MICRO-MOMENTS THAT MATTER: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN USER EXPECTATIONS OF MICRO-MOMENTS AND MOBILE DESIGN UTILITIES

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Various 'moments of truth' have been defined as critical to consumer engagement (Hui, Huang, Suher and Inman, 2013). As technology advances, the marketing funnel of yesteryear is particularly reshaped to include moments of mobile engagement (Luo, Andrews, Fang and Phang, 2014), with the most recent development being termed a micro-moment. Micro-moments are brief and occur in real-time, when a consumer spontaneously reaches for a mobile phone to get an immediate, contextually relevant solution to a need or want (Bernoff, 2014). Primarily mobile-mediated, micro-moments are a by-product of the widespread adoption of smartphones, with consumers increasingly turning to these devices for self-initiated, convenient bursts of digital activity. And although primarily driven by mobile, the consequences of the micro-moment phenomenon eddy out across devices, screens and channels, to affect the entire consumer journey.

Of particular interest to marketers is the conative level of intent with which users approach mobile-mediated micro-moments, with the interaction often being highly-purposive and goal-oriented. The customer journey might be fragmented into small bursts of activity, but the implicit intentionality of the behaviour offers marketers the opportunity to inject these moments with value. To gauge how marketers may approach value creation in fleeting moments of consumer mobile engagement, this study seeks to explore the relationship between the user expectations of micro-moments and mobile design utilities. As an interdisciplinary and establishing field, service design thinking will be employed, as it strategically addresses the complexity of a multi-touchpoint, cross media consumer mindset, prevalent in the ever-evolving digital landscape (Miettinen and Kuure, 2013). With increased value-exchange (context-dependently defined), being the objective of consumer engagement, service design approaches the full service experience from a system oriented trans-user/-producer point of view, to examine the process holistically (Grönroos and Voima, 2013).

Using an exploratory, non-experimental design, user expectations of mobile-mediated micro-moments, relating specifically to utilitarian expectations are explored. The study proposes a conceptual user-centric, mobile-mediated micro-moment model, based on user expectations and the mostly intrinsic utilities of mobile phones and mostly extrinsic design capabilities of mobile phones.

Academic and empirical research relating to micro-moment consumer behaviour is limited, this research will thus assist in theory building on the subject. Similarly, this is the first academic study to explore micro-moment consumer behaviour in an emerging market context. By concentrating on the relationship between a single touchpoint to achieve a specific consumer-defined expectation, this focused approach to channel engagement aims to provide rich insight into user-controlled search activities- and expectations. In conclusion, the pragmatic exploration of user expectations and utilities of mobile, provides an opportunity for researchers and marketing managers to identify other channel and device possibilities for consumer engagement, introducing other emerging fields for future digital marketing exploration.

References

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