THE IMPACT OF BRAND POST CONTENT ON CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT OF FACEBOOK BRAND COMMUNITIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SRI LANKAN TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY

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INTRODUCTION

Although branding dates back to the 1500s, significant changes occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries. Brands have created brand communities with their emotionally linked customers as a result of the consumer takeover. Brand communities can improve the brand loyalty of members, foster antagonistic brand loyalty toward rival brands, and affect consumer behavior toward the adoption of new products. (O'Sullivan et al., 2011). As a result of the shift from a material economy to an information economy, online brand communities emerged (Brogi, 2014). In the Sri Lankan context, the usage of social media increased rapidly during the last 05 years and Sri Lankans have moved to different social media platforms. Among those social media platforms, Facebook is the most popular platform in Sri Lanka and businesses have moved to Facebook to build their online brand communities.

Organizations need these online brand communities to become more competitive and identifying the factors that influence the engagement of consumers in the online brand communities. (Zhao et al., 2021). Consequently, brand post content can be considered a crucial factor that enhances customer or user engagement. Therefore, organizations have to consider content characteristics to influence customer engagement. In today's world, most firms are using the outsourcing strategy to manage their brand communities. (Bryce & Useem, 1998). Through this study, marketers and social media content creators can directly address to necessity of the users or consumers. Because the post content is the main channel or instrument that can be used address to the users. As a result of the likes, comments, and shares, marketers might forge a close connection with firms' potential customers. The marketer's ability to acquire their confidence and turn them into devoted consumers will be boosted by a stronger connection (Dessart, 2015). Furthermore, the researcher conducted this thesis by using the customer category related to Facebook brand communities of the Sri Lankan telecommunication industry. The telecommunications industry can be recognized as an oligopoly market because there are a few competitors in the market in Sri Lanka. As an oligopoly competitor, they are using strategies like online brand community management as their non-price competition strategies. As well as, there is a significant knowledge gap in the area of social media marketing (Antunes et al., 2018; Perera et al., 2022). The researcher Krishnamurthy has defined social media marketing in 2022 as connecting brands and consumers, providing a personal channel and currency for user-centered networking and social interaction. Some researchers have thus categorized brand posts in social media postings according to the various content types and variances in how engagement is affected by the content (Bang Nguyen Dilip S. Mutum, 2015). They showed that there is a significant impact between customer engagement and the brand post content than the brand post characteristics. The study of Eriksson et al. (2019b) shows the levels of fan engagement on Facebook have

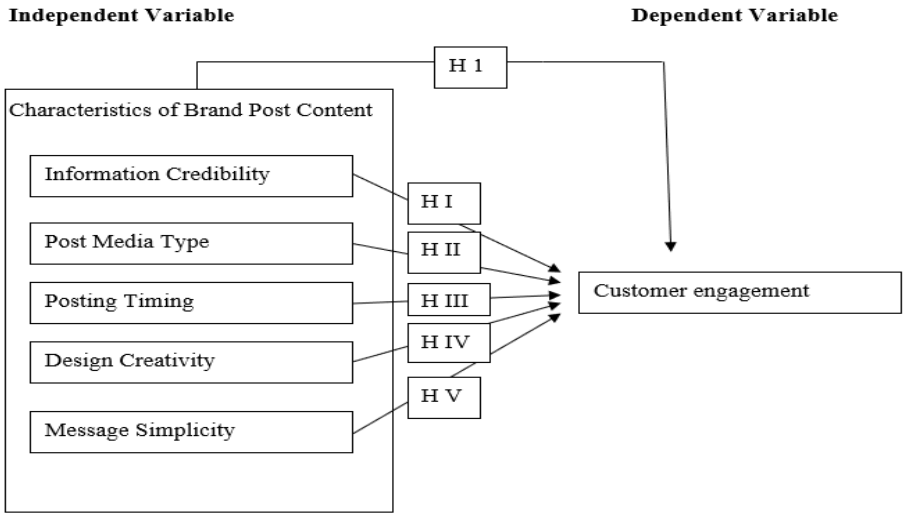
been compared to a pyramid, with Likes at the base (the lowest level of engagement), Reactions being a representation of an emotional icon (such as "love" or "sad"), Commenting going beyond "liking" in terms of engagement with a brand, sharing showing trust in a brand, and create representing involvement, which goes above and beyond engagement, at the top of the pyramid. Therefore, Likes, Comments, and Shares constitute Facebook's three main engagement indicators. Accordingly, through this study, the researcher expected to identify the impact of brand post content on customer engagement of Facebook brand communities in the Sri Lankan telecommunication industry.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher developed following conceptual model, mainly focusing on the effect of brand posts characteristics such as information creditability, post media type, posting timing, design creativity, and message simplicity on customer engagement.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



The framework facilitated to identify following main (H1) and supportive hypothesis (H1 to Hv).

H_1: There is a significant impact of brand post content on customer engagement of Facebook brand communities.

H_I: There is a significant impact of information credibility of Facebook brand post content on customer engagement of Facebook brand communities.

H_{II}: There is a significant impact of the post-media type of Facebook brand post content on customer engagement of Facebook brand communities.

H_{III}: There is a significant impact of the posting timing of Facebook brand post content on customer engagement of Facebook brand communities.

H_{IV}: There is a significant impact of design creativity of Facebook brand post content on customer engagement of Facebook brand communities.

H_V: There is a significant impact of message simplicity of Facebook brand post content on customer engagement of Facebook brand communities.

The researcher considered customers who engaged in the Facebook brand communities in the telecommunication industry as the population and selected 307 participants as the sample size. Data were collected through well-developed questionnaire, and the data were analyzed using SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Under this thesis, the researcher was mainly concerned with the reliability test, validity test, demographic factor analysis, multicollinearity test, descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. From the above analysis, correlation, and regression were crucial in this study and the overall summary can be seen as follows;

Table 1

Correlation & Regression Analysis

Hypothesis	Significance level	Beta Value	Regression Analysis Decision
H_{I}	0.915, Insignificant	0.007	Not accepted
H_{II}	0.000, Significant	0.330	Accepted
H_{III}	0.000, Significant	0.201	Accepted
H_{IV}	0.001, Significant	0.262	Accepted
H_{V}	0.285,Insignificant	0.077	Not accepted
H_{1}	0.000, Significant	0.900	Accepted

According to the above, all hypotheses were accepted under correlation analysis but in the regression analysis first and last hypotheses were rejected. As well as, with the results of regression analysis, the main hypothesis is also accepted because it reaches the acceptable level from the significant values and there is a positive impact between brand post content and customer engagement. The level of the impact is shown in the B value of the Regression coefficient table and it takes 0.900.

Table 2

Correlation & Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.777	0.604	0.598	0.415

According to the overall model summary of regression analysis that was conducted, it shows 60.4% of the R Square value and it represents the amount of the contribution to the dependent variables by the other independent variables.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study, recommends concern about the information credibility, post media type, posting time, design creativity, and message simplicity of brand post content. In particular, post media type, posting time, and design creativity are the main considerable factors rather than the other two. In addition to that, most users are concerned about the post media types because when considering the correlation value, it takes 0.719 and when considering the regression analysis values it takes 0.000 significance value and 0.330 beta value. That helps to create good content rather the others.

As well as this shows the relationship between demographic factors of customer engagement in the Facebook brand communities. Consequently, in the practical implication, digital marketers, content creators, marketing managers, and those who are concerned about industrial brand communities such as telecommunication service providers, have to pay attention to the demographic concerns of the users.

The impact of characteristics of brand post content on customer engagement of Facebook brand communities in the Sri Lankan Telecommunication Industry is identified throughout this study. Though there are no more researchers addressing customer engagement in Facebook brand communities, therefore, researchers can conduct more research on a particular topic.

As well as this research mainly focuses on the Sri Lankan Telecommunication Industry and future researchers can address another industry in the Sri Lankan Context.

Through the study, the main objectives were analyzed in the quantitative method and it has provided only numerical results on objectives as well as creating limitations on providing views of the participants. To avoid these reasons, further researchers can conduct studies on qualitative methods by gaining a wide range of views and opinions of participants. Hence, future researchers can conduct more by using those methods.

***Keywords**:* Brand communities, customer engagement, design creativity, information credibility, rand post content

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