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Content Characteristics and Customer Engagement: Their Impact on Brand Love, Self-Brand Connection, and Customer Brand Identification

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Abstract

Social media has become an essential platform for companies to communicate with consumers and build stronger brand relationships. One of the key factors influencing consumer interaction on social media is the characteristics of the content shared by brands. This study aims to examine the influence of content characteristics—namely vividness, interactivity, novelty, consistency, and content type—on customer engagement and to investigate the effect of customer engagement on brand relationship outcomes, including brand love, self-brand connection, and customer brand identification. The study focuses on Instagram users who have interacted with the official Instagram account of Gojek Indonesia (@gojekindonesia). A quantitative research approach was employed, and data were collected from 168 respondents using purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0. The results show that interactivity, novelty, and content type have positive and significant effects on customer engagement, while vividness and consistency do not significantly influence engagement. Furthermore, customer engagement has a positive and significant effect on brand love, self-brand connection, and customer brand identification. These findings highlight the importance of developing interactive, innovative, and relevant social media content strategies to enhance consumer engagement and strengthen emotional and psychological relationships between consumers and brands.

Keywords: Content Characteristics, Customer Engagement, Brand Love, Self-Brand Connection, Customer Brand Identification, Social Media Marketing.

1. Introduction

Social media has become an integral part of contemporary marketing communication, enabling firms to interact directly with consumers and build stronger relationships with their audiences. Unlike traditional marketing channels, social media platforms facilitate two-way communication that allows consumers not only to receive information but also to actively participate in brand-related interactions. This interactive environment enables brands to enhance brand awareness, strengthen customer relationships, and encourage consumer participation through various forms of digital engagement [1], [2]. As a result, social media marketing has emerged as a strategic tool for companies seeking to create deeper connections with consumers in the digital era.

The effectiveness of social media marketing largely depends on the quality and characteristics of the content shared by brands. Content posted on social media platforms serves as the primary medium through which brands communicate their identity, values, and offerings to consumers. According to [3], the characteristics of content play a crucial role in determining how audiences perceive and interact with brand messages. Previous studies have identified several key dimensions of content characteristics, including vividness, interactivity, novelty, consistency, and content type, which influence how consumers respond to social media posts [4], [5]. These characteristics shape consumers' perceptions and emotional responses, which may ultimately affect their engagement with the brand.

Customer engagement has become an important concept in marketing research because it reflects the level of interaction and emotional connection between consumers and brands [6], [7]. Engagement behavior can be observed through various forms of online interaction, such as liking, commenting, and sharing brand-related content on social media platforms [8]. High levels of customer engagement indicate that consumers are actively involved in brand communication and are more likely to develop stronger psychological and emotional

relationships with the brand [9]. Such engagement is often associated with several relational outcomes, including brand love, self-brand connection, and customer brand identification.

Brand love represents a deep emotional bond between consumers and brands that develops through repeated positive experiences and meaningful interactions [10]. Consumers who develop strong emotional attachments to a brand tend to exhibit higher loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and long-term commitment to the brand. Similarly, self-brand connection refers to the degree to which consumers integrate a brand into their self-concept, perceiving the brand as part of their identity [11]. In addition, customer brand identification reflects the extent to which consumers perceive a brand as representing their personal or social identity [12]. These constructs collectively represent the strength of the psychological relationship between consumers and brands.

In the context of Indonesia, social media usage has grown rapidly, making it an increasingly important platform for brand communication. Recent reports indicate that Indonesia has more than 212 million internet users, with approximately 167 million active social media users. Among various social media platforms, Instagram has become one of the most widely used platforms for brand communication and consumer interaction. This rapid growth in social media adoption provides significant opportunities for companies to engage with consumers and strengthen brand relationships through strategic content creation.

One prominent example of brand activity on Instagram in Indonesia is the official account of Gojek Indonesia (@gojekindonesia). As one of the largest digital service platforms in Indonesia, Gojek actively utilizes social media to communicate with consumers, promote services, and build stronger relationships with its audience. The Instagram account of Gojek Indonesia has more than 1.2 million followers and receives substantial interaction in the form of likes and comments on its posts. These interactions indicate a high level of consumer engagement with the brand's social media content.

Despite the growing importance of social media engagement, empirical evidence regarding how content characteristics influence consumer engagement and brand relationships remains limited. Previous studies have primarily focused on the direct effects of social media marketing activities on consumer behavior, while fewer studies have examined how specific content characteristics influence engagement and subsequent brand relationship outcomes simultaneously [4], [13]. Moreover, the mediating role of customer engagement in linking content characteristics to brand relationship constructs such as brand love, self-brand connection, and customer brand identification remains underexplored, particularly in the context of emerging markets.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of content characteristics—including vividness, interactivity, novelty, consistency, and content type—on customer engagement and to investigate how engagement subsequently affects brand love, self-brand connection, and customer brand identification. By focusing on the Instagram account of Gojek Indonesia, this study contributes to the growing literature on social media marketing by providing empirical evidence on the mechanisms through which content characteristics strengthen brand–consumer relationships in the digital environment.

2. Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

Content Characteristics in Social Media Marketing

Content characteristics refer to the attributes that determine how brand-related information is presented and perceived by audiences on social media platforms. In digital marketing contexts, the effectiveness of content is influenced by several features that shape consumer perception and interaction with brand messages. According to [14], content characteristics play a crucial role in influencing how consumers process information and respond to marketing communication. Key dimensions frequently discussed in the literature include vividness, interactivity, novelty, consistency, and content type [4], [14]. These dimensions influence consumer engagement by affecting the attractiveness, relevance, and informational value of social media content. Customer engagement refers to the level of interaction and emotional involvement that consumers develop with a brand through repeated interactions across communication channels. According to [9], customer engagement reflects behavioral manifestations such as commenting, sharing, and liking brand-related content. In social media environments, engagement behaviors signal consumer interest and participation in brand communication, which can subsequently strengthen brand relationships.

Vividness and Customer Engagement

Vividness refers to the richness of sensory information presented in media content, including visual clarity, imagery, and presentation quality. Content with high vividness tends to attract attention and facilitate information processing because it stimulates multiple sensory channels simultaneously [15]. In social media contexts, vivid content often includes visually appealing images, high-resolution videos, and informative visuals that enhance user experience. Previous studies suggest that vivid content can increase consumer engagement by capturing attention and encouraging users to interact with brand posts [4], [5]. Therefore, when social media content contains strong visual elements and clear information, consumers are more likely to engage with the content.

H1: Vividness positively influences customer engagement.

Interactivity and Customer Engagement

Interactivity refers to the degree to which communication between brands and consumers allows reciprocal interaction and feedback. In social media environments, interactivity is facilitated through features such as comments, polls, quizzes, and direct responses to consumer inquiries [16]. These interactive features enable brands to create more personalized communication experiences. Interactive communication increases consumers' sense of participation and involvement, which can strengthen engagement with brand content. Empirical studies have demonstrated that interactive content significantly enhances engagement behavior, including likes, comments, and shares [4], [17].

H2: Interactivity positively influences customer engagement.

Novelty and Customer Engagement

Novelty refers to the uniqueness and originality of content that differentiates it from typical or repetitive brand communications. Novel content stimulates curiosity and captures audience attention by presenting new ideas or unexpected information [18]. In highly competitive social media environments, novelty plays an important role in maintaining consumer interest. Research has shown that consumers are more likely to interact with content that presents new and innovative ideas compared to repetitive or predictable content [4], [5]. Novelty can therefore increase engagement by encouraging consumers to explore and interact with brand posts.

H3: Novelty positively influences customer engagement.

Consistency and Customer Engagement

Consistency refers to the degree to which brand messages maintain a coherent identity across communication channels and over time. Consistent messaging helps consumers recognize and remember brand values, visual identity, and communication style [19]. Consistency in brand communication can enhance trust and familiarity, which may encourage consumers to engage with brand content more frequently. Previous research suggests that consistent brand messaging strengthens brand recognition and supports stronger consumer interaction with brand communications [5].

H4: Consistency positively influences customer engagement.

Content Type and Customer Engagement

Content type refers to the categories of information presented in brand communication, such as informative, entertaining, or promotional content. Each type of content serves a different purpose and may trigger different consumer responses [4]. Informative content provides useful knowledge about products or services, entertaining content stimulates emotional responses, and promotional content highlights marketing offers. Prior studies indicate that certain types of content are more effective in generating engagement on social media platforms. For instance, entertaining and informative posts tend to attract higher engagement compared to purely promotional content [15], [17].

H5: Content type positively influences customer engagement.

Customer Engagement and Brand Love

Brand love refers to a deep emotional attachment between consumers and brands that develops through repeated positive experiences. Consumers who feel emotionally connected to a brand tend to exhibit stronger loyalty and advocacy behaviors [10]. Customer engagement plays an important role in fostering emotional attachment because frequent interaction with brand content strengthens the psychological bond between consumers and brands. Previous research indicates that higher engagement levels increase the likelihood of developing brand love [20].

H6: Customer engagement positively influences brand love.

Customer Engagement and Self-Brand Connection

Self-brand connection refers to the degree to which consumers integrate a brand into their self-concept. Consumers often associate brands with their identity, lifestyle, and personal values [11], [21], [22]. Engagement with brand content can reinforce this psychological connection by providing opportunities for consumers to interact with brand narratives and values. Studies have shown that consumers who actively engage with brands are more likely to develop stronger self-brand connections [23].

H7: Customer engagement positively influences self-brand connection.

Customer Engagement and Customer Brand Identification

Customer brand identification reflects the extent to which consumers perceive a brand as representing their identity or social group. When consumers strongly identify with a brand, they tend to feel a sense of belonging and emotional attachment to that brand. Engagement behaviors such as liking, sharing, and commenting on brand content can strengthen consumers' identification with the brand because these interactions reinforce psychological closeness between the consumer and the brand [24].

H8: Customer engagement positively influences customer brand identification.

3. Research Method

This study employs a quantitative research approach to examine the relationships between content characteristics, customer engagement, and brand relationship outcomes. The research focuses on the official Instagram account of Gojek Indonesia (@gojekindonesia) as the object of analysis, considering its active use of social media as a marketing communication platform and its high level of audience interaction. Social media platforms such as Instagram provide an appropriate context for examining how content characteristics influence consumer engagement and subsequent brand relationships.

The population of this study consists of Instagram users who have interacted with or viewed content from the @gojekindonesia account. The sampling technique used in this study is non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling method. Respondents were selected based on several criteria: individuals aged at least 17 years, active Instagram users who access the platform at least twice a week over the past year, have viewed the @gojekindonesia Instagram account within the last six months, and have interacted with the account's content through actions such as liking, commenting, or sharing posts. Based on these criteria, a total of 168 respondents were collected as the research sample.

Primary data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The measurement items for each construct were adapted from established studies in the marketing literature. Vividness was measured using indicators proposed by [25], interactivity using indicators from [26], novelty using indicators from [27], consistency using indicators from [19], and content type using indicators from [28]. Customer engagement was measured using the scale developed by Schivinski et al. (2016), while brand love was measured using indicators from [29]. Self-brand connection was measured using indicators developed by [11], and customer brand identification was measured using indicators adapted from [12].

The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) with the SmartPLS 4.0 software. The analysis process consisted of two main stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model). The outer model evaluation assessed convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability to ensure the adequacy of the measurement instruments. The inner model evaluation examined the structural relationships between variables by analyzing path coefficients, R-square values, predictive relevance (Q-square), and hypothesis testing through bootstrapping procedures. This analytical approach allows the study to simultaneously examine the measurement quality of constructs and the causal relationships among variables within the research model.

4. Result

4.1. Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The evaluation of the measurement model was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs used in this study. Convergent validity was evaluated using loading factor values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). An indicator is considered valid if the loading factor exceeds 0.70 and the AVE value exceeds 0.50.

Table 1. Convergent Validity Results

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	AVE
Vividness	VI1	0.808	0.672
	VI2	0.827	
	VI3	0.824	
Interactivity	IN1	0.782	0.623
	IN2	0.816	
	IN3	0.769	
Novelty	NO1	0.819	0.597
	NO2	0.731	
	NO3	0.766	
Consistency	CO1	0.839	0.665
	CO2	0.813	
	CO3	0.793	
Content Type	CT1	0.739	0.634
	CT2	0.807	
	CT3	0.840	
Customer Engagement	CE1	0.829	0.705
	CE2	0.847	
	CE3	0.843	
Brand Love	BL1	0.825	0.665
	BL2	0.802	
	BL3	0.819	
Self-Brand Connection	SBC1	0.814	0.642
	SBC2	0.781	
	SBC3	0.809	
Customer Brand Identification	CBI1	0.846	0.580
	CBI2	0.707	
	CBI3	0.748	
	CBI4	0.738	

The results show that all indicators have loading factor values above 0.70 and AVE values above 0.50, indicating that all constructs meet the requirements for convergent validity.

4.2. Reliability Test

Reliability was evaluated using Composite Reliability. A construct is considered reliable if the value exceeds 0.70.

Table 2. Composite Reliability

Variable	Composite Reliability
Vividness	0.856
Interactivity	0.846
Novelty	0.878
Consistency	0.856
Content Type	0.839
Customer Engagement	0.832
Brand Love	0.816
Self-Brand Connection	0.843
Customer Brand Identification	0.860

All variables show composite reliability values greater than 0.70, indicating that all constructs have good internal consistency.

4.3 Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The structural model was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and multicollinearity tests.

Table 3. R-Square Results

Variable	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square
Customer Engagement	0.358	0.338
Brand Love	0.222	0.218
Self-Brand Connection	0.370	0.366
Customer Brand Identification	0.327	0.323

The R-square value for customer engagement indicates that content characteristics explain 35.8% of the variance in engagement. Meanwhile, customer engagement explains 22.2% of brand love, 37.0% of self-brand connection, and 32.7% of customer brand identification.

Table 4. Q-Square Results

Variable	Q-Square
Customer Engagement	0.224
Brand Love	0.345
Self-Brand Connection	0.273
Customer Brand Identification	0.296

All Q-square values are greater than zero, indicating that the model has good predictive relevance.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in PLS-SEM.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Result
H1	Vividness → Customer Engagement	-0.044	0.319	0.375	Not Supported
H2	Interactivity → Customer Engagement	0.268	2.049	0.020	Supported
H3	Novelty → Customer Engagement	0.180	1.938	0.026	Supported
H4	Consistency → Customer Engagement	0.012	0.111	0.456	Not Supported
H5	Content Type → Customer Engagement	0.297	2.622	0.004	Supported
H6	Customer Engagement → Brand Love	0.472	5.006	0.000	Supported
H7	Customer Engagement → Self-Brand Connection	0.608	7.593	0.000	Supported
H8	Customer Engagement → Customer Brand Identification	0.572	8.179	0.000	Supported

The results indicate that interactivity, novelty, and content type significantly influence customer engagement. In contrast, vividness and consistency do not significantly affect customer engagement. Furthermore, customer engagement significantly influences brand love, self-brand connection, and customer brand identification.

Discussion

This study aims to examine the influence of content characteristics on customer engagement and the subsequent impact of engagement on brand relationship outcomes, including brand love, self-brand connection, and customer brand identification. The findings provide several insights into how social media content characteristics influence consumer behavior and brand relationships in the context of Instagram marketing.

First, the results show that vividness does not have a significant effect on customer engagement. This finding suggests that visually appealing content alone is not sufficient to encourage consumers to actively interact with brand posts. Although vivid content can capture initial attention, engagement behaviors such as liking, commenting, and sharing may depend more on other elements, such as relevance, interactivity, or emotional appeal. This finding differs from previous studies that reported a significant positive relationship between vividness and engagement [4], [5], [15]. One possible explanation is that Instagram users are already exposed to a large amount of visually attractive content, which reduces the novelty and impact of vivid visual elements. As a result, consumers may require additional stimuli beyond visual quality to encourage active interaction.

Second, the findings indicate that interactivity has a positive and significant influence on customer engagement. This result highlights the importance of two-way communication between brands and consumers on social media platforms. Interactive content, such as polls, quizzes, or direct responses to comments, allows consumers to actively participate in brand communication. This sense of participation can increase consumers' perceived involvement and strengthen their interaction with brand content. These findings support previous research suggesting that interactive communication enhances engagement behavior because consumers feel that their opinions and responses are acknowledged by the brand [4], [16].

Third, the study finds that novelty positively influences customer engagement. Content that presents new ideas, creative concepts, or unexpected elements tends to attract consumer attention more effectively than repetitive or predictable content. In the highly competitive social media environment, novelty plays a crucial role in maintaining consumer interest and encouraging engagement. This finding supports previous research showing that consumers are more likely to interact with content that offers innovative and unique experiences [4], [5]. Novel content can stimulate curiosity and encourage consumers to explore and interact with brand posts.

Fourth, the results show that consistency does not significantly influence customer engagement. Although consistency is important for maintaining brand identity and message coherence, it may not directly stimulate active interaction from consumers. Consistent brand messaging may help strengthen brand recognition and trust, but it may not necessarily motivate consumers to engage with content. This finding suggests that while consistency remains important for long-term brand identity, it should be combined with more dynamic content strategies to generate engagement.

Fifth, the study finds that content type has a positive and significant influence on customer engagement. Different types of content, such as informative, entertaining, or promotional posts, can trigger different consumer responses. Informative and entertaining content tends to generate higher engagement because it provides value or enjoyment to the audience. These findings support previous studies indicating that content type is an important determinant of engagement in social media marketing [15], [17]. Brands that use diverse and relevant content strategies are more likely to attract consumer interaction and participation.

Furthermore, the results demonstrate that customer engagement significantly influences brand love. When consumers actively interact with brand content, they are more likely to develop emotional attachment toward the brand. Engagement creates repeated positive experiences that strengthen emotional bonds between consumers and brands. This finding supports previous studies indicating that active engagement with brand communication can foster emotional attachment and long-term loyalty [10], [20].

In addition, customer engagement significantly influences self-brand connection. This result suggests that active interaction with brand content enables consumers to integrate the brand into their personal identity. Consumers who frequently interact with brand content may perceive the brand as reflecting their values, lifestyle, or personal identity. As a result, engagement strengthens the psychological connection between consumers and brands.

Finally, the results indicate that customer engagement has a significant positive influence on customer brand identification. This finding suggests that engagement plays an important role in shaping consumers' perception of belonging to a brand community. Through frequent interaction with brand content, consumers develop a stronger sense of identification with the brand. They may perceive the brand as representing their social identity, which can encourage stronger brand advocacy and loyalty.

5. Conclusion

This study examines the influence of social media content characteristics on customer engagement and the subsequent impact of engagement on brand relationship outcomes, including brand love, self-brand connection, and customer brand identification. Using a quantitative approach with PLS-SEM analysis, the study provides empirical evidence on how different dimensions of content characteristics contribute to consumer engagement and brand relationships in the context of Instagram marketing. The results show that not all content characteristics significantly influence customer engagement. Specifically, interactivity, novelty, and content type have positive and significant effects on customer engagement, indicating that content that encourages two-way communication, presents unique and creative ideas, and offers relevant information or entertainment is more effective in stimulating consumer interaction on social media platforms. In contrast, vividness and consistency do not show significant effects on customer engagement, suggesting that visual attractiveness and message consistency alone are insufficient to generate active consumer participation. Furthermore, the findings reveal that customer engagement plays a critical role in strengthening brand relationships. Higher levels of engagement significantly increase brand love, self-brand connection, and customer brand identification. This indicates that when consumers actively interact with brand content, they are more likely to develop emotional attachment, perceive the brand as part of their identity, and feel a stronger sense of belonging to the brand. Overall, the study highlights the strategic importance of engagement-oriented content strategies in social media marketing. Brands should prioritize interactive, innovative, and diverse content types to encourage consumer participation and strengthen brand–consumer relationships in digital environments. Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the research focuses only on Instagram users who interact with the @gojekindonesia account, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other social media platforms or industries. Second, the study relies on self-reported data from respondents, which may involve subjective perceptions and potential response bias. Future research is encouraged to examine additional variables such as trust, brand satisfaction, or brand experience to provide a more comprehensive understanding of brand relationships in social media contexts. Additionally, future studies may consider using longitudinal approaches to observe changes in customer engagement behavior over time.

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