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Tag Your Friends for a Chance to Read This Paper: Self-Monitoring and Renumeration Posts on Social Media

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Tag Your Friends for a Chance to Read This Paper: Self-Monitoring and Renumeration Posts on
Social Media

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Tag Your Friends For a Chance to Read This Paper: Self-Monitoring and Renumeration

Posts on Social Media

Honors Thesis

Andrea Weng

Abstract

Brands frequently offer consumers the opportunity to win prizes or be entered into a sweepstakes by asking for likes, shares, tags and even content creation. However, many consumers are not interested in interacting with their social media audience for the sole purpose of remuneration.

This study explores the willingness of Gen Z to participate in remuneration posts and the likelihood of liking, sharing, tagging and more. Findings reveal that most Gen Z consumers are willing to like a post in order to be entered to win something, but further engagement is less likely. When using more popular platforms like Instagram, Gen Z consumers are more likely to participate in sharing activities and low self-monitors are more likely to participate when their friends and followers share things. Those with a higher number of friends and followers are also more willing to share and tag than those with a low number of friends and followers. Younger and female participants are more likely to participate with luxury brands however males are more willing to participate on twitter which they use more regularly.

Introduction

“Like this post! Share it on your story! Tag three friends!” Promotional posts with this type of language promising users who follow the instructions a chance at free goods and/or services are pervasive on social media. Instagram posts with the hashtag #giveaway have numbered nearly 43 million (Instagram, 2022) and Facebook reports 2.2 million similar posts (Facebook, 2022). Free goods and services may be appealing to current and potential consumers, but the instructions and requirements may turn people away as they may not want to publicize their interaction with brand-generated promotional content. How much engagement could a brand be losing while pursuing the wrong type of consumer? With a majority of company executives ranking digital customer engagement as a significant strategic and budgetary priority (McKinsey

& Company, 2014), there are important managerial implications of ensuring that the right type of promotional content is connecting with the right type of consumer.

The literature on social media engagement behaviors has lacked an analysis of motivations behind the sharing of social media promotional posts, especially those embedded with instructions to facilitate electronic word of mouth (eWoM), a concept describing consumers' comments shared through the Internet (Hennig-Thurau, Walsh & Walsh, 2003). Specifically, Kim's (2020) review of the self-monitoring literature calls for further studies of the "dynamic impacts of self-monitoring in social media communication and consumption contexts." This paper analyzes the effect of a users' level of self-monitoring on sharing and interacting with brand-generated promotional posts.

This paper begins with a review of the relevant literature on social media engagement leading to the development of hypotheses, followed by the methodology of the study. The results are explained and discussed, and implications for how brands can better create engagement in their promotional content are explored, followed by ideas for future research.

Literature Review

Social Media Engagement Behavior

"Social media" has been defined and redefined multiple times (Hopkins, 2017). Carr and Hayes define social media as "Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others" (2015). This interaction with others is especially important as it has led to the concept of social media engagement behavior (SMEB). SMEB was first specifically noted in

2016 as a valanced continuum ranging from high (active) to low (passive) engagement (Dolan, Conduit, Fahy & Goodman, 2016). Dolan et al (2016) describes seven types of social media engagement behaviors: Co-destruction, negative contribution, detachment, dormancy, consumption, positive engagement and co-creation.

In order to encourage social media users to become slightly less passive participants, many brands look to create positive engagement. When users click, like, share, or comment, they are now recommending and supporting the brand, therefore impacting friends and followers impression of the brand and possible desire to engage (Van Doorn, Lemon, Mittal, Nass, Pick, Pirner, & Verhoef, 2010; Chu, 2011). The focus on “likes” has become a common engagement metric as social networking sites (SNSs) have increased in mainstream use (Moran, Muzellec & Johnson, 2019) as it is used by consumers to indicate their satisfaction and approval of the piece of content they saw (Swani, Milne & Brown, 2013; Gavilanes, Flatten & Brettel, 2018) and a high number of likes indicates the consumers’ interest in the post and its potential to be even more attractive for consumer engagement (Sabate, Berbegal-Mirabent, Cañabate & Lebherz, 2014; Halaszovich & Nel, 2017; Pongpaew, Speece & Tiangsoongnern, 2017). When evaluating successful messaging, two widely tested predictors of communications effectiveness are interactivity cues and media richness levels contained within the brand post (de Vries, Gensler & Leeflang, 2012; Chua and Banerjee, 2015; Coyle and Thorson, 2001; Fortin and Dholakia, 2005). Moran et al. (2019) used these factors to in their study to better understand how brand communication can influence engagement. They found that rich brand content perform better than static or lean content, and confirmed that including call-to-actions (described by Brkić (n.d.) as imperative words or phrases) in posts does stimulate engagement.

However, while marketing practitioners use these metrics to measure the success of their content, Sydral and Briggs (2018) notes that practitioners' concept of engagement is different than that of a consumer. Engagement to a consumer is "a state of mind in which they often feel a sense of enjoyment coupled with a high degree of involvement" (pg. 11) and that the act of "liking", commenting, and sharing pieces of content are an occasional result of being in the aforementioned mental state (2018).

While seeking entertainment, integration and social interaction, personal identity and information are key motivators for using general media (McQuail, 1983), researchers have expanded the definition for social media, to include remuneration and empowerment (Muntinga et al 2011; Maslowska, Malthouse & Collinger, 2016; Buzeta, De Pelsmacker & Dens, 2020; Kitirattarkarn, Araujo & Neijens, 2020). Remuneration is a fully extrinsic motivator that should lead to more engagement with a brand (Gagne' & Deci, 2005; Henning-Thurau, 2004). Piehler, Schade, Kleine-Kalmer, and Burman (2019) found that remuneration was positively related with both creating and contributing, however researchers have not explored what type of consumers may be more likely to engage with this type of post.

Remuneration

With Latin roots, remuneration is described as "to pay an equivalent to for a service, loss, or expense" (Merriam Webster, n.d.). Historically, it has been studied under the management discipline with regards to employee salary (Murphy, 1985; Jensen, Murphy & Wruck, 2004; Armstrong & Murlis, 2007; Kessler, 2009). In the context of social media, remuneration is one (of many) motivator for consumers to interact with content on SNSs (Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh & Gremler, 2005; Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006; Dolan et al 2016; Saridakis, Baltas,

Oghazi & Hultman, 2016; de Vries, Peluso, Romani, Leeflang & Marcati, 2017) and their engagement stems from the expectation of receiving a reward or incentive of various types (Hars and Ou, 2001; Wang and Fesenmaier, 2003; Nov, 2007). Remuneration posts contain information that has attention attracting features such as trials, coupons, special offers, etc. (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2011; Wood et al., 2013). Remuneration posts are not inherently brand related but may refer to specific activities that are intended to promote a company and its products (Muntinga et al., 2011). Engagement with remuneration posts matches that of the widely accepted uses and gratifications framework (Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas 1973).

Pentina, Guilloux, and Micu (2018) found that remuneration posts were “highly influential” but that the high engagement was almost exclusively derived from “liking” and did not affect the amount of commenting and sharing on brand pages and suggests the prompting of “likes” from consumers may be an effective technique to increase engagement on remuneration posts. Likes, which are simply singular clicks, are engagement behaviors that require relatively less effort, which fits Pentina et al.’s other findings that consumer engagement behaviors that require greater effort and creativity (such as taking and sharing photos) are more often motivated by combined needs, not a singular one (2018).

Remuneration could be in the form of money, a prize or a personal want. Sweepstakes and rewards are commonly used in social media to increase engagement. Rehnert, Bartsch, Kull, and Meyer (2017) have done work on rewarded consumer social media engagement and found that the implementation of such can increase active participation in loyalty programs (in contrast to point accumulation exclusively from purchases) if the experience is enjoyable and intrinsically motivated. A common type of promotional content that has a reward focus is a giveaway (Nicholls, 2012; Smith, 2014). This type of content is often generated by commerce brands to

encourage digital word of mouth through specified sharing behaviors that simultaneously act as eligibility criteria.

Self-Presentation and Self-Monitoring

Carr and Hayes's definition of social media includes opportunities to "selectively-self present" (2015). Self-presentation is one reason for using a social networking site (Seidman, 2013) and could be an essential motivation and deterrent to what type of content a user ultimately shares. Self-presentation is the process by which individuals aim to develop and control the impressions that those around us may have (Dominick, 1999). While social media profiles generally appear to be an accurate presentation of the user's self (Back, Stopfer, Vazire, Gaddis, Schmuckle, Egloff & Gosling, 2010), they also provide a unique opportunity to express alternative-selves and ideal selves (McKenna, Green & Gleason, 2002; Manago, Graham & Greenfield, 2008). A user's personality may dictate how accurate a profile is, or which self is properly represented, if any (Seidman, 2013).

Additionally, self-presentation can be critical to how one presumes that they will be perceived by others. For example, analysis of in-depth interviews by Duffy and Chan (2018) found that young adults using social media are socialized to imagine a hypothetical constant surveillance by parties such as family members and future employers, incentivizing (if not forcing) them to be "always on."

The relationship between the presentations of self and perception of that self by others was explored by Mark Snyder whose development of the first self-monitoring scale in 1974 attempted to quantify the relationship (Snyder, 1974; Snyder & Cantor, 1980). Sociological work by Ickes, Reidhead, and Patterson (2011) supports earlier work of Barnes and Ickes (1979)

that self-monitoring, in general, is a form of impression management based on its distinction of being other-oriented and accommodative. In a review of self-monitoring literature, Kim (2020) notes that self-monitoring is closely and positively associated with topics of materialism, appearance management, favorable responses to promotional messages, mobile phone dependency, misrepresentation of one's image via social media and online dating platforms.

Snyders scale was later reassessed and redesigned by Lennox and Wolfe to be more accurate to human behavior and supplements the theory that people who are high self-monitors are more sensitive to how they present themselves in reaction to their social surroundings while lower self-monitors are less likely to differ their presentation and expression (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984). In a study of undergraduate students, Ajzen, Timko, and White (1982) found that there is a relation between intentions and behavior, finding that low self-monitors were more likely to follow through on their initial intentions while high self-monitors may modify their behavior and therefore are less likely to follow through with their original intentions. Levels of self-monitoring also affect how users present themselves when online dating and blogging. Hall, Park, Song, and Cody (2010) found that high self-monitors are more likely than low self-monitors to dishonestly represent themselves while Child and Agyeman-Bidu (2010) reported high self-monitors being more mindful of privacy settings on their blogging profile, are better at tailoring their content for specific audiences, and are more cautious of diction and syntax choices than low self-monitors (2010). Beane (2012) found that high self-monitors take as much time and care in managing their online self-presentation as they do with their offline self-presentation.

Generation Z

This study focuses on Gen Z due to their substantial usage of social media and the lack of research into their sharing of remuneration posts. Gen Z is loosely defined as people born after 1996 and, as of 2020, are “on the cusp of adulthood” (Parker & Igielnik, 2020). Parker and Igielnik summarized broad commonalities of this generation, most notably (for the purposes of the paper) their label as “digital natives”, referring to the concept that members of Gen Z were/are being born into a world where technologies such as Internet and smartphone are commonplace, and they have little to no memory where such technologies were not present in their lives (2020). In fact, a study by Anderson and Jiang noted that 95% of teenagers (between 13- to 17-year-olds) have access to a smartphone and the ownership of such is nearly universal across demographics such as race and socioeconomic status (2018).

As for social media, the same study found that 97% of the teenage participants use at least one of seven major social media platforms (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Just like any specific demographic, brands must consider Gen Z’s influences, perspectives, and desires when formulating best practice guidelines and marketing strategies, especially on social media as Gen Z’s relationship with different technologies is distinct than that of previous generations (Vander Linde & Weatherly, n.d.). As consumers, Gen Z is highly likely to use social media as a source of shopping inspiration, which may manifest as following brand pages and reading reviews (The Influencer Marketing Factory, 2021). This could be important to social media practitioners as comments on their brand posts could serve similar purposes as reviews and that the use of social media for shopping inspiration means that there is a higher chance of said interactions being seen by consumers. This could be of additional importance given that Gen Z supposedly is becoming

comfortable with social commerce, a spinoff of e-commerce where transactions are made not just digitally, but right on social media (as opposed to a retailer webpage) (Kasenholtz, 2021).

Beyond technology patterns, it should be noted that Gen Z shares similar stances on social issues, including race relations and political preferences, with their millennial counterparts (Parker, Graf & Igielnik, 2019). It is possible that appeals to millennials could potentially apply to Gen Z. This is important as millennials are the biggest group of consumers after the Baby Boomer generation (Fry, 2020), so if they are similar in some regards, seeing Gen Z and millennials as a semi-combined group in appropriate contexts would increase the size and potential buyer power of both groups, especially as Gen Z considers brands' transparency on their stances regarding social issues as a standard (The Influencer Marketing Factory, 2021).

Hypotheses Development

Due to the consumer's differentiation between engagement and interaction, Sydral and Briggs's warns that marketing practitioners cannot simply attribute the sum of engagement metrics to their consumers' interest in the content as it is possible for consumers to interact with content even though they are not engaged in it (e.g. sharing an article they did not actually read) (2018). A "like", share, or comment does not necessarily mean that the consumer is engaged (i.e. enjoying and involved) in the content. Pentina, Guilloux, and Micu (2018) found that remuneration posts were "highly influential" but that the high engagement was almost exclusively derived from "liking" and did not affect the amount of commenting and sharing on brand pages and suggests the prompting of "likes" from consumers may be an effective technique to increase engagement on remuneration posts. Likes, which are simply singular clicks, are engagement behaviors that require relatively less effort, which fits Pentina et al.'s

other findings that consumer engagement behaviors that require greater effort and creativity (such taking and sharing photos) are more often motivated by combined needs, not a singular one (2018).

H1: Generation Z consumers are more likely to interact with a remuneration post if the only requirement for a benefit is to like the post than if the requirement for a benefit is another behavior.

Building on the logic of H1, which suggest that the ease and convenience factors of lower effort behaviors such as “liking” a post increases engagement on remuneration posts, then it follows that the appearance of remuneration posts on a user’s social media platform of choice lends to the their likelihood of participation as they are more likely to spend more time on their preferred platform and, as Williams, Crittenden, Keo and McCarty (2012) found, the Generation C (people born after 1990 and are currently the closest sub-generation between the millennials and Generation Z) participants of their study “saw themselves largely as Spectators in the social media ecosystem” (pg. 7).

H2: Generation Z consumers are more likely to participate in sharing activities related to remuneration posts on platforms they use more frequently (ex. Instagram).

Studies of SNS profiles found that high self-monitors would display limited and generic information on their pages in a cautious attempt to control their representation for a more likable reception while low self-monitors did not, opting to more accurately portray themselves by displaying more personal and in-depth information (Lin, 2008; Gogolinski, 2010). Lin (2018), in addition to Rose and Kim (2011), found that high self-monitors were especially concerned with status seeking, a need which may they may try to satisfy through posting content that will express a desired image, like with personal photography (Sheldon and Bryant, 2016) or receive

affirmative interactions, like with “mall hauls” (Harnish & Bridges, 2016). While the literature on self-monitoring and SMEB have focused on the type of content that high self-monitors upload, the curatorial nature of their online behaviors likely influences the type of content they avoid interacting with.

H3: Generation Z consumers who are high self-monitors are less likely to participate in sharing activities based on remuneration posts than low self-monitors.

H4: Generation Z consumers with more followers are more likely to participate in sharing activities based on remuneration posts than Generation Z consumers with less followers.

Sydral and Briggs (2018) also noted that, when choosing to interact with content, underlying motivations such as a desire enhance one’s own image may play a larger role than the level of engagement with the actual content. It suggests that interacting with a piece of content was not the result of being in a state of enjoyment and involvement, but from the perception that interacting with the content can help the consumer achieve an unrelated personal goal. A study by Duong and Sung (2021) found that only conspicuousness (which was measured alongside dimensions of uniqueness, quality, hedonism, and extended self) significantly enhanced consumers’ engagement on luxury brands’ social media content, while others did not. In an attempt to craft a thorough definition of what a luxury product is (as there was not a cohesive consensus at the time), Heine’s findings suggest that consumers had perceive products to be labeled “luxury” when they contain six major characteristics including price, quality, aesthetics, rarity, extraordinariness and symbolism (2012).

H5: Generation Z consumers are more likely to participate in sharing activities based on remuneration posts if the brand is a luxury brand.

Consumers are more likely to feel positively toward a brand they identify with more. (Tuškej, Golob, Podnar, 2013). It stands to reason that regardless of self-presentation motives, if you strongly identify with a brand, you would be more likely to participate in sharing activities than you would with other brands. Therefore:

H6: Generation Z consumers are more likely to participate in sharing activities based on remuneration posts if the brand is a brand they identify with.

Methodology

Participants were recruited using social media. All participants completed the survey on Qualtrics. Questions included what social media platforms participants used, which were used most often and how many followers/friends they had. Questions relating to remuneration focused on likelihood of sharing based on platform, followers, whether the product was a luxury good or from a brand that was part of a participant’s identity (see table 1). Participants were also given a modified self-monitoring scale based on (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984). Demographics were collected including age, gender, and race. Eighty-six participants completed the survey. All surveys were done correctly and completely therefore the usable sample was 86. Fifty-five percent of participants were female and 80% were white. Participants were all from Generation Z (Gen Z) with ages ranging from 18-29, and the majority of participants were 21-22 (see table 2).

Table 1

<i>Variable</i>	<i>As Defined in the Survey</i>	<i>Method of Collection</i>
Social media platform used	No specific definition was provided.	Participants were given pre-generated options of Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, Pinterest,

		YouTube, and Twitter as well as a write-in “Other” option.
Follower count	“Large amount for you could be 50-100 or more”	Participants were given pre-generated options of Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, Pinterest, YouTube, and Twitter as well as a write-in “Other (please specify)” option.
Close contacts	“Friends and family”	Each of the aforementioned social media platform options were presented with a Likert scale, labeled with “All my friends/followers are close contacts”, “Most of my friends/followers are close contacts”, “About half of my friends/followers are close contacts”, “Most of my friends/followers are not close contacts”, and “All my friends/followers are not close contacts”.
Luxury brand	No specific definition was provided, but the question added that the luxury brand was one that the participant would “prefer to buy if money were not a factor”	Text box for unstructured text input
Brand that participant highly identifies with	“feel like an integral part of you and a representation of who you are”	Text box for unstructured text input

Table 2

	N	Mean/percentage of participants
Age	86	22
Income	86	\$60,000-\$89,999
Ethnicity	86	79% White 5% Black 7% Hispanic/Latinx 4% Asian 5% Multiracial or Biracial
Social media use per day	86	4 hours
Gender	86	56% Female 38% Male 6% Other

Results

H1: Consumers are more likely to interact with a remuneration post if the only requirement for a benefit is to like the post than if the requirement for a benefit is another behavior.

85% of participants said they would be willing to like a post in order to be entered to win a prize or sweepstakes. Participants were less likely to perform an additional behavior like sharing (41%), entering an email (37%), or tagging friends (51%).

H2: Participants are more likely to participate in remuneration on platforms they use more frequently (ex. Instagram).

The most commonly used platforms by participants were Instagram and Snapchat, followed by YouTube and TikTok, then Facebook. Twitter and Pinterest were the least used platforms. When asked to rank how often participants used each platform, Pinterest was used least ($m=5.03$), followed by Facebook ($m=4.23$), Twitter ($m=3.9$) and then YouTube ($m=3.43$). TikTok was most used ($m=2.17$) followed by Instagram ($m=2.35$) and Snapchat ($m=3.02$). Participants were more likely to participate in remuneration on platforms like Instagram ($m=2.35$) or Facebook ($m=1.03$) compared to less used platforms like Pinterest ($m=.709$) or Twitter ($m=.872$).

H3: High self-monitors are less likely to participate in remuneration activities than low self-monitors.

H3 was partially supported. In general, there was not a significant difference between likelihood of sharing between high and low self-monitors ($p=.22$). However, when asked how likely they would be to interact or share something their friends/followers have interacted with, self-monitoring did have an impact on the likelihood participants would share based on others

sharing ($F(10)=2.419$, $p=.015$). If exposed to friends/followers sharing something, High self-monitors were less likely to share ($m=8.6$) than low self-monitors ($m=10.5$).

H4: Those with more followers are more likely to participate in remuneration activities than those with less followers.

Those with more accounts with a larger amount of followers (50-100 or more) were more likely to participate in remuneration activities in general ($F(6)=2.373$, $p=.037$) and more likely to share luxury products ($F(6)=4.919$, $p=.001$) and products that reflect their identity ($F(6)=4.480$, $p=.001$). They are also more likely to share if others do ($F(6)=2.684$, $p=.020$).

H5: Young consumers are more likely to participate in remuneration activities if the brand is a luxury brand or a brand they identify with.

There is a significant difference between likelihood of participating in remuneration activities and age for luxury products ($F(11)=2.094$, $p=.033$). Younger participants were more likely to share luxury products with 19-year-olds being the most likely to share posts for luxury brands they like ($m=18$) and participants over 24 being least likely to share ($m=9.8$).

Platform also matters when it comes to participating in remuneration activities and age. There is a significant difference between age groups and how likely they are to participate in remuneration activities on different platforms ($F(11)=2.189$, $p=.024$). Specifically, younger participants were more likely to be willing to participate when the brand was a luxury brand on Snapchat ($F(2)=2.959$, $p=.05$), and YouTube ($F(2)=3.301$, $p=.04$). Nineteen-year-olds were the most likely to participate ($m=3.33$) while 24-year-olds were least likely ($m=.8$).

Younger participants were more likely to share a sweepstakes for a brand they identified with on snapchat ($F(2)=3.549$, $p=.03$). Participants who were 20 years old were the most likely to want to share on snapchat ($m=3.13$) while 28-year-olds were the least likely ($m=.5$).

H6: Females will be more likely to participate in remuneration activities for luxury products and products from brands they identify with.

There are significant gender differences in terms of platform usage for Pinterest but not for the other platforms ($t(85)=22.850$, $p=.001$). 88% of the participants who use Pinterest are females. There is a significant difference between gender and likelihood to participate in remuneration activities on Pinterest ($F(2)=9.222$, $p=.001$). Females were more likely to participate ($m=1.06$) than males ($m=.15$). While twitter did not have a significant difference in usage, remuneration participation on Twitter was significant based on gender ($F(2)=4.526$, $p=.014$). Males ($m=1.30$) were more likely to participate than females ($m=.67$)

In terms of luxury products, there was a significant gender difference when considering remuneration activities on Instagram ($F(2)=3.067$, $p=.05$), pinterest ($F(2)=5.741$, $p=.005$) and twitter ($F(2)=3.406$, $p=.038$). On Instagram, males ($m=2.18$) were less likely than females ($m=2.73$) to participate. On Pinterest males ($m=.31$) were also less likely than females ($m=1.28$) to participate in remuneration activities. On Twitter, however, Males ($m=1.33$) were more likely than Females ($m=.77$) to participate.

Gender differences remain significant on Pinterest ($F(2)=4.770$, $p=.011$) and Twitter ($F(2)=3.658$, $p=.030$) when it comes to brands the participants identify with. Females ($m=1.27$) were more likely to participate in remuneration activities on pinterest for a brand they identify with than males ($m=.38$). Males ($m=1.48$) were more likely to participate in remuneration activities on Twitter than females ($m=.85$).

Discussion

The question of whether social media remuneration “works” requires a nuanced response. It would depend on what metric the brand’s social media practitioner considers in terms of success. For general engagement, remuneration posts would be beneficial as a majority of the participants reported their willingness to participate in them to be entered to win a prize or sweepstakes. However, they are less likely to perform an additional engagement behavior, including entering an email, sharing, and tagging friends. It appears that they are open to the idea of participating in a form of remuneration that they are made aware of from a social media post but are less keen to participate in the remuneration efforts dependent on the requirements of entry. It suggests users are likely to engage by performing actions such as “liking” a post, contributing a comment, or completing a digital entry form. Although social media practitioners tend to include barriers to entry in order to encourage spreading the reach of the post and increasing engagement on it by including requirements such as publicly sharing the remuneration post (e.g. “retweeting” on Twitter, adding the post to an Instagram user’s own Story, etc.) or tagging other users in the comments, users are less likely to participate in the remuneration. Given this, remuneration posts may not be the most optimal method to generate leads or create awareness through digital word of mouth. If the social media practitioner is prioritizing engagement metrics of shares, tags, and email collection, remuneration posts would yield a low return in investment. In order to maximize the awareness efforts of remuneration posts (since a majority of users are open to the idea of participating in them), it is beneficial not only to not only limit the entry requirements to simple, semi-private engagement behaviors, but to also be aware of other social media behaviors pertaining to remuneration. Platform, age, and gender play significant roles in users’ participation in remuneration. It appears that there is a correlation

between the frequency of use and a higher likelihood of participation in remuneration, exemplified by Instagram being reported as the most used platform in addition to being the platform where users were more likely to participate in remuneration. The opposite was true for Twitter as it was the least used both in general and for remuneration. Facebook seems to be the anomaly as it was report second to least used but also second to most likely to participate in remuneration there. Pinterest, overall, was the least used, but has the biggest gender difference of all the other platform options (aforementioned in addition to TikTok) with 88% of the participants who reported to be users also being female. Females are also the most likely to participate in remuneration posts on Pinterest (and well as Instagram) for luxury products. Men, however, were more likely to do so on Twitter, both for luxury and non-luxury products. Snapchat appears to be the platform choice among 20 years old users for sharing remuneration content from a brand they identify with.

In terms of age, the results also showed that younger participants (most commonly 19 year olds) were the most likely to share social media posts for luxury brands they like and more likely to participate in remuneration on any given platform while the opposite is true for participants over 24 years old being least likely to share. It is important for social media practitioners to be aware that, even with the relatively close age gaps of a group of consumers, there are still differences in preferences and behaviors, and it would not be ideal to lump them all into the same assumption (e.g. “Gen Z would/would not do this”).

Although users are less likely to share remuneration posts, in the instances they do, the factor of self-monitoring levels did not appear to affect the users’ general concept of sharing remuneration posts. However, high self-monitors were less likely to share something that other close contact users were sharing, compared to low self-monitors. If a social media practitioner

were still to implement sharing or tagging a post as an entry requirement, it would be beneficial to include at least one non-sharing and non-tagging entrance requirement option lest they consider the loss of engagement from high self-monitors to be marginally beneficial to the awareness that may be derived from the sharing and tagging. Users with more accounts with a larger amount of followers (identified as 50 to over 100 followers) were more likely to participate in remuneration activities in general to share remuneration posts on both luxury products and products that reflect their identity, and they are more likely to do so if they are aware that other users are sharing as well. A theory to explain this could possibly be linked to their frequency of use. Having more than one account to a large number of followers suggests that a user may be a frequent or heavy user of social media and may have amassed the higher number of visitors through content creation and popularity or being exposed to more suggestions of other users they may know or be mutual connections of that they can follow (and be followed back by). It would be beneficial to social media practitioners to target this type of user within their target market if their metric priority is public engagement (e.g. shares and tags) as they are more likely to share remuneration posts.

The limitation of the study primarily lies in its small sample size. A larger sample size of Generation Z social media users would provide additional legitimacy and support to the results of the study. An even larger sample size of social media users of varying ages can also shed light into the social media behaviors in the context of remuneration posts as well as provide insight on potential generation differences on the subject. The sample was also limited by scope. While the survey was dispersed through social media and word-of-mouth, it is highly possible that the convenience sampling resulted in a majority of the sample to be New England based traditional college students, mirroring the following and network of the primary researcher. In

addition to broadening the scope of the sample size by age, geographic, and occupational characteristics, future research could also decrease the hypothetical nature of the current study, such as by providing participants with real examples of remuneration posts from various category of goods and services as well as a varied combination of entrance requirements.

Conclusion

Social media has become a staple of marketing and promotion. Remuneration posts are a common tactic for promotion of product and service lines as well. However, remuneration can become expensive. Social media practitioners will often want to offset the cost and increase their return of investment by increasing awareness for the brand through user-to-user behaviors of sharing embedded into the entry requirements of the remuneration post. The public sharing entry requirements can become barriers to their follow-through as users tend to less likely to perform additional engagement behaviors. With a majority of social media users being open to the concept of participating in remuneration through social media, it is important for social media practitioners to approach remuneration with tact and nuance, using the insight and implications from the study as a guide.

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