Article

Evaluating the Impact of Brand Equity on Brand Evangelism Behavior with the Mediating Effect of Brand Trust: With Special Reference to the Institutional Market of Power Cable Industry in Sri Lanka

Dharmawansa, A.D.[a*], Madhuwanthi, R.A.M.[b]., Chithrananada, K.P.S.P.[c]

a Department of Industrial Management ,Faculty of Applied Sciences, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, b Esoft Metro Campus, c Department of Industrial Management ,Faculty of Sciences, University of Kelaniya

To link to this article: https://doi.org/ 10.31357/jbri.v11i01.8471

ABSTRACT

While brand equity models are vigorously debated for their empirical validity, the notion has been investigated with various product horizons and market circumstances. Brand trust, proven to influence customer actions, is key to strong brand relationships, including brand evangelism. This study concentrated on the branding of industrial products, with the Sri Lankan cable market being the research specialty. It is observed that industrial product branding is an area where significant managerial challenges are attributed in terms of the results of brand relationships vs the investments made in brand building by Sri Lankan cable industry. Even from the standpoint of the industrial market, the trust element is a key influence in industrial product brands. Theoretical explanations and empirical reviews were used to support the hypotheses about brand equity and brand evangelism while the mediating role of brand trust was explicitly taken into consideration as a novelty supported by the commitment trust theory. The industrial market for cable brands in Sri Lanka was the study's focus, and managerial difficulties were especially discussed to explain the discrepancy between theory and practice. A deductive method of analysis was used, conceptualizing variables in accordance with the specified study topics. It used a quantitative research approach, having pretested the questionnaire in a pilot study, and using a multi-stage cluster sampling procedure. 131 respondents were conducted due to the limited number of contractors in the selected market segment following the data filtering procedure, taken into account for the final analysis. The study used descriptive statistical methods, correlation analysis and regression analysis using SPSS software to derive into conclusions. It was discovered that brand equity's effect on brand evangelism is mediated by brand trust. According to the findings, the study suggested managerial solutions to develop brand ambassadors for cable brands in Sri Lanka's industrial market. It attempted to give managerial ideas for the sector, urging how to combine brand-building strategies and methods for cable brands to produce brand evangelists while paying particular attention to the measurements for brand trust.

* Corresponding author. Tel: 071-648 2147; Email: asankad@wyb.ac.lk;Institution: Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

Introduction

Sri Lanka is the only South Asian country with 100% electrical access and nonstop power (Ministry of Power and Renewable Energy, 2019). The cable industry of Sri Lanka is a major contributor to the Sri Lankan economy (Dissanayake, 2015). High cost of plant, machinery, technology, market knowledge, and raw materials act as barriers to enter this market. The Sri Lankan government continues to support the industry by providing duty free copper, which is the prime raw material in the manufacturing. Furthermore, import duties protect domestic producers from subpar imports. The competition in the industry is fierce with six indigenous players, according to Munasinghe and Dissanayake (2017). In a such competitive market, local companies need to focus on brand building and customer loyalty to survive.

The concept of brand equity has been studied in relation to various product categories and market circumstances, and the empirical validity of brand equity models has been widely discussed. Brand evangelism is one of the aspects that determines holistic brand relationship behavior. To analyze brand evangelism in relation to brand building techniques, however, empirical studies contend that further research is necessary. Brand evangelism, which is the result of brand equity strategies, causes consumers to actively and committedly spread positive opinions and try to persuade others to engage with the same brand. (Becerra and Badrinarayanan , 2013). Making brand evangelists is the ultimate goal of brand equity creation initiatives, which is vital even for industrial products that enter consumer markets (Gunawardane, et.al.2016; Munasinghe & Dissanayke, 2017). Brand advocates or brand evangelists are crucial in brand building and eventually striving for long-term success. Brand trust is still a recognized idea that research has shown to be a component of brand appraisal that drives brand relationship behaviors with a mediating effect.

This study concentrated on the branding of industrial products, with the Sri Lankan institutional cable market being the research specialty The identified target group for this research effort also known as the EM1 and C1 contractors and project owners/ clients has been trying to import their power cable requirement directly from China and India where the price rates of the cables are much lower than the locally manufactured cables. The local power manufacturers have increased their cable prices drastically in the recent past. Based on those factors the contractors and projects clients have faced a major problem when purchasing their power cable requirement. Recent studies (Dissanayake & Ismail, 2015; Gunawardane, et. al., 2016) claimed extended empirical investigations on how brand equity related tactics effect on long-term brand relationship behaviors. Additionally, gaps in practice were taken into account when approaching the research issue. While the overall aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of brand equity on brand evangelism behavior with the mediating effect of brand trust in the Sri Lankan institutional market of power cable, it can be broken down to several research objectives: to evaluate the impact on brand equity on brand evangelism behavior in the Sri Lankan institutional market of power cable, with the mediating effect from brand trust in the Sri Lankan institutional market of power cable.

Literature Review

Sector Overview

With a total market share of Rs. 40 billion per year, the Sri Lankan government protects the cable industry with imports regulation and a 28% customs duty on imported products (Dissanayake, 2015). The Sri Lankan government supports its domestic cable industry through import regulations and customs duties. As of 2023, Sri Lanka imported insulated wires and cables valued at approximately $49 million, with China and India being the primary suppliers (Trade Economy, 2023). All manufacturers must comply with Sri Lankan quality requirements; thus they aim to differentiate their brands and pay more attention to brand-building efforts by using above-line expenditures than below-line budgets. Cable manufacturers have trouble cultivating brand champions in the end-user market. When a consumer buys home wiring, it's a one-time investment; the wires are in the wall and can't be withdrawn. This is another problem for cable companies that requires electricians to mediate (Dissanayake, 2015). Sri Lankan consumers must consider quality and safety when choosing cable manufacturers. Companies embrace trust, performance, and perceived quality as core brand equity development tactics to establish long-term client loyalty (Keller, 2013). Industrial brands need trust that drives purchase choices (Dissanayake,2015). Sri Lankan cable manufacturers should generate brand evangelists as

part of their brand equity building plan, rather than relying solely on advertising. Customers can become brand evangelists for cable companies (Munasinghe and Dissanayake, 2017). This study concentrated on the branding of industrial products, with the Sri Lankan Institutional cable market being the research specialty. In support of this, it is observed that industrial product branding is an area where significant managerial challenges are attributed in terms of the results of brand impact vs the investments made in brand building by Sri Lankan businesses. Even from the standpoint of the institutional market, the trust element is a key influence in industrial product brands. In order to confirm how brand equity impact on brand evangelism behavior, this study evaluated the ideas of brand equity and brand evangelism

Brand Equity
"Brand equity" describes the relationship between customers and a brand. Brand equity is the brand's marketing results (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). Brand equity has been recognized as an intangible asset that boosts organizational performance for at least three decades. Strong branding can boost a company's profit margins, expand its brand, and limit its exposure to aggressive marketing. Brand equity can be categorized by perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand association, and patents, trademarks, and channel partnerships. Brand equity is a multidimensional notion and complex phenomenon (Brexendorf & Keller, 2017). Keller's 2003 approach for building a successful brand has four steps: brand meaning, brand reaction, and consumer interaction. Four processes require six brand construction elements: brand salience, performance, imagery, judgment, sentiment, and resonance. Keller (1993) says client attitudes drive brand equity. It's what customers remember about the product. Keller says a range of things, including customer experiences and feelings, can alter and modify brand knowledge. Andersson (2019) posits four characteristics of brand equity: brand awareness, brand association, brand quality, and brand loyalty.

Brand Evangelism
Becerra and Badrinarayanan (2013) define brand evangelism as regular brand purchases, persuading non-users about a brand by disparaging other brands, and spreading positive brand referrals. Brand evangelism exceeds brand loyalty. Evangelists promote a brand while degrading rivals, therefore a brand may benefit more from them than loyalists. In 1991, Guy Kawasaki proposed brand evangelism.

Kawasaki (2004) defines customer evangelism as fiercely promoting product word-of-mouth. According to Becerra and Badrinarayanan (2013), brand evangelism indicates three brand-related behaviors: a desire to acquire the brand, a propensity to laud the brand, and a tendency to criticize competing brands (i.e. oppositional brand referral intentions). Corporations work hard to understand the link between customers and their brands to inspire brand evangelism (McAlexander et al, 2002). Businesses are also focused on generating influential clients who act as brand advocates, persuading others to try the brand and deterring them from buying rival items (Mcconnell and Huba, 2003). Evangelists provide more trustworthy ideas and suggestions since they do it for free (Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013). They don't expect anything in exchange for the brand owner's recommendation, and all of their comments and ideas are based on positive brand experiences. Doss (2014) defines brand evangelists as those who communicate facts, thoughts, and views about a brand to affect others' purchasing decisions.

Brand Trust
Consumers trust a brand to execute its claimed function despite risk or ambiguity. Dependability defines brand trust (Becerra and Korgaonkar, 2011; Veloutsou, 2015). When buyers choose trustworthy brands, ambiguity and bad results are reduced. This builds brand trust (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera, 2005). Cable makers evaluate raw ingredients, production, and finished products for quality and confidence. Brand trust and loyalty depend on customer happiness (Lin and Wang, 2006). Firms utilize a variety of strategies to delight customers, and it's crucial for building brand trust. Brand trust mediates loyalty and enjoyment (Chen and Phou, 2013). Brand trust affects how consumers view brands, which affects actions like brand evangelism (Gunawardane, et.al.2016; Koththagoda & Dissanayake, 2017). Industrial producers aim to boost their reputation by showcasing their strength, new initiatives, and innovations. Industrial equipment generally comes with warranties, and clients prefer reputable sellers. Brand association, brand trust, and supplier reputation affect industrial customers. Brand trust was linked to brand equity and evangelism (Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013; Dissanayake and Ismail, 2015; Becerra and Korgaonkar, 2011).

Research Gap
Previous researchers validate the optimal theoretical model for industrial brands, where product-based equity is favored over customer- or money-based

equity (Aaker, 2013; Datta, et.al.2017). Brand equity has been examined with various product categories and marketplaces for three decades, and there are still disagreements over the theoretical underpinnings (Davcik, 2013). Brandão, A. and Serra, E. (2007), outlined that the brand trust is one of the main strategies to reinforce the loyalty to the brand and to its products/services; however, further inclusion is indicated as another proprietary asset that contributed to brand equity depending on the conditions. Empirical evidence continues to test this model's consistency regarding product categories and market features (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010; Sriram et al., 2007). Empirical causes related to industrial or consumer durable brands should be studied with proper theoretical underpinnings for management consequences (Gunawardane, et.al.2016; Delgado-Ballester and Munuera, 2005). Several studies have contested the most popular brand equity models and theories, stating that the model features don't reflect the underlying nature of industrial brand traits and values (Davcik, 2013).

Scarpi (2010) defined brand evangelism as emotional word-of-mouth. Brand evangelism goes beyond brand loyalty, including purchase intent and recommendations (Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013; Doss, 2014). Sri Lanka needs industry research. Brand connection behaviors like brand evangelism should be investigated across product categories, especially industrial items (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2018; Chen & Phou, 2013). Few Sri Lankan research investigate influence of brand personality on brand love for personal care brands: A study in Sri Lanka. (Bandaranayake, et al, 2020). This study aims to evaluate the impact of brand equity on brand evangelism including the mediating effect on brand trust. As a distinctive product, cable brands are studied, and Sri Lanka's cable business is a niche.

Research Methodology

Hypothesis Formulation and Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses provide direction to investigate research outcomes supported by methodological analysis. Accordingly, this study investigates the undermentioned hypotheses as per the contents and relationships figured out by the conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1.

Several studies (Fullerton and Taylor, 2002; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001) connect brand equity with word of mouth transmission. Brand evangelists support and promote the brand while denigrating rivals. Evangelists may benefit brands more than devoted customers. Brand evangelism is a proactive and dedicated technique to influencing others to use the same brand (Matzler, et. al., 2007). "Brand evangelism" still refers to a less concentrated sector in many markets and products (Dissanayake & Ismail, 2015). The following hypothesis is derived based on the literature.

- H_0: There is no impact from Brand Equity on Brand Evangelism Behavior in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable
- H_1: There is an impact from Brand Equity on Brand Evangelism Behavior in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable

Most sources of brand equity, including brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness, brand associations, and brand pleasure, have been examined; nevertheless, brand trust, a fundamental component of brand equity and emotional brand element (Ambler, 1997), is understudied (Ambler, 1997; Han and Sung, 2008). Alam and Yasin (2010) found that the brand trust can help establish brand equity. Previous studies suggest that branding contributes to trust building between business and their customers (Roberts and Merrilees, 2007). Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005 further states that Brand equity and trust are positively associated. The literature supports to develop the following hypothesis.

- H_0: There is no impact from Brand Equity on Brand Trust in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable
- H_2: There is an impact from Brand Equity on Brand Trust in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable

Brand trust is the willingness to depend on a brand even in uncertain or risky situations (Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2011; Veloutsou, 2015). Relationship marketing, as defined by Morgan and Hunt (1994), hinges on trust and commitment. Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman (2005) further emphasize that building trust between consumers and brands is a core objective of marketing. This trust directly impacts brand relationship activities, such as customer evangelism, which in turn influences brand perception (Gunawardane et al., 2016; Koththagoda & Dissanayake, 2017) and it used to develop the following hypothesis.

- H$_0$: There is no impact from Brand Evangelism Behavior on Brand Trust in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable

- H$_3$: There is an impact from Brand Evangelism Behavior on Brand Trust in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable

Brand trust has been cited as a mediator across a wide range of research fields by numerous academics. The trust is the ability to rely on someone based on their traits and actions under danger. Brand trust is the willingness to depend on a brand despite danger or ambiguity (Becerra and Korgaonkar, 2011; Veloutsou, 2015). Morgan and Hunt (1994) say relationship marketing involves dedication and trust. Trust is essential for company marketing and customer collaboration. According to (DelgadoBallester and Munuera-Aleman, 2005), the purpose of marketing is to develop trust between the consumer and the brand. Studying brand trust. This affects brand relationship activities like evangelizing, which affects brand appraisal (Gunawardane et al. 2016; Koththagoda and Dissanayake 2017).As a result, it is hypothesized that this study will look at how brand trust influences both brand evangelism and customer-based brand equity.

- H$_0$: There is no impact from brand equity on brand evangelism with mediating effect of Brand Trust.

- H$_4$: There is an impact between brand equity on brand evangelism with mediating effect of Brand Trust.
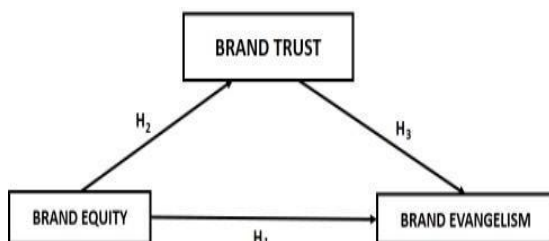

Figure 1 : Conceptual Framework

Sampling and Data Collection
Primary data was collected to fulfill the research goals and objectives. Structured questionnaire was used to gather the main quantitative data, designed based on the conceptual framework. To minimize response bias, a self-administered online survey with closed-ended questions using a five-point Likert scale was provided to the participants. The survey covered independent, dependent, and mediating variables and was targeted towards industrial-related clients in the construction business. The brand equity was considered brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand assets as the main component dimensions. Deep emotional, active promotion, community engagement, defend the brand and provide feedback are the component dimensions which were considered for the brand evangelism. The brand trust was considered the consistency, transparency, customer experience, authenticity, reputation and reviews and ethical practices as the component dimensions. Sample sizes of 131 entities were considered as the sample of this study.

Results & Discussion
Reliability and ValidityTesting
The consistency of results when the same test is repeated on the same sample at a different time is measured by test-retest reliability. The reliability statistics of the selected variables as shown in Table 01.

Table 01 : Results of reliability testing

Variable	Cronbach Alpha
Brand Equity	0.704
Brand trust	0.876
Brand Evangelism	0.795

Cronbach's alpha is generally accepted to be reliable when it exceeds 0.7. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was calculated on a sample of 131 customers. Based on the research reliability statistics, all the independent variables (brand equity and brand evangelism) demonstrated reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.7. Additionally, the mediation variable of brand trust also showed good reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.867.
Validity results were measured through SPSS Pearson correlation analysis. The validity results for this study showed that all the variables' significance is less than 0.05, indicating that they are valid and reliable for measuring the intended constructs. This high level of significance demonstrates that the data obtained closely corresponds to the actual area of investigation, ensuring the integrity and applicability of the research findings. The assessment of normality confirmed that brand

equity, brand evangelism and brand trust are approximately normal, validating the use of parametric methods. This ensures that subsequent analyses yield reliable and interpretable results.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 02 shows that the means for all variables ranged from 4.18 to 4.52. Analyzing the dependent variable, the mean value of brand evangelism, is 4.18, indicating that respondents generally agreed strongly with the statements. The standard deviation of 0.38752 suggests a spread of responses within 0.38 units above or below the mean. Similarly, the mean for the independent variable, brand equity, was 4.52, indicating strong agreement. The standard deviation of 0.43 here, suggests a spread of 0.43 units. The mediation variable, trust, had a mean of 4.52 and a standard deviation of 0.44.

There's a strong positive correlation ($R = 0.901$) between the predicted and actual values as shown in Table 03. The model explains 81.9% ($R^2 = 0.819$) of the variance in the dependent variable. Taking into account the number of independent variables, the adjusted R^2 of 0.867 suggests a good fit for the model. The standard error of the estimate is 0.07561, indicating the model's predictions are on average within 0.07561 units of the actual values.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 01

> H_0: There is no impact from Brand Equity on Brand Evangelism Behavior in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable
>
> H_1: There is an impact from Brand Equity on Brand Evangelism Behavior in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable

Brand Evangelism Behavior

Brand Equity have significant positive relationship of 42.8% with the dependent variable of Brand Evangelism and this relationship is significant with these two variables with 0.003 P value ($P<0.05$) as shown in Table 04. Hence it can be concluded that the, H_1 is accepted. H_1: There is a relationship between Brand Equity and Brand Evangelism Behavior in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable.

Hypothesis 02

> H_0: There is no impact from Brand Equity on Brand Trust in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable
>
> H_1: There is an impact from Brand Equity on Brand Trust in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable

The results showed that the almost all the variables were accurate and having significance association among the variables as shown in Table 05. The independent variable of brand equity and the mediating variable of brand trust have significant positive relationship of 56.3% and this relationship is significant with these two variables with 0.000 P value ($P<1.05$). The alternative hypothesis, H_1 is accepted and it confirms the relationship between Brand Equity and Brand Trust in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable

Hypothesis 03

> H_0: There is no impact from Brand Trust on Brand Evangelism Behavior in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable
>
> H_1: There is an impact from Brand Trust on Brand Evangelism Behavior in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable

There is a significant relationship between the mediating variable of brand trust and the dependent variable of Brand Evangelism as mentioned in Table 06. Brand trust have significant positive relationship of 66.3% with the dependent variable of Brand Evangelism and this relationship is significant with these two variables with 0.000 P value ($P<0.05$). Hence, H_1 is accepted. The result indicates that there is a Brand Trust and Brand Evangelism Behavior in the Sri Lankan Institutional Market of Power Cable.

4.5.4 Hypothesis 04

> H_0: There is no impact from brand equity on brand evangelism with mediating effect of Brand Trust.
>
> H_1: There is an impact from brand equity on brand evangelism with mediating effect of Brand Trust.

Table 02 : Descriptive statistics of variables

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Brand_Evangilism	4.1832	.38753	131
Brand_Equity	4.5229	.43462	131
Brand_Trust	4.5248	.44056	131

Table 03: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.901ª	.819	.867	.07561

Table 04: Coefficients Table of Brand Equity and

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	.263	.212		1.344	.177
Brand Equity	.428	.079	.158	1.264	.003

a.	Dependent Variable: Brand Evangelism

Table 05: Coefficients Table of Brand Equity and Brand Trust

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.263	.212		1.344	.177
Brand Equity	.563	.254	1.351	12.011	.000

a.	Dependent Variable: Brand Trust

Table 06 : Coefficients Table of Brand Trust and Brand Evangelism

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.263	.212		1.344	.177
	Brand Trust	.663	.154	1.441	13.055	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Evangelism

Table 07 : ANOVA table

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.923	4	2.495	421.459	.004 b
	Residual	2.114	343	.005		
	Total	12.137	347			

The Regression model explains a significant amount of variance in the data as shown in Figure 07. The F-statistic (F = 421.459) is very high, indicating a strong effect of the model. The significance level (Sig. = .004) is less than 0.05, which is a commonly used threshold for statistical significance. Null hypothesis is rejected and conclude that the independent variable(s) have a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable.

A one-unit increase in Brand Equity is associated with a 0.428 unit increase in Brand Evangelism as shown in Table 08. However, the standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.158) suggests a relatively weak positive relationship when considering the standard deviation of both variables. The t-statistic (1.264) and significance level (Sig. = 0.003) indicate a statistically significant positive effect of Brand Equity on Brand Evangelism. A one-unit increase in Brand Trust is associated with a 0.836 unit increase in Brand Evangelism. The standardized coefficient (Beta = -1.458) suggests a strong negative relationship, which might seem counterintuitive. A negative Beta here could indicate that higher Brand Trust scores are associated with lower Brand

Evangelism scores. The t-statistic (-12.001) and significance level (Sig. = 0.012) indicate a statistically significant effect of Brand Trust on Brand Evangelism.

The SOBEL Z test is used to examine if a variable mediates (or carries) an independent variable's effect to the dependent variable, which is the outcome of interest.

Through the SOBEL Z test, researchers can get the decision about the relationship between dependent, independent and the mediating variables and the extend of the variables. This study focuses the linear regression method in SPSS. In statistics, the Sobel test is a method of testing the significance of a mediation effect. In mediation, the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is hypothesized to be an indirect effect that exists due to the influence of a third variable (the mediator). As a result, when the mediator is included

Table 08 : Coefficients Table of Brand Trust, Brand Equity and Brand Evangelism

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.263	.212		1.344	.177
Brand Equity	.428	.079	.158	1.264	.003
Brand Trust	.836	.063	-1.458	-12.001	.012

Dependent Variable: Brand Evangelism

in a regression analysis model with the independent variable, the effect of the independent variable is reduced and the effect of the mediator remains significant. The Sobel test is basically a specialized t test that provides a method to determine whether the reduction in the effect of the independent variable, after including the mediator in the model, is a significant reduction and therefore whether the mediation effect is statistically significant.

The Sobel test assesses the statistically significant of the indirect effect from brand trust to the relationship of brand equality and brand evangelism. In other words, it assesses whether the relationship between brand equality and brand evangelism is controlled by the mediator of brand trust.

Sobel Z Test

$$z = \frac{a * b}{\sqrt{b^2 \cdot S_a^2 + a^2 \cdot S_b^2}}$$

a – unstandardized coefficient of independent variable (0.563) from Table 04
Sa – standard error of independent variable (0.254) from Table 04
b – unstandardized coefficient of mediation variable (0.836) from Table 08
Sb – standard error of mediation variable (0.0.063) from Table 08

Z = 6.49

If the z-score is greater than 1.96 It can be concluded that the effect is larger than would be expected by

chance and call the effect significant. The Z value of 6.49 indicated that the mediating variable of brand trust is significantly mediating between the brand equity and the brand Evangelism. Hence it was concluded that there is a relationship between brand equity and Brand Evangelism with mediating effect of Bank Trust. Hence, H_4 is accepted.

Discussion and Conclusion

Increase Brand Awareness - Building brand awareness through above-the-line (ATL) and below-the-line (BTL) advertising strategies is crucial from the standpoint of the cable sector. Budgets should be set aside for dealer boards, hoardings, sample boards, and vehicle branding in order to increase brand visibility. While raising brand awareness, it's crucial to implement effective distribution techniques to make your product easily accessible to your target market. Additionally, it is advised to raise customer awareness of standards, unique product features, new technological advances, new trends, and noteworthy accomplishments in order to demonstrate the dynamism of cable brands (Dissanayake, 2015).

Increase Brand Loyalty - Management has to put more focus on process development activities or shorten existing processes with the intention of improving the customer service parameters. Moreover, it is suggested to provide technical support when selecting cables as an important area since customer has less or no technical knowledge in Sri Lankan cable market (Dissanayake, 2015). Cable manufacturers should be able to manufacture customized cables for diverse applications of customers within reasonable time period since value creation and customization leads to loyalty (Aaker, 1991). However, technical support teams and information tables are useful implications to create loyal customers for consumer market compared to B2B context. World trend is more towards online

purchases and cable brands have to develop mechanism to buy cables on line when required.

Establish Brand Association – It is recommended to initiate association with electricians, electrical engineers, project managers, contractors and electrical consultants to associate with the brand (Dissanayake, 2015). In addition, several instruments such as videos, Facebook pages, and attractive web pages can be recommended to get interaction with consumers with the idea of keeping association with them. Supportively, cable companies can initiate CSR programs to have interaction with intermediaries or consumers. When customers really interact with cable brand, companies have brand extension opportunities under same brand name.

Establish Brand Trust - It has been proven that brand trust plays a mediating role developing brand equity towards brand evangelism. It is recommended to create awareness about the experience and capabilities brand has to build brand trust (Keller,2013). In addition, cable brands should get all the relevant and necessary standards and has to make aware all 150 kind of intermediaries and targeted customers to develop the trust on cable brands (Dissanayake, 2015). When cable brands are exporting, it has been recommended to share that information including exported countries and volume to create trust among customers.

Strategic Focus on Establishing a Brand Evangelist - In today's consumption society where it is increasingly easy for consumers to demonstrate extreme devotion and derision toward the brands, it is important for marketers to understand the drivers of behaviors directed towards the brands. Further, this study suggests that marketers can cultivate brand evangelism by building brand trust and brand equity. Make an additional effort to interact - Interaction with the customer is important to recognize them and have constant touch with them. Cables are fallen into high involvement product category and providing required technical information help them to build long term relationships with customers. Further, attending to customer complains promptly and giving them quick solutions will help to build never ending relationships with the particular brand.

Encourage to promote Brand Evangelism - As the individuals that contact with consumers and intermediaries, sales staff is a crucial element in building relationships with clients. As a result, the business must inform its staff of any brand-related advancements in order to prepare them for effective communication (Dissanayake and Ismail, 2015).

Additionally, compared to other product categories, cables are a high engagement product category where consumers are more likely to share new advances. When workers are enthusiastic about the company they represent, some of that enthusiasm is immediately transferred to the clients they interact with. As a result, employees should be employed to help establish consumer trust so that they become interested in the brand. It is advised to seriously concentrate on internal branding and marketing initiatives in order to inform and secure the commitment of sales employees to behave in the best interests of clients according to brand citizenship behaviors.

Engage the intermediaries via contests - Push methods can also be used to generate brand endorsements, and they are extremely important in sectors like consumer durables and high involvement scopes (Keller, 2013). Offering incentives to customers and business partners may lead to brand relationship behaviors. In order to turn customers, store clerks, consumers, and middlemen into brand advocates, cable brands can launch competitions among these groups. Finally, contest winners are known for automatically promoting the brand to others as are other top cable brands.

Reshaping brand communication for brand relationship focus - The latest trend in Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is to focus on brand connection perspectives. IMC is totally focused on brand building tactics (Shimp, 2010). Therefore, managers in Sri Lanka's cable industry should consider what sort of perception individual cable manufacturers can foster among customers and what kind of strategy may be developed to strengthen the association with cable brands. Owners of brands need to understand both the brand's "performance" and "imagery." Under performance criteria, cable brands can indicate the safety and quality standards to which they adhere when compared to one another. Therefore, in IMC plans where emotional appeals should be included to generate brand recall and connection, more functional values of cables should be emphasized for trust views (Dissanayake,2015). IMC should be used to depict the product outlook, which includes packaging, color, cable flexibility, and lengths that are readily available. Additionally, cable makers should highlight environmentally friendly production practices, installation techniques, user-required product training, and customer service excellences such as speedy response to customer needs to foster brand loyalty behaviors like evangelism. In order to reduce the pressure on prices, they must also convey the pricing and discount structures used by cable brands to

maintain their market shares. In addition, it indicates that, when discussing brands in the industrial sector, it is crucial to remember to emphasize the brands' history and experience. The IMC strategies of cable makers could also promote profile branding to persuade corporates that ethical and responsible product developments result in strong bonds with customers in both institutional and end-user markets. Customers react to any brand with opinions and emotions (Keller.2003). Additionally, it must make efforts to improve cable brand quality and promote such efforts to the appropriate client segment. Additionally, it is crucial to consider how to gain the target audience's trust as it relates to their demands. In addition, the brand must demonstrate how its value proposition is greater to that of other competing cable brands given the potentially dangerous nature of their use. With regard to domestic customers who purchase building supplies like cables, brands need to concentrate on emotional responses and reactions because it is an issue of trust and engagement with for a significant investment. According to certain industry best practices, it is advised that cable companies improve communication appeals to persuade the brand message with emotive materials for a positive brand memory and recall effect that, in turn, persuades the rational attachment (Keller,2003). IMC ads must thus emphasize uplifting emotions like coziness, enjoyment, excitement, security, social acceptance, and self-respect in order to build customer trust and interest in brand content. When developing marketing communication strategies for evangelism-driven reactions, IMC needs to place greater emphasis on safety-related value propositions because, given the nature of cable companies, safety is the most sought-after attribute. Build a deeper bond with the customers - Resonance is the most potent and challenging level of the brand equity pyramid (Keller, 2003). Resonance is acquired through developing closer relationships with customers. Cable companies should also establish a strong psychological connection with their customers. Customers who return to a brand or product feel a connection to it as long as there is no post-purchase dissonance (Shimp.2010). They could experience a sense of camaraderie with other customers and business representatives. And provided brands build such communication forums, these consumers can participate in online discussions and attend events on social media platforms like Twitter or Facebook as active brand ambassadors (Siriwardane, 2018). Finally, as the relationship with

the consumers deepens, increased investment from them in terms of their time, money, energy, and other resources can be observed (Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013). In order to create brand evangelists for the cable brands through a brand community, cable manufacturers must therefore forge closer bonds with their customers. The goal of community building is to get people to interact with cable brands, and they need to have some level of personal involvement in it (Dissanayake & Munasinghe, 2017). To encourage interaction with them, cable manufacturers can establish clubs for intermediates such as electricians, engineers, contractors, and consultants. Additionally, fostering a sense of community among distributors and dealers improves participation in various market segments (Munasinghe and Dissanayake, 2018). Additionally, creating websites, Facebook pages, YouTube videos, and mobile apps to increase consumer interaction with firms is recommended. Finally, CSR initiatives could be carried out to create a community impact for a cable brand's dedicated group of stakeholders. Moreover, this analysis has shown that brand equity and brand evangelism have worthwhile linkages, and professionals in the sector need to design and implement the necessary steps for such a tie. Additionally, managerial actions are heavily necessary to fuel brand evangelism because it maintains a crucial role in the process. The mediation test demonstrated that brand equity and brand evangelism had a notable relationship with brand trust, demonstrating the critical managerial attention needed for trust-building tactics for the cable industry. Therefore, the aforementioned discussion highlights crucial managerial measures that should be taken at the appropriate moment to develop brand evangelism in the context of the Sri Lankan cable market. The administrative difficulties attributed to the sector as a result of manufacturing firms' expenditures on marketing and product development fully support this idea.

The findings of this study can be used by academicians to enrich their knowledge on this rarely-explored concept. The model used in this study will be more useful to establish an eminent framework to explain brand evangelism.

Brand trust was the cognitive component of brand appraisal in this study because it had theoretical backing. Future research, however, might widen the scope to look into viewpoints on brand appraisal besides brand trust and to analyze how they function as mediating mechanisms

Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by RA Manjula Madhuwanthi and Asanka D. Dharmawansa. The first draft of the manuscript was written by Kassapa Yatawatta and K.P.S.P. Chithrananda. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript and agree with the order of presentation of the authors.

References

Aaker, D. A.and Biel, A. L. (2013). Brand equity and advertising: advertising's role in building strong brands. New York: Psychology Press.

Aaker, D.A. (1991). Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name, NewYork, The Free Press

Alam, S.S. and Yasin, N.M. (2010) An Investigation into the Antecedents of Customer Satisfaction of Online Shopping. Journal of Marketing Development & Competitiveness, 5, 71-78.

Ambler, T. (1997). Do brands benefit consumers? International Journal of Advertising, 16(3), 167–198. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0265-0487.1997.00053.x

Andersson, P. (2019) Applying AAKeR's brand equity model in a brand preference context: A comparative study between Samsung and Huawei smartphone users. Bachelor's thesis. Luleå University of Technology, Department of Social Sciences, Technology and Arts.

Bandaranayake, Y.R.K. and Wickramasinghe, A.S. (2020). Influence of brand personality on brand love for personal care brands: A study in Sri Lanka. International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Studies, 7(1), pp.45-58. Available at: https://onlinesciencepublishing.com/index.php/ijebms/article/download/256/381/252 [Accessed 3 Mar. 2025].

Becerra, E.P. & Korgaonkar, P.K. (2011). "Effects of Trust Beliefs on Consumers' Online Intentions", European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 45 , 6, 936-962.

Becerra, E.P. and Badrinarayanan, V. (2013) "The Influence of Brand Trust and Brand Identification on Brand Evangelism," Journal of Product & Brand Management, 22(5/6), pp. 371–383.

Brexendorf, T.O. and Keller, K.L. (2017), "Leveraging the corporate brand: The importance of corporate brand innovativeness and brand architecture", European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 51 No. 9/10, pp. 1530-1551. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-07-2017-0445

Brandão, A. and Serra, E. (2007). The impact of trust in the brand equity. ResearchGate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321579867_THE_IMPACT_OF_TRUST_IN_THE_BRAND_EQUITY [Accessed 3 Mar. 2025].

Chaudhuri, A., and Holbrook, M. B. (2018). The Chain of Effects from Brand Trust and Brand Affect to Brand Performance: The Role of Brand Loyalty. Journal of Marketing, 65(2), 81-93.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.65.2.81.18255

Chen, C.F. and Phou, S. (2013). A closer look at destination: image, personality, relationship and loyalty, Tourism Mana

gement, Vol. 36 No. 1, 269-278.

Christodoulides G., de Chernatony L. (2010) Consumer-based brand equity conceptualisation and measurement International Journal of Market Research, 52 (1) (2010), pp. 43-66.

Datta, H., Ailawadi, K.L. and Heerde, H.J.van (2017), How well does consumer-based brand equity align with sales-based brand equity and marketing-mix response, Journal of Marketing, 81(3), pp. 1–20.

Davcik, N. S. (2013) An empirical investigation of brand equity: Drivers and their consequences, British Food Journal, 115 (9), 1342-1360; DOI: 10.1108/BFJ-01-2012-0005

Delgado-Ballester, E. and Luis Munuera-Alemán, J. (2005), "Does brand trust matter to brand equity?", Journal of Product & Brand Management, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 187-196. https://doi.org/10.1108/10610420510601058

Dissanayake, R., 2015. Building Brand Equity through Integrated Business Model: A Case of Cable Brand in Sri Lanka. IOSR Journal of Business and Management, pp.21-32.

Dissanayake, D. and Ismail, N., 2015. Relationship between Celebrity Endorsement and Brand Attitude: With Reference to Financial Services Sector Brands in Sri Lanka. *International Conference on Business & Information [ICBI]*, pp.1-22.

Doss, S. K. (2014). "Spreading the good word": toward an understanding of brand evangelism. Journal of Management and Marketing Research, 14, 1

Fullerton, G. and Taylor, S. (2002), "Mediating, interactive, and non-linear effects in service quality and satisfaction with services research", Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 124-36.

Gunawardane, N., Munasinghe, A., & Dissanayake, D. M. R. (2016). Relationship between Perceived Brand Equity and Purchase Intention of Life Insurance Brands in Sri Lanka: A Concept Paper. International Journal of Business and Management Invention, 5(12), 2319-8028

Han, S., and Sung, H. (2008). Industrial brand value and relationship performance in business markets — A general structural equation model. Industrial Marketing Management, 37(7), 807–818.

Kawasaki, G. (2004). The Art of the Start: The Time-Tested, Battle-Hardened Guide for Anyone Starting Anything, New York: Penguin Group.

Keller, K.L. (1993), Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity, Journal of Marketing, 57 (1): 1–22.

Keller, K.L. (2013) in Strategic Brand Management Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity. 4th edn. Pearson Education.

Koththagoda, K. C., & Dissanayake, D. M. R. (2017). Perceived Effectiveness of Celebrity Endorsement on Perceived Brand Evaluation in the Scope of Services Sector: A Review Paper. Singaporean Journal of Business, Economics and Management Studies, 51(5384), 1-9

Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2010). Principles of marketing. Pearson education.

Lin, H. H., & Wang, Y. S. (2006). An examination of the determinants of customer loyalty in mobile commerce contexts. Information & Management, 43(3), 271-282.

Matzler, K., Pichler, E.A. and Hemetsberger, A. (2007) "Who is spreading the word? The positive influence of extraversion on consumer passion and brand evangelism," Marketing Theory and Applications, 18(1), pp. 25–32.

McAlexander James H., and Schouten John W., and Koenig Harold F. (2002), Building Brand Community, Journal of Marketing, 66 (January), 38–54.

McConnell, B., and Huba, J. (2003). Creating Customer Evangelists: How Loyal Customers Become a Volunteer Sales Force. Chicago: Dearborn Trade Pub.

Ministry of Power and Renewable Energy Sri Lanka, (2019), Ministry of Power and Renewable Energy Performance 2017 and Programmes for 2018. Available at: https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/defaul t/files/Ministry of Power and Renewable Energy Performance 2017 and Programmes for 2018.pdf (Accessed: 14 March 2024).

Morgan, R. and Hunt, S., (1994). The Commitment-rust Theory of Relationship Marketing, ,.The journal of Marketing, pp.20-38

Munasinghe, A. and Dissanayake, D., (2018). Impact of Brand Trust on Brand Evangelism Behaviour: A Study on Cable Brands in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka Journal of Marketing, 4(2), pp.1,2.

Munasinghe, A., Dissanayake, D.M.R. (2017). Brand differentiation in industrial sector context: empirical review and case evidence in Sri Lanka. International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research, 8(6).

Roberts, J., & Merrilees, B. (2007). Multiple roles of brands in business-to-business services. Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, 22 (6), 410–417.

Scarpi, D. (2010). Does size matter? An examination of small and large web-based brand communities, Journal of Interactive Marketing, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 14.

Shimp, T.A (2010) Advertising promotion and other aspects of integrated marketing communication The Dryden Press, Fortworth, Texas, 8th, Edition.

Siriwardana, A. (2018). Role of Social Media towards Consumer Behavioral Perspective, International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Review, 1(1), 30 - 40.

Sriram S, Balachander S, Kalwani M (2007) Monitoring the dynamics of brand equity using store-level data. Journal of Marketing 71(2):61–78.

Sweeney, J. C., & Soutar, G. N. (2001). Consumer

perceived value: The development of a multiple item scale. Journal of Retailing, 77(2), 203–220. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4359(01)00041-0

Trend Economy (2023) Sri Lanka trade statistics: insulated wires and cables imports. Available at: https://trendeconomy.com/data/h2/SriLanka/8544 (Accessed: 27 February 2025).

Veloutsou, C. (2015), Brand evaluation, satisfaction and trust as predictors of brand loyalty: the mediator-moderator effect of brand relationships, Journal of Consumer Marketing, Vol. 32 No. 6, pp. 405-421. https://doi.org/10.1108/JCM-02-2014-0878