Do Perceptions of Businesses Differ Between Higher and Lower Counts of Social Media Post Engagements?

Tally Shaw  
*University of Southern Mississippi*

Melinda A. McLelland  
*University of Southern Mississippi*

**ABSTRACT**

Social media is a popular marketing tool that directly connects businesses and consumers. This is a relatively new phenomenon, which requires more understanding on the part of marketers. Understanding how consumers respond to social media posts made by the business is vitally important to the continued success of businesses utilizing social media as part of their marketing efforts. Using social metrics such as “likes” and “shares”, businesses can both measure and influence consumer attitudes and behaviors. This study features an experiment that manipulates the effects of high versus low counts of Facebook likes/shares on Facebook timeline posts. This research extends previous studies by utilizing multiple posts as opposed to a single social media post. The study also compares consumer perceptions and intentions in terms of a small/local business and a larger/national business. Multiple independent sample t-tests address the proposed hypotheses. The results show that once a successful level of post engagements have been reached, there is no significant change on perception of the business as engagements continue to increase to higher counts. However, this does not apply to intention to visit the business, as this construct featured a significant difference when introduced to low/high counts of like/shares.

**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

Tally Shaw is a recent 2018 graduate from the University of Southern Mississippi. He graduated with a Bachelor's in Marketing. While obtaining his undergraduate degree, he completed an honor’s thesis, which examined the effects of high and low click engagements on brands utilizing social media. Currently, Tally is an account representative for Howard Technology Solutions in Mississippi where he provides customers with kiosk solutions to everyday problems for up and coming projects. Tally is proficient at pursuing new leads for business, gathering research, and operating SPSS.

Melinda A. McLelland obtained a Ph.D. in marketing from Florida State University. She currently is an associate professor of marketing at the University of Southern Mississippi. She has published in the Journal of Business Research and the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services. Her current research interests are in the areas of service failures and consumer behavior. Melinda serves as a student advisor for the Honor’s College. Two of these students have had their work accepted for publication at national conferences, including the current research endeavor.