Social media conflicts during the financial crisis: Managerial implications for retail banks

Denitsa Dineva, Edinburgh Napier University, UK

Xiaoming Lu, Edinburgh Napier University, UK

Jan Breitsohl, University of Kent, UK

Main Message:

Social media could be used proactively to disseminate accurate corporate information and address undesirable consumer behaviors online to help counteract negativity in the business environment in the wake of a financial crisis.

Key Points:

- Social media has become a popular open forum for financial institutions such as retail banks to engage in corporate dialogue with consumers.
- Financial services firms can proactively use social media-based online communities in order to disseminate accurate corporate information in times of a financial crisis.
- Firms can choose between a range of reactive and proactive strategies to address undesirable consumer behaviors online in the wake of a financial crisis.

Introduction

The anniversary date for the financial crisis is generally regarded as the 9th of August of 2007 - the events of which made the front page of Financial Times. The closure of a French bank BNP Paribas sparked a sharp escalation in the cost of credit for all banks, created a panic in financial markets, and directly led to all the other tumultuous events such as the run on Northern Rock (Constantinou & Ashta, 2011). All the economic jargon and complex financial analyses (for example, credit default swaps, sub-prime mortgages, asset-backed securities and derivatives) may seem abstract, but the picture of queues of customers lining up outside Northern Rock branches is a reminder that the bank's failure was ultimately about people. As the day wore on, panic spread, and the run continued until the government stepped in to guarantee all Northern Rock deposits. It was UK's first retail bank run since the 19th century and one of the first symptoms of the global financial crisis (Shin, 2009). In fact, the entire financial crisis and ensuing recession came at an incalculable human cost, the consequences of which are still prevalent today. The majority of consumers are still worse off now than before the crisis due to massive growth in private debt (Reinhart & Rogoff, 2011).

Ten years after Northern Rock – is the UK more or less likely to see another bank run? It is an appropriate time to reflect on these events, but also to look forward and assess how things have moved on in the last decade, and whether something similar could ever happen again (Harris & Coles, 2004). Liquidity issues at Northern Rock are not the central focus of this paper. We acknowledge that public knowledge of the bank's existing liquidity shortage (initially arising from wholesale funding issues) always acts as the trigger for a retail run. This paper considers a key technological change over the last ten years – the emergence of social media - that may influence the diffusion of (negative) information in a future financial crisis (Gauthier, Bastianutti & Haggège, 2018; Loonam, Kumar, Mitra & Abd Razak, 2018).

Indeed, research into the financial crisis suggested that financial markets are more likely to be influenced by negative press and consumer-generated public scandals rather than facts and fundamentals (Stich, Golla, & Nanopoulos, 2014). For instance, information on the likes on Twitter, Facebook or Google Blogs posts has the power to influence the financial market (Althaus, 2002). This was the case in 2013 when a 'viral' fake tweet from a hacked Associated Press account asserted that explosions at the White House had injured Barack Obama and as a result wiped more than $130bn off the value of the American Stock Market Index (for instance, S&P 500). Therefore, it is conceivable to put forward that during a financial crisis consumers will turn to social media to voice their diverse opinions, criticism and distrust of the economy. If unmanaged, these may lead to large quantities of negative, often highly publicly discussed debacles in the social media environment that exacerbate the situation (Preffer, Zorbach & Carley, 2014).

Given the fact that there are no studies to explore the corporate visibility of banking services in the social media and the utilization of the interactivity in online communities, this paper intends to primarily address how to balance the synergies or contradictions of the social media initiatives in the banking services during a financial crisis. More specifically, we aim to provide a better understanding of how retail banks can avoid or minimize social conflict in online communities during a financial crisis.

Conceptual frameworks

Social media use and its functions during a financial crisis

Studies have shown that financial service firms launch online communities on social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter in order to improve the corporate visibility through encouraging consumer-to-consumer as well as consumer-to-business interactions (Bonsón & Flores, 2011; Brodie, Ilic, Juric & Hollebeek, 2013; Laroche, Habibi, Richard & Sankaranarayanan, 2012). In relation to this, Wirtz et al. (2013) suggested that the greater involvement a member has with a firm's online community, the more likely they are to contribute to that community. Consumers therefore join corporate online communities to obtain social (interact with like-minded community members) as well as functional (receive corporate information) needs from participating in the community (Gummerus, Liljander, Weman, & Pihlström, 2012; Madhavi & Akbar, 2011a).

Moreover, during corporate scandals and business misconducts, consumers turn to the same online communities to seek redress from firms (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh & Gremler, 2004; Weitzl & Hutzinger, 2017). Indeed, consumer complaints and related negative electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) behaviors have now transcended traditional channels (for instance, in-person, telephone, and e-mail), which has led to companies using social media communities as an opportunity for service recovery (Schaefers & Schamari, 2016). A recent example of such corporate misconduct in one of the retail banks goes back to 2018 when TSB shut down its online banking for scheduled maintenance and that resulted in one of the biggest data breach crises in the

UK banking sector. Consequently, consumer complaints were taken to the company's online community on Facebook, but the company failed to handle the situation quickly enough. Research shows that consumers' perceptions of a firm's corporate social responsibility initiatives, particularly during negative events, affect the firm's reputation, if these are unfavorable (Carlisle & Faulkner, 2005). The reputational damage of TSB was indeed enormous resulting in many customers switching to other banks as a result of a week's worth of chaos.

The exact nature of the use of social media during the occurrence of a financial crisis by companies and consumers, however, is largely unknown. The very nature of a financial crisis implies a prolonged impact that is particularly influential for consumers' psychological and personal needs (Al-Kandari, Caldwell & Alduwaila, 2013). Nowadays, it is certainly conceivable that bad news and negative consumer communication will spread more rapidly compared with 2007 (Bennett, 2012). This is because social media accelerates the speed and scope of (negative) information dissemination during a crisis (Madhavi & Akbar, 2011b). As such, the unpredictable events associated with a financial crisis together with the increasing reliance of consumers on social media can make retail banks particularly vulnerable (Voinea & Filip, 2011). In fact, research has found that consumers depend on social media during crises in order to reduce ambiguity and fill information voids (Austin, Fisher-Liu & Jin, 2012). Therefore, social media will arguably be in a powerful position to proactively moderate customer expectations and communication during negative events such as a future financial crisis (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011).

Social conflict in firm-hosted online communities

The interactive nature of social media communities results in the occurrence of social conflict (Breitsohl, Roschk & Feyertag, 2018; Ewing, Wagstaff & Powell, 2013), which refers to hostile and uncivil interactions between consumers due to divergences in goals, social norms and values (Bacile et al., 2018). Social conflicts are likely to be more prevalent during prolonged negative events such as a financial crisis, as they often are a negative spillover from the accumulation of negative e-WoM and consumers' individual online complaints over a period of time (Hauser, Hautz, Hutter & Füller, 2017). Ultimately, during the course of a crisis, these social conflicts lead to publicly discussed debacles that represent rapid discharge of large quantities of negative, often highly emotional comments in the social media environment (Gebauer, Füller & Pezzei, 2013; Pfeffer et al., 2014).

In sociology, social conflicts theory has identified three crucial elements that must be present in order to determine whether a relationship is conflictual (Aubert, 1963; Hirschman, 1994). These are the presence of conflicting parties, a conflict object, and interactive behavior. Conflict objects refer to incompatible resource allocation, values and attitudes based on the underlying goals of the conflicting parties (Wade-Benzoni et al., 2002). In turn, in firm-hosted online communities, advantageous win-win situations for firms and consumers are expected. If consumers feel dissatisfied or disappointed with the firm, its products or services, general negative attitudes towards the company lead to conflictual relationships between the hosting firm and the community members (Kriesberg, 2007). This, in turn, results in conflicting behaviors between different community members, ranging from negative emotions, the polarization of opinions, tensions, and a general loss of trust (Franke, Keinz & Klausberger, 2013; Gebauer et al., 2013). For instance, individuals who feel unfairly treated and are emotionally affected by companies may look for revenge and retaliation (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Grégoire, Laufer & Tripp, 2010) as well as direct their behaviors toward other consumers who may defend the company (Colliander & Hauge Wien, 2013). In turn, consumers may encourage others to participate in negative collective actions to further damage the company image and reputation (for instance, through boycott intentions and behaviors) (Makarem & Jae, 2016).

Moreover, the influence of social media becomes greater when consumers seek solutions, but decision makers fail to offer alternatives to resolve the crisis (Potter & Thompson, 2011). If the incident with Northern Rock occurred at present, consumers will be more likely to turn to social media and to vocalize their criticism and complaints about the company (Istanbulluoglu, 2017). Consequently, social media will facilitate the speed, range, and scale of information diffusion, as well as the detrimental consequences for the firm (Preffer et al., 2014; Qi et al., 2014). Therefore, it is important for retail banks to consider appropriate approaches of conflict management in their online communities as these will affect people's trust and confidence in the firm during a financial crisis (Aula, 2010).

Conflict management in firm-hosted online communities

As social conflict is expected to discharge at rapid quantities during a financial crisis, its effective management will be crucial. Conflict management refers to practices that companies use to intervene in social conflict (Ensari, Camden-Anders & Schlaerth, 2016). The literature on conflict management to date recommends two main mechanisms for dealing with social conflict – reactive versus proactive. Furthermore, from these firms can choose between positive and negative conflict management strategies, the scope and application of which will depend on the severity of the conflict as well as the online community's goals.

Reactive conflict management represents strategies employed by community moderators to resolve the conflict after it has occurred, while proactive conflict management relies on pre-defined community norms and formal rules enforced through community governing mechanisms and expectations of community members to comply with these. In relation to the former, Gallaugher and Ransbotham (2010) recommend that companies should opt for reactive content moderation which includes responding to negative consumer interactions without reinforcing negative behaviors. Such approach can include providing further corporate information, positively affirming a company defender, requesting consumers to adjust their communication behavior or style or deleting consumer comments (Dineva, Breitsohl & Garrod, 2017).

In contrast, Ndubisi (2011) investigated pre-emptive conflict management through the promotion of organizational and information reliability. This approach to managing social conflict in online communities is believed to have the capacity to transform potential sources of conflict, such as service errors, into grounds for improvement, for instance, error detection and containment. Relatedly, a common proactive approach to managing social conflict is the establishment of community-governing mechanisms (Mathwick, Wiertz & De Ruyter, 2007). These constitute articulating expectations for acceptable behavior including maintaining criticism constructive, dismissing unjustified, negative comments, and sustaining a positive community environment. Similarly, Koza and Dant (2007) discussed the use of proactive ‘control mechanisms’ in order to address social conflict prior to its occurrence. The authors divided these into bureaucratic and relational. On the one hand, bureaucratic control mechanisms are characterized by formal control and centralized authority. On the other hand, relational control mechanisms are trust-based governance structures that facilitate the participation of community members in the decision-making.

Further to choosing whether to proactively or reactively engage in social conflict in the social media during a crisis, retail banks can select between positive and negative conflict management strategies. Generally, positive conflict management strategies include practices that reinforce desirable online community behaviors, while negative conflict management refers to punishing undesirable community behaviors. A study by Sibai, de Valck, Farrell & Rudd (2015) put forward two strategies to manage conflicts – interaction maintenance and interaction termination. Interaction maintenance follows a pro-active, ongoing approach which involves explicating roles, formalizing rules, monitoring interactions, rewarding positive behaviors and sanctioning negative behaviors. In contrast, interaction termination is more reactive in nature and seeks to end social conflicts that have become dysfunctional either by ignoring members or by permanently excluding them from the community. Likewise, Matzat and Rooks (2014) drew a contrast between positive (reward) and negative (punishment) conflict management strategies and found that positive moderation styles are more effective than negative styles.

More recently, Hauser et al. (2017) investigated the effect of assertive (negative) versus cooperative (positive) approaches to addressing public scandals that occur in the social media. Assertive conflict management is represented by competing, obliging, avoiding, which were found to further escalate the conflicts. In contrast, cooperative conflict management involves accommodating, yielding and integrating strategies, which can be described as showing willingness to cooperate with the opposing party. The authors found that cooperativeness is generally more effective, though the success of assertive as opposed to cooperative conflict management depends predominantly on factors such as attitudes towards the community, the number and presence of moderators and their credibility. In a similar vein, other studies found that cooperative strategies (for example, integrating and compromising) are more effective in constructively managing conflicts (Ishii, 2010) and generating customer satisfaction (Mazaheri, Basil, Yanamandram & Daroczi, 2011) compared with competitive conflict management.

Conclusion

The fast adaptation of social media globally has presented some unique challenges and marked a key turning point of communication between consumers and firms. The speed of this shift may explain the fierce torrent of criticism directed at social media for causing unnecessary panic during the acute phases of a financial crisis. Social influence denotes a phenomenon in which individuals are influenced by the actions taken by others in a social system to behave in a similar way (Wright, 1997). The probability of adopting a negative opinion and/or communication behavior therefore is likely to increase, if there is large proportion of other community members already expressing this negative opinion.

In accordance with the participative philosophy of the new social media, we argue that it is now time for a focused inquiry into the firm's role in managing the conflicts in the online communities during a financial crisis; for instance, what should retail banks do to manage the social interactions surrounding the consideration of the crisis, and the discussions about the recovery during this process? Consequently, we wish to present some further thought-provoking questions, the answers to which will significantly improve our understanding of the influence of social media on the retail banks and provide an opportunity to engage the decision makers for making a greater use of social media to help predict bank runs before they happen. We therefore outline questions for future research directions below:

What are effective mechanisms companies can adopt to avoid 'pathological' collective behaviors (panic, extremism, breakdown of trust, cooperation) on social media during a financial crisis?

How can financial services firms avoid social conflicts or minimize their destructive effect during a financial crisis?

How can financial institutions such as retail banks assess the actual state of their online community in the form of individual-level and community-level characteristics and adjust their management style accordingly during a financial crisis?

References

Al-Kandari, A. A., Caldwell, L. G., & Alduwaila, N. (2013). The use and impact of media during the 2008 global financial crisis: A media-user perspective. *International Journal of Business Continuity and Risk Management*, *4*(3), 246-265. doi: 10.1504/IJBCRM.2013.058406

Althaus, S. L. (2002). American news consumption during times of national crisis. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *35*(3), 517-521. Doi: 10.1017/S104909650200077X

Aubert, V. (1963). Competition and dissensus: Two types of conflict and of conflict resolution. *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* *7*(1), 26-42. doi: 10.1177/002200276300700105

Aula, P. (2010). Social media, reputation risk and ambient publicity management. *Strategy & Leadership*, *38*(6), 43-49. doi: 10.1108/10878571011088069

Austin, L., Fisher-Liu, B., & Jin, Y. (2012). How audiences seek out crisis information: Exploring the social-mediated crisis communication model. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *40*(2), 188-207. doi: 10.1080/00909882.2012.654498

Bacile, T. J., Wolter, J. S., Allen, A. M., & Xu, P. (2018). The effects of online incivility and consumer-to-consumer interactional justice on complainants, observers, and service providers during social media service recovery. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *44*, 60-81. doi: 10.1016/j.intmar.2018.04.002

Bennett, W. L. (2012). The personalization of politics: Political identity, social media, and changing patterns of participation. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *644*(1), 20-39. doi: 10.1177/0002716212451428

Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2011). Digital media and the personalization of collective action: Social technology and the organization of protests against the global economic crisis. *Information, Communication & Society*, *14*(6), 770-799. doi: 10.1080/1369118X.2011.579141

Breitsohl, J., Roschk, H., & Feyertag, C. (2018). Consumer brand bullying behaviour in online communities of service firms. In, Bruhn, M. and Hadwich, K., *Service Business Development* (pp. 289-312). Springer Gabler, Wiesbaden.

Bonsón, E., & Flores, F. (2011). Social media and corporate dialogue: the response of global financial institutions. *Online Information Review*, *35*(1), 34-49. doi: 10.1108/14684521111113579

Brodie, R. J., Ilic, A., Juric, B., & Hollebeek, L. (2013). Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: An exploratory analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, *66*(1), 105-114. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.07.029

Carlisle, Y. M., & Faulkner, D. O. (2005). The strategy of reputation. *Strategic Change*, *14*(8), 413-422. doi: 10.1002/jsc.741

Colliander, J., & Hauge Wien, A. (2013). Trash talk rebuffed: consumers' defense of companies criticized in online communities. *European Journal of Marketing*, *47*(10), 1733-1757. doi: 10.1108/EJM-04-2011-0191

Constantinou, D., & Ashta, A. (2011). Financial crisis: Lessons from microfinance. *Strategic Change*, *20*(5-6), 187-203. doi: 10.1002/jsc.895

Dineva, D. P., Breitsohl, J. C., & Garrod, B. (2017). Corporate conflict management on social media brand fan pages. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *33*(9-10), 679-698. doi: 10.1080/0267257X.2017.1329225

Ensari, N., Camden-Anders, S., & Schlaerth, A. (2015). Constructive management and resolution of conflict. In H. S. Friedman (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of mental health* (Vol. 1, pp. 340-349). Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Ewing, M. T., Wagstaff, P. E., & Powell, I. H. (2013). Brand rivalry and community conflict. *Journal of Business Research*, *66*(1), 4–12. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.07.017

Franke, N., Keinz, P., & Klausberger, K. (2013). “Does this sound like a fair deal?”: Antecedents and consequences of fairness expectations in the individual’s decision to participate in firm innovation. *Organization Science*, *24*(5), 1495-1516. doi: 10.1287/orsc.1120.0794

Gallaugher, J., & Ransbotham, S. (2010). Social media and customer dialog management at Starbucks. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, *9*(4). Retrieved from: http://misqe.org/ojs2/index.php/misqe/article/view/301

Gauthier, C., Bastianutti, J., & Haggège, M. (2018). Managerial capabilities to address digital business models: The case of digital health. *Strategic Change*, *27*(2), 173-180. doi: 10.1002/jsc.2192

Gebauer, J., Füller, J., & Pezzei, R. (2013). The dark and the bright side of co-creation: Triggers of member behavior in online innovation communities. *Journal of Business Research*, *66*(9), 1516-1527. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2012.09.013

Grégoire, Y., & Fisher, R. J. (2008). Customer betrayal and retaliation: When your best customers become your worst enemies. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *36*(2), 247-261. doi: 10.1007/s11747-007-0054-0

Grégoire, Y., Laufer, D., & Tripp, T. M. (2010). A comprehensive model of customer direct and indirect revenge: understanding the effects of perceived greed and customer power. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *38*(6), 738-758. doi: 10.1007/s11747-009-0186-5

Ishii, K. (2010). Conflict management in online relationships. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, *13*(4), 365-370. doi: 10.1089/cyber.2009.0272

Istanbulluoglu, D. (2017). Complaint handling on social media: The impact of multiple response times on consumer satisfaction. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *74*, 72-82. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2017.04.016

Gummerus, J., Liljander, V., Weman, E., & Pihlström, M. (2012). Customer engagement in a Facebook brand community. *Management Research Review, 35*(9), 857 – 877. doi: 10.1108/01409171211256578

Harris, L., & Coles, A. M. (2004). The impact of the Internet on marketing priorities in the financial services industry. *Strategic Change*, *13*(1), 11-18. doi: 10.1002/jsc.659

Hauser, F., Hautz, J., Hutter, K., & Füller, J. (2017). Firestorms: Modeling conflict diffusion and management strategies in online communities. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems, 26*(4), 285-321. doi: 10.1016/j.jsis.2017.01.002

Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D. (2004). Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: what motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the internet? *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *18*(1), 38-52. doi: 10.1002/dir.10073

Hirschman, A. O. (1994). Social conflicts as pillars of democratic market society. *Political Theory, 22*(2), 203-218. doi: 10.1177/0090591794022002001

Koza, K. & Dant, R. (2007). Effects of relationship climate, control mechanism, and communications on conflict resolution behaviour and performance outcomes. *Journal of Retailing*, *8*(3), 279-296. doi: 10.1016/j.jretai.2007.03.002

Kriesberg, L. (2007). *Constructive conflicts: From escalation to resolution,* Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

Laroche, M., Habibi, M. R., Richard, M. O., & Sankaranarayanan, R. (2012). The effects of social media based brand communities on brand community markers, value creation practices, brand trust and brand loyalty. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *28*(5), 1755 – 1767. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2012.04.016

Loonam, J., Kumar, V., Mitra, A., & Abd Razak, A. (2018). Critical success factors for the implementation of enterprise systems: A literature review. *Strategic Change*, *27*(3), 185-194. doi: 10.1002/jsc.2194

Madhavi, C. V., & Akbar, M. (2011a). Groundswell effect part II: a quantitative indicator of company performance. *Strategic Change*, *20*(1-2), 47-58. doi: 10.1002/jsc.884

Madhavi, C. V., & Akbar, M. (2011b). Groundswell effect part I: A new concept emerging in the world of social networks. *Strategic Change*, *20*(1-2), 31-46. doi: 10.1002/jsc.883

Makarem, S. C., & Jae, H. (2016). Consumer boycott behavior: An exploratory analysis of twitter feeds. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, *50*(1), 193-223. doi: 10.1111/joca.12080

Mathwick, C., Wiertz, C., & De Ruyter, K. (2007). Social capital production in a virtual P3 community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *34*(6), 832-849. doi: 10.1086/523291

Matzat, U., & Rooks, G. (2014). Styles of moderation in online health and support communities: An experimental comparison of their acceptance and effectiveness. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *36*, 65-75. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2014.03.043

Mazaheri, E., Basil, D. Z., Yanamandram, V., & Daroczi, Z. (2011). The impact of pre-existing attitude and conflict management style on customer satisfaction with service recovery. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *18*(3), 235-245. doi: 10.1016/j.jretconser.2010.11.004

Ndubisi, N. (2011). Mindfulness, reliability, pre-emptive conflict handling, customer orientation and outcomes in Malaysia's healthcare sector. *Journal of Business Research*, *65*(4), 537-546. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.02.019

Pfeffer, J., Zorbach, T., & Carley, K. M. (2014). Understanding online firestorms: Negative word-of-mouth dynamics in social media networks. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *20*(1-2), 117-128. doi: 10.1080/13527266.2013.797778

Potter, J., & Thompson, J. (2011). Government responses to the impact of the global crisis on finance for young and small enterprises. *Strategic Change*, *20*(5-6), 145-159. doi: 10.1002/jsc.892

Qi, J., Qu, Q., Tan, Y., & Mu, J. (2014). Modeling MGC strategies under extreme negative UGC. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, *15*(3), 150-161. Retrieved from: http://www.jecr.org/node/437

Reinhart, C. M., & Rogoff, K. S. (2011). From financial crash to debt crisis. *American Economic Review*, *101*(5), 1676-1706. Retrieved from: https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.101.5.1676

Schaefers, T., & Schamari, J. (2016). Service recovery via social media: The social influence effects of virtual presence. *Journal of Service Research*, *19*(2), 192-208. doi: 10.1177/1094670515606064

Shin, H. S. (2009). Reflections on Northern Rock: The bank run that heralded the global financial crisis. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *23*(1), 101-19. Retrieved from: https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jep.23.1.101

Sibai, O., de Valck, K., Farrell, A. M., & Rudd, J. M. (2015). Social control in online communities of consumption: A framework for community management. *Psychology & Marketing*, *32*(3), 250-264. doi: 10.1002/mar.20778

Stich, L., Golla, G., & Nanopoulos, A. (2014). Modelling the spread of negative word-of-mouth in online social networks. *Journal of Decision Systems*, *23*(2), 203-221.doi: 10.1080/12460125.2014.886494

Voinea, L., & Filip, A. (2011). Analyzing the main changes in new consumer buying behavior during economic crisis. *International Journal of Economic Practices and Theories*, *1*(1), 14-19. Retrieved from: http://ijept.org/index.php/ijept/article/view/3

Wade-Benzoni, K. A., Hoffman, A. J., Thompson, L. L., Moore, D. A., Gillespie, J. J., & Bazerman, M. H. (2002). Barriers to resolution in ideologically based negotiations: The role of values and institutions. *Academy of Management Review*, *27*(1), 41-57. doi: 10.5465/amr.2002.5922336

Weitzl, W., & Hutzinger, C. (2017). The effects of marketer-and advocate-initiated online service recovery responses on silent bystanders. *Journal of Business Research*, *80*, 164-175. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.04.020

Wirtz, J., Den Ambtman, A., Bloemer, J., Horváth, C., Ramaseshan, B., Van De Klundert, J., & Kandampully, J. (2013). Managing brands and customer engagement in online brand communities. *Journal of Service Management*, *24*(3), 223-244. doi: 10.1108/09564231311326978

Wright, S. C. (1997). Ambiguity, social influence, and collective action: Generating collective protest in response to tokenism. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *23*(12), 1277-1290. doi: 10.1177/01461672972312005

Authors' biographies:

Corresponding author: Denitsa Dineva

Biographical note: Denitsa Dineva is a Lecturer in Marketing at the Business School of Edinburgh Napier University (UK). Her research interests include conflict management, aggressive consumer-to-consumer communication, and social media-based online communities.

Affiliation: The Business School, Edinburgh Napier University

Postal address: 219 Colinton Road, EH14 1DJ, Edinburgh, UK

Email: D.Dineva@napier.ac.uk

Second co-author: Xiaoming Lu

Biographical note: Xiaoming Lu is a Lecturer in Marketing at the Business School of Edinburgh Napier University (UK). Her main research interests include customer relationship management, retailing management, service encounters and design. Her work has been published in a variety of marketing and management journals.

Affiliation: The Business School, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, UK

Postal address: 219 Colinton Road, EH14 1DJ

Tel: +44 131 455 4404

Email: L.Lu@napier.ac.uk

Third co-author: Jan Breitsohl

Biographical note: Jan Breitsohl is an Associate Professor (Senior Lecturer) in Digital Marketing at Kent Business School, University of Kent (UK). His academic interests focus on the dark side of digital marketing, in particular, consumer aggression, social media scandals and corporate response strategies.

Affiliation: Kent Business School, University of Kent

Postal address: 1.06 Sibson, Kent Business School, Canterbury, CT2 7FS, UK

Tel: +44 1227 827206

Email: J.Breitsohl@kent.ac.uk