



Impact of Brand Trust on Brand Evangelism Behaviour: A Study on Cable Brands in Sri Lanka

A. Munasinghe

*Kelani Cables PLC, Sri Lanka
anil@kelanicable.com*

D.M.R. Dissanayake

*Senior Lecturer, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
ravi@kln.ac.lk*

ABSTRACT

Industrial sector organizations require some specific focus when developing brands to their institutional and domestic customer segments. Brand trust plays a significant role when it comes to establishing strong brand relationships with consumers. This paper mainly focuses to empirical gaps and practice issues found within the cable brands in Sri Lanka to identify the major research questions and the purposes. Alongside, impact of brand trust on brand evangelism was examined addressing to the empirical justifications and practice gaps found in Sri Lankan cable market. Stratified cluster sampling method was employed and 225 questionnaires were distributed amongst end-users of B2C market. Accordingly, quantitative method was occupied with a questionnaire to execute the survey investigating how brand trust influences three sub divisions of brand evangelism. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested via Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) supported by a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) produced with AMOS-23 software version. Results proved brand trust results purchase intention and positive referrals on cable brands whilst the impact of brand trust on spreading negative referrals on competitive brands was not proved. Paper highlights the managerial implications based on the key findings and future research directions were proposed accordingly.

Keywords: *Brand Trust, Brand Evangelism, Cable Brands, SEM, Sri Lanka*

1. INTRODUCTION

Brands need strategic focus when it comes to develop its equity for long term performances. Brand equity is holistic and many factors and conditions are required to develop a successful brand (Aaker, Fournier & Brasel, 2004; Keller, 2012). In addition, brand trust is widely studied in many industries and product scopes. Brand trust is simply recognized as how consumers rely on a brand for what it says about performance (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013). And brand trust is found tested with brand relationship behaviours like purchase behaviours, brand loyalty and brand evangelism as an extended connection (Doss, 2014; Dissanayake & Ismail, 2015). Similarly, brand trust is said as the willingness to rely on a brand, despite the risk associated with it (Becerra and Korgaonkar, 2011; Veloutsou, 2015). Brand trust is found to be the ability of the brand to perform its promised function (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Brand trust results on perceived brand evaluation leading to brand relationships whereas brand evangelism is also highlighted within (Gunawardane, Munasinghe & Dissanayake, 2016).

Marketers try to cultivate Brand evangelism via brand trust and brand identification (Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013). Brand evangelism is defined as an active and committed way of spreading positive opinions and trying to persuade others to engage with the same brand (Matzler et. al.2007). It has said purchasing the brand, praising and/or defending the brand, and opposing rival brands are the features of a brand evangelist (Becerra and Badrinarayanan , 2013). A brand evangelist works as a volunteer spokesperson for a loved brand (Doss & Carstens, 2014; Doss, 2014). The relationships of brand trust and brand evangelism has been claimed as further research direction in many studies (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013; Munasinghe & Dissanayake, 2018; Munuera-Aleman & Delgado-Ballester, 2005).

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

Brand trust and brand relationships behaviours have been found as critical concepts within the industrial sector as per the nature and the risk involved. Alongside, cable market of Sri Lanka is also attributed with many marketing strategies implemented to create brand loyalty and committed behaviours from customer perspectives. Brand evangelism is one of such committed behaviours of customers expected by lading cable manufacturing companies in Sri Lanka. However, it finds less research works or case studies being carried out to investigate the effectiveness of marketing programs executed to establish brand trust and its impact on brand related behaviours in overall. Thus, we aim to address this practise related issues and the empirical gap found within Sri Lankan cable market when framing the main research question of the study. Accordingly, this paper investigates the main research question as how does brand trust influence on brand evangelism behaviour of Sri Lankan cable brands with references to consumer market point of view.

Accordingly, we used comprehensive literature review to develop the variable relationships and the hypotheses in line with the main research question. It followed a deductive approach to define the variables and the hypotheses. Researches followed a survey method and executed the survey for 225 respondents followed by stratified cluster sampling method. Sample framework was justified based on the customer penetration territories of the two leading cable manufactures in Sri Lanka that nearly account for 75 % to 80% of the overall market share in the year of 2017/2018 (Annual Report of ACL Cables PLC, 2017; Annual Report of Kelani Cables PLS,2017). We used a factor analysis followed by normality test before executing the hypotheses testing. Hypotheses were tested by using AMOS-23 software and Structural Equation Model (SEM) was executed to test the hypotheses followed by model fit indices (Ho,2013).

3. LITERATURE REVIEW AND DEVELOPING HYPOTHESES

It has discussed brand trust with brand related behaviors which usually mean for how customers response and act on brands once they do feel brand trust (Becerra and Korgaonkar, 2011; Veloutsou, 2015). Brand trust has been explained with different dimensions connected to cognitive belief and affective perceptions towards a brand (Chanduhuri and Holdbrook, 2001). It is the way how a brand tends to perform what it promises to do. The cognitive side of brand trust is explained with expectations of brand reliability, consistency, competence, and predictability of its performance. Meanwhile, the affective segment of brand trust is identified with expectations of brand integrity, honesty, and benevolence (Becerra and Badrinarayan, 2013).

Similarly, brand trust has been explained with some dimensions namely how customer feels trust on brand, tend to rely on it, feel brand as honest, how it meets expectations and brand acts safe (Chanduhuri and Holdbrook, 2001). Meanwhile, brand evangelism has been detailed as extended brand relationship behavior. As per (Matzler, Pichler & Hemetsberger, 2007), brand evangelism refers for active and committed way of spreading positive opinions whilst trying to persuade others to become interested on particular brand. Brand evangelism is a clear research area that needs more investigations across the product categories (Gunawardane, Munasinghe & Dissanayake, 2016). Such brand evangelists like to spend time to do recommending the brand (Keh, & Xie, 2009), and also (Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013) mentioned it includes positive brand referrals and negative word of mouth influencing for competitive brands besides purchase intention. A brand evangelist acts with more commitments even compared to brand loyal customer. This is more than the purchase intention of a customer towards a brand. The composition of brand evangelism has three main sub components. First, it attributes with purchase intention (Becerra and Korgaonkar, 2011). Secondly, it connects with the brand referral intentions whereas consumers tend to commit for positive brand referrals. Finally, a brand evangelist becomes active of doing oppositional brand referrals meaning discouraging competitive brands with other parties (Power et al., 2008). Thus, brand evangelism has been found with three different behaviors

influenced through different marketing stimulus. Doss (2014) also stated that brand evangelism includes communicate information, ideas, and feelings of a brand including behaviours favourably towards the said brand.

Alongside, the relationship with brand trust and those three sub dimensions of the brand evangelism behavior is empirically supported. In addition, investigating the relationships with brand trust and the difference facets of brand evangelism behavior is a claimed research gap within the context rationalized in this study. The cable market seems competitive and influenced by intensive marketing promotions executed by the main players in Sri Lanka (Munasinghe & Dissanayake, 2018). Specially, leading two brands heavily do brand building through advertising, public relations, event sponsorship and personal selling practices to build brand trust resulting brand evangelist. Thus, we also formulated the hypotheses referring to the relationships postulated by the empirical justifications whilst special attention is made on cable brands referring to B2C consumer segment. Alongside, following hypotheses were built referring to the brand trust and three different sub dimensions of brand evangelism whilst addressing to the practice gaps claimed. (Albert & Merunka 2013; Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2011; Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013; Gunawardane, et.al.2016; Keh, & Xie, 2009; Matzler, et.al.2007; Munasinghe & Dissanayake, 2018).

H1: Brand trust significantly results brand purchase intention of Cable brands

H2: Brand trust significantly impacts on positive brand referral intentions towards Cable brands in Sri Lanka.

H3: Brand trust significantly impacts on oppositional brand referrals within Cable brands in Sri Lanka.

4. MEASUREMENTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

As mentioned in hypotheses development, we used the measurements for brand trust based on the evidences of previous empirical contributions and measured by using 5 items (Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2011; Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013; Chanduhuri and Holdbrook,2001; Doss, 2014; Matzler; Pichler & Hemsberger,2007). Questions were included in the questionnaire with five point Likert scale. Brand evangelism behavior was tested with eight items mentioned by Becerra and Badrinarayanan, (2013). Accordingly, three sub components of the brand evangelism were separately considered when executing the factor analysis (Ho, 2013).

Sample was profiled according to the demographic questions included in the research instrument. Finally, researchers considered 202 questionnaires out of 225 distributed due to some incompleteness found with the responses made by the sample units. Out of which 154 were males and 48 were females. Almost all the consumers had involved with the purchasing decision of building materials purchasing

process for their own house construction matters including lighting and cable products within last 3-5 years. A qualifying question included in the research instrument could check this matter before responding to the questions related to the main variables of the study. We conducted the normality test for the all items based on the threshold mentioned by Byne (2010). Accordingly, Skewness and Kurtosis measurements were considered to rationalize the normality of the data set. All the values of the items were ranged between -3 and + 3 for Skewness whilst Kurtosis values were ranged within the -7 and + 7 satisfying the requirements for normality (Byne, 2010). Study executed reliability test based on the Cronbach Alpha values and all the five items of Brand Trust reported more than 0.7 of coefficient values and the brand evangelism factors also found within the accepted range of over 0.7 alpha values (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012; Ho,2013).

Kaiser-Meier –Olkin (KMO) value factor analysis was employed to confirm the model adequacy and it reported KMO value higher than 0.7 indicating model adequacy to run a factor analysis (Hair et al., 2012). All the factor loadings were reported as more than 50% satisfying the threshold limit confirming latent construct and items are related (Ho,2013). The summary of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) has been given in the following table generated via principal axis factoring (PAF).

Table 1: Summary of Factor Loadings of Variables

Variable	Item	Factor Loading
Brand Trust	I trust on this brand	0.692
	I rely on this brand	0.538
	This is an honest brand	0.507
	This brand meets my expectations	0.734
	This brand is safe.	0.645
Brand Evangelism: Purchase Intention	I would probably buy this brand in future	0.684
	I intend to buy this brand as needed in the future	0.763
	I would like to buy this brand in the future	0.712
	I would possible buy this brand	0.654

Brand Evangelism: Positive Referrals	I spread positive word about this brand	0.765
	I recommend this brand to my friends	0.564
	I would tell them to buy this brand	0.536
Brand Evangelism: Competitive Brand Referrals	I will tell my friends not to buy any competitive brands other than I bought	0.614
	I will spread negative words of mouth about the other brands	0.643

4.1. Reporting Hypotheses Testing Results

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed after the factor analysis to validate the scales used in this study. CFA was executed by using AMOS-23 version for the data set processed for factor analysis. It considered the model fit indices namely Chi-square, CFI, GFI and RMSEA (Ho, 2013). The default model of CFA reported all the model fit indices within the accepted zone besides CFI that reported its value as 0.816, which required treatments (Bentler, 1990). Thus, model fit improvement was carried out with the proposed options of the AMOS outputs. The improved model indicated all the indices within the acceptable zones (Ho, 2013). Accordingly, final model reported Chi-Square = 2.782, GFI = 0.912, CFI = 0.910 and RMSEA = 0.074. Thus, hypotheses testing was carried out based on the improved model. The reported composite reliability (CR) of the improved model was 0.803 reporting the accepted level (Ho, 2013). The average variance extracted (AVE) values were found higher than 50% satisfying the accepted level.

As recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), this study used a two-stage analysis to complete the hypotheses testing process. Thus, initially, the measurement model was confirmed using the confirmatory factor analysis, and then SEM modelling was run based on the measurement model to estimate the fit of the hypothesized model to the data. The output of the SEM has been presented in the undermentioned table.

Table 2: SEM Output Statistics for Variable Relationships

Variables			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Purchase Intention	<---	Brand Trust	0.793	0.081	9.113	***
Positive Referrals	<---	Brand Trust	0.409	0.052	3.307	***
Competitive Brand referrals	<---	Brand Trust	0.549	0.083	5.223	0.0634

As per the results, H1 is supported indicating brand trust results purchase intention whilst H2 is also supported indicating more the brand trust, customer will commit for positive word of mouth towards the cable brands they have used already. However, H3 was not supported as P value was not significant meaning brand trust does not confirm customers to voluntarily spread negative word of mouth about the opposite brands or discouraging competitive brands. Thus the findings of H1 and H2 are mostly related with normal scenarios of the previous studies as referred in this paper (Albert & Merunka 2013; Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2011). Results found with H3 has to be further investigated whilst specific attention has to be given for the managerial implications.

5. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

As per the results indicated, cable manufacturers have to consider the behavioral reality of B2C consumers when it comes to cable buying behavior for their own construction or refurbishment requirements (Dissanayake, 2015). It indicates that even established brand trust of a cable brand cannot predict such extended commitment behavior of consumers to act against the opposite or competitive brand. Thus, it requires such strong and acceptable reasons for them to act against the competitive brands when their relatives or friends need such opinions. We also argue that brand trust cannot be established without a strong brand equity (Keller, 2013; Gunawardane, et, al.2016). Brand equity could create such reasons for consumers to become 100% brand evangelist. Thus, cable branding strategies need to be holistic and executed with comprehensive brand equity building models targeting both end-users and intermediaries including professionals as opinion leaders.

Conclusively, future studies are encouraged to further investigate the consumer responses towards industrial brands including cables as one of the interesting cases. The pulling strategy of getting

consumer to brand purchasing behavior is important rather depending on middlemen or opinion leaders. Brand equity is always plays a core consideration when it refers to brand performance (Aaker, et.al.2004; Keller, 2012). Thus, new studies may examine brand equity and brand trust as related concepts with the brand evangelism behavior of industrial brand as it seems less studies carried out so far. We suggest to examine the role of brand trust as mediating mechanism towards the brand evangelism behavior when impact of brand equity is considered as the main force resulting brand relationship behaviors.

6. REFERENCES

- [1] Aaker, J., Fournier, S. & Brasel, S.A. (2004). When good brands go bad, *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp. 1-16
- [2] Annual Report. (2017). ACL Cables PIC, Colombo.
- [3] Annual Report, (2017). Kelani Cables PLC, Kelaniya
- [4] Becerra, E. P., & Badrinarayanan, V. (2013). The Influence of Brand Trust and Brand on Brand Evangelism, *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22(5/6), 371–383.
- [5] Becerra, E.P. & Korgaonkar, P.K. (2011). Effects of Trust Beliefs on Consumers Online Intentions, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 45, 6, 936-962.
- [6] Bentler, P. M. (1980). Comparative Fit Indexes in Structural Models, *Psychological Bulletin*, 107, 238–246.
- [7] Byrne, B. M. (2010). *Structural Equation Modeling with AMOS: Basic Concepts, and Programming* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- [8] Chaudhuri A., & Holbrook M.B. (2001). The Chain of Effects from Brand Trust and Brand Affect to Brand Performance: The Role of Brand Loyalty, *Journal of Marketing*, 65, 81- 93.
- [9] Delgado-Ballester, E., Munuera-Aleman, J.L. & Yague Guillen, M.J. (2003). Development and Validation of a Brand Trust Scale, *International Journal of Market Research*, Vol. 45 No. 1, pp. 35-76.
- [10] Dissanayake, D.M.R. (2015). Building Brand Equity through Integrated Business Model: A Case of Cable Brand in Sri Lanka, *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 21-32
- [11] Dissanayake, D.M.R., & Ismail. (2015). Relationship between Celebrity Endorsement and Brand Attitude: With Reference to Financial Services Sector Brands in Sri Lanka, *Conference Proceedings*, International Conference on Business & Information (ICBI), 1-22.
- [12] Doss, S. K. (2014). Spreading the Good Word: Toward an Understanding of Brand Evangelism. *Journal of Management and Marketing Research*, 14, 1.

-
- [13] Doss,S.K., & Carstens,D.S. (2014). Big Five Personality Traits and Brand Evangelism, *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 13-22.
- [14] Gunawardane, N., Munasinghe, A., & Dissanayake, D. M. R. (2016). Relationship between Perceived Brand Equity and Purchase Intention of Life Insurance Brands in Sri Lanka. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, 5(12), 2319-8028.
- [15] Hair, J. F., Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Mena, J. A. (2012). An Assessment of The Use of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling in Marketing Research. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 40(3), 414-433.
- [16] Ho, R. (2013). *Handbook of Univariate and Multivariate Data Analysis With IBM SPSS*. CRC Press.
- [17] Keh, H.T. and Xie, Y. (2009). Corporate Reputation and Customer Behavioural Intentions: The Roles of Trust, Identification, and Commitment, *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 38 No. 7, pp. 732-742.
- [18] Keller, K.L. (2012). Understanding the Richness of Brand Relationships: Research Dialogue on Brands as Intentional Agents. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 186-190.
- [19] Keller, K.L. (2013). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- [20] Matzler, K., Pichler, E.A., & Hemetsberger, A. (2007), Who is Spreading the Word? The Positive Influence of Extraversion on Consumer Passion and Brand Evangelism. *Proceedings of the American Marketing Association Winter Conference*, pp. 25-32.
- [21] Munasinghe, A., & Dissanayake, D.M.R. (2017). Brand Differentiation in Industrial Sector Context: Empirical Review and Case Evidences in Sri Lanka. *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 8(6).
- [22] Munasinghe, A., & Dissanayake, D.M.R. (2018). Relationship between Customer Based Brand Equity and Brand Evangelism: Research Propositions on Cable Brands in Sri Lanka, *Elixir Marketing Management*.
- [23] Power, J., Whelan, S., & Davies, G. (2008). The Attractiveness and Connectedness of Ruthless Brands: The Role of Trust, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 42 Nos 5/ 6, pp. 586-602.
- [24] Veloutsou, C. (2015). Brand Evaluation, Satisfaction and Trust as Predictors of Brand Loyalty: The Mediator-Moderator Effect Of Brand Relationships. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 32(6), 405-421. doi:10.1108/jcm-02-2014-0878