

Social Media Strategies and Brand Engagement Among Asian Entrepreneurs: A Digital Marketing Perspective



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Abstract

Social media has become an important medium for entrepreneurial growth and brand engagement in the rapidly evolving markets of Asia with the onset of the digital age. Entrepreneurs increasingly are turning towards social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook to approach consumers, build trust, and gain visibility. The research employed a mixed-methods design with quantitative data from structured questionnaires supplemented with qualitative data from semi-structured interviews. The sample was 200 Asian entrepreneurs operating in different industries who were actively utilising social media for business. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were employed in data analysis to elicit patterns and findings. Instagram (85%) and Facebook (78%) were the most used channels for business engagement. Story-telling with a personal touch scored 9.2 out of 10 in terms of its effectiveness, followed by user-generated content at 8.7, video content at 8.0, and promotional discounts at 7.5. Micro-influencers (1K–100K followers) generated the highest average engagement rate of 6.5%, compared to 4.2% from macro-influencers and 2.9% from mega-influencers. These results determined the strong impact of authentic content and target audience segmentation on the engagement of consumers. Business leaders need to give precedence to relation-based content and platform-centric approaches in creating enduring brand interaction. Future studies should use longitudinal approaches and seek out regional-specific online habits to create a richer understanding.

Keywords: Social media marketing, brand engagement, Asian entrepreneurs, influencer strategy, digital storytelling

1. Introduction

The digital revolution has transformed how businesses are operated, particularly through the rise of social media as part of marketing strategies. For Asian entrepreneurs, social media platforms provide not just visibility but also customer engagement channels, real-time feedback, and storytelling for the brand (Fuada *et al.*, 2024). This phenomenon has democratized marketing access, particularly for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), to compete in global markets (Al-Azzam and Al-Mizeed, 2021). Social media has also empowered women in entrepreneurship, enabling them to ensure digital participation and psychological empowerment (Chakraborty and Biswal, 2023). Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are affordable but high-impact tools for brand engagement and consumer intimacy. In Korea, cosmetic brands have demonstrated how strategic social media utilisation can facilitate brand equity and purchase intention through social engagement and visual branding (Choedon and Lee, 2020). In addition, in the tourism and innovation sectors, digital marketing has ensured sustainable post-pandemic growth (Huy

and Phuc, 2025). As social commerce becomes increasingly relational, it promotes co-creation, trust, and brand loyalty elements critical for entrepreneurs who are grappling with Asia's heterogeneous consumer markets (Cheung *et al.*, 2021).

Even as social media has the potential to revolutionise business engagement, for several Asian entrepreneurs, there are significant barriers to being able to leverage the platforms in an optimal fashion. Issues range from algorithmic changes, information overload, and lack of proper comprehension of data analytics, to cultural incongruence in messaging. For instance, Chinese entrepreneurs suggest that although they acknowledge the power of social media, translating platform-specific strategies to meaningful brand engagement is challenging under limited resources and marketing acumen (Chen *et al.*, 2021). Similarly, in Bangladesh and various Southeast Asian nations, SMEs cannot develop structured digital blueprints to engage consumers. In the Eastern part of India, there is a problem in differentiating content in a way where entrepreneurs selling local handicrafts do not have

good brand recall (Guha *et al.*, 2021). What is more, although recurrent success has been experienced by Korean businesses in terms of visual branding and influencer collaboration, it is also tricky to duplicate the achievement in multicultural markets. Research has also indicated that, despite the entrepreneurial empowerment that women obtain through engagement with social media, the impact does not necessarily evolve into either higher engagement or conversion. There is merit, therefore, in sensitising strategic gaps and the situational impediments to effective use of social media at the onset of the Asian entrepreneurs.

The research will contribute to filling a major research hole in the field of digital marketing by investigating the relevance of using social media tactics to develop an authentic and lasting brand engagement among Asian entrepreneurs. Markets such as China, Hong Kong and India are moving at a very quick rate to total digitisation, and in these markets, where brands co-create value with the consumer through a story, interactive content or influencer relations, trust and loyalty are doubled and tripled. Purchase intention is also motivated by social brand engagement as one of the primary factors especially in Korean industries, which are strongly affected by emotional branding and social campaigns that directly determine the decision of the consumers (Wang, 2020). Additionally, digital marketing is no longer a means of reaching out to the audience but is viewed as a resilience and sustainability technique, especially in a post-COVID economy (Deb *et al.*, 2024). Relational commerce proficiencies are being established by entrepreneurs in countries like Vietnam and other emerging economies to lead to sustainability in business and innovation in green entrepreneurship and online participation. Such tendencies have some practical implications for practitioners and policymakers. The product of this study can inform entrepreneurs on how they can use evidence-based social media tactics according to the specifics of their business, consumer demands, and the cultural settings (Drummond *et al.*, 2020).

The aim of the study of brand engagement is to examine the strategic use of social media marketing by Asian entrepreneurs. The research aims to determine the best manner in which consumer involvement and loyalty have been realised. The research also examines practical problems and possible opportunities such that entrepreneurs can use such interventions in multicultural and digital economies within Asia.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Media Marketing in Asia

The use of social media marketing (SMM) in Asian markets has grown exponentially, and it has incorporated itself as a significant component of the entrepreneurial approach in both developing and

highly developed economies within Asia. Social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp are currently more actively used by Asian entrepreneurs in order to build brand awareness, make goods and services visible, and directly communicate with their customer base (Malesev and Cherry, 2021). This growth is more vigorous in areas where mobile phone penetration is high, with the main mode of interaction in business being digital media as the mode of advertisement and business communication. In Malaysia, as an example, it was reported that SMEs that have made reasonable use of social media suggested very good performance enhancement, customer attraction, and retention (Musa *et al.*, 2016). The development notwithstanding, problems with strategic alignment and digital literacy do not disappear notably in the case of inexperienced entrepreneurs or small company owners who have received no professional training in the field of digital technologies (Sahoo and Raghu, 2023). The potential is, however, quite high since social media gives the companies possibilities to address geographically distributed audiences, engage in content experimentation, and react to the market changes in a fast manner (Sudirjo *et al.*, 2023). In general, the development of SMM in the Asian continent is not only influencing consumer behaviour but also transforming how companies are pursuing branding, engagement and interaction with the consumer in the digital era (Rosairo and Raimundo, 2021).

2.2 Brand Engagement Theories

Digital media has changed the concept of brand engagement to a great extent, especially in the context of consumer behaviour on social networking sites. An example of the latter includes the COBRA (Consumers Online Brand-Related Activities) model, according to which the activity could be outlined as consumption, contribution, and creation (Lei *et al.*, 2017). The framework enables marketers to know about the various degree levels at which branded content is used by users, either through reading or participating in the branded content activities, or even creating it. Cultural inclinations, user motivation, and how the marketing campaigns are developed in the Asian market define these levels of interaction. Research has indicated that when the brands are customised and communicative, the customer experience is deeper, especially in the tourism and retail sectors (Kusumawati, 2019). Moreover, online marketing based on specific customer categories, such as female emigrant entrepreneurs in the UAE, has also brought forth increased interaction along with brand loyalty (Jose, 2018). With online content growing more user-centred, the boundary between consumer and co-creator continues to blur. This shift underscores the necessity for firms to adopt multidimensional engagement strategies in establishing emotional

connection, interactive communication, and reciprocal value creation with diverse consumer bases.

2.3 Entrepreneurs' Utilisation of Social Media

Asian entrepreneurs utilise social media not only as a promotional medium but as a brand establishment tool, customer interaction platform, and business growth instrument. Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram allow entrepreneurs to establish direct relationships with the audience, respond to comments, and promote brand narratives in real time (Isibor *et al.*, 2021). Social media facilitates digital branding through which entrepreneurs can humanise the business, visualise values, and establish trust with consumers (Otokiti *et al.*, 2021). In emerging economies like Nigeria and Southeast Asia, women entrepreneurs are utilising these platforms to overcome resource limitations and achieve broader market access. Learning to optimally use social media enables even new entrepreneurs to flourish in such competitive cities as Bangalore by using influencer marketing, paid advertising and building online communities. Nonetheless, the issue of digital exhaustion, algorithm changes in social media platforms, and oversaturation are the real obstacles that require swift action. Nevertheless, entrepreneurial utilisation of social media remains an active area of business that contributes to further innovation and customer loyalty and sustainable business growth. Other than its reach, it is also valuable because of its ability to develop long-term relationships with consumers that go beyond transactional relationships.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Research Design

In this study, a mixed-methods research design was utilised in an endeavour to offer depth and breadth in the discussion of subjects relative to the social media approach to Asian entrepreneurs. Structured questionnaires were used to obtain quantitative information, and semi-structured interviews were used to obtain qualitative information. This enabled the triangulation of results to be able to offer an extent of look at either behavioural inclinations or the realities of the situation. The numerical remarks and the qualitative descriptions balanced each other and helped investigate the issue of strategic success, user engagement, and implementation issues. Both methods, the study aimed to substantiate patterns and derive richer meanings from entrepreneurial online marketing practice.

3.2 Sample Selection

The sample consisted of 200 Asian entrepreneurs from diverse industries like retail, tourism, education, fashion, and digital services. Participants were enrolled using purposive sampling based on

the active use of social media for business. To ensure representativeness, urban and semi-urban entrepreneurs from nations such as India, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam were enrolled. All the participants had at least a year of experience running social media for business. This assisted in making sure that the results derived were evidence-based, real-life, hands-on knowledge of digital marketing methods and audience engagement strategies.

3.3 Data Collection Tools

Data were gathered using the support of two primary tools: semi-structured interview guides and structured questionnaires. The survey instrument consisted of closed-ended questions to quantify participants' social media consumption patterns, favoured platforms, engagement indicators, and perceived effects. In the interview guide incorporated open-ended questions were incorporated as well that would bring out personal experience, strategy development processes and operational problems. The two tools had undergone a pre-test with regard to clarity and relevance. Data was collected through the use of online questionnaires and video interviews, respectively. This is a non-constrictive data collection approach that has allowed entry into a geographically distant population at the cost of not having to miss out on profundity.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis of quantitative data that was provided in the questionnaires was performed using descriptive and inferential statistics in the forms of frequency tables, cross-tabulations and correlations to find trends and relations. The data were processed and plotted using statistical software, i.e. SPSS. Transcription, coding, and thematic analysis were used to determine qualitative information collected through interviews. The interesting themes were revealed in accordance with repetition and pertinent aspects linked to brand engagement and the social media plan. This two-method analytical structure allowed statistical confirmation as well as contextual interpretation, enriching the reliability and richness of the findings.

3.5 Ethical Issues

Ethical standards were followed strictly throughout the study. Participants were informed about the purpose, extent, and willingness-based participation before data gathering began. Electronic informed consent was signed, ensuring that the respondents understood their rights, such as withdrawal at any moment. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymising individual details and securely retaining all the responses. Interview recordings and questionnaire data. No probing or sensitive questions were asked. The study adhered to ethical

research practices as per the institutional guidelines for research activity on human subjects.

4. Results

4.1 Platform Usage

Amongst participating business owners, Facebook and Instagram were the most commonly used platforms in this study. Specifically, 85% of participants reported frequent usage of Instagram and 78% for Facebook, pointing towards business

purposes as shown in Table 1. Other platforms, such as YouTube (42%), LinkedIn (36%), and TikTok (30%), were less commonly used but also showed strong uptake. These results showed that visual and interactive media were more appealing when it came to brand interaction. Entrepreneurs favoured tools that supported rich media content and direct audience interaction, also pointing towards the dominance of user-friendly, mobile-dominated platforms in Asia's digital business ecosystem.

Table 1: Platform Utilisation by Entrepreneurs

Platform	Usage (%)
Instagram	85%
Facebook	78%
YouTube	42%
LinkedIn	36%
TikTok	30%

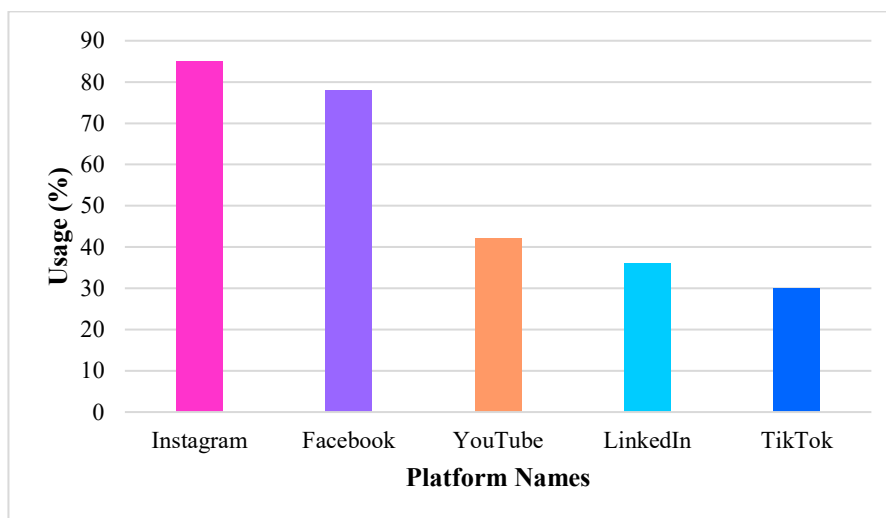


Figure 1: Platform Usage Distribution Among Entrepreneurs

The levels of usage of various social media platforms by business owners. Instagram was the most used platform, with 85% of the participants reporting frequent use. Facebook was second at 78%. YouTube had 42% use, and LinkedIn and TikTok had less use at 36% and 30%, respectively, as shown in Figure 1. The x-axis represented the platforms, and the y-axis represented the percentage of use. The figure indicated a clear bias towards visually appealing platforms that are interactive. The evidence presented revealed that entrepreneurs relied on platforms with multimedia functionalities and audience interaction to support their brands.

4.2 Content Strategies

Personalised storytelling was the most effective content strategy, coming in at an average of 9.2 out of 10. User-generated content followed with 8.7, according to the study, which indicated its potential to establish trust and authenticity. Video content stood at 8.0, while the offers scored 7.5, as shown in Table 2. The above results demonstrated that entrepreneurs who preferred rich stories and engaging people had higher engagement rates. Storytelling helped to humanise brands, and user-generated content made them more credible. The results emphasised the importance of emotional connection and community interaction in successful content marketing strategies on social media.

Table 2: Effectiveness of Content Strategies

Content Strategy	Effectiveness Score (1-10)
Personalized Storytelling	9.2
User-Generated Content	8.7
Promotional Offers	7.5
Video Content	8.0

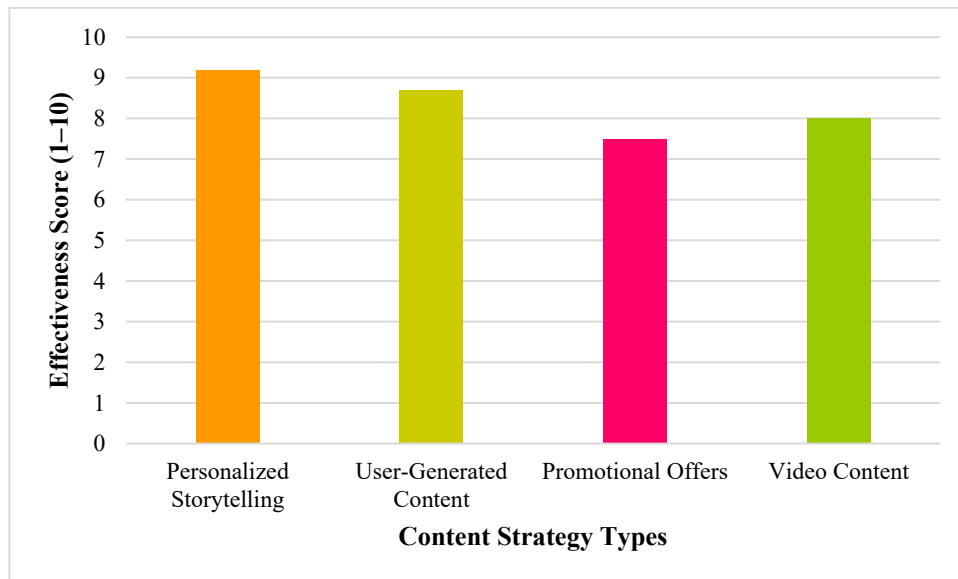


Figure 2: Effectiveness of Content Strategy Types

The figure indicated ratings of four key content strategies used by entrepreneurs. The top-rated one was personalised storytelling, with a rating of 9.2 out of 10, indicating the high level of impact on audience engagement as shown in Figure 2. The following figure demonstrates the findings of User-generated content, followed closely with an effectiveness rating of 8.7, suggesting its capacity to generate authenticity. Video content was also given a high rating of 8.0, and special offers were rated 7.5. The x-axis mapped the types of strategies used, and the y-axis mapped their effectiveness ratings. These findings indicated that emotionally engaging and participatory content strategies were more effective in generating brand connection and long-term consumer interest.

4.3 Influencer Partnerships

The results indicated that the influencer's type played a significant role in influencing engagement rates. Micro-influencer collaborations (1K–100K followers) emerged at a peak 6.5% engagement rate. Macro-influencers had a lower figure at 4.2%, while mega-influencers recorded a paltry 2.9% as shown in Table 3. These findings suggested that micro-influencers possessed content that was more authentic and had a stronger rapport with niche publics. Business owners who partnered with micro-influencers would likely have greater authenticity and trust among their audiences. The findings supported the growing trend of targeting micro-tier influencers to achieve affordable yet successful brand engagements, especially for startups and SMEs entering competitive online spaces.

Table 3: Engagement Rate by Influencer Type

Influencer Type	Average Engagement Rate (%)
Micro (1K–100K followers)	6.5%
Macro (100K–1M followers)	4.2%
Mega (>1M followers)	2.9%

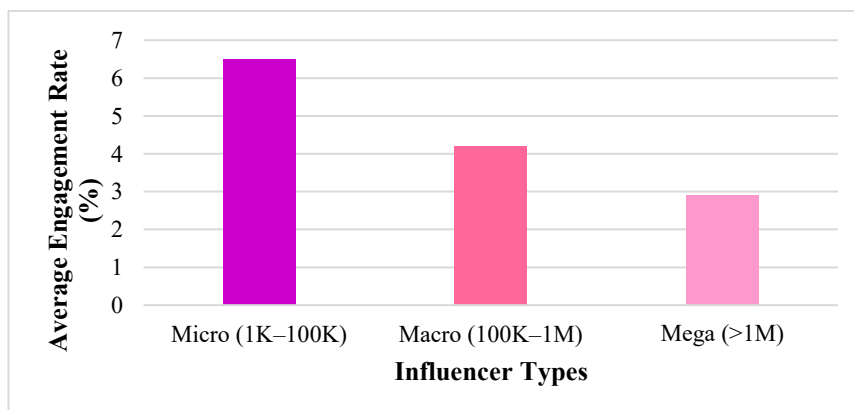


Figure 3: Impact of Influencer Type on Engagement Rate

The figure indicated the average rate of engagement of different influencer types. Micro-influencers, with 1,000 to 100,000 followers, had the highest engagement rate of 6.5%. Macro-influencers, with 100,000 to 1 million followers, had a medium rate of 4.2% as shown in Figure 3. Mega-influencers, with over 1 million followers, had the lowest engagement of 2.9%. The X-axis depicted influencer types, and the y-axis depicted percentages of engagement. These findings suggested that micro-influencers encouraged more authentic engagement, probably due to the niche nature of their audiences. Companies that partnered with them had stronger consumer reactions compared to working with brand influencers.

5. Discussion

This study revealed how Asian entrepreneurs strategically used social media to foster brand engagement and audience connection. Instagram and Facebook were identified as the most preferred platforms, attributed to their visual capabilities, accessibility, and interactive features (Table 1, Figure 1). These platforms allowed entrepreneurs to share content that resonated with mobile-first users and supported real-time interaction. Personalised storytelling and user-generated content were the most effective strategies, both of which did a better job than typical advertising campaigns when it came to audience engagement (Table 2, Figure 2). These findings suggested that emotional connection, legitimacy, and interactive content were primary drivers of trust building and loyalty. Besides that, entrepreneurs collaborating with micro-influencers reported significantly higher engagement compared to those collaborating with macro or mega influencers, testifying to niche community pull strength (Table 3, Figure 3). Although having lower reach, the influencers interacted more heavily with followers, which translated into better consumer interaction. The study corroborated that entrepreneurs' marketing content strategy, in sync with user decisions and platform functionality, achieved better engagement outcomes. In essence, the results gave priority to the fact that social media success is driven not by size but by strategy, authenticity, and understanding audience behaviour. The study has several important implications for support institutions, digital marketers, and entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs need to prioritise content that creates meaningful connections with their audiences over promotional tactics. Personalised content and narrative co-creation were great trust and interaction builders. Micro-influencer collaborations were also quite inexpensive and highly effective, and thus a fantastic approach for low-budget SMEs. Incubators and training bodies have to incorporate digital marketing modules focusing on content creation, platform selection, and engagement metrics. These are now

essential skills to enable brand visibility in competitive digital spaces. Additionally, policy-makers and aid agencies can respond by making available funds or capacity-building schemes that help entrepreneurs scale their online presence effectively. For entrepreneurs entering new markets, knowledge about how local audiences use social media can inform platform selection and messaging. The study reaffirms one-size-fits-all approach to digital marketing is useless. The trick is to be aware of the nuances of each audience and adjust accordingly. Overall, the findings are in support of a strategic, audience-focused social media marketing approach with a focus on authenticity, community building, and digital competencies.

The findings of this study are in agreement with prior research that highlighted the importance of social media strategies to the achievement of SMEs. Susanto *et al.* (2023) placed a focus on the contributions of social media usage and marketing capability to performance outcomes of entrepreneurs, particularly in developing markets. For example, Tarsakoo and Charoensukmongkol (2020) observed that interaction management and richness in content are significant predictors of successful digital marketing, consistent with this study's finding of storytelling and user-generated content. Digital literacy's role, according to Umboh and Aryanto (2023), also from this research, entrepreneurs who possessed awareness of content creation and platform dynamics experienced better results. Yamin (2017) also reported further that customer responses are primarily motivated by emotionally compelling content, further validating the use of story-based marketing in this research. Such similarities reinforce the argument that a digitally savvy and emotionally smart marketing strategy not only generates engagement but also improves overall business performance. The use of micro-influencers and platform-based marketing is a step towards more individualised, trust-based marketing aligned with trends identified across the literature.

The study provided insight into social media strategy among Asian entrepreneurs; several limitations must be highlighted. The study only analysed specific countries, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam, meaning the applicability of findings across the broader Asian region. Cultural, economic, and linguistic differences in other countries may produce alternative consumer usage patterns of platforms and consumer behaviours. Additionally, the 200-sample size of respondents, while sufficient for exploratory analysis, will probably not capture the diversity of entrepreneurial experience across sectors or firm sizes. A further limitation arose from the use of self-reported data gathered using questionnaires and interviews. Participant responses might have been interfered with by individual prejudice, loss of memory, or the

propensity to volunteer favourable results. Furthermore, the study was a point-in-time approach, failing to account for the rapid evolution of social media sites, the popularity of content, or algorithm changes that impact levels of engagement. For reasons of time, the study did not examine the influence of region-specific sites like WeChat or Line, which are important in certain Asian economies. Subsequent studies may fill such gaps using longitudinal designs, real-time analysis, and a wider geographical scope to improve the reliability and applicability of the outcomes.

Based on the findings of this study, a number of future research directions are proposed to further enhance the comprehension of social media strategy among entrepreneurs. Firstly, expanding the geographical scope to include more Asian nations would add more heterogeneity, particularly for those with varying digital ecosystems or emerging platforms. Follow-up studies should take into account sectoral dynamics because social media strategies for interacting in various sectors, such as retail, education, tourism, and services, may vary. The longitudinal design can be applied in tracking the changes in social media strategies over an extended period of time, particularly as a response to changes in algorithms, platform updates or consumer trends. Such information as real-time data analysis, e.g. engagement rates of business accounts or tracking tools, can be added to increase validity and decrease the influence of self-reporting. Besides, the investigation of the impact of such unexplored or domestic platforms as Line in Japan, WeChat in China, or Zalo in Vietnam may provide a more sophisticated knowledge of local branding practice. Analysts can also examine how artificial intelligence and automation will be implemented into the content delivery, the discovery of those in the sphere of influence, and the identification of the necessary audience. That would give a more appropriate understanding of how business owners could keep up with the changing trends in the digital world without affecting the genuine brand-customer interactions.

6. Conclusion

In this study, the Asian entrepreneurs have been looked at on the way of the entrepreneurs use social media in the initiation of brand engagement, and the best approaches that yield the best results are compared. The conclusions were that original content created by the users, strategic influencer collaborations, and customised storytelling were high in making audience engagement on a positive note, more so than the conventional advertorial gears. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were the most fashionable due to their multimedia and interactive features. Organisations whose content and influencers are customised and exclusive showed increased amplified engagement and

customer loyalty with such resources. The concept of authenticity, emotional connections, and platform-based approaches was brought up as some of the most critical success drivers in digital marketing. The discoveries business executives will be able to fine-tune the audience behaviour data and place messaging as per the trends and demands of the platform. A competitive advantage can also be achieved through investment in digital literacy, creating content on their own, and collaborations with micro-influencers in cases of oversaturated markets. Market strategies are also supposed to be different to relationship construction rather than straight promotion as a means of ensuring long-term bonding to a brand. In future research, it is advised to do longitudinal studies to determine the future effects of the said strategies on brand loyalty. Greater geographic and industry-based studies, and the use of real-time digital measurement, might further advance this body of practice and research.

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