

Influence of Social Media Marketing on Customer Engagement

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ABSTRACT: The study examined the influence social media marketing has on customer engagement. The study was decided to be investigated as we can see that organizations spending on social media continue to soar, but measuring its impact remains a challenge for most businesses. All in all, social networking sites facilitate active communication between companies and users and spur interactions among users. Here the need arrived to find out the factors influencing customer engagement; to explore what content they enjoy most on a Facebook brand page which drives them to re-visit. Data used for this study was obtained through questionnaires distributed to fans of a particular Facebook brand page. The results demonstrated that media and content type of posts exert a significant effect on customer online engagement. It also emphasized that higher the influence of social media marketing, higher would be the customer engagement. The findings of this study revealed the five factors that have a significant impact on customer engagement. SNSs are an additional medium through which information can be disseminated because it encourages a two-way communication between customers and firms. Hence, marketers need to be more cautious on what they post online as this is more likely to influence customers. The study also emphasizes the significance of 'self-disclosure' as a major factor to intimate relationships among persons, as a strengthened brand- consumer relationship online will ultimately impact their purchase behavior in reality.

Keywords: Content post, Customer engagement, Facebook, Media post, Social media, Social Media Marketing

I. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The rapid evolution from the web 1.0 environment to the interactive and connected web 2.0 environment has modified the ways in which firms present their online image: from "dot.com" firms (in which communication with consumers continues to be on-sided), to a new model in which the content is in the hands of technology, with consequences of a far wider scope in which marketing managers influence the actual potential clients (Hanna et al., 2011).

Social media are regarded as new marketing tools for promoting a brands products/services, constituting an emerging communication channel through which to shape the relationship between a brand and its customers (Hsu, 2012). Social media marketing is a term which describes the actual acts of using social networks for marketing purposes. Social media marketing is common in the business-to-consumer (B2C) area, and the concept of social media related especially to B2C has been exclusively studied (Hanna et al., 2011; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Trusov et al., 2010, 2009). Weber (2009) suggests that a marketers role has changed from a broadcaster sending messages to a specific target segment to a company which collaborates with its customers and participates in virtual communities. The utilization of social media is now spreading also to the business-to-business (B2B) sector (Bernof, 2009; Ramos, 2009).

More specifically, a shift in power has occurred, brought about by the internet's ability to greatly leverage consumer voices. In this way, firms can no longer dictate communication terms, but must be invited to participate in conversations by being relevant to consumers (Fournier and Avery, 2011).

Consumers increasingly use social media not only to research products and services, but also to engage with the companies they purchase from, as well as other consumers who may have valuable insights about these companies (Garretson, 2008). Firms recognize the power of internet, an open, cost-effective and omnipresent network, which contributes to reducing or even eliminating geographic barriers and physical distance, as a platform to co-create value with customers, thanks to the capabilities of internet: interactivity, broad scope, persistence, speed and flexibility (Shawhney et al., 2005). All of this leads to the formation of a platform to gain client commitment.

Among the ever-burgeoning variety of social media, Facebook is the most popular (Nielsen, 2012). Companies can establish Facebook brand pages, which provide individuals, businesses and organizations with information that has specific purpose, audience and topic to market, promote and inform about products and services (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2011; Goorha and Ungar, 2012). Brand pages allow enterprises and

celebrities to interact with community members and thereby enhance the brand visibility to and the loyalty of these people (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006; Ruiz-Mafe et al., 2014).

Van Doorn et al. (2010) defined customer engagement as the behavioral manifestation of customers towards a brand or a firm, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers, including word-of-mouth activities, recommendations, helping other customers, blogging and writing reviews. The key element to customer engagement is knowledge exchange, so information and communication technologies provide immense opportunities to organizations to exchange knowledge and engage with customers (Vivek, 2009).

Customer engagement in the field of relationship marketing, not only incorporates the relations established between buyers and sellers but also any possible combination between potential and actual clients and all other stake holders. Social networking sites offer possibilities for this participation that develop trust, goodwill and commitment to form relations between individuals and brands, regardless of whether those same individuals acquire them (Vivek et al., 2012).

The Objective of the Study

It becomes important to highlight the significance of an active online participation and communication management as this would create curiosity in the brands activities which will ultimately have a positive impact in creating brand trust.

As a result, the research deals with 3 broad objectives:

1. To find out which types of posts: content or media type encourage customer online engagement.
2. To examine the factors that influence customer online engagement.
3. To analyze the relationship between social media marketing and customer engagement.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Social Media Marketing

Marketing has recently undergone significant changes in the way information is delivered to the customers (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Social networks (SN), as a part of Web 2.0 technology, provide the technological platform for the individuals to connect, produce and share content online (Boyd and Ellison, 2008). As such, for brand owners, they offer the potential for (1) advertising—by facilitating viral marketing, (2) product development—by involving consumers in the design process, and (3) market intelligence—by observing and analyzing the user generated content (UGC) (Richter et al., 2011).

As an outcome of this change in the field of marketing, a new phenomenon, generally known as social media marketing (SMM) was introduced. Social media marketing, a form of WOM marketing, but also known as viral marketing, buzz, and guerilla marketing is the intentional influencing of consumer-to-consumer communication through professional marketing techniques (Kozinets et al., 2010). This is not to be seen as a replacement for the traditional marketing techniques but rather as an additional marketing channel that could be integrated with the traditional ones as a part of the marketing mix.

The advantage of this new electronic channel is that it can be used to communicate globally and to enrich marketing toward consumers at the personal level (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Through users' feedback or by observing conversations on social media, a company can learn about customers' needs, potentially leading to involvement of members of the community in the co-creation of value through the generation of ideas (Palmer and Koenig-Lewis, 2009). Despite the general popularity, viral marketing on SNSs has not yet reached the high expectations set (Clemonset al., 2007).

Although many SMM channels have already been created, how these channels are being used, what their potential is and how consumers interact remains largely unknown. Social networks, as the largest social media platform, may play a key role in the future of marketing; they may increase customers' engagement, and help to transform the traditional focus on control with a collaborative approach suitable for the modern business environment, leading towards the concept of SMM (Berthon et al., 2012; Harris and Rae 2009; Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

SMM can be defined as usage of the existing social media platforms for increasing the brand awareness among consumers on online platforms through utilization of the WOM principles (Drury, 2008). As such, it supports two forms of promotion: (1) traditional marketing promotion, which refers to the communication driven by the companies towards their customers and (2) social promotion, which is unique for social media platforms and is embodied within the consumer-to-consumer communication (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

Social media marketing is related to relationship marketing, where the firms need to shift from 'trying to sell' to 'making connections' with consumers (Gordhamer, 2009). Companies also need to keep away from 'big campaigns' and stick with 'small acts' since some small campaigns can easily reach lots of people and accomplish the objectives in a very short period of time (Coon, 2010).

Social Media and Facebook

Various definitions describe social media as ‘content that has been created by its audience’ (Comm, 2009); as ‘online tools and platforms that allow internet users to collaborate on content, share insights and experiences, and connect for business or pleasure (Strauss and Frost, 2009, p.326). There is a definitive typology of different types of social media (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), but it is common to differentiate among social networking (e.g. Facebook), professional networking (e.g. LinkedIn), Video-sharing (e.g. YouTube), picture sharing (e.g. Flickr), social bookmarking (e.g. Delicious, Digg), social sharing of knowledge (e.g. Wikipedia), micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter), blogs (e.g. blogger), and user forums. The common characteristic is that these social media allow individuals and entrepreneurs to engage in social interactions, in a way and on a scale that were not possible before (Fischer and Reuber, 2011).

Attracted by the large number of users, companies have created brand communities in social media such as Facebook, which boasts having more than a billion monthly active users (Facebook, 2013). Facebook initially began as a series of forums through which young people connected, and rapidly evolved into important platforms for social and commercial exchange.

When a registered Facebook user visits a page, that user can become a fan by clicking on the button ‘like’. This permits the owner of a page to post informational content that will appear in the news for their fans, who will react by liking it, commenting on it and sharing it. In this way Facebook gives brands a voice and establishes an active conversation with Facebook users.

Essentially on Facebook, users can participate in the following types of activities (Patterson, 2012): Status updates, Facebook messages, Facebook wall posts, Facebook pokes

Smith et al. (2012) reviewed studies on Facebook and concluded that they have focused on the site’s functionality and norms and how and why people use it, as well as identity management and self presentation on the site. However, it remains to be seen whether the investments in Facebook are well spent. While much is written on pages that garner a lot of ‘likes’ and fans, the extant literature is mostly silent regarding Facebook effectiveness to reach customer engagement. In fact, Chapman (2008) recommends looking beyond the ‘friend’ and ‘fan’ metric since they are a simple numbers game.

III. CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Firms are recognizing the pressing need to focus on building personal two-way relationships with customers who foster interactions (Kumar et al., 2010). Customer engagement has been recognized as an emotional connection between a company and its customers focused on interaction with customers and their participation. The key element to customer engagement is knowledge exchange, so information and communication technologies provide immense opportunities for organizations to exchange knowledge and engage with customers (Vivek, 2009).

Bowden (2009) understood customer engagement as a psychological process that models the underlying mechanisms by which customer loyalty toward a service brand is formed in new customers, as well as the mechanisms by which that loyalty may be maintained for repeat purchase customers of a service brand. More recently, Vivek et al., (2012) defined customer engagement as the intensity of individual participation and connection with the offers and activities of the organization initiated either by the customer or by the organization.

The particular case of online customer engagement was defined by Mollen and Wilson (2010) as the cognitive and affective commitment of the customer to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer - mediated entities designed to communicate brand value.

Each of these concepts represents a single theoretical scope, which has complicated the achievement of greater conceptual advances, reflecting the lack of absolute consensus (Hollebeek, 2013). However, from earlier definitions, it may indeed be concluded that the majority use a multidimensional perspective on engagement with three dimensions: cognitive, emotional and conation (Vivek et al., 2012), although the self expression of these generic dimension can vary in accordance with the specific concept of engagement that is used, as well as the relative importance of each one in accordance with the context (Brodie et al., 2013).

Factors influencing Customer engagement

Users who are fans of brand pages can see posts and engage with them by liking, sharing and commenting (Araujo and Neijens, 2012; Lin and Lu, 2011, Ruiz-Mafe et al., 2014). The challenge for companies is to attract peoples ‘attention to brand posts and persuade them to view the content.

Vividness as a factor influencing customer engagement

The media type of a post corresponds to the sharing action undertaken by a page administrator within a Facebook brand page (De Vries et al., 2012). This includes a status update, photo, video or a link. These media types represent various levels of media richness, which is commonly referred to as the vividness of online

content (Coyle and Thorson, 2001; Daft and Lengel, 1986). Vividness is the extent to which a brand post stimulates various senses (Steuer, 1992). Therefore, multimedia content has the potential to be engaging for users because of its direct impact on various senses (Coyle and Thorson, 2001). According to previous studies a high degree of vividness appears to be most effective in enhancing attitudes toward a website (Coyle and Thorson, 2001; Fortin and Dholakia, 2005) and increasing click-through rates (Lohtia et al., 2003, 2007). The click through rate is regarded as engagement behaviour.

Interactivity as a factor influencing customer engagement

Interactivity can be defined as the degree to which two or more communication parties can act on each other on the communication medium and on the messages, and the degree to which such actions are synchronized (Liu and Shrum, 2002). A brand post with only text is not interactive; where as a link to a website is interactive, because users can click on it (Fortin and Dholakia, 2005). Interactivity is widely regarded as an essential factor in determining a variety of affective and behavioural outcomes such as satisfaction, attitude, decision making and involvement (Coyle and Thorson, 2001; Fortin and Dholakia, 2005; Stewart and Pavlou, 2002). Hence, information presented with a high degree of interactivity generates a high level of online engagement.

Description of a product as a factor influencing customer engagement

If a brand post contains information such as the dates of new releases and product descriptions; fans are motivated to interact and consume (De Vries et al., 2012). If users are motivated, they are likely to respond to posts (Cvijikj and Michahelles, 2011).

Entertainment as a factor influencing customer engagement

Previous studies have indicated that entertainment is the most crucial factor affecting the behaviour of SNS users (Lin and Lou, 2011; Sledgianowski and Kulviwat, 2009). Information enriched with entertaining elements is typically positively evaluated by recipients and leads to a higher intent to re-visit a website than does information without entertainment features (Raney et al., 2003).

Content novelty as a factor influencing customer engagement

A novel content evokes greater amount of unique message cues and external stimuli (Tokunaga, 2013). The role of novelty in the communication process lies in its power to capture the audience's attention (Mendelson, 2001; Tokunaga, 2013). People are naturally drawn to unique and unusual information because such information sparks interest and is intrinsically rewarding (Yim, 2011).

A recent study by Rhom et al., (2013) identified five primary motives that drive consumers to interact with brands through social media. They include: 'entertainment', 'brand engagement', 'access to consumer services and content', 'product information' and 'promotions'.

Relationship between social media marketing and customer engagement

In the case of communication oriented toward relations through SNS, the commitment of users to SNS pages leads on naturally to the cultivation of relations. Through participation in conversations on the SNS page of a firm (e.g. commenting on the company and its products, expressing support and criticism, sharing information with social connections), the online stakeholders make direct commitments with the firm and other consumers. Customer engagement in the field of relationship marketing, not only incorporates the relations established between buyers and sellers, but also any possible combination between potential and actual clients; non-clients; society, in general; and sellers, in other words, the stakeholders.

SNSs offer possibilities for this participation that develop trust, goodwill and commitment to form relations between individuals and brands regardless of whether those same individuals acquire them (Vivek et al., 2012). Interactions are the means to achieve engagement, the outcome of stakeholder participation with products, services and activities (Configurations of value) of the firm. Those interactions would not take place, without the existence of client participation and involvement. Stemming from eWOM, the relationships between customer engagement, loyalty and satisfaction are directly impacted by Social network marketing (Shoemaker and Lewis, 1999; Kasavana et al., 2010).

Long term customer retention is not only built and sustained by direct sales, but also through other integrated communication channels with customers, such as e-mail, social media or virtual communities (Sigala, 2005).

Derived from researches done previously, organizations increasingly seek commitment and participation through their brands (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Shawney et al., 2005). Individuals are no longer seen as mere passive receivers of marketing actions from the perspective of customer engagement, but increasingly as proactive participants in interactive processes of co-creation that generate value (Shawhney et

al., 2005). It has been suggested that client commitment generates enhanced organizational performance, including increased sales, superior competitive advantage and profitability (Kumar et al., 2010; Hollebeek, 2011), emotional connections/attachment (Chan and Li, 2010) and empowerment and consumer value (Schau et al., 2009).

Social media marketing not only intensify the existing firm to customer and customer to firm relationships, but also create new variations on conventional options, increasing the ability of firms to interact in firm- customer dialog, strengthening their communications. There are fundamental changes in the ease of contact, volume, speed, and nature of these interactions (Gallaughier and Ransbotham, 2010). Firms can reach out to people that otherwise could not be reached (Dong-Hun, 2010; Newman, 2003). Social media transfer content to a more diverse range of people compared to mass media. They create a “small-world” network (Newman, 2003) where content is easily distributed to a large number of people, as the network is formed through voluntary connection and requires fewer steps for sharing information.

IV. HYPOTHESIS

Relationship between Social Media Marketing and Customer Engagement

Social media marketing and customer engagement has been paired rarely in the relationship marketing literature with very few researchers discussing one with the other. In the case of communication oriented toward relations through SNS, the commitment of users to SNS pages leads on naturally to the cultivation of relations. Through participation in conversations on the SNS page of a firm (e.g. commenting on the company and its products, expressing support and criticism, sharing information with social connections), the online stakeholders make direct commitments with the firm and other consumers. Customer engagement in the field of relationship marketing, not only incorporates the relations established between buyers and sellers, but also any possible combination between potential and actual clients; non-clients; society, in general; and sellers, in other words, the stakeholders.

SNSs offer possibilities for this participation that develop trust, goodwill and commitment to form relations between individuals and brands regardless of whether those same individuals acquire them (Vivek et al., 2012). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H: Higher the influence of Social Media Marketing, higher would be the Customer Engagement.

The following conceptual framework has been developed for the purpose of this study:

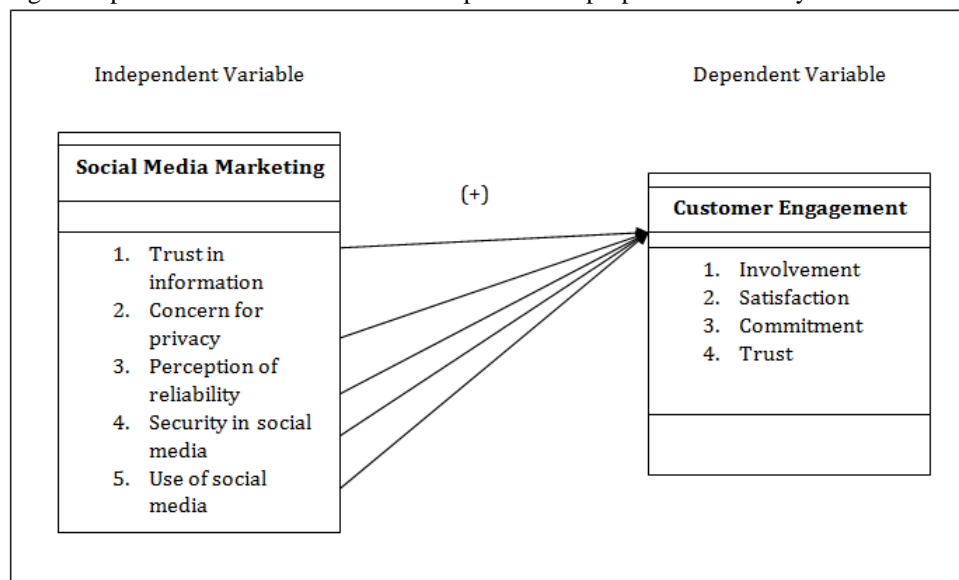


Figure 1: Influence of Social Media Marketing on Customer Engagement

V. METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection

For study purposes, wedding clients of a leading florist in Sri-Lanka involved in online trade for the past five years were selected. The selected respondent was expected to state which type of ‘posts’ of the firm actually induced them to participate online, what factors influenced them to be actively involved and be aware of the firms activities and if these factors have actually had an impact on their purchase behaviour in reality. This sampling unit was preferred because the research intended to gain an insight on the concepts of social media marketing and customer engagement. A sample of 150 respondents was selected using the random sampling technique.

A semi-structured questionnaire was specifically designed for the purpose of this research. It consisted of closed, direct and indirect questions. The questionnaire consisted of 3 schedules. The opening schedule consisted of statements relating to social media marketing and customer engagement. This is then followed by a subsequent schedule, consisting statements concerning socio-demographic profile of respondents; namely: the gender, income, age etc;

The influence of social media marketing on customer engagement is qualitative in nature. Therefore, the responses to these qualitative questions were recorded on a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. At the outset, the questionnaire was pilot tested amongst 10 Facebook Users'. Based on the constructive criticism and valuable advice given, necessary amendments were made to the questionnaire in due course.

The questionnaire was then administered to the respondents along with a covering letter in order to obtain data. Firstly, the questionnaire was administered via e-mails to 50 respondents. A reminder mail was sent to them as initially the response rate was quite low. Hence, apart from mails, questionnaires were personally administered amongst the remaining respondents.

The analysis was performed by SPSS 2016. Linear regression technique has been used to test the relationship between variables and to test the hypothesis.

VI. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Reliability Analysis

The research used SPSS Chrombach's Alpha, as it is a commonly used measure of internal consistency (reliability) associated with scores derived from a scale. Table 1, shows the reliability test with all values greater than threshold of 0.60 (Walsh, 1995). Hence, it can be concluded that the items reliably measure the defined constructs and variables.

Table 1 Results of Reliability Test

Constructs	Number of items	Alpha
Independent Variable: Social Media Marketing		
1. Trust in information	5	0.751
2. Concern for privacy	3	0.661
3. Perception of reliability	4	0.841
4. Security in social media	3	0.773
5. Use of social media	6	0.931
Dependent Variable: Customer Engagement		
6. Involvement	6	0.838
7. Satisfaction	4	0.891
8. Commitment	7	0.861
9. Trust	5	0.934

Note: Survey Data

Correlation Analysis

One of the objectives of the research was to analyze the relationship between social media marketing and customer engagement. The table below represents the correlation obtained from the data gathered for the research.

Table 2 Correlations

		Social Media Marketing	Customer Engagement
Social Media Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.442**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Customer Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.442**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Developed from study

Accordingly, there is a fairly weakly but positive correlation co-efficient between the dependent and independent variables. Thus, the above correlation co-efficients are statistically significant (as values are above 0.05) and prove that the hypothesis is positively correlated.

Testing the hypothesis using Regression Analysis

The study also used the ANOVA to test the hypothesis. The dependent variable for the study is the aggregated averages of Involvement, Satisfaction, Trust and Commitment. The reason for doing an ANOVA is to see if there is any significant difference between groups on some variables. Below given is the test result for the primary data collected for the study.

Table 3 ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	237.921	5	47.584	9.531	.000 ^a
	Residual	718.909	144	4.992		
	Total	956.830	149			

a. Predictors: (Constant), AVG5, AVG4, AVG2, AVG1, AVG3

b. Dependent Variable: DV_TOTAL

Source: Developed from study

The F-ratio is the ratio of two mean square values. If the null hypothesis is true, the 'F' ratio is close to 1.0 most of the time. However, a large F-ratio means that the variation among group means is more than what you will expect to see by chance. The output above shows that the F-Value of 9.531 with 5 and 144 degrees of freedom (df) has a probability of occurrence by chance alone less than 0.001 (F = 9.531, P < 0.001), Hence, there is a statistically significant difference in the two variables.

Followed by the ANOVA is the model summary which is used to analyze the R and R-squared values:

Table 4 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.499 ^a	.249	.223		2.2343726

a. Predictors: (Constant), AVG5, AVG4, AVG2, AVG1, AVG3

b. Dependent Variable: DV_TOTAL

Source: Developed from study

The r-value represents the simple correlation and is 49.9% approximately 50%, which indicates a relatively high degree of correlation. The R-square indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable (customer engagement) can be explained by the independent variable (social media marketing). In this case, 24.9%, approximately 25% can be explained which is theoretically a low goodness-of-fit.

However, since customer engagement is more of a psychological process focused on the emotional connection between an individual and an organization, R-squared value is expected to be low as human beings are simply harder to predict than physical processes are. As a result, a low R-squared value is not inherently bad.

VII. FURTHER DISCUSSIONS

Security in social media refers to the measurement of risk that users' feel in job processes with social media, and it is one of the most important factors in social media (Mohammadain & Mohammadreza, 2012). Therefore, social media websites need to implement more stringent security measures in order to avoid fraudulent dealings (Sarwar, Haque & Yasmin, 2013). This variable positively relates to customer engagement.

Hence, security as mentioned earlier is an important factor of customer engagement. Therefore, social media websites need to enhance security mechanisms in order to increase confidence in the users' mind and encourage them to buy or order products and services through social media.

Any negative word of mouth should encourage firms to device effective mechanisms to solve them and maintain an amicable presence and thereby increase the sales dial significantly. So, a requirement in finding out how online security impact user behavior will shed light into future research.

Another important piece of information is that majority of the users' who participate online were mostly females. There seems to also be a possibility in finding out if there seems to be any possible impact of gender on customer engagement and if so the intensity and magnitude on customer engagement.

VIII. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

From a corporate perspective, Social networking sites are more than an additional channel for disseminating information, because they allow people to interact with companies and share their opinions with others (Nair, 2011). Therefore, brand page administrators must consider that their posts may influence people's online engagement and should not simply create a Facebook brand page simply because other organizations have done so.

The findings of the study revealed that five factors have a significant impact on customer engagement: Trust in information, concern for privacy, perception of reliability, security in social media and use of social media. The more the customers viewed an organization to be trustworthy and secure, the better they would interact.

The social media selected for analysis of the research was Facebook due to the fact that it is the most popular and highly used media by both consumers and marketers alike. This has been a proven fact in previous literature. As examined by previous practitioners and researchers, the concepts of content and media type of posts were examined.

The questionnaire distributed incorporated to question this aspect. Out of the 150 respondents selected, all of them enjoyed images (photos), product information and status updates alike. 87 respondents enjoyed video content. Anecdotes and competitions were least enjoyed (survey data).

A challenge for many companies is to attract peoples' attention to brand posts and persuade them to view the content. Hence, marketers should incorporate both media and content posts alike on their Facebook brand pages in order to keep their clients and potential future customers engaged more frequently. Regular engagement will help retain consumers and help develop loyal ones.

Based on literature and depending on the type of posts consumers enjoyed, five factors have been identified as that which influences customer engagement. These are: vividness, interactivity, description of a product, entertainment and novel content can be concluded as factors influencing customer engagement. As identified previously, a large number of participants enjoyed photo content, product information and video content.

An important step to take in the future would be to relate these measurements to financial measures, which would improve decision making concerning the customer base, especially the engaged customer base (Van Doorn et al., 2010).

Customer engagement is believed to be directly and positively related to a number of relationship outcomes such as satisfaction, trust, affective commitment and loyalty (Brodie et al., 2011). A future empirical measurement of the impact of engagement on the perceptions and attitudes towards the brand will help managers to better design and implement their social media strategies.

Moving further, because the findings are based on one industry they may not be directly applicable to other industries or brand communities and more research is needed to generalize the results. Finally, future studies should look into relationship benefits and relationship outcomes resulting from company versus community interactions, and the role of customer engagement in these interactions.

It is clear that there is a gap and there is a requirement for further investigations of social media marketing influences and customer engagement. Some of these areas of research is unquestionably underdeveloped and therefore necessitates additional exploration.

IX. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study contributes to the literature by analyzing the impact of customer engagement in the context of social media marketing and extends our understanding of the importance of social media marketing and customer engagement as two integrated concepts unlike in previous studies; which will benefit marketers. In addition, the findings can encourage brand page administrators to prepare engagement strategies that facilitate the interactivity of fans and enhance the performance of their brand pages, which will help increase the activity of fans and promote sustainable brand loyalty.

Social media provides a great opportunity for the marketers to increase the market share and to communicate with their customers and at the same time, it allows customers to talk to one another or with the company. Findings of the research will allow marketers to thoughtfully place the promotion of their products and services efficiently. Further, organizations should strive to consistently update information and maintain an active online presence to network with potential and established clientele. Moreover, frequently posting updates and regularly maintaining Facebook pages demonstrate the page is current and credible.

Limitations of Research

Although this study has provided satisfactory results, a single hypothesis was used to test the influence of social media marketing on customer engagement. A more comprehensive study using a number of other

hypotheses in different cultural contexts can be examined in the future. This could include a larger sample size and more variables to test and predict the influence of social media marketing on customer engagement. Furthermore, different brand pages elicit various user motivations for participation and result in unique engagement with the content, which was not investigated in this study. Understanding the motivations associated with various brand pages is critical and requires further investigation. It also remains unclear whether people like what they like or what others like. Moreover, because of the limit of algorithms, future studies should incorporate data from more social networking sites. The development of measured indicators that make it possible to monitor and evaluate engagement behaviours in social networking sites is important for the design of organizational strategies both for the firm itself and for its brands.

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