


# Development and Validation of a Branding Model in Social Media Considering Users' Motivations for Content Creation and Sharing



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**Abstract:** This study aims to develop and validate a branding model in social media that considers users' motivations for content creation and sharing, integrating content marketing strategies, brand competitiveness, customer trust, and brand value. This research employs an exploratory mixed-methods approach, consisting of qualitative and quantitative phases. In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 marketing experts to identify key branding factors, analyzed using thematic analysis and coding methods. The quantitative phase involved surveying 384 social media users through a researcher-designed questionnaire based on qualitative findings. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to validate the proposed branding model, assessing relationships between content marketing strategy, content creation, brand competitiveness, customer experience, and brand trust. Results indicate that content marketing strategy significantly influences content creation and sharing ( $\beta = 0.85$ ,  $t = 9.01$ ) and customer experience management ( $\beta = 0.72$ ,  $t = 8.41$ ). Content creation positively impacts brand value creation ( $\beta = 0.36$ ,  $t = 2.42$ ), while customer experience enhances brand value ( $\beta = 0.51$ ,  $t = 6.66$ ). Brand value creation strengthens brand competitiveness ( $\beta = 0.88$ ,  $t = 9.37$ ) and customer satisfaction and trust ( $\beta = 0.79$ ,  $t = 8.65$ ). Furthermore, brand competitiveness ( $\beta = 0.58$ ,  $t = 6.05$ ) and customer satisfaction and trust ( $\beta = 0.36$ ,  $t = 2.94$ ) positively influence branding success in social media. The model achieved an acceptable fit, with RMSEA = 0.033, SRMR = 0.038, and GFI, NFI, and TLI all exceeding 0.90. The findings highlight the central role of user engagement in social media branding, emphasizing the importance of content marketing strategies, brand competitiveness, and trust-building mechanisms. Effective branding in social media requires interactive and personalized engagement strategies that align with user motivations for content creation and sharing.

**Keywords:** Social media branding, content marketing strategy, user-generated content, brand competitiveness, customer trust, structural equation modeling.

## 1. Introduction

User-generated content has emerged as a critical driver of brand engagement, shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchasing decisions. Research suggests that users engage in content creation and sharing due to intrinsic motivations such as self-expression, identity reinforcement, and social recognition, as well as extrinsic

factors like incentives and platform-specific engagement mechanisms [1, 2]. The interactive nature of social media fosters value co-creation, where users contribute to brand narratives by sharing experiences, providing feedback, and endorsing products [3, 4]. This co-creation process not only enhances brand credibility but also strengthens consumer-brand relationships, driving long-term loyalty [5]. However, the effectiveness of content-based branding strategies depends on the extent to which brands understand and harness users' motivations for content creation and dissemination.

One of the key motivations for content creation is psychological satisfaction, which influences user engagement on digital platforms. Amjadi and John (2023) highlight that individuals derive emotional gratification from content re-creation, particularly on video-sharing platforms [6]. The presence of interactive features such as likes, comments, and shares further reinforces user participation, fostering a sense of belonging within online communities [7]. Additionally, content creators are influenced by perceived brand authenticity and alignment with personal values, which dictate their willingness to share branded content [8]. Thus, a well-designed content marketing strategy must align with users' psychological needs and engagement behaviors to maximize brand visibility.

Social media branding is also influenced by the credibility and trustworthiness of shared content. With the proliferation of generative AI tools, users have become more critical of the authenticity of digital content [9]. The ability of brands to maintain trust through transparent communication and user-centric content strategies is pivotal in an era where misinformation can undermine brand reputation. Hofman-Kohlmeyer (2020) argues that content authenticity plays a central role in users' decisions to share branded messages. When brands foster transparent and ethical engagement, users are more likely to become brand advocates, amplifying brand messages across digital platforms. This underscores the importance of integrating trust-building mechanisms within content marketing strategies to enhance brand credibility [10].

The competitive landscape of social media branding is further shaped by the evolving dynamics of influencer marketing. Influencers, who act as intermediaries between brands and consumers, play a significant role in content dissemination and audience engagement [11]. Their ability to shape brand perception hinges on their authenticity and alignment with audience interests. As influencers drive branded content creation, brands must develop strategic partnerships that enhance message reach and engagement while preserving credibility. The interaction between brand-generated and influencer-generated content highlights the necessity for a cohesive branding approach that integrates multiple content sources to strengthen brand positioning [12].

Content marketing strategies in social media must also consider platform-specific engagement mechanisms that influence user interaction and content visibility. Deshmane and Barriola (2024) emphasize that short-form video content has become a dominant branding tool due to its high engagement potential. Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram leverage algorithm-driven content distribution, where user interactions dictate content reach and visibility [13]. The success of branded content on these platforms depends on its ability to align with user preferences and consumption patterns. Similarly, gamified interactions, where users are incentivized to engage with branded content, have been shown to enhance user participation and brand loyalty [14]. These insights suggest that branding strategies must be tailored to platform-specific engagement dynamics to maximize their effectiveness.

The role of artificial intelligence (AI) in shaping content marketing strategies has also gained prominence. AI-powered tools enable brands to analyze user preferences, personalize content delivery, and optimize engagement strategies [15]. AI-driven content generation has the potential to enhance branding efforts by providing tailored

recommendations and interactive experiences. However, as Sahasra et al. (2024) note, the integration of AI in branding must be approached with caution, as excessive reliance on automated content generation can diminish brand authenticity and user trust [16]. Therefore, a balanced approach that combines AI-powered insights with human-driven content creation is essential for maintaining brand credibility and audience engagement.

Consumer trust and satisfaction play a crucial role in shaping brand competitiveness in social media environments. Research by Wesselman et al. (2020) indicates that users are more likely to engage with brands that demonstrate transparency, responsiveness, and customer-centric communication [17]. Effective brand storytelling, where user experiences are integrated into branding narratives, enhances consumer trust and fosters emotional connections with the brand [18]. Additionally, Liu and Liu (2021) highlight that anxiety-driven online communities rely on content authenticity and peer validation to establish trust, reinforcing the importance of community-driven branding approaches [19]. These findings suggest that brands must actively engage with consumers, address their concerns, and foster meaningful interactions to build a loyal customer base.

The effectiveness of branding strategies in social media is also contingent on firms' ability to adapt to changing user expectations and technological advancements. Digital platforms continuously evolve, introducing new content formats and engagement tools that reshape branding strategies [20]. Triono et al. (2021) emphasize that user involvement in content creation enhances brand equity by fostering a sense of ownership and community attachment. The ability to integrate user contributions into branding efforts not only strengthens brand identity but also enhances consumer engagement and loyalty [21]. As digital platforms introduce new interaction paradigms, brands must remain agile in their branding strategies to sustain long-term competitiveness.

The rise of the sharing economy has also influenced branding in social media, where consumers actively participate in shaping brand narratives. Ding (2023) argues that virtual knowledge communities facilitate value co-creation, where users contribute insights, share recommendations, and influence brand perception. This collaborative branding approach shifts traditional branding control from firms to consumers, necessitating a more interactive and participatory branding strategy [4]. The ability to foster user collaboration and engagement is crucial in establishing a strong brand presence in digital environments. Given these insights, this study aims to develop and validate a branding model for social media that considers users' motivations for content creation and sharing.

## 2. Methodology

The study adopts an applied research approach, as it focuses on providing a practical branding model for social media. From a methodological perspective, it follows an exploratory mixed-methods design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative analyses. The qualitative phase aims to identify key factors and develop the initial model, while the quantitative phase is employed to validate the proposed model.

The qualitative phase involves semi-structured interviews with experts in marketing and social media. These interviews serve as the foundation for identifying essential variables and structuring the preliminary branding model. In the quantitative phase, a researcher-designed questionnaire is developed based on the identified indicators and the initial model. The questionnaire undergoes validation for reliability and validity before distribution, ensuring that the collected data accurately represent the constructs being studied.

Data collection aligns with the mixed-methods nature of the study. In the qualitative segment, data are gathered through in-depth interviews with industry experts, enabling the identification of key constructs for the branding model. In the quantitative segment, data are collected using a structured questionnaire designed based on the

qualitative findings. This two-step process ensures a comprehensive understanding of branding in social media by integrating expert opinions with empirical validation.

Data analysis in the qualitative phase is conducted using thematic analysis and theoretical coding. The interview transcripts are systematically coded using a three-step process: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. These coding stages facilitate the categorization of branding components and the development of a theoretical framework. To enhance accuracy and organization, MAXQDA software is utilized for qualitative data analysis.

In the quantitative phase, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is employed to assess the validity of the measurement instrument. The relationships between variables and the final branding model are tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). LISREL software is used to conduct the quantitative data analysis, allowing for simultaneous examination of causal relationships between observed and latent variables.

The study population in the qualitative phase consists of managers and specialists actively engaged in consulting firms with expertise in marketing. A total of 37 certified consulting firms have been selected for this research, ensuring that the most knowledgeable professionals contribute to model development. These firms include Pouya Fanavar Bahamad, Kavosh, Behbood Modiriyat Ofogh Modiriyat, Rayaneh Daran, Pouyandegan Imeni va Keyfiyat, Mohandesin Moshaver Parsian Houshmand Sar Amad, San Owj Pouyan Espanda, Faragzin Jonoub, Samaneh Saz Pouyan Modiriyat, Moravijan Bahrebari, Moshaveran Tose'e Ayandeh, Farayand Behbood Parsian, Rayvarzan Keyfiyat, Ta'aliyeh Porojeh Dahgam, Ravesh Sazan San'at, Pardazesh Samaneh Farbood, Rahyab Behineh, Rah Andish Mehvar Javid, Parman Pouyesh, Kavoshgaran Bahrebari Pouyaye Pars, Pazhouheshkadeh Tose'e Technoloji San'ati, Ta'avoni Sazman Modiriyat Edarat, Pazhouheshgaran Fan Gostar, Samaneh Sazan Rahjou, Raymand Rasha, Paroujekaran Kouroshe Persia, Moshaveran Saramad Kasb o Kar, Kain Samaneh, Hampay Tolid, Pishgam Pouyesh System, Behbood Arman Partak, Sazman Modiriyat San'ati, Nedak Gostar Iranian, Zir Sakht Gostar Ghaem, Modiriyat Tose'e Amid, Payam Avaran Keyfiyat Payah, Ta'aliyeh Gostar Toos, and Arman San'at Padmira.

The selection of experts in the qualitative phase follows a purposive and non-probability sampling approach. The study prioritizes individuals with extensive knowledge and expertise in branding within social media, ensuring the inclusion of professionals who can provide valuable insights. The sample size is determined based on theoretical saturation, meaning data collection continues until additional interviews do not yield new insights, ensuring a comprehensive and well-rounded branding model.

Experts are selected based on predefined criteria, including academic qualifications, professional experience, and managerial expertise. Participants must hold a degree in marketing, with a minimum requirement of a master's degree. Additionally, they must have at least ten years of experience in the marketing sector and at least five years of experience in managerial roles related to branding and social media marketing.

The study population in the quantitative phase includes all producers and consulting clients associated with the selected certified companies. These firms are chosen to ensure a diverse and comprehensive representation of branding strategies in social media. Given the indefinite size of the study population, the sample size is determined using Cochran's formula, a widely recognized statistical tool for determining optimal sample size in survey research.

After applying Cochran's formula, a sample size of 384 respondents is selected. The questionnaire is distributed among the chosen participants, ensuring that all subgroups within the study population are adequately represented. The sampling method for the quantitative phase follows a simple random sampling technique, ensuring an unbiased and representative dataset for validating the branding model.

### 3. Findings and Results

In the qualitative phase of this study, 11 experts with relevant expertise in marketing participated. The demographic composition of this group in terms of gender distribution indicates that 9 of the participants were male, while 2 were female. Regarding age distribution, 1 participant was under 35 years old, 3 were between 35 and 45 years old, and 7 were above 45 years old. In terms of educational background, 2 participants held a master's degree, while 9 possessed a doctoral degree, reflecting the high level of academic knowledge and expertise within the sample. Furthermore, an analysis of professional experience revealed that 5 experts had between 10 and 20 years of professional experience, while 6 had over 20 years of experience in marketing. These characteristics highlight that the selected sample possessed the necessary experience, knowledge, and expertise to provide reliable and valid data in alignment with the objectives of this study.

The gender distribution of respondents in the quantitative phase shows that 56% of the participants (216 individuals) were male, while 44% (168 individuals) were female. This distribution reflects a balanced representation of both genders within the research sample. The educational background of respondents indicates that 14.58% (56 individuals) had an associate degree or lower, 50.52% (194 individuals) held a bachelor's degree, and 34.90% (134 individuals) had completed postgraduate education (master's or doctoral degrees). This diversity in educational levels ensures a comprehensive and well-rounded sample. The age distribution of respondents reveals that 37% (142 individuals) were under the age of 35, 38% (145 individuals) were between 35 and 45 years old, and 25% (97 individuals) were aged 45 and above. This age distribution ensures broad coverage across different age groups within the study sample.

The qualitative findings of the study, based on thematic analysis, reveal several key categories and subcategories related to branding in social media, users' motivations for content creation and sharing, and competitive strategies. These categories were derived from the coding of expert interviews and highlight the fundamental elements necessary for developing an effective branding model in social media. The extracted themes are presented in the following table, which includes both the primary and secondary concepts identified in the qualitative phase.

**Table 1. Main and Subcategories**

Main Categories (Secondary Concepts)	Subcategories (Primary Concepts)
Branding in Social Media	Defining branding objectives in social media Establishing relationship marketing with customers Identifying media commonalities Implementing brand media strategies Reducing the risk of customer dissatisfaction Developing an online user platform for customers
Content Creation and Sharing	Socializing content Producing content based on customer demands Awareness of content marketing regulations Continuously generating engaging and user-friendly content Creating high-quality content
Brand Competitiveness	Paying attention to aesthetics and website modernity Identifying competitors' strengths and weaknesses Creating attractive brand visions Analyzing customer behavior and purchasing decisions Publishing advertisements at optimal times and across a broad audience Competing through promotional content production
Brand Value Creation	Brand personality Brand awareness

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Customer Satisfaction and Trust	Brand performance
	Brand image
	Perceived brand quality
	Enhancing customer interaction
	Customer loyalty
	Improving service quality
Customer Experience Management	Addressing customer needs
	Providing prompt and timely responses
	Engaging customers
	Customer orientation and centricity
Content Marketing Strategy	Understanding how customer experience elements influence perception
	Assessing customer needs
	Applying digital marketing strategies
	Developing marketing strategies
	Utilizing new information technologies
	Understanding customer behavioral characteristics

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The analysis of expert interviews highlights that branding in social media requires a structured approach that involves clearly defining branding objectives, establishing relationship marketing, and utilizing strategic media engagement. Experts emphasized that social media branding should not merely focus on visibility but must integrate strategies that foster long-term customer relationships and trust. The reduction of dissatisfaction risks and the development of interactive online platforms were also identified as key elements in achieving branding success.

The findings also indicate that content creation and sharing are driven by multiple factors, including socialization, customer demand, and adherence to marketing regulations. The necessity of consistently producing high-quality, engaging, and aesthetically appealing content was frequently mentioned by experts. Additionally, an awareness of regulatory considerations in content marketing was emphasized as a crucial factor in maintaining credibility and consumer trust in social media platforms.

Brand competitiveness emerged as another significant dimension, where experts highlighted the importance of analyzing competitors, creating appealing brand visions, and strategically timing advertisements. The ability to differentiate a brand through engaging promotional content was seen as a key driver in gaining a competitive edge. Furthermore, brand value creation was identified as a multidimensional construct encompassing brand personality, awareness, performance, image, and perceived quality, all of which contribute to consumer perception and brand loyalty.

Customer satisfaction and trust were underscored as pivotal to branding success, with experts pointing to factors such as customer interaction, service quality enhancement, and swift responsiveness to consumer needs. The role of customer experience management was also emphasized, with a focus on engagement strategies, understanding experiential elements, and identifying consumer preferences to refine brand interactions.

Finally, experts identified content marketing strategy as an essential element in the branding model, involving the application of digital marketing techniques, strategic planning, and leveraging emerging information technologies. Understanding customer behavior patterns was considered essential for designing effective marketing campaigns that resonate with target audiences.

Overall, the qualitative findings provide a comprehensive framework for branding in social media, grounded in expert insights and validated through thematic analysis. These findings serve as the foundation for the quantitative phase, which aims to further validate the identified branding model.

The quantitative findings of the study are based on descriptive statistical analysis, including measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode) and measures of dispersion (standard deviation, variance, and range). The data collected from 384 valid responses were analyzed to examine the distribution of responses regarding the research constructs. The results of the descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Constructs**

Research Variables	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Branding in Social Media	384	3.857	3.833	3.833	0.479	2.333	2.500	4.833
Content Creation and Sharing	384	3.709	3.667	3.667	0.510	2.500	2.500	5.000
Brand Competitiveness	384	3.584	3.600	3.800	0.596	2.800	2.000	4.800
Brand Value Creation	384	4.013	4.000	4.200	0.529	2.400	2.600	5.000
Customer Satisfaction and Trust	384	4.616	4.800	5.000	0.482	2.000	3.000	5.000
Customer Experience Management	384	4.563	4.750	4.750	0.464	2.250	2.750	5.000
Content Marketing Strategy	384	4.423	4.500	4.750	0.523	2.750	2.250	5.000

The analysis indicates that the mean values for all research constructs range between 3.5 and 4 on a five-point Likert scale. The median and mode values further confirm that most respondents selected moderate to high agreement levels, suggesting a positive inclination toward branding in social media, content creation and sharing, brand competitiveness, brand value creation, customer satisfaction and trust, customer experience management, and content marketing strategies. The relatively small range of variation, remaining below the 1–5 scale, suggests a high level of consensus among respondents regarding the importance of these constructs.

In terms of branding in social media, the mean score of 3.857, with a standard deviation of 0.479, indicates that respondents generally perceive branding strategies in social media as moderately to highly effective. Similarly, content creation and sharing received a mean score of 3.709, reflecting the recognition of its role in enhancing brand presence. Brand competitiveness, with a mean score of 3.584 and a slightly higher standard deviation of 0.596, shows a moderate but varied perception of competition within social media branding. Brand value creation scored 4.013, suggesting that respondents acknowledge the significance of establishing a strong brand identity. Customer satisfaction and trust obtained the highest mean value of 4.616, signifying its critical role in social media branding, followed closely by customer experience management at 4.563. Content marketing strategy also received a high score of 4.423, reinforcing the importance of strategic digital marketing efforts in branding.

To assess the normality of data distribution, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test was conducted, with skewness and kurtosis values calculated for each construct. The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Normality Test Results (Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test)**

Research Variables	N	Skewness	Kurtosis	KS Statistic	Significance
Branding in Social Media	384	0.030	0.035	0.132	0.136
Content Creation and Sharing	384	0.142	0.387	0.085	0.114
Brand Competitiveness	384	0.020	0.617	0.095	0.055
Brand Value Creation	384	0.294	0.555	0.107	0.213
Customer Satisfaction and Trust	384	0.470	0.614	0.240	0.082
Customer Experience Management	384	0.656	0.633	0.258	0.068
Content Marketing Strategy	384	0.384	0.443	0.191	0.208

The results indicate that in all cases, skewness and kurtosis values fall within an acceptable range, demonstrating that the data do not exhibit significant deviation from normality. Additionally, the significance values of the KS test

are all greater than 0.05, confirming that the data distribution follows a normal pattern. Given these findings, parametric statistical tests can be appropriately applied for further analysis.

The overall findings suggest a strong and consistent agreement among respondents on the importance of branding in social media and its associated factors. The descriptive and normality test results provide a solid foundation for further inferential analysis, enabling the validation of the proposed branding model using structural equation modeling (SEM).

The results of the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis confirm the hypothesized relationships among the research constructs. The standardized factor loading for the effect of content marketing strategy on content creation and sharing is 0.85, with a t-value of 9.01. Given that the t-value exceeds the critical threshold of 1.96 at a 95% confidence level, it can be concluded that content marketing strategy has a significant and positive impact on content creation and sharing. Similarly, the standardized factor loading for the effect of content marketing strategy on customer experience management is 0.72, with a t-value of 8.41, indicating a significant and positive relationship between these variables.

The effect of content creation and sharing on brand value creation is supported by a standardized factor loading of 0.36 and a t-value of 2.42, confirming a significant and positive relationship. Additionally, customer experience management has a positive and significant effect on brand value creation, with a standardized factor loading of 0.51 and a t-value of 6.66. Furthermore, the impact of brand value creation on brand competitiveness is strongly supported, as the standardized factor loading is 0.88 and the t-value is 9.37. The relationship between brand value creation and customer satisfaction and trust is also significant, with a standardized factor loading of 0.79 and a t-value of 8.65.

Brand competitiveness demonstrates a significant positive effect on social media branding, as indicated by a standardized factor loading of 0.58 and a t-value of 6.05. Similarly, customer satisfaction and trust positively influence social media branding, with a standardized factor loading of 0.36 and a t-value of 2.94. These findings collectively confirm that the proposed branding model for social media is statistically supported.

The final structural branding model for content-based social media branding is illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, representing standardized estimates and t-values, respectively.

**Table 4. Summary of Final Model Validation Results**

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Factor Loading	t-value	Result
Hypothesis 1	Content Marketing Strategy	Content Creation and Sharing	0.85	9.01	Supported
Hypothesis 2	Content Marketing Strategy	Customer Experience Management	0.72	8.41	Supported
Hypothesis 3	Content Creation and Sharing	Brand Value Creation	0.36	2.42	Supported
Hypothesis 4	Customer Experience Management	Brand Value Creation	0.51	6.66	Supported
Hypothesis 5	Brand Value Creation	Brand Competitiveness	0.88	9.37	Supported
Hypothesis 6	Brand Value Creation	Customer Satisfaction and Trust	0.79	8.65	Supported
Hypothesis 7	Brand Competitiveness	Social Media Branding	0.58	6.05	Supported
Hypothesis 8	Customer Satisfaction and Trust	Social Media Branding	0.36	2.94	Supported

The structural model was refined and achieved an acceptable level of fit in two iterations. The normalized chi-square value was calculated as 1.69, which falls within the acceptable range of 1 to 5, indicating a good model fit. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) values were 0.033 and 0.038, respectively, both below the threshold of 0.05, confirming the model's goodness of fit. Additionally, the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), Bentler-Bonett normed fit index (NFI), and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) were all greater than 0.90, further demonstrating the robustness of the proposed model.



These results confirm that the proposed model for branding in social media, which incorporates content marketing strategies, content creation, customer experience management, and brand competitiveness, is both statistically valid and practically applicable. The high model fit indices suggest that the relationships within the branding model effectively explain how social media branding is influenced by strategic marketing approaches and user engagement.

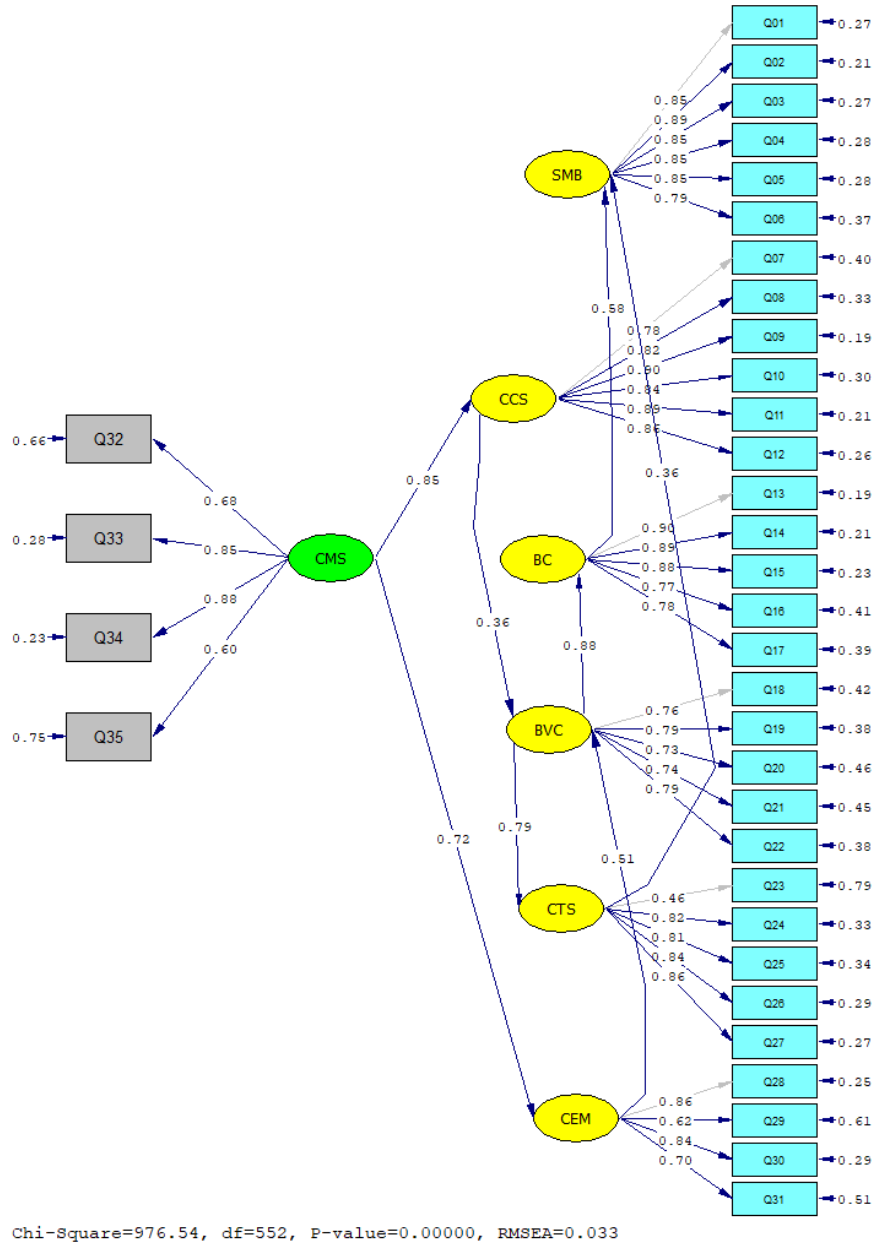


Figure 1. Model with Factor Loadings

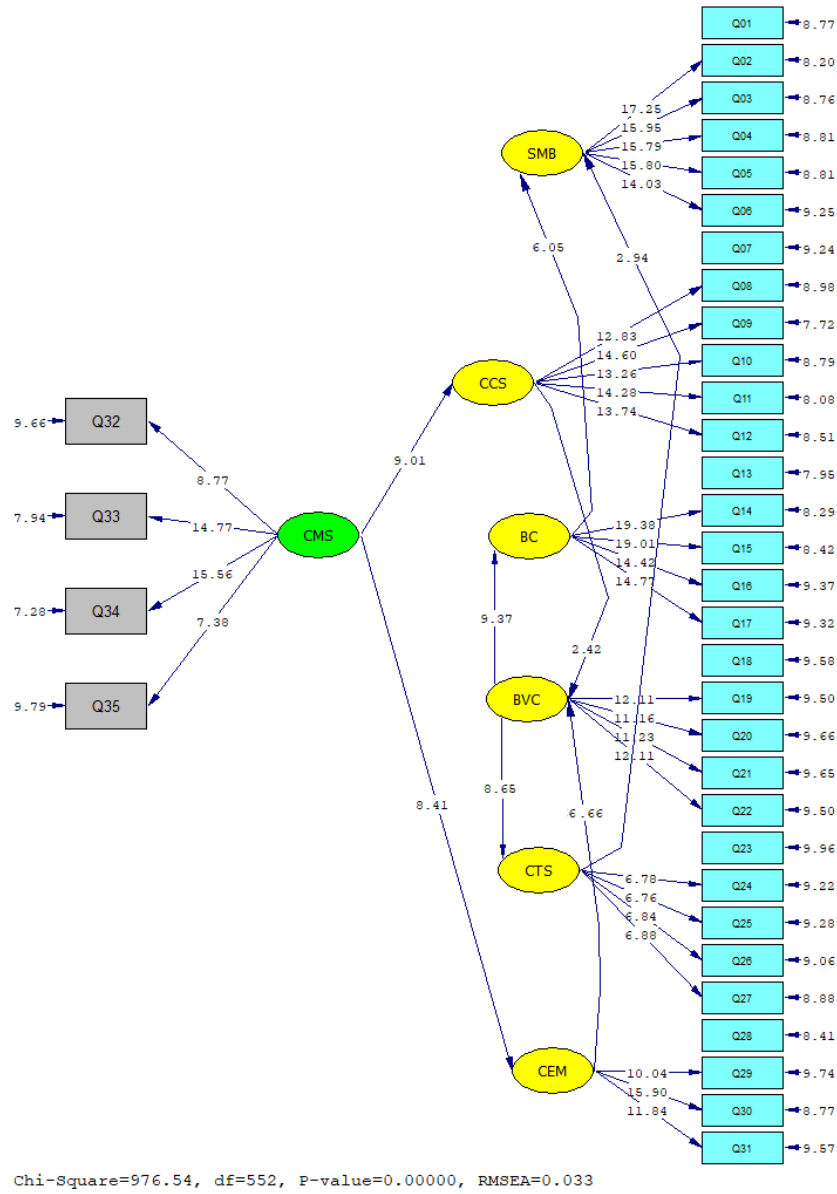


Figure 2. Model with t-values

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the intricate relationships between content marketing strategy, content creation and sharing, brand competitiveness, brand value, customer satisfaction and trust, and overall branding success in social media. The structural equation modeling results confirm that content marketing strategy significantly influences content creation and sharing ( $\beta = 0.85$ ,  $t = 9.01$ ), indicating that well-designed content marketing efforts encourage users to generate and share branded content. This aligns with previous research suggesting that user motivation for content creation is driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including psychological satisfaction, social recognition, and brand affiliation [2, 6, 22]. The role of strategic marketing in facilitating content production is further emphasized in studies on user-generated content (UGC), which highlight that digital platforms foster engagement through algorithm-driven visibility and interaction features [13].

The results also demonstrate that content marketing strategy has a direct positive impact on customer experience management ( $\beta = 0.72$ ,  $t = 8.41$ ). This supports the notion that effective content marketing fosters interactive brand experiences, engaging users beyond passive consumption [1, 19, 23]. Previous studies confirm that when brands create engaging and relevant content, consumers are more likely to participate in brand-related activities, further reinforcing the brand's presence in the digital sphere [18, 24]. Additionally, gamified interactions and AI-powered personalization have been identified as key drivers of engagement, enabling brands to tailor content to user preferences and enhance their digital experience [14, 15].

Another key finding is the significant positive relationship between content creation and sharing and brand value creation ( $\beta = 0.36$ ,  $t = 2.42$ ). This aligns with the concept that brand value is co-created through consumer participation in digital spaces [3, 4]. When consumers engage in producing and disseminating content related to a brand, they contribute to brand awareness, perceived authenticity, and trustworthiness [8]. The importance of UGC in shaping brand value has been highlighted in multiple studies, particularly in the context of digital brand communities where users collaboratively contribute to brand narratives [5]. Additionally, firms that integrate consumer contributions into their marketing strategies often experience enhanced consumer loyalty and stronger emotional connections with their brands [12].

Customer experience management also significantly influences brand value creation ( $\beta = 0.51$ ,  $t = 6.66$ ), reinforcing the argument that positive brand experiences foster brand equity. Previous research suggests that a seamless and engaging brand experience encourages users to identify with the brand, leading to stronger emotional connections and higher brand advocacy [17, 18]. Consumer trust plays a pivotal role in this process, as users are more likely to contribute content and endorse a brand when they perceive it as reliable and consumer-oriented [9]. Transparency in brand communication, ethical engagement, and personalized customer interactions have been identified as key factors in fostering trust and brand loyalty in digital environments [11].

Brand value creation was found to have a strong positive impact on brand competitiveness ( $\beta = 0.88$ ,  $t = 9.37$ ), suggesting that brands with high perceived value are better positioned in competitive digital landscapes. This finding aligns with previous studies demonstrating that brands with strong consumer engagement, high-quality content, and a well-defined digital presence outperform competitors in social media branding [21]. Research further supports the idea that competitive branding is increasingly influenced by digital presence, where brands must continuously adapt to evolving consumer expectations and technological advancements [20]. The ability to differentiate through innovative content strategies, influencer partnerships, and interactive experiences is crucial in establishing brand superiority in social media environments [11, 13].

The results also indicate that brand value creation positively influences customer satisfaction and trust ( $\beta = 0.79$ ,  $t = 8.65$ ). This underscores the importance of brand reputation and value perception in shaping consumer attitudes [3, 5]. Studies suggest that consumers are more likely to trust brands that engage them in meaningful ways, whether through personalized interactions, user-centric content strategies, or community-driven branding initiatives [25]. Additionally, trust in digital branding is heavily influenced by the credibility of shared content, as misinformation and AI-generated content raise concerns about authenticity [9]. Thus, brands must actively manage their online presence to maintain consumer confidence and reinforce positive brand associations.

Brand competitiveness was found to have a direct positive effect on branding in social media ( $\beta = 0.58$ ,  $t = 6.05$ ), confirming that competitive positioning plays a crucial role in digital branding success. Brands that leverage innovative digital strategies, actively engage consumers, and maintain a strong online presence are better positioned to establish long-term brand equity [4, 16, 26]. Previous studies suggest that social media branding

success is closely linked to a brand's ability to differentiate itself through unique content, strong consumer relationships, and strategic partnerships with influencers [11]. Additionally, competitive advantage in digital branding is reinforced through adaptive strategies that respond to emerging trends and technological shifts [20].

Finally, the results confirm that customer satisfaction and trust significantly influence branding in social media ( $\beta = 0.36$ ,  $t = 2.94$ ), highlighting the importance of consumer perceptions in digital branding. Research suggests that trust-driven branding fosters stronger consumer-brand relationships, leading to increased engagement and advocacy [8, 17]. Transparency, authenticity, and consistent brand messaging have been identified as critical components of trust-based branding strategies [9]. This finding reinforces the argument that brands must prioritize customer-centric approaches, ensuring that branding efforts align with consumer expectations and values [12, 14, 19].

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, certain limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study relied on self-reported survey data, which may be subject to response bias, as participants might have provided socially desirable answers rather than objective assessments. Additionally, while the study utilized a diverse sample, it focused primarily on social media users within a specific demographic, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other user groups or cultural contexts. The rapid evolution of social media platforms and branding strategies presents another limitation, as emerging trends and technological advancements may influence user behavior in ways not captured within this study. Furthermore, the study examined branding from a user engagement perspective, and future research may benefit from incorporating firm-side perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of branding strategies.

Future research should explore the long-term effects of social media branding strategies on consumer behavior and brand loyalty. Longitudinal studies can provide deeper insights into how branding efforts evolve over time and their sustained impact on consumer engagement. Additionally, future studies should investigate cross-cultural differences in branding strategies, as consumer motivations and engagement behaviors may vary across different cultural and geographic contexts. Further exploration of AI-driven branding and the implications of automated content generation on consumer trust and brand authenticity would also be valuable. Expanding research to include firm perspectives, particularly on how businesses strategize digital branding efforts and measure branding effectiveness, can provide a more holistic view of social media branding dynamics.

Brands should prioritize user engagement by creating interactive and personalized content that resonates with their target audiences. Investing in content marketing strategies that align with user motivations will enhance content creation and sharing, leading to stronger brand visibility. Businesses should also focus on building trust by ensuring transparency, authenticity, and consistency in brand messaging. Establishing clear guidelines for AI-generated content and reinforcing human oversight in branding strategies will help maintain credibility. Additionally, leveraging data analytics and AI tools to understand consumer preferences and optimize content delivery will enhance brand competitiveness. Finally, brands must remain adaptive to evolving digital trends, continuously refining their social media strategies to maintain relevance and engagement in dynamic digital environments.

### **Authors' Contributions**

Authors equally contributed to this article.

### **Ethical Considerations**

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

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### Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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