ISTANBUL COMMERCE UNIVERSITY
SOCIAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MASTER PROGRAMME

AN EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CUSTOMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY: A STUDY IN MOROCCO

Master's Thesis

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Advisor: Assist. Prof. Mehmet SAĞLAM

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ABSTRACT

Social media applications are valued as an indispensable marketing channel for every sector. Developing technological and informational processes increase the power of social media and brands use this power to increase their brand equity.

The Purpose of this study is to understand how social media marketing affects customer-based brand equity. An online questionnaire was created in the purpose of data collection in order to meet the objectives of this study. The sample of this research includes Social Media users in Morocco and a simple random sampling method was used as the sampling method.

The fundamental constructs for measuring customer-based brand equity are: brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Whereas, in order to analyze the perceived value of Social Media Marketing activities, entertainment, interaction , trendiness, WOM and customization are considered as key elements.

250 data sets were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed in SPSS 22 and AMOS Packages Program. Regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The results of the empirical study showed that social media marketing have influence on brand equity dimensions. It has been determined that e-wom and trend have an effect on brand awareness, entertainment has an effect on brand associations, entertainment, interaction, e-wom and trend have an effect on perceived quality and finally entertainment, interaction and e-wom have an effect on brand loyalty.

The findings of this study can help brands better predict their customers' future purchasing behavior and give managers a roadmap for brand and marketing operations.

Keywords: social media**,** social media marketing, brand equity, perceived quality, Brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand associations.

ÖZET

Sosyal medya uygulamaları her sektör için vazgeçilmez bir pazarlama kanalı olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Gelişen teknolojik ve bilgisel süreçler sosyal medyanın gücünü artırmakta ve markalar bu gücü marka denkliğini artırmak için kullanmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, sosyal medya pazarlamasının müşteri temelli marka değerini nasıl etkilediğini anlamaktır. Bu çalışmanın amaçlarına ulaşmak için veri toplama amacıyla çevrimiçi bir anket oluşturulmuştur. Bu araştırmanın örneklemini Fas'taki Sosyal Medya kullanıcıları oluşturmaktadır ve örnekleme yöntemi olarak basit tesadüfi örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır.

Müşteriye dayalı marka değerini ölçmek için temel yapılar şunlardır: marka farkındalığı, marka çağrışımları, algılanan kalite ve marka sadakati. Oysa Sosyal Medya Pazarlama faaliyetlerinin algılanan değerini analiz etmek için eğlence, etkileşim, trendlik, WOM ve kişiselleştirme anahtar unsurlar olarak kabul edilir.

250 veri seti çevrimiçi bir anket aracılığıyla toplandı ve SPSS 22 ve AMOS Paketleri Programında analiz edildi. Hipotezleri test etmek için regresyon analizi kullanıldı. Ampirik çalışmanın sonuçları, sosyal medya pazarlamasının marka değeri boyutları üzerinde etkisi olduğunu göstermiştir. e-wom ve trendin marka bilinirliği üzerinde, eğlencenin marka çağrışımları üzerinde, eğlence, etkileşim, e-wom ve trendin algılanan kalite üzerinde etkisi olduğu ve son olarak eğlence, etkileşim ve elektronik ağızdan ağıza iletişimin marka sadakati üzerinde etkisi olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Bu çalışmanın bulguları, markaların müşterilerinin gelecekteki satın alma davranışlarını daha iyi tahmin etmelerine yardımcı olabilir ve yöneticilere marka ve pazarlama operasyonları için bir yol haritası verebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: sosyal medya, sosyal medya pazarlaması, marka değeri, algılanan kalite, Marka farkındalığı, marka sadakati, marka çağrışımları.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B2C: business-to-consumer 2

e.g: Exapmle 15

et al: and others 7

E-wom: electronic word of mouth 23

R&D: Research and development 13

SMM: social media marketing 78

SMMA: social media marketing activities 73

CHAPTER 1

1 INTRODUCTION

In marketing, branding has long been a crucial notion. As firms try to dedicate more resources to establish, enhance, and retain their brand equity, this issue is receiving greater attention. In both the online and offline marketplaces, brand equity is critical, but the number of firms and marketing activities online has been steadily expanding in recent years. It's because of the internet's importance and the growing number of customers who choose to shop online (Tuominen, 1999). Even in the online world, Aaker (1991) and Keller (1998) approaches to customer-based brand equity building are two of the most widely used.

Brand equity is a crucial notion for comprehending the purposes, procedures, and overall effect of marketing campaigns (Reynold & Philips, 2005). Brand equity creates benefit for consumers and assists brands in establishing strong competitive positions that are hard to transfer to other competitors (Pitta & Kastsanis, 1995). In order to build brand equity, brands have used a variety of techniques such as advertisements, public affairs, sales force, concepts, and symbols (Aaker, 1991). In this digital era, Yazdanparast (2015) believe that the activities that are based on social media marketing are efficient techniques for building brand equity.

Customers can engage with each other through social media platforms, according to Bernoff and Li (2011), implying that firms are not the key source of brand communication any longer. Furthermore, customers are progressively shifting aside from traditional media such as radio, television, and magazines in order to find information on social networking platforms (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Marketers' authority over brand management has been weakened as a result of this phenomena (Berthon et al., 2007). As a result, it is critical to recognize that customers' opinions of brands are no longer driven solely by what firms convey, but also by what other customers are saying about the brand.

Kang and Park (2018) claim that social media sites can be effective marketing tools for small and medium businesses since they provide low-cost access to huge audiences. The

growth in number of social media users has completely affected company marketing strategies and influenced the B2C industry (Eric, Karen& Tao, 2010).

To build brand equity, social media marketing demands extra attention and strategy development. Relationship marketing is similar to social media marketing, in which businesses must transition from "trying to sell" and instead focus on creating a sort of "relationship" with their customers (Gordhamer, 2009). Firms should avoid "huge campaigns" and instead focus on "little acts," as modest campaigns can quickly reach a large number of people and achieve their purposes as quickly as possible (Coon, 2010). In current technologically advanced world, social media marketing is a term used to define the market condition. Several researches looked into consumer perceptions of online purchasing intent.

In addition, social media marketing differs from traditional forms of communication in that it attempts to exhibit rather than manage the brand's image, providing customers with a more real communication.

Miller, Fabian & Lin (2009), explained that the value of social media resides in the engagement between consumers and the communities, as well as the facilitating of instant, engaging, and communication at a low cost (Miller, Fabian & Lin 2009). Most people's lives have been enriched by internet communities, blogs, and social networks, so social media expanded into alternative communication tools that complement current connections with entertainment and enriching the users' experience.

1.1 Research problem

Over the last decade, social media has grown in popularity, providing a platform for both individuals and companies to express themselves. Companies must evaluate how to efficiently use the internet and social media to interact with customers as the internet and social media expand in popularity (Cheong & Morrison, 2008).

Thanks to the usage of social media as a marketing tool, many businesses may now engage directly with their customers (Rana, 2011). Because customers may now express their opinions instantly and to a global audience, businesses are more exposed than in the past (Qualman, 2009, p. 9). Because of social media technologies, customers now have nonstop access to social media sites and may directly contact organizations and

individuals. There have been numerous global and local studies on the influence of social media on brand equity. Alhadid and Abu-Rumman (2014) studied the impact of social media marketing on brand equity across seven Jordanian mobile service providers as part of an international study.

Because social media marketing differs from traditional types of marketing, it has a different impact on brand equity. Because Social Media Marketing is a novel concept, it's crucial to see how it influences brand equity and how much the relationship is long-term.

Melissa (2015) did study in Starbucks Indonesia about the effect of social media marketing on brand equity and purchase intent. Vogue Turkey undertook a research about the impact of social media use on magazine brand equity, which Rana (2011) did. According to the conclusions of these investigations, social media marketing activities have a significant effect on brand equity creation. The data also reveal that using social media has a four-fold impact on brand equity: it creates a new straight communications system, it boosts an organization's brand presence, it promotes consumer interaction, and it helps an organization build solid relationships with its customers.

1.2 Background of the study

As customers have more choices in terms of choosing brands to buy and stay loyal to, marketing has grown increasingly popular in recent years. Brands can differentiate themselves by interacting with customers through marketing activities. In terms of communicating with potential consumers, social media is now one of the "best options given" to a brand (Neti, 2011).

Customers and brands have utilized social media marketing to monitor and facilitate contacts and interactions. Without a doubt, the emergence of this technology, despite being recognized as an effective driver for favorably influencing customers' purchasing patterns, is seen as a challenge by marketers (Chen & Lin, 2019; Dann, 2010).

According to Neti (2011), social media platforms are able to gain customers' trust by engaging with them on a deeper way. It can be claimed that developing a relationship with customers benefits firms because it extends the customer life cycle. The customer

life cycle refers to the steps that a customer goes through when deciding to purchase, utilizing, and remaining loyal to a product or service.

According to Kim & Ko, (2010), social media marketing can be an important part of developing a brand and establishing long-term customer interactions, marketers must be aware of the potential and problems that arise in the future. They need to find out which actions will have a bigger impact and result in stronger brand equity in the order of looking for acceptable marketing activities when it comes social media. (Kim & Ko, 2010).

It is necessary to highlight that customers can interact with brands through social media marketing by commenting, liking, and subscribing to pages belonging to various brands, which is something that traditional types of advertising have failed to achieve.

1.3 The purpose of the study:

The purpose of this study is to look into how businesses may take use of the opportunities that social media offers to build and increase brand equity through social media marketing, as well as the obstacles that they face in this environment. Because of the concept's popularity, it's critical to investigate its impact on brand equity. It's crucial to remember that every marketing strategy made by a company should result in a profit. The findings of this study can assist managers in developing appropriate strategies for enhancing their brand equity through social media marketing. This study looks at brand equity from the standpoint of customers, and Aaker's customer-based brand equity dimensions will be utilized.

This research focuses on a variety of social media platforms in order to gain a better knowledge of their impact, as well as how businesses may utilize social media to develop and increase brand equity through social media marketing and the problems they face in this regard. Furthermore, this study seeks to cover a gap in the field by examining some elements of social media marketing activities that can have an influence on brand equity and may lead to more effective strategies for customers to gain insights into the businesses' activities as well as their products and services.

1.4 Research objectives:

The main objectives of this research are:

1) To understand the impact of social media marketing on brand equity.

2) To find out how customer-based brand equity and social media marketing are related.

3) To Examine the relationship between brand equity and social media marketing aspects.

4) To understand the importance of social media marketing in the development of brand equity

1.5 Research questions

The following are the study's main research questions to better understand the influence of social media marketing on brand equity:

• What's the link between social media marketing activities and brand equity?

• What effect does social media marketing have on each of the brand equity dimensions?

It is required to identify social media marketing dimensions and four dimensions of brand equity, including brand association, brand loyalty, brand awareness and perceived brand quality, to be able to answer these issues.

CHAPTER 2

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the current literature and presents a review of existing literatures related to this study's topic. Through this literature it will be feasible to construct hypotheses based on the literature review, which will be utilized to perform the survey and, eventually, answer the research question. There will also be a discussion on how to define and sort different sorts of social media marketing, as well as how to define brand equity.

This chapter will help to understand the concept of Social Media and Social Media marketing as well as Brand equity in term of customer-based brand equity. Therefore, a set of hypotheses will be generated in line with the study's objectives.

2.2 Social Media: Web 1.0, Web 2.0 - Web 3.0 and Web 4.0 Concepts:

Social media is a concept that has grown into a global phenomenon in recent years and owes its current existence to the internet's birth. As known, having internet access is the most basic necessity for actively using social media tools (platforms). In this context, it is useful to explain the basis for the existence of the notion of social media before moving on to the description and classification of the concept. The principles of Web 1.0, Web 2.0, Web 3.0, and Web 4.0 will be described first, followed by multiple definitions and general evaluations of social media marketing in the literature will be presented.

2.2.1 Web 1.0

Although there are some variances in the definitions of Web 1.0, it is generally associated with the inception of the notion of the World Wide Web.

Connecting to the internet and distributing web pages created by a limited number of authors to a large number of viewers is the core challenge with Web 1.0. (Naik and Shivalingaiah, 2008: 500). Web 1.0 is a concept that dates back to the early days of the Internet in the 1990s. Web sites are static in this setting, and there is only one-way communication in the Web 1.0 period (Thackeray et al., 2008: 339). For instance,

"Encyclopedia Britannica Online" is a Web 1.0 application (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010: 61). Its objective is to collect more information on users' access to internet pages and the internet. Fuchs et al. (2010: 43-56) used Durkheim's approach to construct Web 1.0, which they described as a hypertext technology. They characterized Web 1.0 as a tool for thought and intelligence. To summarize, in the Web 1.0 period, internet users are unable to create their own content on the internet, and as a result, they are unable to actively contribute to the internet environment.

The following main distinguishing titles can be used to explain the main characteristics of the Web 1.0 period:

- Website Stability: Websites are static, and internet visitors do not need to return to a site they previously visited. The website is only used to obtain specific information, and its content does not change over time.

- Website Unidirectionality: An internet user can only get information from a website. In the context of the website, there is no interactivity, and the user is unable to edit the material.

- Firm Web Sites: In the Web 1.0 era, most websites were owned by companies.

- Wired Internet Era: Users were linked to the Internet through wire in the Web 1.0 period, and wireless Internet became increasingly common in the Web 2.0 period. Table 1 summarizes the key features of the Web 1.0 period, and the comparison with Web 2.0 will be indicated in the next section.

Table 1: Main Characteristics and Actors of Web 1.0 Period

WEB 1.0
Double Click Akamai Mp3.com Publishing Personal websites Page views

Screen scraping
Content management
Taxonomy
Britannica Encyclopedia
Ofoto

Source: O'Reilly, 2007: 18

Thanks to the technological developments in the transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0, there has been a movement from firms to consumers, from individuals to communities, from nodes to networks, from publishing to interaction, and from unauthorized access to invitation, (Berthon et al., 2012: 262). On the internet, this change and transformation has started a new era. The Web 2.0 period, in which the foundations of the notion of social media were established, as well as its essential elements, will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.2 Web 2.0

Some of the causes for the emergence of Web 2.0, according to Levy (2009: 121), include the development and saturation point achieved on the Internet in the last ten years. Tim O'Reilly and Media live International were among those who first developed the term Web 2.0 in 2004 at a brainstorming session (Graham, 2005). Tim O'Reilly popularized the term with the evolution of interactive digital media, the passive relationship between the firm and the customer observed in Web 1.0 has evolved into an interactive one in which consumers initiate information exchange and receive it with Web 2.0. (Hanna et al., 2011: 271). In the Web 2.0 era, passive notions like personal web pages, Encyclopedia Britannica, and publishing content were replaced with active ones like blogs, wikis, and collaborative initiatives (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010: 61). While Netscape was the firm that defined the Web 1.0 era, Google is the most significant company to mention when discussing the Web 2.0 era (O'Reilly, 2007: 19). Levy (2009: 123-124) characterized the four levels of Web 2.0 apps as follows:

Level 3 Applications: Applications that get their power from human communication and communication network effects and are only available on the internet which grows in popularity as more users use them. Wikipedia, Ebay, and Skype are just a few examples.

- 2nd Level Applications: These are applications that can be utilized offline but are more useful online. This level has been demonstrated by Flickr.

- Level 1 Apps: Apps that can be used offline but acquire additional functionality when connected to the internet. Writely and iTunes are two examples.

- Level 0 Apps: Apps that can be used offline. Examples: Like Google Maps, MapQuest.

- Non-network applications: E-mail, phone and instant messaging applications.

Some examples of Web 2.0-based websites given by Naik and Shivalingaiah (2008) are:

1. Flickr: Flickr is a photo-sharing website that allows users to upload and share their photos with everyone.

2. Orkut: A social networking service that allows users to exchange and receive messages from other members.

3. YouTube: It allows users to publish and share videos with the rest of the world.

4. Blogs: They can be used to communicate anything and are managed by individuals or organizations.

5. Google AdSense: Allows users to make money by placing Google advertisements on their websites.

6. Wikipedia: An online library where users submit articles, definitions, and other information. The users are totally in charge of editing and updating it.

7. Scribd: Users can post any document to the website, which other users can then either download or view.

"Web 2.0 is a network as platform that covers all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications, on the other hand, are the applications that receive the main advantages from this platform," according to O'Reilly (2005b). Web 2.0 is software that consumes and reorganizes data from many sources, including individual users, and provides its own services and data while reusing others to provide a better and constantly updated

service with the use of more users. It consumes and reorganizes data from many sources, including individual users, and provides its own services and data while reusing others. It's a notion that extends beyond the Web 1.0 metaphor to provide rich user experiences and networking effects via participation architecture. The following main distinguishing titles can be used to outline the key elements of the Web 2.0 era:

- Website Dynamism: Websites are dynamic, and internet users can return to a website they previously visited. The website's information is updated and revised on a regular basis.

- Interactive Websites: An internet user can utilize an interactive website to get information and update the content. The one-sidedness of the Web 1.0 era ended with the Web 2.0 era in this context.

- Website Management by Communities: Whereas websites in the Web 1.0 period were mostly company-based, the focus in the Web 2.0 era was on communities.

- Wireless Internet Era: In the Web 2.0 era, wired internet has become more widely available, allowing people to access the internet at any time and from any location.

In their article, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 61) defined Web 2.0 as a platform for the evolution of social media before going on to the concept of social media. In this context, Web 2.0 can be seen of as a platform that sits on top of or at the start of social media.

The internet has become an important platform since products and services were not discussed, examined and shared through online environments. For a wide range of businesses, marketing is an important and essential aspect. It has been influenced by people's purchasing habits as a result of reading the comments and reviews of others who have previously used this product (Ying, 2012: 55).

The key features and actors of the Web 1.0 period were mentioned in the previous section, and the Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 periods were compared in the context of their developments in Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison of Key Features and Actors of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 Era

Web 1.0	Web 2.0

Double click	→	Google AdSense
Akamai	→	Bit Torrent
Mp3.com	→	Napster
Publishing	→	Participation
Personal websites	→	Blogging
Page views	→	Cost per click
Screen scraping	→	Web services
Content management	→	Wikis
Taxonomy	→	Tagging
Britannica encyclopedia	→	Wikipedia
Ofoto	→	Flickr
Evite	→	Upcoming.org and EVDB
Domain name speculation	→	Search engine optimization
Stickiness	→	Syndication

Source: O'Reilly, 2007: 18

The concepts of Web 3.0 and Web 4.0 will be briefly covered in the remaining two subsections before going on to the concept of social media.

2.2.3 Web 3.0

Semantic network technologies that are integrated with or power large-scale internet applications are referred to as Web 3.0. (Hendler, 2009: 111). Web 3.0, on the other hand, was defined by Fuchs et al. (2010) as a networked digital technology that facilitates human cooperation, with the community-building and collaborative production approach of Ferdinand Tönnies and Karl Marx as forms of collaboration. "Semantic webs are sets of formats and languages that identify and analyze data in a network of internet servers (world wide web) that enable consumers and businesses understand all kinds of relevant online information," according to Feigenbaum's (2007: 91) definition.

Data and "semantic" are more essential than application in Web 3.0. Semantics is involved with the relationship between a symbol system's syntactic structures and what they want to mean in other words, the intended meaning and the intended meaning cannot be comprehended by the receiver (human or computer) unless a semantic

component is present (Antezana et al., 2009: 394). It will be possible to discuss artificial intelligence in the Web 3.0 era in this context. Web 3.0 represents the evolutions to be experienced in internet usage and interaction, according to Naik and Shivalingaiah (2008: 501). He gave examples for the Web 3.0 period, such as the evolution of the internet into a database, the ability to access content with many non-browser applications, the use of artificial intelligence technologies, and the 3D internet. With many examples such as automatic labeling and artificial intelligence, Levy (2009: 125) argued that the internet has transformed from an irregular environment to a regular structure, and in this context, Web 3.0 apps have found their place in the internet industry.

Table 3: Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 Comparison

S.No	**Web 1.0**	**Web 2.0**	**Web 3.0**
1	1996	2006	2016
2	The Web	The Social Web	The Semantic Web
3	Tim Berners Lee	Tim O'Reilly	Sir Tim Berners Lee
4	Read only web	Read and write web	Read, write and execute web
5	Information sharing	Interaction	Immersion.
6	Million of users	Billion of users	Trillion of users
7	Ecosystem	Participation	Understanding itself
8	Connect information	Connect people	Connect knowledge
9	Brain and Eyes (=Information)	Brain, Eyes, Ears, Voice and Heart (= Passion)	Brain, Eyes, Ears, Voice, Heart, Arms and Legs (= Freedom
10	The Hypertext/CGI Web. (the basics)	The Community Web (for people: apps/sites connecting them).	The Semantic Web (for machines).
11	Pushed web, text/graphics, based flash	Two way web pages, Wikis, video, pod casts, shading, Personal publishing, 2D portals	3D portals, avtar representation Interoperable profits, multi-user virtual environment (MUVEs),

			Integrated games, education and business, all media flows in and out of virtual Web worlds
12	Companies publish content that people consume (e.g CNN)	People publish content that other people can consume companies build platforms that let people publish content for other people (e.g. Flickr, YouTube, AdSense, Wikipedia, Blogger MySpace, RSS, Digg)	People build applications that people can interact with, companies build platforms that let t people publish services by leveraging the associations between people or special content (e. g. Facebook, Google Maps, My Yahoo!)
13	In Web 1.0 search enginesretrieve macro contents. Search is very fast but many times results are inaccurate or more than users can chew.	In Web 2.0 search engines retrieve tags with micro contents (Furl even retrieves tags with macro contents). The process of tagging is manual, tedious and covers negligible percent of the WWW. Web 2.0 tags every-thing: pictures, links, events, news, Blogs, audio, video, and so on. Google Base even retrieves micro content texts.	In Web 3.0 search engines will hopefully retrieve micro content texts which were tagged automatically. This implies translating billions of Web 1.0 macro contents into micro contents. The result could be more precise search because tagging can solve part of the ambiguity that homonyms and synonyms introduce into the process of search.

14	Web 1.0 was all aboutstatic content, one waypublishing of content without any real interaction between readers or publishers or each other.	Web 2.0 is more about 2 way communication through social networking, blogging, wikis, tagging, user generated content and video.	Web 3.0 is curiusly undefined. AI and the web learning what you want and delivering you a personalized web experience.
15	The web in the beginningwhen it was first developingweb 1.0	New advances that allow a much more sophisticated user interaction with web pages – citizen journalism, social networks and Wikis are all products of Web 2.0	Thought to be the future - wherethe web is more interactive with users, leading to a kind of artificial intelligence web 3.0
16	Personal web sites	Blogs	Semantic Blogs: SemiBlog, Haystack, Semblog, Structured Blogging
17	Content Management system	Wikis, Wikipedia	Semantic Wikis: Semantic MediaWiki, SemperWiki, Platypus, dbpedia, Rhizome
18	AltaVista, Google	Google personalized, DumpFind, Hakia	Semantic Search: SWSE, Swoogle, Intellidimension
19	Citeseer, Project Gutenberg	Google scholar, Book search	Semantic Digital Libraries: JeromDl,

			BRICKS, Longwell
20	Message boards	Community portals	Semantic Forums and communityportals: SIOC, OpenLink DataSpaces
21	Buddy Lists, Address book	Online social networks	Semantic Social Networks: FOAF, PeopleAggregator Semantic Social InformationSpaces: Nepomuk, Gnowsis

Source: Naik and Shivalingaiah, 2008: adapted from article 503-505

In conclusion, thanks to high-level technologies such as artificial intelligence in software for Web 3.0, we can talk about an internet era in which features brought by the semantic network, such as smarter search engines, personalized services, and customized information, are offered to internet users.

2.2.4 Web 4.0

Web 4.0 is referred to as a symbiotic network, indicating that it is still in its early stages (Aghaei et al., 2012: 8). The symbiotic relationship of person and machine is the main feature explored in the symbiotic network (Choudhury, 2014: 8099-8100). Web 1.0 is the reading-only era, Web 2.0 is the reading-and-writing era, and Web 3.0 is the reading-writing-and-application era, as indicated in the previous section. It is anticipated that the future of the Internet, the Web 4.0 era, and the symbiotic labor of humans and robots may be actual as a consequence of fast developments in computer technologies.

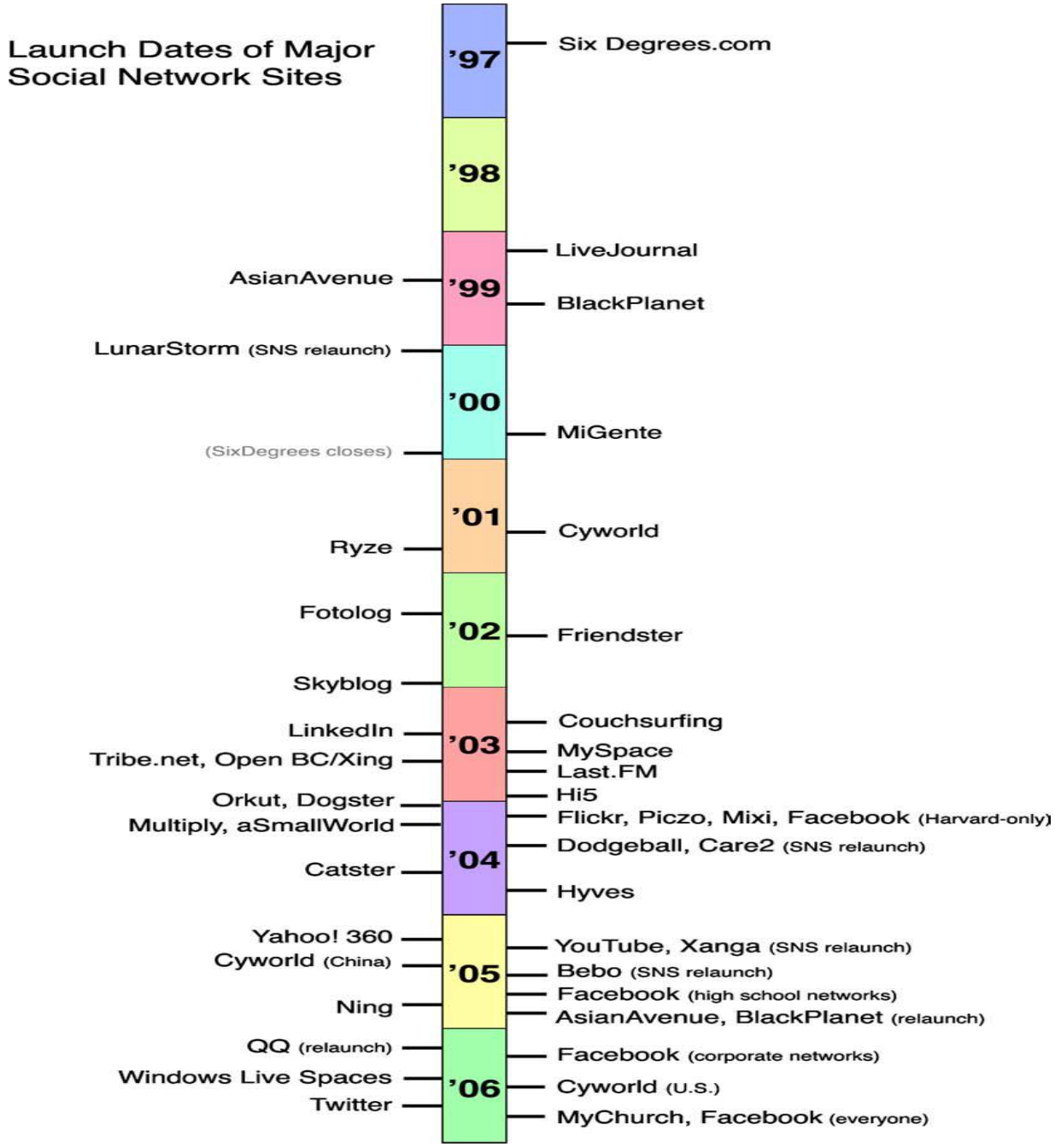
2.3 Social Networking Sites

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 60), the rise of social networking sites like MySpace (2003) and Facebook (2004) has increased the importance of social media today. Social networking sites are "virtual collections of user profiles that can be shared with others," (Hughes et al., 2012: 561). Humans are social creatures by nature, and the desire to communicate with others might be considered an essential characteristic.

People continue to engage / communicate with one another using various tools as technology advances and new ways of interacting emerges. In this perspective, social networking sites serve as a tool to meet people's needs in the virtual world. These personal accounts can include images, videos, audio files, and blogs, among other things."".

Boyd and Ellison (2008: 211) define social networking sites as follows: “Social networking sites allow individuals to (1) create a public or semi-public profile in a restricted system, (2) specify a clear list of other users they have shared links with, (3) Internet-based services that allow mutual viewing of what is done by other people in the system and their own connection lists”.

Figure 1: Timeline of the launch dates of many major SNSs and dates when community sites re-launched with SNS features



Source: Boyd & Ellison 2008: 212

2.3.1 Facebook

When we consider the evolution of social networking sites, one of the most famous social networking sites nowadays is Facebook, which holds a significant place. Facebook is a social media platform that was launched in 2004. Facebook was

developed by Mark Zuckerberg as a network of students from Harvard University, which is also Mark Zuckerberg's university (Boyd and Ellison, 2008: 218).

It was originally planned to create a network only among elite universities (Boyd and Ellison, 2008: 218 In general, Facebook allows various segments such as friends, families, coworkers, and strangers to instantly connect (Safko, 2010: 449). Facebook is the world's largest and most popular social media network, and it is also the first social media platform to exceed the 1 billion user account record. It assists companies in marketing their products and promoting their brands and businesses, in addition to networking with online friends (Spencer, 2017: 22).

2.3.2 Twitter

Twitter is a social media platform that allows users to follow each other without requiring approval or return. Although certain users' shares are hidden behind special settings, it is a platform where everyone who is online and has an active account can be followed in general (Marwick and Boyd, 2011). With its general framework, Twitter is comparable to another social media network, which is Instagram (Lup et al., 2015).

According to Fischer and Reuber (2011: 3), Twitter is the most popular microblogging network, and it is a social media tool that allows users to broadcast short posts. Twitter began as a San Francisco-based company's current R&D initiative in March 2006, and went public seven months later after it was first used for internal company communication (Safko, 2012: 291). Twitter allows users to share 140-character messages as a result of its policy, and because of this feature, users are more focused on instant sharing. As a result, many government organizations, artists, politicians, and celebrities utilize Twitter to share information and make instant announcements (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2011). Businesses and individual users alike utilize Twitter to communicate with their customers (Sarıtaş and Tilki, 2017: 76). In the past years, Twitter has become a platform that politicians and politicians constantly use to share with their followers the events they experience in the election process and in their lives in general (Doğu et al., 2014).

2.3.3 Instagram

Instagram is another key platform for sharing content. "Instagram is a photo/video sharing mobile application where users follow, post, and share instant photos/videos online. It was launched in 2010 and bought by Facebook in 2012." (Lee and Chau 2018: 22). The following are some of Instagram's basic features: Users create profiles; users can share various moments in their lives with their friends and/or other users as images or videos using the "@" and "#" symbols, as well as their related attributes, are used (Hu et al., 2014: 595-596; Phua et al., 2017: 414; Lee and Chau, 2018: 21-22). Users can engage with people who have been to that location before or are instantly present thanks to the feature of adding a location to images posted to the platform (Tekulve and Kelly, 2013: 8). Instagram is a platform that businesses, as well as individual users, frequently visit and use for business purposes to boost consumer interaction (Ting and Run, 2015: 18).

Instagram is a valuable tool for institutions to build brand equity since it allows them to reach user groups that they couldn't reach through traditional media (Guidry and Jin, 2015: 348). The fact that Instagram is based on sharing visual information is considered as an unmissable opportunity for businesses to use the visual memory method to improve their interactions with their brands (Zolkepli et al., 2015: 5). Organizations can learn the most up-to-date comments about their companies and brands without spending any fees by leaving instant comments on their Instagram accounts as feedback (Dennis, 2014: 10).

2.3.4 YouTube

One of the largest content communities today is the video sharing site YouTube. YouTube was founded in February 2005 and allows users to quickly share video content (Gill et al., 2007: 16). Users can share, view, and comment on videos on YouTube, and they can also create a profile to see their friends, comments, favorite videos, people they subscribe to, and current shares and activity (Smith et al., 2012: 104). YouTube is defined by Safko (2012: 258) as "a video sharing website that allows users to upload, view, and share video clipsAfter text-based blogs took their position on the internet, video blogs under the name of "vlog" emerged as a result of users's ability to reach millions with videos on the internet, especially after YouTube became popular.

YouTube allows users and organizations to create original content for their audiences and share it on other social media channels (Kaplan and Hanlein, 2018: 164). Users may rapidly access events taking place all around the world through videos on Youtube, and they can rate these videos using the feedback they leave (Castells, 2008: 276).

The number of views of videos created by users on YouTube influenced business marketers, who wanted to advertise information about their brands through YouTube's, and three sponsorship options emerged. The first of these methods is open sponsorship, which allows video creators on YouTube to earn money by promoting businesses. In the second sponsorship method, content creators earn money by sharing a link with their followers that allows them to immediately access the products of the companies with which they have an advertising agreement and allowing them to shop from there. The third sponsorship approach aims to have the company's items supplied to the video creators for free, and the YouTube's review and suggest the company's products to their followers (Wu, 2016:3).

2.4 Social Media History and Definition

Before moving on to the history and definition of social media, it is thought that defining the level of social media as a concept in terms of Web 2.0 applications, such as social networking sites, will help to avoid any potential conceptual misunderstandings. Although the definition and classification of social media will be thoroughly discussed, terms like social media, social networking sites, Web 2.0 applications, and the platforms used to implement these concepts (e.g., Facebook, YouTube) can be confusing.

In general, Web 2.0 applications will be considered a superset or beginning point, and the idea of social media will be evaluated as a continuation of this concept, with social networking sites being a subclass of it (Kaplan & Haeinlein, 2010). While Facebook is a platform that combines all three concepts, Wikipedia is not a social networking site but is integrated into social media and Web 2.0 apps. In conclusion, the concept of social media can be viewed as a sub-level or continuation of Web 2.0 applications, with social networking sites serving as an example of a sub-level of social media. The history of social media and several definitions will be discussed in the following subsections.

2.4.1 Social Media History

Social media is a concept that has developed in popularity in literature and daily life over the previous decade. Social media sites and their users are growing in quantity and quality at the same time as smartphones and the ability to be connected to the internet nearly at any time. Apart from the fact that the term "social media" has become increasingly popular since the introduction of platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, the concept of social media has a considerably longer history.

In the context of the underlying principle, Standage (2013: 1-3) evaluated the Romans' copying, sharing, and commenting on papyrus rolls as a two-way communication system in which information moves horizontally from person to person through social networks. In this perspective, while social media has become a popular notion in recent years, its historical significance goes all the way back to its popularity (Fuchs, 2017: 37).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 60) explain the history of social media with the following sentences: "In 1979, Duke University's Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis developed a worldwide communication platform where internet users could publish public statements, "However, the modern era of social media began nearly two decades ago, when Bruce and Susan Abelson founded the social networking site 'Open Dairy,' which brought together online writers in a community. The words weblog and blog were also used for the first time in those years, and thanks to the high-speed internet, the concept of social media increased its popularity and social networking sites such as MySpace (2003) and Facebook (2004) were established. As a result, the term social media has gained its current importance and place".

In this regard, as previously stated, one could argue that the current popularity of social media is linked to the formation and success of major social networking sites. In summary, according to its recent history, the word "social media" first appeared in the early 2000s (Lomborg, 2017: 6) and, technically, social media is built on the ideological and technological infrastructure of Web 2.0 (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010: 61), therefore it can be said that it has a history of about 20 years.

2.4.2 Social Media Definition:

Social media is a two-word concept that originates from two different fields. In this context, the words that make up the notion of social media will be briefly described before the concept of social media is defined. The term "social" is associated with the field of sociology. Actor (e.g. social units such as individual, group, organization, and community), relational bond, binary group, triple group, sub-group, group, relationship, and network are all terms used in social network theory and analysis to describe social structures made up of relationships and connections between actors (Wasserman & et al. Faust, 1994).

The media, which can be traced back to the Dark Ages (Jeanneney, 2006), corresponds to the structure that provides communication, which is used to collect and store information for communication purposes (Peters et al., 2013: 282). On the other hand, Kietzman et al. (2011: 241) described social media as an environment in which people and societies connect with one another, generate and discuss information, and use mobile and web-based technology (Kietzman et al., 2011: 241).

Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker and Bloching, (2013) explained that social media from a marketing standpoint is a marketplace where both merchants and customers exist with numerous facilities and engage in a variety of ways (Hennig-Thurau, et. al, 2013). The concept of how social media marketing functions in practice is strongly linked to the definition of social media itself, wherein marketers can develop customer contact through social media (Chary, 2014)

Different definitions of social media have been proposed in the literature. There is no single definition for the concept of social media as it is known today, which can be considered relatively new. As previously stated, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define Web 2.0 applications as a platform for the evolution of social media, while social media is defined as "a collection of internet-based applications that facilitate the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

Peter et al. (2013) stated social media as egalitarian in nature (for example, the brand is only an actor like other actors in the network, not different in a hierarchical sense), and

he defined social media as follows: “Social media is a dyadic (dual) They are communication systems that allow them to communicate in the form of ties”.

Consumers are more willing to share viral videos, generate extra brand-related content, tweet about the brand, and publish their experiences in a well-designed social media campaign (Miller & Lammas, 2010), According to Foux (2006), traditional marketing tools are considered to be less reliable than social media as a source of information. Therefore Social media helps enhance communication by allowing users to easily communicate with hundreds or thousands of other consumers in a short period of time (Mangold & Faulds, 2009), while on the other hand, it allows brands to share and exchange information with their customers (Sashi, 2012).

2.5 Different Classifications of Social Media

Table 4 lists summarizes the several social media classifications, sources, and sample social media tools that have been identified in the literature sorted by year.

Table 4: Different Social Media Classifications Found in the Literature

Weinberg, (2009: 9-11)	- Social News Sites (Digg, Reddit) - Social Bookmarking Sites (StumbleUpon, Delicious) - Social Networks (Facebook, MySpace) - Other Social Media Sites
Mangold and Folds, (2009: 358)	- Social Networking Sites (MySpace, Facebook) - Creative Works Sharing Sites (YouTube, Flickr) - User-Sponsored Blogs (Unofficial Apple Blog) - Firm-Sponsored Blogs (Apple.com) - Company Sponsored Charity Sites (Dove's "Real Beauty" campaign) - Invite-Only Social Networks (AsmallWorld.net) - Business Networking Sites (LinkedIn) - Collaborative Websites (Wikipedia) - Virtual Worlds (Second Life) - Trading Communities (eBay.com, Amazon.com) - Podcasts (“For Immediate Release: The Hobson and Holtz

	Report) - News Transport Sites (Current TV) - Sharing Educational Material (MIT OpenCourseWare, MERLOT) - Open Source Software Communities (Mozilla's spreadfirefox.com site, Linux.org) - Social Bookmarking Sites (Digg, Reddit)
Kaplan and Haenlein, (2010: 62)	- Blogs - Social Networking Sites (Facebook) - Virtual Social Worlds (Second Life) - Collaborative Projects (Wikipedia) - Content Communities (YouTube) - Virtual Game Worlds (World of Warcraft)
Akar, (2011: 25)	- Blogs - Microblogging (Twitter) - Wikis (Wikipedia) - Social Networking Sites (Facebook) - Media Sharing Sites (Image and video sharing sites, YouTube) - Social Marking and Tagging (Delicious) - Podcasting - Virtual Worlds (Second Life)
Fischer and Reuber, (2011: 3)	- Social Networks (Facebook) - Social Bookmarking (Digg) - Video Sharing (Youtube) - Photo Sharing (Flickr) - Professional Networks (LinkedIn) - User Forums - Blogs (or Network Blogs) - Microblogs (Twitter)
Kietzmann et al., (2011: 242)	- General Audience Sites (Friendster, Facebook) - Professional Networks (LinkedIn) - Media Sharing Sites (Youtube, Flickr)

	- Network blogs (Blogs) - Social News and Bookmarking Sites (Reddit, Digg) - Microblogs (Twitter) - Location Featured Networks (Foursquare)
Berthon et al., (2012: 263)	- Blogs - Microblogs (Twitter) - Photo Sharing Sites (Flickr) - Video Sharing Sites (Youtube) - Social Networks (Facebook)
Safko, (2012: 10)	- Social Networks (Facebook) - Photo Sharing (Flickr) - Sound - Video (Youtube) - Microblogs (Twitter) - Live streams (Justin.tv) - Virtual Worlds (Second Life) - Games (World of Warcraft) - RSS and Aggregators - Search Engines - mobile - Peer-to-peer (Skype)

2.6 Social media marketing

The rapid growth of social media in recent years has had an impact on not only people's behaviors and attitudes, but also on people's understanding of marketing as a concept when viewed through the eyes of its users. Markets and the concept of marketing have been altered by technological advancements in the previous decade, bringing consumers and enterprises into consideration (Keller, 2016). As a result of these changes, social media marketing has emerged as a separate topic in the literature. With each passing day, social media marketing is becoming a more significant notion for organizations.

Soat (2014), Duke University, and McKinsey & Co., for example, stated that social media expenditures, which were 9.4 percent in 2014, will increase by 128 percent in five years and will account for 21.4 percent of the marketing budget of enterprises in 2019. In this environment, social media marketing has taken on a significant role in the marketing concept, both in terms of literature and in terms of businesses. First, social media marketing will be described in light of literary definitions, and then general assessments of social media marketing will be presented in this section.

2.7 Social media marketing Definition

At the start of the internet revolution, social media enabled people to receive and transmit information not just as quickly as a blink, but also across a wide geographic range, something that traditional media had stopped doing. Marketing used to be done in a very different way before the introduction of social media.

To promote their products and services to customers, marketers used traditional channel methods and technologies to advertise them, (Nadda et al., 2015). According to studies, brands are increasingly investing on digital marketing instead of traditional marketing (Baines & Fill 2014). To mention some, the traditional types include television, brand websites, radio, door-to-door sales, display panels, exhibitions. Social media platforms such as Twitter and YouTube are examples of platforms that integrate technology and social interaction (Neti, 2011).

Social media marketing is the creation of online marketing proposals of businesses through social media platforms to create and maintain stakeholder relationships that increase the value of stakeholders by increasing interaction, information sharing among stakeholders about their current and popular products and services, providing personalized purchasing recommendations and creating word-of-mouth communication. “It is the process of making and delivering communication” (Yadav and Rahman, 2017).

Social Media Marketing defined as a systematic and rigorous approach to create the company's impact, reputation, and brand inside communities of potential consumers, readers, or supporters (Neti, 2011). The process of using social media technologies to

connect with customers more easily by giving reduced prices, creating personal relationships, and trading offers is referred to as social media marketing.

Brands can engage and react to a large number of customers through social media marketing, which is not available through traditional marketing methods (Akar & Topçu, 2011). Akar & Topçu (2011) define social media marketing as "the use of social media as a strategy to boost a brand's presence on the Internet in order to offer its products and services."

Users create the majority of the content and interactions between customers and brands in social media marketing. The goal of social media marketing is to empower customers to express their ideas about a brand so that it can better serve them (Akar & Topçu, 2011). Furthermore, the interaction gives more worth because it costs less yet has a greater effect than traditional media channels.) The struggle to create content that can capture readers' interest and motivate them to spread it among their social networks is at the heart of social media marketing (Chary, 2014).

With the widest sense, social media marketing refers to a variety of marketing activities carried out by businesses using social media tools. Because of the widespread usage of social media by consumers, brand social media marketing is becoming increasingly important. It's also possible to argue that social media marketing has the ability to contribute at least as much as traditional marketing in terms of achieving branding objectives (Godey et al., 2016). The characteristics of social media marketing, according to Kim and Ko (2012), include promoting a brands as a marketing communication tool or introducing the brand to consumers. Social media marketing might take the form of a photo uploaded on a brand's Instagram account, a Tweet, or a Youtube video.

2.8 Social media marketing dimensions:

The process of utilizing social media technologies to engage with customers easily by delivering lower costs, creating personal relationships, and trading offerings is referred to as social media marketing (Verma, Stock & McCarthy, 2012).

Social media marketing indicators that will be employed in this study are based on dimensions of social media marketing that include: Interaction, Trendiness,

Entertainment, Customization and E-wom (Kim and Ko, 2010). These dimensions are defined as next:

2.8.1 Interaction:

Interaction is one of the most important dimensions of social media marketing. It is the process of brands and customers exchanging information (Gallaugher, & Ransbotham, 2012). According to Kaplan and Heinlen, (2010), social interaction is a key factor in the creation of user-generated content. Besides, the two-way nature of social media communications allows for immediate responses to client enquiries or complaints, which has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. (Sano, 2014). Social media sites are virtual as well as social contexts wherein groups and individuals can interact and exchange experiences (Kaplan and Heinlen, 2010). Social media, consumer assistance and areas for conversation and discussion of the view can be found.

By disseminating up-to-date, consumer-relevant content, social networking sites promote more interaction with the online community (Fischer, & Reuber, 2011). Because of the subjective nature, interactions become more social and noticeable, improving customers' social presence and, as a result, brand interaction.

2.8.2 Trendiness:

Previous researches have shown that customers resort to various ways to access crucial and accurate information before making a purchase decision, in addition to what companies offer through their traditional marketing events by using trendiness which is a form of social media used to obtain information (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Vollmer & Precourt, 2008)

Trendiness refers to the most recent issues that have piqued interest of the audience, as well as trendy information that brands find relevant and fascinating to provide with their clients (Naaman et al, 2011). According to Muntinga et. al, (2011), trending information on social media is used for four reasons: Observation, awareness, pre-purchase information, and motivation.

Godey et al., (2016) looked at trendiness in connection to the propagation of the most up-to-date and popular brand information. Observation is a process which enables keeping track of changes in a consumer's social surroundings (Muntinga 2011 Through

social media contacts with customers, it is now able to carry out integrated marketing activities with far less time and expense than previously.

2.8.3 Entertainment:

Entertainment can be explained as the influence of fun and enjoyment that arises from a user's interaction with social media (Godey et al., 2016). Also Entertainment is known as the ability to deliver an exciting and dynamic mood in order to boost engagement and customer experience. It enhances brand-consumer connection, which encourages active participation and customers to enjoy their activities according to their own time (Netemeyer, et. al., 2004),

According to the use and gratifications theory, social media users want both entertainment and information, but entertainment may be a larger driver of brand engagement than information (Thorbjornsen, Pedersen, & Nysveen, 2007). In addition, the experience that customers require can be obtained through a variety of methods.

2.8.4 Customization:

Allowing customers to build and customize products is an efficient way for businesses to enhance relationships with customers. Louis Vuitton and H&M for example, give a comparable service to the consumers. Customization is the way a service is developed to meet the customer’s preferences, (Schmenner, 1986).

According to Ding & Keh (2016) and Seo & Park (2018), customization, is a technique of creating consumer loyalty that relies on the business's relationship with specific consumers. Furthermore Customization is defined in the literature as the degree to which companies use social media sites to give information that may be searched and updated using the services they provide (Godey, et al., 2016).

2.8.5 E-wom:

E-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) has been the subject of numerous researches in the marketing field. according to Arndt, (1967), electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) has been described as all informal communications addressed at customers via Internet-based technologies about the usage or qualities of certain products and services, or their suppliers (Arndt, 1967).

Consumers' statements on social networking sites are known as E-WOM. These statements can be positive or negative.

Viral marketing is closely linked to electronic media-based word-of-mouth. The internet is the most essential element of viral marketing, and it is this connectivity that differentiates it from traditional word-of-mouth.

According to a research by Sharpe Partners (2006), over 40% of customers were somewhat in favor of sharing branded content with their friends, while only 5% were opposed. Keller (2007) considers word of mouth to be the most influential mode of communication. Consumers have a higher level of trust in peer-to-peer (consumer) messages than they do in corporate messages (Smith et al, 2012). By influencing readers throughout their online information searches, e-WOM can develop virtual relationships and communities with influence far beyond the readers and creators of WOM, creating a new type of reality (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008).

In the online context, social media allows for consumer-to-consumer WOM communication. Given that customers are becoming more reliant on their social networks when making purchasing decisions (Hinz, et.al., 2011), electronic word-of-mouth among consumers is important for firms because it is quicker and more widespread than traditional word-of-mouth.

Hu (2014) found that when deciding which products to purchase, people on Twitter rely heavily on the comments and ratings provided by their friends and relatives. According to the study, news organizations and brands are the 2nd and 3rd most trustworthy sources, however, while government officials on Twitter are the least trustworthy. The level of faith a person places in another's opinion differs depending on the product. When people were confused about which product to buy, for example, the perceived validity of celebrities was higher when they decided to purchase a cheap product rather than an expensive one. Regardless of the item type, family and friends were the most trustworthy sources on Twitter, while legislators were the least trusted. Furthermore, the strength of the relationship between the sender and the receiver determines the reader's level of trust (Koo, 2016).

Marketers have traditionally used one-way communications to contact their targeted customers in the hopes of receiving a response. One requirement is the capacity to efficiently reach out to certain customers. A research conducted by the Nielsen (2012) shows that 78 percent of buyers rely on online word of mouth recommendations to make purchasing decisions.

Hu (2014) has also stated that source trustworthiness is an important component to consider when determining the viability of an effective communication. Similarly, as with other types of e-WOM, their research showed that item page content appeared to be the most important factor in moving buyers along the chain from being aware of the product to liking it. The clear consequences for advertisers are to maintain a "strong" network page by publishing useful and essential item information. Additionally, as with other sorts of e-WOM, if the message caught the receivers' interest, they will most likely click to the proposed item page.

The many-to-many communication model (the company communicates individualized / customized information to a segment of consumers) replaces the old one-to-many communication model (the firm communicates standardized content to a segment of consumers) (Hoffman and Novak, 1996). One embodiment of these shifts is word of mouth, or digital word of mouth (WOM): Consumer activism has spawned as a result of the simplicity with which they may spread information about the corporation and its products. Consumers share their experiences and expect a response from the company in return. Social media has changed the rules for advertisers and marketers alike: it is receiver-oriented and therefore sparks a two-way communication process, fundamentally opposed to traditional one-way, sender-based communication (Prindle, 2011).

Despite the importance of source expertise in decision-making, the writer's reliability is the variable that permits the reader to proceed with the purchase (O'Reilly, 2007). The reader is careless about the commenter's level of knowledge if he or she perceives him to be unreliable. Consumers or readers of the comment form an opinion depending on the writer's approach. Certain phrases that appear to be marketing strategies are quickly dismissed and never accepted as a real suggestion intended to help the reader.

2.9 The concept of Brand

The concept of Brand is one of the most important discussion topics that have been on the agenda for years. It has been debated and discussed for years, and the definitions and procedures are continuously evolving. The concepts of new media and social media, in particular, have altered the concept of branding. Despite all of the developments in branding notions and philosophy, the core objective of branding can be said to remain stable. The objective of branding will always be to influence consumers to recognize with particular brands in order for them to prefer these brands over others. The difficult aspect is achieving this aim, which has become more difficult than ever before with the introduction and increased usage of new media (Edelman 2010).

In the literature, there are several different definitions of the term "brand." The following are brand definitions provided by D. A. Aaker, P. Kotler, and K. L. Keller, all of whom hold key positions in marketing and brand literature: - "A brand is a distinctive name and/or symbol (e.g., logo, trade name, packaging design) used to identify and differentiate the products or services of a single vendor or group of vendors from those of competitors" (Aaker, 1991).The brand can also be defined by its functions. For example, Kapferer (1992) identify six functions specific to the mark: 1) a function of practicality, 2) a function of guarantee (of the quality of the products), 3) a function of personalization (the brand can be considered here as a means of asserting oneself), 4) a playful function (symbol of the pleasure that one can derive from one's purchases), 5) a specificity function (the unique attributes of a product) and 6) a distinctive function (or differentiation of a brand from its competitors).

It's also worth giving a correct meaning to the phrase "brand," which refers to a collection of names, signs, symbols, and images that customers use to identify and differentiate a company's offerings from those of competitors (American Marketing Association, 1960). A brand can be defined as a distinctive collection of practical and emotional values that can give customers with a positive experience (De Chernatony, Drury, & Segal-Horn, 2006).

Keller and Lehmann (2003) also cast doubt on the functions of brands, the most basic of which is to serve as an indicator of a product's provenance. Brands make it easier for consumers to buy products and can guarantee a certain degree of quality. As a result,

they lower risk and increase consumer confidence. Brand are based on the product manufactured, the marketing activities undertaken to promote that product and the use that the consumer will make of it. In this sense, they reflect the complete experience that the consumer will have with the product.

Companies understand that the most important way to create continuity in markets with intense competition is to create a successful brand and to ensure the continuity of this brand and to give more weight to brand building efforts. Building a strong brand has become one of the main objectives of many companies, especially because of the possible benefits it can provide. Brand strategies, which are one of the important components of the marketing mix, are seen as an increasingly important factor in gaining sustainable competitive advantages, making full use of existing resources and preventing price competition (Aaker and Keller, 1990

2.9.1 Benefits of using the concept of Brand for companies/producers.

For manufacturers, the brand is effective in generating demand, attracting purchasers to the items, building product loyalty, and assisting producers in introducing new goods to the market. For manufacturers, the most crucial role of the brand is to set itself apart from competitors. Producers gain from differentiation in a variety of ways.

When it comes to building a great brand in today's environment, businesses confront a variety of obstacles. As a result of increased connection and communication between firms and customers, consumers have more power and influence over branding (Antorini et al. 2016). Additionally, product identity is dependent on the company's shared external communication. Furthermore, customer relationships are becoming increasingly essential. It's important to figure out how much they should be involved in the business without damaging the company identity.

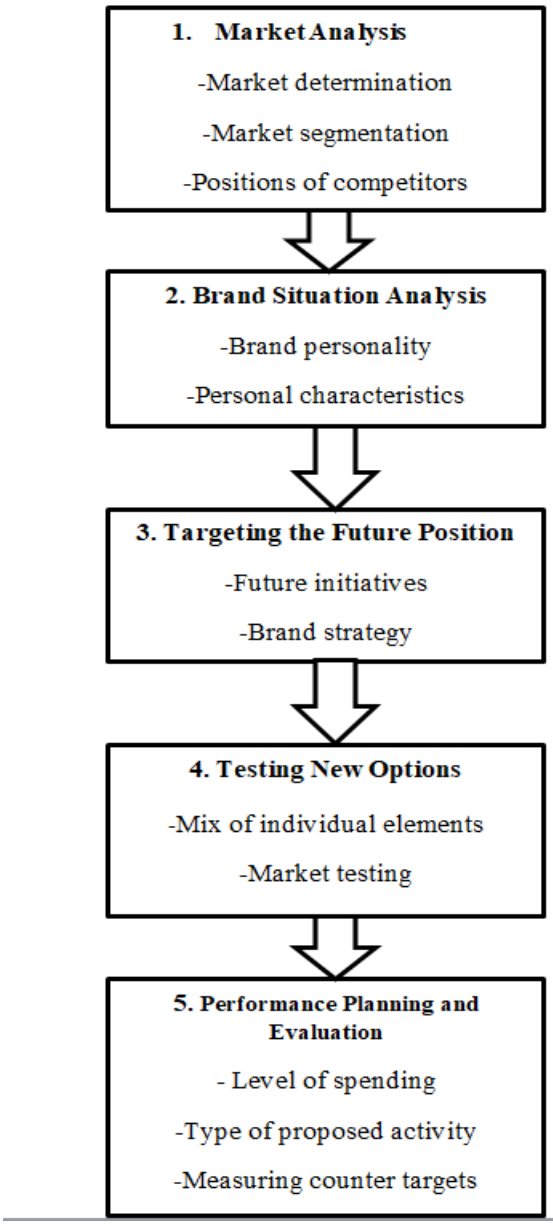
Brands are currently one of a company's most valuable assets. Strong brands enable companies to enter new markets more quickly and at a lower cost. It enables for the expansion of the product line. Because a well-known brand gives consumers confidence, it has a benefit in expanding the product line by guaranteeing that new items introduced under the same brand are readily accepted by customers. The brand name is the core of any story regarding product quality that is being told.

2.10 Brand Management Process

In today's conditions, well-managed brands are accepted by consumers as a sign of high quality, and companies gain market share thanks to effective brand management. The emergence of the brand management process begins with market analysis. After a detailed map of the market is revealed, the firm analyzes the situation of its competitors and itself. Companies should develop their activities in this direction by researching the tendencies of the consumers in the target audience. Then, considering the perception of the brand's personality traits in the market, it should be reviewed whether there are any changes that need to be made regarding the brand. After the analysis of the company and the brand, the strategies to be followed in the future should be determined, the options in front of the company should be evaluated and a pre-test should be done. In general, the way to pre-test is through advertisements. Then, taking into account how the market perceives the brand's personality attributes, it should be evaluated whether any adjustments to the brand are required. (Durmaz and Ertürk, 2016:91).

Due to the increasing focus on the customer in the management process of brands, customer satisfaction is prioritized and used as a measure for the operational success of all branding strategies. There are various ways to do this. Listening to customers and establishing relationships with customers are the priority ones (Özdaş, 2017).

Figure 2: Brand Management Process



(Durmaz & Ertürk, 2016:91)

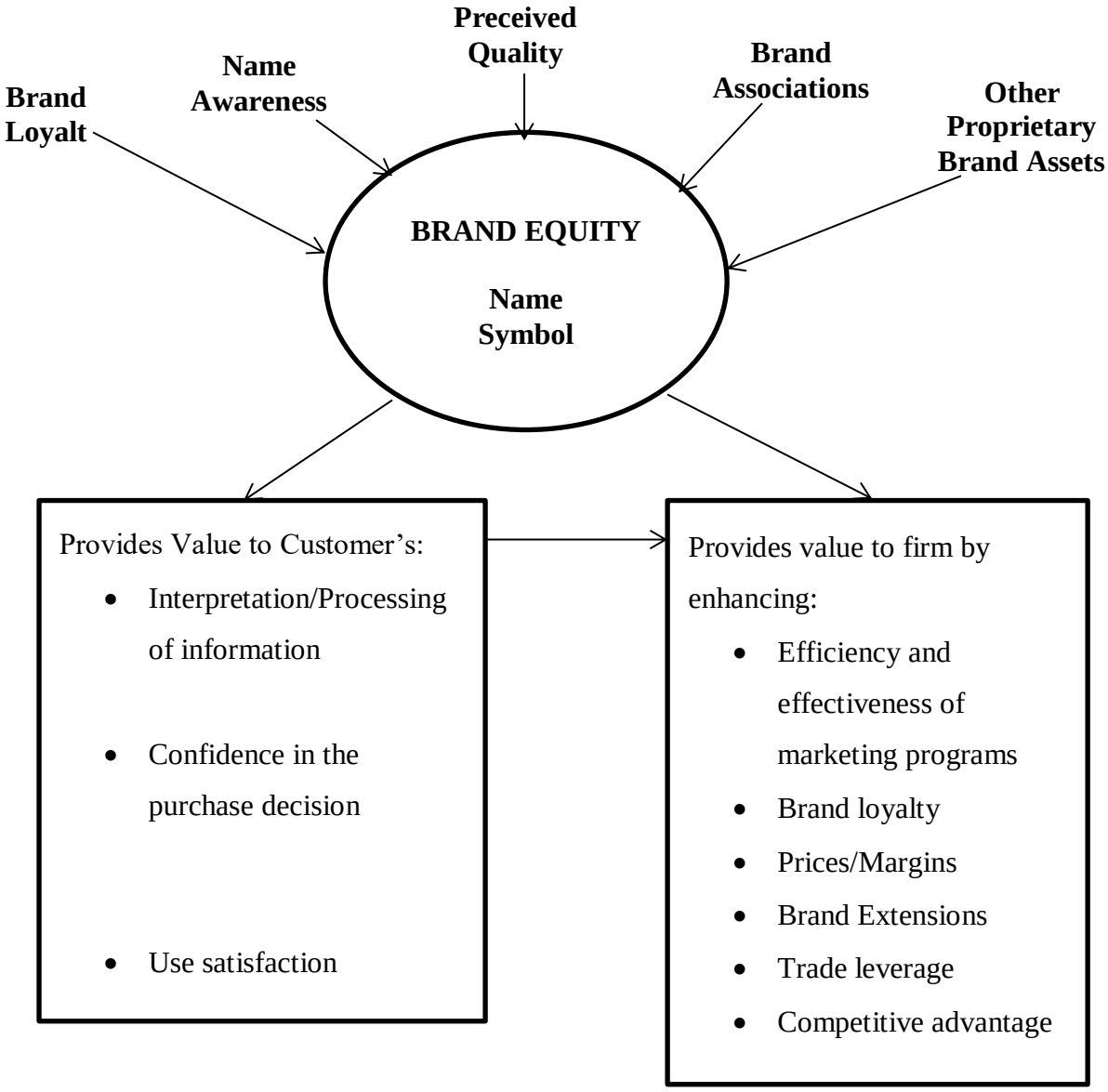
2.11 Brand Equity

In today's business world, brand equity has become a major topic where competition continues to increase rapidly, despite the fact that there are multiple new terms in literature connected to the latest technical advancements in the online community, there is one well-known term among marketers that has the ability to influence customers. In the 1980s, the concept of brand equity became popular among marketers (Barwise 1993).

The concept of brand equity has grown in importance throughout time, particularly in terms of comprehending the overall effects of marketing actions (Reynolds and Phillips, 2005). The concept of brand equity, which first emerged as a critical aspect of brand management in the 1990s, has grown in prominence (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995).

According to Aaker (1992), a brand's name and symbol are related to its equity. It is composed of brand awareness, image, loyalty, and perceived quality.

Figure 3: Brand equity elements



Source: Managing Brand Equity. David A.Aaker, 1991

According to Kotler and Keller (2012), brands are the best at creating pictures that allows consumers differentiate their specialization from others. Kamakura & Russell's (1993) state that brand equity is known as the value that is added to the product's brand name. The term "brand equity" was introduced in the 1980s. Successful brands are key to the success of companies according to business strategists across a wide range of industries, however, there has yet to be an agreement on the content and measurement of brand equity (Fayrene & Lee, 2011).

Furthermore, Shabbir & Rehman (2013) stated that brand equity is one of the most valuable immovable resources, as customers react differently to a branded item versus an unbranded item (Maher, 2014). Consumers' personal and emotional judgment of a brand is viewed as considerably more important than the brand's objective perceived worth (As' af, & Alhadid, 2014).

The concept of brand equity is typically approached from two perspectives: financial and customer. In this context, some studies approach the concept of brand equity from a financial perspective (e.g., Simon & Sullivan, 1993), while others approach it from a customer perspective (eg Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). However, it is clear that the customer-based brand equity method is the most popular and effective. When marketers, on the other hand, use the word "brand equity," they usually mean "consumer/customer perception," rather than "financial worth" (Wood, 2000).

Brand equity is expected to bring several advantages to a firm. For example, high levels of brand equity are known to lead to higher consumer preferences and purchase intentions (Cobb-Walgren, Ruble, and Donthu 1995). According to another definition, brand equity is the differences that arise in the consumer's choices between a branded product with the same product characteristics and an unbranded product (Yoo et al., 2000 ; Yoo & Donthu, 2001).

When it's hard to evaluate quality before to consumption, the role of the brand will be important in convincing customers to buy credence products. The importance of having a strong brand identity as a strategy for gaining new customers.

Almost all definitions of brand equity show that it includes consumer's preferences of a particular brand as well as added value in a product (Winters, 1991; Chaudhuri, 1995).

It has been known as one of the most crucial aspects of marketing management. Despite the popularity of the subject, there is little empirical evidence on how brand equity is built and what its impacts are. Brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty, and perceived quality are some of the dimensions of brand equity that will be examined in this study.

Table 5: Top 20 valuable brands of 2021

Placement	Name	Country	Value in USD
1	Apple	United States	263.375M
2	Amazon	United States	254.188M
3	Google	United States	191,215M
4	Microsoft	United States	140,435M
5	Samsung group	South Korea	102,623M
6	Walmart	United States	93,185M
7	Facebook	United States	81,476M
8	ICBC	China	72,788M
9	Verizon	United States	68,890M
10	We Chat	China	67,902M
11	China Construction Bank	China	59,649M
12	Toyota	Japan	59,479M
13	Mercedes-Benz	Germany	58,225M

14	Tencent	China	56,432M
15	Huawei	China	55,396M
16	State Grid	China	55,203M
17	Ping An	China	54,579M
18	Taobao	China	53,335M
19	Agricultural Bank Of China	China	53,134M
20	Home Depot	United States	52,917M

Source: Brand Finance Global 500, https://brandirectory.com/rankings/global/table

2.12 The Importance and Benefits of Brand Equity

Brand equity offers advantages such as distinguishing messages without causing confusion, increasing the sense of trust in purchasing decisions and maximizing customer satisfaction (Keegan, Moriarty, Duncan, 1995). it is trying to find a way to shorten the decision-making process of consumers who are exposed many unfamiliar brands.

2.13 Customer-Based Brand equity

Since the 1980s, there has been no significant increase in brand equity. This is because the brand is seen as a key aspect in determining the efficiency of a company in a highly competitive environment. The brand is well-known for providing several positive benefits in addition to its value. The characteristics of high-level brand equity, it is claimed, produce high-level target audience desire and purchase motivation (CobbWalgren et al., 1995). Christodoulides and Chernatony (2009) defined customer-based brand equity as a set of perceptions, attitudes, knowledge, and behavior of consumers that yield beneficial results by enabling them to generate as much volume or more profit as possible. Keller (1993) examined customer-based brand equity from a

purely consumer psychology perspective and defined it as "different effects of brand awareness on the response of the brand to its marketing to the customer". Erdem and Swait (1998) defined customer-based brand equity as the most outstanding value of a brand to consumers.

In 1991, a well-equipped team at the Marketing Science Institute identified two separate parts of the brand and the product, describing them as perceptions and attitudes that provide a bigger portion of this concept than the sales rate and profit level provided without the brand name (Jourdan, 2002). There is no reliable explanation for brand equity, according to Park and Srinivasan (1994). When compared to the attribute dimension, which is considered in the objective context, several characteristics connected to brand selection are most commonly chosen. To highlight brand equity, Simon and Sullivian (1993) proposed the idea of growing utility.

Customer-based brand equity, according to Punj and Hillyer (2004), is defined as a set of brand-related associations kept in memory by the consumer. In this context, brand equity is essentially attitudinal, consisting of beliefs, affect, and other subjective experiences associated to the brand, such as brand brand awareness and brand image. Customer-based brand equity structures measure consumer awareness, attitudes, associations, attachments, and loyalty to a certain brand (Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

According to Lassar et al. (1995), brand equity is the desire to improve perceived benefit and the brand name to be suitable with the product concerned. The brand is explained in five key elements as the target audience's perception of the brand's superior

• Brand equity reflects all values that are consistent with the brand.

• Brand equity focuses on the perception of the target audience related to a possible objective indication.

• All of the brand's values are acquired not only physically, but also as a result of the brand name.

• Although not certain, brand equity is known to be competitive.

• The value of a company's brand has a beneficial impact on its investment potential.

As a result, determining brand equity can be done by evaluating the intention to buy or preferences for the focal brand over the counterpart by comparing two items that are otherwise identical but for the name.

Figure 4: Aaker (1996) Brand Equity Model

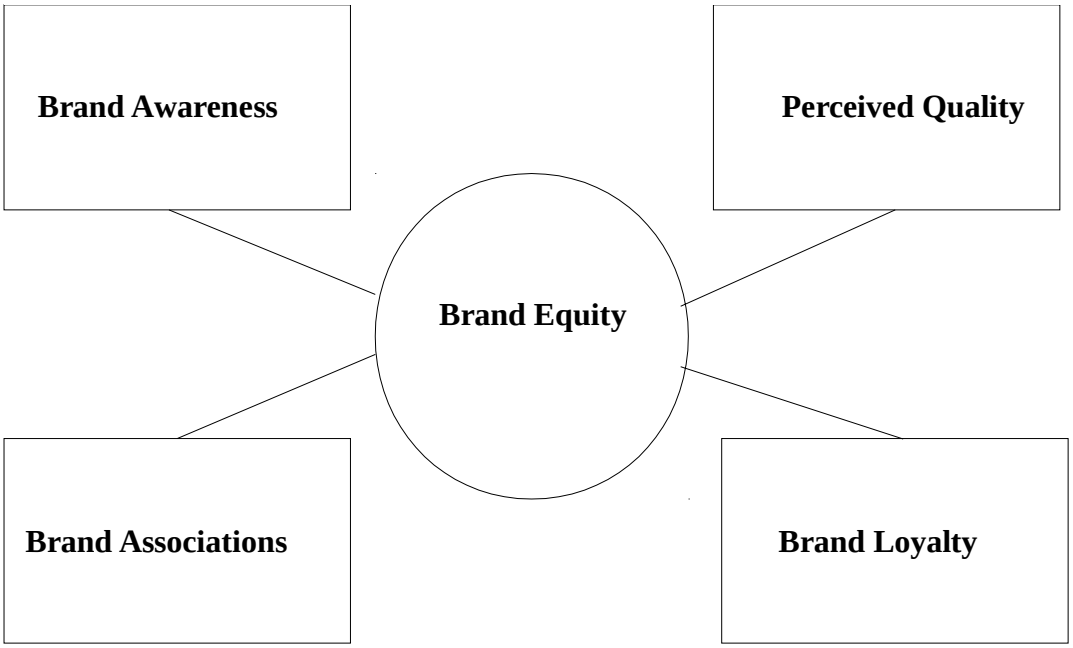
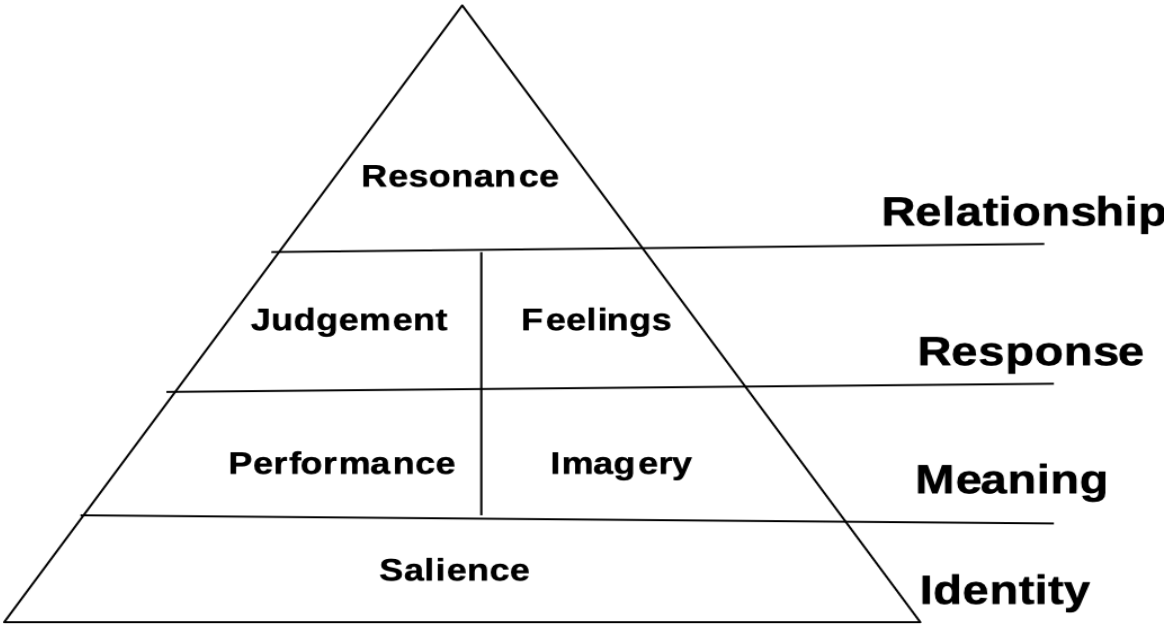


Figure 5: Keller's Brand Equity Model



2.3.1. Aaker's Consumer-Based Brand Equity Model:

Aaker (1991) defines general brand equity as the whole of all resources associated with the features that increase the price of products and services provided to the target audience, similar to a symbol, and differentiating the product from competing products. Brand equity, in Aaker's opinion, is created by association, awareness, quality, and loyalty to the brand. The target audience understands the significance of the brand equity criterion, as studied by Aaker (1991). (Yoo et al., 2000).Aaker's view is conveyed at this point, as these concepts will be constantly explained in detail.

According to Aaker (1991), brand equity is determined using a ten-item model that is applied at five different levels:

Brand loyalty level: minimizing advertising costs, commercial supremacy, reaching various target audiences, being recognized, safety, avoiding risks posed by competitors, etc. Gaining advantages in specific areas creates brand equity.

Brand awareness level: It creates awareness easily through the impressions of the target audience about the product, the attention of the target audience to the brand offered, and the formation of loyalty, and whether purchasing will be done in this direction on behalf of the target audience.

Perceived Quality Level: The reason for purchasing the product, variability, price, and channel element create value by increasing the size of the brand, giving the target audience a reason to purchase, positioning them in the target audience's minds, highlighting the aspects that differentiate them from other brands at the same time, and offering a price difference.

Brand associations Level: It is used to promote data recall, differentiation, and location, as well as the purpose for purchase, evoking positive feelings and perceptions, and allowing the target audience to buy the product.

Other Brand Assets level: The variables that build to brand equity include patents, commercial products, and interactions (Gill and Dawra, 2010). Another thing to think about is whether or not the brand dimensions are mutually compatible within the scope

of the methodology. In conclusion, every dimension that contributes to brand equity might have an impact on another dimension (Aaker, 1991).

In a study he did, Cob-Walgren et al. (1995) looked at the reflected level of brand equity across the target audience. In this direction, the quality associated with brand awareness, awareness and association, which is one of the dimensions of Aaker (1991)'s brand equity, is taken into consideration. Brand equity is a determinant in people's desire, behavior, and consciousness, according to the findings of this study, which looked at whether there is an effect on brand equity in terms of awareness, desire, and behavior.

2.14 Brand equity dimensions:

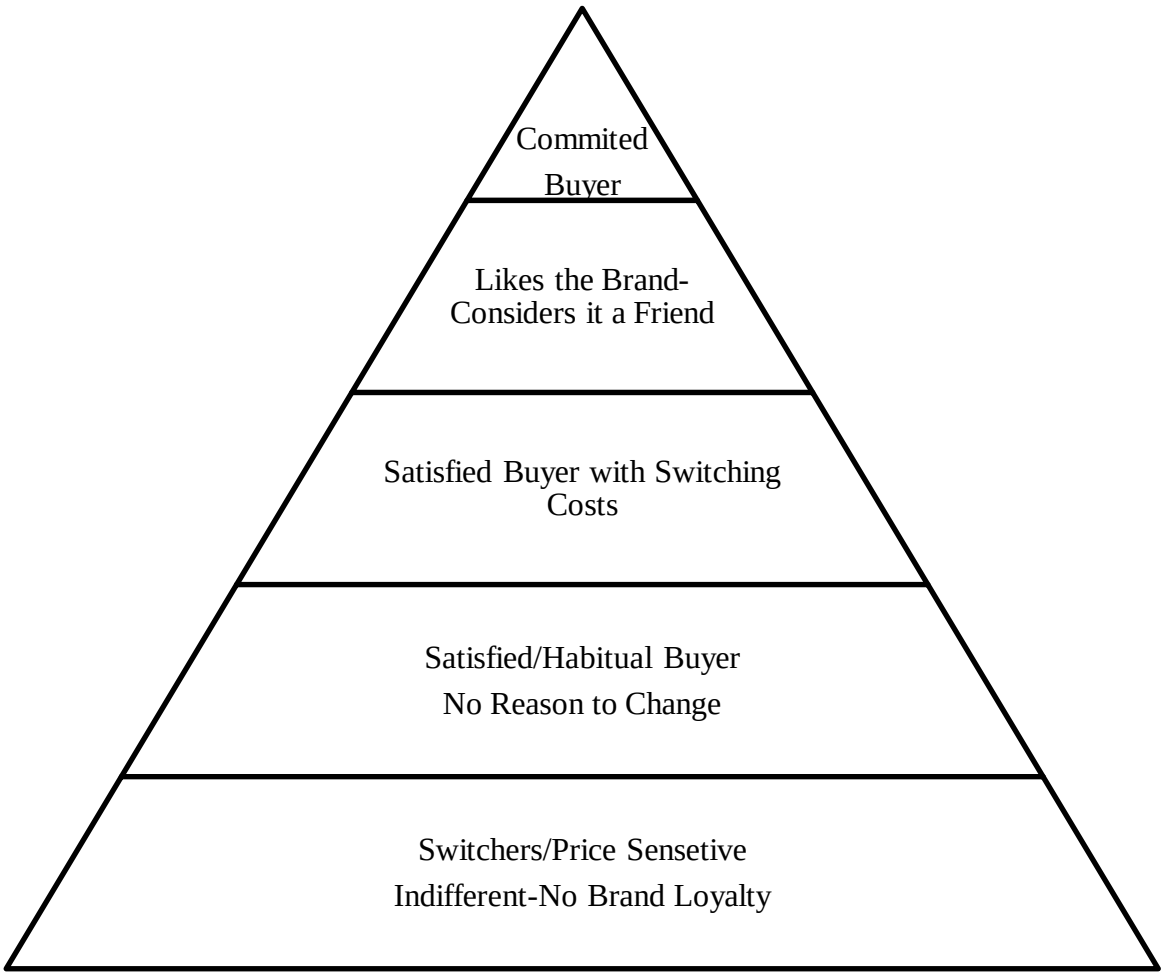
Various ways can be seen in the context of the elements that constitute brand equity, as described in the previous section. It may be claimed that Aaker's (1991) method is one of the main approaches in the literature when it comes to the conceptualization of brand equity.

According to Aaker's (1991) brand equity approach, brand equity will be measured on four dimensions: brand awareness, brand associations, brand loyalty, and perceived quality. Separate subheadings will be used to discuss relevant dimensions.

2.14.1 Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is an important factor in determining brand equity. y. (Aaker, 1991) defines brand loyalty as: "A condition that reflects how likely a consumer will be to switch to another brand, especially when that brand makes a change, either in pricing or in product features". Customers may choose alternative brands regardless their awareness of a brand, positive brand associations, or perceived quality. In this perspective, a brand's loyal customer base can function as the center of brand equity (Aaker, 1991). A different element of brand loyalty can be found when looking at the dimensions that make up the brand value. While brand purchase and use are not required for the establishment of brand awareness, brand associations, or perceived quality, brand purchase and usage are essential for the formation of brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991).

Figure 6: The Loyalty Pyramid



Source: Aaker, D. A. (1991).

According to Aktulu (2011), brand loyalty is a significant dimension for brand equity, lowering promotional expenditures for the company, competitive advantage, coverage of various target audiences, brand recognition at the level of awareness, and so on. It is considered as a power against the situations in the figure (Doğru et al., 2016).

Behavioral commitment is linked to consumer behavior, which can be demonstrated by the number of repeat purchases (Keller 1998). When the need to make a purchasing decision arises, Cognitive loyalty is the first choice of consumers when a brand comes first in the mind, cognitive loyalty is closely related to the highest level of awareness in a particular category that consumers remember first, and the subject of interest is the brand. Thus, a brand can become customer first choices (Keller 1998).

When a consumer remains loyal, the techniques used by competitors to gain new customers have no effect on them (Tong &Hawley 2009). Brand loyalty, unlike the other dimensions of brand equity, stems from actual purchases and usage of the product or brand (Baldauf et al. 2003). It's also important to keep in mind that brand loyalty is determined by how consumers engage with the firm (Palmatier et al. 2007). This connection might take the shape of social media brand communication made by a company or social media brand communication generated by users.

In the name of brand loyalty, Taylor et al. (2004) prioritizes two elements: attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty. Considering that these elements relate to loyalty, frugal loyalty, which stems from a positive relationship or promise and connects the target audience's preferences to opportunity, reflects the person's entire perspective on the brand. The target audience's continuous shopping behavior is shown in behavioral commitment.

As a result, brand loyalty is always recognized by successful and motivated customers into a brand, resulting in consistent product and service purchases over time (Urde, 1994). However, the customer's direct and indirect evaluation and judgment of a specific brand based on numerous sources, such as personal experiential education and word of mouth, can affect brand loyalty (Keller, 1993; Delgado-Ballaster and Munuera Aleman, 2005).

2.14.2 Brand Awareness

Another highly essential dimension for brand equity is brand awareness. Among the dimensions that make up the brand equity, it can be said that brand awareness is the leading dimension in the context of creating brand equity. In order to create associations about a brand, to have loyalty to the brand and to realize various quality perceptions about the brand, it is necessary to be aware of the brand first.

Brand awareness is an essential component of brand equity since it refers to the strength of a brand's position in the minds of consumers (Aaker, 1991). In today's market conditions, as a result of the increasing number of brands in many product categories, it is difficult for consumers to distinguish brands and especially to be aware of new brands

entering the market. Therefore, maximizing brand awareness is critical in creating brand equity.

According to Aaker (1996), brand awareness plays a significant role in branding research and it is an important but often overlooked aspect of brand equity. It is basically related to consumers' brand recall and brand recognition performance (Keller, 1993). Aaker (1991), on the other hand, associates brand awareness with a potential buyer's ability to recognize and remember the brand in relation to a particular product category. In this context, two important elements of brand awareness are brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition is the first step in creating brand awareness. Brand recognition is related to whether the consumer recognizes the brand as a result of giving the brand itself as a clue (Keller, 1993). For example, the fact that the consumer knows which brand the relevant logo belongs to as soon as he sees the brand's logo shows that brand recognition has taken place. On the other hand, brand recall is related to the consumer's ability to remember the brand as a result of various clues such as the product category, the use of the brand, and the need the brand meets. For example, when asked about a comfortable vehicle brand, it can be said that brand recall occurs for brands that the consumer remembers. In this context, it can be seen that in order for the brand to be remembered, first of all, brand recognition must be provided.

Brand awareness is a powerful tool for influencing consumer purchasing decisions, especially when it comes to establishing three advantages: learning, choice, and consideration (Keller, 2003; Atilgan, Aksoy & Akinci, 2005). As a result, Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000, p. 17) and Baldauf et al. (2003) argue that, based on the extent of familiarity with the products and services offered, brand awareness influences consumers' preference, perceptions, and purchasing.

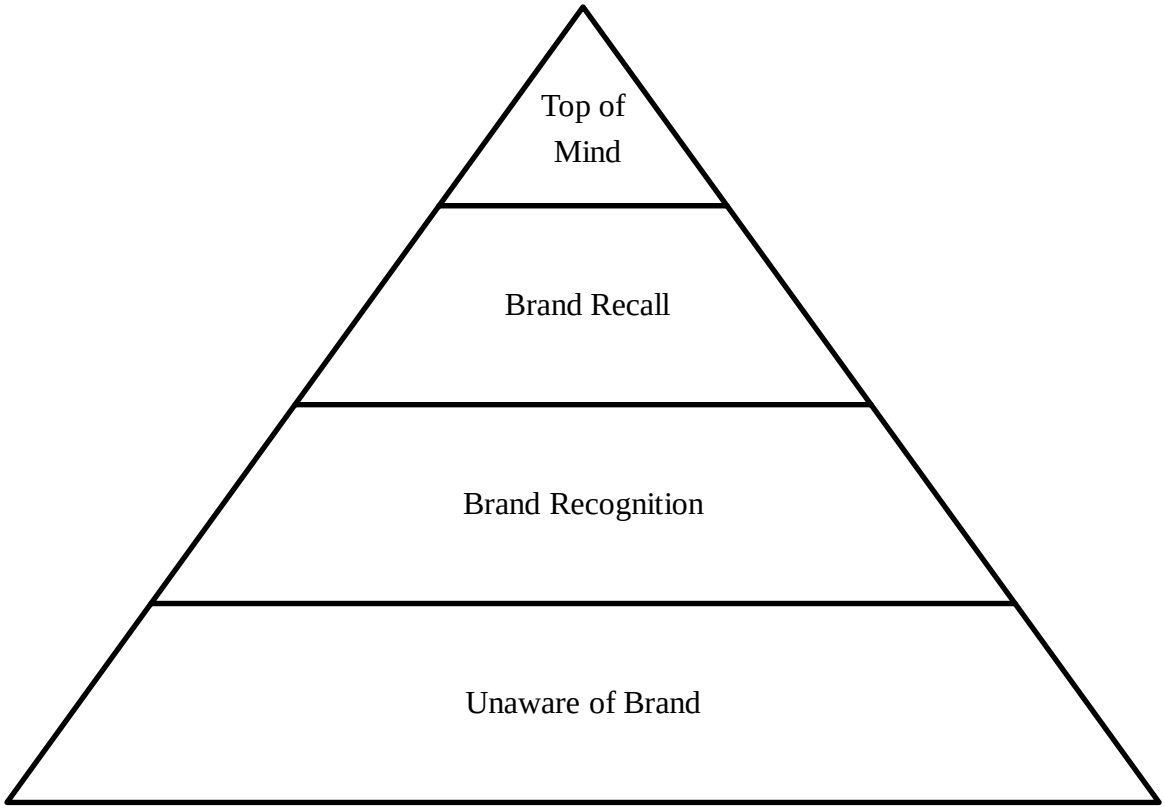
When people are exposed to a brand, they become aware of it. As a result, Keller (1998) describes brand awareness as a phenomenon resulting from continued visibility, strong associations with the appropriate product classification, purchasing experiences, and increased familiarity.

A strong brand profits from a high degree of customer brand awareness, according to Vrontis and Papasolomou (2007). As a result, Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000, p. 17) and

Baldauf et al. (2003) argue that, based on the degree of familiarity with the products and services provided, brand awareness affects consumers' preferences, perceptions, and purchasing.

Consumers are presented to a wide range of items from many brands; as a result, the brands that consumers are more familiar with are usually prioritized in the pecking order. The most popular brands are those that are easily recognizable, categorizeable, and finally purchased (Baldauf et al. 2003).

Figure 7: The Awareness Pyramid



Source: Aaker, D. A. (1991

2.14.3 Perceived Quality

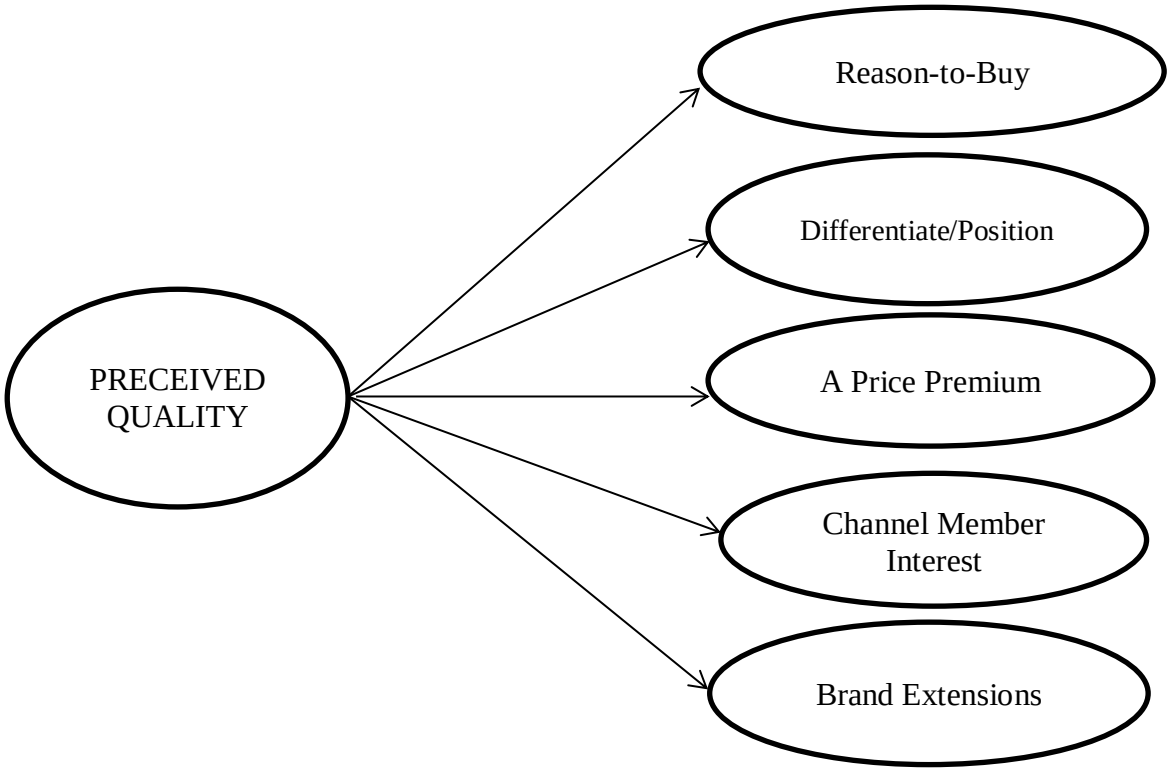
Another essential aspect of brand equity is perceived quality (Aaker, 1991). "Perceived quality is the consumer's subjective judgment of the product, not the product's true quality" (Zeithaml, 1988). It is essential to consider its significance in order to get a competitive advantage. Customers' perceptions of a brand's quality are referred to as perceived quality. The term "quality" can be applied to both real and abstract notions, quality, on the other hand, is described as universal superiority or excellence (Zeithaml,

1988). There is an element of quality on the foundation of a successful brand (Farquhar, 1989). While product/service or brand quality is critical, perceived quality is just as important for brands. For example, even if the material and workmanship quality of a given product of one brand is superior to that of another, the second brand's perceived quality may be superior. This ensures that the second brand is qualified as higher quality in the eyes of the customer. This dimension is linked with price premiums, brand usage, stock return and price elasticity (Aaker 1996). Perceived quality can be described as a customer's overall impression of a product's or service's competitive performance when compared to competing offers (Aaker, 1991). To put it another way, perceived quality is the acknowledgement of a product's potential to bring consumer satisfaction in comparison to other competing alternatives.

Because it is compatible with brand preference and product acquisition choice, Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993) believe quality to be the most important element of target audience-oriented brand equity. There is a development phase that remains the same and increases the potential in order to satisfy the demands and expectations of the target segment (Tariq et al., 2013).

According to Kirmani and Rao (2000), the elements that do not create clarity in the minds of the target audience come into focus in combination with the quality level of the products offered by the companies. This problem presents itself as an imbalance in the data collected. Brands have access to far more data than the target audience. The customers form an opinion based on the information provided by the sellers. As a result, the seller's expected view is also the type of data that must be presented to the target audience. At this point, the brand name, product design, promotion, and other factors are used as measurement instruments to determine the quality that is not visible. These characteristics contribute to the creation of quality, which is viewed favorably by the target audience.

Figure 8: The Value of Perceived Quality



Source: Aaker, D. A. (1991).

2.14.4 Brand Associations

Another dimension that creates brand equity is brand associations. Brand association is explained as "everything related in memory to a brand" and a representations of what a brand represents to a consumer (Aaker, 1991). According to him, a brand association has a strength level, and the link to a brand (from the association) is stronger when it is built on multiple experiences or exposures to communications, as well as when it is supported by a network of other ties. Brand associations may represent product characteristics.

Furthermore, according to Aaker (1991), brand associations can bring value to customers by giving them a motive to buy the brand and by creating favorable attitudes and feelings in them.

Chen (2001) categorized brand associations in two ways, product associations and organizational associations. According to Hamann et al. (2007), customers are generally prepared to pay more for branded products because of their emotional attachment to well-known brands. Independent of the product, brand associations may

indicate product attributes and other factors (Chen 2001). Brand associations are categorized in costumer products as product-related features such as brand performance and non-product-related features such as brand personality, user profile, and country of origin (Aaker 1991; Keller 2003; Netemeyer et al. 2004).

Keller's (1993) models present brand image as associations seen by consumers and categorize them into three sorts or levels of abstraction. 1) product-related qualities and non-product-related attributes, 2) benefits, and 3) attitudes.

Brand associations, according to Levy (2009), are elements of a brand's image that are not physical, real, or concrete attributes and benefits. This concept encompasses a wide range of brand associations, including the consumer's real and aspirational imagination, purchase and consumption imagination, and even history, heritage, and experience (Keller, 2001).

According to James (2005), the higher the level of brand association, the higher the brand equity. Additionally, if consumers have a higher level of brand association, brand loyalty might be increased (Yoo, Donthu & Lee, 2000).

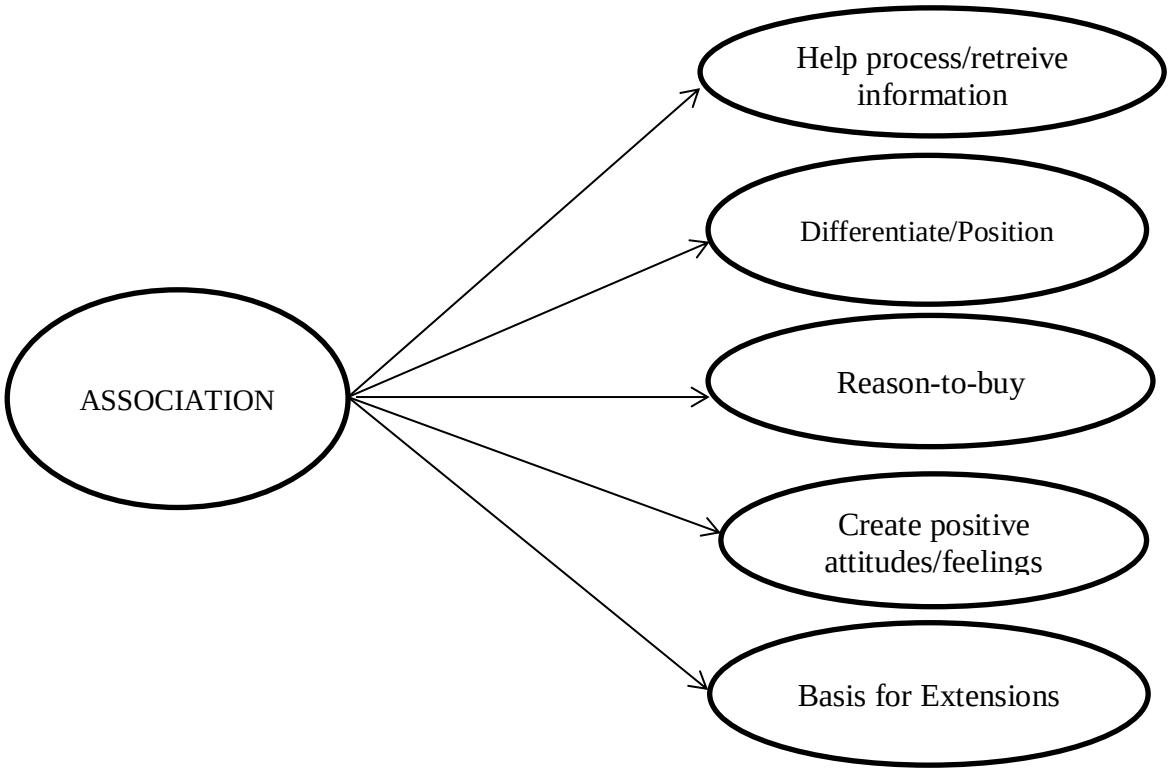
For positioning, brand associations are especially important. Brands can differentiate and position themselves differently in this setting by forming distinct associations of items with similar features. This has a favorable impact on overall brand value. Brand associations, according to Park and Srinivasan (1994: 274), contribute to brand equity in two ways: (1) The feature-based component of brand equity, which is based on product features; (2) the non-feature-based component of brand equity, which is based on the brand's general preference status, which is independent of product characteristics.

According to Park & Kim (2014), the dynamism generated inside the community creates value for the brand in the mind of the customer, and this perceived association leads to customer loyalty. Customers' impressions of a brand are reflected in the brand associations preserved in memory, according to most experts (Jamal & Goode, 2001). These associations can be from intelligence gathered from market offerings or directly from customers' purchasing experiences with the brand. Customers' feelings, attitudes, and perceptions about the brand play a big role in their purchasing decisions (Hollenbaugh & Ferris, 2014). Normann (1991) claimed that brand association, in

combination with the effects of advertising, word-of-mouth, and consumers' experiences with the products and services, can influence customers' purchasing decisions (Kim & Ko, 2010). A positive brand association can assist the company enhance competition while also encouraging consumers to buy from them again (Porter, 1997).

Businesses try to better manage their perceptions by positioning them better in the consciousness of consumers. Thanks to brand associations, it aims to develop attitudes and direct purchasing behavior by creating positive images in the minds of consumers**.**

Figure 9: The Value of Brand Associations



Source: Aaker, D. A. (1991).

2.15 Hypothesis development process

2.15.1 Relationship between Social Media Marketing and Brand Equity

In generally, interaction activities will aid in building brand trust and removing confusion while making a purchase (Khadim et al., 2018). Firms can use entertainment to produce feelings of pleasure in their clients, which would encourage them to keep following up with the brands (Kang, 2005). Firms can use customization to promote individuality and personalization, which will increase brand trust and user familiarity. This unique marketing action allows organizations to approach their target customers, resulting in increased trust and purchase intent (Martin & Todorov, 2010). Information

about firms, customer reviews and suggestions, upcoming trends, and other factors that contribute to customer trust and brand awareness are examples of trendiness (Godey et al., 2016). From the viewpoint of customers, e-wom can be characterized as the act of spreading information about a certain product or brand to other users on digital networks (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2013).

According to Agozzino's (2012) research, social media marketing activities have a major impact on sustaining awareness of the brand, repute, online traffic, and search rankings. As a result, it's crucial to consider whether social media marketing activities can enhance a company's brand in terms of monetary worth. We must also comprehend the aspects that influence consumer brand equity for a specific brand (Aaker, 2001). Therefore, the following hypothesis has been developed.

H1: Social media marketing dimensions have an effect on brand awareness

Developing a favorable brand connection is impossible without first building trust in consumers' minds about online brands (Rios & Riquelme, 2008). According to Khajuria & Rachna (2017)'s research, social media marketing activities can have a huge effect on brand associations. The reason for this is that users of social media platforms can view posts about the brand. This encounter can occur as a result of a company advertisement, a user's friend's "Likes," or comments on a brand's post. As a result, social media users will learn more about the brand, and the company's brand association will improve as customers discover more about the brand on social media (Khajuria & Rachna 2017). Based on these results, the following hypothesis was proposed.

H2: Social media marketing dimensions have an effect on brand associations

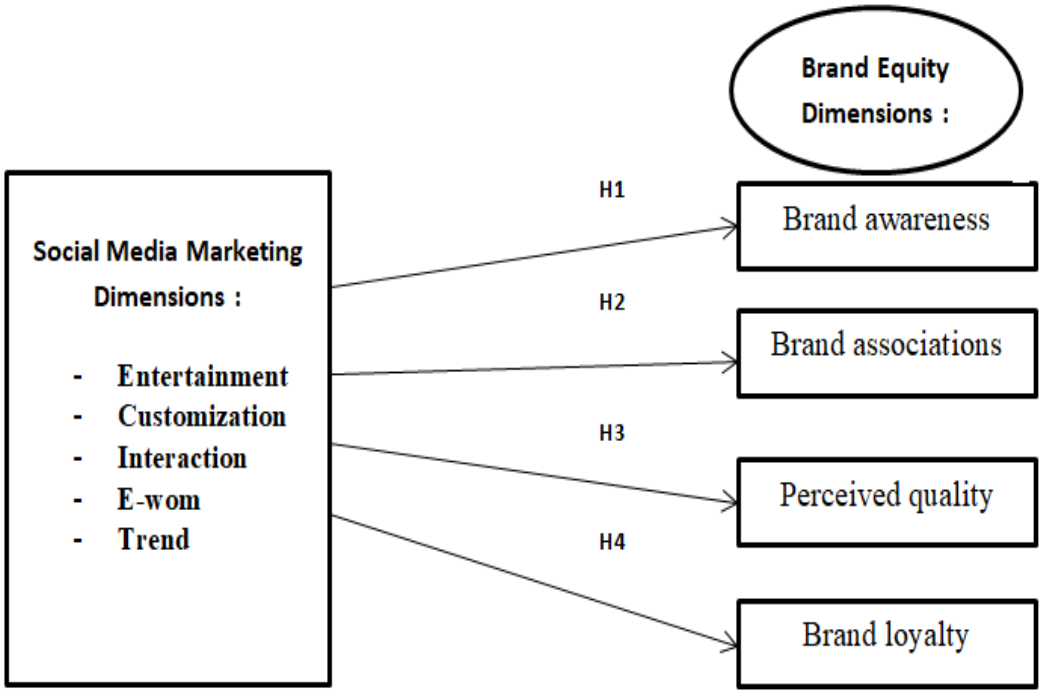
The study by Indrawati (2020) revealed that company-created social media communication and user-generated social media communication have a significant impact on perceived quality. Thus, by focusing more on social media communication, a company will not only increase awareness of its products and services, but will also be able to improvise on quality using feedback from customers and increase the level of perceived quality (Indrawati, 2020). This result can be interpreted as social media shares will have an impact on consumers' perceived quality levels for the brand. In this context, the following hypothesis has been developed.

H3: Social media marketing dimensions have an effect on perceived of brand quality

Marketers have used a variety of ways to maintain consumer brand loyalty, including social media marketing (Keller, 2008). Social media marketing affects brand loyalty, and this concept is receiving increasing attention by academics and marketing practitioners (Zarella, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). Consumers who like and follow companies' social media posts can be loyal customers of the brand. Therefore, the following hypothesis has been developed.

H4: Social media marketing dimensions have an effect on brand loyalty

2.3.2. Study Model:



CHAPTER 3

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Research Design is defined as "procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Overall, it acts as a link between conceptual research problems and empirical research by laying out the strategy for obtaining the required data sets, as well as the appropriate methodologies for processing the phases of data collection and analysis, and how to respond to the research questions (Grey, 2014).

3.2 Population

Cooper & Schindler (2006) define target population as the entire group of individuals which researchers are interested in generalizing the conclusions. Therefore, the target population of this study consisted of all Moroccan customers who are active in social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat and Twitter.

3.3 Sampling

Sampling method is of critical importance to help answer the research questions. Generally, the two specific types of sampling techniques are probability and non-probability and for the scope and purpose of this study, probability sampling is applied. Probability sampling can ensure that every participant in the population has an equal chance of being selected. The sample of this study consisted of all Moroccan customers who are active in social media channels and follow brand's social media accounts. Simple random sampling method was used in the selection of the participants. The sample size for the online survey questionnaire was 250 including male and female from every age group.

3.4 Pilot Study

The questionnaire was pilot-tested before being distributed to the participants. This way, it could be ensured that respondents would have no difficulty understanding the questions or conducting the survey. Fifteen pilot participants were requested to complete a pilot questionnaire in order to provide feedback and give their perspectives.

The pilot participants were politely asked to complete the questionnaire and pay close attention to the questions and their meanings, as well as the ease with which they could respond. All fifteen responses were very useful in improving the questionnaire's final version.

3.5 Data collection process

Primary data was collected using an online questionnaire created with Google Form and distributed via social media. The participants were asked to rate the importance of each criterion in the scales (1 lowest, 5 highest). Data were collected from online surveys between 01-20 October 2021. A total of 250 online questionnaires out of 300 distributed questionnaires were used for analysis.

3.6 Questionnaire design

Online questionnaire contains three different sections of questions, the first section named social media marketing scale items and the second section named brand equity scale items, while the last section named demographic questions. Variables in the section 1 evaluating five social media marketing dimensions (entertainment, customization, interaction, word of mouth and trendiness) with 19 questions adopted from Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, & Gremler, (2002) and Ju & Chung, (2002). In the second section Yoo & Donthu's (2001), Lassar et al. (1995) and Pappu et al. (2005) scales are used for measuring brand equity dimensions, including brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness, and brand association using 12 questions. The last section is about demographic characteristics with 4 questions asking for gender, age bracket, marital status and education level.

CHAPTER 4

4 RESULTS

4.1 Statistical Data Analysis

In this study, SPSS 22 and AMOS Packages Program are used for Statistical Analysis. Socio Demographic Features is examined about Participants as Descriptive Statistics. Because it is the validation of each scale, it was carried out only confirmatory factor analysis and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Scale Validation and Reliability. After Validation, Reliability results and Correlation Analysis, Hypotheses are tested with Regression Analysis. Results are evaluated in %95, %99 Confidence Interval and $p<0,05$, $p<0,01$ significance levels.

Hypotheses:

H_1: Social media marketing dimensions (entertainment, customization, interaction, e-wom and trend) have an effect on brand awareness

H_{1a}: Entertainment has an effect on brand awareness

H_{1b}: Customization Avoidance has an effect on brand awareness

H_{1c}: Interaction has an effect on brand awareness

H_{1d}: E-wom has an effect on brand awareness

H_{1e}: Trend has an effect on brand awareness

H_2: Social media marketing dimensions (entertainment, customization, interaction, e-wom and trend) have an effect on brand associations

H_{2a}: Entertainment has an effect on brand associations

H_{2b}: Customization Avoidance has an effect on brand associations

H_{2c}: Interaction has an effect on brand associations

H_{2d}: E-wom has an effect on brand associations

H_{2e}: Trend has an effect on brand associations

H_3: Social media marketing dimensions (entertainment, customization, interaction, e-wom and trend) have an effect on perceived of brand quality

H_{3a}: Entertainment has an effect on perceived of brand quality

H_{3b}: Customization Avoidance has an effect on perceived of brand quality

H_{3c}: Interaction has an effect on perceived of brand quality

H_{3d}: E-wom has an effect on perceived of brand quality

H_{3e}: Trend has an effect on perceived of brand quality

H_4: Social media marketing dimensions (entertainment, customization, interaction, e-wom and trend) have an effect on brand loyalty

H_{4a}: Entertainment has an effect on brand loyalty

H_{4b}: Customization Avoidance has an effect on brand loyalty

H_{4c}: Interaction has an effect on brand loyalty

H_{4d}: E-wom has an effect on brand loyalty

H_{4e}: Trend has an effect on brand loyalty

4.1. Frequency Analysis and Descriptive Statistics on Socio Demographic Features

Socio-demographic data is comprised of five questions about gender, age, marital, education level and brand for participants in table 6. Gender of participants are 52,40% female, 47,60% male. Age of participants are 40,00% under 20, 46,40% 21-30, 9,60% 31-40, 3,60% 41-50 and 0,40% 51 above. Marital status of participants are 4,40% divorced, 32,40% married, 62,00% single and 1,20% widowed . Education level of participants are 52,00% high school, 38,00% undergraduate, 8,40% graduate(master's), 1,60% graduate(PhD/doctoral). First five brand of Participants are 20,00% Gucci, 18,00% H&M, 17,60% Louis Vuitton, 12,80% Nike and 10,00% Zara respectively.

Table 6: Frequency Analysis about Socio Demographic Features of Participants

Variables		**Frequency (N=250)**	**Percent (%)**
Gender	Female	131	52,40
	Male	119	47,60
Age	21 – 30	116	46,40
	31 – 40	24	9,60
	41 – 50	9	3,60
	51 above	1	0,40
	Under 20	100	40,00
Marital Status	Divorced	11	4,40
	Married	81	32,40
	Single	155	62,00
	Widowed	3	1,20
Education Level	Graduate (Master's)	21	8,40
	Graduate (PhD/Doctoral)	4	1,60
	Undergraduate	95	38,00
	High school	130	52,00
Brand	Adidas	10	4,00
	Asel fashion	1	0,40
	Bang	1	0,40
	Decathlon	1	0,40
	Defacto	7	2,80
	Gucci	50	20,00
	Guccu	1	0,40
	H&M	45	18,00
	IPhone	1	0,40
	Kiabi	13	5,20
	La roche posay	1	0,40
	LC Wakiki	3	1,20
	Lenovo	1	0,40
	Louis voit1ton	1	0,40

	Louis Vuitton	44	17,60
	Mango	1	0,40
	Nike	32	12,80
	Puma	2	0,80
	Razana	1	0,40
	Samsung	1	0,40
	Shein	1	0,40
	Vans	4	1,60
	Yves Rocher	1	0,40
	Zara	2	0,80
	Zara	25	10,00

4.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) tests hypotheses among relationships, and that aims confirmation of relationships. In this process, CFA examines relationships of factors among itself, before which was created with relations, therefore firstly researcher must be knowledge about structure of variables in model. So that the model provides strong structure as basis of theoretical and experimental (Çokluk et al.). In CFA, latent variables can be exogenous or endogenous. While exogenous variables are not effected by other latent variables, Endogenous variables are effected by other latent variables. In this meantime, Exogenous variables describe as independent variables, Endogenous variables describe as dependent variables (Jöreskog ve Sörbom, 1996; Brown, 2015).

Reliability, that is described stability of the measuring tool under the same conditional reproduced measurements to obtain values. An unreliable scale is useless and Scale reliability is evaluated with Alpha (Cronbach) Coefficient to developed by Cronbach(1951). Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient provides a measure of the internal consistency of a test or scale that is expressed as a number between 0 and 1 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

If Correlation is negative among questions, Alpha Coefficient to calculate with Alpha method is negative. Because this coefficient is negative, model of reliable is degenerate.

In the other words, it is described to degenerate of additive of used scale (Kalaycı, 2006).

According to Alpha Coefficients, Scale reliability interpretation show in below.

- $0.00 \leq \alpha < 0.40$; The scale is unreliable.
- $0.40 \leq \alpha < 0.60$; The scale is low reliable.
- $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$; The scale is pretty good reliable.
- $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$; The scale is high reliable (Kalaycı, 2006)..

Validity and reliability values of Social Media Marketing Scale are examined into Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for Dataset of participants in Table 7. Social media marketing Scale's standardized Beta is found as (0,19-0,46). On the other hand, Entertainment, Customization, Interaction, E-wom and Trend are statistically significance (p<0,01). Also Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients are pretty good reliability for sub dimensions as 0,616*(Entertainment),* 0,751*(Customization),* 0761*(Interaction),* 0,766*(e-wom)* and 0,665*(Trend)* respectively.

Table 7: Confirmatory Factor Analysis about Social Media Marketing Scale

Sub Dimension	**Items**	**Beta**	**Standardized Beta**	**Standard Error**	**t**	**p**	**R^2**	**Cronbach's Alpha**
Entertainment	E1	1	0,415				0,172	0,616
	E2	0,992	0,419	0,217	4,574	0,000**	0,175	
	E3	0,68	0,301	0,185	3,675	0,000**	0,091	
	E4	1,224	0,422	0,266	4,596	0,000**	0,178	
Customization	C1	1	0,575				0,331	0,751
	C2	0,689	0,351	0,146	4,701	0,000**	0,123	
	C3	0,97	0,545	0,145	6,704	0,000**	0,297	
	C4	0,87	0,443	0,152	5,718	0,000**	0,196	
	C5	0,668	0,32	0,154	4,33	0,000**	0,102	
Interaction	I1	1	0,283				0,08	0,761
	I2	1,571	0,433	0,413	3,803	0,000**	0,188	
	I3	1,633	0,457	0,422	3,868	0,000**	0,208	
	I4	1,467	0,463	0,377	3,886	0,000**	0,215	
E-wom	W1	1	0,365				0,134	0,766
	W2	1,515	0,522	0,36	4,211	0,000**	0,273	

	W3	1,334	0,526	0,316	4,22	0,000**	0,276	
Trend	T1	1	0,472				0,222	0,665
	T2	0,412	0,191	0,146	2,829	0,005**	0,036	
**p<0,01;*p<0,05								

Social media marketing scale about CFA Model Fit Indexes are examined in Table 8. In CFA model, while *GFI(0,00), CFI(0,845), NNFI(0,810), NFI(0,706),* is not acceptable fit, *Chi-square/df(cmin/df)(1,716)), RMR(0,000), RMSEA(0,054*) are good and acceptable fit so that CFA Model is provided the validation.

Table 8: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model Fit Indexes about Social Media Marketing Scale

Fit Indexes	**Good Fit***	**Acceptable Fit****	**Model**
χ^2/df	$0 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 2$	1-5	1,716*
GFI	0,95≤GFI≤1	0,90≤GFI≤0,95	0,000
CFI	0,97≤CFI≤1	0,95≤CFI≤0,97	0,845
NNFI/TLI	0,97≤NNFI≤1	0,95≤NNFI≤0,97	0,810
NFI	0,95≤NFI≤1	0,90≤NFI≤0,95	0,706
RMR	0≤RMR≤0,05	0,05≤RMR≤0,08	0,000*
RMSEA	0≤RMSEA≤0,05	0,05≤RMSEA≤0,08	0,054**
Source: Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996; Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger & Müller, 2003; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004.			

Validity and reliability values of Brand Equity Scale are examined into Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for Dataset of participants in Table 9. Brand Equity Scale's standardized Beta is found as (-0,183-0,658). On the other hand, Brand Loyalty, Perceived quality, Brand Awareness and Brand Associations are statistically significance (p<0,01). Also Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients are pretty good reliability for sub dimensions as 0,626*(Brand Loyalty)*, 0,724*(Perceived Quality)*, 0,799*(Brand Awareness)* and 0,609*(Brand Associations)* respectively.

Table 9: Confirmatory Factor Analysis about Brand Equity Scale

Sub Dimension	Items	Standardized Beta	Standard Error	T	P	R2	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Loyalty	B_L1	0,564				0,318	0,626
	B_L2	0,658	0,194	6,086	0,000**	0,433	
	B_L3	0,57	0,185	5,792	0,000**	0,325	
Perceived Quality	P1	0,398				0,158	0,724
	P2	0,481	0,237	4,723	0,000**	0,232	
	P3	0,443	0,235	4,532	0,000**	0,197	
Brand Awareness	B_AW1	0,478				0,228	0,799
	B_AW2	0,389	0,206	4,113	0,000**	0,151	
	B_AW3	0,62	0,275	5,158	0,000**	0,385	
Brand Associations	B_AS1	0,596				0,355	0,609
	B_AS2	0,397	0,159	4,245	0,000**	0,158	
	B_AS3	-0,183	0,163	-2,227	0,026*	0,034	

Brand Equity scale about CFA Model Fit Indexes are examined in Table 10. In CFA model, while, *CFI(0,895), NNFI(0,856), NFI(0,799)* is not acceptable fit, *Chi-square/df(cmin/df)(1,78)), GFI(0,945), RMR(0,036), RMSEA(0,056*) are good and acceptable fit so that CFA Model is provided the validation.

Table 10: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model Fit Indexes about Brand Equity Scale

Fit Indexes	Good Fit*	Acceptable Fit**	Model
χ^2/df	$0 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 2$	1-5	1,78*

GFI	0,95≤GFI≤1	0,90≤GFI≤0,95	0,945**
CFI	0,97≤CFI≤1	0,95≤CFI≤0,97	0,895
NNFI/TLI	0,97≤NNFI≤1	0,95≤NNFI≤0,97	0,856
NFI	0,95≤NFI≤1	0,90≤NFI≤0,95	0,799
RMR	0≤RMR≤0,05	0,05≤RMR≤0,08	0,036*
RMSEA	0≤RMSEA≤0,05	0,05≤RMSEA≤0,08	0,056**
Source: Jöreskog ve Sörbom, 1996; Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger ve Müller, 2003; Schumacker ve Lomax, 2004.			

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is used to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationships between two variables (Pallant, 2001). The correlation coefficient(r) is described the magnitude of the association between the two variables.

Moreover r value interprets with helpful guide table in below (Dunn &Mannes, 2001).

- ± 0,80 to 1,00 (very strong)
- ± 0,60 to 0,79 (strong)
- ± 0,40 to 0,59 (moderate)
- ± 0,20 to 0,39 (weak)
- ± 0,00 to 0,19 (very weak)

There is examined relationship between variables in Table 11. There is determined statistically significance relationship among Entertainment (4,30±0,43) and Customization(4,21±0,47)($p<0,01$). Also there has a positive and very weak correlation among two variables($r=0,166$).

Entertainment (4,30±0,43) and Interaction(4,23±0,48) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,01). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,230).

Entertainment (4,30±0,43) and e-wom(4,16±0,60) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,01). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,220).

Entertainment (4,30±0,43) and Trend(4,14±0,57) are not statistically significance correlated (p>0,05).

Entertainment (4,30±0,43) and Brand Loyalty(4,23±0,66) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,01). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,270).

Entertainment (4,30±0,43) and Perceived Quality (4,25±0,52) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,01). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,232).

Entertainment (4,30±0,43) and Brand Awareness (4,18±0,60) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,05). Also there has a positive and very weak correlation among two variables(r=0,133).

Entertainment (4,30±0,43) and Brand Associations (3,50±0,47) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,05). Also there has a positive and very weak correlation among two variables(r=0,125).

Customization (4,21±0,0,47) and Interaction(4,23±0,48) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,01). Also there has a positive and very weak correlation among two variables(r=0,175).

Customization (4,21±0,0,47) and e-wom(4,16±0,60) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,01). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,331).

Customization (4,21±0,0,47) and Trend(4,14±0,57) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,01). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,241).

Customization (4,21±0,0,47) and Brand Loyalty(4,23±0,66) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,01). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,258).

Customization (4,21±0,0,47) and Perceived Quality (4,25±0,52) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,01). Also there has a positive and very weak correlation among two variables(r=0,147).

Customization (4,21±0,0,47) and Brand Awareness (4,18±0,60) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,05). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,226).

Customization (4,21±0,0,47) and Brand Associations (3,50±0,47) are not statistically significance correlated (p>0,05).

Interaction (4,23±0,48) and e-wom(4,16±0,60) are not statistically significance correlated (p>0,05).

Interaction (4,23±0,48) and Trend(4,14±0,57) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,01). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,221).

Interaction (4,23±0,48) and Brand Loyalty(4,23±0,66) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,01). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,287).

Interaction (4,23±0,48) and Perceived Quality (4,25±0,52) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,01). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,207).

Interaction (4,23±0,48) and Brand Awareness (4,18±0,60) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,05). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,207).

Interaction (4,23±0,48) and Brand Associations (3,50±0,47) are not statistically significance correlated (p>0,05).

E-wom(4,16±0,60) and Trend(4,14±0,57) are not statistically significance correlated (p>0,05).

E-wom(4,16±0,60) and Brand Loyalty(4,23±0,66) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,01). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,235).

E-wom (4,16±0,60) and Perceived Quality (4,25±0,52) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,01). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,209).

E-wom(4,16±0,60) and Brand Awareness (4,18±0,60) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,05). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,303).

E-wom(4,16±0,60) and Brand Associations (3,50±0,47) are not statistically significance correlated (p>0,05).

Trend (4,14±0,57) and Brand Loyalty(4,23±0,66) are not statistically significance correlated (p>0,05).

Trend (4,14±0,57) and Perceived Quality (4,25±0,52) are not statistically significance correlated (p>0,05).

Trend (4,14±0,57) and Brand Awareness (4,18±0,60) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,05). Also there has a positive and very weak correlation among two variables(r=0,175).

Trend(4,14±0,57) and Brand Associations (3,50±0,47) are not statistically significance correlated (p>0,05).

Brand Loyalty (4,23±0,66) and Perceived Quality (4,25±0,52) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,05). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,247).

Brand Loyalty (4,23±0,66) and Brand Awareness (4,18±0,60) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,05). Also there has a positive and weak correlation among two variables(r=0,319).

Brand Loyalty (4,23±0,66) and Brand Associations (3,50±0,47) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,05). Also there has a positive and very weak correlation among two variables(r=0,141).

Perceived Quality (4,25±0,52) and Brand Awareness (4,18±0,60) are not statistically significance correlated (p>0,05).

Perceived Quality (4,25±0,52) and Brand Associations (3,50±0,47) are statistically significance correlated (p<0,05). Also there has a positive and very weak correlation among two variables(r=0,176).

Table 11: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients and Correlation Analysis Results among Variables

Spearman's rho Coefficient	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Brand Loyalty**	**Perceived Quality**	**Brand Awareness**	**Brand Associations**	**Media Marketing**	**Brand Equity**
Entertainment	250	4,30	0,43	0,270**	0,232**	0,133*	0,125*	0,536**	0,255**
Customization	250	4,21	0,47	0,258**	0,147*	0,226**	0,082	0,649**	0,294**
Interaction	250	4,23	0,48	0,287**	0,207**	0,205**	0,035	0,529**	0,269**
E-wom	250	4,16	0,60	0,235**	0,209**	0,303**	0,029	0,564**	0,311**
Trend	250	4,14	0,57	0,068	0,108	0,175**	0,006	0,470**	0,126*
Social Media Marketing	250	4,22	0,36					1,000	0,428**
Brand Equity	250	4,04	0,40						1,000
**p<0,01;*p< 0,05									

4.4 Regression Analysis

The estimated model 1 was tested by using ANOVA. According to test results given in Table 12, the estimated model is statistically significant ($p<0.05$)

Table 12: Regression ANOVA Results on Social Media Marketing Dimensions Effect on Brand Awareness

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P
Regression	21,021	5	4,204	15,161	0,000**
Residual	67,665	244	0,277		
Total	88,686	249			
**p<0,01; *p<0,05					

The model 1 can be evaluated in Table 13 for each variable. Entertainment, Customization, and Interaction have not statistically effect on Brand Awareness ($p>0,05$). On the other hand e-wom and trend are found statistically significant ($p<0.05$). So it can be said that, 1-unit change in e-wom will be increased Brand Awareness by 0,251 unit, 1-unit change in trend will be increased Brand Awareness by 0.139. R^2 (Determination Coefficient) of Model is a 0.237, approximately %23,7 of the Brand Awareness variable can be explained by e-wom and Trend. Furthermore Collinearity, Autocorrelation are tested for Model. Because Tolerance values are higher than 0.2 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values are lower than 10, there is not collinearity problem, also Durbin Watson value is found 1.718, which is near 2 therefore there is not autocorrelation. Consequently, $\mathbf{H_{1d}}$ and $\mathbf{H_{1e}}$ Hypotheses were supported. Other Hypotheses were not supported.

Table 13: Regression t Test Results of Social Media Marketing Dimensions Effect On Brand Awareness

Model 1	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**			**Collinearity Statistics**			
Brand Awareness	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**p**	**Tolerance**	**VIF**	**R^2**	**Durbin Watson**
(Constant)	0,960	0,403		2,379	0,018*			0,237	1,718
Entertainment	0,177	0,095	0,126	1,865	0,063	0,687	1,456		
Customization	0,038	0,090	0,030	0,424	0,672	0,612	1,634		
Interaction	0,160	0,088	0,128	1,829	0,069	0,641	1,561		
E-wom	0,251	0,066	0,250	3,806	0,000**	0,725	1,379		
Trend	0,139	0,065	0,134	2,137	0,034*	0,799	1,252		
**p<0,01; *p<0,05									

The estimated model 2 was tested by using ANOVA. According to test results given in Table 14, the estimated model is statistically significant (p<0.05)

Table 14: Regression ANOVA Results on Social Media Marketing dimensions effect on Brand Associations

ANOVA	**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**P**
Regression	4,697	5	0,939	4,602	0,000**
Residual	49,801	244	0,204		
Total	54,498	249			
**p<0,01; *p<0,05					

The model 2 can be evaluated in Table 15 for each variable. Customization, Interaction, e-wom and trend have not statistically effect on Brand Associations (p>0,05). On the other hand Entertainment is found statistically significant (p<0.05). So it can be said that, 1-unit change in Entertainment will be increased Brand Associations by 0,188 unit. R^2 (Determination Coefficient) of Model is a 0.086, approximately %8,6 of the Brand Associations variable can be explained by Entertainment. Because Tolerance values are higher than 0.2 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values are lower than 10, there is not collinearity problem, also Durbin Watson value is found 1.718, which is near 2 therefore there is not autocorrelation. Consequently, **H_{2a}** Hypothesis was supported. Other Hypotheses were not supported.

Table 15: Regression t test Results of Social Media Marketing dimensions effect on Brand Associations

Model 2	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**			**Collinearity Statistics**			
Brand Associations	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**P**	**Tolerance**	**VIF**	**R^2**	**Durbin Watson**
(Constant)	1,874	0,346		5,415	0,000**			0,086	2,088
Entertainment	0,188	0,081	0,171	2,314	0,022*	0,687	1,456		
Customization	0,058	0,077	0,059	0,756	0,451	0,612	1,634		
Interaction	0,071	0,075	0,072	0,942	0,347	0,641	1,561		
E-wom	0,044	0,056	0,056	0,778	0,437	0,725	1,379		
Trend	0,022	0,056	0,027	0,393	0,695	0,799	1,252		
**p<0,01; *p<0,05									

The estimated model 3 was tested by using ANOVA. According to test results given in Table 16, the estimated model is statistically significant (p<0.05).

Table 16: Regression ANOVA Results on Social Media Marketing dimensions effect on Perceived Quality

ANOVA	**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**P**

Regression	19,467	5	3,893	19,616	0,000**
Residual	48,430	244	0,198		
Total	67,897	249			
**p<0,01; *p<0,05					

The model 3 can be evaluated in Table 17 for each variable. Customization has not statistically effect on Perceived Quality (p>0,05). On the other hand, Entertainment, Interaction, e-wom and trend are found statistically significant (p<0.05). So it can be said that, 1-unit change in Entertainment will be increased Perceived Quality by 0,215 unit, 1-unit change in Entertainment will be increased Perceived Quality by 0,215 unit, 1-unit change in Interaction will be increased Perceived Quality by 0,261, 1-unit change in e-wom will be increased Perceived Quality by 0,198 unit, 1-unit change in Trend will be increased Perceived Quality by 0,113 unit. R^2 (Determination Coefficient) of Model is a 0.287, approximately %28,7 of the Perceived Quality variable can be explained by Entertainment, Customization, e-wom and Trend. Because Tolerance values are higher than 0.2 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values are lower than 10, there is not collinearity problem, also Durbin Watson value is found 1.977, which is near 2 therefore there is not autocorrelation. Consequently, **H_{3a}**, **H_{3c}**, **H_{3d}** and**H_{3e}** Hypotheses were supported. Other Hypotheses were not supported.

Table 17: Regression t test Results of Social Media Marketing dimensions effect on Perceived Quality

Model 3	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**			**Collinearity Statistics**			
Perceived Quality	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**T**	**P**	**Tolerance**	**VIF**	**R^2**	**Durbin Watson**
(Constant)	1,122	0,341		3,288	0,001**			0,287	1,977

Entertainment	0,215	0,080	0,175	2,685	0,008**	0,687	1,456		
Customization	-0,044	0,076	-0,040	-0,581	0,562	0,612	1,634		
Interaction	0,261	0,074	0,237	3,510	0,001**	0,641	1,561		
E-wom	0,198	0,056	0,226	3,553	0,000**	0,725	1,379		
Trend	0,113	0,055	0,124	2,051	0,041*	0,799	1,252		
**p<0,01; *p<0,05									

The estimated model 4 was tested by using ANOVA. According to test results given in Table 18, the estimated model is statistically significant ($p<0.05$).

Table 18: Regression ANOVA Results on Social Media Marketing dimensions effect on Brand Loyalty

ANOVA	**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**P**
Regression	33,234	5	6,647	21,676	0,000**
Residual	74,821	244	0,307		
Total	108,056	249			
**p<0,01; *p<0,05					

The model 4 can be evaluated in Table 19 for each variable. Customization and Trend have not statistically effect on Brand Loyalty ($p>0,05$). On the other hand, Entertainment, Interaction, e-wom and are found statistically significant ($p<0.05$). So it can be said that, 1-unit change in Entertainment will be increased Brand Loyalty by 0,362 unit, 1-unit change in Interaction will be increased Perceived Quality by 0,361 unit, 1-unit change in e-wom will be increased Brand Loyalty by 0,205 unit. R^2 (Determination Coefficient) of Model is a 0.308, approximately %30,8 of the Brand Loyalty variable can be explained by Entertainment, Interaction and e-wom . Because

Tolerance values are higher than 0.2 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values are lower than 10, there is not collinearity problem, also Durbin Watson value is found 1.701, which is near 2 therefore there is not autocorrelation. Consequently, **H_{4a}**, **H_{4c}** and **H_{3d}** Hypotheses were supported. Other Hypotheses were not supported.

Table 19: Regression t test Results of Social Media Marketing dimensions effect on Brand Loyalty

Model 4	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**			**Collinearity Statistics**			
Brand Loyalty	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**P**	**Tolerance**	**VIF**	**R^2**	**Durbin Watson**
(Constant)	0,201	0,424		0,474	0,636			0,308	1,701
Entertainment	0,362	0,100	0,234	3,637	0,000**	0,687	1,456		
Customization	0,094	0,095	0,067	0,989	0,324	0,612	1,634		
Interaction	0,361	0,092	0,260	3,910	0,000**	0,641	1,561		
E-wom	0,215	0,069	0,194	3,107	0,002**	0,725	1,379		
Trend	-0,083	0,069	-0,072	-1,204	0,230	0,799	1,252		
**p<0,01; *p<0,05									

CHAPTER 5

5 CONCLUSION

The results of the empirical study showed that social media marketing has an influence on brand equity dimensions. It has been determined that e-wom (electronic word of mouth) and trend have an effect on brand awareness, entertainment has an effect on brand associations, entertainment, interaction, e-wom and trend have an effect on perceived quality and finally, entertainment, interaction, and e-wom have an effect on brand loyalty.

Entertainment, Customization and Interaction have not statistically effect on Brand Awareness. On the other hand e-wom and trend are found statistically significant. Those dimensions have a major impact on sustaining awareness of the brand, repute, online traffic, and search rankings and can enhance a company's brand in terms of monetary worth.

Customization, Interaction, e-wom and trend have not statistically effect on Brand Associations. On the other hand Entertainment is found statistically significant. The reason for this is that users of social media platforms can view posts about the brand. And the company's brand association will improve as customers discover more about the brand on social media.

Customization has not statistically effect on Perceived Quality. On the other hand, Entertainment, Interaction, e-wom and trend are found statistically significant. Thus, by focusing more on social media communication, a company will not only increase awareness of its products and services, but will also be able to improvise on quality using feedback from customers and increase the level of perceived quality.

Customization and Trend have not statistically effect on Brand Loyalty. On the other hand, Entertainment, Interaction, e-wom and are found statistically significant,. Consumers who like and follow companies' social media posts can be loyal customers of the brand.

5.1 Theoretical Implication:

The purpose of this study was to investigate how effective social media marketing is and how it affects brand equity. Aside from that, develop and test a model that demonstrates the relationship between social media marketing dimensions and customer-based brand equity. The study's findings were presented, and the outcome supported the paper's hypothesis. In this chapter, the results will be interpreted, a comparison with previous relevant studies will be made, practical implications will be discussed, and limits will be discussed that can lead to future research.

The current study contributes to several areas, including providing insight into the SMMA's success and helping businesses and customers in establishing new communication channels.

According to the findings of the study, social media marketing activities have a large and significant impact on brand equity, and there is a high correlation between social media marketing dimensions and brand equity dimensions. As a result, brands with strong brand equity are often the most successful on the market.

Hypotheses were developed and tested for the purpose of answering the study questions. The hypotheses were inspired by a variety of studies and theories in the field of marketing, namely social media marketing, in which writer evaluated the impact of social media marketing and brand equity in one way or another. We developed a conceptual model based on their theories, which included social media marketing and brand equity dimensions.

Due to the development of technology and the fact that it is more accessible and widespread than in the past, the time spent online has gradually increased over the years. Social media accounts are one of the most visited and active platforms today. Today, almost every consumer has their own profiles on social media platforms. Through these platforms, consumers can access information quickly, stay in touch with other users, express themselves, produce content, and interact with brands and celebrities they admire. For this reason, it has become mandatory for brands to be in digital environments in order to establish an effective communication with consumers, to create a positive bond with the brand by keeping the relationship with consumers

active, and to be accessible by being available in all networks where the target audience is present. Today, when competitive conditions are transferred to digital platforms, brands have understood the importance of active sharing and have realized that the shared content should be planned according to the nature of each social network and to be compatible with the user base there.

Brands may use social media to reach out to their customers, enhance their visibility through advertising, and maintain a constant interaction with them. For certain brands, which, due to their nature, limited their marketing and advertising activities on certain channels, the birth and spread of social media caused them to be anxious and hesitant to adapt to the new media. The thought that brand equity, which are of great importance for brands, could be negatively affected, caused brands to be reluctant to enter these platforms for a long time.

Traditionally, brands have aimed not to follow the consumer, but to follow the brands in order to promote themselves in their advertising strategies. Thus, while some brands were working to sell their products, other brands tried to highlight the value of the product with the message they wanted to convey and directed it to consumption. However, with the developing technological opportunities, the brand-consumer relationship has changed and the use of social media platforms has become widespread among brands. The rapid progress of information flow in social media and the ability to receive feedback easily affects both brands and consumers. It is possible for brands to have a more positive and more place in the minds of consumers only if they share in a planned and harmonious way. It is important for brands to be aware of this situation and to develop and continue to use communication strategies that are loyal to the brand line. Brands communicate with consumers on social media through the content they share. In this respect, using the right content is of great importance for brands.

Thanks to social media, which has an important place in our lives today, consumers have come out from a passive position to become individuals who create content, criticize, influence each other and direct each other's behavior. This clearly shows the necessity of brands to keep up with the conditions of the day. Brands that can adapt to the current situation can differentiate from their competitors much more easily. Social media, where the number of users is increasing day by day, is one of the most important

channels for brands to strengthen their ties with consumers. However, in order to carry out successful marketing activities in social media, the content in the shared posts must be of a quality that will encourage bonding with the brand. Although many brands are involved in social media, it is seen that few brands share the content that will activate the consumers and make them respond to the posts. Today, brands that want to stand out from their competitors and be successful should take advantage of the opportunities provided by social media. Brands that do not share effective content that will add value to consumers, on the other hand, reject all these opportunities.

5.2 Practical and Managerial Implication

This study's results are significant and beneficial in terms of management and theoretical implications. Because a company's brand equity is a measure of its success, and because it is linked to customers' cognitive processes, it is necessary to have a comprehensive framework that demonstrates how social media marketing can help brands create, control, or change their customers' perceptions in order to increase the value of their brand.

When asked to "specify a brand you follow on social media?" a considerable percentage of the respondents recalled "Gucci" (20%) and "H&M" and Louis Vuitton (18%), which is an interesting finding. Needless to say, these and other brands are among Morocco's best-performing firms, with high profits and a big base of committed and loyal consumers. This means that, as a result of their well-organized social media marketing, they have a higher brand equity, which leads customers to prefer these brands over others in the relevant product categories.

In the study, it has been determined that social media marketing has effects on brand equity. This is a critical step in the study because marketers must comprehend the benefits of effective social media marketing for their brands. Customers are flooded with constant targeted advertisements and new brands entering the market on a daily basis. Given Morocco's socioeconomic background, this is especially true. In order to receive a good return on their investment, brands must effectively express their values to customers. Given that reaching your target groups at reduced costs has never been easier, marketers must engage in social media marketing activities and include it into

their marketing plan. Finally, this study demonstrates that social media marketing has a direct and considerable impact on brand equity.

Furthermore, although brand equity was handled with the above-mentioned components, analyzes showed that there is four components (brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association and brand loyalty. Therefore, the analysis of the effects of social media marketing on brand equity was carried out within the scope of these components. Research findings have shown that social media marketing practices in brands positively affect the brand equity in which these four components are expressed together. It has been determined that this effect affects all four components that make up the brand equity in the same way positively. This result is in line with many research findings in the literature. Marketing managements have to give more importance to strategies related to brand management due to increasing competition and diversifying communication channels and Managers can use social media marketing as a significant power to increase the value of their brand in their current or potential customers' minds. The outcome of this study provides valuable insight for managers to realize how to unitize their sources and which part of marketing requires more investments to get a better result.

The implementation and success of the right strategies on social media platforms can be achieved very easily due to the fact that feedback can be received. However, the fact that many brands produce content on these networks requires brands to pay special attention to this area. Using big data, the most accurate and effective content about consumers should be included in social media platforms. Since the impact of the strategies can be measured by many parameters, the effectiveness of the strategies should also be evaluated, and the implementation of the strategies should be continued by making changes if necessary.

5.3 Limitation and suggestion

The writer thinks that this research is still far from ideal, and he acknowledges some limitations that he faced while performing it, which may have an impact on the research's result. During the data collection process, the writer became aware of the risk of respondent dishonesty. It's possible that some respondents were hesitant to complete the questionnaire completely. As a result, some responders may not have read all of the

questions carefully, resulting in a dishonest answer. This circumstance may have an impact on the data gathering process and, as a result, on data analysis.

Also the demographic characteristics of the sample can raise several concerns. Because the participants were selected from Morocco, so they may not cover the whole population of users, and our sample may lack the variety of users in the target population with different countries and ethnic group. The majority of the participants had high school education (52%), and the number of females (52.4%) in participants outnumbered the number of men As a result, it may have an impact on the gender differences findings.

Furthermore, the outcomes of this study may vary depending on the industry and product category. Further research could examine into particular social media sites, as different social media platforms have different characteristics, and researchers would have a better understanding of the true impact of social media marketing on brand equity if they look into all of a company's accounts. Furthermore, examining a broader range of companies may reveal more detailed information about the types of marketing needed in different markets. One industry's results may differ from that of others. Given the numerous limitations related in conducting this study, the writer thinks that it can be enhanced further in order to develop better and more precise results. To begin, it may be more beneficial to provide incentives for hesitant respondents in future study in order to persuade them to change their minds. Incentives could come in the shape of gift cards or prizes. It will entice the respondent to fully participate in filling out the questionnaire. They are expected to answer all of the questions carefully because they are willing to fill out the questionnaire completely. As a result, the research will have more accurate data. Second, this research study focuses on only five aspects of social media marketing: entertainment, customization, interaction, e-wom, and trendiness. The writer advises that in future research, the researcher should consider other associated criteria such as content sharing, accessibility, and credibility. The inclusion of additional elements could provide different research results and provide additional insight into the impact of social media marketing on brand equity.

Moreover, a larger sample size covering a greater number of participants form each demographic group is recommended. Besides, it can be helpful to compare the effect of

SMM on brand equity in different industries to discover if they have the same impact across all industries, or they act differently in certain industries. Also, it is recommended to conduct similar studies in other countries and regions to realize if the relationship between SMM and customer-based brand equity and its effect size are the same. Lastly, the focus of this study is on brand equity from the customer perspective, and it has not considered the financial aspect of it. Therefore, testing financial metrics can be useful in order to investigate the impact of social media marketing on brand equity in terms of financial values.

In future research in Morocco, it will be helpful to investigate how a sub-cultural background can impact customers' thoughts on brand attributes. For instance, Arabs, Berbers, Sahrawis each can be sensitive toward specific attributes and features in a brand, and not all share the same perception about it due to cultural values.

In conclusion, the current study shows that social media is becoming more popular in recent times. Individuals and businesses, in particular, are becoming more successful in their attempts to influence diverse consumers through social media and social networks.

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[QUESTIONNAIRE]

THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CUSTOMER BASED BRAND EQUITY

Purpose of the Study:

This study is being conducted by Mohamed Yassir Chaknan MBA student at Istanbul Commerce University in Istanbul, Turkey, as part of a Master thesis with supervision of Dr. Mehmet Sağlam. This questionnaire consists of two parts, with the first part measuring the Social Media Marketing activities and the second part measuring the perceptions of brand equity on social media platforms.

What will be done:

You will complete a survey, which will take 6-8 minutes to complete. The survey includes questions about Social media marketing activities and what impacts the success of marketing attempt in building a successful brand.

Confidentiality:

Your responses will be kept completely confidential and anonymous. We will NOT know your name or your personal details when you respond to the Internet survey.

How the findings will be used:

The results of the study will be used for scholarly purposes only. The results from the study will be used for a Master thesis.

Part I: Social Media Marketing Scale Items

1) Please specify a brand you follow on social media and evaluate the next questions based on the brand you wrote here

2) The contents found on the brand's social media seems interesting.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

3) It is exciting to use the brand's social media.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

4) It is fun to collect information on brands or fashion items through social media.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

5) It is easy to kill time using the brand’s social media.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

6) It is possible to search customized information on the brand's social media.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

7) The brand's social media provide customized services.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

8) The brand's social media provide lively feed information I am interested in.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

9) It is easy to use the brand's social media.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

10) The brand's social media can be used anytime, anywhere.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

11) It is easy to convey my opinion through The brand's social media.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

12) It is possible to exchange opinions or conversation with other users through the brand's social media.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

13) It is possible to do two-way interaction through The brand's social media.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

14) It is possible to share information with other users through The brand's social media

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

15) I would like to pass out information on brands, products, or services from the brand's social media to my friends.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

16) I would like to upload contents from the brand's social media on my blog or micro blog.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

17) I would like to share opinions on brands, items, or services acquired from the brand's social media with my acquaintances.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

18) It is a leading fashion to use the brand's social media.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

19) Contents found on the brand's social media are up-to-date.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

Part II: Brand equity scale items

1) I consider myself to be loyal to the advertised brand I follow on social media platforms.

1= Strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

2) The advertised brand I follow on social media platforms, would be my first choice.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

3) I will not buy other brands if the advertised brand I follow on social media platforms is available to purchase.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

4) The likely quality of the advertised brand I follow on social media platforms is extremely high.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

5) The likelihood that the advertised brand I follow on social media platforms would be functional is very high.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

6) The advertised brand I follow on social media platforms offers products/services of consistent quality

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

7) I can recognize the advertised brand I follow on social media platforms among other competing brands.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

8) I am aware of the advertised brand I follow on social media platforms.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

10) Some characteristics of the advertised brand I follow on social media platforms come to my mind quickly.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

11) I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of the advertised brand I follow on social media platforms.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

12) I have difficulty in imagining the advertised brand I follow on social media platforms in my mind.

1= strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= neither agree nor disagree

4= Agree

5= strongly agree

Demographic questions

1) What is your gender?

Male

Female

2) In which age bracket do you fall?

Under 20

21 – 30

31 – 40

41 – 50

51 above

3) What is your Marital status?

Single

Married

Divorced

Widowed

4) What is your education Level?

High school

Undergraduate

Graduate (Master's)

Graduate (PhD/Doctoral)