

# **SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY ON E- BRAND TRUST: AN EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Social media has been amazingly successful in terms of adoption and usage levels. They lead to a paradigm shift in the way people connect and communicate with each other, how to express and share ideas, and even how to interact with products, brands, and organizations. In addition, social networks have become an important consumer knowledge network. Social media, especially Facebook and Twitter, are important platforms for building relationships with consumers and for consumers to obtain information about brands and their products. E - WOM has grown at an extraordinary rate over the past couple of decades, creating multiple opportunities for marketing in online settings. The explosion of social media helps customers become more empowered and engaged in their brand interactions while also providing them with new tools in their search, evaluation, choice, and purchase of marketing offerings. Consumers trust the information published by the brand and the information published by other consumers online. The future of social media is also seen as a marketing tool. Consequently, these developments are influencing marketing practices, both strategically, and tactically. This setup has been able to communicate the best experience possessed of a brand to consumers so that they are able to recall the brand in a long time which led to the formation of trust, satisfaction, and loyalty towards the brand. This research aims to analyze the effect of social media marketing activities on E-brand Trust. The paper followed a deductive approach and attempted to review current scholarly social media marketing literature and research, including its beginnings, current usage, benefits and downsides, and best practices. Further examinations to uncover the vital job of social media, inside a digitalized business period. As a result of the comprehensive analysis, it undoubtedly displays that social media is a significant power in the present marketing scene, especially on E Brand Trust.

***Keywords: E brand Trust, E- WOM, Internet, Social Media Marketing***

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The boom in technology blasts in recent years has driven many numbers of organizations to fall back on online media as an interactive platform empowering successful advertising. At first, web-based media was just seen as a chance to stay connected with loved ones. Social media empowers interactive correspondence with a wide scope of individuals to send messages, feeling, and emotions (Hossain and Sakib, 2016). Because of the simplicity of sharing and accessing data, collaborating,

and producing content on the web (Hajli, 2014). Individuals give very nearly 33% of their time connecting to online web-based media (Lang, 2010). Further, web-based media provides the capacity to connect with similar individuals and organizations through different virtual communities (Hagel and Armstrong, 1997; Wellman and Gulia, 2018). Therefore, researchers and industry advisors urge firms to engage in and acquire from participation in social media (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

Building and keeping up the brand trust has been the focal topic of research for marketers for a very long time. (Bennett and Rundle-Thiele, 2002; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Oliver, 1999). In the effort to advance brand trust, advertisers have used different platforms and means, for example, marketing mix variables, internet marketing, and social media marketing (Keller, Parameswaran, and Jacob, 2011). However, numerous examinations (e.g., Edelman, 2010; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre, 2011) have lamented that advertisers don't appear to appreciate and use online media's full effect. While firms may have joined social media to expand brand trust and secure more clients, the question actually still stays on the best way to construct brand trust through online media (Godey, 2016). An understanding of how the various components of social media marketing (SMM) impact brand trust is significant from a strategic point of view. Further, research looking at the impacts of social media marketing from the viewpoint of branding literature is as yet exploratory and needs empirical evidence (Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie, 2014).

The utilization of web-based social networking is developing among individuals in Sri Lanka and Facebook has turned into the most famous and engaging social media platform when promoting consumer products (Thuseethan and Kuhanesan, 2014). The absolute populace in Sri Lanka is 20.86 million and there are 6.26 million dynamic Web users and 4.9 million dynamic social media users. When considering the utilization investigation of Facebook can see that there are 4.9 million months to month dynamic clients and 86% of them get to through cell phones. It was additionally recorded that 49% of Facebook clients use it daily. Insights further show that 30% of Facebook profiles belong to females while staying 70% are male (Simon, 2019). Further, according to (Global stats, 2019) the social media stats as of June 2019 hold 82.06% of Facebook users, which is comparatively the most popular social media platform used by Sri Lankan internet users. A quarter of online social media users follow their favorite product or brand on their social network. Among them, 80% of them follow the company or brand pages on Facebook. Therefore, having a presence on Facebook makes brands discoverable and connected (Perera, 2019).

### ***1.1. Purpose of the Study***

The purpose of this paper is to provide an insight that shows how the SMM elements such as awareness, engagement, Drive traffic, advocates and fans, and sharing voice will influence brand trust which has been neglected in previous studies (Laroche, Habibi, Richard, and Sankaranarayanan, 2012). Explanation of this study will contribute theoretically to the literature on the antecedents of brand trust. From a

practice perspective, this study will enable marketing managers to use social media as a tool for building brand trust.

Accordingly, attempt to further investigate how empirical evidence is found, discussing the role of social media marketing with special reference to the emergence of online technology and its influence upon E Brand Trust is significant. The Paper followed a deductive approach and this paper attempts to review current scholarly social media marketing literature and research, including its beginnings, current usage, benefits and downsides, and best practices.

It attempted to review empirical thoughts as organized content on how Social Media Marketing is becoming the latest and most popular trend as a digital platform for social interaction between virtual communities in different faces. Finally, this paper attempts to conclude the main remarks whilst proposing key insights for the future research directions

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1. The Internet and Word of Mouth***

As presented by Cohen, (2008), consumers in today's world are the proactive buyer and these buyers in the online market may provide valuable marketing information and cultural information, etc. As described by Brown (2007), Specially in the virtual marketing environment, formal and informal collaboration between business firms and consumers is considered a critical determinant of virtual competitiveness. To understand consumer behavior in the virtual market, an understanding of consumer purchase decisions is crucial (Peppard and Butler, 1998). Senecal and Nantel (2004), consumers are influenced in their online purchases by online recommendations whereas millions of other user's motivations and experiences are following many others (Brown,2007). eWOM a term for electronic word of mouth (Woerndl, 2008) is more effective than other traditional/conventional sources of recommendations in online purchasing. Therefore, eWOM can be considered the dominant channel for online marketing which has a significant influence on the final purchasing decision of products. This started with the birth of social media networks. Growing social media enables consumers to interact with each other to share their perceptions and opinions on brand trust (Gruen, 2005).

Via web-based media platforms, existing customers can discuss their brand experience, influencing other possible clients. Meanwhile, organizations can listen in on these public remarks and recalibrate their online media advertising procedures likewise. (Clark and Melancon, 2013; Meiners, 2017). Subsequently, electronic word of mouth higher affects web-based media marketing because it can contact more individuals in online settings and impact their future choices or judgments identified with different brands, compared with traditional collaborations between individuals. Utilizing the premises of a secondary report for looking at research patterns identified with online media promotion, (Clark and Melancon, 2013; Meiners, (2017) tracked down that online media stages lead to a more extraordinary and broad effect of WOM contrasted with traditional advertising instruments. Also, Hudson, (2015) exhibits the worth and relevancy of brand relationship quality for social media marketing and

assists with distinguishing how this concept is connected to other behavioral results, like WOM.

On the other side, Agichtein, 2008; Stephen and Galak, 2012, based their eye-tracking examination to study advertising adequacy dependent on empirical data and to examine banner blindness and found that Facebook advertisements enrolled lower thought for purchasing, contrasted with eWOM from friends on this web-based media platform. In light of this discovery, advertisers should focus on animating interactivity and eWOM by receiving a proactive endorsement of sharing (as promoted posts or advertising campaigns via online media) content made by purchasers (also known as client-created content). Different sorts of content and marketing communication that is made, created furthermore, and shared via online media by consumers and customers of a brand or organization would then be able to be re-purposed also, changed into advertising efforts (Saravanakumar and Sugantha-Lakshami, 2012)

## ***2.2. Social Media Marketing (SMM)***

Past literature shows promoting through social media is the most recent and well-known trend in the market. Traditional promoting tools, for example, TV, papers, and magazines have been over the top expensive and cover a limited focused market. The traditional marketing methodologies depended on focusing on specific markets exclusively. Indeed, even now it is hard for organizations to target and market their products and services to the huge geographical situation through a single campaign, for example, covering the whole of Asia through one newspaper promotion; because every country in Asia watches similar TV channels (Evans, 2012). Based on a greater understanding of social media networking has completely changed that approach in marketing (Saravanakumar and Sugantha-Lakshami, 2012). Social media marketing has the capacity to empower the organization by capturing the feedback, comments, and suggestions from their clients through online blogs, pictures, and evaluations and improve their products and services, thereby the clients' needs could be tended to satisfy in a progressive and a proactive way. Along these lines, it is understood that marketing and advertising have completely changed because of social media (Hajir, 2012).

As proposed by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is based on applications that are available on the Internet and allow the developing, consuming, and sharing User Generated Content. These applications have created many opportunities for anyone to create personalized content, share it, and exchange ideas in interactive frameworks, that take different forms, from blogs, wikis, microblogging, and general social networking website. Also, from a general perspective, Filo (2015) explained the concept of 'social media by focusing on its interactivity and co-creation of user-generated content in the relationships established between organizations and individuals.

Atanassova and Clark, 2015, showed that brands can make a strong impact on consumers using social media. According to Trusov. (2009), social media networking platforms allow users to connect with other users and also enable them to attract first-

time customers for their business. Golden (2011) presented a few characteristics of social media such as tone, conversation, validation, reach, control, etc. As a whole, social media enables marketers to accelerate brand promotion and strengthen customer-brand relationships and build brand trust significantly.

Social media marketing is a recent fad and a quickly growing way by which organizations are connecting with targeted clients without any problem. Online media marketing can be essentially characterized as the utilization of web-based media channels to promote the organization and its products (Mohammadian and Mohammadreza, 2012). This sort of marketing can be considered as a subset of online marketing activities that complete traditional web-based procedures, for example, email bulletins and online advertising campaigns (Yuksel, Milne, and Miller, 2016). By urging clients to spread messages to individual contacts, online media marketing has infused another term of exponential dissemination and trust into mass communication and mass advertising (Hafele, 2011). With this new methodology of effort and marketing, new instruments are being created and expanded thusly for organizations. Social Media Marketers are presently going better and more viable knowledge through the introduction of logical applications by social network site platforms (Hafele, 2011).

### ***2.3. Empirical overview of E-Brand trust***

Finally, building trust in a computerized world is challenging. Digital innovation and its segment parts imply it cuts over national and sectorial guidelines and legislation. This makes distinguishing the correct reactions troublesome, always developing products and services obscure traditional limits (Hess, Matt, Benlian, and Wiesböck, 2016). For organizations, an excitement to tune in and a more in-depth understanding of the significant interest side elements should help manage an expansion in the degrees of trust consumers place in business. This may help stay away from things like backlashes against changes to unexpected changes to terms and conditions, prominent features about smart toys that release children's private discussions, or what's been portrayed as an almost 200 million in number blacklist of publicizing on the web through advertisement blockers (Zinder, and Yunatova, 2016).

Trust is the focal point of the online environment (Gommans, 2001; Tanrikulu and Celilbatur, 2013), and one of the strategies is to use trust in the internet business (Corbitt et al. 2003). Trust may provide a stimulus to purchase via the internet (Mukherjee and Nath, 2007). Confidence in the online environment likewise diminishes the uncertainty of vulnerability and risk and impacts different practices, for example, data sharing (McKnight et al. 2002). At first, trust tends to occur between people (Solomon and Flores, 2001). Nonetheless, in the online commerce environment, individuals can trust the tools or qualities of the online environment. Gommans et al. (2001) express that in the online environment in general, we can't feel, contact, and see salespeople. Trust in the online climate emerges when an individual has a decent experience while utilizing the web, design website, information, nation of beginning, testimony, and security (Ha, 2004; Ruparelia, 2010)

Trust is the expectation of the agents involved in a transaction and the risk related to the expectation and behavior (Rai and Medha, 2013; Atkinson and Rosenthal, 2014). Brugha (1999) defined trust as an expression of a feeling. The feeling has an effect on cognition, affection, and behavior. Assael (1998) said that trust could be measured by determining the attribute and benefits of a brand. Discussion about trust is related to relationship marketing (Morgan and Hunt, 1994, Parasuraman, 1985). Trust and commitment are mediating variables in the company's relationship with its customers (Ekelund and Sharma, 2001; Tezinde, 2001; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Alam and Yasin, 2010). There are two categories of trust, they are organizational trust and personal trust (Ekelund and Sharma, 2001). Brand trust is a part of personal trust.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The development of the Internet prompted another stage in marketing, creating opportunities for both consumers and corporations identified with social relationships and business practices. Particularly after the time of 2003–2004, new eras that are the expansions of the Internet like Web 2.0, 3.0, and 4.0 began that permits information to be shared, reused across applications, ventures, and community limits and permits extended contributions like securing and imitating information across cloud environments across firms (Hemnath 2010; Kim and Chen 2015).

With the period of Web 2.0, which is a second-generation, more customized, communicative type of the Internet that stresses active participation, availability, collaboration and sharing of information and thoughts among clients and Web 2.0 advances help client relationship with external customer blogs, wikis, external social networks (Andriole 2010), Weber (2007, p. 4) characterizes web-based media as "the online place where individuals with a common interest can accumulate to share thoughts, comments, and opinions". As indicated by authors, social media are the tools utilized for communication that is, they are participatory, collective, information sharing, user-empowering instruments accessible Online.

Some normally utilized social media instruments incorporate organization-sponsored sites, social networking (for example, Facebook, Instagram, Myspace, Netlog, Pinterest, and so on), creative work sharing sites (like Youtube, Plant, Vimeo), search engines (like Google.com), content communities (like Piczo.com), virtual worlds (like Second Life), business networking sites (like Linked. in), blogs, microblogging destinations (Twitter), web-based gaming destinations, discussions, social bookmarking (like Reddit) and news sites (Robinson 2007; Mangold and Faulds 2009; Xiang and Gretzel 2010; Chung, 2015).

### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Utilizing online media to promote one's brand, products, or services can likewise involve trust, protection, and information security issues. Companies must be aware of these issues and take proper measures to limit their exposure to liability related to the individual information collection, use, and upkeep. Trust, especially the interesting components of transactional security and protection (Hoffmann, 1999), plays a critical part in creating client loyalty to web-based media marketers. An investigation by Ratnasingham (1998) has shown that fear of online credit card fraud has been one



of the significant reasons clients have not accomplished more extensive online purchasing (Ratnasigham, 1998).

Although much scholarly literature concentrates on how organizations have utilized Social Media Marketing (SMM), the literature likewise covers "best practices" and practical strategies that organizations can use in arranging and executing an SMM campaign. (Tiago and Veríssimo, 2014). As most social media clients know, organizational messages can vary from excellent, valuable, and engaging to by and large abuse and spam (Agichtein, 2008). For an SMM technique to be successful, organizations must concentrate on the previous and avoid the latter. Along these lines, it is significant for an organization to know how their SMM is perceived, for example, by keeping a close watch on the web for a social talk from clients who have interacted with the brand online (Clark and Melancon 2013). Previous literature offers five components to an effective SMM methodology and customer engagement in the social media context has been denoted as a timely important practice and a research priority (Dissanayake, Siriwardane and Ismail, 2019).

Also, privacy concerns in a digitalized era have prompted an advertising disaster for some significant social media marketing resulting in substantial brand image erosion (Publicizing Age, 2000). Online media organizations like Facebook and Twitter generally have their own security approaches that oversee their utilization of consumer information and third-party conduct on the social media platform as for individual information (Hutter, Hautz, Dennhardt, and Füller, 2013; Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014). Advertisers utilizing third-party online media outlets ought to guarantee that their promoting efforts don't empower customers or some other parties to participate in engagement that would violate the social media company's privacy policy, and marketers should also ensure that they are abiding by the policies as well.

In addition, security concerns have encouraged an advertising catastrophe for some critical online media advancing and achieving generous brand picture disintegrating (Publicizing Age, 2000). Electronic media organizations like Facebook and Twitter are considered to have their own security plans that supervise their usage of client data and outsider lead on the online media stage with respect to individual data (Gummerus, 2012; Van Doorn, 2010). Advertisers using outsider online news sources should ensure that their advancing endeavors don't empower purchasers or some different social occasions to participate in practices that would abuse the electronic media company's protection methodology, and advertisers should similarly ensure that they are submitting to the approaches as well. Organizations that regulate their own online blogs or other social media platforms ought to maintain thorough arrangements that uncover the company's information collection, use, and storage practices, and any responsibilities that third parties have in regard to protection and information security (Steinman and Hawkins, 2010). Trust, which is firmly identified with security, is a vital factor in the online-based purchasing measure behavior measure. As a general rule, you can't feel, smell, or contact the product. You can't investigate the salesperson's eyes (Steinman and Hawkins, 2010). In this manner, these methods of creating trust are prohibited on the Web. Brand trust for the most part adds to a decrease in vulnerability. So, it is obvious, that trust is a segment of the

attitudinal segment of Loyalty (Gummerus, 2012; Van Doorn, 2010). So clearly the loyalty overall and brand trust specifically can assist to overcome a portion of the Internet's disadvantages, for example, beating the perception, that the Web is an unsafe, misleading, and questionable commercial center. Indeed, these perceptions are yet preventing some likely clients from working together on the web.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This study focuses solely on the impact of social media marketing on e-brand trust, it outlines how social media marketing has a tremendous impact on e-brand trust. While an increasing number of studies have examined the use of social media by marketers for brand building (Gallaughar, and Ransbotham, 2010; Kozinets et al. 2010), few studies have succeeded in empirically examining the factors of SMM, which influence brand trust.

Brand trust is an important factor to help customers be loyal to the brand. Customer trust in a brand (brand trust), it is the brand's ability to be trusted (brand reliability), which comes from consumer confidence that the product can fulfill the promised value (brand intention), which itself is based on consumer confidence that the brand can prioritize consumer interests (Delgado and Munuera, 2005). Trust is the most important factor in a brand that can increase or decrease the value of the brand itself, and make consumers have a sense of belonging to a brand. Moormal et al. (1992) stated that trust can influence consumers in buying a brand, meaning that a brand can create an emotional feeling with customers, while Delgado and Munuera (2005) state that brand trust is the ability of a brand to fulfill the interests of its consumers, so brand trust is a factor that can make consumers have an emotional bond with the company and make consumers loyal. Among other, administrators of the online brand communities should organize more activities that could strengthen the bond between members and the brand mainly to enrich their brand community commitment. This is because brand trust that is reinforced by the high level of brand community commitment could facilitate both brand referral and intention to purchase a new product of the brand in the future

As companies observed this trend, they allocated a part of their online marketing budget to influencers. As Morrison (2017) from Adweek proposed in early 2017, influencer marketing is becoming an integral part of social media marketing and it implies the promotion and selling of products and services through people (influencers) who have a large base of followers. Further, the main purpose of influencer marketing is to determine certain behavioral results, in the form of purchases or intent to buy of their followers because of built trust. Even if influencer marketing has similarities to celebrity marketing, its distinction is based on the fact that anyone who has a large following on different social media platforms can become an influencer for a brand or product. Companies should also allocate resources to monitor social media discussions about their brands, and observe the general sentiment about their products, and examine which developed content (by the company or by other consumers) is generating positive word of mouth or has viral tendencies. Therefore, this study provides strong evidence that social media and their



application should be the focus of attention for both perspectives' practitioners and researchers.

The current study provides an understanding of the research trends on the subject of social media marketing, with additional actionable tactics, practices, and strategies for organizations that have an online presence on these platforms. Product and services purchase directly through social media platforms seem likely to increase over time, especially considering the increasing rates of both online shopping and social media use (Lindsey-Mullikin and Borin, 2017). It is essential to comprehend aspects that influence the online consumer decision process for a successful social media marketing plan. Based on the study on the influences of social media purchasing, Lindsey-Mullikin and Borin (2017) propose the following strategies for successful social media sales: stimulating sales by signaling value, actively managing social media sites, and encouraging communication amongst friends to increase customers. Marketers should focus on developing marketing strategies that emphasize customer relationship-building on social media, which creates the premises for consumer engagement (Hollebeek et al., 2016; Brodie et al. 2013; Wirtz et al. 2013) and co-creation (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). Various studies showed that investment in social media technology can grant firms substantial relationship management benefits (Wang and Kim, 2017; Trainor et al. 2014).

The current study gives a comprehension of the examination patterns regarding the matter of web-based media marketing, with extra significant strategies, practices, and procedures for organizations that have an online presence on mentioned platforms. Products and Services that buy directly through web-based media platforms appear prone to increment over the long run, particularly considering the expanding paces of both internet shopping and web-based media use (Lindsey-Mullikin and Borin, 2017). It is fundamental to comprehend viewpoints that impact the online customer decision process for a successful web-based media advertising plan. Advertisers should zero in on creating promoting procedures that stress client relationship expanding via web-based media, which makes the premises for buyer commitment (Hollebeek et al. 2016; Brodie et al. 2013; Wirtz et al. 2013) and co-creation (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). Different examinations showed that interest in online media innovation can give firms significant relationships the executives benefits (Wang and Kim, 2017; Trainor et al. 2014).

Future research should focus on examining consumer behavior in social media marketing, by proposing and validating a scale that would explain this behavior. Moreover, researchers should investigate the differences in online consumer behavior based on different social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat). Social media aspects are still in the early stage of research in examining their extent to digital marketing. As a result, Alalwan, (2017) notes this might be the main obstacle in studying the attitudinal and behavioral responses of consumers toward digital marketing tactics on social media platforms. As described above, a related area of social media marketing that lacks academic perspectives is influencer marketing in online frameworks. Finding the premises that lead to influencers' role in SMM is a research path that will have multiple managerial and practical implications for

marketing. Interactivity has been another imperative factor in consumer engagement on social media. Subsequently, future studies should aim to clarify how this factor could have an impact on the customers' responses to the advertising activities as part of social media marketing in order to enhance E-brand Trust.

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