Abstract

Social media are increasingly leveraged on for the establishment of strong consumer-brand relationships, however the causal relationships leading to them have yet to be clarified. The underlying theory suggested to contribute to this gap is rhetoric, indicating the available means of persuasion to achieve one's goal. This paper builds on Aristotle's view, that effective rhetoric is based on the combination of Logos, Pathos and Ethos and examines how social media marketing activities help strengthen the connection between the consumer's self and the brand. The proposed framework is tested in 183 consumers, which follow a brand on Facebook. The findings indicate that social media marketing activities positively affect brand attachment, through the mediating role of self-brand connections. Furthermore, brand engagement in self-concept moderates the effect of self-brand connections on brand attachment. Significant implications both from a theoretical and managerial perspective are discussed.

Keywords: rhetoric, consumer-brand relationships, social media marketing activities, self-brand connections, brand engagement in self-concept, brand attachment

1.   **Introduction**

Consumers have the tendency to create social bonds with brands (O'Malley and Tynan 2000). Strong and meaningful relationships to brands present various positive outcomes (e.g. Gummesson 1994; Dall'Olmo Riley and de Chernatony 2000); both on the relationship directly created with the brand and on the relationship indirectly created with other consumers through the brand (Belén del Río, Vazquez, and Iglesias 2001; Veloutsou 2009). However, for the development of a relationship, a certain degree of connection needs to be perceived between the consumer's and the brand's identity (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). Defined as the strength of the link between the self and a particular brand (Escalas 2004), self–brand connections are a crucial descriptive of consumer-brand relationships. If the relationship develops even further, the consumer can not only ascertain a link between the brand and the self, but also unfold positive emotions and memories about the brand. This combination of self-brand connection and brand prominence, expressing "the strength of the bond connecting the brand with the self" (Park et al. 2010, p.2), is defined as brand attachment and is an even deeper descriptive of consumer-brand relationships, linked to numerous positive behavioral and emotional outcomes (e.g. Dolbec and Chebat 2013; Kaufmann et al. 2016; Shukla et al. 2016; Taghipourian and Bakhsh 2016; Gillespie and Noble 2017; Japutra et al. 2017).

An avenue which brands are increasingly leveraging on to establish and cultivate consumer-brand relationships are social media (Malthouse and Hofacker, 2010; Hudson et al. 2016; Panopoulos, Theodoridis, and Poulis, 2018; Poulis, Rizomyliotis, and Konstantoulakis, 2019). Characterized as one of the top 7 marketing trends to budget for in 2019 (Forbes 2018, a), companies currently spend 12% of their marketing budgets on social media (Forbes 2018, b). Marketers are thus investing in social media

marketing activities to communicate with their customers, defined as "introducing a brand's products, services, and a brand itself in a sincere manner by providing a variety of services to consumers who engage in social media activities as means of marketing communications" (Kim and Ko 2012, p. 1482). Through those activities marketers attempt to create an honest representation of the brand universe, and its respective signs and symbols, providing consumers with useful and relevant meaning to use, when they communicate information about themselves (Swaminathan, Stilley, and Ahluwalia 2008). Social media thus assist consumers in expressing their virtual identity to others (Grewal et al. 2019). In such a context, the importance that brands can have in an individual's life is being re-examined (Belk 2014), in line with their contribution to one's sense of self (Belk 2013). In an era in which relationship marketing is experiencing a fundamental shift (Payne and Frow 2017), trying to appeal to consumers' hearts, instead of simply their resources (Sheth 2017), it has become more exigent to develop and maintain a strong and meaningful connection to the consumer's self (Panigyrakis and Zarkada, 2014; Fetscherin and Heinrich 2015). In such a context, it is critical to understand how the consumer's self can be accurately expressed through the brand, especially considering that it is not fully clear how consumer-brand relationships can be established in a social media setting (Fournier and Lee, 2009).

It has been identified that the consumer's self directs social media behavior, which subsequently also affects the consumer's self-concept (Berezan et al. 2018). It is noteworthy to highlight at this point that consumers differ on their degree of including brand elements in describing their selves. Defined as "an individual difference representing consumers' propensity to include important brands as part of how they view themselves"(Sprott et al. 2009, p. 92), brand engagement in self-concept, differs according to a consumer's behavioral and cognitive attitude towards the brand, their

age (Chaplin and John 2005), their desire for self-extension (Schau and Gilly 2003) or their loyalty (Lindstrom 2005). Taking the aforementioned into account, the process through which consumers increase the connection between the brand and the self through social media marketing activities has yet to be examined. This study aims to shed light on this process, with the underlying theory of rhetoric. Rhetoric has been defined as an ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion (Aristotle 1991). In this context, the goal of the persuasion attempt is defined as the perceived level of connection between the consumer's self and the brand, through the exposure to social media marketing activities and this study pursues to identify the effective means to achieve that.

The contribution of the present study is twofold. First, this study responds to calls for more research applying rhetoric in the marketing literature. Second, this is the first study to apply rhetoric in a social media context, as a way to strengthen consumer-brand relationships. Despite the fact that rhetoric has been examined in the context of social media, no study has so far, to our knowledge, examined rhetoric as an underlying philosophy and strategy to strengthen consumer-brand relationships. This research not only tests the applicability of rhetoric in consumer-brand relationships developed on social media, but also extends it, by examining the role of brand engagement in self-concept in the process. This study contributes to understanding how social media marketing activities' impact on the subsequent connection to the brand. Specifically, it shows how the approach of rhetoric, including the elements of Logos, Pathos and Ethos in one's persuasion attempt, as indicated by Aristotle, can assist in the achievement of one's goal.

The article is structured as follows. First of all, the fundamental concepts around rhetoric as our underlying theory are presented, in line with how it has been applied in

the marketing context so far. Next, the description of the conceptual framework follows, based on the notions of Logos, Pathos and Ethos, proposed by Aristotle for effective rhetoric. Next, the respective literature in the consumer-brand relationship literature and the formation of hypotheses are presented, to proceed to the results section and to conclude with academic and managerial implications of the study and suggestions for future research.

2.   Underlying Theory of Rhetoric: the importance of Logos, Ethos and Pathos

Rhetoric refers to an individual's competency to identify the existing means to convince another individual (Aristotle 1991). The identification of those means can include both the words and combination of words applied, but also the underlying rationale to achieve one's goal. Since individuals frequently attempt to create the appropriate meaning to convince someone to act upon a specific action or to embrace a certain idea, it can be stated that they engage in rhetoric more or less in their personal or professional life.

According to Aristotle, an effective rhetoric consists of three elements. Firstly, Logos, which includes the arguments on the subject presented by the speakers. Secondly, Ethos, which refers to the words of the speakers that show their good will, competence and reliability. Finally, Pathos, describes the feelings that the words of the speakers produce in the audience (Bonet and Sauquet 2010).This would mean that for the achievement of one's persuasion attempts Logos, Ethos and Pathos are required. The activity of rhetoric can be described as a human-centered approach, since the persuasion of others through the identification of the right words and rationale, presupposes a deep and actual understanding of the other party (Heracleous and Barrett 2001).

Interestingly, this rhetorical construction happens both individually and collectively (Heracleous and Barrett 2001). Just as individuals develop their rhetoric through language and social interaction (Cliff, Langton, and Aldrich 2005), organizations, seen as a group of persons working as an organizational agent, develop their rhetoric through the discourse practices they apply. Thus, it can be claimed that brands also engage in rhetoric in the activities they are implementing, attempting to identify the right words and actions to convince consumers about certain issues. The question of the elements of effective rhetoric is a crucial issue to consider.

Due to this close connection between rhetoric and marketing communication, there has been a call for more frequent application of rhetoric in the marketing literature (Tonks 2002), and various scholars have examined rhetoric in this context. Initially, rhetoric was applied as a strategy to criticize existing controversies in marketing (Phillips and McQuarrie 2004). Gradually, a more conceptual approach was adopted, and rhetorical tools and paradigms were used as a way to examine existing marketing practices [Table 1 near here]. Under this scope, rhetoric is seen as the language used to promote marketing change (Grint and Case 1998). The focus of analysis is the symbols applied to generate change (Sköldberg 1994; Rindova, Becerra, and Contardo 2004). Research in this area has shown how the application of rhetorical figures assists the effectiveness of advertising through the creation of additional meaning (Padgett and Allen 1997; Sojka and Giese 2001; Mulken and Kok 2005; McQuarrie and Glen Mick 2009; Phillips and McQuarrie 2010; Huhmann and Albinsson 2012; Burgers et al 2015). Rhetoric has also been used as a tool to understand the role that language can play in brand interactions (Schroeder 2009; Iglesias and Bonet 2012; Preece and Kerrigan 2015; Dholakia 2016; Carnevale, Luna, and Lerman 2017). Finally, recent research has also shown how beneficial the use of rhetoric can be in online communications (Toder-Alon,

Brunel, and Fournier 2014; Miles 2014; Gretry et al. 2017; Hakala, Niemi, and Kohtamäki 2017; Wilk, Harrigan, and Soutar 2018). However, in most studies the focus has been on rhetoric as the words used in marketing communications. Rhetoric as an underlying logic, expressing the philosophy or the strategy to achieve one's goals has yet to be examined in this context.

3.   Conceptual Framework

Through social media marketing activities marketers aim to enhance the perceived connection between the consumer's self and the brand. The goal of persuasion in this case is thus the amplification of this connection. As aforementioned, rhetoric assists in identifying the available means of persuasion to achieve one's goal and according to Aristotle, effective rhetoric includes, Logos, Pathos and Ethos. This means that in order to achieve the enhancement of the perceived connection between the consumer's self and the brand through social media marketing activities, Logos, Pathos and Ethos are required. In such a context the following can be assumed:

- Logos referring to the arguments in favor of the strengthening of the connection due to the exposure to social media marketing activities, is expressed through consumers' evaluation of social media marketing activities.
- Ethos referring to the credibility of the source, refers to how credible the consumer evaluates the brand to see one's self connected to it, is expressed through self-brand connections.
- Pathos referring to the feelings evoked to the audience from this connection, which is expressed through brand attachment.

- Furthermore, a significant factor to consider at this stage is linked to whether the consumer is willing to include brand-related dimensions in defining their selves, which is described as brand engagement in self-concept.

As a result, it is argued that social media marketing activities predict the degree of brand attachment, and the role of self-brand connections in the process will be examined. Moreover, how this might differ for individuals with different degrees of brand engagement in self-concept will also be investigated.

3.1 Hypotheses development

Social media marketing activities (linked to Logos), self-brand connections (linked to Ethos) and brand attachment (linked to Pathos)

Social media marketing activities have been defined as "a two-way communication seeking empathy with young users, and even enforcing the familiar emotions associated with existing brands to a higher age group." (Kim and Ko 2012, p.1482). This means that through those activities brands have the chance to not only create a deeper and holistic connection to those customers engaging with social media, but also to further build their brands (Kim and Ko 2010; Porcu et al. 2017; Dwivedi et al. 2018). As a result, it is argued that social media marketing activities predict the degree of brand attachment.

Consumers show a strong attachment and form bonds to anything self-expressive, that is, an object congruent with the self, which reflects the extent of "me-ness" (Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995; Rao and Perry 2002; Bidmon 2017; Koronaki, Kyrousi, and Panigyrakis, 2018). Consumer attachment toward a brand is a strong affective concept

(Fournier 1998). Attachment is basically the process of developing an emotional bond (Collins and Read 1990), which is facilitated by consistent and repeated experiences, between relationship partners (Rao and Perry 2002). Consumers become attached to a specific brand in the process of defining and maintaining their sense of self (Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995). Under this scope, Park et al. (2010) in their definition of brand attachment, underline that the strength of this bond relates not only to how connected consumers feel to the brand, but also how prominent the brand is in their mind. They emphasize that memories through feelings and thoughts that relate to the brand make the brand more salient, and the bond even stronger.

Brands are leveraging on that and use their social media pages as a way to provide unique experiences to their customers (Vanden Bergh et al. 2011; Colliander et al. 2015; Lim and Kumar 2017). Social media are used to build a brand's story, and thus enhance the perceived degree of self-brand connections (Ren et al. 2012; Harrigan et al. 2018). This increases the consumers' levels of engagement (Sook Kwon et al. 2014; Coliander et al. 2015;Moussa 2019) and provides them with relevant resources to build their identities (De Veirman et al. 2017; Grewal et al. 2019) and communicate with others (Chatterjee 2011; Araujo et al. 2017; Maslowska et al. 2017; Youn and Jin 2017). Through such tactics, they not only manage to improve the depth of connection created with consumers (Van-Tien Dao et al. 2014; Do et al. 2015; Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016), but also how frequently consumers will be receiving information, or news relating to the brand (Gavilanes et al. 2018).

However, it is a fact that consumers experiment with different brands to expand and develop a variety of self-concepts, which they present to others or to themselves (Belk 1988; Gill-Simmen et al. 2018). Consequently, consumers feel a stronger connection to a brand that helps them represent their desired or actual selves (Fournier 1998; Escalas

and Bettman 2003; Tsiotsou et al. 2014; Cheng et al. 2016; Japutra et al. 2018; Nyadzayo et al. 2018). Chang and Fan (2017) identified that consumers that value the content shared and have a commitment towards the brand are more likely to engage with it. Consumers show a desire to connect to the psychological attributes of the brands, and such a degree of connection can lead to significant behavioral and emotional benefits. Thus, the degree to which social media marketing activities will positively affect the subsequent bond created to consumers, will depend on the existing strength of the link between the brand and the consumer (Escalas 2004). In line with that, Shanahan et al. (2019) found that the perceived degree of personalization positively impacts the subsequent brand attachment and consumer's brand engagement. Chu et al. (2016) underlined that consumers' willingness to make use of brand-related information shared on social media relates to their attitudes, while Kumar and Nayak (2018) emphasized the role that loyalty and engagement play for a brand-community relationship to convert into a brand relationship.

A positive effect of social media marketing activities on brand attachment is thus predicted. Moreover, since this is linked to the degree of connection between the consumer's and the brand's self, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Social media marketing activities positively affect brand attachment via the mediating role of self-brand connections.

Brand engagement in self-concept as a moderator of self-brand connections (linked to Ethos)

Customer brand engagement (CBE) is defined as 'the level of a customer's cognitive, emotional and behavioral investment in specific brand interactions' (Hollebeek 2011), and it represents a significant role in marketing research, since it is based on relational

foundations (Brodie et al. 2011). Further advancing those brand interactions, the term brand engagement in self-concept emerged, which refers to the degree to which consumers are prone to use brand related elements to define themselves. This basically describes how people use different associations they have in their minds, in order to describe themselves.

Various researchers have identified that consumers' personal characteristics can affect the subsequent relationship they form with a brand (e.g. Chu and Kim 2011; Strutton et al. 2011; von Noort et al. 2014; Bernritter et al. 2017). Goldsmith and Goldsmith (2012) identify brand engagement in self-concept as one of the three main consumer motivations along with materialism and status consumption, on involvement and loyalty. Dimitriu and Guesalaa (2017) found that different consumer segments satisfy different needs through their social media usage. One can argue that, if consumers receive useful and meaningful resources from the brand, they will have more chances of including those associations when describing themselves.

Given the link between the consumer's self-concept and the attachment created, it can be claimed that a customer who has a high degree of brand engagement in self-concept, will be inclined to develop a closer relationship and attachment to the brand. It is plausible to theoretically infer a positive relationship between the brand engagement self-concept and brand attachment. For people with a high degree of brand engagement in self-concept, effects of self-brand connections on brand attachment are expected to be strong. For these people self-brand connections might serve as a proof to increase their strength of the bond to the brand. For people with a low degree of brand engagement in self-concept, self-brand connections might have little effect on the bond created to the brand. These people are not that willing to include brand elements in describing themselves.

To test this effect, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Self-brand connections positively affect brand attachment, and this effect is moderated by brand engagement in self-concept, such that self brand connections have a stronger positive effect on brand attachment for people with high brand engagement in self-concept than for people with low brand engagement in self-concept.

The proposed framework and the respective hypotheses is presented below. [Figure 1 near here]

4.   Research Methodology

4.1 Data Collection

Data were collected from 186 individuals that have liked a Facebook page of a brand, building on the fact that users who have liked a page start receiving content from its administrator (Schivinski and Dabrowski 2015). Missing data and out-of range responses were eliminated and 183 valid questionnaires remained. Of these cases, 47% were male, 53% were female. The average age was 29 and they were of Greek ethnicity. A standardized online survey was used, which was sent to the participants. The questionnaire took 15 to 20 minutes to complete, although no time constraints were imposed. Strict response validation procedures were programmed, requiring participants to answer all questions within the allowed range of responses.

4.2 Measures

The survey instrument contained 30 items, measuring a total of 4 constructs. Since the constructs of social media marketing activities, brand engagement in self-concept, brand attachment and self-brand connections are already established in the academic marketing literature, the choice of scales was based on previously published research

[Table 2 and Table 3 near here]. The measurement of social media marketing activities was adapted from a scale developed from Kim and Ko (2012), including 11 items. Brand engagement in self-concept was approached as suggested by Sprott, Czellar, and Spangenberg (2009) and measured with 8 items. The scales for self-brand connections were taken from the paper by Escalas (2004) and included 7 items. Finally, the scale for brand attachment included four items also taken from Park et al. (2010). All items were measured on a seven point Likert scale anchored by 1="Strongly disagree", 7="Strongly agree" or 1="Never", 7="All the time".

5.   Results

Before testing the hypotheses, a correlation matrix and reliabilities for all the constructs are provided [Table 4 near here]. Then the proposed hypotheses are examined.

For the first hypothesis, the accuracy of the mediation effect using SPSS macros (Model 4) for computing mediated effects was evaluated (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Hayes 2013). In step 1 of the mediation model, the regression of social media marketing activities on self-brand connections was significant, with b=1.22, t (181) = 1.22, p=.00 (<.001). This means that according to the coefficient, a unit increase in social media marketing activities increases self-brand connections by 1.22. In the second step, the regression of self-brand connections and brand attachment was also significant, with b =1.05, t (181) = 10.00, p = <.001. Thus, if self-brand connections is increased by one unit, brand attachment increases by 1.05. The study also controlled for social media marketing activities, which was still significant with p=0.110, providing support for partial mediation (Zhao, Lynch Jr, and Chen2010). The final step was to test for the significance of the identified indirect effect. Since zero was not in the bootstrapping 95% confidence interval, the indirect effect was in fact significant.

To test hypothesis 2, the goal was to examine whether brand engagement in self-concept moderates the effect on self-brand connections on brand attachment, and SPSS macros were used (Model 1) for checking for moderation (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Hayes 2013). This would mean that the nature of the relationship would change for different levels of brand engagement in self-concept. First of all, the overall model F $(3,179)= 96.54$, is statistically significant with p=.oo and an R square of 0,618 indicating that 61,8 percent of variance in brand attachment is due to self-brand connections, brand engagement in self-concept and their interaction. The first step to examine is the significance of the interaction term, which in this case is in fact significant with a p of .01. This means that the relationship between our interaction term and brand attachment is significant. The second element to be examined is whether the R square increase due to the interaction is significant, which was the case in our model as well, with a p of .4673.

Finally, it can be seen that for different levels of brand engagement in self-concept, the respective levels of brand attachment change. The unstandardized simple slope for brand engagement in self-concept 1 SD below the mean was 0.498 and the unstandardized simple slope for brand engagement in self-concept 1 SD above the mean was 0.601 [Figure 2 near here].

Hence, H2 is supported whereas H1 gains support only to the extent that self-brand connections is a partial, and not a full, mediator of the effect of social media marketing activities on brand engagement in self-concept.

6. Discussion and Implications

This research examines how social media marketing activities can strengthen the perceived degree of connection between the brand and the self. Specifically, the study

describes how social media marketing activities (linked to Logos) influence brand attachment (linked to Pathos), through the mediating role of self-brand connections (linked to Ethos). This responds to VanMeters et al., (2018) identified lack of causal connection between social media activities and deep consumer-brand relationships. Furthermore, the study reveals how brand engagement in self-concept moderates the relationship among self-brand connections and brand attachment. This study thus replies to the need for more empirical evidence on social media marketing activities' effects on strengthening consumer-brand relationships (e.g. Ren et al. 2007; Kaplan and Haenlein. 2010; Hudson et al. 2016; Knoll 2016).

The findings support the following conclusions. Firstly, the relationship between social media marketing activities and brand attachment is significant and mediated by self-brand connections. That is, a brand can significantly improve the attachment consumers feel, through investment in social media marketing activities. Our study is thus in line with research emphasizing the importance of brand attachment and its connection to social media (e.g. Nagy and Koles 2014; Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016; Saboo et al. 2016; Lim and Kumar 2017; Rezaei and Valaei 2017; Arya et al. 2018; Dwivedi et al. 2018; Shanahan et al. 2019). The examination of the role that attachment has in the social media setting and the emerging relationship was also suggested by Hudson et al. (2016). As identified, a significant parameter affecting this relationship, is the existing degree to which consumers feel connected to the brand, further advancing research supporting the connection between self-brand connections and brand attachment (e.g. Dennis et al. 2017; Harrigan et al. 2018; Grewal et al. 2019).

Second, the effect of self-brand connections on brand attachment is moderated by the consumers' brand engagement in self-concept. Specifically, for consumers with high degree of brand engagement in self-concept the effect of self-brand connections on

brand attachment will be stronger than for consumers with lower propensity to include brand elements in their self-concepts. This research is thus in line with research emphasizing how an individual's personal characteristics can affect the perceived bond (e.g. Chu et al. 2016; Chang and Fan 2017; Dimitriu and Guesalaga 2017; Lim and Kumar 2017; Youn and Jin 2017; Gavilanes et al. 2018; Kumar and Nayak 2018). Furthermore, the findings are in accordance with research stressing the importance of the individual's propensity to include brand elements in defining their self-concepts (e.g. Czellar et al. 2009; Goldsmith 2012; Harmon-Kizer et al. 2013; Alden et al. 2016; Singh 2016; Banahene 2017; Risitano et al. 2017; Bruneau et al. 2018).

Furthermore, it is of great interest to see how the use of rhetoric as underlying theory can lead to better results in building brands and developing consumer-brand relationships. This approach is in line with research underlining the importance of language in developing brands (e.g. Preece and Kerrigan 2015; Dholakia 2016; Carnevale et al. 2017) and on the importance of brand meaning (e.g. Schoreder 2009; Iglesias and Bonet 2012). Specifically, the findings are similar to findings emphasizing the importance of language in online brand development (e.g. Miles 2014; Toder-Alon et al. 2014; Gretry et al. 2017. Hakala et al. 2017; Wilk et al. 2018). However, this research further advances the use of rhetoric in marketing research, examining the structure and logic of an argument, not just the words applied in a specific discourse, as done in most studies so far. It shows how Logos, Pathos and Ethos can structure the argument of marketing communications towards the achievement of one's goal.

From a managerial standpoint, there are a series of implications that emerge from this study. Companies should acknowledge the power of social media marketing activities in fostering strong bonds to their customers. The meanings created through those media are used by consumers as a justification to maintain and develop the existing

relationship. Subsequently, frequently posting interesting content on social media can not only increase the degree to which consumers feel connected to the brand, but also how prominent the brand is in their minds. In an era of decreasing trust towards social media, building such a relationship with one's customer basis could be of great value for marketers.

However, it should also be taken into account that consumers' existing connection to the brand will influence the effect of social media marketing activities on brand attachment. This means that marketers should constantly invest in cultivating and developing their consumers' self-brand connections, acknowledging the significant effect they can have in both emotional and behavioral outcomes. Furthermore, they can expect the effect to be lower when appealing to consumers with a low degree of connection.

Moreover, the important role of the consumers' individual difference in their degree of willingness to include brand-related elements in how they define themselves has numerous implications. Firstly, marketers can create separate programs for consumer with a high level of brand-engagement in self-concept and leverage on their characteristic not only in terms of behavioral and emotional outcomes, but also in terms of advocacy roles. Simultaneously, they can also attempt to affect consumers' propensity to include brand elements in defining themselves. Since this characteristic can vary from individual to individual, but is also linked with some brand-related dimensions, marketers can invest in high quality social media marketing activities, which will be able to positively influence self-brand connections and thus might also lead to higher levels of brand engagement in self-concept. The use of trending topics, ideological issues or even specific problems they are concerned with regarding the brand can function as useful resources. But at the same time, this difference in including

brand elements in defining one's self, can stop marketers from continuous investment in customer groups which are not willing to use those such meaning from the definition of their self-concept.

Moreover, it became clear that leveraging on the knowledge on rhetoric can help managers effectively and efficiently structure and design their social media marketing activities. This means that activities on social media can be strategically designed to satisfy the dimensions of Logos, Pathos and Ethos and thus provide the consumer with the reasons to engage in an activity, underline their own credibility in this context and cultivate positive feelings in that direction. The understanding and knowledge of how rhetoric can help in achieving one's goal can be leveraged on for any other online or offline purpose a marketer might have. Furthermore, this knowledge can also be applied in an offline setting, such as the development of new brands, the establishment of existing ones or any other communication-related strategy. Being able to effectively structure their rhetoric, in an era in which the concept of meaning is considered of high importance will be of great value.

This study is not without limitations. Limitations of this study come from selecting Facebook as the social medium of analysis. Future studies could include different social media such as Twitter, Instagram and Pinterst and examine how media used for different purposed might function differently. Furthermore, one could also examine the effects of the simultaneous use of social media on both consumer perceptions and consumer-brand relationships. The study was conducted with consumers within a limited range of age and geographic area. Conducting research across different cultures, but also age groups could provide interesting insight in understanding whether different rhetoric is required for different groups. This could also be very useful in examining the differences between digital natives and digital immigrants. Other constructs such as

brand love, brand preference, brand likability or brand attitude could also be examined for other types of persuasion attempts. Future studies could also examine subsequent behavioral outcomes such as purchase intention, WOM and e-WOM but also whether this affects the creation of brand communities. Since self-brand connections only partially mediates the effect of social media marketing activities on brand attachment, other potential mediators of this relationship could also be examined. Checking for other moderators from variables describing consumer characteristics would also be of great interest. Lastly, it would be worthwhile to examine how the elements of logos, pathos and ethos in rhetoric can be applied in other marketing communication or branding contexts and whether they are perceived as relevant in other contexts as well. This could also differ according to the brand category or the brand personality, which could be another avenue for research.

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Tables

Table 1: Studies on rhetoric and marketing

Research	Methodology	Variable (s)	
		Independent	**Dependent**
Studies examining Rhetorical tools and paradigms in advertising			
Burgers, Konijn, Steen, & Iepsma (2015).	Quantitative	Conventional metaphors Conventional irony	Complexity Creativity Ad appreciation. Persuasiveness
Huhmann, & Albinsson (2012)	Quantitative	Rhetorical works (schemes and tropes)	Advertisement liking Advertising effectiveness Positive processing, Brand awareness, and Persuasion outcomes
Phillips & McQuarrie (2010)	Quantitative	Narrative transportation Immersion Grotesque imagery	Persuasion Modes of engagement Brand experience Brand evaluation.
McQuarrie & Glen Mick (2009).	Quantitative	Repetition of rhetorical figures: easy to-understand rhymes challenging puns	Advertising effectiveness
Mulken & Kok (2005).	Qualitative	Rhetorical figures	Appreciation of print advertisements.
Sojka & Giese (2001).	Quantitative	Individuals' preferences for visual information Individuals' preferences for verbal information	Processing style personality traits.

Padgett & Allen (1997).	Qualitative	Narrative approach in advertising	Brand image
Studies examining Rhetorical tools and paradigms in advertising			
Carnevale, Luna & Lerman (2017).	Qualitative	Language	The way consumers interact with brands
Dholakia (2016).	Qualitative	Mystification	Marketing discourses and practices
Preece & Kerrigan (2015).	Qualitative	Relationships	Value of artists' "products"
Iglesias & Bonet (2012).	Qualitative	Multiple sources of consumer touch-points Consumer-brand relationship	Brand meaning
Schroeder (2009).	Qualitative	Culture Ideology Politics	More typical branding concepts, such as equity, strategy, and value.
Studies examining Rhetorical tools and paradigms in advertising			
Wilk, Harrigan & Soutar (2018).	Quantitative	Online Brand Advocacy	Cognitive, affective and virtual visual dimensions
Hakala, H., Niemi, L., & Kohtamäki, M. (2017).	Qualitative	Discursive praxis Online community posts, comments and reactions Individual perceptions, judgements of the texts and actions on them organizational and societal context	Levels of legitimization Discourselegitimization practice. Legitimacy of the brand in the community and beyond
Gretry, Horváth, Belei & van Riel (2017).	Quantitative	Informal (vs. formal) communication style Consumers' familiarity Social norms	Brand trust
Miles (2014).	Qualitative	The presentation of the viral	Marketing of viral marketing

		Marketing message as an independent, quasi-organic entity the presentation of the viral marketing message as 'domesticated' through careful management of its design parameters	
Toder-Alon, Brunel & Fournier (2014).	Qualitative	Hashtag	Writing shame

Table 2: Construct definitions

Construct	Definition
Social Media Marketing Activities	Social media marketing activities (SMM) refer to introducing a brand's products, services, and a brand itself in a sincere manner and providing a variety of services to consumers who engage in social media activities as means of marketing communications
Self-Brand Connections	The strength of the link between the self and a particular brand
Brand Engagement in Self-Concept	An individual difference representing consumers' propensity to include important brands as part of how they view themselves
Brand Attachment	The strength of the bond connecting the brand with the self

Table 3: Constructs and items

Social Media Marketing Activities-Kim and Ko (2012)
1. Using Brand X 's social media is fun 2. Contents shown in Brand X 's social media seem interesting. 3. Interaction Brand X 's social media enables information sharing with others. 4. Conversation or opinion exchange with others is possible through Brand X 's social media. 5. It is easy to deliver my opinion through Brand X 's social media. 6. Trendiness Contents shown in Brand X 's social media is the newest information. 7. Using Brand X 's social media is very trendy.

8. Customization Brand X 's social media offers customized information search. 9. Brand X 's social media provides customized service. 10.Word of mouth I would like to pass along information on brand, product, or services from Brand X 's social media to my friends. 11.I would like to upload contents from Brand X 's social media on my blog or micro blog.	

Self-Brand Connections-Escalas (2004)

1. Brand X reflects who I am.
2. I can identify with Brand X.
3. I feel a personal connection to Brand X
4. I (can) use Brand X to communicate who I am to other people
5. I think Brand X (could) help(s) me become the type of person I want to be.
6. I consider Brand X to be "me" (it reflects who I consider myself to be or the way that I want to present myself to others
7. Brand X suits me well.

Brand Engagement in Self Concept-Sprott, Czellar and Spangenberg (2009)

1. I have a special bond with the brands that I like.
2. I consider my favorite brands to be a part of myself.
3. I often feel a personal connection between my brands and me.
4. Part of me is defined by important brands in my life.
5. I feel as if I have a close personal connection with the brands I most prefer.
6. I can identify with important brands in my life.
7. There are links between the brands that I prefer and how I view myself.
8. My favorite brands are an important indication of who I am.

Brand Attachment-Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, and Iacobucci (2010)

1. "To what extent is [Brand Name] part of you and who you are?"
2. "To what extent do you feel that you are personally connected to [Brand Name]?"
3. "To what extent are your thoughts and feelings toward [Brand Name] often automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own?" and
4. "To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward [Brand Name] come to you naturally and instantly?

Table 4: Pearson correlations among constructs

	1	2	3	4
SMMA (Cronbach a=0,760)	-			
SBC (Cronbach a=0,905)	,450**	-		
BESC (Cronbach a=0,941)	,427**	,663**	-	
BA (Cronbach a=0,929)	,428**	,675**	,748**	-

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

Figures caption

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Figure 2: Unstandardized slopes