The impact of digital technologies on consumer wellbeing

Extended Abstract

Technology has doubled tenfold in the last decade, faster than any decade before. Digital technologies (DT), defined as "electronic tools, systems, devices and resources that generate, store or process data. Well known examples include social media, online games, multimedia and mobile phones" (Victoria State Government 2019), have provided priceless benefits for consumers, introverting with connection and/or communication on their own terms, as face-to-face interaction is not preferred (Scott et al., 2016), however, with the increased technological demand worldwide particularly during the global pandemic, research on the influence of consumers' use of digital technologies on their wellbeing is scarce, as well as it is currently unclear if the use of digital technologies such as mobile apps, virtual reality, augmented reality social media communities, voice assistant and chatbots have positive and/ or negative impacts on consumers' wellbeing, if it does, what are wellbeing related variables associated with both positive and negative wellbeing? Therefore, there is a need to explore the certain predictors which are specific for consumers' positive wellbeing, and which are for their negative wellbeing, and/or which certain factors are common predictors of both aspects.

Previous literature in psychological research revealed that positive wellbeing includes components such as happiness (Kahneman et al., 1999), positive mood (Hills and Argyle, 2001), Hedonic (Diener, 2000) and life satisfaction (Argyle and Crossland, 1987), whereas negative wellbeing includes components such as anxiety (De Beurs et al., 2005), depression (Kashdan and Roberts, 2004) and distractions (McLean et al., 2021). In the phenomenon that consumers nowadays are engaged and surrounded by technologies, this research aims to bring a debate discussion on the effects of technology use on consumers' wellbeing as contemporary issue, to explore all wellbeing related variables indifferently associated with both consumer positive and negative wellbeing.

This current research is in the development stage to investigate the impact of digital technologies on consumer wellbeing by using mixed methods with two stages of field research. The first stage is an inductive approach, and the second stage is a deductive approach. In the first stage, interviews are undertaken to gain a better and deeper understanding of consumers perceptions towards using digital technologies affecting their wellbeing, and to identify all associated predictors with both positive and negative wellbeing. In the second stage, a scale development procedure is adopted to analyse these variables via exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. The findings of this research will contribute to the marketing literature on consumer adoption of technology affect their wellbeing. This study will provide a holistic view containing all variables related consumer wellbeing when engaging with brands through technology, by explaining and clarifying the role of each predictor. It also contributes practical implications for brands on how to utilise technology to engage with consumers in improving the interventions for a better wellbeing.

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