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Master Thesis:

*The Impact of Consumer Socialization on Customer Response to Service Failure through Attachment Styles and Tolerance Zone.*

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# 0. Abstract

Following the research of Albert Bandura, the raising of social media has changed the platform for social interaction and human experience. Marketers have a new opportunity to apply the concepts of Bandura's Social Learning Theory toward enhanced consumer engagement and socialization in a social media context. This thesis synthesizes current research on Social Learning Theory and Social Media Technology, focusing on how the application of social media can have an impact on consumer socialization.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Research Motivation

In today’s technology driven world, in which the Internet play a key role of daily life of the vast majority of the world population, a new form of interaction and communication is getting more and more relevant. Human develop theories to explain of why people behave like their do. Especially economic decisions of humans are often relevant for their long term well being and interests influence parameter for companies, regulators and researchers. The decisions made are influence by the way how consumer are influenced and socialized.  
Consumer socialization is driven by many influence factors: One main driver could be the interaction with relatives, friends and social connections, next to marketing efforts of businesses.  
The rise of the internet and as a result the developed digital social media platforms attracted over 2 billion people worldwide.[[1]](#footnote-1) In the digitalized world people are using their computer or smartphone to be socially connected to each other through these social media platforms, known as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and co. The influence factors and drivers of the way consumer socialize are digitized by the internet and could be aggregated by these platforms. The acceptance of new technology in the information process is still increasing, which could indicate a trend or in other words more interest for this thesis.  
  
During the socialization of consumers it could be interesting for researcher how the new development of information technology is adopted by consumers.[[2]](#footnote-2) Consumer socialization is the process "by which young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning in the marketplace" (Ward 1 980a, p. 380). In this paper, we seek to explain and predict differences in consumer socialization tendencies via a more general social media socialization framework.

Marketing researchers and audience are showing substantial interest in social media research, trying to understand the challenges and opportunities associated with this new digitaised cultural and social phenomenon. Very few studies have focused on the impact of social media as a source of consumer socialization or as a socialization agent. The influence of this media is on the rise. In this research, the authors examine consumer socialization through social media as a new attachment phenomenon, positing likely predictive links to marketing-related social media behaviors. Researchers have demonstrated useful applicability of psychological [attachment theory](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/psychology/attachment-theory) to a variety of other marketing contexts, including special possessions, places, brands, and services.

On the other hand the author will elaborate the model of tolerance zone especially the concept of minimum expectations to the socialization of consumers through social media.

These two model are used in the research model to predict the response of consumers to product and service failure.

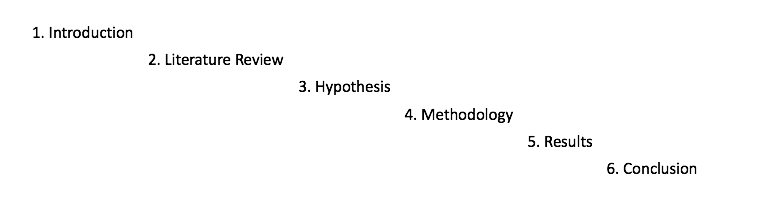
## 1.2. Research Objectives

Businesses and Consumer are more connected through the internet and especially social media around the globe than ever before: An average user of the Internet is connected with around 660 people.[[3]](#footnote-3) There are over 700 Million tweets at Twitter every day… 2 other facts…250 mio Linkedin.

The main objective of this thesis is to explain the response of consumers to product failure via the theoretical models in the field of consumer socialization of tolerance zone and attachment theory by the influence of social media. The hypothesis of this thesis are developed in Chapter 3.   
An online survey was conducted on a sample of Internet users (N = 216, age M = XX) . The questionnaire was designed to measure participants’ response to product failure based on there socialization through social media. Acceptance of service failure was assessed by measuring the respondents’ attitude toward a szenario of product failure.   
To develop a quantitative approach the study included this questionnaire to elaborate a quantitative fundament to get deeper insights to the connection between Consumer Socialization by the models of tolerance zone and attachment theory and social media. Moreover, the study will provide answers in regards to the questions on how consumer are influenced by social media in the consumer socialization process.

In addition, the thesis attempt to establish new…

## 1.3. Structure of the Thesis

The structure of this thesis is organized in six main chapters. Following the Introduction, the **literature review** is presented with the finding of other studies in the topics of consumer socialization and social media to give an theoretical fundament. The topics of this chapter are social learning theory, consumer socialization, influence agents and social media.  
Afterwards the development of the **hypothesis** will be presented in chapter 3.  
Followed by the methodology in Chapter 4 detailing how the **data collection and analysis** were conducted. The structure of the questionnaire will be explained in this chapter.  
The questionnaire results will be presented and discussed in chapter 5.  
Finally in Chapter 6 the thesis will end with a **conclusion** about the potential impacts of consumer socialization from social media influence, explained by the model of attachment theory and tolerance zone. Including a discussion on **implications** of this study and **future research** directions.

# 2. Literature Review

## 2.1. Social Learning Theory

“If you would understand anything, observe its beginning and its development” Aristotle

Two of the most commonly utilized theoretical perspectives to explain the Consumer Socialization process are the cognitive development model and social learning theory. This thesis will focus on the social learning theory.

Social learning theory describes the learning process and social behavior and proposes that new behaviors can be acquired by observing and imitating others.[[4]](#footnote-4) Key statement of the theory is that learning is a cognitive process which takes place in a social context and can conduct through observation.

Started in 1948, Skinner published the first lectures on verbal behavior, putting a more empirical approach to the subject of learning theories than existed in psychology at the time.[[5]](#footnote-5)Different researcher from all over the world work further on the development of the social learning models since the middle of the 19th century. Bandura (1971), Rosenstock and Ackers developed the model of social learning as a way to describe why people behave as they do.[[6]](#footnote-6)Experiments were conducted were the participants recognised the action of other individuals and learnt from this impression. In contrast to other learning theories Bandura showed, that not just Belohnung or punishment educate children. Bandura stressed out mainly three factors in the theory of social learning: The learning process influence people learning process by observation. Followed by the Imitation of the actions others, who successfully performed a task and finally creating models out of the experience for better future practise.**[[7]](#footnote-7)**

It can also seen in the way how younger people develop their buying decision on the market the social learning model attempts

Also the observation of behavior can be process of rewards and punishments recognized. When a particular behavior is rewarded regularly, it will most likely persist; conversely, if a particular behavior is constantly punished, it will most likely desist.[[8]](#footnote-8)

A reinforcement process implies that the learner is motivated to adopt (or not) some behaviors or intentions because of a reward (or punishment) offered by the socialization agent. This reward reinforcement can be delivered via written communication and in this case also social media.

The social learning models emphasize and develop the source of influence by so called social agents. These social agents are the core so transmit values, believes, behaviour and motivation of the learning human.[[9]](#footnote-9) A social agents could be any person or entity that interacts with the developing consumer and therefore inspire influence on the socialization of the learner. Social agents are mainly the family, mass media, school and peers. [[10]](#footnote-10)

This learning progress is leading to socialization -->

## 2.2. Consumer Socialization

A short review of how the understanding of consumer socialization has evolved over the past is considered to be required towards the effort of describing what consumer socialization is about. The following chapter will present a literature review of consumer socialization to bring together the theoretical fundament.

### 2.2.1. Origins and Term Socialization

The first research for understanding the behaviour of consumers can be found between the 1930s and the 1940s. The researchers Arndt (1986) and Ekström (2003) titled this era as the “Early Empiricist Phase”. During this time the concept of “homo economicus” was state of the art, which means that research attempts to understand consumers’ decisions in the marketplace were based on classical economic theory principles.

Consumers were seen as rational decision makers, performing economic calculations on how to spend their income, maximizing utility and minimizing cost (Zaichkowsky 1991, Waguespack and Hyman 1993, Ekström 2003).

Although people today have the ability to share information with millions of people from other cultures and social backgrounds, the underlying phenomenon of social interaction is not new. Man as, homo sociologies is a social being and therefore, contact and interaction with other people play a central role throughout the life course.[[11]](#footnote-11)  
Already in the times of the earlier humans, the exchange of views was more important than the people themselves have made recommendations to each other about particularly fertile farmland and rewarding hunting grounds. The existence of social networks based in their origin on personal communication is not a new phenomenon. The need for people to exchange ideas has not changed over time, but the new technologies and modern communication media are making a significant contribution communication network, which makes it very easy to reach many people around the world and makes communication a global one.

**Socialization** theory is a common ground for understanding **how young consumers learn to shop**.[[12]](#footnote-12) Research about consumer socialization was primarily conducted on children in the 1960´s and developed further to adolescent in the 1970's.

Today's academic consensus often define consumer socialization as a “process in which (children) **acquire skills**, **knowledge**, and **attitudes** relevant to their **performance as consumers** in the marketplace or in specific social settings” (Ward, 1977; Basu and Sondhi, 2014; Quintal et al., 2016). Using the **learning theory**, Ward et al. (1977, p.56) propose that “a basic component of children's learning about the marketplace is knowledge of sources of information about products.”

The content of consumer socialization refers to what human learn with respect to consumption; process refers to how they learn it.

Research **focused on children** and their interaction driven by socizalation. “a basic component of children's learning about the marketplace is knowledge of sources of information about products.” Newer research also conduct experiments on older target groups to get insights of the the process of consumer socialization during a longer period than only childhood.

### 2.2.2. Socialization as a lifelong process

A key question Ward raised in perspective of implications for future behaviour was, how permanent the influential aspects of consumer socialization are.[[13]](#footnote-13) Many research was executed focused on children till the age of 14, but less research was conducted for older individuals like freshman or other college students in the age between 18-24.

Baumrind describes consumer socialization as **lifelong process** through which individuals acquire skills, knowledge, habits, attitudes, and values that affect their ―present and ―eventual behavior as consumers in the marketplace.[[14]](#footnote-14) Also Ward extent his concept of socialization of the consumer not only to young children, but also to the development of relevant cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors about consumption adult periods.[[15]](#footnote-15).   
The idea of lifelong socialization was also earlier promoted by Brim, who argues that the process of learning and its capability can duarte throughout a person's **lifetime**.[[16]](#footnote-16)

As described the process of consumer socialization try to explain the way how consumer learn how to interact in the market. Often the process of marketing starts with market research which implement the goal of explore the unmet needs and wants of the customer.

Generational differences, especially the differences between generations defined variously as the Baby Boom Generation, Generation X, and the Millennial Generation, are widely discussed in the popular press as well as in a few scholarly publications [[17]](#footnote-17)

The **fields of studies** are present in: Child psychology, marketing research, home economics and communication research. (Scott Ward, Journal of consumer research, Sept. 1974, p. 5)

**Consumer Socialization** as a part of marketing and psychology is interfering with more and more topics in the research fields of economics. In the view of digitalization, especially of the new generation since the last generation, the way of socialization could have changed. Consumer Socialization acquires more knowledge of consumer behavior and there patterns (George P, Churchill Fr. S. 599 JoM Vol. XV Nov. 1978).

The following insight are used to develop new products or services or process to gain more attention, better prices and differentiation. [[18]](#footnote-18)

(2.1.4.) Why Socialization in the field of Marketing

Constructive management has been considered an important tool for managers to deal with failures, especially in the services sector, where customers evaluate a performance and not a tangible product.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Business research has demonstrated that dissatisfaction deriving from a service failure does not prompt most customers to complain.[[20]](#footnote-20) However, research does show that dissatisfaction is a central factor in customer switching behaviour.[[21]](#footnote-21) As customer switching behaviour has a direct impact on company profitability, service managers are necessarily interested in identifying the reasons behind switching behaviour, and behind consumer complaint behaviour , which usually precedes customer switching.[[22]](#footnote-22)

## 2.3. Influence Agents of Consumer Socialization

As described in chapter 2.1. consumers are developed their attitudes through social interactions and there influencers so called agents. Research has identified these influential sources as parents, peers, mass media, stores, schools, brands, and social media .[[23]](#footnote-23)

In addition to the media, children obtain product information from packaging, advice from peers and family, and learn about product characteristics from their own consumer experiences. Influencing factors on consumer purchase behavior into two groups: personal and situational factors. For example, feelings and beliefs regarding a product, brand, and store can be considered personal while shopping advice, values, and norms obtained from parents, peers, and the media are situational factors.[[24]](#footnote-24)  
Situational factores

### 2.4.1. Social Media

With the beginning of the late 1990s, broadband Internet became more available and popular. The broadband internet gave the opportunity for websites that allowed users to create and upload content.It is not a recent innovation as it just became popular enormously lately, however, the first social network site appeared in 1997 which was SixDegrees.com. Since 2002 onwards, a lot of social network sites were launched including those for niche communities such as MySpace. By the late 2000s, social media had gained a great impetus and many social media sites were increasing.[[25]](#footnote-25) For example; in 2004, Facebook was evolved. In 2005, Youtube was emerged. Twitter was launched in 2006. [[26]](#footnote-26) …

Social media, as a result of the development of the internet, have changed how consumers and marketers communicate.[[27]](#footnote-27)   
Social media platforms attract daily over millions of users, many of whom integrate the sites into their daily lives and business practices.[[28]](#footnote-28) Moreover, social media allow users to connect with peers by adding them to networks of friends, which facilitates communication, particularly among peer groups.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Ward pointed out that Consumer Socialization through Social Media influence the communication among consumers and that this affects their cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes. Through socialization, consumers learn consumption-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes in the marketplace.[[30]](#footnote-30) Consumer socialization through peer communication using social media websites has become an important marketing issue through the development and increasing popularity of social media. Guided by a socialization framework, this article investigates peer communication through social media websites; individual-level tie strength and group-level identification with the peer group as antecedents; and product attitudes and purchase decisions as outcomes. [[31]](#footnote-31)

Social media use among adolescents and children is rising nearly exponential by daily active users. Wherever the social media has an influence of consumer socialization, few research is done by now in this field. Kelly Allen how in his research that the social connectedness is also driven by social media. He argues that this connectedness between an individual and his environment could as well have positive influence on the connected and psychological well being, as well negative aspects for example alienation and ostracism.[[32]](#footnote-32)

The research of Anderson und McCabe 2014 conducted that the Internet adds dimensions to the socialisation and takes away elements in the socialization process that have not been manifest in the same way in the past. Anderson argues that the internet itself could an influence agents in the socialization process. Lot of newer forms of social exchange is transforming in the digital world, connected by the internet. As influence agents and for identity development, instant messages, chat rooms or groups and social networking are immanent in 21. century. [[33]](#footnote-33)

According to Mayfield social media have some basic features: Beginning with the feature of participation, which means social media encourage the contribution and comments from interested parties. The participation of users blurs the limits between mass media and the audience. Secondly Openness: The majority of Social Media services is open to feedback and participation while there are rarely hindrances in accessing and using content.[[34]](#footnote-34)

The feature of conversation describes in contrast to the traditional mass media that concern only content broadcasting to an audience, Social Media form a bi-directional conversation.

Community: Social Media allow easy and direct creation of communities sharing common interests such as their love of photography or a TV show.  
Connectedness: Most types of social media develop their consistency by using connections with other websites, resources and people.

These basic features can be identified in the socialization process as well.

### 2.4.2. Learning Institutions

Socialization through schools and kindergartens includes different pedagogical approaches, which accentuate its culturally active nature.

J. Brunner notes that a modern educational institution, being a bearer of a specific organizational culture, is able to realize the idea of the learning community where each student represents quite well what he is doing, how it should be done and why.

### 2.4.3. Peer

Literature refers in the process of socialization the peer group of an individual as an important source of influence. The personal peer group of an individual has an direct influence on the consumer socialization. Especially at the moment the young individual are getting more independent from their parents and school. Also the individual spend more time along their peers, because there are interested in the same things and often use the same source of information. (Wang, 2012) Another phenomena is described by the effect that the individuals of the same peer group often buy similar brands and products, because they identify as a part of the group by these.[[35]](#footnote-35)

### 2.4.4. Family

Moschis, Churchill and Reisman arguing with that families have significant influence on the child's acquisition of consumer skills. They call the family a socializing agent.[[36]](#footnote-36)

## 2.5. Consumer

This papers research is focused on young people with an age range from 18-24 and online social media accounts, because most of the research was done with childrens. Consumer is defined as a participant in the economic market. Starting from fast moving consumer goods to lifetime buy decisions or investments.

**Here: A broad idea of customer tolerance zone, relationship styles, and response to service failures**.

## 2.6. Socialization in the Era of Internet

### 2.6.1. Online Shopping Behaviour / Socialization

Newer generation are growing up with information technologie since there were young. The affinität to online services and devices is increasing. (numbers here)

“especially when technology constantly evolves and thus, alters” (Elms et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2011; Lissitsa and Kol, 2016).  
  
The trend is going with more and more online shoppers and a changing way of how they socialize. The way of shopping also interact very nearly to the development of behavior and habits of the consumer.

Shop more online “They also start to develop behavior, knowledge and habits from a very early age with the help of the surrounding environment and technology”. → Bigger and expanding market.

60% online shoppers “41% use a mobile device to make general purchases (Ramasubbu, 2014)”.

Moreover, Wägar and Lindqvist (2010) suggest that age is a relevant factor in customers' evaluations of service encounters, but the role of age varies in different service settings, especally in the internet.

Customer loyalty

Goodman and Ward's (1993) study for the US Office of Consumer Affairs suggests that for every five customers who encounter a problem, one will be lost for good. Non-complainers were found to be the least loyal customers even more disloyal than complaining dissatised customers whose problems were not resolved.[[37]](#footnote-37)

## 

## 2.7. The Model of Tolerance Zone

The model of tolerance zone refers to the research development of the Tolerance Gap. The tolerance gap is the difference between desired service and the level of service considered adequate. The larger that gap, the more likely the customer will be dissatisfied.

The zone of tolerance can be described with a different approach as well. So a level below the zone of tolerance will lead to customer frustration, decrease customer loyalty, and, hence, dissatisfaction. A level above the tolerance zone will lead to delighted customers, strengthen loyalty, and, hence, satisfied customers.

According to Parasuraman et al. (1994)[[38]](#footnote-38) there is a developed model to measure two aspects of service quality: The gap between perceived service and desired service - referred to as measure of service superiority; The discrepancy between perceived service and adequate service (or minimum service) - referred to as measure of service adequacy.

### 2.7.1. Concept of minimum expectations

## 2.8. Attachment Model / Relationship Styles

Lots of research has focused on the attachment theory, where attachment styles can be defined as the “systematic process of social behaviour of needs and expectations which outcomes from a specific record of attachment experienced normally when a relations starts” (H. Akhtar: Understanding the attachment style… JoM Vol. 25 2016, p. 60). The attachment styles can be seen very linked together in the theoretical model. The first time the idea of attachment styles was proposed was by Ainsworth in 1967, where he explained the pattern of behaviour of children, when there were separated from their mother and reunited. Therefore he categorized the behaviour into three styles: secure, avoidant and anxious. (Ainsworth M.D. 1978 Patterns of attachment: A psychology study, Hillsdale, NJ).

Social Learning Theories. Disengagement Theory maintains that mutual withdrawal of the elderly and our social systems from each other occurs as a natural consequence of aging. As people grow old, the theory contends, there is a voluntary severing of social ties and retreat into isolation. After this inevitable process gradually shifts the relationship between self and society, a new equilibrium emerges that is mutually gratifying to both self and society. It is characterized by contraction of previous interpersonal contacts and increased interiority of the individual. Schramm was among the first to suggest that the elderly use mass media to help combat disengagement.

## 2.9. Internet in Marketing Process

First, the internet give the possibility to communicate information about service provider, its products, and its services.[[39]](#footnote-39)

Second, the Internet functions as a marketing tool as it enables customers to interact with retailers and other customers, and assists their purchase decision-making process.[[40]](#footnote-40)

Finally, it involves selling products online and facilitating transactions between retailers and consumers. transaction intermediate, This unique feature reduces shopping risks and has reshaped the shopping environment for many consumers[[41]](#footnote-41)

In addition, the Internet is an important socialization agent due to its ability to establish two-way communications.[[42]](#footnote-42) → Web 2.0 (more details?)

In fact, previous studies showed that consumers undertake more research in the early stages of information search and alternative evaluation in the internet during their shopping (Chen and Hung, 2015; Elms et al., 2016; Lissitsa and Kol, 2016; Ling et al., 2010). In this process, other online parties and tools such as available product preview sites, consumer community, and social networking sites such as blogs, forums, Facebook, and Twitter, exert significant effects on online purchasing (Niu, 2013; Pereira et al., 2016; Thaichon and Quach, 2016).

### 2.9.1. Customer Relationship Management

The field of **customer relationship management** often focuses on customer satisfaction and the needs. This thesis will have a deeper look the the development of socialization mainly driven by learning how to interact in Society. Therefore a better understanding of the process of socialization can help to have a better perception of their feelings and level of security.

# 3. Hypothesis Development Process

## 3.1. Linking Consumer Socialization with the concept of tolerance zone (H1a)

**H1a**: A*s more active consumer are in social media, as tighter the tolerance zone of the user could be. The amount of using social media could increase the level of minimum expectations in the tolerance zone of the consumer.*

First Social media posts are often showing highlights of somebody's life, but could not be representative. This could be argued by the goal, to share the best moment with the social network. But this content could be seen by other as normal, so the expectations of consumer could increase to the presented level therefore. If we take the social learning theory in consideration, the observation of the posted content could lead to try of imitation.

Secondly Social media users are getting more support in the points of views there like, because liked and preselected pages and content by their own favour. The so called “Filter Bubble” as a phaenomena already in the public debate. (source here) This could be an self increasing effect.

It has become easier to respond to product failure by social media, because the technical and personal requirements are lowered by the effectiveness of the internet. Where people 20 years ago wrote letters to companies and shared it with the news, today the feedback/complaining process can be done in Bruchteil of the time and effort. In some cases there are collectively complaining on an company social media presence and causing so called “shit-storms”. (source here). This could rather strengthen the effect.

## 3.2. Linking Consumer Socialization with international friends on Social Media (H1b)

**H1.b**: *As more international friends consumer have on social media, as bigger could be the zone of tolerance.*

As more international social connection, the content shown could be more diversified in terms of culture, politics, entertainment and language. The international friends could add more different discussions about opinions and decisions by the individual. (Maybe more international friends could also indicate that the consumer traveled more, than comparable peers with less international friends/connection on social media.)

According to the social learning theory the human learn by observation. The social learning theory describe its “wirkungsprinzip” by transmit informations by observation. As a result of international friends consumer could observe more different points of view and so learn from cases more likely, because there observe different opinions and recommendation. Also about other cultures and behaviour and may be more likely to accept and tolerate them by understanding that people are different.

As more friends consumer have on social media, as more international content will be posted by peer and could influence the tolerance of different ideology.

* + - As larger the number of facebook friends, as more different content is posted in the social media “news stream” of the consumer.

This hypotheses can be leading Because

## 3.3. Linking Consumer Socialization with the concept of Tolerance Zone (H2)

**H2**: *As higher the minimum expectation in the model of tolerance zone are, as likelier consumer will respond to product or service failure with an exit of the consumer relationship*.

This could mean that the range of tolerance zone could have an influence on how likely the consumer response to product or service failure with leaving.

With the learning theory attached the individuals are developing their learning progress by observation. As more the individuals can observe and therefore learn, as more different types and level of tolerance of others are shown.

Upside down the hypothesis could be formulated like this: As smaller the zone of tolerance is, as more intolerant could be the response to product failures. Consumer will not accept failures and could be therefore more likely to switch.

It is harder to accomplish the expectations of the consumer, if the tolerance getting tighter from the bottom, in this case minimum expectations.

How can this be tested with the questionnaire/regression analysis?

## 3.4. Linking Consumer Socialization with anxious attachment style (H3)

**H3**: *As more active consumer are socialized through social media (amount of use), as less likely there develop an anxious attachment style (-).*

If the model of social learning is applied to this hypothesis it could bring support the hypothesis, because the user of social media can make daily new observation. The content which is shown in social media could give the user the opportunity to get more diversified options, values and believes. This diversified content could lead to a development of confidence which could prevent the development of an anxious attachment style.

In this case the use of social media has a negative influence on the development of the consumer attachment style anxious.

Also the hurdle to communicate, after a anxious or negative event, through social media is reduced by their presence in the social media. This could lead to confidence to have a fair possibility to communicate with other. Further developed this could also mean that as more people are reached as more people have similar or same experience. In this case the users can share experiences, fears and can communicate together. Public posted opinion/response to failure can attract support for the social media user.

But less analog interactions of consumer could causing an avoidant attachment style? Also they could be afraid about their social relationships in the analog world. The ability of real life communication could decrease. This could lead to the development of an anxious attachment style (not in children).

Interesting could also be the point of view upside down: As more consumer share/post content about the there life on social media, as less likely there are socialized with an anxious attachment style. (maybe at the end?)

## 3.5. Linking Consumer Socialization with attachment style anxious ending customer relationship (H4)

**H4**: *As stronger developed the attachment style anxious is in consumer, as less likely the consumer will exit the customer relationship as a response to product failure.*

“Anxious individuals feel that they want to be close with other individuals but others don’t want to be friendly with them. These individuals are normally worried that their caregiver don’t like them and they don’t want to stay with them.“[[43]](#footnote-43)

The anxiety attachment style could make the Individuals less likely to (directly) leave a customer relationship after a product or service failure, because of the fear to lose a relationship. The opinion that the caregivers, in this case the companies, will not worry about them could be established. If consumer now that the company care about them, there are less likely to leave….

that to increasing levels of attachment avoidance, the negative relationship between attachment anxiety and trust becomes stronger (more negative).

* Customer attachment anxiety and customer attachment avoidance are negatively related to satisfaction in the customer relationship.
* Customer attachment anxiety and customer attachment avoidance are negatively related to constructive response with service failures.

## 3.6. Linking Consumer Socialization with the attachment style avoidance (H5)

**H5**: *As more negative experience were made in by the socialization through social media, as less likely the consumer will develop the attachment style of avoidance.*

Consumer with a strong social network and positive experience with engagement of companies after a service failure will strengthen the confidence of the consumer. As described in the learning theory the consumer can observe different failures or examples on social media.

Customer attachment style avoidance could moderate the relationship between consumer socialization with the implication of social media and constructive response to service failure.

## 3.7. Linking attachment style avoidance with exit the customer relationship (H6)

**H6**: As stronger the attachment style avoidance are developed in the consumer, as more likely the consumer will exit the customer relationship as a response to product failure.

With an increasing levels of attachment avoidance, the consumer will be less motivated to argue with the company and may be more likely to prefer to switch the supplier, than handle with the issue. If the consumer try to avoid as much uncomfortable situation as possible, it could also lead to the result, that he will not exit the relationship, because the has to search for new suppliers.

Also as more avoidant consumer are attached, as less likely there will engage with the company after a product/service failure experience. The negative experience could cause in conflict with the company. So the consumer may avoid the conflict or is not willing to invest efforts and time into this failure experience.

This also can lead to the response that as more avoidant consumer are, as less feedback there will give about there earlier expectations.

# 4. Methodology

## 4.1. The Questionnaire

Via pyramid scheme, the self-designed online survey on [www.limesurvey.com](http://www.limesurvey.com) was distributed on social media sites like Facebook and Instagram, black boards, internet forums and other institutions all over Germany. All participants who took part in the study, was giving the opportunity to enter a drawing to win a Amazon Co. coupons of 50€ and/or getting an abstract of the study, is given. Before we worked out the model, an extensive operationalization, variables´ coding and scale building we conducted.

The questionnaire consists of 32 questions. A short scenario about a product/service failure way presented at the beginning. Based on this scenario the participation were asked about there reaction to the szenario. The aspects of tolerance zone were questioned about the minimum level of expectations and the desired level.

## 4.2. Data collection

Online questionnaire distributed by social media. Including a tombola as an incentive.

## 4.3. Target peer group

The targeted group for answering the questionnaire were freshman students in the age range of 18-23. The demographic profiles were asked in every survey. Also the actual academic status.

## 4.4. Analysis

## 4.5. Results

The sample of the empirical study constiedest on 216 people with an age range of around 18-36 years old students during the first universal degree. Attempts were made to include a balanced number of both sexes and social classes. The questionnaire has an range of 30(?) question to generate quantitative data for the regression analysis.

# 5. Results

# 6. Discussion and conclusion

This research provides several theoretical contributions to the field oif consumer socialization through social media with an focus not on children, ionsteat on freshman students. As it is one of the first study (to the best of this author’s knowledge) to examine the role of consumer socialization through social media combining the concept of tolerance zone attachment theory. The most important contribution is that this study empirically demonstrates that …

The study also provides a theoretical contribution to potential regulators, because…

Another contribution of the current study is that it...

Thus, the ability-based measure in this study may produce more accurate and pertinent knowledge about i…

In summary, the findings of this study demonstrated a scholarly need for greater attention to consumer…

While a single study cannot completely articulate such complex phenomena, the findings of the current study may offer a useful theoretical foundation for building theory in the consumer ...

## 6.1. Implication for research

## 6.2. Implication for manager

## 6.3. Limitation and further research

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