

Chapter 14

Enhancing Brand Image: Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty, and Social Media Influences on Building a Brand Image



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14.1 Introduction

Customers and brands are the key intangible assets of businesses. Businesses capitalize on acquiring new customers and retaining existing customers in order to boost current and future cash flows and, eventually, firm value (Gupta and Lehmann 2003). The COVID-19 epidemic has radically altered many aspects of existence. Local and multinational businesses are among the most affected sectors (Shaari 2020). When customers are loyal and the company has a good reputation, brand image is strong; but, when customers' preferences, attitudes, and behaviors begin to wane, brand image is weak. However, a brand could be able to survive in this new normal environment after the pandemic because of its prominent presence and demonstrating empathy and undertaking measures to maintain consumer relationships (Waldron and Wetherbe 2020). Some firms have achieved a good brand image by demonstrating their care and duty in battling the epidemic on both the local and international levels (Shaari 2020).

Is a client still devoted to a certain brand? Is there any major shift in customer brand loyalty as more individuals purchase online and their purchasing habits alter? According to a Valassis survey of "1000 adult consumers in the United States, ~ 48% of consumers bought the same brand they used before the pandemic, 21% considered mixing brands, 13% explored new brands, and 19% were less loyal and would consider whatever brand was available". Customers are not passive players in the creation of brands. It was discovered that customer loyalty is the most powerful driver

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of brand image across industries. In the customer–provider relationship, it is also the sole common, statistically significant driver of present revenue and growth potential (Berg et al. 2007). Through the viral or quick dissemination of product and service experiences and views, social media has the ability to generate awareness and interest. (Fournier and Avery 2011) even cautioned corporations against participating in social media because they can be “uninvited crashers,” meaning that creating brand connections through social media is more challenging than just promoting more interactions. To capitalize on social media’s interactive and engagement features, an increasing number of marketers have shifted their marketing objectives to focus on developing/maintaining a desired consumer-brand connection through social media involvement (Hudson et al. 2016).

14.2 Literature Review

14.2.1 Social Media

Social media was considered a more effective tool in determining the brand image and brand loyalty among customers which influence their attitude and behavior in choosing a product. Social media eases information sharing (Limaye et al. 2020) and participation and involvement from users of social media in order to curate and/or distribute user-related content (Shaari 2020). In the latest era, the endurance of a customer’s loyalty toward the brand is considered a key factor for the long-term success of companies (Assistant et al. 2016). "A firmly held commitment to rebuy or re-patronize a favoured product or service regularly in the future, despite situational factors and marketing efforts having the potential to promote switching behaviour," says the company (Barden-O’Fallon et al. 2018). Because companies and organizations are believed that brand loyalty is the key factor to retaining their customers. Therefore, companies, to enhance and maintain customer loyalty they are developing marketing strategies to enhance customer loyalty (Dahlgren 2011) using different tools and techniques out of which social media was the most efficient tool in reaching out to the customers through unremitting customer engagement (Parveen et al. 2015) qualitatively analyzed the major prominent factors that facilitate development, growth, and success of marketing. They reported saying that the key important element in digital media was consistent social media presence by suggesting that the media can be utilized for connecting with customers by understanding their requirements and getting their input. Companies may improve consumers’ faith in brands and drive the development of consumers’ connection to brands through their social media presence, thereby increasing their loyalty.

14.2.2 Brand Loyalty

Customer loyalty data increases comprehension of sales campaigns and their impact. For various reasons, both marketing practitioners and theorists regard loyalty as an essential notion. Creating a new client is nearly always more expensive than maintaining an existing one. According to (Hwang and Kandampully 2012), loyalty is a strong desire to persevere to support a chosen brand regardless of situational circumstances and marketing activities having the potential to promote switching behavior. Joseph et al. (2020) says brand loyalty is defined as "a firmly held commitment to patronize a product/service. It is described as a readiness to suggest, and it is a powerful predictor of a company's growth rate" (Jones and Taylor 2007). Brand loyalty, which is at the heart of brand equity (Bashir et al. 2020), is a critical measure of a brand's sustainability since being loyal to a brand makes its consumers less inclined to move to competitors, even if competitors offer greater benefits. Similar actions are carried out in social media platforms for the building and maintenance of brand loyalty as in traditional brand loyalty activity. Personalized offers and the development of loyalty programs are examples of this (Ulas and Vural 2018). Repeat purchase behavior is an axiomatic concept (Espinosa et al. 2018) that essentially mentions the amount to which customers repurchase a similar brand after the first experiencing it, resulting in brand loyalty. A customer that prefers their brand and is resistant to rivals' attempts to entice them away with alluring offers and promotions (Holmes et al. 2020). The influence of a loyal customer base serves as the foundation (Olivotti et al. 2019) for its position as a key ingredient in brand image assessments, and loyal customers are more profitable than non-loyal consumers (Joseph et al. 2020).

14.2.3 Brand Trust

Long-term relationships require a significant amount of trust (Zhang et al. 2020). Customer expected value, reliability, and customer awareness are some of the variables which contribute to brand trust. Brand trust helps to build long-term customer relationships and reduces uncertainty to decide on any purchases (Albert and Merunka 2013). Antecedents of repurchases create brand trust, and it is vital in building brand image (Huo et al. 2021). Consumers overall satisfaction with a brand (Hendriks and Bartram 2019) leads to brand trust. Creating a customer bond is important for trust, the major contributor to this bond is brand trust and loyalty, and it is an emotional bond and positive experience a customer creates over a brand (Madadi et al. 2021). Brand trust enhances the ongoing relationship with customers, and customer realizes their self-identity and self-esteem through brand trust. High congruence of the brand image leads to brand trust (Rather et al. 2019). Trust can predict satisfying outcomes, and brand trust regulates loyalty (Huo et al. 2021). Brand

trust and loyalty were a contributor to brand equity. Brand trust increases the brand association in the consumer's mind to recollect a brand (Kalhor et al. 2021).

14.2.4 Brand Image

The notion of brand image dates back to the 1950s in marketing literature and consumer behavior research. Brand image assists consumers in identifying the product and distinguishing the organization's offering from competitors' offers (Iglesias et al. 2020). The major contributor to brand loyalty is the brand image. Successful organizations have developed a distinct brand personality (Choi et al. 2022) and a long-term reputation for excellence, which is backed by advertising and other forms of brand support. A recognizable brand image to consumers may assist firms in hosting new brands and increasing sales of existing products (Sasmita and Mohd Suki 2015). A brand image delivers on its promises (Balmer et al. 2020). Organizations must guarantee that their personnel delivers on the brand's promises (Hur and Adler 2011). Retailers have long been recognized for creating an image or reputation in the eyes (Soegoto 2018) of their customers. Retailers have long been recognized for creating an image or reputation in the eyes of their customers (Mitchell and Balabanis 2021). The concept of "brand as a person" or user imagery has been related to brand image. A brand may be distinguished by endowing it with distinct personality features (Lau and Phau 2007).

14.3 Research Objective

Brand image is a customer viewpoint of a brand, and it is largely built by various factors like brand awareness, brand association, brand trust, brand loyalty, brand equity, and so on. Much literature highlights the antecedents and association of brands in consumer purchases; during pandemic, the customer's purchase decision was mostly driven by most of these brand factors, and additionally, on the other side, literature discusses the social media influences on purchase decisions during the pandemic and post-pandemic scenarios. The interface of these two concepts has proposed a few research questions like how we can enhance brand image through trust, loyalty, and social media. Is there any positive relationship among brand trust, brand loyalty, and social media and how far it predicts the brand image? A positive brand image will help the brand to survive in spite of uncertain market conditions which disconnect the product-customer interface in situations like a pandemic and also improves the share of mind and heart which otherwise improves the trust and loyalty. To enhance the brand image, the variables like brand trust, loyalty, and positive reviews of people play a significant role. Additionally, the study attempted to understand the difference between the frequency of purchase of brand and study variables (brand trust and brand loyalty). The research used appropriate methodology to collect, test, and analyze the variables used.

14.4 Methodology

14.4.1 Sample and Data Collection

To address the above research questions, the research objectives of the study were tested using a questionnaire-based survey. The study instrument was designed carefully considering the important variables and items of brand trust, brand image, brand loyalty, and social media. The study sample was collected in a time frame of 3 months in the second quarter of 2022. The study was conducted using a voluntary sampling technique, in which survey participants self-select to participate in the survey. These people frequently exhibit a significant interest in the survey's main issue. The sample of the study comprised consumers from different age categories. The questionnaire was distributed to people through various online modes, and 319 responses were received out of which 300 were found to be correct without any data missing. The questionnaire included demographic questions about age, gender, education, employment, and frequent purchases, as well as questions about the four constructs of brand loyalty (Budiman 2021), brand trust (Yohana et al. 2020), brand image (Huang et al. 2019), and social media influence (Ahmad and Murad 2020). Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from completely disagree to completely agree. The Cronbach's alpha value for 21 study variables is 0.925, and it is found to be a highly reliable instrument to measure the study variables. The analysis was carried out using Microsoft Excel and SPSS. To test the objective and hypothesis, the researcher used ANOVA and multiple linear regression.

14.5 Analysis

14.5.1 Respondents Profile

The age representation in the total sample includes the age group from 22 years and below (38.7%), 23–24 years (36%), and 25 and above (25.3%). The gender participation was male (52.7%) and female (47.3%). Education qualifications of the respondents include (6%) high school/diploma, (55.3%) bachelor's degree, and (38.7%) master's degree. The frequency of purchases of brand includes (64.7%) purchases a brand on monthly basis, (17.3%) purchases in a weekly basis, and 18% on a quarterly basis.

The significance of the difference among frequency of brand purchase, brand trust, and brand loyalty using ANOVA test.

H1: There is no Significant Difference Among the Frequency of Purchase, Brand Trust, and Brand Loyalty.

Table 14.1 shows that the result is significant and that frequent purchase of products by customer affects brand trust, where the F -value is of 4.427. The F -value of

Table 14.1 ANOVA table frequency of purchase vs. brand trust and brand loyalty

		Sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig
BT	Between groups	3.806	2	1.903	4.427	0.14
	Within groups	63.189	147	0.430		
	Total	66.995	149			
BL	Between groups	4.479	2	2.239	5.910	0.003
	Within groups	55.695	147	0.379		
	Total	60.173	149			

5.910 approaches significance with a *p*-value of 0.003 (< 0.05 alpha level) and the brand loyalty value with a *p*-value of 0.014 (< 0.05 alpha level) (which is < 0.05 alpha level). It provides significant evidence against the null hypothesis, as the null hypothesis has a $< 5\%$ chance of being right (and the results are random). As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The frequency of purchase will be an influencing variable in creating brand trust and brand loyalty.

14.5.2 Correlation

H2: There is a Positive Relationship Among the Variables Brand Image, Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty, and Social Media

Table 14.2 shows the relationship among brand trust, brand loyalty, brand image, and social media. Brand trust and brand loyalty were significantly correlated, $r = 0.624$, $p = 0.00$ (which is < 0.05 alpha level). Brand trust also has a significant positive with brand image, where $r = 0.702$, $p = 0$, also with social media, where $r = 0.446$, $p = 0$. Brand loyalty has a significant positive correlation with brand trust, where $r = 0.624$, $p = 0$, and has a significant positive with brand image, where $r = 0.66$, $p = 0$ also with social media $r = 0.501$, $p = 0$. Brand image has a significant positive on brand trust, where $r = 0.702$, $p = 0$, also with brand loyalty, where $r = 0.66$, $p = 0$, and with social media a weak positive, where $r = 0.450$, $p = 0$. Social media has a weakly significantly correlating with brand trust, where $r = 0.446$, $p = 0$, and with brand loyalty, where $r = 0.501$, $p = 0$, and finally with brand image, where $r = 0.430$, $p = 0$. Thus, from the above data, it was evident that each of the independent variables such as brand trust, brand loyalty, brand image, and social media had a significantly positive correlation with one another.

Table 14.2 Correlation matrix among brand image, brand trust, brand loyalty, and social media

		BT	BL	BI	SM
BT	Pearson correlation	1	0.624**	0.702**	0.446**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	300	300	300	300
BL	Pearson correlation	0.624**	1	0.666**	0.501**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000
	N	300	300	300	300
BI	Pearson correlation	0.702**	0.666**	1	0.450**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000
	N	300	300	300	300
SM	Pearson correlation	0.446**	0.501**	0.450**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	300	300	300	300

14.5.3 Multiple Linear Regression

To predict how social media influences brand image through brand loyalty and trust, a multiple linear regression was used. A significant regression equation was found, $F_{(3,296)} = 137.320, p = 0$, with an R^2 of 0.582, as predicted by respondents (Tables 14.3, 14.4 and 14.5).

$$\text{Brand Image} = 0.888 + 0.425 (\text{Brand trust}) + 0.331(\text{brand loyalty}) + 0.051(\text{Social media})$$

where social media, brand trust, and brand loyalty were coded on a scale of 1–5, with 1 indicating complete disagreement and 5 indicating complete agreement with the dependent variable. The influence on social media increases by 0.425 for every unit

Table 14.3 Model summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted square	R std. error of the estimate
1	0.763 ^a	0.582	0.578	0.33809

Table 14.4 ANOVA table for multiple linear regression

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
1	Regression	47.088	3	15.696	137.320	0.000 ^b
	Residual	33.834	296	0.114		
	Total	80.922	299			

Table 14.5 Coefficients for the model

Model	B	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficients		
			Std. error	Beta	t	Sig
1	(Constant)	0.888	0.176		5.045	0.000
	BT	0.425	0.046	0.453	9.232	0.000
	BL	0.331	0.049	0.346	6.826	0.000
	SM	0.051	0.030	0.074	1.677	0.095

increase in brand trust, which was shown to be a significant difference, $t_{(296)} = 9.232$, $p = 0.00$. The impact on social media increases by 0.331 for every unit increase in brand loyalty, which was shown to be a significant change, $t_{(296)} = 6.826$, $p = 0$. The influence on social media increases by 0.051 with each unit increase in social media, which was shown to be a significant shift, $t_{(296)} = 1.677$, $p = 0.095$. Brand image was significantly predicted by independent variables such as brand trust, brand loyalty, and social.

14.6 Discussion

The results clearly portray that enhancing the brand image and creating brand trust and brand loyalty and social media content are vital. The brand image can be supported by various social media reviews and ratings. The customer prioritizes the content discussed by the brand in social media and how the company addresses the customer queries and complaints. All of the relationships of its important brand are to consistently deliver its promises and strictly maintain the quality level. In the trust factor, it was found that customer who believes the brand feels the brand never fails their expectations and customer feels the anticipated needs are satisfied and which keeps the customer trusting the brand and which leads to a higher brand image. The brand’s reviews and ratings have a strong impact in creating the image of the brand in the people who are mostly using social media and the internet, trend has changed from word of mouth to electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) to what people talk about the brand product in social media whether its positive or negative comment, it impacts the brand image of the company, and thus, the company the has responsibility to take care of negative review and take counter-action to avoid negative brand image. In addition to this, the brand has to be active on social media to interact with people and build brand image through its marketing strategy. It is recommended that companies should use social media effectively in building their brand. From the result, it is also found that the frequency of purchases also influences brand trust and brand loyalty. The company can focus on various sales promotion schemes to make their customer repeat their purchases very often. Any changes happening with brand trust, brand loyalty, and social media will surely influence the brand image of the company, and

the company should strategies in a way where all of these variables are taken care of with relative metrics for planning, evaluation, and control.

14.7 Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations; firstly, the number of variables used was minimum because the researcher wanted to conduct the study has voluntary sampling method and found the respondents will be hesitant to answer a long questionnaire. Hence, very relevant and important was only added to the instrument variables. Secondly, the sample size can be increased for such contemporary studies, and the researchers had constraints in collecting primary data in post-pandemic situations. Thirdly, the social media variables can be increased, and we can measure how individually these variables are affecting the brand image in a larger way.

14.8 Conclusion

In a more complex business environment, it is very challenging to acquire new customers, and the companies are spending huge financial budgets on various customer retention strategies and technology to drive it. On the other side, building brand trust and brand loyalty among existing customers are becoming key metrics for all the marketing and sales teams of the company. This study will contribute as an insight for the teams to consider factors that play a major role in brand trust, brand image, and social media factors for building a positive brand image. In the post-pandemic business challenges, business operations have put forth many research questions on cost-effective marketing practices to acquire new customers and retain existing customers. Brand image and brand equity are two swords of the company brand-building process. One is important from the customer's viewpoint and another from the company's viewpoint, any positive brand image is always a contributor to higher brand equity. This study focused on adding one new variable of social media reviews, and this can be tested with any established model of brand image to further validate and at various customer segments. Overall future research directions can use the social media positive vs. negative reviews impacting the brand variables and use it appropriately in social media strategy building in creating brand image and brand equity.

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