

## The Impact of Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM) on Brand Loyalty and Brand Trust in Telecommunication Sector in Egypt

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### Abstract

Social customer relationship management (SCRM) refers to the incorporation of social media (SM) platforms into the existing framework of customer relationship management (CRM) strategies. CRM practices are being progressively enhanced to integrate SM platforms. Hence, this research attempts to investigate the effect of SCRM on brand loyalty (BL) and brand trust (BT) within the telecommunications industry in Egypt. This sector is dominated by four large corporations: Vodafone, Orange, Etisalat, and WE. This study employed a convenience sampling technique of 456 consumers via online questionnaire. The findings highlighted the significant influence of SCRM on brand loyalty and brand trust. This research provides valuable guidance to marketers on advancing BL and BT through the effective utilization of SCRM.

### Keywords

SCRM; brand trust; brand loyalty; Telecommunication Sector

### Article history

Received: 27 December 2023 · Accepted: 5 March 2024

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, there have been significant changes in the CRM field. Previously, the emphasis was primarily on establishing financial connections with customers. However, the current approach to CRM encompasses both transactional and interactional aspects (Sharma et al., 2023). Social media usage has resulted in the criticism of traditional CRM practices. The latest iteration of CRM, known as SCRM, leverages advancements in online media to enhance the management of client interactions (Jalal *et al.*, 2021).

Firms, particularly those in the service industry, along with service marketing professionals, exhibit caution and heightened awareness of the significance of using social media platforms. They achieve this by building self-hosted platforms, such as Facebook brand pages, with the aim of augmenting their level of customer involvement (Sadek & Mehelmi, 2020). The active involvement of consumers is critical for the growth of strong consumer-brand relationships, the generation and collaborative creation of experiences, and the enhancement of value (Itani *et al.*, 2020).

The service industry is increasing dramatically worldwide, representing more than half of the global gross domestic product (GDP) (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2021). In Egypt, the economic growth of the nation is experiencing its fastest expansion in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector, with the growth rate of 16.7% in FY2021–2022, up from 16.1%, observed in the preceding financial year (International Trade Administration, 2023). Information and communication technology, the fastest-growing industry, along with digitalization, has become the world's dominant features following the COVID-19 crisis (International Trade Administration, 2022). Egyptian telecommunication companies should develop systems that play a crucial role in achieving better organizational outcomes. In this context, SCRM is a foundational concept that empowers organizations to engage with customers effectively, fostering increased trust and loyalty (AlWeshah *et al.*, 2018).

Customer brand engagement and experience are vital for corporate success, as they influence brand trust and encourage loyalty. However, the connection between SCRM, customer experience, customer engagement, trust, and loyalty lacks comprehensive examination (Kumar & Mokha, 2021). Hence, it is essential to conduct further empirical investigations in order to address this disparity. Dewnarain et al. (2019) have argued that there is a lack of literature regarding investigating SCRM, customer brand engagement, and brand experience from the perspective of consumers, particularly in African countries. Additionally, the relationship between SCRM practices and the perceptions of brand loyalty and trust among consumers represents an essential area of research (Malki *et al.*, 2023; Gazi *et al.*, 2024). Hence, it is imperative to conduct further research that specifically concentrates on examining SCRM within the context of developing countries (Jalal *et al.*, 2021; Dewnarain *et al.*, 2019).

The objective of this research is to gain an in-depth understanding of the variations in SCRM practices and subsequently evaluate their outcomes in terms of factors such

as customer brand engagement, experience, loyalty, and trust. As businesses increasingly utilize social media and digital platforms to engage with customers, it becomes essential to examine how these interactions influence brand trust and loyalty.

In more detail, active consumer involvement in brand activities strengthens brand connections, resulting in higher sales, reduced costs, increased profits, greater brand advocacy, and improved collaborative experience (Khan *et al.*, 2020). The impact of social media technology on consumer involvement and its effect on strategic decision-making remains insufficiently explored (Zhao *et al.*, 2020). Despite its importance, studies in this field are noticeably lacking, signaling a knowledge gap that requires attention.

Customer brand experience is a pivotal factor in the competitive landscape, influencing customer satisfaction, purchase decisions, and subsequent brand loyalty and trust. The interaction process between consumers and companies is determined by customer brand experience, impacting the emotions of both parties. Therefore, examining, and quantifying consumer experiences and engagement behaviors through SCRM is a crucial objective for marketing experts and enterprises (Yasin *et al.*, 2019).

Furthermore, Meena and Sahu (2021) asserted that few studies focused on the telecommunication industry. Therefore, this research seeks to address a theoretical gap in the literature concerning SCRM. It aims to investigate the impact of SCRM on customer experience, engagement, trust, and loyalty.

## **2. Literature Review and hypothesis development**

Customer relationship management (CRM) is a strategic approach focused on enhancing organizational profitability and customer satisfaction (Al-Hawary & Aldaihani, 2016). SCRM, a contemporary development, leverages social media to engage with customers, monitor interactions, and incorporate social influence into planning and implementing CRM activities (Paliouras & Siakas, 2017; Reinhold & Alt, 2019). Greenberg (2010) defines SCRM as a business strategy involving technological structures, regulations, procedures, and social aspects to facilitate collaborative communication and create mutual value in a transparent and trustworthy business environment (Kim & Wang, 2019).

### **Impact of SCRM on Brand Trust and Loyalty**

Many scholars have examined the relationship between SCRM and brand trust. Marmat (2021) proposes a framework for the establishment of online brand trust through social media, emphasizing interaction, information processing, and trust development stages. Puspaningrum (2020) demonstrates that social media marketing increases brand trust, subsequently impacting brand loyalty. Similarly, Fianto *et al.* (2021) confirm the substantial influence of social networking on brand trust, impacting brand loyalty. Chen *et al.* (2022) present a model highlighting how social interaction and online consumer privacy concerns affect trust, emphasizing the major impact of privacy risk, privacy control, and collaborative norms. Overall, these studies

collectively suggest that SCRM positively influences brand trust, leading to increased brand loyalty and value co-creation.

SCRM and brand trust are related concepts that have been explored in several studies. Research indicates that social media marketing has a vital role in cultivating brand trust and loyalty (Puspaningrum, 2020; Sohail *et al.*, 2020). Through social media channels, organizations can present their brands and interact with customers, thereby enhancing brand trust and loyalty (Wongsansukcharoen, 2022). Trust is essential for fostering strong connections between companies and their stakeholders, including customers (Fianto *et al.*, 2021). Establishing trust can be achieved through CRM systems and employer branding, which influence employer choice and trust. Regarding social media, recommendation systems are utilized for monitoring brand-related conversations and providing insights to brand managers.

Sokmen and Bas (2019) and Kumar and Mokha (2021) demonstrated a strong and positive correlation between SCRM and customer loyalty. Rashwan *et al.* (2019) stated that SCRM serves as a key factor in increasing consumer loyalty toward the brand. Mulyono and Situmorang (2018) highlighted the direct impact of SCRM on loyalty. Overall, SCRM is interconnected to brand trust and loyalty, and can be strengthened through various strategies and activities. Based on the above discussion, the following two main hypotheses can be formulated:

**H1: SCRM has a positive effect on brand loyalty.**

**H2: SCRM has a positive effect on brand trust.**

## **SCRM and Customer Brand Engagement**

The concept of SCRM evolved with the development of the latest social media tools in the early 21st century. As a result, SCRM new dimension focuses on the customer engagement field, and social media usage has currently reshaped how customers and organizations communicate, serving as a strategy for establishing sustained connections between them (Kim & Wang, 2019). Santos *et al.* (2022) indicated that providing useful information encourages participants to further interact with platforms such as Twitter, primarily perceived as a personal branding tool; Facebook, which assists in self-expression; and LinkedIn, which serves as a professional platform. Furthermore, research demonstrates a significant relationship between online customer engagement with the brand and brand interactions, suggesting that social media can maintain loyalty among satisfied and unsatisfied customers as well (Lim & Rasul, 2022).

Harrigan *et al.* (2017) highlighted the significant impact of social platforms on understanding the dimensions of brand engagement: cognitive, affective, and active, and on cultivating a distinctive brand image. The study emphasized the role of social network in formulating strategies for engaging with customers, underscoring the importance of active managerial involvement in fostering customer loyalty within the tourism sector.

Jayasinghe and Dissanayaka (2022) investigated how SCRM affects customer engagement in the fast-food industry in Sri Lanka. The study's findings revealed a significant relationship between SCRM and customer engagement in this sector. Based on the aforementioned discussion, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

**H3: SCRM has a positive effect on customer brand engagement.**

### **SCRM and Customer Brand Experience**

Customer brand experience refers to “The way consumers perceive the brand, across various touchpoints such as advertising, initial individual interactions, and the quality of the treatment they receive.” (Alloza, 2008).

The internet and social networks, in particular, are playing a key role in transforming traditional CRM into SCRM, which aims to enhance customer brand experience, while supporting and empowering customers to participate in co-creating value (Sigala, 2018). Although CRM practices do not directly affect the loyalty of customers or the likelihood of word-of-mouth, results have proved that these practices provide customers with a positive experience, which consequently enhances their loyalty, encouraging them to purchase more products from the brand (Mosa, 2022).

Moreover, an empirical study by Kamboj *et al.* (2016) demonstrated that SCRM capabilities positively influence co-created customer brand experience. Similarly, Mulyono and Situmorang (2018) identified SCRM as a predictor of customer experience. Considering these arguments, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

**H4: SCRM has a positive effect on customer brand experience.**

### **Customer Brand Engagement and Customer Brand Experience**

According to Khan *et al.* (2020), there is a stronger positive relationship among customer engagement, customer experience, the quality of relationships, as well as the desire to exhibit loyalty toward social media platforms, particularly mobile applications. The increasing use of mobile technology has prompted enterprises to adopt mobile relationship-building strategies, which include the utilization of mobile applications. Despite the accelerated growth of these technologies, the understanding of customer behaviors associated with mobile applications remains limited in comparison to desktop browsers. Therefore, this article aims to explore this aspect.

Customer brand engagement (CBE) and customer brand experience (CBX) have been determined as crucial concepts for discovering interactive service settings. However, according to the definition of customer brand experience by Alloza (2008), brand experience does not necessarily encompass a state of motivation at all times; rather, it is based on reactions caused by brand-related stimuli, which forms the main basis of CBE (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014). CBE involves increased customer or consumer proactivity throughout service-related processes in interactive contexts (Brodie *et al.*, 2011). Engagement in tourism, encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral

aspects, positively influences CBX. According to our research, CBE's dimensions exert varying effects on CBX (Rather *et al.*, 2021). Islam *et al.* (2019) confirmed the critical role of customer engagement and its significant impact on brand experience. The findings revealed that customer engagement is a substantial antecedent to brand experience (Rasool *et al.*, 2021).

Unlike traditional marketing, customer brand engagement in the social media context grants customers the authority to make decisions instead of organizations. The study by Solem and Pedersen (2016) indicates that customer brand experience is significantly impacted by customer brand engagement within the realm of social media (Khan, 2023). Based on the previous discussion regarding the correlation between customer brand engagement and the customer brand experience, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

**H5: Customer brand engagement has a positive effect on customer brand experience.**

### **Customer Brand Engagement and Brand Loyalty**

The findings of Ozata and Lujja (2017) highlighted the individual consequences of consumer engagement on social platforms among university students in Turkey, considering CBE as a multidimensional concept. The findings suggest that the dimensions of emotional and behavioral engagement exert a notable influence on brand loyalty, whereas cognitive engagement does not demonstrate a significant influence.

A recent study conducted by Widarto (2018) in Indonesia revealed that customer engagement can lead to brand loyalty. Thus, researchers suggest that managers should interact with their existing and future clients on additional social media channels. Moreover, they emphasized that brand loyalty is positively influenced by continuous customer engagement post-sale (Sohail, 2023).

From 2000 to 2018, a mapping study and bibliometric analysis of 337 publications on brand management and consumer loyalty were conducted to provide a more comprehensive understanding for future research. Tartaglione *et al.* (2019) found that brand management is crucial for enhancing loyalty along with the introduction of new approaches, including but not limited to brand loyalty, customer brand engagement, brand equity, and brand communities.

Sadek and El Mehelmi (2020) demonstrated that brand engagement significantly and directly improves the online brand experience. Furthermore, it has been shown that customer behavioral outcomes, particularly those related to brand satisfaction, trust, and loyalty, are significantly and positively impacted by online brand experiences. Stated differently, the bank can more effectively foster client satisfaction, build trust, and promote customer loyalty by raising CBE, since it offers a unique online brand experience. Consequently, the study validated the hypothesis and concluded that customer brand engagement significantly affects brand loyalty. According to France *et al.* (2016), it is expected that a customer extensively engaged with the brand's offerings will influence their loyalty toward the brand.

Brand loyalty is significantly influenced by the engagement of the customer. Research has revealed that variables such as brand trust and brand love contribute to customer engagement, which in turn leads to brand loyalty (Omran, 2021). In the smartphone industry, consumer engagement dimensions substantially impact brand loyalty, which further influences positive word-of-mouth and repurchase intentions (Wardhana & Susilawaty, 2021). These findings emphasize the significance of encouraging consumer brand interaction to strengthen brand loyalty across various industries (Khan *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, the proposed research hypothesis is:

**H6: Customer brand engagement has a positive effect on brand loyalty.**

### **Customer Brand Engagement and Brand Trust**

Brand trust is "a sense of security that the customer has while interacting alongside the company, built on the assumption that the brand is dependable and accountable for the well-being and desires of the consumer" (Ha & Perks, 2005).

Afaq *et al.* (2022) asserted that the development of business technology through computer-based education supports the formation of lasting partnerships in expanding markets, allowing firms to achieve a dominant market position. In contemporary discussions, there is growing acknowledgment among academics that active consumer participation on online platforms signals a potential for improved relationships and heightened brand trust (Samarah *et al.*, 2021; Omran, 2021; Li *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, the relationship of brand engagement with brand trust is emphasized (Nyadzayo *et al.*, 2020).

According to Chou *et al.* (2023), using social media platforms for fostering customer involvement possesses the potential to alleviate the adverse effects of a low-cost strategy on levels of commitment and trust implemented by LCAs. Hence, it can be argued that:

**H7: Customer brand engagement has a positive effect on brand trust.**

### **Customer Brand Experience and Brand Loyalty**

Brand loyalty has been proposed as another consequence of customer brand experience (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). Most early studies as well as current research focus on how customer brand experience influences behavior, given its significant impact on brand loyalty. According to the current research, brand loyalty is described as a consistent dedication to buy a favored service/product regularly over the long run; as a result, this causes repetitive particular brand or specific brand set purchase, in spite of environmental effects and promotional activities that are capable of stimulating switching behavior. Brand loyalty is substantially impacted by the customer brand experience (Santos & Schlesinger, 2021; Chung & Welty Peachey, 2022; Olaoke *et al.*, 2021; Yadav *et al.*, 2021). It influences both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty, with a stronger effect on the latter (Pratiwi *et al.*, 2021).

Brand experience positively and directly impacts perceived quality, brand trust, and brand loyalty (Akoglu & Ozbek, 2022). Furthermore, there is a positive impact of brand experience and brand love on brand loyalty (Angelina & Nurlinda, 2023). Behavioral loyalty is more significantly affected by brand experience than attitudinal loyalty (Beichen, 2022). The impact of brand experience is a key factor in determining brand loyalty (Revaldi et al., 2022). Additionally, customer experience is linked to brand loyalty (Kurhayadi et al., 2022). Hence, the proposed research hypothesis is:

**H8: customer brand experience has a positive effect on brand loyalty.**

### Customer Brand Experience and Brand Trust

Yu and Yuan (2019) investigated how social media customer experiences can promote a brand's credibility among South Korean and Chinese clients. The results indicated that a favorable customer brand experience is essential for enhancing positive brand trust. Brand loyalty is significantly affected by customer brand experience and brand trust. Several research findings highlighted a direct positive impact of customer brand experience on brand trust (Beichen, 2022; Wang et al., 2019; Pratiwi et al., 2021). Moreover, customer brand experience has been recognized as the primary driver influencing brand trust (Siqueira et al., 2023).

Positive customer experiences enhance brand trust (Harjanto et al., 2021; Mei et al., 2021). The pivotal role of brand experience in building brand trust has been emphasized (Kumar & Mokha, 2021). Wijayanti et al. (2023) confirm the strong positive effect of brand experience on building brand trust. Therefore, the following can be formulated:

**H9: Customer brand experience has a positive effect on brand trust.**

According to the previously presented literature and identified relationships, Figure 1 represents the proposed research model. The proposed framework of the research is outlined as follows:

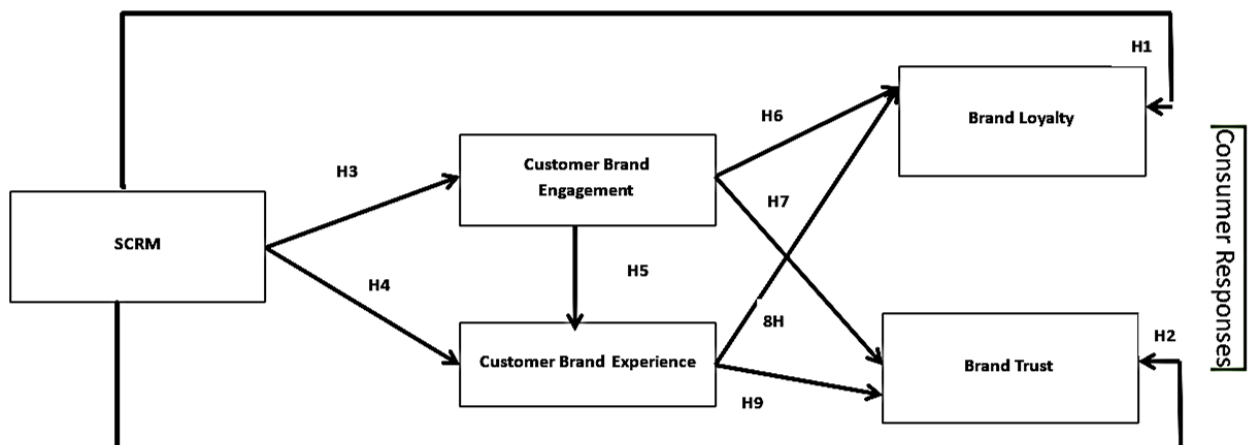


Figure 1: Proposed Research Model



### 3. Research Design

#### 3.1 Participants and Procedures

The study employed a convenience sampling strategy to gather primary data, since a comprehensive sampling frame including all social media users in Egypt was not accessible. The population of this research comprises consumers from the four major Egyptian mobile telecom operators. The telecommunications industry is dominated by four large corporations: Vodafone, Orange, and Etisalat, from the private sector, and the newly formed WE, from the public sector. Only consumers who actively utilize social media channels were included in the study. The researcher distributed 600 online questionnaires using Google Forms via Facebook, Messenger, and WhatsApp groups, resulting in 456 responses, representing 76% of the total.

The sample is representative of several age groups; among these, 30.8% are in the 18–25 age range, which might reflect the characteristics of Egyptian Facebook users (Socialbakers, 2014). The individual's monthly income represents the purchasing power of the respondent. About 41.2% of the sample's participants have a monthly income of less than 5000 EGP. This may be related to the fact that the age segment comprising the majority of Facebook users in the sample falls within the 18- 34 range.

#### 3.2 Measures

The questionnaire was divided into four sections, rated by the degree to which each statement was agreed or disagreed with, from (1) strongly agree to (5) strongly disagree. SCRM is assessed by five items borrowed from Arora *et al.* (2021). A five-point Likert scale was employed in this research. The measurement of customer brand engagement was adapted from Hollebeek *et al.* (2014) ten-item scale. Customer brand experience is measured using 12 statements cited from Brakus *et al.* (2009). Brand trust is evaluated through nine items across its two dimensions which are: competence and benevolence (Li & Petrick, 2008). Brand loyalty is measured by four items across its two dimensions: purchase brand loyalty and attitudinal brand loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). In addition, the final section of the questionnaire measured the demographic information of the sample.

#### 3.3 Analyses

AMOS25 software (Analysis of Moment Structures) is used to verify structural equation models (SEMs) (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). The most widely used approach, maximum likelihood, was applied to estimate the model (Bollen, 1989). A number of goodness-of-fit indices were reported by AMOS, and were utilized to assess the model's fit. They include chi-square (Bollen, 1989), which is essentially a measure of fit index; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) (Tucker & Lewis, 1973), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (Brown & Cudek, 1993).

#### 4. Results Reliability and Validity

The degree to which a variable, or combination of variables, is consistent in what it is intended to measure is known as “Reliability”. When several measurements are conducted, the values of the reliability measures should remain constant (Hair *et al.*, 1998; Sekaran & Bougie, 2003). The reliability indicator, Cronbach's coefficient alpha, has a range of 0 to 1. Higher reliability is indicated by values closer to 1. Values between 0.60 and 0.70 generally represent the acceptable lower threshold (Hair *et al.*, 1998). The entire model's unobserved variables exhibit high Cronbach's alpha values, indicating that they are reliable, as demonstrated in Table 1, which presents the Cronbach's alpha for each variable item as determined by convergent validity tests. Notably, all Cronbach's alpha variables are higher than 0.7, with exceptions. This aligns with the standards outlined by Hair *et al.* (1998).

**Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha**

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM)	5	0.818
Customer brand engagement (CBE) Cognition	3	0.747
Customer brand engagement (CBE) Affection	4	0.832
Customer brand engagement (CBX) Activation	3	0.770
Customer Brand Experience (CBX) Sensorial	2	0.766
Customer Brand Experience (CBX) Affective	2	0.770
Customer Brand Experience (CBX) Intellectual	2	0.700
Customer Brand Experience (CBX) Behavioral	2	0.760
Customer Brand Experience (CBX) Social	4	0.889
Brand Trust (BT) Competence	4	0.897
Brand Trust (BT) Benevolence	5	0.850
Purchase Brand Loyalty (PBL)	2	0.845
Attitudinal Brand Loyalty (ABL)	2	0.850

The convergent validity was evaluated by the researcher using factor analysis, specifically principal component analysis (PCA). The use of the orthogonal rotation approach, namely varimax, was employed in order to enhance the distinctiveness and clarity of factor loadings. The findings of the present research include the Eigenvalues, average variance extracted (AVE), Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure, Bartlett's test, and the factor loadings of the formative variables. The results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test indicate that all values are within the permissible range and statistically significant for the Bartlett test at a significance level of 0.00. All AVE values exceed 50%. All factor loadings surpass the established threshold of 0.3, indicating satisfactory levels of association between the observed variables and their respective latent factors. Additionally, every Eigenvalue exceeded the requirement of 1, suggesting that a substantial amount of the overall variation was explained by each factor in the data, as demonstrated in Table 2.

**Table 2: Results of EFA & CFA**

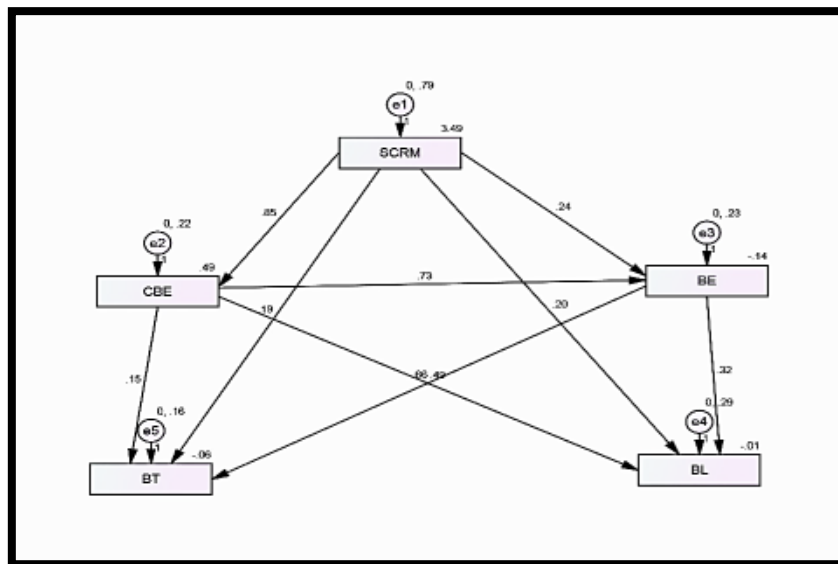
Variables	Eigen Values	AVE%	KMO *Bartlett Sig.	Factor Loading
<b>Social Customer Relationship Management (SCRM)</b>	2.958	59.17%	0.801*	
SCRM1				0.745
SCRM2				0.808
SCRM3				0.800
SCRM4				0.710
SCRM5				0.778
<b>Customer brand engagement (CBE) Cognition</b>	2.003	66.77%	0.653*	
CBEC1				0.829
CBEC2				0.748
CBEC3				0.870
<b>Customer brand engagement (CBE) Affection</b>	2.523	63.07%	0.769*	
CBEA1				0.841
CBEA2				0.861
CBEA3				0.852
CBEA4				0.590
<b>Customer brand engagement (CBE) Activation</b>	2.196	73.20%	0.718*	
Act1				0.856
Act2				0.860
Act3				0.851
<b>Customer Brand Experience (CBX) Sensorial</b>	1.636	81.60%	0.500*	
Sen1				0.905
Sen2				0.905
<b>Customer Brand Experience (CBX) Affective</b>	1.645	82.20%	0.500*	
Aff1				0.823
Aff2				0.823
<b>Customer Brand Experience (CBX) Intellectual</b>	1.544	77.19%	0.500*	
Intell1				0.772
Intell2				0.772
<b>Customer Brand Experience (CBX) Behavioral</b>	1.622	81.108	0.500*	
Beh1				0.901
Beh2				0.901
<b>Customer Brand Experience (CBX) Social</b>	3.096	77.90%	0.848*	
Social1				0.884
Social2				0.87
Social3				0.874
Social4				0.890
<b>Consumer Brand Trust (CBT) Competence</b>	5.719	71.10%	0.947*	
Com1				0.849
Com2				0.837
Com3				0.843
Com4				0.856
<b>Consumer Brand Trust (CBT) Benevolence</b>	3.091	77.64%	0.837*	
Ben1				0.759
Ben2				0.780
Ben3				0.797
Ben4				0.858
Ben5				0.767
<b>Purchase Brand Loyalty (PBL)</b>	1.735	86.74%	0.500*	
Pbl1				0.931
Pbl2			0.500*	0.931
<b>Attitudinal Brand Loyalty (ABL)</b>	1.747	87.32%		
Ab11				0.873
Ab12				0.873

## 4.1 Model Fit Indices

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) has been applied to evaluate the research model fit indices. SEM is a multivariate method that simultaneously estimates a number of interconnected dependent relationships by integrating aspects of factor analysis and multiple regression. It enables researchers to develop and modify theoretical models (Gaskin, 2012; Hair *et al.*, 1998).

Model fit includes three types of fit measures: absolute fit, which indicates how well the entire model explains the the observed correlation matrix; incremental fit, which compares the proposed model with a standard model, most frequently the null model; and parsimonious fit measures, which connects the model's goodness-of-fit to the number of estimated coefficients required to achieve this degree of fit (to diagnose “over-fitting” due to an excessive number of coefficients) (Schermelleh-Engel *et al.*, 2003; Hair *et al.*, 1998).

Table 3 represents the fit indices of the research model. The model demonstrates a very good fit, according to the fit indices presented in Table3. Figure 2 illustrates the research model's standardized estimates using SEM.



**Figure 2: Standardized Estimates of the Research Model Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)**

## 4.2 Results of Hypotheses Testing

This section is dedicated to the examination and evaluation of the research hypotheses, with the aim of determining which should be accepted or rejected. Given that the hypotheses under investigation include several interconnected variables that can be measured quantitatively, the researcher applied a statistical technique called structural equation modelling (SEM) to analyze and assess these variables. Table 3 presents the outcomes of unstandardized estimates (Unstand.), standardised estimates (Stand.), standard error (SE), critical ratio (CR), and P-value for the discussed direct relationships.

**Table 3: Some Fit Measures of the Overall Structured Model**

Goodness-of-fit Measures	Model Results	Levels of Acceptable Fit
<b>Absolute fit measures</b>		
Likelihood ratio chi-square (significance level)	146.097 (0.000)	A statistical test of significance was provided.
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.888 (0.000)	Value ranges from 0 (poor fit) to 1 (perfect fit). Higher values indicate better fit, but no absolute threshold
Root means square residual (RMR)	0.048	Zero indicates a perfect fit, and less than 0.09 can be considered a good fit.
Root means square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.058	It is the discrepancy per degree of freedom. Acceptable values under 0.08.
<b>Incremental fit measures</b>		
Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	0.902	It is GFI adjusted by the ratio of degrees of freedom for the model to the degree of freedom for the null model. Recommended level is >0.9.
Normed fit index (NFI)	0.888	It is a relative comparison of the model to the null model. It ranges from 0 (not fit at all) to 1 (perfect fit). Recommended level is >0.9.
Tucker – Lewis index (TLI)	0.942	It is the non-normed index. Recommended level is >0.9.
Relative fit index (RFI)	0.44	It ranges from 0 (poor fit) to 1 (perfect fit). A higher value indicates better fit.
Incremental fit index (IFI)	0.889	It ranges from 0 (poor fit) to 1 (perfect fit). A higher value indicates better fit.
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.888	It ranges from 0 (poor fit) to 1 (perfect fit). A higher value indicates better fit.

The author assumed a confidence level of 0.95. Therefore, a significance level of 0.05 was deemed acceptable, and any P-value above this threshold was deemed statistically insignificant and excluded. According to Schermelleh-Engel et al. (2003) and Hair et al. (1998), the critical ratio (CR) serves as a z-statistic for estimating values that are different from zero. In order to achieve statistical significance at a level of 0.05 or below, the absolute value of the CR should be equal to or greater than 1.96.

To test the research hypothesis, AMOS SEM sequential structural modelling was conducted. The analysis results revealed the following:

**H1: SCRM has a positive effect on brand loyalty.**

Table 4 demonstrates that the impact of SCRM on brand loyalty (BL) ( $\beta = 0.203$ , CR = 3.048,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H1 is accepted.

**H2: SCRM has a positive effect on brand trust.**

SCRM has statistical positive significant effect on brand trust (BT) ( $\beta = 0.186$ , CR = 3.779,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H2 is accepted.

**H3: SCRM has a positive effect on customer brand engagement.**

As mentioned in Table 4, there is a significant impact of SCRM on CBE ( $\beta = 0.85$ , CR = 33.405,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H3 is accepted.

**H4: SCRM has a positive effect on customer brand experience.**

As mentioned in Table 4, there is a significant impact of SCRM on BE ( $\beta = 0.86$ , CR = 26.852,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H4 is accepted.

**H5: Customer brand engagement has a positive effect on customer brand experience.**

As mentioned in Table 4, there is a significant impact of CBE on BE ( $\beta = 0.732$ , CR = 7.207,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H5 is accepted.

**H6: Customer brand engagement has a positive effect on brand loyalty.**

As mentioned in Table 4, there is a significant impact of CBE on BL ( $\beta = 0.488$ , CR = 8.861,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H6 is accepted.

**H7: Customer brand engagement has a positive effect on brand trust.**

As mentioned in Table 4, there is a significant impact of CBE on BT ( $\beta = 0.152$ , CR = 3.732,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H7 is accepted.

**H8: Customer brand experience has a positive effect on brand loyalty.**

As mentioned in Table 4, there is a significant impact of BE on BL ( $\beta = 0.322$ , CR = 7.356,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H8 is accepted.

**H9: Customer brand experience has a positive effect on brand trust.**

As mentioned in Table 4, there is a significant impact of BE on BT ( $\beta = 0.662$ , CR = 20.467,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H9 is accepted.

**Table 4: Regression Weights (Standardized and Unstandardized Estimates)**

Hypotheses	Dependents Variables		Independent Variable	Standardized Estimate	Unstandardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
H1	BL	<---	SCRM	0.18	0.203	0.067	3.048	0.002
H2	BT	<---	SCRM	0.171	0.186	0.049	3.779	***
H3	BE	<---	SCRM	0.791	0.86	0.032	26.852	***
H4	CBE	<---	SCRM	0.849	0.85	0.025	33.405	***
H5	BE	<---	CBE	0.049	0.732	14.85	7.207	***
H6	BL	<---	CBE	0.432	0.488	0.055	8.861	***
H7	BT	<---	CBE	0.14	0.152	0.041	3.732	***
H8	BL	<---	BE	0.309	0.322	0.044	7.356	***
H9	BT	<---	BE	0.662	0.662	0.032	20.467	***

## 5. Discussion of the Findings

The first hypothesis **H1** which generally stated “SCRM has a positive effect on loyalty” was supported. This indicates that SCRM positively affects brand loyalty. In the present study, understanding the nature of social media interaction within brand communities is critical for building effective SCRM, as it can positively impact brand loyalty, which aligns with Minallah *et al.* (2023), Marmat (2021), Arianty and Marfah (2023), Yeşim *et al.* (2017), and Khan *et al.* (2022).

The second research hypothesis aimed to investigate the impact of SCRM on trust. The acceptance of hypothesis **H2** supports the notion that SCRM influences brand trust. It emphasizes that brand communication can occur via social media, enabling the interaction and compliance with customers, which can further enhance brand trust. This finding is consistent with Wardhana and Susilawaty (2021), Puspaningrum (2020), Sohail *et al.* (2020), Alanazi (2023), and Mahendri and Azah (2023) who emphasize that factors such as customer relationship management, customer value, and customer happiness play significant roles in fostering customer trust (Jain *et al.*, 2019).

The acceptance of hypothesis **H3** supports the idea that SCRM positively impacts customer brand engagement, allowing organizations to enhance engagement by leveraging social media platforms. Integrating internet and social media into CRM systems facilitates personalized services, thereby fostering customer satisfaction and loyalty. The widespread adoption of online platforms, influenced by the internet and social media, reshapes consumer engagement, emphasizing the correlation between CRM, social media, and brand loyalty. This finding is supported by Wang (2021), Dewnarain *et al.* (2021), Kumarapeli *et al.* (2016), Gu *et al.* (2017), Özkan Yıldırım and Bayraktar (2019), Afaq *et al.* (2022), and Ndhlovu and Maree (2023).

The acceptance of hypothesis **H4** supports the positive impact of SCRM on CBX, suggesting that SCRM can promote brand experience through the use of social media and technology, facilitating interaction with customers and co-creation of value. This finding corroborates the works of Sigala (2018) and Ejaz *et al.* (2014), confirming the role of social media in providing companies with insights, facilitating their engagement with customers through online communities and conversations. SCRM aims to cultivate robust connections with online users via the provision of positive experiences with the organization's brand, offerings, and services. The primary objective of SCRM is to transform an organization's social media connections into loyal customers (VanLooy, 2022).

Hypothesis **H5** confirms the positive impact of customer brand engagement on customer brand experience. Hollebeek *et al.* (2020) argued that customer brand experience is an outcome of customer brand engagement. Customer brand engagement can support customer brand experience despite an individual's propensity to socialize online, as customers are motivated to engage, interact, and derive benefits from others on the brand page. This finding is supported by Satar *et al.* (2023), Sukendia *et al.* (2021), Ahmed *et al.* (2022), and Lim and Rasul (2022).

By accepting hypothesis **H6**, the study reveals that CBE significantly supports BL, establishing a strong relationship between customers and the brand. This aligns with Khan and Saeed (2023) and Sujana *et al.* (2023), emphasizing the positive correlation between heightened customer involvement and loyalty, particularly when engaging through social media. Various dimensions of engagement, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects, contribute to building brand loyalty (Perez Benegas & Zanfardini, 2023; Wijayanti *et al.*, 2023; Tuti & Sulistia, 2022). Researchers and managers advocate for focusing on existing customers to improve identity, experience, engagement, and behavioral goals for ensuring sustained success in the market (Chairunnisa & Ruswanti, 2023).

The support of hypothesis **H7** reveals the influence of customer brand engagement on brand trust, showing that CBE can support brand trust by creating positive interactions and experiences with the brand. When customers actively engage with a brand through social networking sites, such as following the brand's page and participating in brand-related activities, they perceive the brand as more interactive and involved. Furthermore, this result is corroborated by Liang (2022), Santos and Schlesinger (2021), Chung and Welty Peachy (2022), Olaoke *et al.* (2021), Yadav *et al.* (2021), and Sujana *et al.* (2022).

Hypothesis **H8** demonstrates the effect of customer brand experience on brand loyalty, aligning with the findings of Liang (2022), Mauricio and Schlesinger (2021), Chung and Welty Peachy (2022), and Yadav *et al.* (2021). These studies emphasize that brand experience fosters enduring brand loyalty through emotional connections and strong associations. Iqbal *et al.* (2023) further support this conclusion, highlighting a significant enhancement in brand loyalty resulting from brand experiences. Additionally, Bouziane *et al.* (2023) note that individuals creating an emotional bond with a brand are personally invested, increasing the likelihood of maintaining a robust brand relationship.

Hypothesis **H9** underscores the significant positive impact of customer brand experience on brand trust; a finding consistent with Iqbal *et al.* (2023) who reported that the identification of a constructive emotional experience has been recognized as a primary factor in driving customer behavior, specifically in terms of brand trust, customer retention, and loyalty (Maura *et al.*, 2022). This implies that the success of a brand is contingent upon the interplay between brand experience and trust, since these two factors are intricately interconnected. Furthermore, this result is supported by ElMekebbaty (2020), Harjanto *et al.* (2021), and Portal *et al.* (2019).

## **5.1 Research Implications**

### **5.1.1 Academic Implications**

The present study contributes to the existent literature on SCRM through delivering guidance to scholars on how to effectively engage consumers with telecommunication businesses, ultimately leading to improved customer loyalty. In the current highly competitive business environment, cultivating a loyal customer base



provides a significant competitive edge for companies. Exploring the effect of SCRM on brand trust and loyalty presents several significant academic implications.

First, it contributes to the progress of knowledge in the customer relationship management field by offering insights into the changing dynamics of customer-brand interactions in the digital age.

Second, examining the effect of SCRM on brand trust and loyalty can aid in the development of best practices in customer relationship management within the framework of social media and digital platforms.

Third, academic research on this topic can fulfill the gaps in current SCRM theories and practices highlighted by several authors such as Jalal et al. (2021) and Dewnarian et al. (2019). Through bridging these gaps, academic research can establish a foundation for the continuous evolution and improvement of CRM practices in the digital age.

Finally, investigating the impact of SCRM on brand trust and loyalty has the potential to generate valuable academic contributions that enrich both theoretical understanding and practical application regarding the field of customer relationship management.

### **5.1.2 Practical Implications**

The study recommends marketers prioritize investments in strategies that actively involve consumers and cultivate positive customer brand experiences across various touchpoints to optimize customer loyalty. Tailored, interactive, and captivating initiatives help customers develop a sense of familiarity and connection with the telecommunications company and its offerings.

The findings of this study suggest that SCRM has a positive impact on customer brand engagement and experience. Consequently, telecommunication businesses should consider allocating their resources toward improving SCRM in order to promote customer brand, customer experience, and engagement, resulting in enhanced brand trust and loyalty.

These organizations should prioritize strengthening the connection between customers and brands by conducting thorough consumer research and developing brand communication strategies that align with consumer preferences, interests, and values. Additionally, companies should observe the quality of their products to build trust among customers. They should also consider the characteristics and content of their brand page posts, as they have a positive impact on customer attitudes and engagement. Furthermore, they should focus on reinforcing customer brand engagement with their brand through digital marketing channels and strategies to ensure brand loyalty by providing customers with positive experiences, enabling organizations to differentiate themselves from competitors and promote value co-creation.

## **5.2 Research Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

While this particular study contributes to the existing literature on customer engagement, it is necessary to acknowledge its limitations, which consequently present potential opportunities for future research.

First, this research focuses solely on the Egyptian culture and its sector of telecommunication service. Hence, it is recommended that additional research be conducted, including replicating our study methodology in other cultural contexts and service industries, such as banking and hospitality, to further substantiate the validity of the proposed model.

Second, the study exclusively examined Facebook as a social media platform. Therefore, future investigations should explore the impact of other social networks on customer involvement with business pages.

Third, among the study's limitations is its exclusive reliance on quantitative data; therefore, future research is required to adopt a mixed methods approach.

In conclusion, this study exclusively analyzed current consumers who voluntarily engage with specific brands. Future studies should expand their focus to involve prospective customers. Additionally, the cross-sectional design used in the current research poses a limitation, suggesting that future studies explore consumer attributes such as age and gender, and their impact on individuals' involvement with brand sites on social media platforms.

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