An Integrated Model of the Antecedents and Consequences of Touchpoints: An Abstract

Dennis T. Esch, Hugh N. Wilson, and Emma K. Macdonald

Abstract The view has emerged that customers base their choice decisions on their holistic customer experience with different brands across diverse touchpoints, from advertising to peer recommendation. These touchpoints have mainly, however, been studied separately, raising the question how they combine in influencing choice. Furthermore, most research assumes the touchpoints themselves to be independent variables. To address these weaknesses, this paper develops a conceptual model integrating antecedents and consequences of touchpoints into an attitude-based behavioural intention model, also incorporating competitive effects. The paper examines how touchpoints are shaped by the prior experiences and the customer's prior attitudes. Furthermore, it analyses the influence of touchpoint encounters on brand attitudes and behavioural intentions, both directly and indirectly through the mediator of attitude towards the touchpoint. The model is empirically tested through partial least squares structural equation modelling with a real-time experience tracking dataset. The paper finds support for the notion that customers' affective reactions to touchpoint encounters are based on their prior brand attitude. Moreover, touchpoints are shown to influence brand attitudes and behavioural intention, both directly and indirectly through their influence on attitudes towards the touchpoint as hypothesised. In addition, touchpoints within and outside the organisation's control are shown to exert differential effects on both attitudes and intentions. Lastly, brand attitudes are confirmed to be the main driver of behavioural intention, with the inclusion of competitive effects significantly increasing the predictive validity of the model. The research thereby extends and integrates previous work on advertising, store experiences, earned media and user-generated content. It provides marketers with a rational basis for resource allocation and experience design.

D.T. Esch (✉)

University of St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland

e-mail: dennis.esch@unisg.ch

H.N. Wilson • E.K. Macdonald

Cranfield School of Management, Cranfield, UK

e-mail: hugh.wilson@cranfield.ac.uk; emma.macdonald@cranfield.ac.uk