Influence of Online Brand Community Management Capability on Firm Performance: An Abstract

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Abstract Online Brand Communities (OBCs) are communities where the members can interact with other members, or with the brand through the Internet without temporal and spatial barriers (Tseng et al., 2017). These are important platforms for firms to disseminate information and knowledge pertaining to their brands. OBCs provide opportunities for customers to share their affect and experiences with particular brands (Hollebeek et al., 2017). Some firms have successfully created firm-initiated online brand communities to connect with customers directly. These firms use online brand communities to build customer relationships, enhance brand image, and increase customer interactions with the brands. So, firms must know how to manage the OBCs well. A well-managed OBC is likely to motivate a greater number of customers to participate in the community. Since OBCs are crucial platforms to strengthen the customer-brand relationship (Hajli et al., 2017) and increase customer brand loyalty (Islam et al., 2018), firms can capitalize on OBCs by leveraging them as dynamic capabilities.

Using the dynamic capability perspective (Teece et al., 1997), we propose a novel construct - online brand community management capability (OBCMC) - and theorize its effect on firm performance. We conceptualize online brand community management capability as a dynamic capability that can be developed through technology infrastructure, brand communication, and customer service. We propose that online brand community management capability leads to increased firm growth, customer engagement, and firm reputation. We also suggest that the impact of OBCMC on the firm performance is affected by the B2B or B2C focus of business offerings.

We contribute to marketing management literature by viewing OBCMC as a dynamic capability and as an important managerial initiative. We explain how certain firm-level elements lead to better management of virtual communities. We pro-

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pose that firms can achieve their business goal using effective and efficient OBC management. It is imperative for managers to know what levers to pull in order to optimize the use of online communities; such agency is likely to motivate managers to use online brand communities to improve firm performance. Thus, this research suggests how well-managed OBCs can be used by firms to connect with customers and reach business goals.

References Available Upon Request