Would You Be My Friend? An Examination of Global Marketers' Brand Personification Strategies in Social Media

Kuan-Ju Chen, Jhih-Syuan Lin, Jung Hwa Choi & Jung Min Hahm

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Would You Be My Friend? An Examination of Global Marketers' Brand Personification Strategies in Social Media

Kuan-Ju Chen
National Central University, Taoyuan City, Taiwan (Republic of China)

Jhih-Syuan Lin
The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, USA

Jung Hwa Choi
The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas, USA

Jung Min Hahm
The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, USA

Building on the consumer–brand relationship framework, this research examines global marketers' branding strategies and consumer engagement in social media. Results of a content analysis in Study 1 show that brand personification strategies are prevalently employed on global brands' Facebook pages in both graphic and textual content. Brand personification strategies in textual content are especially effective in inducing consumer engagement (i.e., likes, shares, and comments). A linguistic analysis in Study 2 further suggests that highly engaged consumers exhibit anthropomorphic responses when they interact with brands; they treat brands as humanlike social agents and show positive emotions toward the brands. The synthesized results provide empirical evidence that consumer–brand relationships are realized by brand personification strategies and consumers' anthropomorphism in the social media domain. Theoretical implications and managerial suggestions are discussed.

Keywords brand personification, typology of personification, social media, anthropomorphism, consumer engagement

Address correspondence to Kuan-Ju Chen, National Central University, Department of Business Administration, No. 300, Zhongda Rd., Zhongli District, Taoyuan City 32001, Taiwan (R.O.C.). E-mail: kuanjuc@uga.edu

Kuan-Ju Chen (PhD, The University of Georgia) is an assistant professor, Department of Business Administration, National Central University.

Jhih-Syuan Lin (PhD, The University of Texas at Austin) is an assistant professor, Department of Advertising and Public Relations, Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, The University of Georgia.

Jung Hwa Choi (MA, Michigan State University) is a doctoral student, Department of Advertising and Public Relations, Moody College of Communication, The University of Texas at Austin.

Jung Min Hahm (MA, The University of Georgia) is a doctoral student, Department of Advertising and Public Relations, Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, The University of Georgia.

To augment marketing campaigns in marketplaces worldwide and reach consumers active online around the clock, using social media has become necessary for all kinds of businesses in today's digitally empowered era (Giamanco and Gregoire 2012; Kumar and Sundaram 2012; Lipsman et al. 2012). As the interactive features of social media continue to radically transform traditional linear, unidirectional marketing models, the media's capacity for brand management clearly allows dynamic interactions between consumers and brands that may, in turn, facilitate consumer–brand relationships and provide engaging brand experiences (Gensler et al. 2013; Truong, McColl, and Kitchen 2010). In particular, Facebook—called "the dominant social networking platform" (Smith 2014, p. 1) and attracting more than 936 million active users worldwide each day (Facebook 2015)—offers multidimensional features of expression that make it a well-rounded tool for brand communication (Lipsman et al. 2012). Establishing a social media presence using Facebook thus promises a new set of opportunities for leveraging marketing communication programs (Hutton and Fosdick 2011), because Facebook users, once attracted, often allow marketers to establish and maintain relationships with them—both current and potential consumers.

Van den Bulte and Wuyts (2007) have averred that the interactive nature of social media can not only convert marketers' design of branding messages but also affect consumers'

consumption of and responses to such messages. Because brands increasingly permeate consumers' online social networks, consumers become more likely to encounter branded content, if not to also personally interact with brands (Gensler et al. 2013; Leigh and Thompson 2012). At the same time, as Gensler and colleagues (2013) observed, "originally inanimate brands are becoming humanized through intimate conversations with consumers" in the realm of social media (p. 250). Indeed, ever since advertising and marketing literature introduced the notion of brand personification—the act by which marketers endow brands with humanlike characteristics to present them as people (Aaker 1997; Brown 2011; Delbaere, McQuarrie, and Phillips 2011)—studies have indicated that consumers are likely to perceive brands to be humanlike social agents with whom they may form relationships (Aaker, Fournier, and Brasel 2004; Aggarwal 2004; Fournier 1998). As such, marketers have sought to capitalize on the brand-as-person metaphor by taking advantage of the mechanism by which consumers anthropomorphize brands and interact with them in ways similar to interpersonal communication (Aggarwal and McGill 2007; Epley, Waytz, and Cacioppo 2007). In the context of social media, marketers can, for example, host Facebook pages as personal accounts and issue interpersonal messages via branded content to induce consumers to consider their brands as if they were people. By engaging with such branded content via such Facebook functions as liking, sharing, and commenting, consumers can consequently express anthropomorphic responses to brands, including their perceptions and emotions (Fournier and Alvarez 2012; Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone 2012).

However, previous research has documented only the use of personified characters in print advertisements and TV commercials (e.g., Callcott and Lee 1994; Phillips and Gyoerick 1999), while studies of social media have examined either marketers' general branding strategies in branded content (e.g., Kwon and Sung 2011; Lin and Pena 2011; Vernuccio 2014) or consumers' consumption of such content (e.g., Chen, Kim, and Lin 2015; Chu 2011; Muk and Chung 2014). These research strands have thus softened the account of the interpersonal ways that marketers' branding strategies are implemented and the extent to which they affect consumer engagement specific to the social media context simultaneously. Given the great and increasing popularity of using social media in advertising and marketing, it is important to understand the phenomenon of bidirectional communication in consumer–brand relationships. In response, this research addresses the timely topic of how global marketers employ brand personification strategies via branded content and their effectiveness, as well as how consumers engage with brands via anthropomorphic responses on Facebook.

Specifically, building upon the tenets of the consumer–brand relationship framework, the current research aims (1) to analyze how global marketers employ brand personification strategies in their layouts and brand posts on Facebook pages;

(2) to examine whether brand personification strategies effectively enhance consumer engagement expressed, for example, via likes, shares, and comments with brands; and (3) to investigate how anthropomorphic responses (e.g., perceptions and emotions) underlying consumer engagement are revealed in consumer posts. In achieving these ends, the research seeks to contribute to the advertising and marketing literature by exploring the asset of mutual investment in consumer–brand relationships from the perspectives of both marketers and consumers. The results illuminate the ways in which consumer–brand relationships are realized and sustained in social media through the lens of brand personification and the propensity of consumers to anthropomorphize brands. In another sense, the brand personification strategies and their effects on consumer engagement discovered in this research are also resources for businesses intending to adopt social media as marketing channels. As such, this article additionally offers managerial suggestions for delivering personified messages to capitalize on consumers' anthropomorphizing tendency and emotional bonding with brands.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Brand Personification in Consumer–Brand Relationships

Fournier (1998) has posited that consumer–brand relationships emerge when interdependence between a brand and its consumers is evident and that, in these relationships, a brand should be conceived as an active contributor to the dyadic relationship, not a passive entity awaiting marketing transactions. To cultivate such interdependence, marketers tend to endow inanimate brands with the characteristics of humans—that is, to practice brand personification—to encourage consumers to consider brands in human terms (Aaker 1997; Brown 2011). Brand personification is defined as "imbuing trademarked or otherwise proprietary-named products and services with a human form and/or human attributes, including a generally distinctive physical appearance and personality" (Cohen 2014, p. 3). In practice, marketers construct messages of personification by associating brand-related figures and humanlike characters in their brands' product design, advertising, and other marketing efforts, largely to increase positive brand outcomes such as recognition, recall, and loyalty. As such, brand personification can cultivate a sense of brand identification and induce the perception that consumer–brand relationships exist (Cohen 2014).

Before the emergence of social media, literature on the topic conceived brand personification as the use of spokescharacters, including both animate beings and animated objects, to convey branded messages with visual demonstrations or verbal testimonies (Callcott and Lee 1994; Phillips and Lee 2005). Callcott and Lee (1994) examined animated spokes-characters in television advertising and found that 7.6% of TV commercials sampled contained spokes-

characters, mostly humans (33%) or humanlike animals (28%). Later, Phillips and Gyoerick (1999) analyzed animated spokes-characters in print ads and found no increase in the use of spokes-characters in magazine ads (6.7%), though spokes-characters that did appear were either humans (45.5%) or humanlike animals (32.5%). While both studies indicated no predominant use of brand personification in traditional media channels, there was evidence that the role of personified spokes-characters had changed over time. That is, brand personification, which used to target children's market, had appeared more often in advertising targeting adult audiences. Yet both sets of study results are limited to advertising in traditional media and may also be outdated. In fact, more recent research has suggested that brands have become increasingly personified since marketers, with the help of social media—especially Facebook—have become able to provide interactive content that can engage consumers (de Vries, Gensler, and Leeflang 2012; Malthouse et al. 2013). By doing so, brands can deliver content that initiates conversations with consumers by triggering their propensity to interact socially, a mechanism typically reserved for other people (Gensler et al. 2013).

Brand Personification Strategies on Facebook Pages

We conceive brand personification strategies in social media to constitute the rhetorical use of images (i.e., graphic content) and language (i.e., textual content) to depict brands as living people able to communicate with consumers via interpersonal conversations. We adopt Brown's (2011) typology of personification to classify the nuances within brand personification strategies employed in graphic content on Facebook pages. First, anthropomorphism is conceived as a straightforward strategy in which marketers use a real person (e.g., "the Most Interesting Man in the World" for Dos Equis) or an animated human figure with a name (e.g., Mr. Clean) to associate the representative's personality with a brand (Keel and Nataraajan 2012). The use of celebrities and other people as spokespersons (e.g., Beyoncé for Pepsi) also qualifies as anthropomorphism (Fournier 1998). Second, and by contrast, zoomorphism refers to marketers' use of animals with human qualities to advocate brands. Because people intuitively project human characteristics, thoughts, and behaviors onto animals and treat them as relationship partners (Brown 2010; Daston and Mitman 2005), zoomorphism appears in a range of brand animals and mascots (e.g., Coca-Cola's polar bears, Tony the Tiger for Kellogg's Frosted Flakes, and the Aflac duck for Aflac Insurance). Third, early research in religion has pointed out that people tend to endow inanimate objects with human-specific traits, including psychical attributes and mental states, to incarnate the objects (Guthrie 1993). Derived from Greek (Brown 2011), teramorphism refers to the personification of inanimate objects as spiritual figures with humanlike characteristics, by which marketers can depict brands as if

they were humans (e.g., the so-called spokes-candies for M&M's and Mr. Peanut for Planters).

Brand personification strategies can also appear in textual content on Facebook pages, as text messages constitute an integral part of branded content in social media. Research has shown that, among brand personification strategies, the use of language such as personal pronouns and verbs, particularly in their imperative form, can reduce the impersonality of top-down marketing communications and implicitly assert relationships between brands and consumers (Fairclough 1989; Kwon and Sung 2011). Pollach (2005) has further suggested that using first-person pronouns (e.g., *I, my, we, our*, and *us*) can foster social relationships by enabling people to consider the information given as personal belief instead of plain fact. By contrast, using second-person pronouns (e.g., *you, your*, and *yours*) can be regarded as an invitation to directly engage individuals in interpersonal conversations. At the same time, though using third-person pronouns (e.g., *he, she, his*, and *her*) does not directly involve individuals in interpersonal conversations, it nevertheless establishes a conversational context. As far as verbs are concerned, Insch (2008) has posited that imperative verbs (e.g., *come, join, share*, and *enjoy*) cue people to act and react to other social agents, as well as initiate interactions necessary for probable social relationships.

Similar to social media users, brands can host profiles and accounts to suggest that they behave as people do and thus need social relationships. Via branded content in social media, as opposed to traditional media channels, brands can expand their presence by uploading brand-related photos and adding biographical information that sets the tone of their personality and human characteristics. Brand posts are sites where brands can initiate conversations, give instant feedback, resolve urgent problems, and make emotional claims. Moreover, brands can invite consumers to join trending discussions by using, for instance, personal pronouns, personality traits, and/or humanlike designs in posted messages.

Taken together, marketers can use such tactics to manage personification messages in branded content when laying out their Facebook pages. With graphic content, on one hand, the typology of personification (i.e., anthropomorphism, zoomorphism, and teramorphism) can be shown to consumers in the page's profile picture, cover photo, and thumbnails next to "About." With textual content, on the other hand, personal pronouns and imperative verbs can be stated in "About" and in the captions of adjacent thumbnails. Marketers can also employ brand personification strategies involving both graphic and textual content together in brand posts, particularly when updating the status of brands. Given global marketers' endeavors to manage branded content in social media, we posit the following research questions to probe how brand personification strategies are employed on Facebook pages:

RQ1: To what extent do global brands employ brand personification strategies in graphic content on Facebook pages?

RQ2: To what extent do global brands employ brand personification strategies in textual content on Facebook pages?

Consumer Engagement With Brand Personification Strategies

Owing to the interactive characteristics of social media, consumers can not only consume but also respond to branded content immediately (Malthouse et al. 2013), which when done with target brands can be conceived as consumer engagement (Gensler et al. 2013). According to Wang (2006), engagement is defined as "the contextual relevance in which a brand's messages are framed and presented based on its surrounding context," which includes utility, involvement, and emotional bonding in response to brand-related information (p. 355). Specific to online contexts, Mollen and Wilson (2010) defined engagement as "the cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the web site or other computer−mediated entities designed to communicate brand value" (p. 5). In this sense, engagement elevates the instrumental value of brands that consumers witness via brand usage to a perception of brands' experiential value as part of a dyadic relationship (van Doorn et al. 2010). These multifaceted concepts suggest that consumer engagement consists of cognitive, affective, and behavioral activities in consumer–brand interactions (Hollebeek 2011; Mollen and Wilson 2010). For instance, Gummerus and colleagues (2012) surveyed users of a Facebook brand community regarding an online gaming provider and found that consumer engagement significantly influenced consumers' perceived benefits in terms of sociality, entertainment, and economy. Consequently, these perceived benefits enhanced consumers' satisfaction with their established relationship with the brand, as well as their loyalty to actively participating in the brand community.

As a logical extension, consumer engagement in social media can therefore be applied to articulate the essence and dynamics of consumer–brand relationships (Claffey and Brady 2014). To differentiate the varying levels of the construct of engagement, Malthouse and colleagues (2013) have conceived consumer engagement in social media contexts as existing on a continuum from low to high engagement. On this scale, low engagement characterizes "situations in which consumers either only passively consume content or use very basic forms of feedback," whereas high engagement describes "cases in which consumers actively process the role of the brand in their lives or participate in various forms of co-creation" (p. 272). Put another way, low consumer engagement encompasses consumers' viewing of branded content along with the provision of simple responses, such as indicating their favor of the brand (i.e., as likes) and redistributing branded content (i.e., by shares). By contrast, high consumer engagement entails consumers' active creation and modification of brand-related content (i.e., in comments). Recent research by de Vries, Gensler, and Leeflang (2012), for example, has demonstrated that, when showing their engagement with brands, consumers are likely to respond to brand posts with likes and comments, both of which affect the popularity of brand posts. In addition, vivid and interactive brand posts were found to increase the number of likes, whereas only interactive brand posts enhanced the number of comments.

Although social media enable brands to convey a "conversational human voice" (Kwon and Sung 2011), previous research has not yet empirically demonstrated whether brand personification strategies in brand posts can boost consumer engagement on Facebook pages. In the current study, we therefore aim to explore the relationships between brand personification strategies and consumer engagement, which are addressed in the following research question:

RQ3: To what extent do brand personification strategies in brand posts affect consumer engagement on global brands' Facebook pages?

Anthropomorphic Responses Underlying Consumer Engagement

Regarding consumers' part in consumer–brand relationships, Fournier (1998) has claimed hat consumers' tendency to anthropomorphize the nonhuman explains how brands are "animated, humanized, or somehow personalized," as well as legitimizes consumer–brand relationships in general (p. 344). In other words, consumers' anthropomorphizing inclination is the mechanism by which they comprehend brand personification strategies, as well as project the relationship mind-set onto brands (Aggarwal and McGill 2007; Fournier 1998). More specifically, Epley, Waytz, and Cacioppo (2007) have defined anthropomorphism as an individual's sociopsychological mechanism of "imbuing the imagined or real behavior of nonhuman agents with humanlike characteristics, motivations, intentions, and emotions" (p. 864). Consumers' anthropomorphism can be expressed in various ways, such as by nicknaming brands (e.g., Beemer for BMW) or conceiving brands to have human capacities (e.g., Lowe's takes care of my home).

Epley, Waytz, and Cacioppo (2007) have identified three determinants that prompt consumers to exhibit anthropomorphism. First, elicited agent knowledge is knowledge of human beings, including that about the self and others, which people derive from ample phenomenological experiences by being humans and observing others. When agent knowledge is elicited by personification messages, for instance, it anchors anthropomorphic inferences about inanimate brands. Second, sociality motivation is people's fundamental need for companionship that propels them to establish social relationships (Epley et al. 2008). Driven by sociality motivation, consumers tend to

anthropomorphize inanimate brands and consider them to be sources of social relationships that can fulfill their need for companionship. Third, effectance motivation refers to people's inclination to perform effective interactions with their surroundings as a means to promote stability (Waytz et al. 2010). By anthropomorphizing inanimate brands, consumers attain competence about and control over their interactions with brands, which promotes effective relationship management (Epley et al. 2008; Waytz et al. 2010). As such, the interactive platform of social media seems to be a good fit for prompting consumers' tendency to anthropomorphize the nonhuman.

Because consumers perceive anthropomorphized brands to be intimate and thereby relevant to them (Delbaere, McQuarrie, and Phillips 2011), they tend to perceive brands similarly to how they perceive other people in interpersonal relationships (Cesario, Plaks, and Higgins 2006; Fournier 1998). Building on this logic, Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone (2012) adapted the major personality traits of warmth and competence attested to in sociopsychological literature to interpret consumers' perceived intention and ability, which facilitate the consideration of brands as if they were humanlike social agents. Intention refers to the humanlike intentions of a brand, whereas ability denotes the capability of a brand to act on those intentions. Consumers' perceived intention and ability regarding brands are the two dimensions that contribute to brands' intentional agency, which is related to consumers' interaction with anthropomorphized brands. In this sense, when issuing anthropomorphic responses, consumers perceive brands' intentional agency depending on "how well (or ill) intentioned they seem to be, as well as how able they are perceived to be" (Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone 2012, p. 171).

Meanwhile, the perception of brands' intentional agency usually coincides with distinct emotions that reflect well on consumer behaviors prompted by anthropomorphism (Fournier and Alvarez 2012; Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone 2012). In other words, consumers' emotional responses may correspond to the degree to which consumers perceive brands' intention and ability. To illustrate, high perceived intention and ability can be associated with positive emotions, whereas low perceived intention and ability might be associated with negative ones. Research has suggested that marketers should rely on urging consumers' positive perceptions and emotions toward brands (Malthouse et al. 2013; Thomson, MacInnis, and Park 2005), because brands perceived as well intentioned and able can lead to consumers' admiration for brands—a process that consolidates often long-term consumer–brand relationships (Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone 2012).

Considering that verbal expressions reflect individuals' psychological states regarding their impressions of others (Pennebaker, Mehl, and Niederhoffer 2003), consumers' comments resulting from high consumer engagement in social media could reveal their anthropomorphic inferences concerning brands. Moreover, consumers may post comments to disclose how they perceive brands' intentional agency and emotionally
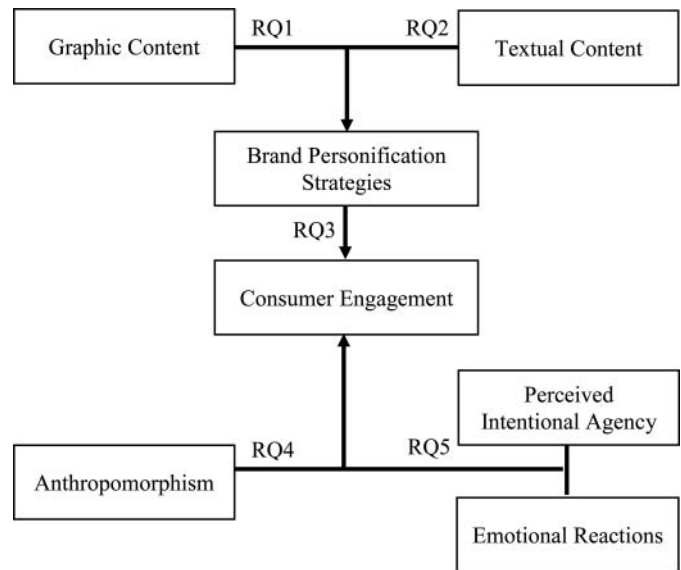

FIG. 1. Overall conceptual framework.

react to brands. Because high consumer engagement is preferred to low consumer engagement in nurturing consumer–brand relationships (Malthouse et al. 2013), it is important to understand anthropomorphic responses embedded in consumer posts on Facebook pages, which yields another, final set of research questions. Figure 1 presents a summary of our overall conceptual framework.

RQ4: To what extent do consumers anthropomorphize global brands when they have high consumer engagement on Facebook pages?

RQ5: To what extent do consumers perceive brands' intentional agency and emotionally react to global brands when they have high consumer engagement on Facebook pages?

STUDY OVERVIEW

This research consists of two studies to address the research questions within the proposed conceptual framework. Driven by the exploratory attempt to have an exhaustive examination of the relationship dynamics between brands and their consumers on Facebook pages, hybrid research methods combining traditional content analysis and computer-assisted analysis were adopted. Study 1 analyzed Facebook pages of the "100 Best Global Brands" (Interbrand 2013) to determine the extent to which global marketers employ brand personification strategies, as well as how such strategies influence consumer engagement. Study 2 examined consumers' anthropomorphic responses underlying their high engagement in consumer posts. The analysis was conducted by using a linguistic analysis program, *Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC)*.

Study 1: Content Analysis of Brand Personification Strategies

Sample. Study 1 employed a content analysis to investigate global marketers' brand personification strategies in terms of graphic and textual content in both the layout and brand posts on Facebook pages. The list of "100 Best Global Brands" was acquired from the annual report of *Interbrand* in 2013. Then, a search of the top global brands' official websites was conducted to identify and include subbrands for a complete sample pool ($N = 784$), since we were attempting to examine the employment of marketing strategies across global brands at all levels. A total of 150 brands were randomly drawn from the sample pool as the study sample. The Facebook page of each selected brand was searched and identified on Facebook. If a selected brand did not have a Facebook page, it would be replaced by another brand with a Facebook page randomly drawn from the sample pool. Only the Facebook page officially created by the selected brand was captured for analysis. Following Cozma and Chen's (2013) procedure, screenshots of the layout of the Facebook pages and the six most recent brand posts were taken for offline analysis. The sampling procedures were conducted from March 24 to March 25, 2013.

Coding Scheme. Because the unit of analysis was a brand's Facebook page, to begin with the brand name, number of likes, number of brand mentions (i.e., talking about), and product category were coded for basic information. Brand personification strategies for setting up the layout in graphic content, including profile picture, cover photo, and thumbnails next to "About," were coded. The graphic content was coded based on whether humans or humanized characters were presented (i.e., yes or no). If there was any human or humanized character, the typology of personification (Brown 2011) was coded as (1) anthropomorphism (human character), (2) zoomorphism (humanized animal), or (3) teramorphism (humanized spiritual object). To note, if there were multiple images with brand personification strategies employed in a section, the most obvious strategy (e.g., humanized animals took the largest portion of the cover photo) was coded (e.g., zoomorphism). Secondarily, for brand personification strategies in textual content, the use of personal pronouns and imperative verbs (i.e., yes or no) were coded respectively (Pollach 2005). The coding was based on the textual content shown in "About" and the captions of the adjacent thumbnails. If any personal pronouns were used, specific coding for first-person pronouns, second-person pronouns, and third-person pronouns was employed.

For the coding of brand posts, basic components, such as the number of likes, shares, and comments, were coded. Each brand post was coded if there was textual content (i.e., text or a

TABLE 1
Operationalization of Coding Scheme

Coding scheme		Operationalization
Brand information	Brand name	
	Number of likes	
	Number of brand mentions (i.e., talking about)	
	Product category	
Brand post	Number of likes	
	Number of shares	
	Number of comments	
Brand personification in graphic content	Images of humans or humanized characters	
Typology of personification	Anthropomorphism	Celebrity endorsers or human characters embodied with characteristics (e.g., Marlboro Man)
	Zoomorphism	Animals endowed with humanlike characteristics and act like persons (e.g., Tony the Tiger for Kellogg's)
	Teramorphism	Objects incarnated by humanlike characteristics and act like persons (e.g., M&M's chocolate)
Brand personification in textual content	Text messages with personal pronouns or imperative verbs	
Language use	First-person pronoun	i.e., I, my, me, myself, we, us
	Second-person pronoun	i.e., you, your, yours, yourself
	Third-person pronoun	i.e., he/she, his/her, him/her, himself/herself, they, them, their
	Imperative verb	e.g., come, join, have, enjoy, share

hyperlink with description), graphic content (i.e., photo or thumbnails), or others (i.e., only hyperlink without any description). Also, if graphic content was presented, the typology of personification was coded. If textual content was presented, the language use of personal pronouns and imperative verbs was coded. The coding for brand personification strategies in graphic and textual content were conducted following the same procedures for coding Facebook page layouts. The coding scheme and its operationalization was summarized in Table 1.

Coding Procedure. Two graduate students were trained over three training sessions before conducting the content analysis. They completed a pretest by coding three brands randomly drawn from the sample pool. The brands used for the pretest were excluded from the main coding. Intercoder reliability was checked after each training session and the pretest phase by using P/L Index computations (Perreault and Leigh 1989). In the main study, intercoder reliabilities for the coded variables ranged from .80 to 1.00, with an average of .91. These results were acceptable and met the requirements

suggested by previous content analysis research (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, and Bracken 2002).

Research Questions 1 and 2: Employment of Brand Personification Strategies. A sample of 150 global brands was selected; however, three brands were withdrawn due to data crash. The selection process yielded a total of 147 global brands' Facebook pages and 882 (6 × 147 = 882) brand posts for the content analysis. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of global brands' Facebook pages by category.

The first two research questions ask the extent to which brand personification strategies are employed on global brands' Facebook pages in graphic and textual content. As for graphic content in layouts (Table 3), results showed that few brands (6.1%) employed brand personification strategies in the profile picture, compared to 93.9% of the brands that did not. A chi-square test showed that the difference was significant ($\chi^2 = 130.11$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). Among the personified profile pictures, anthropomorphism (4.1%) was the most prevalent brand personification strategy (i.e., KFC, MTV, Pepsi, Quaker,

TABLE 2
Descriptive Statistics of Global Brands' Facebook Pages by Category

Category	N	Fans (in millions)			Top brand
		Mean	Median	Range	
Food/beverages	44	3.69	1.09	33.97	Starbucks
Product/service	23	6.10	2.70	31.37	Sony PlayStation
Company	17	2.54	1.20	12.99	Louis Vuitton
Cars	15	2.91	1.83	10.76	Ferrari
Electronics	7	6.56	1.60	25.14	Blackberry
Clothing	6	6.53	7.02	14.00	H&M
Shopping & retail	6	7.03	5.25	17.43	Amazon.com
Wine/spirits	5	2.92	.93	8.93	Smirnoff
Health/beauty	4	1.68	1.96	1.55	Colgate
Software	3	7.06	5.01	13.76	Google Chrome
Others	17	6.94	1.55	43.38	MTV
Total	147	4.58	1.48	43.42	

Category	%	Talking about (in thousands)			Top brand
		Mean	Median	Range	
Food/beverages	29.9	46.39	29.08	230.43	Budweiser
Product/service	15.6	106.58	41.33	621.20	Harley-Davidson
Company	11.6	44.75	28.61	213.69	Louis Vuitton
Cars	10.2	93.80	54.01	364.98	Toyota
Electronics	4.8	97.01	12.39	326.09	Blackberry
Clothing	4.1	108.00	115.01	303.28	H&M
Shopping & retail	4.1	70.23	58.60	211.04	Burberry
Wine/spirits	3.4	71.14	10.36	219.56	Smirnoff
Health/beauty	2.7	13.43	13.74	22.11	L'Oréal
Software	2.0	40.10	53.21	46.87	Google Chrome
Others	11.6	117.68	36.32	581.40	Samsung Camera
Total	100.0	74,107	32,314	621,339	

TABLE 3
Brand Personification Strategies in Graphic Content

Type of graphic	Typology of personification			
	Anthropomorphism	Zoomorphism	Teramorphism	N/A
Profile picture	6 (4.1%)	1 (0.7%)	2 (1.4%)	138 (93.9%)
		$\chi^2 = 130.11, df = 1, p < .001$		
Cover photo	79 (53.7%)	6 (4.1%)	4 (2.7%)	58 (39.5%)
		$\chi^2 = 142.84, df = 1, p < .001$		
Thumbnails	70 (47.6%)	12 (8.2%)	1 (0.7%)	64 (43.5%)
		$\chi^2 = 142.96, df = 1, p < .001$		

Philips, Nestlé, Gerber, and Johnnie Walker), followed by teramorphism (1.4%) (i.e., Starbucks and Dannon), and zoomorphism (.7%) (i.e., John Deere).

The majority (60.5 %) of the brands employed brand personification strategies in the cover photo, compared to 39.5% of the brand that did not. The results showed that significantly more brands employed brand personification strategies ($\chi^2 = 142.84$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) in the cover photo. Specifically, anthropomorphism (53.7%) was the most prevalent brand personification strategy, followed by zoomorphism (4.1%) and teramorphism (2.7%). For example, Gatorade and Nike had images of celebrity athletes use their products in the cover photos to indicate anthropomorphism. Cartier's cover photo showed evidence of zoomorphism using a leopard, while Kellogg's Krave presented teramorphism using humanlike chocolate cereals. For graphic content in the thumbnails next to "About," significantly more brands (56.5% versus 43.5%) employed brand personification strategies ($\chi^2 = 142.96$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). Similarly, anthropomorphism (47.6%) was the most prevalent strategy, followed by zoomorphism (8.2%) and teramorphism (.7%). For instance, MTV used images of celebrities (i.e., anthropomorphism), Nestlé's Friskies used images of cats (i.e., zoomorphism), and Kellogg's Pop-Tarts used images of humanlike toaster pastries (i.e., teramorphism) in the thumbnails. However, Table 4 showed no indication that brands were more likely to employ brand personification strategies in textual content regarding the description in "About" and the captions of the adjacent thumbnails.

As for brand posts ($N = 882$), brand posts had an average of 4,008 likes (range = 163,115), 331 shares (range = 15,134), and 126 comments (range = 10,843). Most of the brand posts were constructed with a combination of graphic (97.5%) and textual (84%) content. Regarding graphic content (Table 5), fewer brand posts were presented with brand personification strategies (42.6%) compared to brand posts without brand personification strategies (57.4%). The difference was significant ($\chi^2 = 16.03$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). Among the brand posts with brand personification strategies, anthropomorphism (38.2%) was the most prevalent strategy, followed by zoomorphism (3.1%) and teramorphism (1.3%). Regarding textual content, significantly more brands (83.7% versus 16.3%) used at least one type of personal pronouns in brand posts ($\chi^2 = 441.22$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). Second-person pronouns (47.7%) were the most prevalent strategy among these brand posts, followed by first-person pronouns (28.7%) and third-person pronouns (7.3%). Still, there was no indication that brands were more likely to use imperative verbs in brand posts ($\chi^2 = 7.07$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$).

Research Question 3: Effects of Brand Personification Strategies. Research question 3 asks the extent to which brand personification strategies employed in brand posts affect consumer engagement. To answer this research question, ANOVAs were conducted with the employment of brand personification strategies in graphic or textual content (i.e., yes or no) as the independent variable and each consumer engagement (i.e., number of likes, shares, and comments) as the dependent variable. As for graphic content, the results showed

TABLE 4
Brand Personification Strategies in Textual Content

Type of Text	Personal pronoun				Imperative verb	
	1st	2nd	3rd	N/A	Yes	N/A
About	36 (24.5%)	42 (28.6%)	5 (3.4%)	64 (43.5%)	52 (35.4%)	95 (64.6%)
		$\chi^2 = 2.45, df = 1, p = .11$			$\chi^2 = 12.57, df = 1, p < .001$	
Thumbnails	9 (6.1%)	7 (4.8%)	0 (0%)	131 (89.1%)	21 (14.3%)	126 (85.7%)
		$\chi^2 = 89.96, df = 1, p < .001$			$\chi^2 = 75.00, df = 1, p < .001$	

TABLE 5
Brand Personification Strategies in Brand Posts

Graphic content		Textual content	
Type	Frequency	Type	Frequency
Anthropomorphism	283 (38.2%)	1st person	253 (28.7%)
Zoomorphism	23 (3.1%)	2nd person	421 (47.7%)
Teramorphism	10 (1.3%)	3rd person	64 (7.3%)
N/A	425 (57.4%)	N/A	144 (16.3%)
$\chi^2 = 16.03, df = 1, p < .001$		$\chi^2 = 441.22, df = 1, p < .001$	
		Imperative verb	391 (44.3%)
		N/A	491 (55.7%)
		$\chi^2 = 7.07, df = 1, p < .01$	

that brand personification strategies in brand posts did not significantly influence consumer engagement in terms of likes (F (1, 880) = .28, p = .60), shares (F (1, 880) = 1.15, p = .29), and comments (F (1, 880) = 2.69, p = .10). As for textual content, most importantly, the results showed that the use of personal pronouns in brand posts significantly influence consumer engagement including likes (F (1, 880) = 21.62, p < .001), shares (F (1, 880) = 15.84, p < .001), and comments (F (1, 880) = 4.86, p < .05). Similarly, the use of imperative verbs significantly influence consumer engagement, such as likes (F (1, 880) = 5.90, p < .05) and shares (F (1, 880) = 5.91, p < .05). The influence of imperative verbs on the number of comments was marginally significant (F (1, 880) = 3.25, p = .07). Overall, the results of Study 1 indicated that global brands prevalently employed brand personification strategies to set up the layout of their Facebook pages with graphic content. Brand personification strategies in textual content were prevalently employed in brand posts and such strategies—the use of personal pronouns and imperative verbs—significantly enhanced consumer engagement.

Discussion. For the layout of Facebook pages, brand personification strategies were prevalently employed in cover photos and thumbnails next to "About" rather than in profile pictures. The possible reason may be that the profile picture is a place where consumers have to accurately identify a target brand's Facebook page when they surf on Facebook. For such identification purposes, a global brand may use the brand logo, rather than personified characters, to allow consumers to easily recognize the brand. By contrast, the cover photo and the thumbnails next to "About" are the sections where marketers have greater flexibility to employ brand personification strategies and craft the brand's Facebook page resembling a normal Facebook user's profile. Anthropomorphism was the most prevalent strategy for setting up the layouts in graphic content. This could be explained in that anthropomorphism is a straightforward type of presentation in which brands can be effortlessly associated with humans.

Nevertheless, the results showed that global brands were not likely to employ brand personification strategies, personal pronouns, or imperative verbs in "About" and the captions of the adjacent thumbnails. While some global brands used personal pronouns in "About," this section usually presents basic information and mission statements for an introduction of the brand. The reason there is rare employment of brand personification strategies in the captions of adjacent thumbnails might be that captions can include only limited words, and thus it usually depicts the brand's campaign events currently launched. It suggests that global brands tend to provide official brand-related information in textual content to set up the layout of their Facebook pages.

Regarding brand posts, while most of the brand posts were composed of textual and graphic content for updating brand status, the employment of brand personification strategies was prevalent with texts rather than graphics. The dominant use of personal pronouns and imperative verbs also corresponded with their significant influences on consumer engagement, including likes, shares, and comments. This might also explain the rare employment of brand personification strategies in graphic content because, compared to personified pictures, designing and posting personified text messages is relatively immediate and easy. In this practice, second-person pronouns were the most prevalent brand personification strategies in brand posts. This finding seems reasonable, because second-person pronouns directly address consumers, as if the brands are talking to them in conversation. The findings demonstrate that Facebook pages are a valid platform for marketers to employ brand personification strategies, and textual content of brand personification strategies in brand posts can effectively improve consumer engagement.

Study 2: LIWC Analysis of Consumer Posts

Procedure and Measures. Study 2 delves into the dynamics of consumer engagement in consumer–brand relationships on Facebook pages. Considering the creation of brand-related

content as a form of high consumer engagement, consumer posts responding to the brand posts in Study 1 were defined as the unit of analysis and were collected. A linguistic analysis of consumer posts was conducted using *LIWC*, which is a computational linguistic analysis program that counts the frequency of words used in predefined categories for verbal expressions in texts (Pennebaker Booth, and Francis 2015; Pennebaker, Chung, et al. 2015). Previous research in psychology has demonstrated the use of *LIWC* to examine individuals' perceptions and emotions underlying interpersonal communication (e.g., Gonzales and Hancock 2008). Because individuals' language use is consistent across contexts and can reveal important psychological states (Pennebaker, Mehl, and Niederhoffer 2003), analyzing responses in consumer posts is appropriate to determine the extent to which consumers anthropomorphize brands and how they perceive the brands.

The analysis was conducted using the default dictionaries in the *LIWC*. Basically, frequency of words and words per sentence were counted. To examine consumers' anthropomorphic responses along with the perception of brands' intentional agency underlying high consumer engagement, the uses of personal pronouns (e.g., *I, them, her*) and impersonal pronouns (e.g., *it, this, those*) in consumer posts were first compared, followed by the comparison of words with certainty (e.g., *really, so, definitely*) or tentativeness (e.g., *seems to, maybe, sort of*). Specifically, consumers use more personal pronouns than impersonal pronouns if they anthropomorphize the brands. They would use more words with certainty than words with tentativeness if they perceive brands as well intentioned and able, and vice versa. The valence of consumers' emotion behind high consumer engagement was determined by comparing the use of positive emotion words (e.g., *love, nice, sweet*) and negative emotion words (e.g., *hurt, ugly, nasty*).

Research Questions 4 and 5: Anthropomorphic Responses in Consumer Posts. A total of 111,132 consumer posts were analyzed. There was an average of 4,034.29 words used in consumer posts when consumers showed high engagement with global brands. A single consumer post had an average of 32.02 words with 12.43 words per sentence (Table 6).

The fourth research question asks how consumers anthropomorphize global brands when they have high consumer engagement on Facebook pages. Results showed that consumers used more personal pronouns ($M = 8.16$, $SD = 2.82$) than impersonal pronouns ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 1.60$) in consumer posts. A paired-samples *t* test was conducted, and the difference was significant ($t (146) = 16.84$, $p < .001$). Further, first-person pronouns ($M = 5.57$, $SD = 2.36$) were used the most frequently, followed by second-person pronouns ($M = 1.40$, $SD = .91$) and third-person pronouns ($M = 1.18$, $SD = 1.14$). Results showed that consumers used significantly more first-person pronouns, compared to second-person pronouns ($t (146) = 20.45$, $p < .001$) and third-person pronouns ($t (146) = 19.89$, $p < .001$), respectively. However, no difference existed between the use of second-person pronouns and third-person pronouns ($t (146) = 1.80$, $p = .07$).

Last, the fifth research question asks how consumers perceive brands' intentional agency and emotionally react to the brands when they have high consumer engagement on Facebook pages. Regarding the perceived intentional agency of global brands, results of a paired-samples *t* test showed that consumers used more words with certainty ($M = 1.74$, $SD = .71$) than words with tentativeness ($M = 1.71$, $SD = .84$), but the difference was not significant ($t (146) = -.43$, $p = .66$). Regarding consumers' corresponding emotions to the brands, the results showed that consumers used more positive emotion words ($M = 6.22$, $SD = 1.99$) than negative emotion words ($M = 1.28$, $SD = .86$). The difference was significant ($t (146) = 26.16$, $p < .001$). In sum, the results of Study 2 suggested that highly engaged consumers anthropomorphized global brands as humanlike social agents, but they did not necessarily perceived high intentional agency from the brands. Most important of all, highly engaged consumers

TABLE 6
LIWC Analysis of Consumer Posts

Category	Mean	Median	Range	Top brand
Words	4,034.29	2,079.00	41,808	Starbucks
Sentences	12.43	12.10	18.65	Panasonic
Personal pronouns	8.16	7.93	25.52	Dannon Activia
First person	5.57	5.38	19.19	Dannon Activia
Second person	1.40	1.26	5.58	Pepsi Quaker
Third person	1.18	.88	8.21	Heineken Dos Equis
Impersonal pronouns	4.71	4.73	9.26	John Deere
Positive emotion words	6.22	5.98	8.97	Ralph Lauren
Negative emotion words	1.28	1.11	5.14	Nestlé Crunch
Words with tentativeness	1.71	1.58	5.30	Kellogg's Krave
Words with certainty	1.74	1.72	4.15	HSBC Students

were likely to react to the anthropomorphized brands with positive emotions.

Discussion. The dominant use of personal pronouns in consumer posts indicated that highly engaged consumers were inclined to anthropomorphize brands and could easily project the relationship mind-set onto the brands. Their communication style the used with the brands resembled the way they communicate with other Facebook users. Consumers' common use of first-person pronouns suggested their self-expression of personal belief or affiliation to the brands. However, the similar use of words with certainty and tentativeness in perceiving brands' intentional agency could be due to the characteristics of reciprocal communication on Facebook pages. It might be explained that highly engaged consumers sometimes use words with tentativeness to raise question or show concerns about the brands because they care about the brands, which is consistent with their active participation in consumer–brand relationships.

Although highly engaged consumers had delicate perceptions of brands' intentional agency, they were more likely to react to the anthropomorphized brands with positive emotions than negative emotions. This could be because active interactions with brands satisfy the need for companionship and bring pleasure to highly engaged consumers. Once they have the opportunity to become involved in brand-related conversations, these highly engaged consumers may lean toward publicly advocating their positive evaluation or affection for the brands. Taken together with the prevalence of brand personification strategies and their effects on consumer engagement, the findings of Study 2 further point out that consumers are likely to reveal anthropomorphic responses along with positive emotions in the situations where they are highly engaged with global brands.

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The examination of global marketers' branding strategies and consumers' anthropomorphic responses on Facebook pages offers a holistic picture of the consumer–brand relationship dynamics in a social media context. This research documents the brand personification strategies marketers predominantly employed, the effects of such strategies on consumer engagement, and the perceived value underlying high consumer engagement. The synthesized results thus contribute to the literature in marketing and advertising, as well as provide insights for brand management in social media.

Theoretical Implications

This research provides empirical evidence that Facebook pages are a legitimate way to realize consumer–brand relationships (Fournier 1998), given their capacity of reciprocal communication that taps into the mutual investment in a relationship dyad. First, brand personification strategies are a useful means to imbue consumers with the mind-set that brands in many ways behave similarly to human beings. Coupled with branded content in social media, the brand-as-person metaphor not only induces consumer engagement (i.e., likes, shares, and comments) but also encourages consumers to anthropomorphize brands and reasons about brands in positive human terms. The research results also imply that the impression management concept, a goal-oriented process attempting to affect people's perceptions about a subject (Leary and Kowalski 1990) in social-psychology, is applicable to the branding literature as brands increasingly become humanlike. Because brands themselves are entities formed by the collective efforts of marketing communication, brand personification strategies could accurately encapsulate brands' intended behaviors and translate them into attributes affiliated with personality traits (Srull and Wyer 1989). Crafting these special strategies may establish brand impressions in consumer and likely foster the acquisition and maintenance of consumer–brand relationships. The evidence of anthropomorphic responses along with positive emotions underlying high consumer engagement also indicates that consumers form impressions of brands as they form impressions of people in social relationships.

This research contributes to the emerging brand as intentional agents framework (Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone 2012; Fournier and Alvarez 2012) in that consumers' anthropomorphism renders the perception of brands as humanlike social agents. The framework argues that the perceptions of brands and the resulting emotions are based on consumers' past experiential contact with the brands. Our research suggests that highly engaged consumers need not perceive high intentional agency from the brands, yet their engaging experience with brands could bring about positive feelings. This implies that personified brands in the sociable virtual environment of Facebook pages may yield opportunities for consumers who seek alternative sources of relationships for presumable interactions. High consumer engagement may thus lead consumers to have plentiful brand experience and generate positive emotional responses, because social interaction per se is pleasant (Wang et al. 2007).

It is also noteworthy that this research suggests increased employment of brand personification strategies in visual formats on Facebook pages (60.5% in cover photos and 56.5% in the thumbnails next to "About") compared to previous research on print ads (6.7%; Phillips and Gyoerick 1999) and television commercials (7.6%; Callcott and Lee 1994). Although different definitions of brand personification and sampling and coding procedures might account for the numerical disparity in these studies, the well-rounded presentation style of Facebook and its interactive template possibly contribute to the increasing brand personification strategies investigated in the present research. The increasing trend is consistent with the strong positive effects of brand personification in influencing the likability, entertainment, and

interactivity of brands (Phillips and Lee 2005). The effectiveness of brand personification may be further enhanced by the technical advances of social media, which actualize interactions between brands and consumers. This implies that as more brands become personified in social media, consumers may be more willing to converse with the brands at a personal level.

Managerial Implications

Managerially, analyzing the presence of top global brands' marketing strategies and their effects on consumer engagement in social media provides role models for companies of all kinds to grasp the value of social media. The research suggests that social media are viable outlets for content marketing to engage consumers with positive feedback in consumer–brand relationships. Because consumers inherently see the brands through human eyes and readily apply human thoughts to brands, brand personification strategies are proven to be effective in eliciting consumer engagement. Especially in the digital era, companies wants their brands to get increased viewing time from consumers. The humanlike characteristics of brands are likely to be more attractive than nonhumanlike brand features. Our research implies that brands can convey humanlike personality traits when laying out their Facebook pages' graphic content to create a cordial atmosphere, as if they were consumers' Facebook friends. Brand personification strategies to reduce impersonality, such as in textual content when updating brand status, are exceptional ways to invite consumers to join conversations with brands and relate themselves to the brands as well.

Consumers' exhibition of anthropomorphizing brands is closely related to the application of consumers' self-knowledge to make attributional inferences about brands. A logical implication of the research findings is that consumers are likely to identify with the brands they anthropomorphize. This is supported by the predominant use of first-person pronouns rather than second- or third-person pronouns when consumers highly engage in communication with brands. As consumers express higher identification with anthropomorphized brands, they might be more likely to achieve a sense of convergence between their self-concept and the brand image. Personified brands in social media, at least on Facebook pages, could make consumers regard the brands as their extended self through self–brand connection (Belk 1988). Furthermore, consumers' engaging activities invested in consumer–brand relationships would propel them to rely on the brands and possibly result in brand attachment (Park et al. 2010).

In addition, brand personification strategies via layout designs and status updates cultivate consumers to treat brands as social agents and facilitate consumer engagement with emotional bonds. It is important for brands to survey the comments posted by highly engaged consumers and capture their affective feelings concerning the brands. Leveraging relationships with these consumers determines the success of social media campaigns. Because highly engaged consumers may recognize the brands' social identities in their online social networks, they are likely to get involved in sharing favorable experiences with the brands with other consumer prospects. Considering that emotions are contagious within the social media domain (Kramer, Guillory, and Hancock 2014), trending discussions about brands could lure new consumers to participate in band-related topics and, in turn, change their attitude toward the brands in a positive way.

Limitations and Future Research

Although this research adds to the growing literature regarding branding in the interactive media environment, it should be interpreted with some limitations. We tested the relationship between brand personification strategies and consumer engagement, yet the results based on content analyses were descriptive in essence. Future research with experimental designs could examine how disposition factors influence consumers' performance of anthropomorphic responses and formation of brand perceptions. Evaluating opinion leaders and information flows can be feasible by network analysis of the social media metrics. Next, the data collection process provides only a snapshot analysis of ever-changing social media context; longitudinal studies could be conducted to examine the trajectory of global brands' social media marketing for a commercialized event (e.g., the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup). Future research may expand the time span of data collection to increase the generalizability of the research results. For example, researchers may set up a one-year time frame and collect monthly brand posts using a systematic sampling method to get a thorough picture of social media campaigns across brands. While we explored marketers' branded content to position their brands/products on Facebook pages, future research could consider comparing brand personification strategies in sponsored posts and paid ads for specific branded products across categories. The incorporation of brand personification strategies with traditional and digital media (e.g., TV commercials and advergames) would be interesting topics for future investigation.

Conclusion

Given that more and more brands swarm to integrate social media with their marketing communications, there is urgent need to specifically delineate how branding strategies are transformed and carried out in interactive channels to facilitate consumer–brand relationships. With the exploratory attempt of analyzing branded content in social media, this research illuminates the mixture of a long-standing topic, brand personification, and the imperative practice in the marketing and

advertising fields. While social media marketing with brand personification strategies is usually a case of global brands' marketing program, this research identifies the value of these particular messages in molding brands into active relationship partners. Our research also presents the effectiveness of brand personification strategies in shaping consumers' universal mechanism, anthropomorphism, underlying their engagement in consumer–brand relationships.

REFERENCES

Aaker, Jennifer L. (1997), "Dimensions of Brand Personality," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34 (3), 347–56.

———, Susan Fournier, and S. Adam Brasel (2004), "When Good Brands Do Bad," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (1), 1–16.

Aggarwal, Pankaj (2004), "The Effects of Brand Relationship Norms on Consumer Attitudes and Behavior," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (June), 87–101.

———, and Ann L. McGill (2007), "Is That Car Smiling at Me? Schema Congruity as a Basis for Evaluating Anthropomorphized Products," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (December), 468–79.

Belk, Russell W. (1988), "Possessions and the Extended Self," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15 (2), 139–68.

Brown, Stephen (2010), "Where the Wild Brands Are: Some Thoughts on Anthropomorphic Marketing," *The Marketing Review*, 10 (3), 209–24.

——— (2011), "It's Alive Inside! A Note on the Prevalence of Personification," *Irish Marketing Review*, 21 (1&2), 3–11.

Callcott, Margaret F., and Wei-Na Lee (1994), "A Content Analysis of Animation and Animated Spokes-Characters in Television Commercials," *Journal of Advertising*, 23 (4), 1–12.

Cesario, Joseph, Jason E. Plaks, and E. Tory Higgins (2006), "Automatic Social Behavior as Motivated Preparation to Interact," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90 (6), 893–910.

Chen, Kuan-Ju, Jooyoung Kim, and Jhih-Syuan Lin (2015), "The Effect of Affective and Cognitive Elaborations from Facebook Posts on Consumer Attitude Formation," *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 14 (3), 208–18.

Chu, Shu-Chuan (2011), "Viral Advertising in Social Media: Participation in Facebook Groups and Responses Among College-Aged Users," *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 12 (1), 30–43.

Claffey, Ethel, and Mairead Brady (2014), "A Model of Consumer Engagement in a Virtual Customer Environment," *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, 13 (4), 325–46.

Cohen, Ronald J. (2014), "Brand Personification: Introduction and Overview," *Psychology and Marketing*, 31 (1), 1–30.

Cozma, Raluca and Kuan-Ju Chen (2013), "What's in a Tweet? Foreign Correspondents' Use of Social Media," *Journalism Practice*, 7 (1), 33–46.

Daston, Lorraine, and Gregg Mitman (2005), *Thinking with Animals: New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Delbaere, Majorie, Edward F. McQuarrie, and Barbara J. Phillips (2011), "Personification in Advertising," *Journal of Advertising*, 40 (1), 121–30.

de Vries, Lisette, Sonja Gensler, and Peter S.H. Leeflang (2012), "Popularity of Brand Posts on Brand Fan Pages: An Investigation of the Effects of Social Media Marketing," *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26 (2), 83–91.

Epley, Nicholas, Adam Waytz, Scott Akalis, and John T. Cacioppo (2008), "When We Need a Human: Motivational Determinants of Anthropomorphism," *Social Cognition*, 26 (2), 143–55.

———, ———, and John T. Cacioppo (2007), "On Seeing Human: A Three-Factor Theory of Anthropomorphism," *Psychological Review*, 114 (4), 864–86.

Facebook (2015), "Facebook Newsroom," http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts.

Fairclough, Norman (1989), *Language and Power*, London: Pearson.

Fournier, Susan (1998), "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24 (March), 343–73.

———, and Claudio Alvarez (2012), "Brands as Relationship Partners: Warmth, Competence, and In-Between," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22 (2), 177–85.

Gensler, Sonja, Franziska Völckner, Yupin Liu-Thompkins, and Caroline Wiertz (2013), "Managing Brands in the Social Media Environment," *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 27 (4), 242–56.

Giamanco, Barbara, and Kent Gregoire (2012), "Tweet Me, Friend Me, Make Me Buy," *Harvard Business Review*, 90 (July), 88–93.

Gonzales, Amy L., and Jeffrey T. Hancock (2008), "Identity Shift in Computer-Mediated Environments," *Media Psychology*, 11 (2), 167–85.

Gummerus, Johanna, Veronica Liljander, Emil Weman, and Minna Pihlström (2012), "Customer Engagement in a Facebook Brand Community," *Management Research Review*, 35 (9), 857–77.

Guthrie, S.E. (1993), *Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hollebeek, Linda D. (2011), "Demystifying Customer Engagement: Exploring the Loyalty Nexus," *Journal of Marketing Management*, 27 (7–8), 785–807.

Hutton, Graeme, and Maggie Fosdick (2011), "The Globalization of Social Media: Consumer Relationships with Brands Evolve in the Digital Space," *Journal of Advertising Research*, 51 (4), 564–70.

Insch, Andrea (2008), "Online Communication of Corporate Environmental Citizenship: A Study of New Zealand's Electricity and Gas Retailers," *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 14 (2), 139–53.

Interbrand (2013), "The Top 100 Brands," http://www.interbrand.com/en/best-global-brands/2012/Best-Global-Brands-2012-Brand-View.aspx.

Keel, Astrid, and Rajan Nataraajan (2012), "Celebrity Endorsements and Beyond: New Avenues for Celebrity Branding," *Psychology and Marketing*, 29 (9), 690–703.

Kervyn, Nicolas, Susan T. Fiske, and Chris Malone (2012), "Brands as Intentional Agents Framework: How Perceived Intentions and Ability Can Map Brand Perception," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22 (2), 166–76.

Kramer, Adam D.I., Jamie E. Guillory, and Jeffrey T. Hancock (2014), "Experimental Evidence of Massive-Scale Emotional Contagion Through Social Networks," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111 (24), 8788–90.

Kumar, V., and Bala Sundaram (2012), "An Evolutionary Road Map to Winning with Social Media Marketing," *Marketing Research*, 24 (2), 4–7.

Kwon, Eun Sook, and Yongjun Sung (2011), "Follow me! Global Marketers' Twitter Use," *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 12 (1), 4–16.

Leary, Mark R., and Robin M. Kowalski (1990), "Impression Management: A Literature Review and Two-Component Model," *Psychological Bulletin*, 107 (1), 34–47.

Leigh, Thomas W., and Scott A. Thompson (2012), "On the Complexity of Managing Brand Relationships in a Social Media World," in *Consumer–Brand Relationships: Theory and Practice*, Susan Fournier, Michael Breazeale and Marc Fetscherin, eds., New York: Routledge, 317–50.

Lin, Jhih-Syuan, and Jorge Pena (2011), "Are You Following Me? A Content Analysis of TV Networks' Brand Communication on Twitter," *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 12 (1), 17–29.

Lipsman, Andrew, Graham Mudd, Mike Rich, and Sean Bruich (2012), "The Power of 'Like': How Brands Reach (and Influence) Fans Through Social-Media Marketing," *Journal of Advertising Research*, 52 (1), 40–52.

Lombard, Matthew, Jennifer Snyder-Duch, and Cheryl Campanella Bracken (2002), "Content Analysis in Mass Communication: Assessment and Reporting of Intercoder Reliability," *Human Communication Research*, 28 (4), 587–604.

Malthouse, Edward C., Michael Haenlein, Bernd Skiera, Egbert Wege, and Michael Zhang (2013), "Managing Customer Relationships in the Social

Media Era: Introducing the Social CRM House," *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 27 (4), 270–80.

Mollen, Anne, and Hugh Wilson (2010), "Engagement, Telepresence, and Interactivity in Online Consumer Experience: Reconciling Scholastic and Managerial Perspectives," *Journal of Business Research*, 63 (9–10), 919–25.

Muk, Alexander, and Christina Chung (2014), "Driving Consumers to Become Fans of Brand Pages: A Theoretical Framework," *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 14 (1), 1–10.

Park, C. Whan, Deborah J. MacInnis, Joseph Priester, Andreas B. Eisingerich, and Dawn Iacobucci (2010), "Brand Attachment and Brand Attitude Strength: Conceptual and Empirical Differentiation of Two Critical Brand Equity Drivers," *Journal of Marketing*, 74 (November), 1–17.

Pennebaker, James W., Roger J. Booth, and Martha E. Francis (2015), *Operator's Manual: Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count: LIWC2007*, Austin, TX: LIWC.net, http://homepage.psy.utexas.edu/HomePage/Faculty/Pennebaker/Reprints/LIWC2007_OperatorManual.pdf.

———, Cindy K. Chung, Molly Ireland, Amy Gonzales, and Roger J. Booth (2015), *The Development and Psychometric Properties of LIWC2007*, Austin, TX: LIWC.net, http://homepage.psy.utexas.edu/HomePage/Class/Psy301/Pennebaker/HRtraining/LIWC2007_LanguageManual.pdf.

———, Matthias R. Mehl, and Kate G. Niederhoffer (2003), "Psychological Aspects of Natural Language Use: Our Words, Our Selves," *Annual Review of Psychology*, 54 (1), 547–77.

Perreault, William D., and Laurence E. Leigh (1989), "Reliability of Nominal Data Based on Qualitative Judgments," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 26 (2), 135–48.

Phillips, Barbara, and Barbara Gyoerick (1999), "The Cow, the Cook, and the Quaker: Fifty Years of Spokes-Character Advertising," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 76 (4), 713–28.

———, and Wei-Na Lee (2005), "Interactive Animation: Exploring Spokes-Characters on the Internet," *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, 27 (1), 1–17.

Pollach, Irene (2005), "Corporate Self-Presentation on the WWW: Strategies for Enhancing Usability, Credibility, and Utility," *Corporate Communication: An International Journal*, 10 (4), 285–301.

Srull, Thomas K., and Robert S. Wyer (1989), "Person Memory and Judgment," *Psychological Review*, 96 (1), 58–83.

Smith, Aaron (2014), "6 New Facts about Facebook," *Pew Research Center*, February 3, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/02/03/6-new-facts-about-facebook/.

Thomson, Matthew, Deborah J. MacInnis, and C. Whan Park (2005), "The Ties That Bind: Measuring the Strength of Consumers' Emotional Attachments to Brands," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 15 (1), 77–91.

Truong, Yann, Rod McColl, and Philip Kitchen (2010), "Practitioners Perceptions of Advertising Strategies for Digital Media," *International Journal of Advertising*, 29 (5), 709–25.

Van den Bulte, Christophe, and Stefan Wuyts (2007), *Social Networks and Marketing*, Cambridge: Marketing Science Institute.

van Doorn, Jenny, Katherine N. Lemon, Vikas Mittal, Stephan Nass, Doreen Pick, Peter Pirner, and Peter C. Verhoef (2010), "Customer Engagement Behavior: Theoretical Foundations and Research Directions," *Journal of Service Research*, 13 (3), 253–66.

Vernuccio, Maria (2014), "Communicating Corporate Brands through Social Media: An Exploratory Study," *International Journal of Business Communication*, 51 (3), 211–33.

Wang, Alex (2006), "Advertising Engagement: A Driver of Message Involvement on Message Effects," *Journal of Advertising Research*, 46 (4), 355–68.

Wang, Liz C., Julie Baker, Judy A. Wagner, and Kirk Wakefield (2007), "Can a Retail Website be Social?," *Journal of Marketing*, 71 (July), 143–57.

Waytz, Adam, Carey K. Morewedge, Nicholas Epley, George Monteleone, Jia-hong Gao, and John T. Cacioppo (2010), "Making Sense by Making Sentient: Effectance Motivation Increases Anthropomorphism," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 99 (3), 410–35.