

# The Role of Engagement, Brand Equity, and Trust

## The Case of Portuguese Telecommunications Brands on Facebook

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**Abstract:** Over the past few years, the consumer has increasingly engaged with brands on social networks, thus becoming crucial to evaluating trust and brand equity. This study aims to understand whether trust and brand equity are essential to the consumer in the case of Portuguese telecommunications brands. A quantitative methodology was used through a survey, where the variables of positive engagement, negative engagement, brand trust, and brand equity were analyzed. In addition to the survey, a content analysis was conducted on the social networks of the three Portuguese telecommunications brands under study (Meo, Nos, and Vodafone). The study concludes that brand equity and trust are essential to consumers in this sector. There is also greater positive engagement than negative engagement with Facebook telecommunications brands. In addition, the frequency of brand publications does not result in greater Facebook engagement. These results have relevant implications for marketing professionals, providing them with recommendations for the importance of engagement in Facebook.

**Keywords:** Positive engagement; Negative engagement; Brand Trust; Brand Equity

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## 1 Introduction

Over the past few years, the consumer has been increasingly present in the communication of brands on social networks. Social networks “represent a set of autonomous participants, uniting ideas and resources around values and shared interests” (Tomaél et al., 2005, p. 93).

Companies can establish contact with the target audience through social networks, creating proximity and empathy. With the evolution of social networks, marketers need to understand the attitudes of customers and potential customers. Then, engagement is crucial, and it can be defined as the "involvement, interaction, intimacy, and influence that an individual has with a brand over time" (Haven et al., 2007, p. 4).

In the service sector, telecommunications plays a leading role. According to ANACOM (2022), "electronic communications are essential in modern society." In 2021, the data showed a change in individual internet usage behaviour due to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a significant increase in the use of telecommunications services and a change in consumption patterns. Many academic studies focus on consumer engagement with the brand on social media, studying brand motivations and perceptions, brand management in the context of consumer experience or even the influence of content marketing on customer behaviour. In this way, along with increased consumer engagement on brand social media, assessing consumer trust and brand equity has become essential. The present paper aims to understand if trust and brand equity are relevant for the telecommunications consumer because of a gap in studies about this sector. The research question of this study is: "How do consumers engage with telecommunications brands based on trust and brand equity?" This study seeks to understand which Portuguese telecommunications brand has greater engagement (positive and negative), as well as trust and brand equity.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Social Media Engagement

Social networks have been increasingly present in everyday life, changing how users relate to each other and how brands communicate and relate to the consumer. Over the last few years, consumers have become the primary vehicle of information for other consumers and the brands themselves, as consumers use social networks to express their opinions about a product, service, or brand, giving them the opportunity to other consumers to express their opinions. Brands must engage with consumers through new digital media (Brondoni, 2006).

To measure engagement, the COBRA (Consumer's Online Brand Related Activities) model "provides a unifying framework for thinking about brand-related consumer activity across social media platforms" (Muntinga et al., 2011, p. 14). This model was "categorized into three dimensions corresponding to the gradual engagement with content related to the brand on social networks, i.e., consume, contribute and create" (Muntinga et al., 2011, pp. 15–16).

In the same perspective, Schivinski et al. (2016) consider that there are different activities related to the brand in social networks that lead to different levels of engagement, such as (1) the consumer consumes content related to the brand, seeing, for example, publications on social networks (2) the consumer is engaged in the publication of the brand,

commenting or liking it, it is in the “observer” phase; (3) the consumer decides to publish a photograph of a product on the social network while creating content related to the brand.

Consumers who relate to a particular brand are likelier to give positive feedback about their experience with friends and family, thus generating word-of-mouth and may become brand advocates (Verhoef et al., 2010).

Some research has demonstrated the significance of social media in fostering community involvement (Cheung et al., 2020), cultivating a loyal customer base, enhancing consumer engagement, and fostering strong brand loyalty (Malarvizhi et al., 2022).

Conversely, social networks have an algorithm that analyzes each publication. Considering this analysis, the algorithm chooses which publications appear in the users' feeds. One of the main points of the algorithm is the level of user engagement based on the number of likes, comments, and shares (Wagner et al., 2017). Therefore, it is essential to understand and measure the consumer's engagement with brands through social networks so that brands can understand which path they should take regarding the communication and development of the brand.

## 2.2 Brand Equity

All companies must pay attention to the perception and images of their products in the market, that is, to brand equity. According to Aaker (1991), brand equity provides value to the customer, enhancing the interpretation and processing of information, confidence in the purchase decision, and the satisfaction of using that brand. Brand equity for companies increases the efficiency and effectiveness of commercial leverage programs and competitive advantage (Aaker, 1991).

Social networks allow the consumer to influence brand equity, whether negative or positive (Zailskaite-Jakste & Kuvykaitė, 2013). Brand communication through word of mouth, combined with the appropriate marketing means, can increase brand equity. Therefore, the brand must communicate effectively with consumers on social networks (Zailskaite-Jakste & Kuvykaitė, 2013).

In Aaker's brand equity model, assets and liabilities provide value for the company/brand or the consumer. Brand equity is based on assets and liabilities that may differ from context to context. These can be grouped into five categories (Aaker, 1991): brand loyalty, knowledge of the name, perceived quality, brand associations beyond perceived quality, and other proprietary brand assets (patents, trademarks, etc.) (Aaker, 1991).

According to Aaker (1991), brand loyalty is one of the main dimensions of brand equity, as it adds value to the company, translating loyalty into profit, since the costs of marketing actions make downsized, as it is cheaper to keep current customers than to win new ones; customers through word-of-mouth, expose the brand and convey security to potential customers; the consumer, having greater loyalty, will have greater commercial leverage, since they will not resort to competing brands, knowing that the brand is always present and available (Aaker, 1991).

According to Aaker (1991), brand awareness is divided into four levels: brand unawareness, brand recognition, brand evocation, and top-of-mind. The lowest level, brand recognition, is based on assisted recall tests; consumers identify the brands they had already heard of through brand names from a given product category.

The brand image is more than just its visual identity; it must be adequate and built daily. According to Keller (1993, p.2), brand image is "knowledge of a brand reflected by the association of brands present in the consumer's memory." The set of associations linked to the brand is present in the consumer's memory based on the signals the brand transmits (Keller, 2009).

Keller (2009) divides brand associations into attributes, benefits, and attitudes. Attributes concern the descriptive elements of the brand's products, which can be categorized into product-related and non-product-related attributes. Within the attributes related to the product, we can find the physical composition and the technical requirements that determine the product's function. Product-related attributes vary according to the product or service category in question. As for attributes unrelated to the product, they refer to external aspects of the product or service; that is, they can affect the purchase or consumption.

Perceived brand quality can be defined, according to Aaker (1991), as "the consumer's understanding of the quality of a product or service concerning its purpose" (Aaker, 1991, pp. 80–81). Even so, to define perceived brand quality, several topics must be taken into account, including actual or objective quality, that is, the extent to which the product or service offers superiority over other brands, quality based on product, that is, the nature and characteristics included in the product or service, and finally, the manufacturing quality, that is, the objective of the product or service not having defects (Aaker, 1991).

Brand loyalty is a crucial attribute for brands. Increasing customer brand loyalty is a valuable endeavour for any company.

For Aaker, brand loyalty is "the customer's attachment to a brand" (Aaker, 1991, p. 39). According to Aaker (1991), brand loyalty varies according to several factors: customers who buy only with a focus on price, not giving importance to the brand or quality; customers who are satisfied with the brand, that is, they have no reason to switch to a competitor's brand, customers who are equally satisfied with the brand, however, with no possibility of switching in terms of costs or that the competitor's product does not satisfy them; customers who identify with the brand, either through its visual identity or because they maintain a long-term relationship with it and, finally, customers who are committed to the brand, that is, they do not just like the brand, the brand is a reflection of what they are, and recommend it to others.

Recent studies from Zarei et al. (2022) showed that marketing activities in social media have a significant positive effect on brand equity.

## 2.3 Brand Trust

Brand trust can be defined as “the consumer's willingness to trust the brand's ability to perform its stated function” (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001, p. 82). This includes the company's willingness to work in the consumer's interests to improve trust, safety, and reliability (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). There is a belief that trust in a brand means a high expectation in the consumer that the brand's product/services will bring beneficial results (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005).

For Delgado-Ballester (2004), brand trust involves brand reliability and intentions. Trust based on credibility is based on the expectations and needs of the consumer; that is, the consumer believes that the brand fulfils the promise of value, keeping the consumer's interests ahead of their interests. The brand reliability dimension implies a feeling of predictability that the brand will positively satisfy the consumer's needs (Delgado-Ballester, 2004).

Trust based on intentions towards the brand reflects emotional security on the part of the consumer. The consumer feels the brand's behaviour is motivated by positive factors and intentions concerning their interests. This view involves the consumer's conviction and actions about present situations based on the expectation that future events will prove them correct, that is, that the brand will not take advantage of the consumer's fragility. Thus, trust based on brand intentions involves views such as altruism, benevolence, honesty, and justice (Delgado-Ballester, 2004).

## 3 Methodology

The methodology used is quantitative since a survey was applied to understand the impacts that engagement (positive or negative) has on brand trust and brand equity. To deepen the study of engagement on Facebook, publications by brands in the telecommunications sector were also analyzed.

### 3.1 Data collection instruments

In order to answer the research question, the methodology used is quantitative since a questionnaire survey will be applied. Brand publications will also be analyzed to study Facebook engagement.

The quantitative approach "is employed due to the need to measure the patterns of relationships and interrelations of authors in a network configuration, based on their contacts". The qualitative approach "considers the authors' universe of meaning, which should not be reduced to the operationalization of variables" (Marteleto & Tomaél, 2005, p.83).

Considering the multiplicity of data from social networks, quantitative and qualitative methods "allow the configuration of networks and the presentation of measures that specify relationship patterns between individuals, using quantitative techniques. The use of qualitative tools (...) is supported by the interest in "giving voice" to the actors, who,

in the sociogram and network measurements, appear as points or links, listening to and interpreting their desires, opinions and representations (Marteleto & Tomaél, 2005, p.84).

### 3.1.1 Facebook Posts Analysis Grid

The social network analyzed was Facebook, which continues to be the most used social network in Portugal and the world. On Facebook, the analyzed brands have a greater engagement with the consumer, even compared to other social networks. Presenting more data for analysis will give greater depth to the study. The grid analysis period will be two months, January and February 2022. January is the first month of the year, and February is the month since the telecommunications brand Vodafone suffered a cyberattack.

**Table 1.** Facebook posts analysis grid. Adapted from Vries et al. (2012)

Date/Time	Message	Content-Type	Number of Comments	Number of Negative Comments	Number of Positive Comments	Shares	Likes / Reactions	Engagement Rate	Level of Interactivity
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The analysis grid is adapted from de Vries et al. (2012) (Table 1). These authors studied the popularity of publications by 11 international brands on Facebook pages from six different product categories (cosmetics, alcoholic beverages, telecommunications, clothing, fashion accessories, and food).

When completing the analysis grid, the following factors were taken into account: type of content (intention to sell products or services (information) or content not related to products or services (entertainment)); Number of comments; Number of negative comments; Number of positive comments; Shares; Likes/Reactions; Engagement Rate ( $(\text{Reactions} + \text{Comments} + \text{Shares}) / \text{number of followers} \times 100$ ); Level of Interactivity (the publications were characterized in three levels (low - photography, medium - call-to-action and high-videos), according to Vries et al. (2012).

### 3.1.2 Survey

The survey aims to understand how user engagement with the brand on Facebook (positive or negative) can lead other users to engage positively or negatively with that same brand. The survey also analyzed brand equity and trust variables. The questionnaire was based on the adaptation of scales already validated by reference authors. The ten items to measure engagement (positive and negative) were adapted from studies of Muntinga, Moorman, and Smit (2011) and Schivinski, Christodoulides, and Dabrowski (2016). Brand Equity was measured using the validated scale of Yoo and Donthub (2001), and Brand Trust was measured using the scale of Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001).



## 4 Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Data

### 4.1 Consumer Engagement Analysis Grid with Telecommunications Brands on the Facebook

Within the scope of this study, three telecommunications brands were analyzed: MEO, NOS, and Vodafone. During the analysis period, in January and February 2022, MEO did 71 publications, NOS did 8, and Vodafone did 36. The Telecommunications brand with the highest number of followers is MEO (1443584), followed by NOS (1383278) and Vodafone (1041117). The type of content in the publications of the telecommunications brands, both in January and February, was informative; that is, most publications referred to products and services to sell them.

During January, the telecommunications brand that received the most comments was MEO (2581). However, while MEO had a more significant number of negative comments (272), Vodafone had a more significant number of positive comments (40). In addition to the highest number of comments, the MEO obtained the highest number of shares and the highest number of likes/reactions to the publication. The NOS achieved the highest engagement rate despite having only two publications in this period (0.192%). In February, the brand with the highest number of comments was Vodafone (13611), both negative (861) and positive (1157). Vodafone also stands out in terms of the highest number of shares (6715) and engagement rate (0.367%). However, the MEO accounts for the highest likes/reactions (67.244).

In February, a cyber-attack on the Vodafone boosted consumer engagement with the brand's publications on Facebook. Despite having a high number of negative comments (861), the number of positive comments is higher (1157) since the consumer took advantage of what happened to encourage the brand, saying that despite everything the brand was going through, it continued to be the brand of choice and that they would not switch operators. In addition to the attack on Vodafone, February was marked by the start of the war between Russia and Ukraine. It led to greater engagement in the publication of the MEO when it temporarily offered international mobile calls to Ukraine.

In this way, the brand that obtained the most significant engagement on Facebook in the analyzed period was Vodafone, mainly due to the cyberattack it suffered in February. The brand that obtained minor engagement due to users was the NOS. However, NOS was also the one that was least published on Facebook.

### 4.2 Presentation and Analysis of Survey Data

The questionnaire received 194 responses (86 from MEO users, 65 from NOS users, and 43 from Vodafone users). The sample is characterized based on sociodemographic information, such as gender, age, district of residence, academic qualifications, and professional situation (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Sample Summary

<b>Gender</b>	70% female
<b>Age</b>	38% from 17 to 24 years
<b>District of Residence</b>	60% district of Viseu
<b>Academic qualifications</b>	50% degree
<b>Professional situation</b>	61% Workers

Although most respondents (73%) did not follow any telecommunications operator on Facebook, they were still considered the final sample. Over 50% of respondents do not share posts, comment positively on other negative comments about the brand, or create posts about the brand. However, 37% of respondents tend to like it, thus making it the most used form of positive engagement mentioned in the survey (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Summary of positive engagement

	<b>I totally agree</b>	<b>I agree</b>	<b>I neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>I disagree</b>	<b>I totally disagree</b>
I tend to “like” brand posts on Facebook	7%	30%	23%	19%	23%
I tend to comment (positively) on the brand's publications on Facebook	5%	16%	16%	19%	44%
I tend to share (in a positive way) the brand's publications on my profile or that of friends	7%	21%	7%	12%	53%
I tend to comment (in a positive way) on posts and comments about the brand posted by other Facebook users	5%	21%	9%	12%	53%
I create brand-related posts on Facebook	0%	16%	7%	16%	61%
I post brand-related posts on my or my friends' feeds	0%	14%	9%	16%	61%
I have already written positive reviews and opinions related to the brand on Facebook	9%	16%	9%	12%	54%
I tend to comment (in a positive way) on posts and negative comments about the brand posted by other Facebook users	0%	14%	5%	16%	65%

As we can see in Table 4, except for the statement, “I often read negative publications and comments about the brand posted by other Facebook users,” more than 50% of respondents do not engage negatively with the brand. However, 11% of respondents post



negative about the brand on their Facebook feed or that of friends, and 12% of respondents have already written negative reviews or opinions about the brand.

**Table 4.** Summary of negative engagement

	I totally agree	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I totally disagree
I usually read the publications and comments (negative) about the brand posted by other users on Facebook	18%	28%	19%	12%	23%
I tend to comment (negatively) on the brand's publications, videos, and images on Facebook	0%	9%	5%	23%	63%
I tend to share (in a negative way) the brand's publications on my profile or that of friends	0%	9%	9%	12%	70%
I tend to comment (negatively) on posts and negative comments about the brand posted by other Facebook users	2%	7%	7%	12%	72%
I create negative brand-related posts on Facebook	0%	9%	5%	12%	74%
I make negative brand-related posts on my or my friends' feeds	0%	11%	5%	7%	77%
I have already written reviews and negative opinions related to the brand on Facebook	5%	7%	5%	9%	74%

#### 4.2.1 Brand Equity

##### Brand loyalty

Most respondents (47%) consider themselves brand loyal and agree that the brand would be their first choice (48%). However, only 23% of respondents agree that they would not subscribe to services from other brands.

##### Perceived brand quality

Most respondents (50%) agree that the quality of the brand's services is extremely high, and most (72%) consider the current telecommunications brand functional.

##### Brand awareness

Most (69%) respondents recognize that they can distinguish the brand from other competing brands. In turn, when asked about brand awareness, 69% of respondents agree

that they recognize the reputation of the telecommunications brand, and only 7% of respondents do not recognize brand awareness.

### Brand associations

Most respondents (62%) agree that "When I think of the brand, certain features quickly come to mind," as well as "I can quickly remember the symbol or logo of the brand" (83%). Furthermore, 69% of respondents have no difficulty imagining the brand in their minds. Of the 194 respondents, 41% believe that the brand cares about customers, 15% disagree with the statement, and 44% neither agree nor disagree.

**Table 5.** Summary of Brand Equity

	I totally agree	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I totally disagree
I am loyal to the brand.	13%	34%	33%	10%	10%
The brand would be my first choice.	12%	37%	31%	12%	9%
I will not subscribe to services from other brands.	8%	15%	43%	20%	14%
The quality of brand services is exceptionally high.	10%	40%	36%	10%	4%
The brand is functional.	12%	60%	21%	5%	2%
I can distinguish the brand from other competing brands.	20%	49%	24%	6%	1%
I recognize the awareness of the telecommunications brand	15%	54%	24%	5%	2%
When I think of the brand, specific characteristics quickly come to mind.	14%	47%	29%	6%	3%
I can quickly recall the brand symbol or logo	38%	45%	11%	4%	2%
The brand cares about customers	8%	33%	44%	9%	6%
I have no trouble picturing the brand in my mind	24%	45%	22%	5%	4%

### 4.2.2 Brand Trust

Of the 194 respondents, 39% consider the brand quite honest, as opposed to 16% who do not consider it honest. In turn, 26% of respondents consider that the brand works for their happiness, but 44% do not agree or disagree. 37% of respondents agree that the brand works to satisfy them, and 41% agree that what the brand promises is real (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Summary Brand Trust

	I totally agree	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I totally disagree
The brand is quite honest.	7%	32%	45%	11%	5%
The brand works for my happiness.	8%	18%	44%	18%	12%
The brand works to satisfy me.	8%	29%	38%	16%	9%
What the brand promises is real.	9%	32%	35%	15%	9%

## 5 Discussion of Results

This investigation has the starting question, "How do consumers engage with telecommunications brands based on trust and brand equity?" Objectives were defined to answer the research question. This discussion is presented according to objectives.

### **Objective 1 - Understand whether the frequency of publications results in greater engagement on Facebook.**

The data obtained through the analysis grid shows that the three telecommunications brands had different publication frequencies in the analyzed period. The telecommunications brand that stood out for the highest frequency of publications was the MEO, with 71 publications in January and February, with the highest engagement rate of 0.948%, whose publication accounted for 437 comments, 257 shares, and 13000 likes/reactions. NOS was the brand with the fewest publications (8 posts), and the highest engagement rate it obtained was 0.363%. The post with the highest engagement rate had 441 comments, 289 shares, and 4300 likes/reactions. Vodafone had 36 publications in the analyzed period, with a February publication having an engagement rate of 1.171%. That publication had 2500 comments, 3400 shares, and 6300 likes/reactions. From the perspective of Kim and Yang (2017), behaviours such as "liking," commenting, and sharing a publication require different cognitive efforts. Putting a like requires less cognitive effort because it is done through a click, unlike the comment, which requires a more significant effort from the user since he is expressing himself through words or emojis. Sharing a publication requires a more significant cognitive effort since the shared publication will appear on the user's profile, becoming self-represented (Kim & Yang, 2017). In this way, the frequency of publications does not result in greater engagement since Vodafone obtained a higher engagement rate despite MEO having a higher frequency of publications. We can also see that MEO had a higher engagement rate than NOS due to the high number of likes/reactions.

### **Objective 2- Analyze whether users have more positive than negative engagement with telecommunications brands on Facebook**

Consumers who relate to a particular brand are likelier to give positive feedback about their experience with friends and family, thus generating word-of-mouth and may become brand advocates (Verhoef et al., 2010).

In addition to all the positive aspects of consumer engagement, it can harm the brand. With negative word-of-mouth, brands/companies will suffer negative consequences, potentially alienating new and potential customers (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

Through the analysis grid, we can see a more significant negative than positive engagement with telecommunications brands on Facebook since, considering the number of negative comments, these are higher than the number of positive comments, except for the Vodafone brand. However, through the data obtained in the survey, we can see the opposite; that is, with the respondents' responses, there is a more significant positive engagement.

Of the 43 responses obtained in the variables of positive and negative engagement, 16 correspond to users of MEO, 16 correspond to users of NOS, and 11 to users of Vodafone. An interesting piece of data in this comparison of positive and negative engagement on the part of the consumer is that, for users of Vodafone, when asked about the variables of negative engagement, the only options selected were "disagree," "completely disagree", and "neither agree, nor I disagree." Thus, of the three telecommunications brands analyzed, the Vodafone brand has the most significant positive engagement on Facebook, and the telecommunications brand with the most significant negative engagement is the MEO. However, there is greater positive engagement than negative engagement with telecommunications brands when analyzing the answers through the survey.

### **Objective 3 - Understand if the values of trust and brand equity are present in the consumer's mind.**

Keller (1993) indicates that brand equity comprises four dimensions: brand recognition, brand image, brand association, and perceived brand quality. With the data obtained through the survey, we can globally observe that, of the 194 respondents, 47% consider themselves loyal to the brand, and 48% of respondents say that the current brand would be their first choice. Concerning services from telecommunications brands, 24% of respondents agree that they will not subscribe to services from other brands, and 44% of respondents agree that the quality of the brand's services is exceptionally high. In turn, 72% of respondents consider the current telecommunications brand functional. 68% of respondents can distinguish the brand from other competing brands, and 62% of respondents, when they think of the brand, have some features on their minds.

85% of respondents can quickly remember the symbol or logo of the brand, and 70% have no difficulty imagining the brand in their minds. 41% of respondents believe that the brand cares about customers. Analyzing the same data but considering the respondents' telecommunications brands, we can see that in MEO, more than 50% of respondents responded positively to most questions about brand equity. However, only 42% of respondents consider themselves loyal to the brand, and only 20% consider that they do not subscribe to services from competing brands. Of the 86 MEO respondents, only 35% believe that the brand cares about customers, and only 45% consider the services extremely high quality. It should be noted that 81% of respondents can quickly remember the symbol or logo of the brand, and 69% have no difficulty imagining the brand in their heads.

Concerning the NOS brand, we can also observe that more than 50% of respondents answered most brand equity questions positively. However, 45% of respondents consider themselves loyal to the brand, and only 19% consider that they do not subscribe to services from other brands. Of the 64 respondents from NOS, 70% consider the brand functional, and 67% recognize the brand's reputation. However, only 42% consider the brand's services incredibly high quality, and only 44% would choose the current brand as their first choice. As for Vodafone brand respondents, more than 60% responded positively to questions about the brand's equity, except 37% of respondents who will not subscribe to services from other brands and 47% of respondents who consider the brand to care about customers. In turn, 91% of the 43 respondents to the Vodafone brand can quickly remember the brand's symbol or logo, and 87% consider the brand functional. Comparing the three telecommunications brands, we can conclude that Vodafone has the highest brand equity for the customer (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Brand Equity comparison between the three telecom brands

	<b>MEO</b>	<b>NOS</b>	<b>Vodafone</b>
I consider myself loyal to the brand	42%	45%	60%
The brand would be my first choice	43%	44%	67%
I will not subscribe to services from other brands	20%	19%	37%
The quality of brand services is exceptionally high	45%	42%	70%
The brand is functional	67%	70%	87%
I can distinguish the brand from other competing brands	61%	70%	84%
I recognize the notoriety of the telecommunications brand	64%	67%	84%
When I think of the brand, specific characteristics quickly come to mind.	53%	63%	79%
I can quickly recall the brand symbol or logo	81%	81%	91%
The brand cares about customers	35%	47%	47%
I have no trouble picturing the brand in my mind	69%	67%	77%

Except for the statement "the brand cares about customers," which presented an equal value to the NOS brand, the Vodafone presented higher values than other telecommunications brands. Trust in the brand can mean the company's willingness to work in the consumer's interests, aiming to improve trust, safety, and reliability (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Therefore, it is critical to analyze whether the consumer perceives the brand as trustworthy.

Analyzing the respondents of the three telecommunications brands, Vodafone stands out for presenting the best results on brand trust. In this way, trust and brand equity are essential for the consumer, and Vodafone stands out most in these two variables.

## 6 Conclusion

Over the last few years, the consumer has been increasingly present in brand communication, engaging positively and negatively with brands on social media. Consumers take the opportunity to share their experiences and opinions about a particular brand product or service with other users.

With this study, all telecommunications brands present different results in the content analysis. NOS was the least published brand on the Facebook social network in the analyzed period, while MEO was the brand that shared the most. Through the analysis of the three telecommunications brands on Facebook, the brand with the highest engagement rate was Vodafone, followed by NOS and MEO. Although the telecommunications brand NOS has a low publication frequency, it achieved a higher engagement rate than the MEO.

With the application of the questionnaire, we realized that there is a more significant positive engagement concerning negative engagement; that is, the respondents are more positively involved with the telecommunications brands than negatively. Concerning the variables of brand equity and brand trust, we highlight that the components of each variable are very present in the consumer's minds. However, there are many responses in the option "neither agree nor disagree," mainly brand trust, wherein for all items, the answer most chosen by consumers was "neither agree nor disagree." Trust and brand equity are essential for the consumer.

This study thus contributes to future studies on consumer engagement in social networks in services, especially in the telecommunications sector. The study has limitations, such as reduced responses in positive and negative engagement variables. Also, the high number of "neither agree nor disagree" responses contradicted the data obtained. In future studies, it would be interesting to add personality scales, relating, for example, personality to each brand. Likewise, the study can be replicated in other social networks and sectors.

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