THE IMPACT OF BRAND RELATIONS AND CONSUMER CHARACTERISTICS ON BRAND EVANGELISM

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ABSTRACT

Brand evangelism is a kind of persuasion since the evangelist serves as an unpaid spokesman on behalf of the brand, in contrast to word-of-mouth communication, which does not necessarily have to be grounded on a compelling stance in order to be effective. The communication that evangelists share with others in an effort to persuade more people to buy the brand may even be seen as "preaching" in certain contexts. Evangelism Marketing is an innovative, unpaid, and advanced form of word-of-mouth marketing in which satisfied, in fact, delighted consumers communicate information and feelings about a brand freely and passionately to potential consumers in the hope of converting them into the actual consumers of the brand. Evangelism Marketing is a form of word-of-mouth marketing that was developed in the 1990s and has since evolved into a more advanced form. As a consequence of the intense competition that has arisen as a consequence of the proliferation of brands, which has been further compounded by consumerism and the global flow of information through internet and social media networks, the significance of the study has increased leaps and bounds in the current scenario. In the context of recent developments, such as the rise of the idea of brand love and the construction of brand communities, evangelism marketing may play a positive role in the development and expansion of brands, particularly in the context of current developments. This research sheds light on the influence that evangelical marketing has on the purchasing behaviour of consumers as well as their loyalty to brands.

Keywords: Evangelism Marketing, Consumer Buying Behavior

INTRODUCTION

An ardent supporter of a certain brand is known as a brand evangelist. This individual feels comfortable praising the goods or services offered by the firm in front of other people. They are very active in spreading information about the product to other people, which helps them promote any product or service more aggressively (Patil,N. 2015). The purpose of the brand evangelists is to transmit recommendations to other consumers based on their own personal opinions, without expecting any rewards in the form of products or money in exchange for their voluntary advocacy of the brand (Wikipedia ; Kemp, Childers, & Williams, 2012). Sometimes known as customer apostles (Jones and Sasser 1995), brand zealots (Eighmey, Sar, and Anghelcev 2006; Rozanski, Baum, and Wolfsen 1999), champions (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Weiser 1995), inspirational consumers (Roberts 2004), advocates (Christopher, Payne, and Ballantyne 2002; Chung and Darke 2006; Rusticus 2006), and volunteer sales people, brand (McConnell and Huba 2003). Word-of-mouth marketing has evolved into a more sophisticated form known as "brand evangelism" (Wikipedia, Doss, S. K. 2014). It is a method of persuasion (Becerra and Badrinarayanan

2013) on favour of the brand and is often seen to be preachers to consume a certain brand. [Citation needed] (Doss, S. K. 2014). Yet, it is not always the consumers that serve as brand advocates; sometimes it is the employees of the organisation (Nadeem, 2007) There are a few qualities of Brand Evangelism that may be cultivated by the brand in order to boost good word-of-mouth and recruit new customers. These characteristics include brand satisfaction, brand salience, customer-brand identity, brand trust, and opinion leadership. (Doss, S. K. 2014).

The act of freely disseminating positive information, thoughts, and emotions about a particular brand to other individuals, often with the intention of influencing their consumption behaviour, is an example of the marketing strategy known as "brand evangelism." Advocates (Christopher, Payne, and Ballantyne 2002; Chung and Darke 2006; Rusticus 2006); brand zealots (Eighmey, Sar, and Anghelcev 2006; Rozanski, Baum, and Wolfsen 1999); customer apostles (McConnell and Huba 2003); inspirational consumers (Roberts 2004); champions (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Weiser 1995); champion customers (Weiser 1995); inspirational customers (Jones and Sasser 1995). Since all of these adjectives have a sense that is substantially equivalent to one another, the phrase "brand evangelism" will be used throughout this research to refer to the same conceptual framework. The promotion of a company via enthusiastic word-of-mouth communication is known as "brand evangelism."

Brand evangelism is a kind of persuasion since the evangelist serves as an unpaid spokesman on behalf of the brand, in contrast to word-of-mouth communication, which does not necessarily have to be grounded on a compelling stance in order to be effective. The communication that evangelists share with others in an effort to persuade more people to buy the brand may even be seen as "preaching" in certain contexts. Brand evangelists will be aggressive in communicating with the firm that owns the brand, despite the fact that there will be contact with other customers about the brand (Weiser 1995). Complaints regarding the product or service may be included in these messages, as well as any responses to those complaints. Consumers who are true devotees of a brand and brand evangelists might even continue using the brand long after it has been discontinued by the business that originally created the brand. For instance, supporters of the Apple Newton (a personal electronic digital assistant) brand community kept providing support and application development for a product after it had been discontinued, all while advocating for the device to be brought back into production (Muniz and Schau 2005). While the push to bring back the Apple Newton was ultimately unsuccessful, the sharing of information continued for a few of years after Apple stopped producing and selling the device.

Attributes Of Brand Evangelism

There hasn't been a lot of study done on the characteristics of brand evangelism up to this point. It is hypothesised that consumer-brand identification, brand satisfaction, brand salience, brand trust, and opinion leadership are the components that lead to brand evangelism (See Figure 1). The consumer's self-defined notion of oneness and identity with a brand is what we mean when we talk about consumer-brand identification (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Kuenzel and Halliday 2008). In the context of this discussion, the term "brand satisfaction" refers to the joyful fulfilment of a consumer's requirements, wants, or desires in relation to the brand (Oliver 1997). The "top-of-mind awareness" that a person holds unassisted in relation to a product category is what we mean when we talk about a brand's salience (Alba and Chattopadhyay 1986; Miller and Berry 1998). "willingness to depend on the capacity of the brand to accomplish its stated role" is what we mean when we talk about "brand trust" (Chaudhuri and Holbrook

2001, p. 82). In conclusion, opinion leadership refers to the extent to which specific individuals have an impact on the attitudes and actions of other people in relation to a certain brand (Baumgarten 1975; Rogers 2003).

Fundamental Concepts of Brand

Understanding the nature of brand evangelism has received considerable attention in recent times, particularly in the literature pertaining to marketing. According to the most recent findings of a body of research, brand evangelism is defined as the practise of actively supporting and defending a brand, disseminating favourable thoughts, and fervently encouraging others to connect with it. The word "evangelism" has been used to stress the missionary part of consumer passion, which also entails preaching about the most cherished characteristics of a brand. Evangelism as a phrase has been used to emphasise the missionary aspect of consumer passion. In a similar vein, the concept of brand evangelism describes the behaviour of customers who consistently show their support for a brand by making purchases of that brand, participating in positive brand referrals, and making oppositional referrals against the brands of rivals. Moreover, brand evangelists may assist firms in attracting new consumers and saving expenses, which is the core idea behind the expansion of brand evangelism. In point of fact, brand evangelism is more of a consequence of the influence that the brand has, but community evangelism is more of a result of community loyalty since it includes people of local communities actively promoting the brand via word of mouth (WOM) By doing so, they are simultaneously exemplifying the core principles of brand love and engagement. Despite the growing interest in consumer brand evangelism, a significant number of research have also investigated the predictors including brand-related topics, such as love for the brand, identification with the brand, trust in the brand, and engagement with the brand.

Past studies have shown that customers do not only buy products and promote brands solely on the practical effectiveness of such products; rather, they also do so for symbolic and social reasons. Recent studies have shown that a customer's extra-role activity or citizenship behaviour may be strongly predicted by the brand symbolism they associate with the company. According to research conducted in the past, the symbolic significance of items has been broken down into two distinct categories: societal symbolism and self-symbolism. Brand symbolism is becoming an increasingly important topic of discussion among academics who research mainstream marketing in the context of hospitality and tourism. In addition, as was brought to light by, there is a dearth of empirical research on the symbolism of brands in connection to the interactions between customers and brands. A favourable and substantial association between brand symbolism and the consumer–brand relationship in the hospitality setting, such as customer citizenship behaviour, has been discovered by several researchers and identified in their studies (helping and policing other customers) commitment to the brand and future shopping plans Previous research has limitations when it comes to examining the relationship between brand symbolism and the customer–brand relationship in the context of coffee shops. These limitations are especially apparent when it comes to the three dimensions of brand evangelism that are an outcome of brand symbolism, which are purchase intention, positive brand referrals, and oppositional brand referrals [16]. Consequently, one of the primary objectives of this research is to evaluate if the symbolic meaning of a brand (also known as brand symbolism) might encourage the evangelical behaviour of customers in a coffee shop (also known as brand evangelism).

Purpose The purpose of this research is to investigate how brand transgression (BT) influences the quality of brand relationships (BRQ). As potential mediators between brand loyalty and brand evangelism, brand forgiveness (BF) and brand evangelism (BE) are being tried. This research contributes to the body of knowledge on consumer behaviour by demonstrating how individuals offer to manage the relationships they have with companies via the use of BE and BF. The important information that this offers to managers enables them to develop tactics to win forgiveness from customers in the event that anything unpleasant occurs. Not only are they obligated to work on obtaining forgiveness, but they must also look for strategies to secure the Survival of their own brands. They serve as protective barriers for the brands in the event that a violation takes place. Design/methodology/approach This research investigates whether or not forgiveness acts as a mediator in the connection between BRQ and BT by using a survey methodology. Furthermore investigated was whether or not BE served as a mediator of the connection that existed between BT and BRQ. The PROCESS bootstrapping approach was used throughout the testing that took place (Model 4 of Hayes [2018]). Findings This research reveals that, after a BT, customers participate in BE and BF in order to sustain the connection they have already created with their brands. This finding is consistent with the expectations that were made before. Originality/value This study contributes to the current body of research by demonstrating that the reactions of customers in the wake of a BT may take a variety of forms. Whether or not the customer forgives the brand or evangelises about the brand may have an effect on the reaction the consumer has to the brand as well as the connection the consumer has with the brand. The findings of this research suggest, on the basis of the cognitive dissonance theory, that forgiveness and BE play a crucial role as processes in the comprehension of consumer-brand interactions when companies behave in an unacceptable manner. In addition, this study makes a contribution to the existing body of research on social media brand management by conducting an investigation into a real-world scenario of BT's use of social media.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the impact of evangelism marketing on consumer buying behaviour

2. To identify the type of goods in which evangelism marketing is effective

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Kotler and Keller (2012: 265), the definition of a brand is a combination of a name, image, word, symbol, or plan, or it might be a combination of some of these things, or it could be just one of these things added. It is useful as an evidence that can be recognised of the items or services from a single vendor or group of sellers, and it can also be used to distinguish them from competitors. In almost every business, a brand is one of the most essential intangible resources, as well as one of the most significant potential risks. It is common knowledge that firms who own profitable brands have large financial benefits, and vital corporate resources are those organisations that own such brands (Madden, Fehle, and Fournier, 2006; Keller, K. L., Parameswaran, M. G., & Jacob, I. ,2011).

Lately, there has been a further consideration from scientists and professionals in exploring and explaining the drivers and significant factors of brand evangelism. This new consideration came about as a result of recent developments. In addition, many businesses in the advertising industry believe that their sales will increase when more people recommend their product or service to others. They have a ground-breaking sway in communicating

their experiences relating to their images with the ultimate purpose of influencing others. A customer evangelist is someone who not only purchases and consumes the product on a regular basis, but also has a strong commitment to encouraging others to consume the brand and switch from competing or existing brands (McConnell and Huba, 2003). Yet, according to Becerra and Badrinarayanan (2013), it would seem that the size of this very influential group of clients is on the smaller side (Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013).

The term "brand Evangelism" most often refers to upbeat and casually positive contact between customers. An unpaid representative working in the interest of the brand is known as an evangelist; his demonstration may even come to "lecturing" as a push to convince others to employ the brand in question (Doss, 2013). Brand evangelism is not the same as verbal communication, which is not generally influential in nature. Brand evangelism is subjected to declaring intentionally not only the positive data but rather also thoughts and sentiments regarding a specific brand to others intentionally and regularly enthusiastically, which is overwhelmingly intended to influence utilisation behaviour.

The intention of a customer to purchase a product is one factor that may be influenced by the effectiveness of a brand evangelist (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi 2012). Regular use of a consumer's likeable product can lead to the development of an emotional relationship with the brand, which can then lead to the consumer referencing the brand favourably to other consumers, either verbally or visually (Matzler, Pichler, & Hemetsberger 2007). Additionally, it has been observed that consumers will spread negative remarks about the brand of a competitor when they use the product (Sundaram, Mitra, & Webster 1998). Brand love has a significant and positive correlation with structure capital, relational capital, cognitive capital, and favourable brand referrals, all of which contribute to an increase in positive feedback on the brand, which ultimately results in brand evangelism (Hsieh, S. & Lee, T.C 2016).

According to the findings of an ongoing study being conducted by Gopika and Rajani (2016), converting a customer into an evangelist is a difficult and time-consuming process. Some customers may have the opinion that it is difficult to communicate with others or may be preoccupied with their own job. This is especially true for customers who have a tendency to move between products before becoming used to a certain brand. Since customers' preferences and tastes may vary so much, a significant amount of effort is required to persuade them to buy. In addition, if the product offering is modified often, measuring evangelism may prove to be difficult. This is due to the fact that when a product is modified, the level of excitement felt by customers may shift as a result of the modification. Multi year-over-year income growth is the ideal sign, and it might be a precise evidence of the organisations to identify the quantity of their customer evangelists. The continuous collection of contributions from evangelists would provide the marketers with a better understanding of what the customers enjoy and dislike about their products (McConnell and Huba, 2003). According to the findings of past research on brand evangelism, there are a number of challenges that businesses face when attempting to convert customers into brand advocates. This is especially true for businesses that operate in the very competitive mobile phone market.

Some repeat customers find themselves in a connection that extends much beyond the simple fulfilment of a user's requirements. They are the aggressor in their duty to their brand, which include having positive verbal exchanges for the brand, experiencing the product to the maximum extent possible, and launching direct attacks on the organisation if they believe they have been deceived in any way. These devoted followers of the brand have the

potential to become the company's most important business partners or, at the other extreme, an independent armed force. Their unwavering beliefs prompt them to make efforts to influence the beliefs and behaviours of others, which, in the end, leads to shifts in popular conception or legislation (Rozanski et al. 1999).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

By the use of a descriptive, analytic, and exploratory research methodology, the purpose of this study is to collect pertinent information about evangelism marketing and its influence via the use of a sample survey. In order to conduct an in-depth examination, this study makes use of both primary and secondary sources of information to compile its findings. The researcher's goal is to collect primary data with the assistance of a well-structured questionnaire that will be given to 100 samples drawn from the universe. These samples will include consumers of various brands that span over various industries and will be exposed to evangelism marketing through a convenient sampling technique. The questionnaire was sent using a document created on Google Forms. The research also makes use of secondary data, which comes from web sources, professional journals and magazines, reports of projects and studies carried out by specialists, and professional publications and magazines. The primary data that was obtained was analysed with the use of several tools, including the Percentage Analysis, Friedman Test, One way ANOVA, Two-way ANOVA interaction model, and Independent sample t test, as well as charts and graphs, Microsoft Excel, and SPSS 20.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

TABLE 1ASSIGNMENT OF THE PRODUCTS TO CLASSES

PRODUCT CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Convenience Goods	17	17
Shopping Goods	32	32
Speciality Goods	28	28
Unsought Goods	23	23
TOTAL	100	100

Source: Primary Data

According to Table 1, 17% of the respondents rely on evangelists when it comes to convenience products, 32% do so when it comes to shopping goods, 28% do so when it comes to specialty goods, and 23% do so when it comes to unsought items.

TABLE 2CHANGE IN PURCHASE DECISION BASED ON A BRAND EVANGELIST'S OPINION

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CHANGE IN PURCHASE DECISION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	71	71
No	5	5
Sometimes	24	24
TOTAL	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 makes it clear that the majority of respondents (71%) believe that they have a tendency to change their purchase decision on the basis of the opinion of a brand evangelist, while only 5% of respondents believe that they do not change their purchase decision in accordance with the opinion of a brand evangelist. This disparity in opinions is clear from the fact that only 5% of respondents believe that they do not change their purchase decision in accordance with the opinion of a brand evangelist. 24 percent of those who participated in the survey expressed the belief that the recommendation of an evangelist may occasionally influence their choice of where to make a purchase.

TABLE 3EVANGELISM MARKETING'S EFFECT ON CONSUMER BUYING ACTION

IMPACT ON BUYING BEHAVIOUR	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	77	77
No	7	7
Sometimes	16	16
TOTAL	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 makes it clear that the majority of respondents (77%) believe that evangelism marketing has an effect on their purchasing behaviour, while just 7% of respondents believe that evangelism marketing does not have an effect on their purchasing behaviour. One sixth of the respondents were of the opinion that evangelistic marketing does sometimes have an effect on their purchasing behaviour.

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TABLE 4EVANGELISM MARKETING STRATEGY'S SUCCESS

SUCCESS OF THE STRATEGY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	83	83
No	5	5
Sometimes	12	12
TOTAL	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 reveals that the majority of respondents (83%) believe that evangelism marketing is a successful marketing strategy, while only 5% of respondents believe that evangelism marketing is not a successful marketing strategy. Table 4 also reveals that the majority of respondents (83%) believe that evangelism marketing is a successful marketing strategy. Twelve percent of those polled have the view that evangelistic marketing may on occasion be an efficient marketing technique.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- According to the findings, 17% of the respondents rely on evangelists when it comes to convenience products, 32% when it comes to shopping goods, 28% when it comes to specialised goods, and 23% when it comes to unsought items.
- It is evident that seventy-one percent of the respondents are of the opinion that they have the habit of changing their purchase decision on the basis of the opinion of a brand evangelist, whereas only five percent of the respondents opined that they do not change their purchase decision in accordance with the opinion of a brand evangelist. • This finding is supported by the fact that seventy-one percent of the respondents are of the opinion that they have the habit of changing their purchase decision on the Twenty-four percent of those who took the survey said that the recommendation of an evangelist may occasionally influence their choice about whether or not to make a purchase.
- It was discovered that 77% of the respondents believe that evangelism marketing has an influence on their purchasing behaviour, whilst just 7% of the respondents believe that evangelism marketing does not have an impact on their purchasing behaviour. One sixth of the respondents were of the opinion that evangelistic marketing does sometimes have an effect on their purchasing behaviour.
- It has been found that 83% of the respondents believe that evangelism marketing is a successful marketing strategy, while only 5% of the respondents believe that evangelism marketing is not a successful marketing strategy. • This finding was made possible by the fact that only 5% of the respondents held the opinion that evangelism marketing is not a successful marketing strategy. Twelve percent of those polled have the view that evangelistic marketing may on occasion be an efficient marketing technique.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, evangelism marketing is an effective marketing strategy in the present scenario, as shown by the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the study. The modern day is witnessing a proliferation of brands and media, which results in fierce competition and makes market positioning and survival a difficult task. Nonetheless, the success of evangelistic marketing is dependent on a number of distinct elements. The use of evangelism in marketing has the potential to increase customer loyalty to a brand, and there is evidence to suggest that it also has the ability to have a significant influence on the purchasing decisions consumers make. In point of fact, evangelism is going to be the next buzzword that everyone uses in the years to come. These brand evangelists are the most effective type of marketing since they are unpaid and they contribute the most when they promote a certain automobile, model, or dealer to a potential new buyer. So, in order to build brand evangelism, companies need to be sure to take care of these issues.

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