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THE IMPACT OF BLOGS OVER CORPORATE MARKETING COMMUNICATION: AN EMPIRICAL MODEL

***Abstract.** Despite the increasing rate of corporate blog adoption among companies, few empirical researches have been published up to date. In order to fill the void in current state of literature and enrich the body of knowledge, we model Romanian SME intention to use corporate blogs. We assume that intention to integrate the corporate blog within the marketing communication is a function of companies' attitude towards corporate blogging, perceived benefits of corporate blogs, social pressure coming from competitors and risks or concerns perceived when facing the decision to implement a corporate blog. We also assume the indirect effect of perceived benefits of corporate blogging on intention to use, mediated through attitude. Each of our latent constructs (perceived benefits, attitude, intention, social pressure and perceived anxiety) contains four items measured on a 7 point Likert Scale. We performed a structure equation modelling analysis in order to validate the hypothesis and find the path coefficients associated with the relationship between variables. Our hypotheses are validated and our model and confirmatory factor analysis indicates good fit.*

***Keywords:** corporative blog, marketing communication, intention, use, structural equation modelling*

JELL Classification: M31

1. Introduction

Corporate blogging is a new phenomenon that had gained the attention of both practitioners and scientists. Yearly in-depth studies of Dartmouth Marketing Research Centre show an increasing trend in the adoption of corporate blogging from 2007 to 2009. For example, 8% of the Fortune 500 companies and 19% of the Inc. 500 companies (the fastest growing companies in US) were using the corporate blogs. A year later, the adoption of corporate blog increased: 16% of the Fortune 500 and 39% of the Inc. 500 were blogging. The findings on 2009 report again an increased usage rate of corporate blogs: 23% of the Fortune 500 and 45%

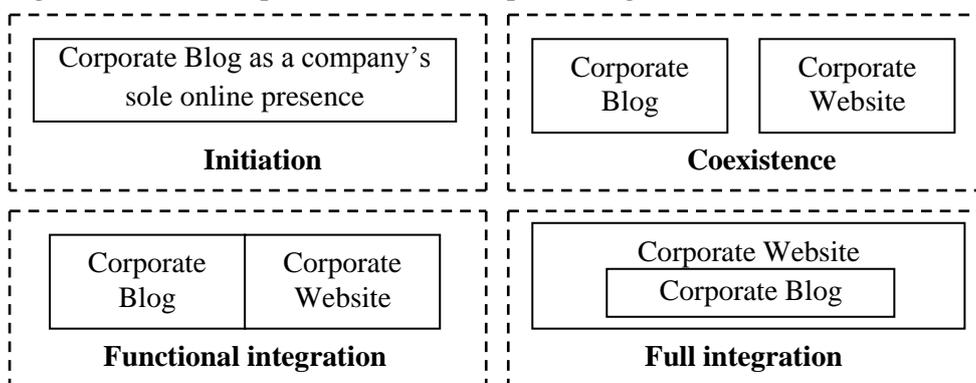
of the Inc. 500 (Dartmouth Marketing Research Centre, 2011). A Durbin Media Group paper reports examples of successful corporate blogs, such as Microsoft, GM, T-Mobile, Emerson, IBM, Pfizer, Boeing, Google and Sun that have become though leaders, have improve public relations, have created communities of feedback and got valuable feedback on new product development from its customers (Durbin Media Group, 2006). The rapid proliferation of blogs among companies has given rise to a trend of published press articles, white papers, mass-market books and few research papers on the subject (Hill, 2005).

2. The corporate blog and its implementation

The corporate blog was defined as “a blog published by or with the support of an organization to reach that organization’s goals” (Fredrik, 2004). Corporate bloggers are defined as both individuals that blog “in an official or semi-official capacity at a company” and individuals that do not represent a company spoke people but still “are so affiliated with the company” (Smudde, 2005).

According to Mazurek, there are different ways a company can implement a blog: initiation, where the blog is the sole online presence of the company, co-existence, when the blog coexists with the corporate website as two different entities, functional integration where the corporate blog and the corporate web site are jointly connected and finally full integration, where the corporate blog is integrated within the company’s website. (Mazurek, 2008).

Figure 1 Models of implementations for corporate blogs and websites (Mazurek, 2008)



3. The benefits of using corporate blogs

There is empirical evidence that blogs are a viable and effective communication tool for an organization, giving various and practical advantages of use (Hill, 2005). The most evident use of corporate blogging is external: companies use the corporate blog to engage in public relationships with its key stakeholders, to enhance brand awareness and brand loyalty and to enhance corporate image by

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developing trust around products and/or company's expertise and promoting social responsibility campaigns (Kolari et al, 2007). A BackBone Media research among companies indicate that there are various perceived benefits of blogging, such as thought leadership, community building, sales and online PR (BackBone Media, 2005). These above mentioned benefits refer to external corporate blogging. There are however corporate blogs for internal use within a company. Internal corporate blogs are formed by all "non-public blogs hosted within the organization on their intranets" (Kolari et al. 2007). Employees use internal corporate blogs for sharing expertise, voice opinions and initiate discussions (Kolari et al. 2007).

If some organizations choose to implement and maintain corporate blogs for internal use, the great majority of organizations have adopted the corporate blog for marketing communication and public relation purposes. A corporate blog facilitates information dissemination not just inside the organization, but also with its key stakeholders (Lee et al, 2006). Building a relationship with key public is the main goal of public relations (Hon and Grunig, 1999). Corporate blogs' particular features such as the comment function, allowing readers to post comments and blog-rolls function, allowing a social network related to the brand or field to be formed, position the corporate blog as a relationship management tool (Cho, 2006). Corporate blogs not only enable market analysis done through the assessment of written opinions of their target audience, they also direct public opinion towards the company's products or business itself (Hallett, 2005). Leaving a comment on corporate blogs is both unsolicited and anonymous, thus the information provided by the audience is both candid and uncensored (Singh et al, 2008). The engagement of the consumers in an ongoing communication supports brand loyalty by giving them a feeling of having a role in the product creation or development (Singh et al, 2008). Such feelings develop a brand loyalty since consumers get a feeling of ownership of the brand (Nardini, 2005). Several authors have found a direct relationship between brand community participation and consumers' attitude towards an organization but also product awareness and product involvement (Gustafsson et al, 2005). Corporate blogs are perceived as a personification of brand in that corporate bloggers post brand-related informal stories which provide brands with personality traits (Cho, 2006).

In Mazurek's empirical study, the most appreciated benefit of corporate blog usage was found to be online brand image creation, while improvement of media relations was not widely appreciated (Mazurek, 2008).

Consumers that are willingly contributing to a corporate blog are already interested in the product or the service a company has to offer. The segmentation of the consumers has been already made, since only targeted consumers participate in corporate blog topics of discussion. Mined data from consumers' comments can be mined using various techniques such as clustering in order to predict future behaviour (Ajuha and Medury, 2011).

Other authors emphasize on the benefits and advantages of the corporate blog by comparing it with the corporate website and outlining that the first enables a bi-directional humanized conversation with the target audience (Kelleher and Miller,

2005). Nevertheless, corporate blogs are also used in order to stay relevant to customers (Singh et al, 2008).

If used wisely, corporate blog is a very powerful information technology and communication tool that can improve long term strategic planning and profit maximizations (Spanos et al, 2002).

4. The main barriers of corporate blog adoption

The main barriers that keep companies from adopting corporate blogs are information security and confidentiality. Employee corporate bloggers can disclose sensitive information, such as earnings expectations or they may present negative or false and inaccurate information (Ranjan, 2005). Perceived issues with disclosure of important information are a main reason for not using corporate blogs (Mazurek, 2008). Such cases are not pure suppositions; companies have dismissed employees for prejudicing the company by posting negative comments or disclosing confidential information (Ostrander, 2007). Other companies fear about legal liabilities of un-moderated content (Ranjan, 2005). Moreover, the monitoring of blog users' comments requires time. Bad intentioned people can post scandalous, false or malicious information (Ranjan, 2005). Risk of receiving many negative comments and perceived difficulty in managing them is a strong inhibitor of corporate blog adoption (Mazurek, 2008). Other companies agreed that corporate blogging presents the risk of losing employees to competitors head hunting (Mazurek, 2008). The fact that corporate blogs need constant updates and posts puts enormous pressure on majority of companies since they perceive lack of topics to write about and employees' reluctance to writing (Mazurek, 2008).

5. Conceptual research model

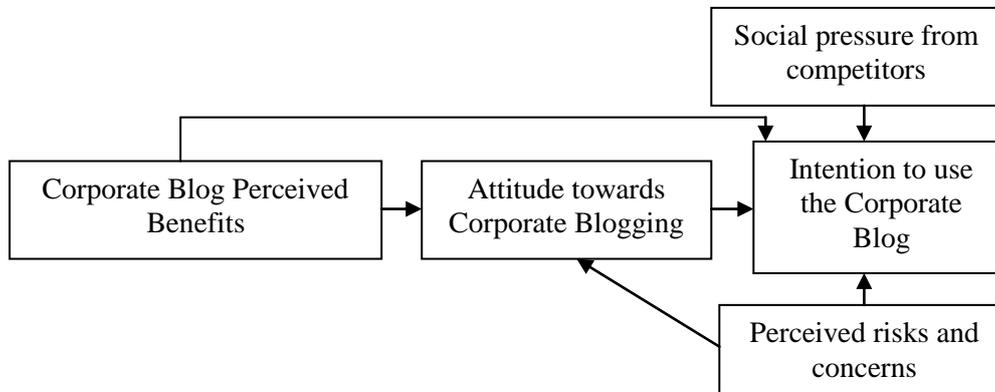
Theories such as the Theory of Reasoned Actions and Theory of Planned Behaviour validate that a particular behaviour can be explained based on the intention to adopt such behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen, 1991). The strong and direct relationship between intention and adoption has also been studied in various IS theories, among which Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and various TAM-based derived models (Davis et al, 1989).

Due to methodological issues, many researchers rely upon this assumption and they are satisfied with studying only individuals' intention to perform certain behaviour or adopt a certain information systems. Since actual adoption or use has to be measured after a certain period of time after the intentions are stated, we only rely upon modelling companies' intention to adopt corporate blogging and integrate the corporate blog in company's marketing communication. Moreover, companies do not change marketing strategies frequently, thus we would had to wait a considerable amount of time before measuring actual use:

As per this rationale, we propose the following research model:

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Figure 2 – Research model



The attitude-intention relationship has proven its validity across various studies, since attitude cannot always directly predict behaviour (Bagozzi, 1989). Attitude was defined as a general evaluative pattern of an individual's conduct with respect to an object (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). In an IS context, the attitude towards an information system has proven to positively influence individual's intention to use the system (Davis et al, 1989). We thus assume that those companies with a favourable attitude towards corporate blogging are more willing to use the corporate blog in marketing communication:

Hypothesis 1: The attitude towards corporate blogging has a positive influence on companies' intention to use the corporate blog in marketing communication

TAM postulates that an individual tends to accept or reject an information system based on his or her perception about its usefulness, whereas perceived usefulness represents the individual's perception according to which the information system is beneficial to him or her (Davis, 1989). Closely related to usefulness is the concept of perceived benefits of the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory, whereas perceived benefits represent the degree to which an innovation is perceived to be an improvement or amplification of current offer (Rogers, 1995).

TAM positions that perceived usefulness has both direct effect on the intention to use an information system and an indirect effect, mediated through attitude (Davis, 1989; Davis et al, 1989). The validity of these relationships is confirmed by TAM taxonomies of various models of adoption of different information systems and behaviours: e-commerce adoption, e-banking adoption, e-government adoption (Schepers and Wetzels, 2007; King, 2006).

We also assume that those companies perceiving greater benefits of corporate blogging are more willingly to use the corporate blog in their marketing communication and those companies perceiving greater benefits have a more favourable attitude towards corporate blogging:

Hypothesis 2: The perceived benefits of corporate blogs have a positive influence on attitude towards corporate blogging

Hypothesis 3: The perceived benefits of corporate blogs have a positive influence on the intention to use the corporate blog in marketing communication

The intention to perform or to engage in certain behaviour is also influenced by subjective norms, whereas subjective norms are defined as individual's referent groups' opinions and the motivation to comply with them (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen, 1991). In our model referent groups' opinions are irrelevant since we deal with collective intention but motivation to comply is not. We assume that companies perceive a certain amount of pressure from its environment, especially from competitors who are using corporate blogs in their marketing communication. Thus, we assume that companies tend to comply with competitors blog usage trend

Hypothesis 4: The pressure from competitors and motivation to comply has a positive influence on the intention to use the corporate blog in marketing communication

When using a corporate blog, there are however some perceived risks and concerns: information security, confidentiality, legal liabilities, receiving negative comments, lack of topics to write (Ranjan, 2005; Mazurek, 2008). We position that perceived risk and concerns cause anxiety and thus reluctance to use the corporate blog in marketing communications:

Hypothesis 5: Perceived risks and concerns have a positive influence on the intention to use the corporate blog in marketing communication

6. Research methodology

In order gather data, we first had to develop measures for our constructs and then initiate a web-based survey among Romanian small and medium enterprises. We gathered data and validated our responses database for missing values and inconsistency among responses. Then we performed a Reliability and Internal Consistency Analysis of the constructs' items and an Exploratory Factor Analysis using the Principal Axis Method and an oblique Promax rotation. After, we performed a Confirmatory Factor Analysis in order to compute factor loadings. Finally, we performed structural model path analysis in order to validate our hypotheses and proposed model based on path coefficients and model fit.

6.1 Measures development

In order to measure our constructs, we employed four items for each construct: intention, attitude, perceived benefits, social pressure and perceived risk or concerns, measured on a 7 point Likert scale. Most of the items were adapted from previous literature (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Davis, 1989; Davis et al, 1989).

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The items measuring intention and perceived usefulness were adapted from Davis's Technology Acceptance Model to the purpose of our study (Davis, 1989; Davis et al, 1989). The items for measuring attitude and social pressure from competitors were adapted from Fishbein and Ajzen's Theory of Reasoned Actions they have proven to be successfully strong in various behavioural and intentional models (Chen et al, 2002). The constructs and their measures are presented in Appendix A.

6.2 Data collection

We have collected data with the survey questionnaire instrument, which was sent to a database of over 1800 e-mail addresses from Romanian small and medium sized enterprises, manually extracted by authors for the purpose of this study. 1810 e-mails were sent containing the cover letter in which we explained the purpose of our study and a short description of authors and the attached questionnaire to the e-mail. After 2 weeks only 102 completed questionnaires were received. We then decided to send a reminder to companies in order to increase the response rate. After another 2 weeks, a total of 242 completed questionnaires were received by the authors, resulting a 13.37% response rate. However, only 217 questionnaires were validated as being consistent and having no missing values.

7. Analysis and results

The structural equations model (SEM) analysis was made with IBM SPSS Statistics Package and IBM SPSS Amos.

Before the analysis procedures the database was checked for missing values, duplicate entries and multivariate outliers. All the entries with one missing value for a item corresponding to a latent variable were replaced with the mean of the others, and the ones with more than one missing value for construct were removed from the database. The influential multivariate outliers were detected using the Mahalanobis D-Squared test in SPSS Amos for a $p < 0.01$ and were also removed. No cases of duplicate answers were found.

The first step of the structural equations modelling is the reliability and internal consistency analysis which follows that the items corresponding to each construct have a Cronbach's Alpha value over 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978) in order for the items to influence the construct. The Reliability Statistics will show the Cronbach's Alpha and Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items values, the Item statistics will show the mean and standard deviation of each item and the Item-Total Statistics will compute the Corrected Item-Total Correlation, which is the correlation between the item and a composite score of all the other remaining items, and Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted, which indicates which item should be removed if the corresponding row coefficient value is greater than the Cronbach's Alpha value from the Reliability Statistic segment.

The Inter-Items correlation matrices were also computed for each set of items and they all have good Pearson R correlation coefficients, over 0.3, the lower accepted limit as a rule of thumb for item correlations.

Table 1 – Reliability and Internal Consistency Analysis

Reliability Statistics [PB]					
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items				N of Items
.886	.889				4
Item Statistics			Item-Total Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
PB1	5.46	1.178	217	.698	.876
PB2	5.82	1.077	217	.818	.829
PB3	5.71	1.188	217	.755	.854
PB4	5.78	.994	217	.751	.857
Reliability Statistics [AT]					
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items				N of Items
.939	.940				4
Item Statistics			Item-Total Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
AT1	5.53	1.131	217	.819	.932
AT2	5.71	1.091	217	.835	.926
AT3	5.69	1.005	217	.877	.914
AT4	5.71	1.074	217	.892	.908
Reliability Statistics [CP]					
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items				N of Items
.765	.780				4
Item Statistics			Item-Total Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
CP1	5.49	1.151	217	.607	.688
CP2	5.83	1.045	217	.598	.698
CP3	4.74	1.407	217	.453	.790
CP4	5.66	1.081	217	.652	.668
Reliability Statistics [PR]					
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items				N of Items
.882	.883				4
Item Statistics			Item-Total Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
PR1	5.63	1.148	217	.785	.841
PR2	5.56	1.177	217	.713	.869
PR3	5.39	1.142	217	.726	.863
PR4	5.60	1.126	217	.783	.842
Reliability Statistics [CI]					
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items				N of Items
.901	.903				4
Item Statistics			Item-Total Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
CI1	5.63	1.128	217	.860	.841
CI2	5.58	1.242	217	.664	.899
CI3	5.52	1.255	217	.768	.874
CI4	5.60	1.138	217	.855	.842

Table 1 shows excellent Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients for Attitude [AT] and Continued Intention [CI] variables, 0.939 and 0.899, very good values for

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Perceived Benefits [PB] and Perceived Risks [PR]. 0.886 and 0.882, and a good value for Competitors' Pressure, 0.765, over the accepted lower limit of 0.7.

The Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items calculate the Cronbach's Alfa under the pretence that all the items in the construct have nearly the same variance, which is true in our model, the two coefficients being almost equal, except for [CP] where Alpha is 0.765 and standardized Alpha is 0.780, because of the Item 3 which has a lower mean than the others.

The Item-Total statistics segments of table 1 show that all the items have good Corrected Item-Total Correlation values, over 0.3 and have Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted values under the Alpha value from Reliability Statistics segments, are all explaining very well the latent construct, except Item 3 from [CP], which should be removed, thus resulting a final Alpha of 0.78. However, we chose not to remove Item 3 because Competitors' Pressure is a formative variable and all the items are distinctive components of the [CP] construct, and the improvement of Alpha with only 0.015 doesn't justify such action.

Next, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in SPSS Statistics will be done in attempt to discover the underlying structure and nature of the constructs influencing a set of items' responses (DeCoster, 1998). The a priori assumption of EFA is that any indicator or item may be associated with any factor. The EFA will be made using the Principal Axis Analysis extraction method based on Eigenvalues grater than 1 with a fixed number of five factors, a Promax oblique rotation method and suppressing small coefficients with an absolute value below 0.2.

First, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's test (Table 2) shows a KMO measure of 0.886, which is very good, indicating that the variables are able to be grouped in factors, and a Bartlett's Test of Sphericity with a Chi Square of 3703 (df=190) which is significant for a $p < 0.001$, thus the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, resulting that this set of data is appropriate for using an EFA, also confirmed by the Communalities table, which has all the values over 0.3.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.886
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3703.688
	df	190
	Sig.	0.000

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	8.993	44.965	44.965	8.709	43.545	43.545	6.696
2	2.936	14.681	59.646	2.646	13.231	56.776	4.190
3	1.255	6.276	65.921	.903	4.514	61.290	6.046
4	1.064	5.319	71.240	.718	3.589	64.879	6.845
5	.893	4.464	75.704	.603	3.015	67.894	5.709

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

The Total Variance Explained Table 3 shows that five factors were extracted and the of Cumulative % for Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings is 67.89 on factor five, which means that these five factors explain about 68% of the variance in the model containing the observed items.

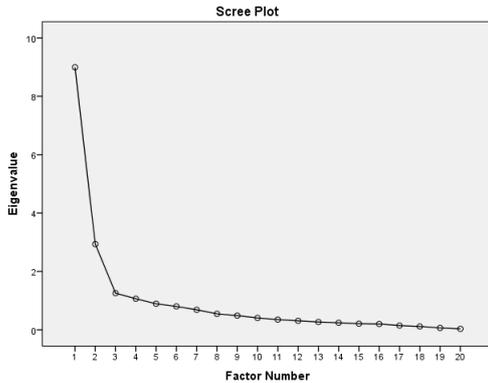


Figure 3 – The Scree Plot

The next step of the EFA Analysis procedure is the most important and consists in analyzing the Pattern Matrix and the Factor Correlation Matrix.

Table 4 – The Pattern Matrix after Promax rotation converged in seven iterations is pretty clean, the observed twenty items loading clearly on the five factors, which means that the items correlate better with each others than they do with the other set of items. The loadings for the corresponding factor’s items are all positive and over 0.5, showing that the five factors describe well the twenty items. We have some cross-loadings because of Item 1 from [PB] and Item 1 and Item 4 from [PR] loading on multiple factors, but the differences between cross-loadings are over 0.2 which mean that they don’t cause problems, and each item produce at least one zero loading on some factor (Thurstone, 1947).

The Factor Correlation Matrix (Table 5) shows some high correlations among some of the factors, which is the reason

The Cattell (1978) Scree test plot (Figure 3) shows the Factor Number on the X axis and the Eigenvalue on the Y axis, and it results that only five factors are over the Eigenvalue of 1, the first two explain over half of the model variance, while the other eighteen factors explain the rest. The scree plot suggests that three factors are sufficient to emphasize parsimony, but the Kaiser criterions rule shows that five factors should be kept because they have values over 1.

Table 4 - Pattern Matrix^a

	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
PB1				.725	
PB2				.900	
PB3				.795	
PB4	.218			.570	
AT1	.879				
AT2	.887				
AT3	.874				
AT4	.874				
CP1					.776
CP2					.613
CP3					.380
CP4					.744
PR1		.640	-.209		.254
PR2		.902			
PR3		.936			
PR4		.611	-.251		.252
CI1			.854		
CI2			.598		
CI3			.718		
CI4			.810		

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
 Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.
 a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Table 5 - Factor Correlation Matrix

Factor	1	2	3	4	5
1	1.000	.207	.677	.618	.513
2	.207	1.000	.135	.551	.518
3	.677	.135	1.000	.562	.469
4	.618	.551	.562	1.000	.664
5	.513	.518	.469	.664	1.000

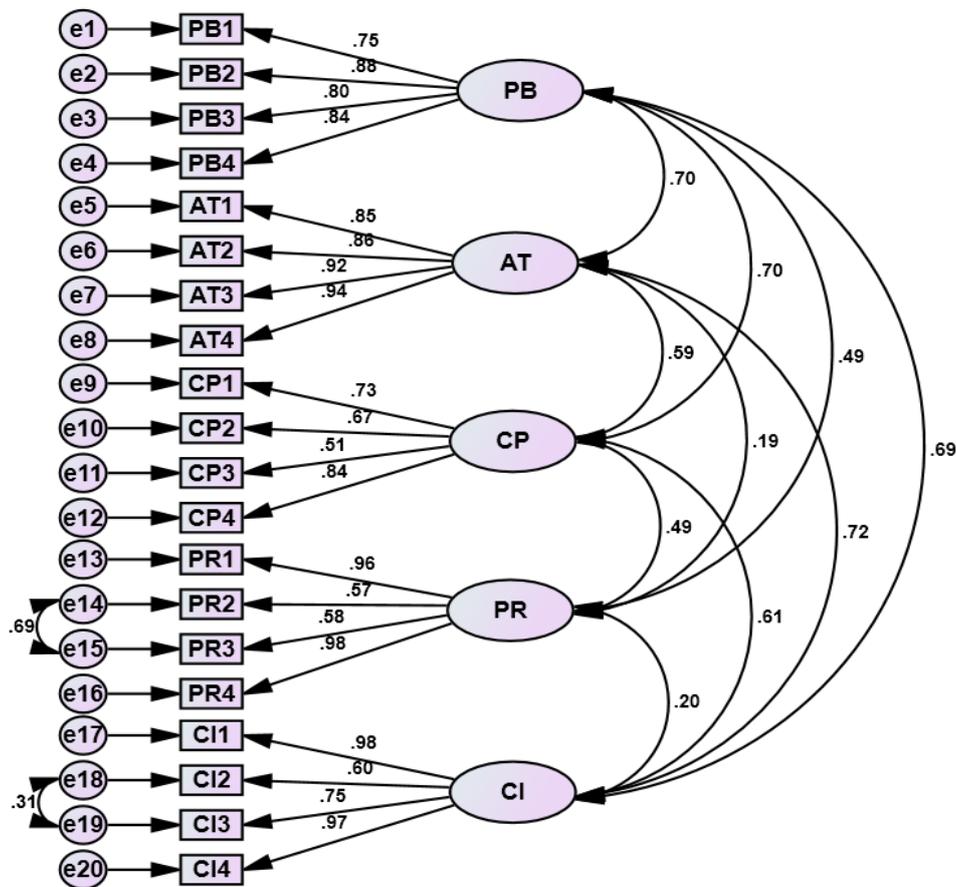
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
 Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

for cross-loadings, but is overall good.

Because the Correlation Matrix has values over 0.32, the oblique rotation is recommended (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007, p. 646), being the reason why we chose the Promax rotation technique.

Next, the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is done in order to determine if the numbers of factors and the loadings of observed variables or items conform to the hypothesized model expectations and if the model fit the observed set of data. The CFA will be accomplished using SPSS AMOS.

Figure 4 – Confirmatory Factor analysis



The CFA show pretty good standardized factor loadings for each associated item, especially for the reflective variable Attitude [AT] and also for Continued Intention [CI]. The Perceived Benefits [PB], even if it is a formative latent variable has good factor loadings. The minor problems are on the Competitors Pressure [CP] and Perceived Risks [PR], which have some smaller loadings, between 0.5 and 0.7, which is predictable regarding their formative nature, but which could negatively

influence the structural model fit. Errors e14 and e15 from [PR] and e18 and e19 from [CI] were covariated for a better model fit because of the high modification index values associated to them, over 60 in first case and over 20 in the second. In conclusion the individual parameter fit is good with a few exceptions which we'll see if they influence the overall model fit.

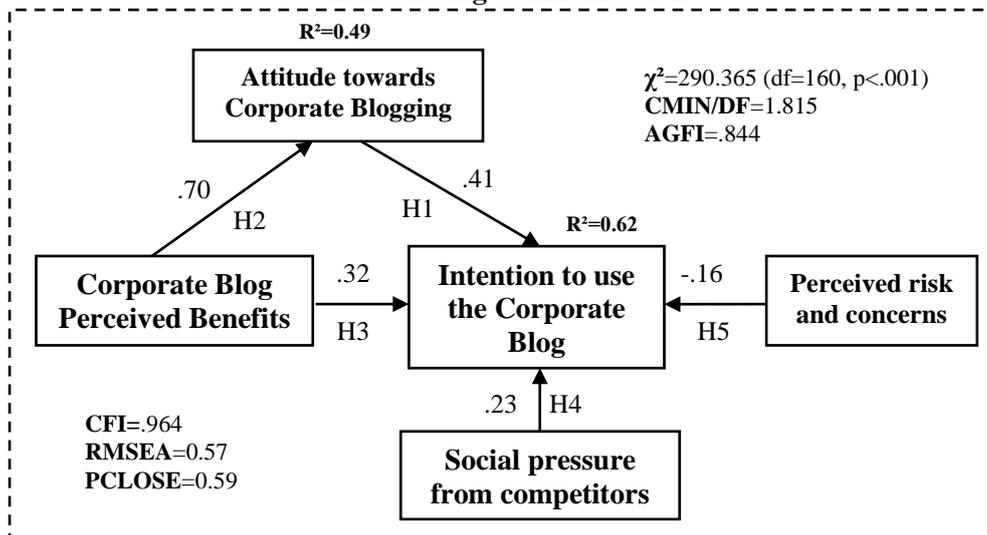
Table 6 - CFA Overall Measurement Model Fit

DF	Chi Square	CMIN/DF	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA	PCLOSE
158	270.728	1.713	.889	.969	0.57	.143

The overall measurement model fit was analysed using the Maximum Likelihood technique, and the fit indices have all good values: CMIN/DF (Chi Square / df) is 1.713, under the under 3, which is very good, the AGFI is over 0.8, also very good, the comparative fit indices (CFI) is over 0.95, which is excellent, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.57, under 0.8, which is pretty good and the PCLOSE is excellent, over 0.05, thus the overall measurement model is validated and has a good fit, each set of items describing well the latent factor.

The last step is assessing the validity of the proposed structural equation model and establishing the corresponding path coefficients for each hypothesised relationship between model's variables. The five variables from the CFA will be linked with regression lines in SPSS AMOS, the arrows being directed form model's independent variables to the dependent variable.

Figure 5 – The Model of Romanian SME’s intention to use the corporate blog in marketing communication



The structural model was built and the path coefficients or standardized regression weights were associated to each hypothesis.

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All the coefficients are significant, with a p under 0.001 and under 0.01 for Perceived Risks, thus the entire model's hypotheses being validated.

The strongest correlation is between Perceived Benefits [PB] and Attitude [AT], having a standardized weight of 0.7 and a Pearson R Squared coefficient of determination of 0.49, meaning that the [AT] can be explained in a proportion of 49% by the [AT].

The Continued Intention [CI] dependent variable can be predicted by the other four model's dependent variables in a proportion of 62%, the strongest relationship being with Attitude [AT], having an associated path coefficient of 0.41. Competitors' Pressure [CP] also have a significant effect of 0.23 on [CI] and Perceived Risk and Concerns [PR] has a negative influence on [CI] of -0.16 as hypothesized.

The standardized regression weight between Perceived Benefits [PB] and [CI] is 0.32, which indicated a strong correlation between the two variables, and regarding the standardized weight between [PB] and [AT] of 0.70, and between [AT] and [CI] of 0.41, using a statistic calculator (Soper, 2012) for the significance of mediation Sobel (1982) test, resulted a Sobel test statistic value of 5.034 with a two-tailed probability under 0.001 which means that the [AT] has a significant partially mediating effect between [PB] and [CI].

The proposed structural model fit indices computed with Maximum Likelihood technique have all good values, the CMIN/DF (Chi Square / df) being 1.815, under the under 3, which is very good, the comparative fit indices (CFI) over 0.95, which is excellent and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.61, very good, thus the model being validated with a very good fit.

8. Conclusions

Companies' intention to use the corporate blog within marketing communication can be modelled through a research framework of Theory of Reasoned Actions (TRA) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), both augmented with a new variable, perceived risk. We first assumed that the intention to use the corporate blog in marketing communication is a function of attitude towards corporate blogging and its perceived benefits. This is in accordance with previous TAM and TAM-based studies of various information systems adoption. The performed path analysis indicates that a strong relationship between attitude towards corporate blogging and companies intention to use a corporate blog and a moderate influence of perceived benefits of corporate blogs on companies intention of usage. Note that perceived benefits of corporate blogs have also an indirect effect on intention, mediated through attitude. These findings implicate that companies with a more favourable attitude towards corporate blogging are more willing to use the corporate blog in their marketing communication. Also, companies that perceive higher benefits from using a blog are more willing to use the blog in their marketing communication. Higher perceived benefits also determine a more favourable attitude towards corporate blog usage. Higher benefits from using a blog can lead to a brand awareness and brand loyalty enhancement favoured by

community participation in product development, a corporate image enhanced by the trustful environment instalment and company's participation in social responsibility campaigns, a deeper insight in consumers thoughts and action mined through data from their comments, a better information dissemination between the company and its stakeholders: customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers and partners. But corporate blogging also brings some potential risk or concerns. Companies fear of exposure of confidential or sensitive data by their employees bloggers. They also fear about the risk of potential lawsuits if blog content, especially customers' comments are not proper moderated. They also perceive a risk of getting bad corporate image due to various blog users who could post scandalous, false or malicious information just to harm the company.

We then assumed that all these perceived risks would negatively influence companies' intention to use the corporate blog in their marketing communication. Path analysis confirms our assumption indicating a moderate negative impact of perceived risks on the usage intentions.

Following Fishbein and Ajzen assumption that individuals care and are motivated to comply with referent groups' opinion, we also assumed that companies tend to comply with current trend in corporate blog adoption. This means that those companies knowing that their competitors engaged in corporate blogging are more likely to use the corporate blog in their marketing communications. Again, path analysis validated our assumption and social pressure from competitors and motivation to comply has a moderate influence on companies' usage intentions.

All the model's relationships between variables associated to the corresponding hypotheses were all validated concluding that Attitude acts as a partial mediator between Perceived Benefits and Continued Intention, and the model fit indices of both overall measurement model and proposed structural model have very good values resulting that the model is validated and has a very good fit.

9. Limitations and future research recommendations

Our study has some limitations which we hope to be surmounted by future empirical researches in the field of corporate blogging. First of all, our model is limited to modelling companies' intentions to use corporate blog in their marketing communication. A possible improvement would be considering longitudinal studies in order to assess actual usage and correlate reported intention with reported use. Second, our study is limited by its sample of Romanian SME. Using data gathered from other regions and cultures could have lead to different results. Thus, countries' culture but also economic, social and demographic indicators could play a moderating effect when modelling companies' adoption of corporate blogging. We strongly recommend cross-countries studies in order to assess the possible effect of country related moderating variables.

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Appendix 1. Proposed measurements for items and constructs

Construct	Measurement Item
Perceived benefits of corporate blogs	We believe that using a corporate blog is efficient for maintain public relations with company’s key stake holders
	We believe that using a corporate blog is efficient for enhancing brand awareness and brand loyalty
	We believe that using a corporate blog is efficient for gaining though leadership in company’s field
	We believe that using a corporate blog is effective for gaining insight in consumers beliefs and behaviour
Perceived risks of corporate blogs	We believe that the use of a corporate blog can expose confidential or sensitive data about the company
	We believe that use of a corporate blog can cause potential lawsuits if content is not proper moderated
	We believe that use of a corporate blog can harm companies’ reputation if bad intentioned users post scandalous, false or malicious information comments
	We believe that using a corporate blog we can cause losing employees due to competitors head hunting
Social pressure from competitors and motivation to comply	If our competitors used external corporate blogs, we would consider using them, too
	If our competitors used internal corporate blogs, we would consider using them, too
	If our competitors would frequently update their corporate blogs, we would consider updating our content more frequently, too
	If our competitors were engaged in conversations with blog users, we would consider allocating more time to respond to blog users’ comments, too

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Attitude towards corporate blogging	We believe that the use of corporate blogs in marketing communication is a good idea
	We believe that the use of corporate blogs in marketing communication is a wise idea
	We believe that the use of corporate blogs in marketing communication is a practical idea
	We believe that the use of corporate blogs in marketing communication is a necessary decision
Intention to use corporate blogs in marketing communication	We anticipate using the corporate blog in our marketing communication
	It's probable that we will use the corporate blog in our marketing communication
	We expect to use the corporate blog in our marketing communication
	We are willing to use the corporate blog in the near future