

Examining the role of parasocial interactions in generating the bandwagon effect: a parallel mediation and multigroup analysis

Spanish Journal of
Marketing - ESIC

Zeeshan Majeed Nadroo

School of Management, IILM University, Gurugram, India

Nirma Sadamali Jayawardena

University of Bradford, Bradford, UK

Mohammad Asif Naqshbandi

Islamic University of Science and Technology, Awantipora, India, and

Park Thaichon

University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Australia

Received 24 August 2024
Accepted 14 August 2025

Abstract

Purpose – The bandwagon effect – a psychological phenomenon where people embrace particular behaviours, purchase products or support trends simply because many others are doing the same – is emerging as an important concept in marketing literature. This study aims to investigate the role of parasocial interactions (PSI) in generating the bandwagon effect, using the parallel mediation of vicarious expression and electronic word of mouth (eWOM).

Design/methodology/approach – Framed within the context of parasocial relationship theory, this study used a purposive sampling method to collect data from 488 social media users who actively followed at least one tech YouTube influencer and one brand fan page on a social media platform, with a specific focus on the online retail sector. The collected data was analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling and a multigroup analysis based on gender.

Findings – The results demonstrate that PSI with social media influencers significantly enhances mechanisms like vicarious expression experiences and eWOM, both of which emerged as key drivers of the bandwagon effect. Vicarious expression positively shapes consumer attitudes, while eWOM amplifies product and brand

© Zeeshan Majeed Nadroo, Nirma Sadamali Jayawardena, Mohammad Asif Naqshbandi and Park Thaichon. Published by Emerald Publishing Limited. This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this licence may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Erratum: It has come to the attention of the publisher that article Nadroo, Z.M., Jayawardena, N.S., Naqshbandi, M.A., and Thaichon, P. (2025), “Examining the role of parasocial interactions in generating the bandwagon effect: a parallel mediation and multigroup analysis”, – *Spanish Journal of Marketing – ESIC*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SJME-08-2024-0233>, incorrectly listed author Zeeshan Majeed Nadroo’s affiliation. This has now been amended from IILM University, Gurugram, India to School of Management, IILM University, Gurugram, India.

This error was introduced during the article publication process, for which the publisher apologises.



Spanish Journal of Marketing -
ESIC
Emerald Publishing Limited
e-ISSN: 2444-9709
p-ISSN: 2444-9695
DOI 10.1108/SJME-08-2024-0233