the overall tone of the firm	Firm aligns messages with stakeholder messages and exchanges	Provide a consistent experience across messaging platforms	Understand and respond to the stakeholders as a part of social media presence
Muninger, Hammedi, and Mahr, 2019	Empirical qualitative study of top social media firms; study of firm characteristics which foster social media use	Open exchanges are a prerequisite for those firms to engage in innovative	Evaluates the presence of Networking and collaboration	Team identifies trends and looks forward to engage and mitigate risks	N/A

Figure 3, continued

According to Gartner's most recent 2018 survey of CMOs, spending for social media marketing alone has now surpassed offline advertisement at 7.1% and 7.0% of the marketing budget respectively (<https://www.gartner.com/en/webinars/3890974/the-cmo-spend-survey-2018-2019>). Increased spend signals the practitioner sector focus highlights the necessity to understand how to operationalize social media. However, studies have focused on operational metrics which indicate integrated social media strategy. Furthermore, existing empirical studies examine a subset of the components versus the overall underlying constructs of integrated social media strategy (Muninger et al., 2019; Tafesse & Wien, 2018; Valos et al., 2017); the outcome of brand perception and value creation.

First, integrated review begins with measurement. The definition of measurement criteria, however, is highly varied and the need to identify and test scales which examine the influence of integrated social media strategy on consumer behavior persists as called out by Vinerean (Vinerean, 2017). The premise of this examination is not to propose standard set of measurement, but to establish the understanding of the use of measurement of integrated social media strategy in practice.

Second, is the examination of messaging as compared to firm messaging context. This answers the question of the degree to which the firm provide consistent messaging to similar discussions across its communication platforms.

Third, social media adaptability to ongoing external conversations is highlighted. This need has been identified, however, firms have avoided expedited responses on social media because insufficiently thought out answers have met with far too many negative

outcomes. Although, avoiding the social responses and adapting to the changing environment limits the risk of potential negative outcomes, not responding is not a publicly acceptable behavior. It has been noted social media is a communication channel similar to advertisement (Henderson, Johnson, & Auld, 2013). Therefore, this examine provides guidance by which to understand the interactive nature of messaging speed with consideration of the linked stakeholder relationships and integrated messaging.

Co-Creation

For this examination co-creation is defined as the producer and consumer working in unison as a part of an ecosystem in which value is produced value that is mutually shared and beneficial (Lusch & Nambisan, 2015; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008; Zwass, 2010). The evolution of the Service Dominant Logic defines services as the “application of specialized competences (knowledge and skills), through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself” (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, p.6) therefore this production of services is precisely the interaction of the producer and consumer and can occur at various levels and systems.

Figure 4 illustrates the evolution of the concept and contains the discovered underlying themes included in the sampling of articles focused upon co-creation; including relationship duration, open exchange, engagement, and innovation.

Author, year	Theoretical or Empirical / Focus of study	Relationship duration	Equity / Open Exchange / Transparency	Interaction / Engagement / Dialogue	Innovation
Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004, 2004b	Theoretical / Introduction of the DART Model to evaluate firm capability to co-create VCC	Value comes from personalized meaningful interactions	Unrestricted access to information	Communities form pockets of creation. Risk is shifted to customer and benefits are received by the firm	Through experimentation the customers become an active innovative arm of the firm
Vargo and Lusch, 2004	Theoretical	Service Dominant Relationship implies the product delivery is the beginning not end of the relationship	Improvements from stakeholder exchanges to adjust and modify firm operations	Cultivation of relationships to better understand value from the customer perspective	Build upon the existing firm competitive advantage to identify new customers and uses for the competencies
Sawhney and Prandelli, 2005	Qualitative empirical Case study	Joint experience with spontaneous social engagement with the stakeholders	Virtual environments to increase the speed and continuous customer engagement	Virtual environments provide the customers the option to engage at a level they determine	Collaborative creation experience through customer participation in online communities

Figure 4. Co-creation

Author, year	Theoretical or Empirical / Focus of study	Relationship duration	Equity / Open Exchange / Transparency	Interaction / Engagement / Dialogue	Innovation
Vargo and Lusch, 2008	Empirical	Incremental benefits are created over time	Includes direct and indirect interactions between operants	Relationships form among the firm and the actors surrounding the firm	Incremental contributions
Zwass, 2010	Literature Review	Long term and committed relationships towards a collective goal	Transparent sharing of information to build a better products together	Autonomous and firm sponsored exchanges in the creations of Open Source Software	Continuous shared creativity and innovation
Moe and Schweidel, 2012	Empirical, study of trends	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grönroos and Voima 2013	Theoretical / conceptual model of the exchange process which enables co-creation along the lifecycle	Co-creation takes place over the use of the product including when customer takes possession	Implies relationship building is a continuous open exchange	Exchange is not the end but the beginning of the creation of value exchange and co-creation is continuous	New ideas come from when the products are in use

Figure 4, continued

Author, year	Theoretical or Empirical / Focus of study	Relationship duration	Equity / Open Exchange / Transparency	Interaction / Engagement / Dialogue	Innovation
Hidalgo and D'Alvino, 2014	Empirical / Examines the inward versus outward focus of innovation to understand the increased positive influence of inward innovation	Relationships vary based on need of innovation; exploitive (point in time) versus explorative (relationship based) innovation	Ecosystems provide exploitive (product improvements) versus explorative collaboration (new product oriented)	Communication technologies are enabling an increased role of customers and suppliers in co-creation.	Innovative model extension beyond technology innovation to include the examination of the moral fiber and professionalism of
Lusch and Nambisan, 2015	Theoretical / Further explored the roles of the value creation process to assess for the	Users generate innovative ideas incrementally throughout the relationship evolution	The customer becomes the "ideator" of in context use of firm offerings which can be	Increased interface capabilities will result in new opportunities for increased innovation	Architecture is becoming more layered giving rise to increased and focused innovation
Dolan, Fahy, Goodman, 2016	Theoretical / Theoretical / evaluated the social construct of the actors involved in the	Value is created before, during and after exchange	Value is created social exchange through perceptions	The engagement is determinant upon the social construct of the participants	Opportunities to create and innovate throughout the relationship
Ranjan and Read, 2016	Empirical / participants evaluated the interactions of the co-creation process (students)	Reciprocal, and iterative processes build relationships with stakeholders	Firm and stakeholders share ownership equal roles in determining final outcomes	Interactions which are facilitated by ease of communication increase co-creative output	Value in use is measured when co-creation is ongoing and participation in the activity

Figure 4, continued

Author, year	Theoretical or Empirical / Focus of study	Relationship duration	Equity / Open Exchange / Transparency	Interaction / Engagement / Dialogue	Innovation
Vargo and Lusch, 2016	Theoretical / Evaluates service dominant relationships enablement of co-creation	Value is generated through institutional relationships	All actors are participants in the co-creation of value	Value is uniquely identified through individual interactions	Service is the basis of the co-creative innovation
Albinsson, Perera, and Sautter, 2016	Empirical / Studied customers perceived value creation from services offered	Relationship was not measured, however, depth of relationship was explored	Open exchange on multiple platforms that adapts to customer communication preferences	Dialogue influences the degree to which customers are able to contribute	Innovation capability is influenced by the customer interactions, not measured
Villalba and Zhang, 2019	Empirical / Finding that additional latent variables to consider to evaluate firm co-creation	Need to develop communities of customers that provide feedback to the firm freely	Provide open access to information that helps customers evaluate the product risks and benefits	Speed of response to questions and suggestions	Not specifically measured in this model
Zaborek and Mazur, 2019	Empirical / Study to understand varying influence of co-creative techniques and value co-creation	Continuous ongoing dialogue influences the relationship and VCC	The influence of equally balanced provisioning of information and disclosure for customer and firm	Tools used for exchange of co-creative efforts influence the perceived value of co-creation.	Outcomes of co-creation are reflected in the Operational Performance and subsequently ROI

Figure 4, continued

The focus of the research has been primarily around the ability of the firm to harness the creativity of the consumer as an operant, who contributes to value creation. Drawing upon the definition Social Media “as a platform whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). acknowledged that current processes, when used collectively may be perceived to be conducive to social benefit and increase the likelihood of providing shared value to firm and community.

Kaplan and Haenlein go on to provide guidance that social media is intended to be a collaborative and publicly engaged conversation as seen in examples of applications readily available for free public consumption ranging from YouTube to Snapchat, with every Facebook and Twitter post in between (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Rather, the purpose here is to hone in on the role of co-creating shared value of through Social media encouraging further investigation to identify if in fact there is empirical support.

The next expansion of the literature developed the concept to further identify presence of sponsored as well as autonomous communities in which creation can take place; whereas the role of the firm interchangeably moves from leader of creation to beneficiary as ideas bubble up from the community (Zwass, 2010). The concept of the intended product use is no longer cut and dry as the innovation of the users provides a roadmap to develop increased value.

Studies have examined online user groups or sponsored initiatives to develop products together with the public which have demonstrated positive influence on value

creation for products and brand when the consumer is looped in (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, & Ilić, 2011; Marchi, Giachetti, & De Gennaro, 2011; Sawhney, Verona, & Prandelli, 2005). It is clear that these studies point to user engagement, whereas little has been posited and limited empirical research has been done to understand the specific influence of co-creation within the social media space.

Recent discussion of the concept of social spaces for sharing has identified the positive influence of platforms that facilitate agility and enable fluid and uninhibited exchange amongst the users in the social ecosystem (Baumöl, Hollebeek, & Jung, 2016; Lusch & Nambisan, 2015). Such platforms are available through social media, yet empirical study remains underexplored.

Model - SDL Logic and Hypotheses

The model proposes that the presence of SDL positively influences the presence of firm characteristics which positively influence employee and customer sentiment. In particular, the model proposes that social dialogic listening permits firms to do better at organizational transparency, integrated social media strategy, and co-creation, and that these outcomes might be related to the other outcomes of employee and customer sentiment. This section contains logic leading to the hypotheses that make up the model.

The logic supporting the paths shown suggests firms which exhibit social dialogic listening engage the audience to understand and build relationships through social media platforms. These firms tailor social media conversations to engage with clients and become more familiar, building relationships. Through relationships the customer needs

and underlying perceptions of the firm actions are revealed, e.g. word of mouth (WOM) (Alexandrov, Lilly, & Babakus, 2013). Therefore, relationships develop through SDL, thoughtful, consistent messaging, (Schaffer, 2013) and social media platforms display increasingly transparent comments with relative and consumable information reflecting the values of the firm (Holland et al., 2018; Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). Highly SDL firms display without reservation both positive and negative comments (Alexandrov et al., 2013). Therefore, public availability of conversations amongst the firm and customers provides robust source of information. In turn, this awareness empowers firm employees with the knowledge to further understand their clients which improves the level of organizational transparency. Stated formally, I hypothesize:

H₁: *Increases in the level of social dialogic listening have a positive effect on the level of organizational transparency.*

As dialogs publicly display the firm values and customer perceptions employees gain knowledge of customers through SDL providing real-time unadulterated market insights. As insight and data becomes increasingly available through continued social media listening and responses, clients provide an increased level of relevant information, information which can be used by the firm. Through SDL, the “velocity” of the data propagated through social media becomes endless source of unstructured data feeding into customer insights (Erevelles, Fukawa & Swayne, 2016, p.898). As such, data harvested from social media provides the firm an unparalleled, competitive advantage to confirm or challenge current strategy, if it is accessible. Therefore, firm social media

strategy becomes increasingly integrated with overall firm strategy (Andzulis, Panagopoulos, & Rapp, 2012; Valos et al., 2017). In short,

H₂: *Increases in the level of social dialogic listening have a positive effect on the level of integrated social media.*

I posit that the actions of social dialogue listening results in collaboration between the employees and customers. And, collaboration is a required and necessary component to enable co-creation (Hansen, 2004). SDL in social media includes the display of firm values in consistent messaging and builds relationships; increasing the firm orientation towards Relationship Marketing (Andzulis et al., 2012). Over time, through the iterative nature of the dialogue, customers build trust which leads to conversations in social media. As conversational interaction increases, relationships formulate, and customers become more willing to share ideas. Thus, the customers will be more prone to disclose post product purchase ideas that have the potential to increase product shared value (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Thus, firms engaging in SDL social media increases the potential to improve the firm's ability to engage in co-creation with customers. Stated formally,

H₃: *Increases in the level of social dialogic listening have a positive effect on the level of organizational co-creation.*

The presence of SDL social media is posited to increase organizational transparency. As the level of organizational transparency increases, employees are provided reliable, timely, and consistent information that they can use (Rawlins, 2008b). Social media technologies operationalized with SDL provide visibility into the firm values and firm operations (Hultman & Axelsson, 2007). I argue that the transparency

results in an increased level of employee trust maintained in the belief that the firm has higher moral standards and tries not to deceive. As a result, the employees are more connected to the firm which translates into shared value (Rokka, Karlsson, & Tienari, 2014). Through this process the employees exhibit increased positive sentiment.

H_{4a}: *Increases in the level of organizational transparency have a positive effect on the level of employee sentiment.*

I also argue that a similar effect happens for customers. As previously posited, through SDL, it is expected that the observed indicators of transparency in the form of disclosure, clarity, relevancy and timeliness increase. When customers feel that the information provided to them is consistent, reliable and that the firm keeps its promises and commitments, the perceived risk of the unknown is reduced and over time familiarity with the firm increases. Familiarity, in turn positively influencing trust and therefore the customers willingness to engage more fully into relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). As relationship engagement and subsequently duration increases customers experience an increased sense of belonging and decreased propensity to leave (Bloemer & Odekerken-Schröder, 2007; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). These proposed effects result in more positive sentiment.

H_{4b}: *Increases in the level of organizational transparency have a positive effect on the level of customer sentiment*

An integrated social media strategy provides an increased role of social media in the firm. As the role of social media increases, employees become more aware of the overall marketing strategy and therefore firm objectives. Consistent messaging across

marketing media channels increase the value of the firm generated content provided on social media (Kumar, Bezawada, Rishika, Janakiraman, & Kannan, 2016). Social media strategy that is aligned to overall marketing strategy improves employees' awareness (Clark, Bryan, & Shapiro, 2011) and resulting ability to align personal accountability. SDL provides for active monitoring and integration to reach firm objectives clear objectives. Minimizing ambiguity through an integrated social media strategy improves employees' role clarity (Valos et al., 2017), which in turn brings forward increased employee satisfaction. Thus,

H_{5a}: *Increases in the level of integrated social media strategy have a positive effect on the level of employee sentiment.*

Firms which have increased levels integrated social media with focus on SDL, e.g. exhibiting consistent messaging and values will more easily identify with organizations with similar values (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002). Conversely, if a firm exhibits values that are not that of its customers word will spread quickly of discontent giving the firm the opportunity to mend fences if appropriate (Foscht, Lin, & Eisingerich, 2018). Customers of a firm who responds to good and bad sentiment expressed on social media are more likely to be more satisfied with the firm, as it demonstrates consistency in the public facing front taking accountability which builds trust (Yang, Kang, & Cha, 2015). Firms which provide comment on positive and negative sentiment, exhibit SDL, will increase customer perceptions regarding if it keeps its promises and commitments.

H_{5b}: *Increases in the level of integrated social media strategy have a positive effect on the level of customer sentiment.*

As employees have the opportunity to engage with customers in co-creation activities, the employees are being empowered to have more influence over processes and results. I posit that through this increased control the employees are more likely to feel that the company wants to understand how decisions affect the employees (since they are involving the employees more in the decisions). Additionally, I argue that the increase in employee control over the processes through co-creation results in greater job satisfaction. Last, co-creation is typically a ‘positive’ activity and as such should result in positive feelings of accomplishment. Therefore, the customers feel an increased level of ownership (Baumöl et al., 2016; Sawhney et al., 2005; Zwass, 2010).

H_{6a}: *Increases in the level of co-creation activities have a positive effect on the level of employee sentiment.*

The firm takes on greater meaning to the customers. The customers who have engaged in co-creative activities as a part of the relationship with the firm will provide increased value add contributions to the firm (Grönroos & Voima, 2013). Customers will reflect affective commitment. Affective commitment is defined as “the emotional attachment to an organization (Bloemer et al, 2007, p. 22)” feeling they are a part of the ‘family’ and as a result are more likely to plan to stay with the firm indefinitely (Bloemer & Odekerken-Schröder, 2007).

H_{6b}: *Increases in the level of co-creation activities have a positive effect on the level of customer sentiment.*

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this section I describe the method used to examine the hypotheses. First, I describe the pilot survey used to purify the scales for all of the constructs. I then describe the measurement of the constructs. I next describe the main survey sample summary statistics. I then review the analytical techniques used to examine the collected data. I describe the exploratory factor analysis and provide the loadings of the confirmatory factor analysis and other model fit statistics. I then describe the path analysis coefficients and model fit and whether the data is consistent with the hypotheses.

Pilot Study Sample

Survey questions were compiled using scales from existing studies for each of the construct. The questions were adapted as appropriate to the context of social media. A pilot study was conducted in which data from key informants at 35 different organizations on the East Coast was collected to examine the scale items. Another wave of 45 different respondents from organizations on the West Coast was also examined. The results were consistent and scale items were adjusted based on the factor analysis and Cronbach Alpha scores.

Main Study Sample

I used a panel provider to access to key informants—mid level managers on up to executive level positions—at North American-based publicly-traded firms. A total of 431 valid questionnaires were completed. As to sample summary statistics, key informants

were 59% female and 41% male with an average age of 44. Indicated functional titles included mid-level titles such as business consultant and financial analysts up through C-Level roles. Determination of eligibility was supported by the required responses to indicate current role and retained those responses which selected a job classification of mid-level managers on up to executive level positions. This parameter was included to ensure the participants had first-hand knowledge of corporate strategies including social media as well as organizational performance. See, e.g., King and Zeithaml (2001), Wooldridge and Floyd (1990), and Braojos-Gomez, Benitez-Amado and Llorens-Montes (2015). All respondent demographic information was required as a parameter of completion of the survey, to maximize the capability to fully analyze and differentiate the sample population characteristics.

Addressing Potential Common Source Bias

All research that uses key informants has the potential for common source bias; I controlled for and minimized the effects of the predisposition through several procedural and statistical techniques. Podsakoff et al. (2003, p. 899) state that “there is no single best method for handling the problem.” Based on their work, I employed methods to control bias that included counterbalancing cover stories to minimize bias from previously answered survey sections and verbiage which directly addresses the variables studied. Furthermore, a post hoc Harmon’s single factor test indicated that no one factor contributed greater than 49% of the variance in the unrotated factor matrix which falls below the 50% maximum threshold (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Additionally, when the highest factor on the model was used as a control variable the remaining dependent

variables were observed to have a notable change in variance. Finally, potential method bias was not observed as being statistically significant for any interaction effects (Podsakoff, et al., 2012). Therefore, common source bias as a whole was not observed through statistical analysis of the model.

Initial Scale Item Measurement

As mentioned earlier in the methods section, an initial pilot of the instrument was sent to a group of respondents identified as representative of the target survey distribution. From the pilot, a total of 37 respondents returned the survey in the East Coast. However, 7 of the returned questionnaires were found to contain incomplete results and subsequently removed; yielding a sample set of 30, a 60% response rate. The pilot response data was then reviewed through exploratory factor analysis (EFA). EFA is a common step taken to refine constructs when the measurement theory is underdeveloped (Hair, Howard, & Nitzl, 2020). Evaluation of pilot data was executed using SPSS and factor loadings generation with the varimax orthogonal rotation function. Results provided the ability to further refine the framework through dimension reduction analysis and assess if responses aligned with expected constructs as expected from questions adapted from the existing scales. The results indicated the constructs measures could be improved through further instrument refinement and differentiation. Therefore, the items related to co-creation and SDL were modified to generalize firm co-creative indicators as well as further differentiate SDL from Integration Social Media questions. Also, to minimize bias, questions of similar nature were differentiated and placed in separate blocks to ensure isolation

and minimize alignment. (Hair, et al., 2020; Moe & Schweidel, 2012). Questions were reworded to further clarify the construct being measured and counterbalancing cover stories between question blocks were enhanced to distinguish independence of topics and remove previously answered topic question bias. For example, transition text was added between question blocks to remove for potential bias from the social media line of questions. For example, to provide context for transparency the following statement was added:

It has been stated in the news “that transparency is a topic that has risen to the top of the corporate agenda...because of ethical considerations, tough financial times, the proliferation of information, and rising customer expectations.” (Foscht, Lin, and Yuting, 2018, p. 490).

Additionally, questions were slightly modified, e.g. from the pilot question of “My firm takes the time with people like me to understand who we are and what we need on our social media platforms” to questionnaire request item of “My firm takes the time to understand its social media platform users and their needs from social media responses” (Rawlins, 2008, p.9).

The study included only firms which were public US based firms. Therefore, as a part of the requested data, respondents were required to identify the name of the US firm which they represented as well as the stock ticker of the firm. Such identifying data was used to acquire publicly available secondary data for the represented firms to further compare and contrast provided scale perception responses for customer and employee sentiment.

Secondary data for customer sentiment was sourced from Customer Guru

(<https://customer.guru/>). Employee sentiment secondary data was gathered from

Glassdoor (www.glassdoor.com).

Table 1. Main Study Key Informant Demographics

Primary Industry	Searchable Public Firms		Initial Firms All	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Accommodation and Food Services	20	6%	38	7%
Arts, entertainment or recreation	7	2%	17	3%
Finance and Insurance	81	23%	118	23%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	18	6%	19	10%
Manufacturing	66	20%	32	19%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	8	2%	94	2%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	43	13%	9	12%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	8	2%	60	4%
Retail Trade	75	22%	19	16%
Utilities	8	2%	76	2%
Wholesale Trade	6	2%	8	2%
Total	350	100%	501	100%
Position				
Accounting	33	9%	40	8%
Business development or financial analyst	24	7%	25	5%
C-Level or executive	26	8%	80	16%
Engineer	29	9%	25	5%
Human resources professional	16	5%	26	5%
Legal	5	1%	10	2%
Managerial Consultants	13	4%	20	4%
Marketing, merchandise, or purchase	19	6%	24	5%
MIS or information systems	20	6%	19	4%
Operations management	60	18%	95	19%
Other management	73	21%	95	19%
Product management	22	6%	42	8%
Total	350	100%	501	100%

Survey Response Validation

Upon receipt or response, the panel vendor performed an initial review of received responses. Criteria for initial inclusion were that responses were from unique individuals that were over 18, 100% complete, and from individuals identifying as employed by firms which were “public for profit”. Those responses not meeting the minimum criteria were marked invalid and not included in provided results. If the responses met initial qualifying criteria, the database company extracted and provided data to the study’s team as responses were received.

After initial review by the 3rd party database provider, the study included a detailed review of the information provided by the respondents was performed. This review included four steps, firm name to firm stock symbol comparison, US-Firm validation, overall responses to prohibit straight-lining and free-text review. This review was comprised of four parts, 1) comparison of firm to stock ticker 2) validation of US-Publicly traded firm 3) review for straightlining and 4) free text entry validity. First, a comparison of the informant’s provided firm name to stock symbol was performed. Participants were required to provide both firm name and firm stock symbol as for the survey to be considered complete and were requested required fields. A valid combination was defined in the survey analysis parameters to contain firm name and ticker as reflected in public record, e.g. Compustat. Initial review validated the text included was that of a US publicly traded firm. For example, responses including gibberish responses or invalid phrases such “nunya”, “no” or “N/A” were marked as invalid and responses not included. In the case that data provided for both company and

ticker were representative of a US publicly traded firm, the firm name and ticker were compared for alignment. For example if company provided was “IBM” and stock symbol provided was “WMT”, the response was considered a mismatch, and removed. As a result 58 responses were excluded from the sample.

Second, as the scope of the study was publicly traded US firms only, those firms found to be headquartered in non-domestic locations or not publicly traded were also removed from the sample. Validation of firm identification information was performed through investigation through publicly available tools such as www.marketwatch.com. Only those responses found to originate from US-based firms meeting the validation criteria were included as part of the sample; 22 non-US and 20 private firms were excluded.

Third, the survey scale responses were reviewed to ensure the informants carefully considered their answers and provided thoughtful responses and not simply answering all questions with the same response, e.g. all “1” or all “7”; such behavior is known as straightlining (Herzog & Bachman, 1981; Kim, Dykema, Stevenson, Black, & Moberg, 2019). The expectation for use of key informants was so that the respondents would recall from their personal expertise and provide data that represents their perceptions. Therefore, as a part of this study, additional steps were taken to optimize this expectation, which first required completion of all aspects of the study and then individual response scoring variance analysis. Variance analysis evaluated the overall variance of the items as scored on the Likert 1 to 7 scale. If the overall variance for all

items on the Likert scale was less than 0.40 the respondent data was excluded from the overall sample set, this step eliminated 49 (10%) of received responses.

Finally, free text responses requested the respondents to identify best and worst practices used by the firm to engage in firm social media. The responses were analyzed to understand if the participants were seriously considering the completion of the questionnaire. Expected results were that captured response would demonstrate thoughtful alignment to the answered scaled items. The vast majority of the final sample set were as expected and included text such as “none” and “non-applicable” as acceptable responses. However, it was found that a handful of completed questionnaires included out of context or inappropriate text which rendered 10 (2%) invalid and were excluded from the sample set; e.g. “I’m watching”.

Scale Item Measurement

The literature review exposed existing scales used for each of the antecedents of the conceptual model. Review of the extant literature for scales to evaluate the antecedents commenced with examination of the top Marketing Journals; Journal of Business Research, Journal of Marketing Industrial Marketing Management, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science through a Google Scholar search. Each of the journals were queried using search terms and examples of top tier results are shown in Table 2:

Table 2. Search Criteria /

Variable	Query Search Terms	High-Level subconstructs
Organizational Transparency	Keywords: Empirical OR Scales "Organizational Transparency" source:" <i>journal name</i> "	Hultman & Axelsson (2007), Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, (2016)
Integrated Social Media Strategy	Keywords: Empirical OR Scales , "Social Media Strategy" source:" <i>journal name</i> "	Vinerean (2017), Andzulis et al., (2012), Valos et al. (2017), Tafesse & Wien (2018), Muninger et al. (2019)
Co-Creation	Keywords: Empirical OR Scales , "Co-creation" source:" <i>journal name</i> "	Chan (1998), Chan, et al., (2010), Schau, et al. (2009), Ranjan & Read (2016), Albinsson et al. (2016), Zaborek & Mazur (2019)
Social Dialogic Listening	Keywords: Empirical OR Scales , "Dialogic" source:" <i>journal name</i> "	Sugathan & Ranjan (2019), Muninger et al. (2019), Hsieh & Hsieh (2015), Tafesse & Wien (2018)

Table 3 contains a summary of the scale items for each construct, their CFA loadings, and their construct fit indices. All scales demonstrate acceptable validity and reliability. Table 4 contains the latent variable correlations. The average variance extracted (AVE) exceeds the interitem correlations for all of the potential antecedent constructs.

Table 3 Construct Scale Item Measures, Loadings, and Fit Statistics

SOCIAL DIALOGIC LISTENING (7 point scale: 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) (<i>Hsieh and Hsieh, 2015; Tafesse and Wien, 2018; Muninger, Hammedi, & Mahr, 2019</i>)		ICR= 0.937; AVE= 0.725; sqrt AVE=0.851
To what extent do you agree that the company...		
...provides its customers direct and tailored responses to their questions through social media		0.834
...push insights into the company and get not just action, but the 'best available' action'		0.849
...provide the right information at the right time in the right context to the right individual		0.866
...provide real-time and relevant nudges to overcome decision inertia		0.854
...create a seamless and integrated customer		0.864
...learn from others about how it can better serve its		0.861
...learn from others about how it can create better products		0.832

INTEGRATED SOCIAL MEDIA (7 point scale; 1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree) <i>Clark, et al., 2011, Andzulis et al., 2012, Valos, et al., 2017, Tafesse and Wien, 2018, Yahia, et al., 2018. Muninger, et al., , 2019</i>		ICR= 0.920; AVE= 0.714; sqrt AVE=0.845
To what extent do you agree that the company's social media strategy includes...		
...specifics on how to execute our social media plan/program		0.833
...clearly defining of our target audience		0.856
...close alignment with our Marketing Strategy		0.862
...a regular posting schedule		0.861
...posting on a regular basis using a primary social media account		0.825
...measuring our social media effectiveness		0.834
ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSPARENCY (7 point scale; 1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree) <i>Rawlins, 2008a, Rawlins, 2008b, Hultman & Axelsson, 2006; Pirson & Malhotra, 2011; Auger, 2014; Yang, et al., 2015; Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016; Holland, 2018</i>		ICR= 0.940; AVE= 0.676; sqrt AVE=0.822
As to organizational transparency in the company, to what extent do you agree that...		
...provides detailed information to people like me		0.853
...makes it easy to find the information people like me need		0.859
...actively asks for feedback from people like me about		0.829
...provides detailed information to people like me		0.879
...is very clear and factual about both the negative and positive factors associated with the service/ product offering		0.855
..... information provided by the company about its products/services is easily understood		0.769
...information provided by the company about its products/services is easily accessible		0.781
...the company openly compares the pros and cons of its products/services versus competitor offerings		0.835
...accepts a broad set of societal responsibilities		0.726

CO-CREATION (7 point scale; 1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree) <i>Ranjan & Read, 2016; Albinsson, et al., 2016; Villalba & Zhang, 2019; Zaborek & Mazur, 2019; Auh, Menguc, et al., 2019</i>		ICR= 0.867 ; AVE= 0.714; sqrt AVE=0.845
In regards to your company's efforts to participate in co-creation with its customers, to what extent do you feel that the company...		
...systematically engages in dialog with consumers of our products/services.	0.883	
...uses special means to actively encourage consumers to have dialog with us	0.857	
...solicits and listens to ideas from customers about products and services	0.851	
...encourages consumers to learn detailed information about using our products/services	0.840	
EMPLOYEE SENTIMENT (7 point scale; 1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree) <i>Morgan and Hunt 1994; Anderson and Narus, 1990; Pirson and Malhotra, 2011</i>		ICR= 0.928; AVE=0.736; sqrt AVE=0.858
To what extent do you agree that		
...My firm wants to understand how its decisions affect people like me	0.778	
...My firm does not try to deceive	0.857	
...My firm has high moral standards	0.871	
...Employees are satisfied with the company	0.860	
...I would recommend this company as a place to work	0.902	
...Employees enjoy working at this company	0.876	

CUSTOMER SENTIMENT (7 point scale; 1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree) <i>Bloemer & Odekerken-Schröder 2007; Brun & Ricard, 2014</i>		ICR= 0.909; AVE= 0.626; sqrt AVE=0.859
To what extent do you agree that		
...Our customers plan to stay a with the firm indefinitely		0.676
...Our customers feel our firm has a great deal of meaning to them		0.634
...Our customers, feel like they are part of the family		0.621
...Our customers feel that the information provided to them is reliable		0.712
...Our customers feel our firm keeps its promises and commitments		0.732

Table 4. Latent Correlations

Construct	ICR	AVE	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Customer Sentiment	0.911	0.738	0.859					
2. Employee Sentiment	0.928	0.736	0.781	0.858				
3. Integrated Social Media Strategy	0.920	0.714	0.521	0.555	0.845			
4. Organizational Transparency	0.940	0.676	0.613	0.698	0.61	0.822		
5. Social Dialogic Listening	0.937	0.725	0.462	0.430	0.731	0.535	0.851	
6. Social Media Co-Creation	0.867	0.714	0.583	0.609	0.632	0.678	0.562	0.845

Note: All correlations of latent constructs are significant ($p < .01$). All AVE scores meet or exceed a .50 cutoff. Diagonal values (bold face) are the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE); all square roots of AVE are greater than correlations with other constructs.

Secondary Data

I found data from glassdoor.com and NPS for 139 of the firms. Table 5 includes the sources of secondary data, measures and metrics as gathered.

Table 5. Sources of Secondary data

Source	Measure	Metric(s) Gathered	Scale	Sentiment Type
Customer Guru	% customers likely to recommend (promoters) minus % of customers who would not recommend (detractors)	Net Promoter Score (NPS) and NPS Benchmark	-100 to 100	Customer
Glass Door	Overall Recommend friend	Star Rating Recommend	0 to 5 stars % of total	Employee

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

The proposed models include multidimensional latent concepts which are not directly observable or publicly documented. The models also include relationships amongst the concepts to produce outcomes. I conducted exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using IBM's SPSS 25. I next used Smartpls3.0 software to conduct partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze the data. According to Hair et al. (2016) and Hair et al. (2019), PLS-SEM is more appropriate than COV-SEM when the research goal is 'predicting key target constructs' and/or 'identifying key driver constructs' which is the case here focusing on social dialogic listening. Hair et al. (2016) also recommend using PLS-SEM if the structural model is complex which is also the case. Additionally, the sample size of one of the robustness checks is small and the other robustness check includes moderating variables that PLS-SEM is better equipped to handle than COV-SEM.

To statistically test for common source bias I ran a Harmon's single factor analysis which yielded a result of 49.2%, below the tolerance of 50%; interpreting the results, no single factor accounts for the majority of the variance in the unrotated factor matrix (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Additional statistical examination of Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability analysis and Chi-Square examination of discriminate validity also demonstrated lack of common source bias.

Measurement Model Validation

Composite reliability for all individual scale items was above the threshold of 0.7 minimum value, and all items loadings were at a statistical significance level of .001. Average variance extracted (AVE) results were 0.50 or above. The construct discriminant validity was realized through a two-step process. Results from the 3rd party survey cross-loadings were found to load as expected to each of the constructs being measured and did not present on other constructs (Hulland, 1999). Second the inter-correlation values for each construct was below the square root of the AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Internal composite reliability (ICR) results ranged from 0.867 to 0.940, (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) and well above .7 as suggested to exhibit reliability (Nunnally, 1994). Details of the results are included in Table 3 and includes individual item factor loadings as well as AVE, ICR and the sqrt AVE. The latent variable correlations are also provided in Table 4.

Structural Model and Hypotheses

The conceptual model of Social Dialogic Listening is a new topic and this study is the first to examine the influence of the phenomena. This led to the development of two competing models, Model 1 (M1) the influence of SDL and its influence on organization transparency, co-creations and integrated social media, and Model 2 (M2) the evaluation of the influence of the antecedents of organization transparency, co-creations and integrated social media on the endogenous concept of social dialogic listening. Therefore, the following will review and contrast the results of the models.

Model Results

Path Model examines the influence of the presence of social dialogic listening. The results indicate support for the majority of the proposed relationships. First, the path from social dialogic listening to organizational transparency is both positive and significant (path coefficient=0.53, $t=11.1$, $p<0.01$), in support of H1. Second, the path from social dialogic listening to integrated social media strategy is both positive and significant (path coefficient=0.73, $t=24.6$, $p<0.01$), in support of H2. The path from SDL to co-creation is also positive and statistically significant (path coefficient=0.56, $t=14.7$, $p<0.01$), supporting H3.

The paths from Integrated Social Media Strategy to Employee Sentiment and Customer Sentiment respectively (path coefficient=0.14, $t=2.4$, $p=0.02$ and path coefficient=0.14, $t=2.0$, $p=0.04$) are significant, supporting H4a and H4b. The path from Organization Transparency to employee sentiment (path coefficient=0.48, $t=7.4$, $p<0.01$) and customer sentiment (path coefficient=0.36, $t=4.6$, $p<0.01$) are both significant, support H5a and H5b. Last, the path from Co-creation to employee and customer sentiment (path coefficient=0.20, $t=2.9$, $p<0.01$ and path coefficient=0.25, $t=3.4$, $p<0.01$) are significant, supporting H6a and H6b.

In addition, to assist in determination of the best model, more support is offered when reviewing the effect values; r^2 . The model provides good fit as indicated by r -square values. Employee Sentiment has an $R^2=.53$ in the model and likewise, Customer Sentiment has an $R^2=.44$ in the model. The model therefore, explains much of the variation in the outcome variables. See Figure 5.

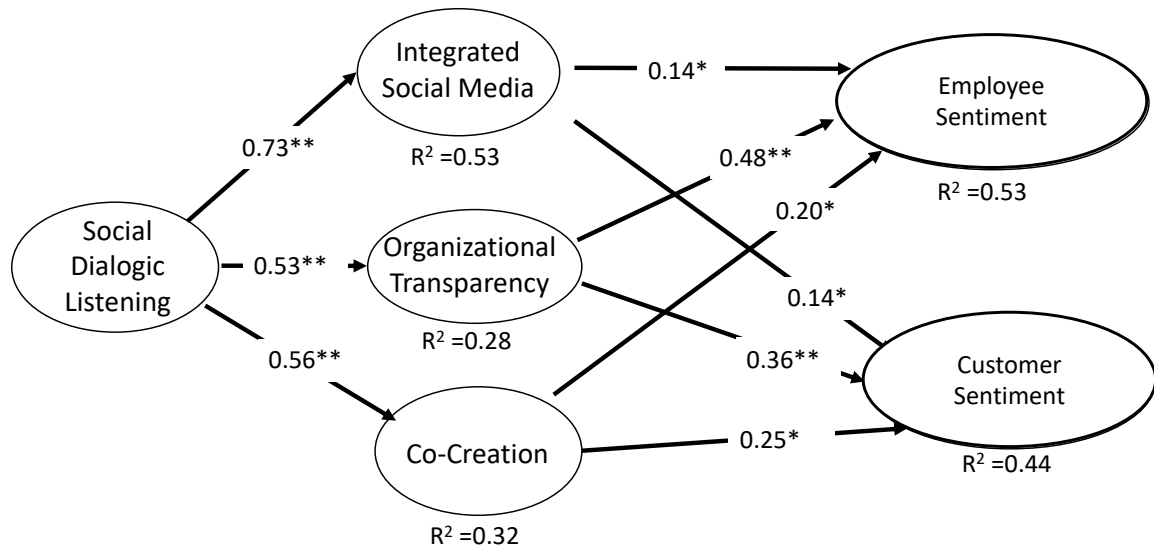


Figure 5 Structural Model. Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, n.s. not significant ($p > .10$).

Robustness Checks

The novelty of this research to the extent that is supported in current literature provoked the need to further the study through several robustness checks. First, an alternative model was analyzed and both the model and the reversed model were evaluated for goodness of fit using standardized root mean residual (SRMR) as part of the SmartPLS program. Additionally, secondary data from GlassDoor and Consumer Guru was used to compare to key informant responses for employee and customer sentiment respectively.

Many studies focused on marketing concepts related to trust and commitment use rival models to provide additional insight into the potential relationships between constructs (see, e.g., Arnett, German, and Hunt 2003; Morgan and Hunt 1994; Pritchard, Havitz, and Howard 1999; Wang, Arnett, and Hou 2016; Zietsman, Mostert, and Svensson 2019).

The alternative/rival path model puts forth logic and hypotheses supportive of the idea that organizational transparency, integrated social media strategy, and co-creation all serve as foundations for social dialogic listening, and that it, in turn, influence the sentiment of employees and customers. Reversing the direction of the relationship between SDL and the three other variables tests the possibility that the relationship could be that of a mediating effect of SDL and aligns with recommended practice (Morgan and Hunt, 1994, p. 25). In particular, the rival model contains the idea that organizational transparency, integrated social media strategy, and co-creation are positively influenced by the presence of social dialogic listening, and that, in turn, improves the sentiment of employees and customers. In short, it proposes that the relationships work in reverse versus the antecedent paths proposed in Model. In this section I outline the logic and hypotheses for this alternative rival possibility.

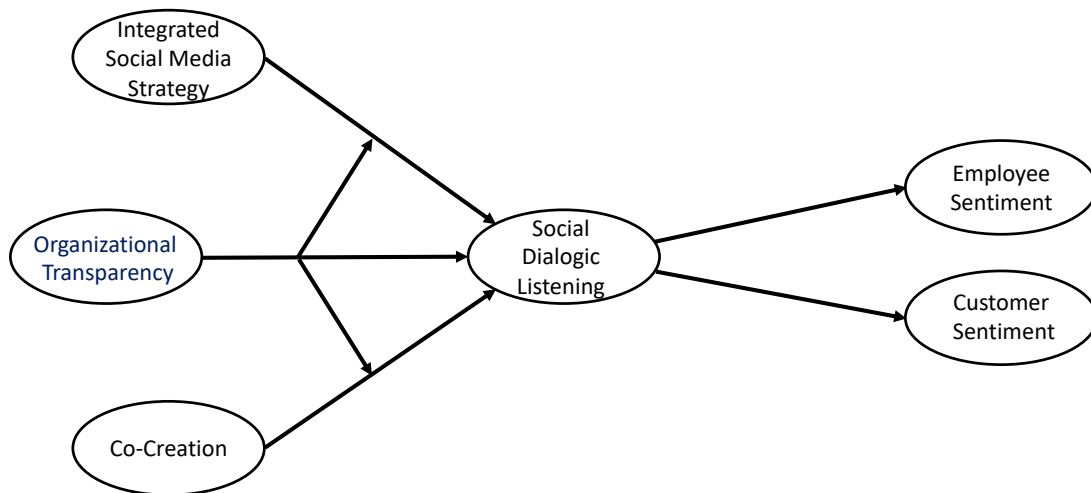


Figure 6 Robustness Checks – Reversed Conceptual Framework

Although Transparency has been identified as contributing to increased positive customer perception, there has not yet been sufficient examination as to the influence of

Organizational Transparency as it pertains to the firm operational social media constructs and perceived influence of social dialogic listening. It is from this perspective from which I analyze the contribution to SDL as perceived by a) other employees and customers

Other scholarly work has promoted this activity to bring forward legitimacy and trust (Bhattacharjee, 2002; Hadjikhani & Thilenius, 2009). However, these motivations are often grounded in meeting the need for the investment to meet the return. Finally, this section evaluates the underlying factor of Top Management team. Such support is demonstrated through executive messaging and commentary as well as increased funding for firm Social Media design, development and execution. For the robustness check the expectation that increases in the level of integrated social media strategy has a positive effect on the level of social dialogic listening.

Revisiting the influence of *organizational transparency*, additional influence as depicted in the Reverse Model is expected as it pertains to *Integrated Social Media Strategy*. Organizations which exhibit *Organizational Transparency* are posited to have increased levels of disclosure and clear and meaningful communication. *Integrated Social Media Strategy* is predicated on a networked communication across the firm structure that exhibits consistency across the firm. Therefore, increasing levels of Organizational Transparency would be expected to promote increased integration amongst the firm and thus demonstrate increased levels of *Integrated of Social Media Strategy*

Next, although I acknowledge that co-creation and social benefit is not the current rationale behind firm motivation to engage in social media, I hypothesize that firms

which engage in co-creation demonstrate increased *social dialogic listening* and therefore provide increased indicated commitment and trust than those which do not engage in co-creative activities for other employees and customers.

Despite these substantive contributions to our understanding of the benefits of social media use the capability of creation of shared value through co-creation remains unexplored. Social media, as noted, comprises a particular subset of activity, wherein the energies of both firm and client are expended to create a perception, but is perception of the firm the creation of value? As such, several scholars have suggested that shared value is the objective when firms derive the value of an action (Noland & Phillips, 2010; Peppet, 2014; Porter & Kramer, 2019).

Co-creation drives customer engagement and increased interactions with the firm. Therefore, it could be posited that the presence co-creation would increase focus on social media. Indications of both co-creation and increased social dialogic listening could therefore reflect in increased usage of dialogic communication in the social media channel.

Therefore, it is required to understand co-creating dialogic communication is defined as “any negotiated exchange of ideas and opinions (Kent & Taylor, 1998, p. 325).” With reference to firm social media usage this dynamic is also referred to as Organizational Public Dialogic Communication (OPDC); where firms engage in openly sharing information that is mutually beneficial to through public communication (Yang et al., 2015). Therefore the reversed model would suggest that increases in the level of organization co-creativity has a positive effect on the level of social dialogic listening.

Once again, revisiting organizational transparency, additional influence on the model is expected as it pertains to *co-creation*. Organizations which exhibit *organizational transparency* demonstrate behaviors which include clear and meaningful communication leading to the participants increased understanding of firm goals and capabilities. Within the marketing domain, transparency has been posited as an underlying component of co-creation within the DART framework for co-creation (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). However, initial empirical investigation suggests weak alignment to perceived loyalty; (Albinsson, Perera, & Sautter, 2016). Additionally, through examination and empirical testing in the context of consumer adoption and use of sustainable products Foscht, Lin and Eisignerich identified stronger alignment to outcomes of positive influence of increased transparency in consumer adoption and use of sustainable products offerings (0.36, $t = 6.19$, $p < 0.001$) (Foscht, Lin, & Eisignerich, 2018, p. 485).

The reversed model robustness check further examined the underlying co-creative components in a similar methodology as Foscht, Lin and Eisignerich versus in isolation to examine the influence to loyalty. Thus, it is posited that increasing levels of *organizational transparency* would amplify engagement of participants and firm in co-creative activities that allow firms to take action; perpetuating additional shared value activities through co-creation.

Finally, the reversed model examines also the influence on employee sentiment and customer sentiment, from SDL to each.

Rival Model Robustness Check Results

Overall, the data does not support the majority of the reversed relationships that are contained in the rival model. The model is presented in Figure 7 and includes the observed path coefficients. The path from organizational transparency to social dialogic listening is not statistically significant (path coefficient=0.08, $t=1.275$, $p=0.203$). The path between integrated social media strategy and social dialogic listening is positive and statistically significant (path coefficient=0.13, $t=11.52$, $p<0.01$). Additionally, the path between social media co-creation both positive and significant (path coefficient=0.444, $t=2.009$, $p<0.01$), lending supporting. Furthermore, organizational transparency as a moderating influence for transparency and integrated social media, hypotheses 9 and 11, was tested. SmartPLS two-stage approach was used to examine the interaction because the interaction examined contains formative variables (Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016). Results indicate that organizational transparency moderating influence on to social media co-creation and integrated social media is not supported (OT*ISM: path coefficient= -0.044, $t=0.801$, $p=0.423$) (OT*SMCo-creation: path Coefficient= 0.076, $t=1.368$, $p=0.172$) not supported. However, the outcome paths between social dialogic listening and employee sentiment as well as customer sentiment were also both positive and significant (SDL->ES: path coefficient=0.438, $t=8.577$, $p<0.01$; SDL->CS: path coefficient=0.468, $t=9.212$, $p<0.01$) supporting the model.

With regard to r-squared, a moderate effect size was noted for SDL with results of 0.56, however, both employee and customer relationships effect size were very weak, values less than 0.3 (Hair, et al., 2016). See Figure 7.

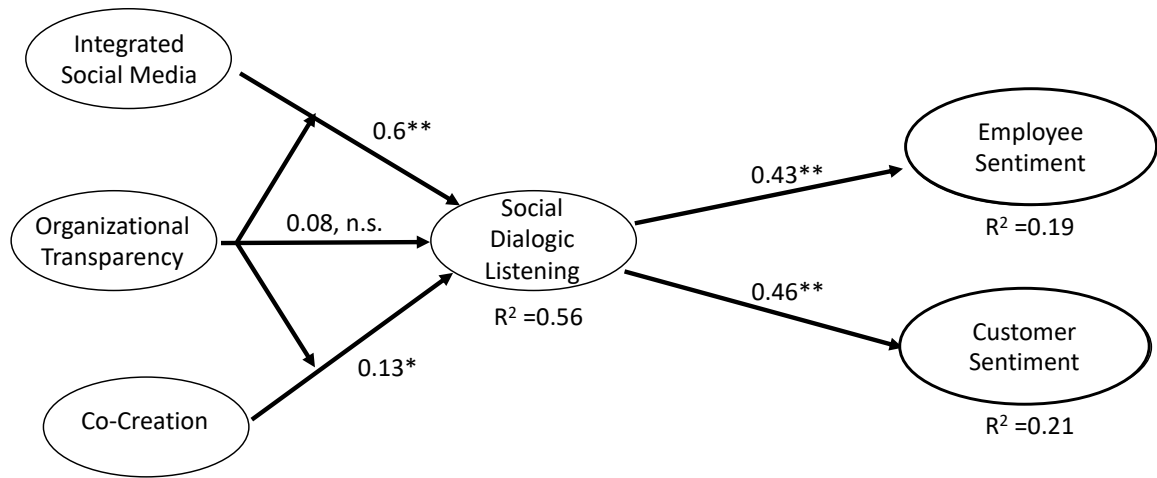


Figure 7 Reversed Structural Model. Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, n.s. not significant ($p > .10$).

Next, to further examine the overall model goodness of fit, the model and the reversed model were further scrutinized through examination of available model fit tools. The examination evaluated the results of the SRMR. Results of SRMR calculations were 0.165 and 0.125 for model and robustness check respectively, falling far below the recommended 0.9 cutoff.

Secondary Data Robustness Check

Finally, a robustness check was performed to evaluate the results provided by the respondents and those gathered from Glassdoor.com and Consumer Guru. Results indicated positive support of the connections between the model elements and the outcomes of employee sentiment and customer sentiment. However, the employee and customer sentiment survey questions in the study are being answered by the same key informants that answered the questions on social dialogic listening, organizational transparency, integrated social media strategy, and co-creation. While analysis presented in an earlier section indicates that common source bias does not appear to be a significant problem, it would still be beneficial to examine data from other sources on employee and customer sentiment. Toward that goal, in this section I analyze the relationships looking at employee and customer sentiment gathered from publicly available sources. I use glassdoor.com for gathering data on employee sentiment and I used Consumer Guru for gathering data on customer sentiment operationalized as net promoter score for each organization. In total, I found data on 139 firms for the two different databases matching organizations in my survey sample.

The results of path analysis in Smartpls3.0 indicate support for the paths from social dialogic listening to integrated social media strategy (path coefficient=0.70, $t=10.6$, $p<0.01$), to co-creation (path coefficient=0.63, $t=10.0$, $p<0.01$), and to employee sentiment (path coefficient=0.22, $t=1.98$, $p=0.05$) that uses the glassdoor.com data. In turn, the path from the glassdoor.com data to the Consumer Guru net promoter score data is statistically significant (path coefficient=0.37, $t=3.8$, $p<0.01$). Thus, social dialogic

listening does appear to lead to enhanced employee sentiment, which in turn, translates into enhanced customer sentiment.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

The newly conceived concept of SDL was investigated for two purposes. One purpose was to determine if those firms which participate in SDL received increasingly positive outcomes as perceived by employees and customers. The other purposes was to understand the connections between SDL and other organizational practices. The model provides insight indicating that influencing relationship exists, and by examination of the alternative direction of influence of competencies to SDL. When evaluated conversely, through the robustness check the results are not supported or weakly supported that the influence of the firm competencies positively influences the presence of SDL.

Theoretical Implications

To better enable companies to leverage social media this research introduces a theoretical framework that explores the potential relationships between social media dialog, intermediate goals (organizational transparency, integrated social media strategy, customer co-creation) and more final outcomes (employee sentiment, customer sentiment). In doing so it adds insight to the system of ideas that explain how firms can better carry out the marketing concept in the digital era. First, there is a lot of research on social media effectiveness that focuses on using social media as another channel for advertising and marketing communications *to customers* (see discussion in, e.g., Ashley

& Tuten, 2015; Rapp et al., 2013; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). The results of this study show that when social media is utilized for dialog *with customers*, there is increased organizational transparency, increased integration of social media into firm strategy, and increased co-creation with customers. Moreover, this research adapted and developed scale items on social dialogic listening which could be used in future research.

Second, organizational transparency is an important, strategic priority for organizations (see e.g., Holland et al., 2018; Rawlins, 2008a; Rawlins, 2008b). Yet, research has not examined the potential connections between social media and organizational transparency. This research indicates the two are related. Future research needs to deepen our understanding of the insights discovered in this research on that relationship.

Third, scholars have questioned has marketing lost its seat at the table and the Marketing Science Institute's continually updating research priorities call attention to the desire to connect marketing activities to firm strategy. This study's results imply that the specified marketing activity labeled 'social dialogic listening' is significantly connected to firm strategy (Hypothesis 2). As proposed by Sashi (2012, p. 257) "Social media with its ability to facilitate relationships may help realize the promise of the marketing concept, market orientation, and relationship marketing by providing the tools to better satisfy customers and build customer engagement." Many firms do not engage in social dialogic listening, according to the variance in this dataset and according to several practitioners that I, the author, spoke with while undertaking this dissertation. Adopting social dialogic listening might be considered an adaption or morphing of several

components of market orientation. Discussing SDL and not just social media is important for marketing scholars interested in connecting social media to firm strategy.

The next theoretical contribution relates to customer co-creation research. This research indicates that customer dialog is connected to customer co-creation. But must it always be present? This implies a need for research to discover what are the specific dialog levels or requirements for co-creation to occur between customers and organizations. Prior studies found positive empirical support with reference to the relationship between On-Line Communities (OLCs) and stakeholder engagement and brand perception (Lusch & Nambisan, 2015; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2016; Zwass, 2010). This research extends the scope of co-creation encounters beyond product and communities to include social media.

While there is much interest in research on customer sentiment analysis (the modeling technique), the findings of this research could be viewed as a catalyst for additional research to deepen our understanding of the connections between marketing activities, employee sentiment, and customer sentiment. This research provides evidence that is consistent with the commitment trust process. The findings of this empirical study provide the foundation from which further research can be launched that examines the presence of operational activities which may promote SDL and the influence such activities. Examination of differentiating innovative strategies which create an environment of SDL e.g. customer relationship social media teams will be a logical next step in furthering the study of the identified phenomena.

Managerial Implications

There is general consensus that firms are convinced there is value in the benefits of social media. However, from discussions I've had with many practitioners, it appears that most organizations are focused on using social media to communicate *to* customers rather than communicate *with* customers. Indeed, many of the companies are trying to automate social media interactions using artificial intelligence programming. Or they are using outsourced call centers to handle it. Although the idea of an internal social media answer team may come with a higher cost, I argue that the value of social dialogic listening through social media far outweighs the expense. The value includes improved organizational transparency, integrated social media strategy, and customer co-creation, which in turn result in improved employee sentiment and improved customer sentiment. Attempts to remove the firm's internal human element to realize efficiencies have decreased value with poorly designed robo advisors providing "best match" responses. However, best responses typically conclude without further engagement, e.g. asking about other needs. Therefore, if such an activity is entered, training the robots with information gathered from human responses through AI training is a viable option; carefully supervising the AI learnings to enable a more human touch to leverage the opportunity to learn about the customers.

Additionally, the benefits of positively influencing organizational transparency, integrating social media strategy and increasing co-creative capability could be quite appealing to many firms; the presence shown in this study serves to positively influence the sought after higher NPS and eNPS ratings. Higher ratings have been posited to

increase, productivity and deepened sales relationships result, with minimal risk. This results from the happier employees who are thrilled to engage with meaningful dialogue with customers who receive a relationship growing interaction as they would through a phone call and are pleased to refer a friend; a win-win.

Limitations and Future Research

Every study has natural limitations that present opportunity for future research. For example, the scope of this study was limited to US based publicly traded firms. Therefore, future research could examine if the relationships are stronger, weaker, or different for US privately held and not-for-profit firms. More broadly, cultural diversity as well as foreign national regulatory policy and procedures could potentially alter firm capabilities to engage in the social media technologies. Therefore, non-US firm variance would provide an compelling case to further the examine the outcomes of the study and would be an equally compelling study.

Second, future research could also examine if the results differ by industry. Such focused study by industry may provide valuable insights to enable further comparison studies to understand industry variance. Does social dialogic listening and its relationships change when in industries such as financial services or investment banking or insurance where employees have less ability to freely interact in dialog with customers given tighter regulations on what can and cannot be discussed.

Third, the only way to investigate the firm activities of social dialogic listening, organizational transparency, integrated social media strategy, and co-creation was through the usage of key informants in the organizations. These topics are not found in any reporting. Thus, it is important to remember that all of these data are the perceptions of the employees. While I presented additional secondary data on employee sentiment and customer sentiment, future research is needed to establish that the relationships discovered using the perceptions here hold true for other samples and using other operationalizations of the constructs in the models.

Additionally, with regard to this robustness checks, recent literature has empirically examined the subjectivity by which employees evaluate the firms. Research calls into question the validity of combining of both current and former employee results (Chang, & Chin, 2018). However, the use of this data was as a robustness check and so was for validation of the respondents' sentiment. Further study of this phenomena is recommended.

Also, as a part of this study a robustness check provided additional scrutiny of the model and reversed model through model fit examination evaluating the results of the standardized root mean residual (SRMR). Although, PLS-SEM offers the ability to perform the SRMR model fit examination, studies have provided clear recommendation that the results are not equal to the goodness of fit results of Covariance-based testing which predicts using covariance whereas PLS-SEM calculates the difference between the observed and predicted models (Henseler & Sarstedt, 2012; Hair, Hult, et al., 2017). Other measures of goodness of fit found in

COV-SEM such as RMSEA, GFI, CFI, etc. that compare overall global model fit are not available in PLS-SEM because it does not use covariance matrices in the bootstrapping and as a result it is not possible to compute them.

Conclusion

Social media is here to stay. Firms have begun to look beyond the use social media as as another channel for broadcast messaging. Yet, understanding the positive influence of firm social media interactions which include social dialogic listening (SDL) has only just begun. This study which began with the idea that a two-way conversation in social media was beneficial, has revealed a portion of the potential benefits that will be positively influenced by the presence of SDL. Further consideration beyond the scope of US publicly traded firms should be considered and outcomes examined, e.g. local governments and private firms.

Given recent, unfortunate and unprecedented events, e.g. COVID-19, the online space, beginning with and beyond social media will be forced to mature to accommodate the velocity of change underfoot. There will be no going back to what we once knew as a channel or an outlet, as interactions online will be an all encompassing component of daily life. With increased operation in the digital space, transparency and co-creation will be critical to the survival of firms. Therefore, given the results of this study, the new norm will amplify the call to engage in SDL to meet rising expectations of increased transparency and co-creation and furthering firm integration of social media strategy.

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Appendix Commitment-Trust Theory

The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing is the seminal construct from which Social Media focus is examined (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The Commitment Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing posits that two fundamental factors must exist for a relationship to be successful: Trust and Commitment. For the purpose of this investigation, I rely upon the definition offered by Morgan and Hunt, “Trust is defined as the belief in an exchange partner’s reliability and integrity (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).” The presence of increased Trust has been empirically demonstrated increased commitment, thereby leading to a stronger bond between the actors. Empirical studies have shown increasing commitment between firm and customers influences the cooperative behaviors which in turn influence product sales and value; influence increases as commitment increases. Speaking on the foundational premises and outcomes of Relationship Marketing (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Hunt et al., 2006) propose that multiple, important forms of relationships need to be considered separately, including: other employees and customers .

Trust

To understand the framework, included is review of the seminal literature which identifies Trust as a key component of the Relationship Marketing theory. While scholars continue to struggle to nail down the elusive universal definition, there is clarity and agreement on the outcomes of the assumptions undertaken by party participation other employees and customers the party(ies) embarking or maintaining a relationship with a

firm the effects of Trust when entering into a relationship with a firm as in requires that such entity has endeavored to willingly enter into such partnership with the expectation that those discretionary actions of another party will bring more good than harm which assumes that there is an inherent willingness to be open to vulnerability (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Further study of Trust identified the relationships developed online specifically. Consumers develop perceptions of the firm from the online presence “*online trust includes consumer perceptions of how the site would deliver on expectations, how believable the site’s information is, and how much confidence the site commands in on the presence of Trust in the online interactions.*” (Bart, Shankar, Sultan, & Urban, 2005, p. 134).

Additionally, as suggested, by Mayer within the context study alignment of said Trust should be ascertained with specific reference to attributes or action associated; not merely do you or do you not (Mayer et al., 1995). Therefore, when considering the intended outcomes of social media it becomes necessary to identify those variables which influence increased Trust for other employees and customers. The propensity to Trust or the influence of the trustees is evaluated by the trustee’s perceived ability, benevolence and integrity as observed as occurring in unison or independently and evaluated throughout the relationship duration (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman, 1995, p. 720).

Within virtual communities this idea has been examined by Ridings, Gefen, and Arinze who provided the model of Trust which has served for the past 18+ years as a foundational concept for evaluation. Ridings, Gefen, & Arinze, 2002. However,

closer examination of the specific firm characteristics or independent variables that invoke Trust through Social Media platforms has not yet been studied. Therefore, it is within this context that this examine facilitates building that foundation.

Commitment

In the literature quite often Trust and Commitment are interchangeably used; however, the two outcomes are not equal. To understand Trust and Commitment effectively, it is critical to clarify similarities and differentiates. Commitment is the willingness to be a part of another's focus and intensions. The parties have a mutual goal to complete together and are willing to engage in activities that further that goal. However, it is possible, be it not longstanding to have the presence of commitment without trust. For example, although I am committed to working on a project with a team and my full focus is therefore placed upon completion of my assigned part of the project. However, I may not trust that the others will complete their assignments nor do I trust that I will be provided the resources to complete my project as needed; yet I remain fully committed to the end. Thus, over time if the other parties fulfill their agreed upon tasks or not will increase or decrease my trust in the team. Additionally, as the level of support and fulfillment increases my personal commitment to complete my parts of the project will be increased or decreased accordingly. Conversely, it is also possible to have trust without commitment. I may trust that the finance department will provide accurate and thorough information within the financial year end statement, yet because I am not measured on a

day to day basis on how well that team reflects such information, I am not committed to a common goal.

For example, on an individual level, if I were to ask a bank teller how much revenue their bank generated last year, it would come as no surprise to me that very few would be able to state the figure with any amount of accuracy; and this is not isolated to banking.

Individuals not held accountable for the outcome of a goal do not reflect commitment to a goal.

However, although trust does influence commitment, and commitment does influence trust; both variables contribute to relationships. Relationship Marketing emphasizes the value-creating potential of networks of relationships (Grönroos, 1996; Gummesson, 1994 Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Thus, as such the success of a Relationship Marketing is influenced by the value of the outcome expected by both parties engaged in the relationship. Although, the focus of this work is to understand the antecedents which contribute to the focus on social media, to illustrate the positive influence of social media on Relationship Commitment, I next review those seminal articles that highlighted such positive outcomes for relationship value regarding other employees and customers perspectives.

The following table lists a few select examinations of the existing literature and practitioner examples which suggest the use of social media to build value.

Type	Study	Focus	Propositions/ Hypotheses	Results
Firm and Employee	Trier, R. (2019). Inspiring Employee Support For Your Social Media Marketing Strategy. Retrieved 2 September 2019, from https://www.weidert.com/whole_brain_marketing_blog/employees-supporting-social-media-strategy	Publicly engaging employee in Social Media participation	Firms which are discussed by employees in Social Media will increase presence	N/A
Firm and Consumer (B2C)	Andzulis, J. M., Panagopoulos, N. G., & Rapp, A. (2012). A review of social media and implications for the sales process. <i>Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management</i> , 32(3), 305-316.	Qualitative study of Social media integration along the sales process	Integration of social media along the sales process will enhance relationship trust and value	Indicated the presence of growing interest in social media as part of relationship building
Business to Business (B2B) (Supplier)	Agnihotri, R., Dingus, R., Hu, M. Y., & Krush, M. T. (2016). Social media: Influencing customer satisfaction in B2B sales. <i>Industrial marketing management</i> , 53, 172-180.	Social Media influence on sales for vendors of a University	Positive influence will result in higher engagement and perception of Sales	Sales persons using both use Social Media which included quality information showed increased sales volumes
Firm and Investor	Chen, H., De, P., Hu, Y., & Hwang, B.-H. (2014). Wisdom of Crowds: The Value of Stock Opinions Transmitted Through Social Media. <i>The Review of Financial Studies</i> , 27(5), 1367-1403.	Social Media peer influence for investment decisions; applicable yet notably stock comments not a pure social media platform	Positive influence of peer comments on stock value and purchasing	The presence of positive comments positively influenced sales volumes and pricing

Notably, Social Media literature examining the firm and supplier relationship has recently received growing attention (Agnihotri, Dingus, Hu, & Krush, 2016). Such studies focused on building of the Business to Business (B2B) relationships and is not prevalent in practice.