

The Crowdsourcing Effect: How Crowdsourcing Shapes Customer Engagement: An Abstract

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Abstract: Consumers collaboration in companies' daily innovations has become a new path for business. Crowdsourcing refers to the phenomenon of company's outsourcing tasks using collective intelligence (Howe 2006). Crowdsourcing initiatives are usually efficient because the resulting ideas meet consumers expectations (Fuchs et al. 2013). However, Thompson and Malaviya (2013) suggest that consumers demonstrate two opposing responses to crowdsourcing: skepticism about the competence and identification with the creator. Yet, whether and how crowdsourcing can provide value for consumers and favor customer engagement remains unclear. To fill this research gap, this study aims to investigate the influence of crowdsourcing on customer engagement and purchase intentions.

In four experimental studies, we propose and test that purchase intentions and customer engagement depend on crowdsourcing initiatives. Study 1 shows that the crowdsourcing presence (vs. absence) increases consumers' purchase intentions.

Study 2 examines the mediating role of customer engagement in the relationship between crowdsourcing and purchase intentions. Customer engagement is the perceived personal relevance or importance of the company for the engaged consumer (Greenwald and Leavitt 1984; Mittal 1995). Goh et al. (2017) suggest that crowdsourcing fosters engagement and participation. Study 2 results show a customer engagement mediation effect that is significantly higher for crowdsourcing (vs. absence). That is, because crowdsourcing provides significant inclusive and sharing values to consumers, building a sense of customer engagement, which in turn will increase purchase intentions. Study 3 and 4 further refine our theory by examining the moderating role of community belonging to the relationship between crowdsourcing and purchase intentions. Community belonging reflects the essential facets of company-consumer social sharing value (Simon and Tossan 2018). These authors state that community belonging represents the social gratifications derived from company-consumer virtually mediated interactions, which are likely to motivate the development of company

relationships and, therefore, trigger an active engagement of consumers in virtual company communities. In the context of crowdsourcing, consumers can easily interact not only with their company but also with the company's other customers, thus extending their opportunities to acquire relational knowledge about the company. Study 3 and 4 results suggest that crowdsourcing can be less influential for companies with high (vs. low) community belonging. Crowdsourcing emerges as a profitable format of product innovation. Companies are increasingly using crowdsourcing to achieve promising ideas for new products, which are commercialized later as consumer-designed products. Our results attest crowdsourcing initiatives as capable of positively affect consumers' customer engagement, which has positive downstream effects on purchase intentions (Nishikawa et al. 2017; Schreier et al. 2012, 2016). In addition, we reveal the moderating role of community belonging on the crowdsourcing effects (Brodie et al. 2013; Schau et al. 2009; Schembri and Latimer 2016; Zaglia 2013).

Keywords Crowdsourcing · Customer engagement · Community belonging · Purchase