

Technology and Consumer Wellbeing

In recent years we have seen consumers embed technology within their everyday life. The Covid-19 global pandemic has amplified consumers' use of technology to the highest level we have ever seen (Calugar-Pop and Lee, 2020) and into categories which previously had limited technology presence (Cruz-Cardenas et al., 2021). Accordingly, consumers are spending significant proportions of their day occupied with technological devices. For example, one of the first activities consumers engage in upon waking in the morning is consuming digital information either from email, news media or social media facilitated by their mobile device (McLean, 2021). Technological developments in both hardware and software have created the 'always on' consumer (Hollebeek and Belk, 2021). Whether it is engaging with a voice assistant, utilising virtual reality, deploying wearable technology (e.g., smart-watches), overlaying augmented reality, or consuming information through social media, technology surrounds consumers and can encompass any activity. Accordingly, consumers are often engaging with brands in some form through technology from the moment they wake to the moment they go to sleep.

Recently, the focus of much research has been on encouraging consumer adoption of technology, enhancing consumer's technology-facilitated brand engagement and co-creating value between consumers and brands facilitated by technology. While positive outcomes can be achieved for both brands and consumers through the use of technology, non-favourable outcomes are possible too due to the potential of technology to cause distractions and present consumers with information overload (Cruz-Cardenas et al., 2021; McLean et al., 2021). Given that consumers are increasingly exposed to greater media consumption through the array of digital channels of communication and technology facilitated service provision, the access to such media and services may have a compounding effect on consumers' wellbeing. Accordingly, this effect may elicit positive or negative wellbeing.

Positive psychology is the study of what makes life most worth living, focusing on both individual and societal wellbeing (Seligman, 2002). The scientific enquiry of positive psychology aims to understand and improve *quality of life*. In examining wellbeing, it distinguishes between hedonic well-being (HWB; Kahneman et al., 1999), and eudaimonic wellbeing (EWB; Ryff and Singer, 2008). The hedonic approach focuses on happiness, defining wellbeing in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance (Kahneman et al., 1999). It can be seen as subjective wellbeing (SWB, Kahneman et al., 1999) consisting of a cognitive component of evaluation in terms of life satisfaction and an affective component characterised by the prevalence of positive emotions rather than negative emotions. The eudaimonic approach, on the other hand, relates to meaning, and self-realization where wellbeing is seen as the full functioning of the

person (Ryan and Deci, 2001). Regardless of the conceptualisation of consumer wellbeing, research on the influence of consumers' use of technology to interact with brands on their wellbeing is scarce. Despite the amplified use of technology and particularly during the global pandemic, it is currently unclear if this use has a positive or negative effect on consumers' wellbeing and the spill-over effects this could have on brand related outcomes such as engagement, purchase, and loyalty. Despite brands efforts to utilise technology to engage with consumers, our knowledge in relation to positive psychology is largely non-existent

With this in mind, the objective of this Special Issue is to promote discussion and stimulate debate on the effects of technology use on consumers' wellbeing. We encourage approaches and methods to explore the varying roles and perspectives of technology's influence on consumer wellbeing. Empirical and conceptual contributions are invited on (but not limited to) the following topics:

- How can consumers' use of technology positively influence their wellbeing?
- Can a consumer's use of technology negatively influence their wellbeing?
- Do specific types of technology (e.g., virtual reality, social media) have a positive or negative effect on consumer wellbeing?
- What are the impacts (positive vs. negative) of certain technology facilitated activities on consumer wellbeing?
- Does consumer wellbeing have an effect on consumer engagement with a brand?
- How can brands engage with consumers via advanced technology (e.g., chatbots, AI) that lead to positive effects on consumers' wellbeing?
- What impact do branded 'wellbeing experiences' have on consumers and behavioural intentions?
- What role should brands play in fostering consumer wellbeing as a component of their brand strategies?
- What impact does the technology fostered psychological state of mind *flow* have on consumer wellbeing?
- How and why do consumers use technology to enhance their wellbeing?
- Does interacting with brands via advanced technology such as Artificially Intelligent (AI) digital assistants have a positive effect on consumer wellbeing?
- Do escapism activities through technology (e.g., branded mobile apps, brand's virtual reality experiences, social media communities) have a positive or negative effect on consumer wellbeing?
- Do consumers regret the time they spend engaging with brands via technology and does this have a spill over effect on continued brand engagement or other brand related outcomes?
- What are prevalent elements of consumer wellbeing within the context of new technology?
- How does continuous engagement with technology lower or increase consumer wellbeing?

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Submission deadline:

31st March 2023 (early submission will be appreciated)

To submit a manuscript, follow the manuscript submission guidelines outlined in the "[Instructions for Authors](#)" of *Psychology & Marketing*, be sure to select the correct Special

Issue "Technology and Consumer Wellbeing Special Issue" and also mention it in the letter to the editor.