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Research Paper

Shallow Engagement in Highly Engaged Pages. The Influence of Perceived Value, Content Reliability, and Homophily on Disseminating Information on Valencia Bonita Facebook Community Page

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to study the engagement that leads to disseminating content on a highly engaged Facebook page. The model connects shallow engagement, understood as clicking like and sharing content, with four antecedents: image attractiveness, perceived value, reliable content, and perceived homophily. The research is based on a survey of 257 users from Valencia Bonita, a user-generated Facebook page which posts information about the Spanish city of Valencia regarding its history and possible leisure plans. The analysis is performed using structural equation modelling. The evaluation of the model confirms the direct effect on shallow engagement of three antecedents: perceived value, reliable content, and perceived homophily. Image attractiveness has an indirect effect through perceived value.

Keywords: Engagement; Facebook; Elaboration Likelihood Model

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1. INTRODUCTION

User engagement on Social Networking Sites (SNS) has become the lever of social media marketing (Weiger et al., 2019). Engagement goes beyond reading posts; it reflects an impact on readers. Engaging with content implies that users react after reading it, mostly immediately (Antoniadis et al., 2019; Dolan et al., 2019; Gvili & Levy, 2018). This greater implication from users becomes critical on SNS because the algorithm that builds the newsfeed rewards engaged content (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Greater engagement begets wider diffusion.

The dissemination of content through individual online interactions has been considered part of the electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) dynamism. Various features have been identified as influential in eWOM processes; some correspond to the post's external elements (Antoniadis et al., 2019; de Vries et al., 2012), whereas others relate to users' internal attitudes (Carlson et al., 2018; Chang et al., 2015; Lee & Ma, 2012). Understanding how these features fit into eWOM helps companies better manage their online resources and develop more efficient communications strategies (Vander Schee et al., 2020). A crucial part of eWOM on SNS depends on how users engage with the posted content.

Alwash *et al.* (2021) distinguished between deep engagement and shallow engagement, depending on the cognitive effort exerted by users. Deep engagement supposes writing comments, while shallow engagement includes clicking, liking or other reaction buttons and sharing content. The latter aspect will be the focus of this research, as it contributes most directly to spreading content on SNS. Specifically, this phenomenon will be studied on a User-Generated Content (UGC) on Facebook. When this sort of page is focused on a specific topic, it is likely to attract followers interested in it, giving rise to higher levels of engagement.

This research contributes to academic literature in various ways. First, it enhances the research body based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). This theoretical underpinning explains behaviours derived from a persuasive message, and it has been applied to research user behaviours on SNS (Babić Rosario et

al., 2020; Chang et al., 2015; Hussain et al., 2017). Second, the concept of perceived value (Babin et al., 1994) is introduced as an influential factor for user engagement. Although there are studies applying different aspects of value perception to social media (Carlson et al., 2018; O'Brien, 2010), this construct is integrated as a synthesis of several dimensions: learning value, utilitarian value, and hedonic value. Third, the results suggest a strong conjunction among three elements that promote shallow engagement: perceived value, reliable content, and perceived homophily.

In the following sections, the concept of shallow engagement on SNS is developed and the ELM is introduced. Then, the research model is built. The methodology was based on an online survey conducted among followers of a popular Facebook user-generated fan page about a Spanish city. The analysis is performed using structural equation modelling. Finally, the theoretical contributions are discussed along with the practical applications and the limitations of the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Engagement on SNS

SNS consist of web-based services that allow users to carry out three main functions: construct a public or semi-public profile of themselves, build a list of other users with whom they are connected, and view the content published by their list of connections and other users within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). The spreading of UGC on SNS mainly comes from two sources. Firstly, posts generated by a user are taken to build the newsfeed of that user's immediate connections. The second source depends on the interaction generated by the posts. One viewer can carry out several actions when reading a post, such as clicking like or other reaction icons, commenting on the post, or sharing the content. The SNS algorithm considers these actions when deciding whether to include that post in the newsfeed of the user's connections, so that the content reaches users beyond the original list of connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Weiger et al., 2019). On SNS, more interactions imply higher diffusion.

Interacting with the content constitutes the core idea for *user engagement.* This construct is defined as the online behavioural manifestations elicited by the content posted on SNS (Dolan et al., 2019; Weiger et al., 2019). The interactions undertaken when visiting SNS can be differentiated according to the degree of engagement. Regarding the viewer's effort, Alwash *et al.* (2021) distinguish between shallow and deep engagement. The

former entails actions with a low level of cognitive effort and is performed quickly, while the latter implies greater cognitive work and consequently takes longer. Liking and sharing would be cases of shallow engagement, whereas producing content and commenting on others' posts would fall under deep engagement.

Research has uncovered various antecedents and outputs when studying UGC on SNS. They can be grouped according to post content, psychological dispositions, and social conditions. From the perspective of the content, Dolan *et al.* (2019) suggested that rational appeals have a greater effect on user engagement than emotional appeals. The former enhances active and passive engagement, and the latter facilitates the passive more. Focusing on the psychological factors, user engagement with UGC exhibited enhanced consumer loyalty, satisfaction, trust, and commitment to brands (Brodie et al., 2013). Finally, some researchers explored the social dimension involved in user engagement with UGC. Their findings supported a positive effect of community value (Chan et al., 2014) and social capital (Gvili & Levy, 2018). However, some results suggested a nuanced consideration of this social dimension. Chu and Kim (2011) found that homophily had a negative relationship with user engagement. In this context, the present study wants to advance a better understanding of engagement on SNS. To do so, the research is framed under the theoretical considerations provided by the ELM.

2.2 Elaboration Likelihood Model

ELM was developed in the field of persuasive communications (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). It predicts the way a message changes attitudes depending on the level of analysis performed by the receiver. The model distinguishes two routes. A receiver who scrutinizes the content thoroughly follows the so-called central route processing, whereas a receiver who pays more attention to tangential issues rather than key information follows the peripheral route processing. The former requires more time to deal with the information than the latter, and the eventual persuasive effect will last more. The model posits three aspects that influence the different levels of elaboration by the receiver: motivation, ability, and opportunity. If someone is more interested in the issue or is more skillful in processing the data, or deals with it at an appropriate moment, then they will more likely follow the central route (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

This framework has been applied to research eWOM, given that the content can persuade users to spread the message. Babić Rosario *et al.* (2020) structured their conceptualization of eWOM by following the basic user involvement features proposed by ELM. Chang *et*

al. (2015) based their research on user engagement in a Facebook UGC-based cooking community inside the ELM framework. Antecedents included content quality, popularity, and attractiveness. Given this fruitful application to SNS communication, the main insights provided by ELM will be followed to develop this research on shallow engagement.

2.3 Perceived value

Users perceive value in a post based on a wide range of expectations, interests, and motivations. This psychological dimension drives users to engage with posts. In a study based on a Facebook community, Chang *et al.* (2015) found that usefulness and personal preferences positively influenced the intentions to click like and share content. As the perception of value provided with SNS content includes different aspects, three dimensions are distinguished for building the *perceived value* variable: learning value, utilitarian value, and hedonic value.

Seeking information related to products drives users to engage with brand pages (Muntinga et al., 2011). This learning benefit can encourage users to broaden their background knowledge or offer their expertise to others (Carlson et al., 2018). *Learning value* is assumed as the contribution of informative content on SNS with the main intention of understanding more about a particular topic.

When customers seek a product or service in terms of instrumentality and functionality, this relationship is framed under a utilitarian perspective (Babin et al., 1994; Chandon et al., 2000). In the case of UGC-based SNS pages, users can be attracted to them as they search for useful resources to meet their needs. This perception constitutes the core of *utilitarian value*.

Hedonic value emerges when consumers experience a product or service in a spontaneous and affective manner (Babin et al., 1994). In this case, the product is sought out of want rather than need, with no direct relationship to practical goals (Chandon et al., 2000). Hedonic appreciation is more obvious inside community fan pages, as the reason to follow their updates is intricately linked to personal preferences. Hence, *hedonic value* is understood as the gratifying experience of visiting an SNS page for the sheer pleasure of enjoying its content.

The overall perception of the value provided by SNS content prompts users to interact with it. According to ELM, readers can be persuaded in as much as they are motivated, as well as they have opportunity and ability. In the case of SNS, the opportunity to interact

comes immediately as the viewer finds the post. Similarly, the ability to engage is very easy as it is performed through buttons embedded in the same post. Regarding motivations, some reactions are easily expected when users perceive content as valuable, as it is the case of clicking like. For the research model, the value perceived on a SNS content will likely promote shallow engagement with it.

H1: Perceived value positively influences shallow engagement.

2.4 Image Attractiveness

SNS content invariably includes text accompanied by one or more pictures or videos. Some scholars have referred to this enriched multimedia format as vividness (de Vries et al., 2012). Vivid content provides more emotional stimuli, which are critical if the content is to go viral (Dobele et al., 2007). Sabate *et al.* (2014) estimated that the formal elements of an SNS publication with the greatest influence on user participation was its image. In the research model, *image attractiveness* is conceptualized as the attention paid to the post resulting from the graphic elements.

The appeal derived from the post's images makes it easier to appreciate the content. Carlson (2018) found that the quality of content contributes to increasing users' experiences in terms of learning, connecting users, and enjoyment. Regarding graphic elements, Chang *et al.* (2015) showed a positive relationship between the attractiveness offered by the post and the expectations and preferences of the reader. When users find attractive pictures in a post, it is more likely that they appreciate the whole content from the perspective of value. Following this rationale, the theoretical model proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Image attractiveness positively influences perceived value.

It is easier to draw users' attention using enriched content, and consequently make them engage with that content. The relationship between the post's graphic elements and several engagement outcomes was found significant by Antoniadis *et al.* (2019). They analyzed the content of 18 retail brand pages, and the results indicated that the presence of pictures and videos in posts correlated to liking, reacting, and sharing, whereas comments only correlated to pictures. According to de Vries *et al.* (2012), the vividness of posts significantly influenced the number of likes but not the number of comments. As positive emotion is related to user engagement, the appeal inspired by graphic elements can be expected to promote the dissemination of that content. In this regard, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H3: Image attractiveness positively influences shallow engagement.

2.5 Reliable content

Credibility has been a key aspect of dealing with information accessed through SNS (Ismagilova et al., 2021). Regarding eWOM, users seek information from previous shoppers to make better purchasing decisions. For them, assessing the products' information as trustworthy is very convenient (Alhidari et al., 2015; Wu & Wang, 2011). Credibility in UGC depends on aspects related to the source (author), as well as the message (content) (Moran & Muzellec, 2017; Verma & Dewani, 2020). In this model, *reliable content* is regarded as the user's perception of receiving a believable message that can be trusted.

According to Babić Rosario *et al.* (2020), one important aspect of searching eWOM content is reducing uncertainty in purchasing decisions. This perception requires reliability in the UGC. Reichelt *et al.* (2014) found that the credibility of eWOM sources contributed to utilitarian and social functions in the purchasing process. This suggests that finding reliable content on SNS will prompt users to estimate the information as more valuable to meet their needs. Following this reasoning, a positive relationship between reliable content and perceived value is proposed:

H4: Reliable content positively influences perceived value.

Reading a trustworthy source on social media has been proven to influence purchasing decisions (Kim et al., 2018) and to enhance brand attitude (Wu & Wang, 2011). Muda and Hamzah (2021) found a direct relationship between credibility and eWOM in YouTube. They built the credibility construct by joining trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. Credibility was also found to influence eWOM engagement indirectly through the attitude toward eWOM in Gvili and Levy (2018). Furthermore, according to ELM, the perception of reading reliable content will make users interact with it and contribute to spreading the message among their connections. In this regard, the research model poses the following hypothesis:

H5: Reliable content positively influences shallow engagement.

2.6 Homophily

Homophily refers to the degree of similarity in certain attributes among individuals who interact with one another (Rogers & Bhowmik, 1970). Since SNS users build their own list of preferred contacts, homophily plays a key role in shaping online relationships. The likeness among users has been studied as a critical factor in explaining eWOM among

consumers (Babić Rosario et al., 2020), the disposition to share online experiences (Ismagilova et al., 2021), and the perceived self-congruence with loved brands (Wallace et al., 2017). In the YouTube study mentioned before, the perceived source homophily proved to influence positively in the eWOM mediated by the attitude toward UGC (Muda & Hamzah, 2021). When SNS users find this sort of UGC, it can be expected that they will engage more likely with that content as it comes from a source with which they have some sort of affinity. In this regard, the perception of greater homophily on an SNS page can be hypothesized as fostering engagement through liking and sharing content.

H6: Perceived homophily positively influences shallow engagement.

Figure 1 depicts the theoretical model proposed in this research.

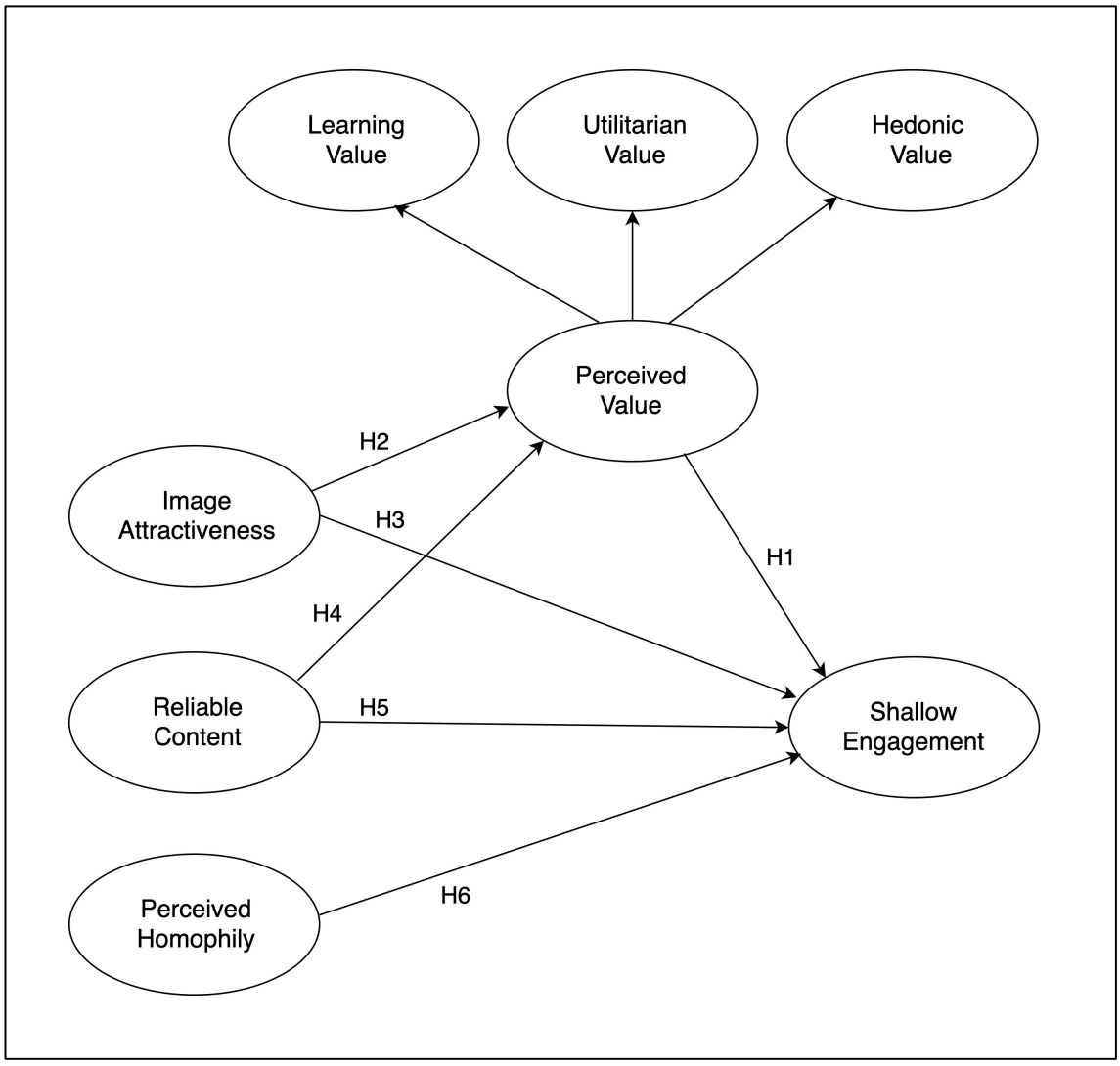

Figure 1. Research model

The research model considers some aspects related to the message drawn from ELM. More specifically, perceived value, image attractiveness, and reliable content will be considered. Furthermore, homophily is included because the content stems from a community built around a common interest.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

The present research was implemented as a cross-sectional study carried out with an online questionnaire. The model was tested in the Facebook community 'Valencia Bonita'. This page was originally created to promote the content published on the blog ValenciaBonita.es, which provides information about the Spanish city of Valencia. The blog focuses on its history, festivities, and traditions. It also publishes information about upcoming events and recommends weekend activities. Two users manage the blog. The Valencia Bonita Facebook fan page (https://www.facebook.com/ValenciaBonitaOficial) had more than 220,000 users in 2020. Posts are published regularly and there are numerous reactions and comments, as well as abundant shared content. This is an appropriate high-engagement SNS page with which to test the research model.

The link to the online questionnaire was posted on the Valencia Bonita Facebook page on 29 October 2019, with a reminder posted two weeks later. The survey was closed on 25 November 2019, and 610 responses were collected. After discarding incomplete questionnaires, the final sample consisted of 257 valid responses. Table 1 summarises the respondents' demographics. There were 81.71% of women. The majority were between 35- and 54 years old. Most respondents were employed (63.04%). Regarding their studies, the majority held a Master's/Ph.D. degree (33.85%).

Table 1. Demographics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	47	18.29
	Female	210	81.71
Age	Under 18	1	0.39
	18-24	20	7.78
	25-34	46	17.90
	35-44	71	27.63
	45-54	72	28.02
	55-64	36	14.01
	65 and over	11	4.28
Job	Student	24	9.34
	Employee	162	63.04
	Unemployed	21	8.17
	Domestic work	19	7.39
	Retiree	20	7.78
	Other	11	4.28
Education	Primary School	15	5.84
	Secondary School	53	20.62
	Vocational Training	50	19.46
	Degree level	52	20.23
	Master/PhD	87	33.85

3.2 Measurements

The measurement instrument was built from scales published in previous studies to ensure content validity. The items were modified to adapt them to the Valencia Bonita Facebook fan page. They can be found in Table 2. The scales for image attractiveness and reliable content were adapted from Chang *et al.* (2015), whereas the items for measuring perceived homophily, learning value, and utilitarian value were amended from Carlson *et al.* (2018). The scale for hedonic value was adjusted from Jahn and Kunz (2012), and the scale for shallow engagement was built by Wallace *et al.* (2017) and Hossain *et al.* (2018). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale with options ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (5) “strongly agree”. Four additional items addressed demographic variables. The questionnaire was provided in Spanish. One author translated the item texts and the other reviewed the translation.

Table 2. Measurement Instrument

Construct	Item	Description	Source
Learning Value (LV)	LV1	This Facebook page enhances my knowledge about Valencia's history and customs.	Carlson *et al.* (2018)
	LV2	This Facebook page provides information about future events that will take place in Valencia.	
	LV3	This Facebook page helps me to know more about Valencia.	
Utilitarian Value (UV)	UV1	I find information on this Facebook page to be valuable.	Carlson *et al.* (2018)
	UV2	I think this Facebook page is a helpful resource.	
	UV3	There is useful information on this Facebook page.	
Hedonic Value (HV)	HV1	The content of this Facebook page is fun.	Jahn and Kunz (2012)
	HV2	The content of this Facebook page is exciting.	
	HV3	The content of this Facebook page is pleasant.	
	HV4	The content of this Facebook page is entertaining.	
Image Attractiveness (IA)	IA1	Images posted on this Facebook page are attractive.	Chang *et al*. (2015)
	IA2	I like the pictures posted on this Facebook page.	
	IA3	The images published on this Facebook page catch my attention.	
Reliable Content (RC)	RC1	I think this page's posts with more people pressing 'Like' and commenting are trustworthy.	Chang *et al.* (2015)
	RC2	I think this page's posts with more people pressing 'Like' and commenting are reliable.	
	RC3	I think this page's posts with more people pressing 'Like' and commenting are believable.	
Perceived Homophily (PH)	PH1	I can find out about people like me on this Facebook page.	Carlson *et al.* (2018)
	PH2	I can interact with people like me on this Facebook page.	
	PH3	I can meet people like me on this Facebook page.	
Shallow Engagement (SE)	SE1	I click 'Like' on this Facebook page to 'talk up' about it to my friends.	Wallace *et al.* (2017) and Hossain *et al.* (2018)
	SE2	I click 'Like' on this Facebook page to spread the good word about this page.	
	SE3	I recommend this page to friends and family on Facebook.	
	SE4	I share contents from this Facebook page regularly.	

4. RESULTS

4.1 Measurement Model

The theoretical model was estimated using covariance-based structural equation modeling with the R-package lavaan (Rosseel, 2012). To evaluate the measurement model, a second-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted. Bagozzi and Yin (1988) recommend that all standardized factor loadings be higher than 0.6. However, there was one loading very close to that minimum level, HV2 (0.603). This item was removed from the model to assure better measurement results.

The fit for the re-specified model was assessed. The χ^2/df ratio was 1.629. This ratio is under 3 as recommended by Wheaton *et al.* (1977). The Standardised Root Mean Square (SRMR) was 0.047, which is lower than the cut-off value of 0.8 suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999). The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.049 and is considered a good fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1992). The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) is 0.946 and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is 0.954, both higher than the minimum recommended (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Thus, the results show a valid model fit.

Convergent validity was assessed by testing the value of the factor loadings, Cronbach's α, Composite Reliability (CR), and AVE. Table 3 shows the results for the final model's second-order CFA and the reliability measures. The standardized factor loadings were all over 0.6 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) and significant ($p<0.001$). Each factor meets Nunnally and Bernstein's (1994) recommendation of Cronbach's α exceeding 0.70 as well as the CR indicators being over 0.7. There is one factor –hedonic value at 0.49– with an AVE lower than the 0.5 thresholds (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As this average is very close to the cut-off value, the indicator was considered as valid. The other Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are above 0.5. Altogether, the measurement model's convergent validity and reliability can be considered adequate.

Table 3. Second-order CFA Results and Reliability of the Final Measurement Model

Construct	Item	Non-standardized factor loading	Standardized factor loading	t-value	CA	CR	AVE
Learning Value (LV)	LV1	1.000 [1]	0.645	-	0.737	0.749	0.503
	LV2	0.682	0.624***	8.308			
	LV3	0.936	0.839***	10.004			
Utilitarian Value (UV)	UV1	1.000 [1]	0.736	-	0.780	0.782	0.546
	UV2	0.895	0.682***	10.167			
	UV3	0.843	0.794***	11.714			
Hedonic Value (HV)	HV1	1.000 [1]	0.691	-	0.748	0.747	0.497
	HV3	0.906	0.714***	9.879			
	HV4	0.956	0.709***	9.817			
Perceived Value (PV)	LV	0.432	0.855***	9.340	0.935	0.932	0.821
	UV	0.470	0.929***	11.744			
	HV	0.394	0.935***	10.928			
Image Attractiveness (IA)	IA1	0.498	0.699***	11.681	0.784	0.786	0.552
	IA2	0.549	0.792***	13.664			
	IA3	0.519	0.734***	12.423			
Reliable Content (RC)	RC1	0.796	0.780***	14.484	0.893	0.895	0.741
	RC2	0.902	0.888***	17.520			
	RC3	0.932	0.909***	18.200			
Perceived Homophily (PS)	PH1	0.677	0.725***	12.729	0.845	0.850	0.656
	PH2	0.698	0.796***	14.367			
	PH3	0.808	0.898***	16.947			
Shallow Engagement (SE)	SE1	0.727	0.698***	11.967	0.800	0.801	0.504
	SE2	0.878	0.824***	14.971			
	SE3	0.628	0.664***	11.205			
	SE4	0.716	0.640***	10.693			

$\chi^2(196, n=257)=319.186$***; CFI=0.954; TLI=0.946; RMSEA=0.049; SRMR=0.0467.
*** p<0.001

Notes: CFA: Confirmatory Factorial Analysis; CA: Cronbach's α; CR: Composite Reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted.
[1] The indicator's loading has been fixed to 1 for identification purposes.

Discriminant validity was assessed using two criteria. Firstly, according to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the inter-factor correlations should be lower than the squared roots of the AVE of the corresponding factors. Secondly, Anderson and Gerbin (1988) propose that the confidence interval for the inter-factor correlation estimation should not contain a value of 1. Table 4 shows all these values in a matrix. The measurement model meets both criteria for discriminant validity.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity of the Measurement Model.

		F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
F1	Perceived Value (PV)	**0.906**	0.811	0.523	0.420	0.711
F2	Image Attractiveness (IA)	0.719	**0.743**	0.540	0.393	0.625
F3	Reliable Content (RC)	0.400	0.413	**0.861**	0.585	0.738
F4	Perceived Homophily (PH)	0.284	0.251	0.472	**0.810**	0.674
F5	Shallow Engagement (SE)	0.605	0.500	0.643	0.565	**0.710**

Note: Bold values on the diagonal represent the squared root of the average variance extracted; below the diagonal, the correlations between the factors are provided, and above the diagonal, the upper limits of the confidence interval for the estimation of inter-factor correlations are indicated.

4.2 Structural Model

The structural model was tested. The overall fit indices are within the commonly accepted values; χ^2 is 320.333 ($p<0.001$), χ^2/df is 1.626, SRMR is 0.047, RMSEA is 0.049, TLI is 0.946, and CFI is 0.954. Figure 2 shows the results for the estimated path coefficients. Perceived value has a significant influence on shallow engagement (H1: $\beta=0.375$; $p<0.001$). Image attractiveness has a strong influence on perceived value (H2: $\beta=0.667$; $p<0.001$), whereas it has no effect on shallow engagement (H3: $\beta=0.011$; n.s.). Reliable content has no significant influence on perceived value (H4: $\beta=0.091$; n.s.), but it directly affects shallow engagement (H5: $\beta=0.350$; $p<0.001$). Perceived homophily exerts influence on shallow engagement (H6: $\beta=0.296$; $p<0.001$). Finally, the model explains 74% of the variance of learning value, 87% of utilitarian value, 87% of hedonic value, 53% of perceived value, and 62% of shallow engagement.

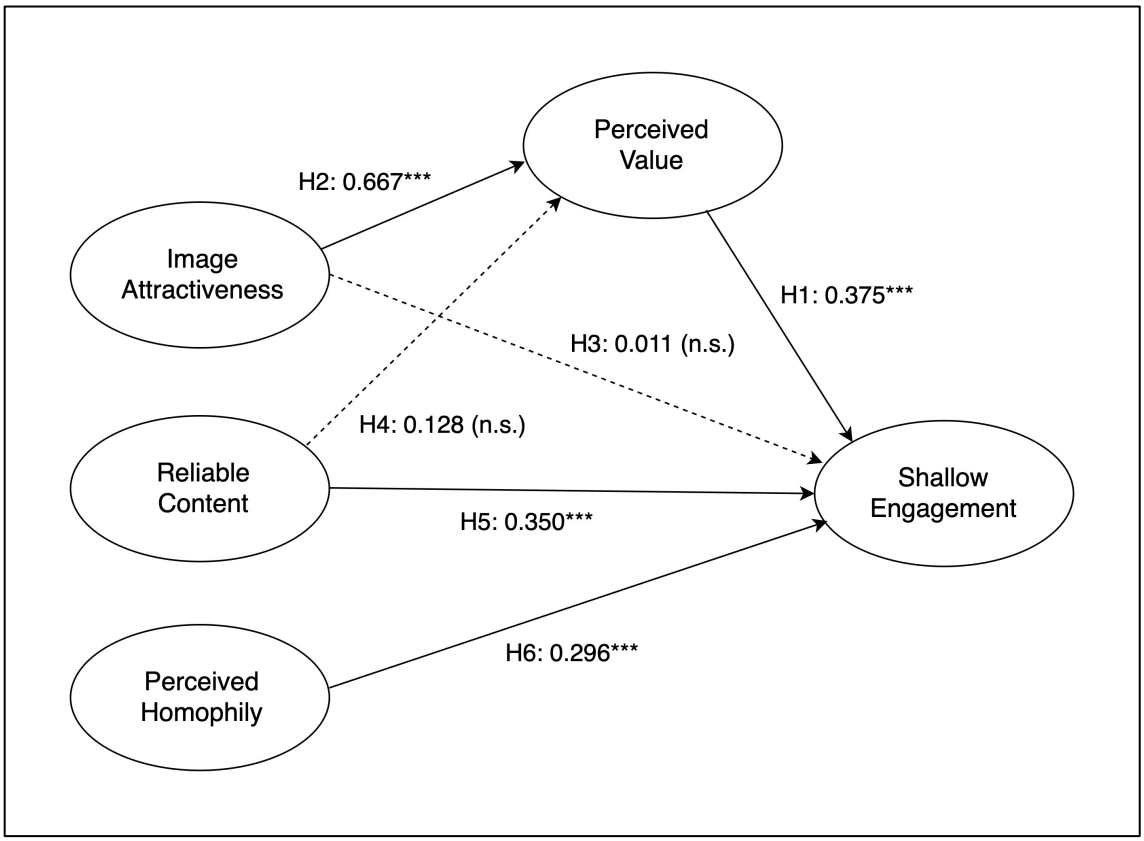

Figure 2. Results of the Structural Model.

Notes: Coefficients are standardized coefficients. $\chi^2(196, n=257)=320.333$***; CFI=0.954; TLI=0.946; RMSEA=0.049; SRMR=0.047.

*** p<0.001.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Theoretical contributions

This research focuses on user engagement on SNS by drawing insights from ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). It specifically works on the concept of shallow engagement introduced by Alwash *et al.* (2021). This sort of engagement features reacting to the post and sharing content.

The results indicate the influence of perceiving value upon shallow engagement (H1). This finding aligns with similar studies developed under the framework of ELM. It is the case of Chang *et al.* (2015), who explained the sharing-post intention on UGC through liking intention, user preferences, and usefulness. Other ELM-based investigations had connected engagement behaviours on SNS with different aspects related to value perception, such as user involvement (Alhidari et al., 2015; Wu & Wang, 2011) and information-seeking motivation (Lee & Ma, 2012).

These studies uncovered issues that were tackled in an isolated manner. However, value perception integrates several dimensions (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). The approach in this research follows that assumption. Specifically, perceptions of seeking learning, utilitarian value, and hedonic value were united into one single variable so that the effect of a unified consideration of value perception could be captured. In the research model, this second-order variable has proven to be relevant for shallow engagement. This result suggests that users react and share SNS content because they appreciate its content as a whole.

The relationship between value perception and shallow engagement fits into the ELM. This theoretical model explains the possible persuasive effect of content depending on readers: the motivations for reading that content, the opportunities for receiving the content, and the ability to act after assimilating the content (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). According to the obtained results, the motivations reflected in the value perception dimensions have leveraged user engagement. Given that this UGC fan page deals with the traditions of a city and possible leisure plans, the results suggest that this content satisfies the users' needs for learning, consulting, and entertainment.

Content on SNS is composed of two basic elements: textual and graphical. In other studies, the attraction exerted by posted images proved relevant since the graphical elements draw attention in a more vivid manner (de Vries et al., 2012; Dobele et al., 2007; Sabate et al., 2014). The results point to the mediated effect of the attractiveness of images in engagement through value perception, as H2 is accepted and H3 is rejected. This lack of direct effect can be explained by considering that affective elaboration on SNS is more direct than cognitive (Chen et al., 2015), so finding more compelling images may enhance the perception of a post as more valuable. This result is consistent with Chang *et al.* (2015), whose research was also based on a UGC fan page. They linked post attractiveness with user preferences, and this factor positively influenced the intention to like and share content. The results suggest that images on SNS push engagement when the content better fits positive perceptions by users.

It was tested the relationship between perceiving SNS content as reliable and perceiving its value. The rejection of H4 makes the lack of influence of this association evident, suggesting that users' appreciation of the value provided by posts does not depend on the credibility of that content. This lack of connection could be explained by considering that credibility depends on the content as well as the source (Moran & Muzellec, 2017; Verma & Dewani, 2020). As this research is

performed among users of a UGC fan page centered on a particular topic, perhaps the credibility judgment was more associated with the source than with the content.

Nevertheless, content reliability does play a role in user engagement in the evaluated model (H5). ELM helps to explain the dependence on reacting and sharing content after reading a trustworthy post. This finding is consistent with Muntinga *et al.* (2011), who established a relationship between contributing to spreading of the message and the credibility of SNS content.

Another factor that promotes interpersonal communication is homophily (Rogers & Bhowmik, 1970). Similar attributes between individuals frame the relationship so that the exchange of information can flow more easily. In the SNS context, the similarity can be shaped by affinity for a common topic or interest (McPherson et al., 2001). The research model supports this relationship (H6). The respondents shared a common background in a particular place. The results confirmed that these users tended to engage with this UGC by reacting and sharing content. This suggests that similarity contributes to viral propagation (Ismagilova et al., 2021). However, some scholars had found that homophily did not always predict engagement (Chu & Kim, 2011). In the case of the present study, the conclusions reinforce the role of homophily in stirring up user engagement. Considering the whole model, the perception of value on the fan page also plays a role in promoting shallow engagement. Hence, these results suggest that homophily is a significant factor when perceiving the value of that content is also present. Sharing common attributes among users, along with reading valuable content, frames homophily more consistently as a driver for engagement in an SNS community.

5.2 Practical Implications

This research is focused on a UGC Facebook page with high posting activity and engagement levels. The findings obtained can help individuals and social media managers improve the dynamics of engagement. One practical implication suggested by this study relates to images in posts. Users who create content should pay close attention to the attractiveness of the graphic elements. The results confirm that a better presentation, in terms of images, enhances a positive valuation of the post, and in turn, contributes to sharing that content.

Assuming that shallow engagement contributes to disseminating content on SNS (Alwash et al., 2021), the model reveals a relevant impact on the way users perceive value on the page. This value should be given particular attention by social media managers, due to the complex dimensions it implies (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). This research focuses on the joint role played by three different

functions: learning, using, and entertaining. Community managers must identify sources of creating value. In the case of a brand, there can be other demands from users that should be considered, such as cultivating social relationships or self-expression. The key goal should be to raise interest among followers, and this requires a clear focus on users' needs and wants.

6. CONCLUSION

The results of this research also provide useful insights for managing engagement on SNS pages. The direct effect of value perception, reliable content, and perceived homophily on shallow engagement points to two strategic goals: assuring credibility in the message and strengthening bonds among the users. Offering trustworthy content and building strong relationships in the SNS community can leverage engagement. In doing so, these actions oriented toward promoting engagement can contribute to increased content dissemination.

6.1 Limitations

The purpose of this research was to study the factors influencing shallow engagement on a UGC fan page. Its limitations determine the scope of its findings. The study considers a single platform through a cross-sectional survey. Furthermore, the users in the sample are skewed toward females and highly educated individuals. Although these results do not allow causal inference, they at least offer positioned knowledge to undertake future studies that could integrate a more balanced sample.

6.2 Future Research

To further this research, it would seem appropriate to test this model with other UGC pages. Another issue of research interest would be related to the published content. In this case, the content was focused on entertaining activities and the history of a particular city. These topics affect users whose bond can be nurtured more by affective than utilitarian considerations. This research could be continued by analyzing other fan pages with more specific topics but lower levels of emotional content. In relation to the variables used in the model, it would be of great interest to deepen the building of perceived value to incorporate more dimensions. In the case of brand pages, the link between value consideration and eWOM has been widely explored, but it remains a research gap for UGC fan pages.

Another avenue to advance the research would be adding the source's credibility to the model. The present study uniquely considered the reliability of the content but given that credibility also comes

from the overall perception of the one who publishes (Moran & Muzellec, 2017; Verma & Dewani, 2020), incorporating this factor could contribute to explaining users' predisposition to engage with the content in a more nuanced way. At any rate, shallow engagement will be worth studying for companies as information dissemination on SNS depends on how the user interacts with the content.

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