Investigating value, loyalty, and trust as determinants of purchase intention on the Pinterest social media network

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Abstract: This paper makes a contribution in the investigation of constructs of value, loyalty, and trust as determinants of purchase intention on the Pinterest social media network, and shows gender variations in engagement and use of Pinterest, relative to other social media. Using the Pinterest social media network, the specific purpose of this study is to investigate constructs of value, loyalty, trust, and the impact of these constructs on purchase intention. Data were gathered from a sample of 357 respondents in the Southeast USA. Constructs of value, loyalty, and trust were tested with good Cronbach alpha results, and found to be determinants of purchase intention. Females had significantly higher scores on these constructs. Engagement varied significantly among social media. Among those with significant gender differences, females had higher engagement, with Pinterest showing the largest relative female-male difference.

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1   Introduction

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube have received a lot of attention from marketers as customers use these platforms to consume and create information as a result of interaction with other users and brands. In the new digital model, companies collaborate and co-create marketing messages using Web 2.0 tools on social media networks (Kao et al., 2016; Abeza et al., 2018). In recent years, realising the potential offered by social media networks, companies are spending a large portion of their marketing budget to develop and maintain a social media presence. Companies are finding new ways to promote their products by posting information, photos, videos, and other brand-related multimedia content to help consumers with their purchase decision (Thackeray et al., 2008). The phenomena of *like*, *pin*, *tweet*, and *follow* have created a new paradigm for engagement, interaction and communication. Furthermore, consumers' attitudes toward a brand's social media have been found to be positively related to loyalty, awareness, and purchase intention for that brand (Arli, 2017). The value offered by social media networks may possibly depend on antecedents of loyalty and trust. Despite documented advantages of social media networking (Daugherty et al., 2008; Fogel, 2010), companies face challenges in identifying complex constructs such as value, loyalty, and trust that could impact purchase intention towards a product or brand.

Since personal information along with demographic and psychographic data can be considered to be a form of social capital for companies that offer personalised services, there is a need to investigate why consumers are attracted to a particular social media network, and why there is more engagement on larger social media networks (such as Facebook) compared to other smaller platforms (such as Pinterest) that offer a similar paradigm of sharing information and content. Using the Pinterest social media network, the specific purpose of this study was to investigate constructs of value, loyalty, trust, engagement, and the impact of these constructs on purchase intention. This current research uses the technology acceptance model (TAM) which focuses on perceived usefulness and ease of use for a system to be widely accepted by users (Davis et al., 1989). It is expected that results of this study could provide marketers additional insights into using differentiated marketing opportunities by leveraging a niche audience in smaller social media platform such as Pinterest.

Table 1 Constructs, scale items and reliability coefficient of scale measures

Construct and scale items	Cronbach's α
Value	.85
1 Using Pinterest is a productive use of my time	
2 Pinterest improves my quality of life	
3 Using Pinterest will provide me with long-term benefits	
4 Pinterest provides me with useful ideas that are not available on other social media sites	
Loyalty	.84
1 I prefer using Pinterest over other social media sites	
2 I have visited Pinterest more than any other social media site	
3 If another Pinterest type website is available, I will continue to prefer using Pinterest	
4 I have encouraged people I know to sign up with Pinterest	
Trust	.71
1 Pinterest provides a platform that encourages useful information exchange	
2 It does not bother me when Pinterest asks me for personal information	
3 I am willing to provide my credit card number to Pinterest when making purchases	
4 I am not concerned about my personal privacy when pinning items of interest on Pinterest	
Purchase intention	.76
1 Browsing through items on Pinterest can influence my purchase decision	
2 After I use Pinterest, I feel like making a purchase	
3 I feel good about buying an item I saw on Pinterest	

In this paper, social media networks refer to online social media networks such as Facebook and Pinterest that are accessible using the internet. The constructs of social media value, loyalty, and trust used in this paper are more fully detailed later in the paper, and are operationalised in Table 1. However, since a shared understanding of these constructs will be beneficial before proceeding much further, a brief explanation is provided here. Value includes specific characteristics which are beneficial to the customer such as saving time, generating new ideas, and other benefits. Loyalty refers to preference for a particular social media channel even when other alternatives are available. Trust implies having sufficient confidence in the social media channel to share personal information or credit card details. Based on review of literature related to specific social media networks and platforms which show few empirical studies, we find that there is a need to conduct a study that can explain user behaviour on a niche social media network. For the purpose of this study, we identify a niche network as one that relates to products, services, or interests that appeal to a specialised section of the population. One such smaller social media network is Pinterest which has gained popularity among the category of smaller niche networks. Pinterest has grown from 104 million monthly visits in 2012 (Wasserman, 2012) to 150 million monthly visits in 2015 (Chaykowski, 2016), to 250 million monthly visits in 2018 (Griffith, 2018; Aslam,

2018). In April 2019, Pinterest became a publicly traded company which can give it more opportunities for research and development which can further improve market share, revenue, and growth as a result of implementing innovative ideas.

The exponential growth in the use of Pinterest demonstrates its relevance as a niche social media network worthy of use in this study. Since Pinterest is a smaller social media network, it has a niche audience and may offer unique opportunities to be used as a promotional channel that may not exist in larger social media networks. Pinterest, as a social media network, has not received much attention in marketing research; there is more literature on Pinterest in the domains of human computer interface, psychology and information science (Hansen et al., 2012; Gilbert et al., 2013; Linder et al., 2014; Mull and Lee, 2014) as compared to business and marketing studies, thus research to date has not adequately examined value, loyalty, and trust issues related to Pinterest from a marketing perspective.

2   Review of literature

Companies advertise on different social media networks based on their target markets. By using Pinterest to promote products or services, companies aim to build social capital by engaging customers in promotional activities within the Pinterest platform. The result of building social capital can be acquisition of new customers or retaining loyal users (Diffley et al., 2011) by forging relationships with users, and forming interactive communities around a brand or a product. While Facebook has been shown to be a powerful advertising platform to generate sales (Tucker, 2014), many companies such as Lowe's, Honda, Kraft Foods, Whole Foods, Sony, and Nordstrom also have started using smaller social media networks such as Pinterest as a marketing channel.

TAM has been used in previous research to examine the adoption of different technology systems such as productivity and presentation software, groupware and collaborative systems, internet browsers, and trust issues when using technology (Adams et al., 1992; Dasgupta et al., 2002; Keat and Mohan, 2004). In recent years, due to the popularity of online social media networks such as Facebook and Pinterest, additional research has been done to apply social network theories to the current generation of online social media networks (Ellison, 2007; Seidman, 2013; John et al., 2017). There is a need to examine social communication conventions and online social interaction with marketing content embedded in online social media systems as it may impact customer engagement with a brand or product. Since Pinterest relies on user acceptance of a technology system for the purpose of interacting within the system, the TAM (Davis et al., 1989) was considered relevant to this study. The TAM model was extended and revised by Venkatesh and Davis (2000) to include social influence, which is a relevant element in today's social media networks because of user interaction exhibiting social influence within the networks. By conducting a meta-analysis of studies that used different personal behaviour theories, Ngai et al. (2015) had found the use of TAM for social media research to be widespread to investigate scenarios with respect to different social media technologies.

Since online social networks involve communication between users, Rauniar et al. (2014) investigated user behaviour on Facebook by further extending the Venkatesh and Davis (2000) TAM model. In further extension to the previous TAM model, the fact that technology systems could be used for personal use outside of organisational settings by individual users, as well as on personal devices, was added. Further, the role of other users in influencing an individual's attitude towards social media, and consequently affecting usage behaviour, was also considered. New constructs such as critical mass, capability, and perceived playfulness (which are similar to engagement construct in our study) were added to the revised model. Rauniar et al. (2014, p.9) posited that "…the psychological concept of social influence is rooted from the assumption that a person's behavior is heavily influenced by the behavior and presence of others. Therefore, the mass of users in social media connected to a user could be a critical component to explain the social media usage behaviour." In this revised TAM model, an important finding related to this Pinterest study was that value and trust were positively related with intention to use Facebook. As a follow-up and extension to previous research by Rauniar et al. (2014), in this study, we wanted to specifically investigate constructs of value, loyalty and trust as determinants of purchase intention within Pinterest.

2.1   Value

Social commerce is beneficial to companies and users if both parties derive value as a result of interaction on social network websites. While the value of social networks for businesses has been clearly demonstrated in terms of activities such as branding, sales, customer service and product development (Culnan et al., 2010), the value to the user is derived from benefits such as useful information obtained from the social network that relates to improved personal productivity, a better quality of life, and curation of ideas and their implementation to improve lifestyle. Consumers receive value from a company that answers questions using the social network platform and is able to consistently demonstrate creation of unique content that appeals to the user-base and promotes further discussion. For example, Pinterest first started as a browsing platform for idea curation; however, to create value, it later added the capability to directly purchase products that were previously available only on a company's website where the user had to go to make the purchase.

Value creation occurs when companies facilitate sharing of information by helping users create stories around a product. This is easily done in Pinterest due to the visual nature of the medium. For example, Lowe's uses promotional messages to encourage people to post pictures of their rooms with certain paints and furnishings that are pinned by Lowe's as products available for sale. By creating a community around a product, item, or brand, users are able to personalise a product by showing how the product has helped improve their lifestyle. By using a social media platform, the idea of sharing personal stories can create further interaction between multiple stakeholders including the consumer, other members of the network, product/item/brand and the company. Culnan et al. (2010) noted that community building in social media will create business value which can help create new content that the customers generate. This value-added content can then be used for research and development while providing a source of ideas and shared creativity for other members of the community. Laroche et al. (2013) further found that users who find value in a social network can enhance brand loyalty through

the enhancement of brand trust. Based on the above information for the value construct, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1a   Value characteristics of users will be positively associated with purchase intention on Pinterest.

Note: the constructs of value, loyalty, trust, and purchase intention which form the basis of our hypotheses, are operationalised in Table 1.

2.2   *Loyalty*

Fournier (1998) perceived brand loyalty as an affect-laden partnership between consumers and brands. This partnership is further moderated when there is social influence from other members of the community. A better definition of virtual community loyalty, which is both behavioural as well as attitudinal (and which is more relevant to this study), was offered by Reichheld and Schefter (2000) who defined virtual community loyalty as the degree to which a member of a social network creates and shares information continuously. Nearly two decades later, social media networks are types of virtual communities in which active participation by users encourages membership from others, and provides a feeling of fellowship with other members. Interaction with other group members in the social network over a long-term causes a psychological attachment and creates loyal users of the community because of the motivation to visit and participate in the social network and results in deriving value from the social network (Ridings et al., 2002; Nisar and Whitehead, 2016).

Social networks strive to gain users who maintain loyalty towards the network thus increasing the chances that users will visit the social networking site and engage with content, other users, and develop purchase intention towards products and services displayed on the social network. Zeithaml et al. (1996) define loyalty as behavioural intention to keep using a specific brand in the future. Loyalty can be a result of interactions with marketing messages from the company or interactions with users who share the same belief about a product, brand or company. It has been found that satisfaction, trust, and commitment are antecedents to loyalty (Dorsch et al., 1998; Rezaei and Ismail, 2014), and that loyalty is positively associated with purchase intention (Arli, 2017). There is a need to investigate loyalty in niche platforms such as Pinterest. Based on above information for the loyalty construct (operationalised in Table 1), we propose the following hypothesis:

H1b   Loyalty characteristics of users will be positively associated with purchase intention on Pinterest.

2.3   *Trust*

Trust was identified as one of the barriers to purchase intention in early ecommerce research and has often been linked to other related factors such as security and risk perception (Chang et al., 2005; Kim, 2007). Trust has been defined as confidence in a brand's consistency, honesty and reliability (Wang and Emurian, 2005). It helps establish emotional ties with consumers which can lead to consumers feeling more comfortable while browsing or shopping on the website. Habibi et al. (2014) identified trust as an element critical to consumers shopping online. The success of any social media platform

is mediated by trust, which will result in increased user involvement and participation in a user-friendly environment (Hazari et al., 2017). While social media can provide access to information and interpersonal communication, researchers such as Culnan and Armstrong (1999) and Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) expressed strong concerns over the dangers of intense social media involvement. This caution is because of personal and sensitive information that can compromise personal privacy and lead to misuse of shared data. Misuse of data by firms has a negative connotation of trust between consumers and firms (Jones and Leonard, 2008). Users trust social media networks if there is transparency in disclosing the privacy policy and how information is handled (Flavián and Guinalíu, 2006; Walrave et al., 2018). As social media users create and share their information, the users must feel their privacy is intact and trust the social media site with their related activities (Mahrous, 2011; Rauniar et al., 2014).

User control of privacy levels that are easy to understand and implement may increase trust and loyalty for the social media network. User-generated content by a member who can be considered a social influencer because of high participation in the network may result in other members having a high trust level in the recommendation for a product or service that is shared on the social network. Weisberg et al. (2011) showed that social context is an important factor that influences trust, and Hajli (2014) also found that trust is the most important factor in determining users' intention to buy. As a result of above information, for Pinterest users, it may be possible to achieve higher level of trust if users perceive the Pinterest platform to offer reliable information, maintain a high level of security, protect users' privacy, and facilitate sharing of content in social context that holds value which may lead to purchase intention.

2.4   Purchase intention

Mann and Ghuman (2018) found that there are two routes by which corporate brand associations can influence purchase intention of consumers – by affecting their cognitive responses or by influencing their affective responses towards the company. Howard and Sheth (1969) identified purchase intention as a cognitive state that reflects a consumer's intent to making a purchase in a specified time period. Intention to purchase is affected by many factors which have been explored by researchers from several disciplines including psychology, behavioural science, and economics where researchers identified more than 80 variables as antecedents to purchase intention (Chang et al., 2005). Purchase intention has also been shown to have a positive impact on an individual's action (Chandon et al., 2005; Ling et al., 2010). Pinterest encourages users to create trust and build a community around ideas. Pins that have a high number of repins and discussions from users have the potential for increased purchase intention. Since Pinterest is a visual medium with large images that capture attention, companies have created unique promotions by using product ideas, as well as shared photos and videos on Pinterest to inspire uses to buy their products. Rohm and Swaminathan (2004) and Allred et al. (2006) found convenience, variety of products, consumers' attitudes towards online shopping, and social interaction with other users creates a positive attitude towards shopping online and increasing subsequent purchasing behaviour.

Based on above information for the trust and purchase intention constructs (operationalised in Table 1), we propose the following hypothesis:

H1c   Trust characteristics of users will be positively associated with purchase intention on Pinterest.

2.5   *Gender differences*

Tsichla et al. (2016) observed that, given the tremendous role of social media platforms in the contemporary marketplace, it is critical that marketers thoroughly understand user preferences and gender differences in order to construct a platform that kindles interests of users and accommodates their varying needs. It is well documented in marketing literature that males and females respond differently to advertising that is tailored to their specific needs or social roles (Brunel and Nelson, 2000; Dahl et al., 2009). There is a difference in cognitive styles of males and females, which has implications for social media advertising effectiveness. Papyrina (2015) noted that if there is an opportunity for detailed information processing with advertising content, females engage in systematic consideration of message content. For the same type of content, males ignore the details and process the advertisement in a heuristic manner (moderate level of cognitive effort). Pinterest provides both types of opportunities by having Pins in different categories and subcategories that can appeal to users irrespective of gender.

Han et al. (2015) reported that Pinterest male and female users showed different behaviours on different topics in terms of dedication, responsiveness and sentiment. Ottoni et al. (2013) also investigated gender roles on Pinterest and found that females reciprocate more, have higher involvement and interaction, and use words that convey affection and positive emotion. They also found that males are more assertive in communication and consider themselves as specialists. Females make more use of the commercial nature of Pinterest while males curate items that are related to their personal taste. Sanchez-Franco et al. (2009, p.196) investigated gender as a moderating effect on loyalty towards online service providers and found that the "influence of trust on commitment and commitment on loyalty was significantly stronger for females than males, while effect of satisfaction on commitment, and of trust on loyalty were significantly stronger for males." Also, Lim et al. (2014) noted significant gender differences in the evaluation of social media sites with females consistently showing higher social media site satisfaction and loyalty than males. These findings are relevant to our study because Pinterest has more female users than male users, and investigation of gender differences for the loyalty construct that we identified in the study could have implications for marketers. As can be seen from the above discussion, it is relevant to study gender differences in the Pinterest social media network as these differences may provide relevant opportunities for marketers. Based on above information about gender differences, we propose the following hypotheses:

H2a   Males and females will have significant differences in value, loyalty, trust, and purchase intention towards the Pinterest platform.

H2b   The different social media platforms will show significantly different engagement (as measured by hours per week spent on the social media platform).

H2c   The different social media platforms will show significant gender differences as measured by engagement (hours spent per week on each media platform).

H2d Since Pinterest is considered more of a female-oriented social media platform, among those platforms which show a significant gender difference in use, the gender difference will be the greatest for Pinterest.

2.6 Engagement

Engagement is the interaction of consumers with marketing promotions of a company or a brand. In the digital environment, a consumer usually interacts with a company's website or social media channel such as Pinterest. It is essential to offer users value-based engagement which leads to trust and, as a result, higher interaction that a user will engage on the social media platform. A high value proposition is evidenced by users spending more time on the website and sharing content within the network as well as on external connected networks. Engagement is used by many digital analytics programs as a metric to determine success of social media marketing campaigns. Specific to Pinterest promotions, engagement can be related to the number of pins, repins, or creating related boards as a result of being inspired by ideas presented by companies and other users on Pinterest. This sharing and creating new content could increase results which are directly related to social media interaction and engagement (Sterne, 2010).

Users engage on social media platforms at different levels of interaction. Ashley and Tuten (2015) observed that, although marketers are creating content for social media platforms, there is more research needed on how different variables may affect engagement. They noted that engagement may be affected by needs, goals, and motivation of the consumer as a result of previous interaction or awareness with a brand. Fang et al. (2013) found that online consumers' attitudes and purchase intention can be greatly influenced by cognitive, psychological, and demographic characteristics. Based on the preceding review of the literature suggesting these relationships, we propose the following hypotheses:

H3a The following variables are determinants of engagement with Pinterest (hours/week spent on Pinterest):

    1 gender

    2 age

    3 years of social media use

    4 times/week on social media websites

    5 time spent per session on social media.

Note that H3a(4) and H3a(5) refer to social media sites *in general* while engagement with Pinterest refers specifically to hours per week spent on Pinterest.

H3b Value, loyalty, trust, and engagement with Pinterest (hours/week spent on Pinterest) are determinants of purchase intention.

Figure 1 shows a conceptual model which incorporates all the hypotheses listed above.

Figure 1   Conceptual model of hypotheses and association between constructs (see online version for colours)
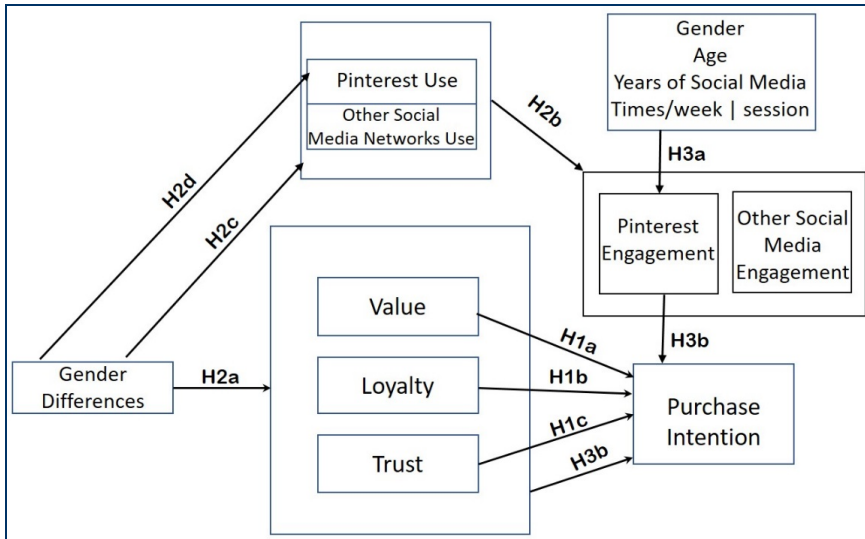
Note: Relationship between constructs shown in the conceptual model depicts associations, but does not imply causation.

3   Method

A survey was developed by the authors with construct measures using the review of literature referenced above. The survey was delivered using an online software platform. Following the introduction section in the survey, which included the informed consent, the survey asked for information related to general social media use and specific Pinterest use, along with other information such as frequency of using social media, devices on which social media is accessed, and different social media platforms used. After the general information items, the participants were asked to enter their familiarity level with the Pinterest social media platform. For non-users of Pinterest, the survey then branched to other sections where reasons for not using Pinterest were asked. All participants were presented randomised Likert scale items related to the constructs in the study. These statements included information related to value, loyalty, trust and purchase intention. The five-point Likert response scale ranged from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.' An additional column, 'cannot answer', was also provided to differentiate from responses that respondents may have otherwise selected as 'undecided.' Survey items captured participant preferences related to the items under investigation in this study. The survey then asked for demographic information such as age, gender and employment status. IRB approval was obtained from the university committee to administer the survey to students. Quantitative data were gathered through a questionnaire-based survey of 357 undergraduate business students enrolled at a university in the Southeast United States. Although there is a debate on using convenience samples of college students as subjects in research studies (Peterson and Merunka, 2014), the observations of

Pragnell (2012) and Aslam (2018), who noted that Pinterest has a younger customer-base, provided some support for a student sample being relevant in this study.

Prior to administration of the survey, it was pilot tested with a group of respondents that included faculty and students (not counted in the actual sample). Feedback from the group was incorporated in the final version of the survey that was given to respondents included in this study. Content validity of survey items was established by two faculty members in the Marketing Department in College of Business. The items in the questionnaire which were used to create the constructs of value, loyalty, trust and purchase intention were pilot tested and subsequently subjected to reliability analysis, the results of which are shown in Table 1. Since these were new constructs specific to the Pinterest platform and developed to test the hypotheses developed for the study, we relied on the review of literature to identify related scales in previous studies that measured similar constructs. The selected items from the review of literature were modified to conform to the context of the Pinterest study.

4 Scale measures

For the Pinterest value construct, indicator items were modified from research conducted by Culnan et al. (2010), Nair (2011) and Kim and Ko (2012). Items included statements that asked about productive use of time when interacting with other users or content on Pinterest website, whether Pinterest provides value by improving quality of life, long-term perceived benefits of using Pinterest, differentiation of unique content available from Pinterest website, and curation of ideas on Pinterest that are not available on other social media networking sites. For the Pinterest loyalty construct, indicator items were modified from research conducted by Bloemer and de Ruyter (1998), Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), Anderson and Srinivasan (2003), Brakus et al. (2009) and Laroche et al. (2013). Items included statements that asked about preference for using Pinterest over other websites, engagement with Pinterest website content as compared to other social media networks, Pinterest alternatives, and creating network effect by encouraging other connections to sign up on Pinterest.

For the Pinterest trust construct, indicator items were modified from research conducted by Culnan and Armstrong (1999), Dwyer et al. (2007), Pentina et al. (2013), Rauniar et al. (2014) and Mvungi and Iwaihara (2015). Items included statements that asked about Pinterest platform privacy and security issues, information seeking, useful benefits of Pins, giving up of personal information on Pinterest website, providing and/or storing credit cards numbers on the website, and personal privacy related to shared content. For the purchase intention construct, indicator items were modified from research conducted by Ling et al. (2010), Allred et al. (2006), Fang et al. (2013) and Dai et al. (2014). Items included statements that asked about browsing behaviour on Pinterest, motivation for purchase decision, personal interest in purchases, and post-purchase emotions as a result of purchase decisions.

Reliability analysis of scales and subscales was conducted and it was found that each construct exceeded the recommended Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient (α) value of 0.7 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1995). The α value for the constructs, and the scale items that constitute each construct, are shown in Table 1.

5   Data analysis and results

Table 2 shows demographic characteristics of respondents which included profiles related to gender, age, social media expertise, device preferences and session time. Participants were also asked about their familiarity and experience with Pinterest.

Table 2   Demographic information

Measure	Items	n	%
Gender	Male	139	42.6
	Female	187	57.4
Age	18–25	299	92.3
	26–50	23	7.1
	Over 51	2	0.6
Social media expertise (*self-perceived*)	Beginner	13	4.0
	Intermediate	148	45.0
	Expert	168	51.1
Devices used for accessing social media	Smartphone	308	93.6
	Tablet	3	0.9
	Laptop	14	4.3
	Desktop	4	1.2
Average social media session time	< 30 minutes	215	65.5
	30–60 minutes	91	27.7
	> 60 minutes	22	6.7
Pinterest familiarity	Not familiar at all	86	26.3
	Somewhat familiar	123	37.2
	Very familiar	121	36.6

Independent sample t-tests of differences between means and regressions were performed to test the set of aforementioned hypotheses. The results are presented in the following sections and in Tables 3–7c.

5.1   Purchase intention

H1a hypothesised that value characteristics of users would be positively associated with purchase intention on Pinterest.

H1b hypothesised that loyalty characteristics of users would be positively associated with purchase intention on Pinterest.

H1c hypothesised that trust characteristics of users would be positively associated with purchase intention on Pinterest.

All three hypotheses were tested together. The results of a regression analysis with purchase intention as the dependent variable and value, loyalty and trust as independent variables is provided in Table 3.

We note that, while the level of significance for loyalty is marginally over 0.05, all three variables are positively associated with purchase intention. Thus, H1a and H1c are supported.

Table 3   Test of model of purchase intention

Dependent variable: purchase intention		
Adj. R^2	0.657	
F	205.907	
Sig. F	0.000	
	β value	*Sig.*
Value	0.323	.000
Loyalty	0.107	.054
Trust	0.465	.000

5.2   Gender differences

H2a hypothesised that males and females would have significant differences in value, loyalty, trust, and purchase intention towards the Pinterest platform.

The results of tests of gender differences are reported in Table 4.

Table 4   Gender differences in value, loyalty, trust and purchase intention

Group statistics			*t*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*	*Mean difference*
	Gender	*Mean*			
Value composite	Male	2.904	–5.858	0.000	–0.641
	Female	3.545	–5.471	0.000	
Loyalty composite	Male	2.382	–4.233	0.000	–0.511
	Female	2.892	–4.140	0.000	
Trust composite	Male	2.842	–4.351	0.000	–0.449
	Female	3.291	–3.996	0.000	
Purchase intention	Male	2.943	–5.821	0.000	–0.674
	Female	3.617	–5.478	0.000	

H2a is supported. Females have significantly higher scores on value, loyalty, trust and purchase intention. In fact, in gender tests, in every variable for which a significant difference is found, females have the significantly higher score.

H2b hypothesised that the different social media would show significantly different engagement (as measured by hours per session) when using the social media platform. While H2b is not strictly speaking a test of gender differences, it is necessary to analyse this one first, relative to the gender tests of H2d. So, before we examine gender differences in social media, it is appropriate to examine the engagement (in hours per week) spent on each medium. This is shown in Figure 2, which is indicative of support for H2b. An ANOVA provides additional validation; this is reported after Figure 2.

Figure 2   Engagement with (hours per week spent on) each social media platform
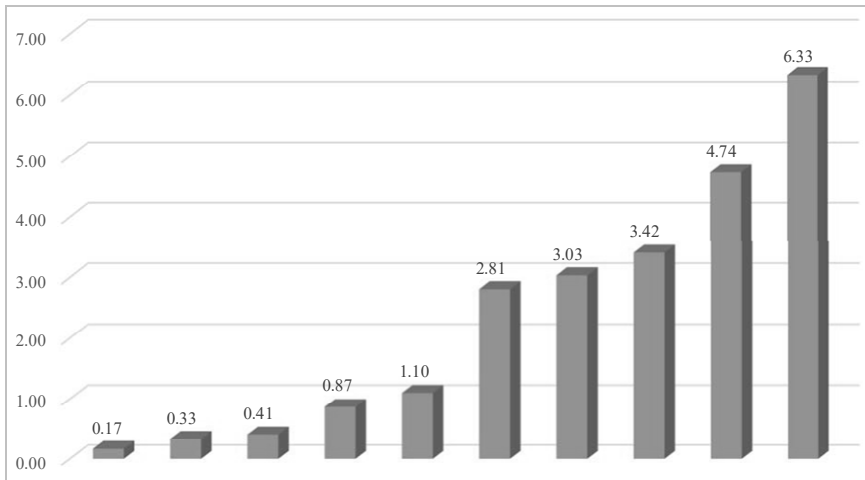
Unsurprisingly, the ANOVA on this data shows a very significant difference in engagement between the social media platforms (F = 45.51, p < 0.001). Thus, H2b is supported.

The same analysis was repeated separately for males and females. Both genders separately showed very significant difference in engagement between the social media platforms: $F_m = 27.26$, $p_m < 0.001$ and $F_f = 28.11$, $p_f < 0.001$. Females showed even greater significance in the difference in engagement between the social media platforms.

The next two hypotheses are analysed together in Table 5. H2c hypothesised that the different social media platforms would show significant gender differences as measured by engagement (hours/session), and H2d hypothesised that, since Pinterest is considered more of a female-oriented social media platform, among those platforms which show a significant gender difference in use, the gender difference would be the greatest for Pinterest.

Table 5   Gender differences in engagement with social media platforms

Hours per week spent on	Gender	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)	Female engagement – Male engagement	Average engagement (both genders)	Female engagement – Male engagement, as a percentage of average engagement
Pinterest	Male	0.07	0.000	1.44	0.87	166%
	Female	1.51	0.000			
Facebook	Male	2.26	0.000	2.20	3.42	64%
	Female	4.46	0.000			
Instagram	Male	2.71	0.001	3.69	4.74	78%
	Female	6.40	0.000			
Snapchat	Male	3.40	0.001	5.45	6.33	86%
	Female	8.85	0.000			

Table 5 reports on independent samples t-tests performed to test for gender differences within each social media platform represented in Figure 2. Only those social media which showed a significant difference between genders are reported in Table 5; the other platforms did not show significant gender differences.

Each of the social media reported in Table 5 show significant gender differences, and all these cases, females have a significantly higher mean relative to males. Thus, H2c is supported only for Pinterest, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat as shown in Figure 2.

When we examine the difference between the genders, we find that the difference between female engagement and male engagement in terms of number of hours spent per week is highest for Snapchat, followed by Instagram, then Facebook, and finally Pinterest. On the face of it, this would appear to be inconsistent with H2d which postulated that, since Pinterest is considered more of a female-oriented social media platform, the female-male difference would be the greatest for Pinterest. However, we note that a simple raw difference in hours spent does not capture the relative difference between the genders since the average time spent on each of the four social media sites is vastly different. In fact, the raw differences simply follow the pattern of the average engagement. So, in the last column of Table 5, the difference between the genders *relative to* the average time spent (by both genders combined) is computed for each social media platform. We found that the difference between the genders relative to the average engagement is far greater for Pinterest than it is for the other social media. Thus, H2d is supported. As a matter of interest, we note that the second highest relative gender difference is found in Snapchat followed by Instagram, and then Facebook.

5.3   Pinterest use

H3a stated that the following variables are determinants of engagement with Pinterest (hours/week spent on Pinterest):

1   gender

2   age

3   years of social media use

4   times/week on social media websites

5   time spent per session on social media.

The results of these tests are shown in Table 6.

Table 6   Determinants of engagement with Pinterest: gender, age, years of social media use, times/week on social media websites and time spent per session

Dependent variable: engagement with Pinterest		
Adj. R^2	0.095	
F	34.369	
Sig. F	0.000	
	β value	*Sig.*
Gender	0.313	.001

Only one part of H3a is supported. Only gender was found to have a significant effect on engagement with Pinterest in this analysis, again supporting the general point that gender plays the major role in engagement with Pinterest.

H3b hypothesised that value, loyalty, trust, and engagement with Pinterest (hours/week spent on Pinterest) are determinants of purchase intention.

To test H3b, a regression was done with purchase intention as the dependent variable, and value, loyalty, trust, and engagement with Pinterest as the independent variables. This regression, shown in Table 7a, differs from that shown in Table 3, only in that engagement with Pinterest has been included in the set of independent variables to test if it is a determinant of purchase intention. Engagement was not found to have a significant effect, and loyalty had a marginally significant effect (0.053), but value and trust did have a significant effect. Thus, H3b is only partially supported.

However, when engagement with Pinterest is the only dependent variable used as a determinant of purchase intention, a significant effect is found as shown in Table 7b. So, it appears that the effect of engagement on purchase intention is suppressed because of the presence of value, trust, and to some extent, loyalty.

Table 7c shows correlation coefficients for these four variables showing that value, trust, and loyalty have much stronger and more significant correlations with purchase intention than does engagement, and that explains why, although engagement is significantly associated with purchase intention, its impact is suppressed in a regression with value, trust, and loyalty as independent variables.

Table 7a   Test of model of purchase intention with value, loyalty, trust and engagement as dependent variables

Dependent variable: purchase intention		
Adj. R^2	0.660	
F	104.788	
Sig. F	0.000	
	β value	*Sig.*
Value	0.326	.000
Loyalty	0.109	.053
Trust	0.462	.000
Engagement	–0.009	.828

Table 7b   Test of model of purchase intention with engagement as the dependent variable

Dependent variable: purchase intention		
Adj. R^2	0.019	
F	5.520	
Sig. F	0.020	
	β value	*Sig.*
Engagement	0.152	.020

Table 7c   Correlation coefficients of purchase intention, value, loyalty, trust and engagement as dependent variables

Correlations		Purchase intention composite	Hours/week spent on Pinterest	Value composite	Trust composite	Loyalty composite
Purchase intention composite	Pearson correlation	1	.152*	.754**	.765**	.614**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.020	.000	.000	.000
	N	235	235	227	218	229
Hours/week spent on Pinterest	Pearson correlation	.152*	1	.268**	.071	.280**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020		.000	.287	.000
	N	235	337	246	229	257
Value composite	Pearson correlation	.754**	.268**	1	.745**	.698**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	227	246	246	227	241
Trust composite	Pearson correlation	.765**	.071	.745**	1	.596**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.287	.000		.000
	N	218	229	227	229	224
Loyalty composite	Pearson correlation	.614**	.280**	.698**	.596**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	229	257	241	224	257

Notes: *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
         **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 8 shows a summary of hypothesis testing results for all the preceding tests.

Table 8   Summary table of hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis		Result
H1a	Value characteristics of users will be positively associated with purchase intention on Pinterest.	Supported
H1b	Loyalty characteristics of users will be positively associated with purchase intention on Pinterest.	Supported
H1c	Trust characteristics of users will be positively associated with purchase intention on Pinterest.	Supported
H2a	Males and females will have significant differences in value, loyalty, trust, and purchase intention towards the Pinterest platform.	Supported
H2b	The different social media platforms will show significantly different engagement (as measured by hours per week spent on the social media platform).	Supported
H2c	The different social media platforms will show significant gender differences as measured by engagement (hours spent per week on each media platform).	Supported for Pinterest, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat
H2d	Among those platforms which show a significant gender difference in use, the gender difference will be the greatest for Pinterest.	Supported

Table 8   Summary table of hypothesis testing results (continued)

Hypothesis		*Result*
H3a	The following variables are determinants of engagement with Pinterest (hours/week spent on Pinterest):	Supported only for gender
	1 gender	
	2 age	
	3 years of social media use	
	4 times/week on social media websites	
	5 time spent per session on social media.	
H3b	Value, loyalty, trust, and engagement with Pinterest (hours/week spent on Pinterest) are determinants of purchase intention.	Supported for value, loyalty and trust

6   Discussion and managerial implications

The findings of this Pinterest study are consistent with a previous Facebook study by Rauniar et al. (2014) which also used the TAM model. This study provides support for the revised TAM model by showing that value, loyalty, and trust are additional variables that are associated with interaction on another technology-based social network platform (Pinterest). The variables used in this study contribute to the prediction of Pinterest social media acceptance and usage behaviour. Empirical evidence was provided by this study that value, trust, and loyalty are significant determinants of engagement on a platform that uses social influence to impact purchase intention. This study specifically found that users' value characteristics are positively associated with purchase intention on Pinterest. Culnan et al. (2010) had identified community building as a foundation of social media implementation for companies. In addition to sales, virtual communities can be used to support branding, service, and new product development as a result of user input and participation which is derived from the loyalty and value experienced by customers on social media. Given that value creation occurs when companies help users create stories around a product, Pinterest is the ideal platform to facilitate the sharing of these stories. For example, companies can create promotional pins showcasing a product being used in a unique way, and caption it with request for customers to pin their own unique uses for the product. Thus, the original pin is shared as well as those created by consumers, creating a network effect and value that affects purchase intention.

    This study found that loyalty characteristics of users are associated with purchase intention. The Pinterest platform helps users feel connected to the brand. Social influence helps moderate loyalty if other members of the community on Pinterest also provide positive comments related to the brand. Companies can use the Pinterest platform to promote and demonstrate shared values that provide an insight into the belief behind the brand. This creates an emotional attachment to the brand (Dembek et al., 2016) which increases customer loyalty. Examples of shared value ideas on Pinterest might include a shoe company that donates a pair of shoes for each purchase made, or a company that lists customer service as its first priority. By sharing stories on Pinterest, customers can be made aware of how a company has a higher purpose that goes beyond generating revenue. Customer loyalty is related to trust, and McCole and Palmer (2002) identified

online customer trust as an antecedent to online purchasing. In this study, trust characteristics were positively associated with purchase intention on Pinterest. This extends prior findings of Gefen and Straub (2004) who found that higher customer trust when shopping on ecommerce websites leads to a higher degree of purchase intention. The finding of this study regarding trust is important because the inclusion of social influence on platforms such as Pinterest did not negatively affect trust characteristics. Pinterest can be used as a platform to build trust by engaging the customer and using boards to promote creative projects using the company's products. This provides social proof as visitors can get ideas from other users who have provided testimonials related to a company's product or brand. To increase loyalty and trust, companies should provide opportunities for users to discuss innovative ideas and take an active role in providing boards for engagement; such approaches may involve product promotions in conjunction with creative ideas that can result in organic brand advocacy.

By studying value, loyalty, and trust as determinants of purchase intention on Pinterest, it may be possible that businesses with smaller marketing budgets can use a promotional strategy that leverages the Pinterest platform to attract customers. Sevitt and Samuel (2013) feel that Pinterest marketing is underutilised as companies have not yet realised the power of this comparatively small social media platform. Pinterest has helped reverse the showrooming trend where consumers mostly visit brick and mortar stores to browse but then complete the purchase at an online store. Sevitt and Samuel (2013) found that many Pinterest users actually complete the purchase in the store for products that were seen on Pinterest. Companies can monetise Pinterest by running contests (for example, boards that feature innovative uses of the company's products on users' boards). The objectives of running such contests would be to attract new followers and to engage with the audience to create a loyal community of like-minded users. Using this study, marketers may be able to get a better understanding of social media platforms that can be designed with innovative features to promote higher levels of collaboration with content as well as other users. Additionally, Pinterest can be integrated into a company's marketing plan. The Pinterest platform can be used for lead generation, branding, sales, focus groups, market research, trend tracking, increasing awareness of new products and services (especially among consumers who may not be aware of a company's product or service), and demonstrating creative ways in which a product can be used.

McKay-Nesbitt et al. (2018) call for more research to help marketers seek ways to convert females' enjoyment of shopping into actual purchase behaviour. The demographic make-up of Pinterest users can shed light on segmentation strategies to be used for marketing purposes (Lipsman, 2015). Among several variables investigated for engagement with Pinterest in this study, we found gender to be the only variable that was a significant determinant of engagement with Pinterest. Therefore, marketers targeting a female demographic audience may find Pinterest most relevant among all social media platforms given that 70% of Pinterest users are female. Papyrina (2015) noted that gender differences exist in response to product advertising. Female shoppers engage with message content when there is more detailed information in text along with images. Also, females, more than males, tend to share information with friends and others about the advertised product. Another advantage of marketing to females on Pinterest is that females on Pinterest have more of their pins re-pinned (Gilbert et al., 2013). Given that our study shows significant differences between males and females in terms of value, trust, loyalty, and purchase intention, marketers should create pins that exhibit products'

benefits to females by using images and interactive content, as well as showcasing useful ideas that are likely to be shared (pinned). Since engagement is also associated with purchase intention, as our study indicates, these efforts will reasonably lead to increased sales of the promoted products among women.

7   Limitations and future work

One limitation of this study was the use of a convenience sample of students for data collection. While a convenience sample provides researchers with advantages in terms of access to participants, low cost, and faster data collection, some disadvantages relate to the non-probability nature of samples which may introduce bias or unequal representation of certain groups within the sample. As referred to earlier in the paper, Pinterest has a younger customer-base (Pragnell, 2012), so a student sample is relevant to studying potential consumers who are right on the cusp of their becoming users.

Another limitation of this research was that subjects self-reported their social media platform experience and engagement which may have been affected by social desirability bias when reporting the use of social media networks. An additional limitation relates to the construct of purchase intention that was used in this study. In this study, purchase intention refers to online purchase intention. Although the subjects reported their intention to purchase, this intention may not translate to actual purchase behaviour in the future due to other extraneous factors not included in this study. Despite these limitations, the results of this study make significant contributions to the extent to which value, loyalty, trust, and purchase intention can interact within social media networks (particularly Pinterest use) to affect consumer behaviour.

Sashittal and Jassawalla (2015) stated that Pinterest users seek to find authentic experiences and enrichment on Pinterest. Additionally, Arli (2017) found that perceived information about a product within a brand's social media is positively related to attitude toward that brand's social media. Since we found in this study that gender was a significant determinant of engagement with the Pinterest platform, we recommend that marketers interested in utilising Pinterest carefully study the pros and cons of using Pinterest as a direct sales channel. Instead, Pinterest can be used more as a scrapbooking platform where a product fits into highlighted values, goals, and aspirations of a female user of Pinterest. This indirect persuasion idea has a better chance of being shared on user boards than the product image by itself.

The interaction effect of a product shown in the context of users' aspirations, along with other constructs in this study such as platform value, loyalty, and trust that were found to be significant factors as determinants of Pinterest engagement, can help position the brand using unique characteristics of the Pinterest social media platform. The use of promotion boards on Pinterest is third after lifestyle and community boards (Ferguson and Greer, 2015), which leaves some potential for growth of promotion boards on Pinterest.

Based on the results of this study, further research is recommended related to promotion boards on Pinterest. Because this study found that only gender (not age nor years or frequency of social media use) is a determinant of engagement with Pinterest, investigating the factors that affect amount of time spent on the site by females per visit could be worthwhile. It would also be valuable to research to what extent a person's purchase intentions influence whether a purchase is actually made.

Further, exploring the circumstances that impact whether a purchase is made directly via Pinterest, in a brick-and-mortar store, or via another online source could enlighten marketers who are currently using Pinterest or are contemplating use of the Pinterest platform as part of their marketing plan. Since Pinterest offers different types of promotions to companies, another avenue for future research would be to distinguish between these types of promotions, such as promoted pins, video ads, and shopping ads, in terms of which promotion gives companies the largest return on investment. This research could investigate which promotions affect consumers the most with regard to awareness of brands, whether consumers pin promoted pins to their own boards, and whether consumers purchase directly through Pinterest, versus only pinning the product and then purchasing elsewhere. By using the most effective promotion on Pinterest, companies can get their products shared and pinned, and as a result establish trust by making consumers aware of unique and innovative product features and benefits which can increase purchase intention.

Acknowledgements

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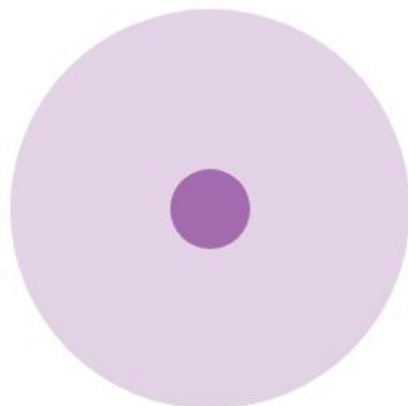
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