

Co-Branding and Social Media Marketing Activities Drive Brand Evangelism: Perceived Novelty and Social Influence as Intermediate Variable

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Extended Abstract

This research addresses the critical need for innovative marketing strategies within the rapidly evolving and intensely competitive consumer electronics accessories market. The increase of mobile devices since the introduction of the iPhone in 2007 has fuelled substantial growth in this market, projected to reach USD 111.2 billion by 2033 (Persistence Market Research, 2023). To differentiate themselves and capture consumer attention, brands are increasingly turning to strategies such as co-branding and social media marketing activities (SMMA) (Verified Market Reports, 2024). This study aims to investigate how these marketing strategies influence consumer behaviour, specifically focusing on the cultivation of brand evangelism, defined as deep customer devotion leading to active brand promotion and defence.

Grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, this research examines the mediating roles of perceived novelty and social influence in the relationships between co-branding and SMMA (as stimuli) and brand evangelism (as the response). The study proposes six key hypotheses. Firstly, H1 posits that co-branding positively influences perceived novelty, as the collaboration of brands can lead to unique and compelling offerings. Secondly, H2 proposes that co-branding positively influences social influence, leveraging the social networks associated with each brand. Thirdly, H3 suggests that social media marketing activity positively influences perceived

novelty, as innovative content on these platforms offers refreshing experiences. Fourthly, H4 proposes that social media marketing activity positively influences social influence, facilitating network development and trust-based relationships. Fifthly, H5 suggests that perceived novelty positively influences brand evangelism, as the emotional connection fostered by novelty can lead to brand advocacy. Lastly, H6 proposes that social influence positively influences brand evangelism, as observing others endorse a brand can lead to favourable attitudes and promotion. The theoretical framework underpinning these relationships also includes the spillover effect, where perceptions of one entity extend to a related one, and relationship marketing theory, which emphasises the importance of building meaningful connections (Abdolmaleki et al., 2023; Raufeisen et al., 2019).

The research employs a quantitative methodology, utilising a structured questionnaire distributed via social media platforms (Instagram) to consumers of consumer electronics accessories who use social media. Quota sampling are used to ensure a representative sample. Responses are measured using a 6-point Likert scale. The questionnaire assesses the dimensions of the key variables: co-branding (self-image congruence, perceived product quality, image fit, evaluation), social media marketing activity (entertainment, customization, interaction, electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM), trendiness), perceived novelty (thrilling, change from routine, boredom alleviation, surprise), social influence (identification, internalization, compliance), and brand evangelism (brand purchase intentions, positive brand referrals, oppositional brand referrals). The questionnaire items were adapted from prior research to ensure content validity, and pre-test with 30 questionnaires has been conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the instrument (Hair, 2016). In the formal test, this study collected 464 valid responses and conducted SEM analysis using SPSS and AMOS.

The findings of this research indicate that the primary pathway to brand evangelism is through social media marketing activities influencing social influence, which in turn affects brand evangelism. A secondary pathway is through social media marketing activities impacting perceived novelty, which subsequently influences brand evangelism. These results are expected to provide valuable theoretical insights into the drivers of brand evangelism and offer practical guidance for marketers in the consumer electronics accessories industry seeking to enhance their co-branding and social media marketing strategies. This study contributes to the literature by filling a research gap through an investigation of the direct and indirect effects of these strategies on brand evangelism. It holds academic value by bridging knowledge gaps and identifying indirect effects that support the theoretical framework, while also offering practical contributions by providing insights into how

digital marketing strategies shape consumer behavior and highlighting the importance of cultivating brand evangelists.

Keywords: co-branding, social media marketing activity, perceived novelty, social influence, brand evangelism

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