| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Impact of Advantageous Campaigns on Customer-Brand Relationship Building Through Social Media Marketing

Sultan Khamis Ali Al Mashrafi[1] ✉ and Dr Zaheer Ahmed Khan[2]
[12]Mazoon College, Sultanate of Oman
Corresponding Author: Sultan Khamis Ali Al Mashrafi, **E-mail**: SK65628@hotmail.com

| **ABSTRACT**
Marketing has been paying close attention to social media engagement because of its potential to influence consumer behaviour. A key component of marketing communication in Oman is the use of social media. In this research paper, we aim to identify the dynamics of the influence of social-media marketing elements (e.g., valuable campaigns, relevant content, frequent updates, popular content, and brand appearances on different platforms) on consumer perceptions of customer-brand relationship building. Researchers collected data on 209 respondents by using purposive sampling in a field survey conducted in Muscat, Oman. Adapted from prior research, the data collection instrument contains items measured on a Likert scale. Results of the study revealed that the predictors (advantageous campaigns, relevant content, frequent updates, popular content, and appearance of brand on various platforms) significantly impact customer-brand relationships. Consequently, this study adds to the growing body of work on social media marketing (SMM) by exploring the role of SMM in enhancing important branding goals, including customer loyalty. This study extends the benefits of social media marketing to management by providing insight on how to engage customers and increase sales.

| **KEYWORDS**

Social, Media, Marketing, Customer, brand, relationship, Popular, Content, Oman

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1. Introduction
Social media as an advantage of marketing support has created future challenges, opportunities and research directions. According to Leitch & Merlot (2018), the majority of businesses have ventured into the social media world as a strategic thought to use it to leverage consumer engagement into highly profitable relationships. Social media uses a range of social media platforms to promote a product or service and is becoming increasingly popular among millions of social media users. Currently, among others, the most popular social media platforms are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Social media has become an important channel for firms' product and brand marketing and consumer-brand relationship that affects brand loyalty (Jain & Rehman, 2018).

Customer engagement through social media can assist in promoting product sales, enhance brand awareness, improve brand image, reduce marketing costs, and enhance brand loyalty (S. Kim et al. 2015; Wan & Ren 2017; Bai &Yan, 2020). Due to the interactive nature of social media, companies monitor and analyze consumers' attitudes and opinions about them (Schweidel & Moe, 2014). Hence, social media marketing is a firm's marketing strategy, which takes social media as a channel to satisfy the purposes of customer relationship management and business promotion. Marketing strategies are updated in real-time in social media to achieve the best marketing results (Ashley & Tuten 2015; Bianchi & Andrews, 2015) and are a way companies create value for stakeholders to achieve organizational goals (Felix et al. 2017; Bai and Yan, 2020). The effectiveness of social media marketing for firm performance has been recognized by managers and scholars. Social media marketing imparts value of the relevance and quality of information, timeliness of information, and receptivity proved a significant on brand value (Godey et al. 2016; Ismail, 2017; Seo & Park, 2018). Social media influences consumer behaviour and relationship leading to purchase intention (Kim & Ko, 2010; Laksamana, 2018).

Social media marketing (SMM) is the augmentation of traditional and digital marketing communication tools (Tuten & Solomon, 2017), which monitors and facilitates customer communications, collaborations and interactions with the company, its brands, and other customers, and encourages their engagement. It also describes the client perspective on the company's multiple marketing activities on the social media platform (Yadav & Rahman, 2018).

Oman had 4.14 million social media users by January 2021. Oman's number of social media users grew by 11% between 2020 and 2021. The number of social media users in Oman was equivalent to 70.2% of the total population in January 2021, and the average daily use of Omani social media platforms among Omanis was six hours (KEMP, 2021). People in Oman use social media to create, share or exchange information, pictures or videos in virtual communities and networks; social media sites have an influence on the decision-making process of consumers. Furthermore, social media platforms (i.e., WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram) gained the attention of public relations professionals for the purpose of attracting a target audience (Al-Badi, Tarhini, Al-Sawaei, 2017). Therefore, the use of social media has become one of the important marketing communication strategies in Oman. Contemplating the background information, this paper investigates the impact of social-media marketing elements (i.e., advantageous campaigns, relevant content, frequent updates, popular content, and appearance of brand on various platforms) to capture and engage consumers' perceptions of customer-brand relationship building.

Despite challenges, social media marketing (SMM) responses positively influence behaviour and purchase intention as a major factor in brand building and creating long-term customer relationships (Kim & KO, 2010; Sano, 2014). Consumer engagement through social media has gained great attention in marketing because of its potential influence on consumer behaviour (Gambetti & Graffigna, 2010). However, the construct of social media is still at a relatively early stage of understanding (France, Merrilees, & Miller, 2016). Scholars (e.g., De Vries & Carlson, 2014; France et al., 2016; Harrigan et al., 2017) have acknowledged the positive influence of social media in involvement on consumer engagement due to its cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. Consequently, we attempt to answer the following research questions through empirical evidence based on a field study.

RQ 1. What is the impact of advantageous campaigns on customer-brand relationship building through SMM?
RQ 2. How does relevant content affect customer-brand relationship building through SMM?
RQ 3. What is the impact of frequent updates on customer-brand relationship building through SMM?
RQ 4. How does popular content affect brand-customer relationships built through SMM?
RQ 5. How does the appearance of a brand on various platforms and applications affect customer-brand relationship building through SMM?

2. Literature Review
2.1 Theoretical foundations
A critical literature review related to SMM and brand knowledge grounds the subsequent development of the theoretical framework and hypotheses used to guide the empirical research into the impact of SMM elements of customer-brand relationship building. The theory of social exchange arises from sociology studies exploring exchanges between individuals or small groups (Emerson 1976). The theory was probably best summed up by Humans (1958). Social behaviour is an exchange of goods, material goods, but also non-material ones, such as the symbols of approval or prestige. Both social media marketing and traditional marketing depend on the interrupt-perturbation model. While online media focus on the fascination or direction messages. Customers are moving from the traditional way to online media that enables them and gives them a voice (Bruhn et al., 2012). Social media promotion is viewed as a viable device for creating associations with customers (Choi, Fowler, Goh, and Yuan, 2016; Ismail, 2017).

2.2 Social-media marketing (SMM)
Due to interactive features and the most important communication platforms for brand information, social media enables branding activities through information sharing (Knoll, 2016; Kusumasondjaja, 2018; Valos et al., 2017) and has a greater capacity for personal outreach to the masses than traditional media (Bowen, 2015). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) explain that social media are "a group of Internet-based applications that builds on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content". Social media encompasses a variety of forms such as consumer assessment sites, community content sites, wikis, and internet forums (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Brands are increasingly communicating information through SMM activities, including advertising on social networking sites (e.g., WhatsApp, YouTube and Facebook, and Instagram) for building strong and favourable brand knowledge in consumers' minds (Keller, 2013; Phan et al., 2011; Yu and Yuan, 2019). Marketers have widely embraced the SMM strategy as the primary type of marketing strategy, aimed at building trust between the brand and the consumer to support the intention to purchase. Chan and Guillet (2011) suggest SMM as a tool to drive consumers' positive perception and repurchase intention and recommend using customized and two-way interactive information. The SMM has been successful in drawing consumer attention in building a relationship between consumers and brands for reinforcing intention to purchase goods. Shih et al. (2014).

2.3 Customer- brand relationship and social media

The attractiveness of social media improves customer relationship management because it creates an environment that makes it easier for customers to interact with companies and encourages interaction with unattended segments in the market. Social media has a tremendous impact on branding by encouraging users to share stories and details within their networks. In customer-brand relationships, the customer is the most important entity as an origin of sustainability. Cougar & Singh (2020) mentioned that over the past several decades, customer relationship management has grown, which is evident from many theories designed to build customer relationships. While explaining theories of interpersonal relationships, De Vries & Carlson (2014) identified six relational parameters; trust, satisfaction, commitment, mutuality of control, trading relationship, and community relationship. The first three parameters have already been well thought and found important in determining the quality of the relationship between customers and brands. Gautam & Sharma (2017) have reported a mediating role of customer relationships in the relationship between social media marketing and consumers' purchase intentions. Carlson et al. (2019) reported that YouTube is the most innovative social networking site (SNS), where consumers can post, view, comment, and link to videos on the site regarding brand activities and emotional calls through SNS play an important role to attract users. Furthermore, Kujur and Singh (2020) proposed a theoretical model based on the consumer-brand relationship through visual consumer communications on business social networking sites. The content of information and entertainment is important in building, visualizing the benefits of creating imagery to create a compelling impact on the customers - brand relationship.

2.4 Content and social media marketing

Social media content is used to support a creative strategy. Information related to a business or product can be shared quickly and easily via social media sites. The speed with which information can reach millions of people can be negative or positive for the enterprise concerned. Positive information such as recommendations, discounts or good experiences can serve as a source of free advertising and easily funnel in new customers with little additional effort from the company (Ashley &Tuten, 2015). Similarly, negative customer experiences can rapidly gain momentum through the Internet and lead to severe criticism from others, and even reach the media. This large amount of obvious negative attention can ruin customer relationships and cause a sharp decline in future customers.

In a survey of more than 1,500 marketers (Pulizzi& Handley, 2015), 72 % stated that their top social medium priority is to create more engaging content, and their second-highest priority (65%) is to improve their understanding of what content is effective. These priorities are the main factors that promote engagement in social media marketing. Researchers have addressed aspects of this issue from a variety of perspectives, but holistic research into what characterizes the influential position is still rare. Lipsman & Bruich (2012) mentioned that Facebook is the dominant social networking site; it represents 90 % of all time spent on social networking websites. Branded content on social media can take many forms, among them content shared directly from the brands, re-shared content from connections, and social-marketing tools such as Facebook's "Sponsored Stories" advertising unit. According to Du Plessis (2017), content marketing has become a leading marketing technique in digital marketing communication and uses the point of view of consumers to build relationships by creating and sharing engaging content in social media that enhance their daily lives.

Lee, Hosanagar and Nair (2014) evaluated the effect of social media content on customer engagement through a major Facebook over 100,000 single messages through 800 companies engaging with users on Facebook using a combination of Amazon Mechanical Turk and state-of-the-art Natural Language Processing algorithms. Their study used a large-scale database of content attributes to test the effect of social media marketing content on future user engagement, defined as likes and comments. By comparing social media messages with and without visual content, their study revealed that messages containing images are most effective at engaging the public on social media. We propose the following hypotheses based on Manovich (2017) study to determine which visual characteristics of a social media message drive engagement.

> H1: Advantageous campaigns on social media positively affect the customer-brand relationship.

> H2: Offers of relevant content on social media positively affects the customer-brand relationship.

2.5 Management of social media marketing

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. Understanding the aspects that affect online consumer decision-making is essential for a successful social media marketing plan. Based on their study of influences of social media purchasing, Lindsey-Mullikin and Borin (2017) propose the following strategies for successful social media sales: sales by signalling value, actively managing social media sites, encouraging communication amongst friends to increase customers. Marketers work on developing marketing strategies that emphasize customer relationship-building on social media, which creates the premises for

consumer engagement (Hollebeek et al., 2016; Brodieet al., 2013) and co-creating (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). Research has shown that investing in social media technology can provide companies with important relationship management benefits (Wang & Kim, 2017). Different types of communications are created, developed, and shared on social media by brand consumers -which in turn is redirected and transformed into advertising campaigns, such as stand-alone marketing tools for brand awareness. These tools may also be linked to rebates, special contests, event marketing or other sales promotions to generate behavioural activities that go beyond the online environment. By pursuing such a tactic for brand awareness or sales stimulation, companies paint a more authentic and relevant picture of their brands to their primary targets.

Theoretically, social marketing theory is a set of theories that stress how social value information can be promoted. The theory is administrative in nature and therefore seeks to define a framework that can be used to design, implement, and assess information campaigns. The target audience is identified based on their information needs. Once this is done, the information is packaged and distributed in a way that will be readily available to the target audience. Since all social media depends on the delivery of content by users, it seems fundamental to understand why people are participating—the positive effect of web-based media marketing highlights on brand trust. Businesses utilize the social media stage to impart, cooperate and communicate with clients, offer some benefits and encounters, and consequently improve their conduct reactions to the brand. Hence, this research proposes the following hypotheses.

> H3: Frequently updates its contents on social media offers of relevant content on social media. Social media positively affect the customer-brand relationship.

> H4: Offering popular content among friends on social media positively affects the customer-brand relationship.

> H5: Appearance of the brand on various platforms and applications on social media positively affects the customer-brand relationship.

3. Methodology
The research is descriptive in nature and uses quantitative research to provide empirical evidence as an overview of how social media marketing can create a customer-brand relationship using social media platforms form marketing communication. The study used a deductive approach (Bryman and Bell, 2018) as a theory-based trial hypothesis testing.

3.1 Theoretical framework
The proposed framework (Figure 1) focuses on the relationship between social media marketing activities and consumer responses to advantageous campaigns, relevant content, frequent updates, popular content, and brand appearance.
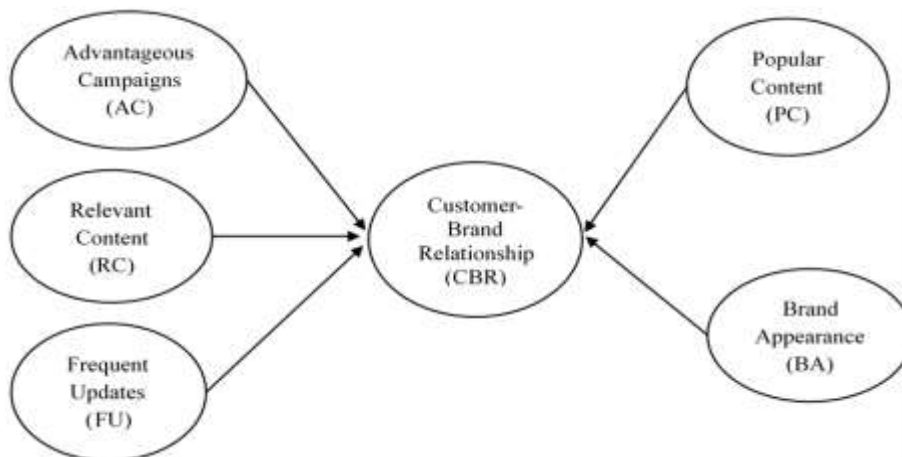

Figure 1: Proposed Research Model

3.2 Data Collection
The target population was young Omani males and females who use social media for information purposes. Due to the unknown size of the population, we used Slovin's formula (i.e., N= (Z^2 (p) (1-p))∕c) recommended by Ryan (2013) and Mensah and Ishmael (2014) for sampling, estimating proportions by considering the normal standard deviation set at 95% confidence level (1.96), percentage picking a choice or response (50% = 0.5) and the confidence interval (0.05 = ±5).

Table 1 shows that the total sample, the largest number were female, making 51% of the total sample followed by mail 49 %. The age group is almost equally distributed among three groups (25 years and above those represent 35.7%, age group below 20 years, 32 %, and 32 % despondence belong to the age group 21 to 25 years).

Table 1: Sampling Distribution

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	102	49%	49
Female	107	51%	100
Below 20 yrs.	67	32%	32.4
21-25 yrs.	66	32%	64.3
Above 25 yrs.	74	35%	100

Table 2 shows the use of media; the majority of respondents (about 73%) are using media often and more (very often, which is 40%, often are 32.4%, and sometimes are 27.5%.

Table 2: Frequency of use of social media

	Frequency	Percent
Some time	57	27%
Often	67	32%
Very often	83	40%
Total	209	100%

The study used simple random sampling to ensure that the sample approximates what would have been obtained if the entire population had been measured (Shadish et al., 2002). A self-administered structured questionnaire utilizing a five-point Likert Scale (i.e., 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= Not sure, 4= agree, 5= strongly) was used as a data collection instrument. The measurement scale for advantageous campaigns, popular content, relevant content, and frequent updates were adapted from Khan, Furqan & Anisa (2019); Appearance of the brand on various platforms from Chang and Chieng (2006); and Customer-brand relationship from Aaker, Fournier and Brasel (2004). We distributed 600 online questionnaires; out of the total sent questionnaires, 207 respondents from 7 colleges submitted the completed surveys. Participants belong to educational institutes located in Muscat. Each individual male or female who took participated in the survey is considered as a sampling unit.

4. Results and Discussion
The means, standard deviations, and skewness scores for the measures are shown in table 2. Regarding the descriptive statistics, results indicated a marginally significant preference for AC (M = 3.96, SD = 0.956), RCON (M = 3.792, SD = 1.068), PCON (M = 2.928, SD = 0.779), FU (M = 3.061, SD = 0.991), BAP (M = 2.771, SD = 0.982), and CBR (M = 2.664, SD = 1.128). The negative values for kurtosis indicate that more data values are located near the mean and less data values are located on the trails; AC and FU are negatively skewed. Overall kurtosis and skewness are within the acceptable range (-1 to +1). Hence, we assume the data from normal distribution (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Constructs	Mean	SD	Kurtosis	S.E. Kurt	Skewness	S.E. Skew
AC	3.396	0.956	0.06	0.34	-0.45	0.17
RCON	2.792	1.068	0.52	0.34	0.08	0.17
PCON	2.928	0.779	0.56	0.34	0.17	0.17
FU	3.061	0.991	-0.39	0.34	-0.29	0.17
BAP	2.771	0.982	0.23	0.34	0.19	0.17
CBR	2.664	1.128	-0.51	0.34	0.31	0.17

Valid N (listwise) 207, Missing N (listwise) 0

AC =Advantageous Campaign; RCON= Relevant Content; PCON Popular Content; FU= Frequent Updates; A= Brand Appearance; CBR= Customer Brand Relationship

Table 3 shows the internal consistency and reliability of the data of each variable; all the values of Cronbach Alpha are above 0. 7. Therefore, no problem of reliability or consistency was indicated end data set is suitable for further statistical analysis.

Table 4: Reliability Statistics

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No. Items	N
AC	0.776	4	
RCON	0.842	5	
FUP	0.768	5	
PCON	0.761	4	209
BAP	0.830	4	
CBR	0.930	4	

For the hypothesis testing, multiple linear regression was applied. Table 5 shows the R-square value (0.678), which indicates that 67.8 % of the variance is explained through predictors; R-square values of 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25 are considered substantial, moderate, and weak (Sarstedt & Hair, 2017). ANOVA (F (5,206) =84.778), p<0.05) indicated a significant explanatory power of the model. Multiple regression analysis determined the significance of the hypothesized path (Wasserstein& Lazar, 2016) of independent variables with dependent variables. Advantageous campaigns (β=0.11, t=2.28, p <0.05) showed a significant and positive impact on the customer-brand relationship. Relevant content (β=0.08, t=2.50, p <0.05) indicates significant impact on the dependent variable. Popular content (β=0.25, t=4.70, p <0.05) indicated significant impact on dependent variable customer-brand relationship. Frequency of update (β=0.19, t=4.22, p <0.05) was also significant on customer-brand relationships. Similarly, the brand appearance (β=0.55, t= 9.99, p <0.05) indicated a significant impact on the customer-brand relationship. The tolerance limits of collinearity statistics were within the limits of tolerance +/- "5" as the maximum level of VIF (Ringle et al., 2015). VIF values are below 3, which indicated that there was no issue of multicollinearity.

Table 5: Path Coefficients

Hypothesized Path		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics		Decision
		B	SE	Beta	t	Tolerance	VIF	
	(Constant)	0.13	0.23	0.000	0.560			
H1	AC →CBR	0.13	0.06	0.110	2.280*	0.71	1.41	Supported
H2	RCON→ CBR	0.08	0.06	0.080	2.500*	0.59	1.71	Supported
H3	FU→ CBR	0.21	0.05	0.190	4.220*	0.82	1.22	Supported
H4	PCON→ CBR	0.36	0.08	0.250	4.700*	0.59	1.7	Supported
H5	BAP→ CBR	0.63	0.06	0.550	9.990*	0.54	1.87	Supported

Notes:
*significant at 95% CI
Dependent Variable: Consumer Brand Relationship (CBR)
Predictors: AC =Advantageous Campaign; RCON= Relevant Content; PCON Popular Content.
FU= Frequent Updates; A= Brand Appearance; CBR= Customer Brand Relationship
Model Summary:
R2=0.678 ANOVA: F (5,206) =84.778), p<0.05

5. Conclusion

The result of this study indicated that the advantageous campaigns on social media are among the most significant drivers of customer-brand relationship, followed by the relevancy of the content, popularity of the content among friends, and appearing on different social media platforms and providing applications. The findings of the study are consistent with previous studies (Itani et al., 2020; Pulizzi& Handley, 2015; Du Plessis, 2017) reported in the literature review. The customer-brand relationship of the consumer is also positively influenced by the various platforms and apps that are offered by the brand through social media. The study also analyzed respondents' intention to join the brand on social media. The results indicate that respondents share information and experience with a brand through social medial. This may lead to thinking that social media is a platform where people want to entertain themselves. Campaigns around brands should be entertaining, informative and do what other brands did not think when interacting with customers on social media platforms. Brand information and training manuals may also be provided on social media, as sharing information is also an important engagement factor. However, the results obtained in this study specify only five dimensions, namely: 1) advantageous campaign 2) relevant content 3) popular content 4) frequent updates 5) appearance of brand on different media platforms. Hence, the role of profitable campaigns was considered important to influence the relationship of brand customers. This implies that customers are intended to look for additional gifts and benefits

through the brains interacting with them through social media. This result confirms many of the studies reported in the literature review.

Therefore, companies need to keep abreast of the changing interests of customers, their activities, and the changing perspectives in the life of prospective customers. Companies can conduct qualitative research or observations to understand their customer's lifestyles and transfer that knowledge to social media platforms. Lastly, the popularity of content among friends also increases the customer-brand relationship with consumers. As a result, businesses may encourage social media users to share their presence, campaigns, and content on social media with their peers.

The current study provides an understanding of the research trends about social media marketing, with additional actionable tactics, practices and strategies for organizations that have an online presence on these platforms. The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of literature in social media marketing by addressing the role of social media marketing (SMM) activities in enhancing important branding goals, including customer-brand loyalty. Firstly, the measurement and conceptualization of SMM are still challenging. The holistic impact of these dimensions defines the activities that inspire users to use social media. The study has supported the theoretical concept of this study successfully. The outcomes of this study are confirmatory to most of the theoretical aspects of the social exchange theory of customer relationships. Therefore, the study adds a valuable contribution to the literature in the context of a particular market and social setting.

Social media marketing is an integral part of an online marketing strategy to improve brand performance. It is associated with customer relationship marketing and its positive impact on customer loyalty, generating more sales and profits. This study brings to management's attention the effectiveness of social media marketing in engaging clients and encouraging their emotional and behavioural responses. Therefore, users may be identified in their brand communities and excited about other activities. Social media is an important source of information that impacts consumer buying decisions. Companies should use social media and other online apps to provide consumers with the most up-to-date and relevant information. These insights inspire and motivate customers towards their brand choice (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Managing social media marketing will nurture the brand community that customers rely on as an important source of information in decision-making. Companies must consider controlling digital content and other online publications and are willing to share their experiences and exchange opinions. To increase the trustworthiness of the generated content, customers can be invited by the companies to share the real- sons behind selecting the brand and provide them with further suggestions for improvements and developments.

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