**Factors influencing customer engagement in the travel sector via online brand community: A conceptual analysis.**

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Abstract— In the marketing context, customer engagement (CE) is found to enhance trust, loyalty and repurchase intention. Online brand communities (OBC) play a vital role in engaging customers with firms/brands. Travel brands are also actively engaging with their customers in their online travel brand community; customers are also actively participating and engaging on online travel brand community to exhibit their participation toward brands. In this study we try to develop a conceptual framework based on a theory Stimulus-Organism-Response, representing brand trust as stimuli, customer engagement as an organism, and brand loyalty and brand repurchase intention as the responses in online travel community context. This research will assist academicians by adding to their expertise, using it in the classroom, increasing industrial cooperation, and enhancing through publications and other professional opportunities and to the managers with a better conceptual foundation and insights into how to develop marketing plans for engaging with customers through online travel brand communities in the travel sector that may help managers understand the concept more clearly. The hypotheses put forth in this conceptual paper may be verified or changed in subsequent work using empirical techniques.

**Keywords:** Brand trust, brand loyalty customer engagement, conceptual framework, online brand community, and brand repurchase intention.

1. **Introduction**

The travel industry has experienced significant changes with the rise of online brand communities (Brodie et al., 2013). These communities offer a platform for customers to engage with travel brands, share experiences, and provide feedback. CE is crucial for the success of these communities and the travel brands they represent. In this conceptual analysis, we will explore the determinants of CE in the travel sector via online brand communities. By identifying the factors that drive engagement, travel brands can better understand how to build and maintain successful online communities that meet the needs and expectations of their customers. Online travel brand communities have become increasingly important for the travel and tourism industry as they offer a unique opportunity to connect with customers in a more personal and engaging way (Kaur et al., 2020). However, simply creating an online community does not guarantee customer engagement. To encourage participation and foster a sense of community, travel brands must consider various factors of customer engagement.

1. **Methodology**

In order to deepen our understanding of OBCs, the study synthesises the existing OBC literature and identifies future research priorities. This study developed a conceptual framework based on Stimulus-Organism-Response, representing brand trust as stimuli, customer engagement as an organism, and brand loyalty and brand repurchase intention as a response in online travel community context.

1. **Discussion AND RESULTS**

The S-O-R theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) was utilised in this study to determine what factors influence online brand communities' ability to engage customers in the travel industry. CE was revealed to be the organism that mediates the link between trust and brand loyalty/repurchase intention, and trust was found to be a stimulus that affects customer engagement. The most common responses to customer involvement were found to be brand loyalty and repurchase intention. According to the proposed S-O-R model, trust affects customer engagement, which in turn has a positive impact on brand loyalty and repurchase intent. Travel brands can create robust online brand communities that promote consumer engagement, loyalty, and repeat business by concentrating on the main factors that determine customer engagement.

1. **Conclusions**

In this theoretical study, we outline a conceptual framework that, through a systematic review, identifies the factors that affect online brand communities' ability to engage customers in the travel sector. This conceptual framework may then be empirically validated. According to the concept, engagement, which results in brand loyalty and repurchase intention, is mostly driven by trust. The results of this study can help businesses in the travel industry create successful online brand communities that promote engagement and raise customer loyalty.

**References**

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