

## A SURVEY OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON EMOTIONS, QUALITY OF BRAND RELATIONS AND WORD OF MOUTH

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**Abstract:** *The present study aims to evaluate the impact of social media on emotions, quality of brand relations and word of mouth to present a good solution to be useful for Denon Sahar Company and achieving the relevant goals. The study population is internet and normal customers of Danet (those buying from stores and shopping centers of Danet). The study sample is selected by Cochran's formula as 384 internet customers of Danet. The study method is survey-correlation. A questionnaire is used for data collection. The data is analyzed by SPSS, AMOS software. Pearson and path analysis tests are used to test the hypotheses. This study consists of five hypotheses and all are supported. Finally, the fitted model has bigger significance level than first type error 0.05 and this shows significant consistency of the model with the conceptual model of study. GFI, AGFI are estimated bigger than empirical value 0.9 and these indices show good power of model to estimate the share of each of factors.*

**Keywords:** *Social media, Emotions, Quality of brand relations, Word of mouth*

### INTRODUCTION

Given the importance of social networks and the internet (e.g. Sharma, 2002; Walters, 2008), which facilitate direct unmediated inter-organizational associations (Berthon et al., 2003; Pitt et al., 2006), it is argued that social media, and particularly social network sites, can support brands via developing and maintaining relationships between firms. Social media are becoming more important as an internet marketing tool given their wide adoption by the general public. Evidence suggests that in consumer markets, SNS have become "de facto modus operandi" for users to disseminate information about brands (Michaelidou et al, 2011). If the goal of advertisement is making strong brand relations, it is required to

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use high levels of emotional content and the emotional content has maximum effectiveness, if less consideration is given (Hudson et al., 2015). There is not much information about the effect of social media on feelings to brand and achieving or non-achieving good results including word of mouth via relations based on social media (Mangold, & Faulds, 2009). Researches show that the less the information of users of emotional elements and components in advertisement, the better the function of advertisement, If the goal of advertisement is making strong brand relations, it is required to use high levels of emotional content and the emotional content has maximum effectiveness, if less consideration is given (Hudson et al., 2015). Denon Sahar Company mostly focuses on new products of Danet and it attempts to produce new products for customers with the growth of factory. This company doesn't know the effect of company brand and internet advertisement on emotions of customers and it should be aware of the effect of social media on its customers. This company attempts to evaluate the effects of social media on emotions, quality of brand relations and word of mouth on customers that in case of positive effect of these variables on investment can advertise the brand and advertisement in social media to attract more customers and develop the products. Also, it can be aware of opinions and criticism of customers regarding the products. Thus, the present study attempts to present a model to evaluate the effect of social media on emotions, quality of brand relations and word of mouth and research literature is enriched in this ground.

## **THEORETICAL BASICS**

### **Social Media**

Social media is applied programs, online media (internet) with the aim of facilitation of interaction s of collaboration and content sharing (Angella J. Kim et al., 2012). There are a few studies regarding SNS and the evidences (Michaelidou et al., 2011) show that social media is of great importance for business to business companies (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The companies increasingly invest in social media and the great example is global costs of marketing in social websites as 4.3 billion dollars (Vries et al., 2012; Williamson 2011). Managers invest in social media to have high interaction with customers (Setbun & Tubio, 2010).

### **Brand**

American Marketing Association (AMA) defines brand a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of them to identify the products and services of sellers or group of sellers and differentiating them from the rivals products and companies. A brand is the image in the mind of consumer reflecting what they think about a product (Wells, 2005). Brands are important to exchange business.

In case of encountering with hundreds of personal computers, a buyer can use brand to organize his selection, its division and helping the decision making and follows the products, their brand indicates what fulfilling the expectations, needs and desires. Indeed, brands are some tools for tasting, design, determining quality, credit and value. Today, products with brands are used instead of goods (Kim & Chung, 2005).

### **Emotions**

Emotions indicate internal data affecting motivation and behavior. According to Simon, adjustment requires supervision of important stimuli and using consistent goals instead of new goals and disturbance in function (Simon, 1979). Emotions play important role in the life of people. People with high abilities in emotions can not agree regarding the best definition of emotion. Pole Kleinginna collected 90 definitions and presented a comprehensive definition. He considered emotion as the result of interaction of subjective, environmental, neural and hormone processes of body (Franken, 1998). Emotions affect most cognitive processes including perception, decision making, creativity, learning, memory and attention.

### **Brand Relations and its Quality**

Relation marketing in product and consumer consists of relations network management between brand and its consumers (Ambler, 1997). Although some consumers are not inclined to acceptance of brand relations by this form (Benjet C, 2003). Different types of relations can be voluntarily or imposed, long-term or short-term, public vs. private, formal, informal and symmetrical and asymmetrical (Fournier, 1998). These relations can achieve the level of growth in which consumers are interested in brand (Carroll, B. A. & Ahuvia, 2006). The relationship with brands is finished one day and the elimination of the relationship with a person and Brand is investigated. Quality of brand relations is described as a customer-oriented index of power and depth of relationship of brand (Smith et al., 2007). The researches in brand show that sometimes people give human features to a brand and form their relations as they are associated with a person in the society (Aggarwal, 2004). These mutual trading relations between brand and consumers are by a set of repetitive actions with great advantage for both sides (Huang & Kandampully, 2012).

### **Word of Mouth**

Word of mouth is referred to interpersonal relationship between users regarding the personal evaluations and experiences of a company or a product (Jason et al., 2010). In the environment in which trusting to organizations and advertisement is reduced, word of mouth is used to achieve competitive advantage. The effect on

beliefs of people is of great importance for organizations presenting goods and services (Jalilvand and Ebrahimi, 2011). Word of mouth refers to interpersonal relationship between users in relation to evaluations and personal experiences of a company or a product (Jason et al., 2010). The researches show that word of mouth is much more effective than relationship via other resources as important items in newspaper and commercial breaks (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012).

Hamidzade et al., (2012) in a study evaluated the “relationship between personality dimensions and brand equity and moderating role of ethic attributes”. The results of study showed that responsibility and dynamics variables had significant effect on brand equity and ethics attributes had mediating role in responsibility and dynamics with brand equity. Kheyri et al., (2013) evaluated emotional dependence of users to brand: pre-requirements and results”. The results of study showed that experience and attitude of consumers were effective on formation of emotional dependence with brand. Karami and Alvije and Ahmadi (2014) in a study evaluated the “impact of quality of news website designs on loyalty and electronic recommended advertisement. Findings of study showed that quality of website design had direct, significant effect on enjoyment of website and perceived quality of information and indirect and insignificant effect on satisfaction, trust, loyalty and recommended electronic advertisement. Michaelidou et al., started descriptive evaluation of applications, barriers and marketing measurement criterion of social media in business-business brands. The results of study showed that more than ¼ of business 2 business SMEs in Britain were using social network sites to achieve the brand goals. One of the most important goals can be attraction of new customers.

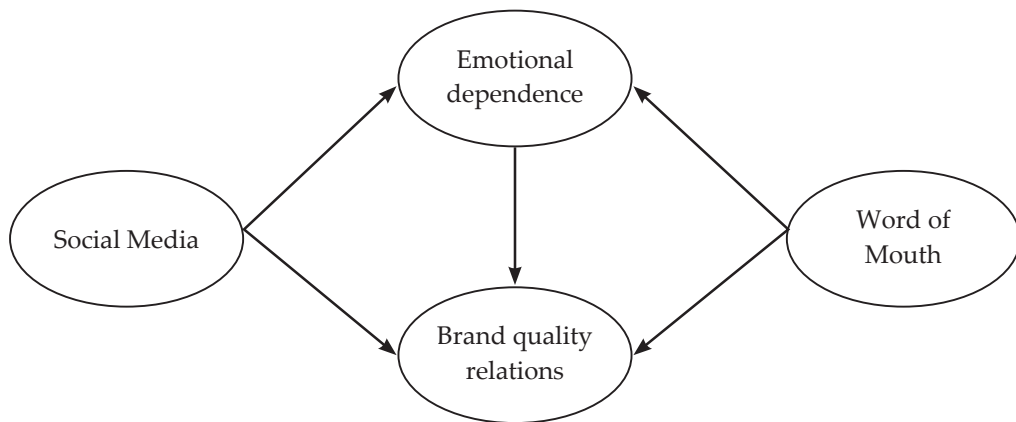
Albert & Merunka (2013) evaluated the role of love to brand in the relationship between brand and consumer. The results of study showed that brand identity had positive and significant effect on love to brand and brand commitment. Brand trust had positive and significant effect on love to brand and brand commitment, love to brand had positive and significant effect on brand commitment, love to brand had positive and significant effect on word of mouth and tendency to pay higher prices. Brand commitment had positive and significant effect on word of mouth and tendency to pay higher prices. Erdil (2014) evaluated the role of quality of relationship of external broker on export performance: evaluation of Turkish companies”. The results of study showed that commitment had positive association with export performance. Also, quality of external broker had positive association with export performance.

Figure 1 shows conceptual model of study. In this model, social media is independent variable, emotional dependence and quality of brand relations are mediating variables and word of mouth as dependent variable. The innovation

of this study is that emotional dependence variable and quality of brand relations and its effect on word of mouth are investigated. Based on the conceptual model, the study hypotheses are as follows:

1. Social media are effective on emotional dependence to brand.
2. Social media are effective on brand relations quality to brand.
3. Emotional dependence is effective on world of mouth.
4. Emotional dependence to brand is effective eon quality of brand relations.
5. Quality of brand relations is effective on word of mouth.

**Figure 1: Conceptual model of study**



## **Study Method**

The results of present study are used to identify the effect of social media on emotions, quality of brand relations and word of mouth. It is applied study in terms of purpose and nature of study. The purpose of applied study is development of applied knowledge in a specific field and it is a descriptive-survey- correlation design in terms of data collection. The present study data is quantitative as collected by questionnaire. This study is regarding the marketing management of social media and brand. The study place is Denon Sahar brand of Danet in Tehran city. The present study is conducted from Spring 2015 to Summer 2015.

The study population is internet and normal customers of Danet (those buying from stores and shopping centers of Danet). The study sample (infinite population) is selected by Cochran's formula as 384 internet customers of Danet. Convenient non-probable sampling method is applied.

In this study, questionnaires are completed by internet and Email-Based questionnaire. The questionnaires are sent via E-mail and the researcher sends questionnaire in word office Microsoft file to the E-mail of participants and they complete the questionnaires and return the E-mail to the researcher. The applied questionnaire is based on four parts. The first section is regarding the questions of quality of brand relations as presented by Smith et al., (2007) and 5 questions with 7-item Likert scale of totally disagree=7 to totally disagree =1. Second part is about the questions of emotional dependence variable as presented by Thomson et al., (2005) and is based on 6 questions with 7-item Likert scale of totally agree=7 to totally disagree=1. Third section is about questions of word of mouth as presented by Eisingerich et al., (2014) and based on four questions with 7-item Likert scale of very much =7 to very low =1. Fourth part is about the questions of social network variable as presented by Eisingerich et al., (2014). It is based on 5 questions with 7-item Likert scale of totally agree=7 to totally disagree =1. The questions of each of study variables are shown in Table 1-3.

### **Statistical Analysis Methods**

To analyze the data of study, descriptive and inferential tests are used. Descriptive tests, percent, mean and standard deviation are applied. Inferential test of Pearson correlation and path analysis are used. Briefly, we describe path analysis method. The data analysis is performed based on study hypotheses by SPSS, AMOS software. For descriptive analysis, SPSS software is used and to evaluate the hypotheses and their validity after the support of their normality by Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) is applied and structural equations model and path analysis technique by AMOS software is applied. Single t-test, independent t test and ANOVA tests are used to evaluate the effect of demographic variables on each of four variables.

### **Demographic Features**

In this section, we describe demographic features of study population. The results of demographic statistics of respondents regarding gender show that 201 (52%) of subjects are men and 183 (48%) women. The results regarding age of subjects show that 182(47%) of subjects are below 30 years, 159(42%) 30-40 years, 36(9%) are 41-50 years and 7 (2%) above 50 years. The results of demographic statistics regarding education show that 78(20%) are Diploma and below diploma and 107(28%) associate, 104 (27%) BA and 89(23%) MA and 6(2%) Ph.D. The results of demographic statistics of respondents regarding social network show that 292(19%) of subjects applied Facebook, 369 (24%), Telgram, 259 (17%) Viber, 384 (25%) Whats up, 237(15%) Line. The total frequency in applied social network is higher than study sample and the reason is that people applied two social networks at the same time.

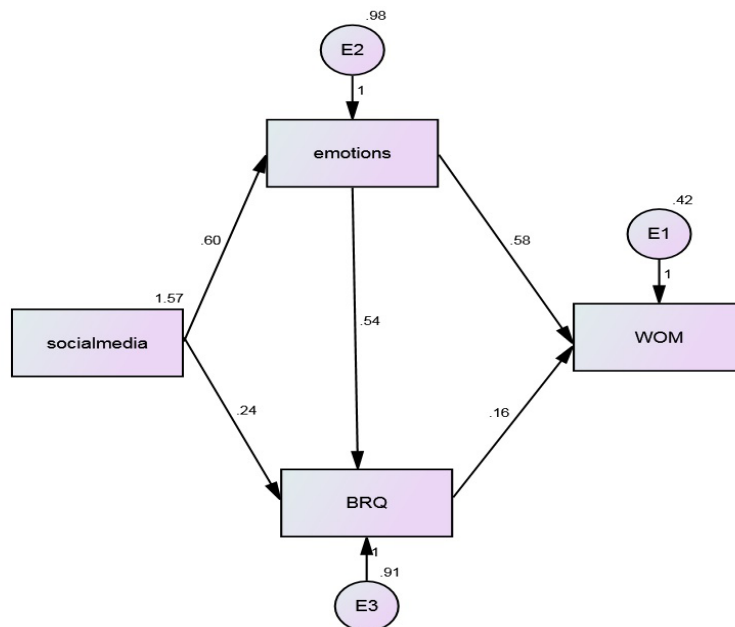
### Hypotheses Test

Before fitting the structural model of study, normality of studied variables is tested by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Based on significance level for testing the normality of scores of each of variables, these values are estimated bigger than first type error 0.05. We can accept normality of scores of each of variables at first type error level 0.05. To fit the structural model of study and effects test by parameter method, we can test the hypotheses. Before fitting the study structural model, their simple correlation is studied by Pearson correlation coefficients. Based on the results, there is a positive and direct association between word of mouth and emotional dependence, brand relations quality, social media and this relation is significant at level 0.05. Based on the significance of relationship between variables, to evaluate their effect on each other and evaluation of their simultaneous relationship with word of mouth, structural equations are fitted among the study variables.

### Structural Equations Fit

Based on estimated path coefficients, the effect of each of emotional dependence, quality of brand relations, social media on word of mouth are identified. Chart 1 indicates estimation of path coefficients of each of studied factors in explaining word of mouth.

**Chart 1: Estimation of path coefficient in non-standard state**

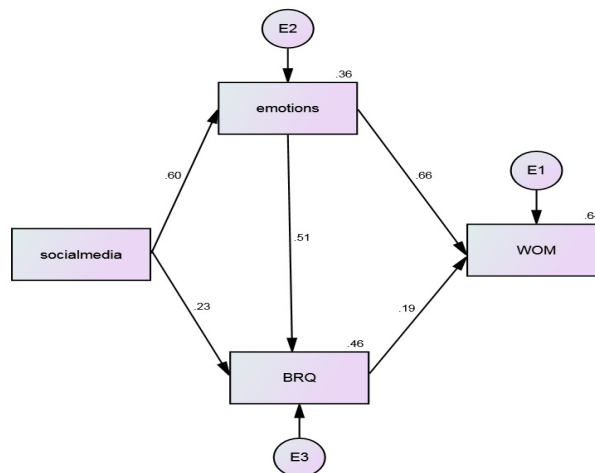


As each of the variables of social media, emotional dependence and quality of brand relations had different effects on word of mouth, the model fitting is not possible by maximum likelihood by latent variables. IN other words, covariance relations between each of dimensions of variables, latent variables are not entered in the model and to interpret the relationship between each of main variables with each other, the effect of each of dimensions on dimensions of other variables is evaluated separately. Based on the model findings, we can say: Social media has positive impact on emotional dependence. Social media has positive effect on quality of brand relations. Emotional dependence has positive effect on quality of brand relations. Quality of brand relations has positive effect on word of mouth. Emotional dependence has positive effect on word of mouth. Based on the significance levels of effects of each of factors, we can present the results of study hypotheses test as:

1. Social media has positive effect on emotional dependence to brand.
2. Social media has positive effect on quality of brand relations.
3. Emotional dependence has positive effect on word of mouth.
4. Emotional dependence to brand has positive effect on quality of brand relations.
5. Quality of brand relations has positive effect on word of mouth.

The study hypotheses are supported. As we can not rank the share of each of these factors based on non-standard path coefficients, estimation of standardized path coefficient is shown in Chart 2.

**Chart 2: Factor loads estimation at standard state**





Based on standardized path coefficients for each of factors, we can rank the share of independent variables on word of mouth as:

1. Emotional dependence (Loading=-0.66)
2. Quality of brand relations (Loading=0.19)

To evaluate goodness of fit of study structural model, goodness of fit indices of power and error of model are evaluated and the results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Results of goodness of fit tests**

Chi-square(p-value)	0.083 (0.773)
GFI(AGFI)	0.962 (0.952)
RMSEA	0.056
pr(RMSEA<0.05)	<b>0.390</b>

Findings of Table 1 show that significance level of model is bigger than first type error 0.05 and it shows the significant consistency of estimated model with the conceptual model of study. The GFI, AGFI indices are estimated bigger than empirical value 0.9 and these indices show good power of model in estimation of share of each of factors. The model error criterion to two fraction digits is zero and with probability 0.167, we can say this error is little. Based on the results of this Table, we can say the study model has good validity.

### **Additional Tests**

#### *The evaluation of the mean of study variables*

To evaluate the condition of each of study variables, One-Sample T Test is applied. Indeed, the difference between the mean of studied sample is tested with an assumed value. As shown in the results, significance coefficient for all variables is smaller than  $\alpha=0.05$ . Thus, for all variables as H0 as the mean of variable is equal to 3 is not supported. Two values in the column of confidence interval 95% (upper and lower limit) show that these values are positive. Positive lower and upper limit of this interval for all variables shows that the mean of all variables is above 3. The results of analysis of mean of data show that t-statistics value for all variables is bigger than critical value 1.96 and is in critical region of test and the difference mean of all variables from 3 is significant. Based on t-statistics for all variables, emotional dependence is good and then social media, word of mouth and brand relations quality are used. Generally, all study variables have good condition.

***The comparison of the difference of mean of variables among men and women subjects***

Regarding word of mouth variable, significance coefficient is bigger than 0.05 and H<sub>0</sub> is supported. It means that the mean of word of mouth among women and men has no significant difference. In other words, gender is not effective on word of mouth but regarding the brand relations quality, social media, emotional dependence as significance coefficient is less than 0.05, H<sub>0</sub> is rejected. This means that the mean of these variables among men and women has significant difference. The comparison of the mean of mentioned dimension among men and women shows that the mean of these variables in women is more than the sample men. In other words, quality of brand relations, social media, emotional dependence to Dent are more in women compared to that of men. It can be said that gender of people is effective on quality of brand relations, social media and their emotional dependence.

***The comparison of the mean of study variables in various degree levels***

To find about the effect of demographic variables, One Way Anova test is used. Based on the results, for social media, emotional dependence, word of mouth and brand relations quality, based on the difference of mean and significance coefficient smaller than 0.05 (error coefficient), it can be said there is significant difference in the mean of mentioned variables in terms of different education. For exact evaluation of these variables, LST test is used. It can be said, using social media in sample people is increased with the increase of education. In other words, people with higher education apply social media better than people with lower education. It can be said emotional dependence of sample people to brand is increased with the higher education. In other words, people with higher education have higher emotional dependence to brand compared to people with lower education. It can be said, word of mouth of people to brand is increased with the increase of education. In other words, people with higher education have higher word of mouth to brand compared to those with lower education. Also, the quality of brand relations of sample people to brand is increased with the increase of education. In other words, people with high education have better brand relations to Danet brand compared to people with low education.

***The comparison of the mean of study variables in different age levels***

To find about the effect, One Way ANOVA test is used. For social media, emotional dependence, word of mouth and brand relations quality, based on the little difference of mean and significant coefficient bigger than 0.05 (error coefficient), it can be said that there is no significant difference in the mean of mentioned variable in terms of different sectors of activity.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of study, first hypothesis we can say social media has positive effect on emotional dependence to brand. Thus, first hypothesis is supported and we can say social media in this study population is good and has positive effect on emotional dependence of Danet users. In explanation of such result, a few studies have been conducted about social network sites. The evidences (Michaelidou et al., 2011) show that social media is of great importance for business to business companies. Indeed, business to business companies can use social media namely social network sites as Facebook and LinkedIn to establish relationship with customers and suppliers and can create relationship and trust and identification of future partners in terms of business to business activities. It is said that social media and namely SNS can use brands, including business-business brands via creating the relationship between companies in these environments (Berthon et al., 2003; Pitt et al., 2006). This result of study is consistent with a part of results of Angella J. Kim, Eunju (2012). Second hypothesis based on findings of study is as social media has positive effect on quality of brand relations. Thus, second hypothesis of study is supported and we can say social media is performed well and has positive effect on quality of brand relations. We can say attention to customer is one of the most valuable assets of company, new view in marketing and it states that any organization by keeping relationship with customers can increase the value of durability of customers. Improving the relationship with customers can lead to their support of organization and it is a vital source for future benefits of organization and market opportunities as they deal with the verbal statements of products and organization services (Bolton, 2004). Vrieset al., (2012) in a study "Popularity of Brand Posts on Brand Fan Pages: An Investigation of the Effects of Social Media Marketing" showed that brand post on the above of brand fans page increased the fame of brand post. The findings of study showed that different factors were effective on the number of likes and comments. In other words, interactive and transparent features of brand post can increase the number of likes. The result of this study is consistent with the results of study of Vries et al., (2012) and Hudson et al., (2015). Third hypothesis is based on the findings of study as emotional dependence has positive effect on word of mouth. Thus, third hypothesis of study is supported and we can say emotional dependence to Danet brand is well and it has positive effect on word of mouth. This result of study is consistent with a part of results of study of Esmail and Spinly (2012), Yasin and Shamim (2013) and Hudson et al., (2015). Fourth hypothesis based on findings of study show that emotional dependence to brand has positive effect on quality of brand relations. Thus, fourth hypothesis of study is supported and we can say emotional dependence to Danet brand is well and it has positive effect on quality of brand relations. Customer satisfaction is the collective result of

perception, evaluation and physiological reaction of customer to the experience of goods consumption or service experience. Electronic trading, has eliminated the difference between final users and online customers and the need to combine technology and marketing elements is increased (this need is increased in internet environment). Online customers satisfaction is not determined merely by the features of product or service and interaction of customer with system is important in formation of this satisfaction (Yanlio et al., 2006). This result is consistent with the results of study of Albert & Merunka (2013) and Hudson et al., (2015). Fifth hypothesis based on findings of study shows that quality of brand relations has positive effect on word of mouth. Thus, fifth hypothesis is supported and we can say brand relations is done well and it has positive effect on word of mouth. The researches show that perceived character of brand is effective on the power of relationship of consumer with these brands over time (Aaker et al., 2004). If the users feel that the purchased brand has positive attitude to their concerns and their value system is perceived, the users support the brand by buying it and this is consistent with the results of study of Hudson et al., (2015).

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