



**ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY,  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING MANAGEMENT**

**EFFECT OF CONTENT MARKETING ON BRAND LOYALTY  
MEDIATED BY CONSUMER ONLINE ENGAGEMENT: THE  
CASE OF HEWLETT PACKARD COMPANY IN ETHIOPIA**

**BY**

**MESFIN AYELE**

**JUNE 2021  
ADDIS ABABA**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis “EFFECT OF CONTENT MARKETING ON BRAND LOYALTY MEDIATED BY ONLINE CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT: THE CASE OF HEWLETT PACKARD COMPANY IN ETHIOPIA” is my original work, prepared under the guidance of Asfaw Yilma (Ph.D.). All sources of materials used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged. I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or full to any other higher learning institution for the purpose of earning any degree.

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JUNE 2021

## **ENDORSEMENT**

This thesis has been submitted to St. Mary's University, School of Graduate Studies for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

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**SIGNATURE**

JUNE 2021

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## **ACRONYMS/ ABBREVIATIONS**

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ERCA	Ethiopian Revenue and custom Authority
HP	Hewlett Packard
ICT	Information and Computer Technology
IT	Information Technology
S-O-R	Stimulus-Organism-Response
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
VIF	Variation Inflation Factor
WOM	Word of Mouth

## ABSTRACT

*The main objective of the study is to investigate the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty through the mediation of online customer engagement in the case of Hewlett Packard Company in Addis Ababa. By taking the research objectives and proposed hypotheses into considerations, quantitative approach had applied and explanatory research design used for this study. The study was used convenience non-probabilistic sampling technique. The population of the study were graduates of Addis Ababa university who subscribed on the official Hewlett Packard Facebook page. By using structured questionnaire, the data were collected from 264 subscribers/ followers of Hewlett Packard Facebook page in Addis Ababa City with the response rate of 82%. Data collected through self-administered questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS version 20. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe and analyze the relationship among content marketing, online customer engagement and brand loyalty variables. The results of the findings indicated that perceived information quality, enjoyment and interactivity had significant and positive effect on brand loyalty. Among these content marketing dimensions, interactivity had relatively the highest effect on brand loyalty. Besides, online customer engagement mediated the relationship between content marketing and brand loyalty. In conclusion, the more the content marketing practices improved, the more online customer engagement that leads to escalating brand loyalty of HP products in Addis Ababa. Therefore, the company should provide relevant and valuable contents to promote its followers' online engagement so as to assure their long-term loyalty to the brands of the company.*

**Keywords:** -Content Marketing, Brand Loyalty Perceived Information Quality, Online Engagement, Hewlett Packard Company

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Marketing is all about everything a business company does to place its product or service in the hands of potential customers. In decades, there has been a change in the concepts of marketing, from transactional concepts such as pricing, promotion and distribution, towards relationship concepts such as customer trust, risk and commitment (Baines & Fill 2016). Nowadays, the tendency of more traditional marketing methods' ignorance, such as media commercials, email lists and online ads is one of the implications changing marketing strategy (Rancati, Codignola & Capatina 2015). The change towards a digital society has forced enterprises to adopt new ways to meet the expectations from customers and other stakeholders, which has resulted in the concept of digital marketing (Wertheim & Fenwick 2009).

The trend of decreased investment in traditional marketing methods is affected by the change in consumer behaviour (Gluckman, 1990). These days, consumers develop a tendency not want to be interrupted and therefore more consumers ignore marketing messages that seem intrusive (Rancati, 2015). More consumers ignore TV commercials and unsubscribe to email lists which are indications that it is easier for consumers to ignore interruptive ads (Turow, 2008). But, invention of internet and smart phones escalate the ways for enterprises to market themselves online. Marketing an enterprise online is more or less exactly what digital marketing is about and an important aspect is to provide the online audience with the content it wants, aka content marketing (Moran 2016). Compared with conventional marketing communications, one major aspect in digital marketing is content (Yogesh, & Roopan, 2019).

However, the way to create and retain customers has changed and is still changing much because of the digitalization and evolvement of internet technologies (Iansiti, M. & Lakhani, 2017). According to Patrutio & Baltes (2016), content marketing is a crucial part of digital marketing. The reason is that the major part of any enterprises digital marketing should be built on identifying the consumer and its needs, by doing these; enterprises can acquire trust and build a customer-company relationship. Content marketing strategies involve the usage of digital platforms such as blogs and social networks where high-quality content is presented to the consumer. The content presented on these platforms as well as through other media is what creates value for the customers and will help

enterprises attract, convert and retain those (Denham & Harvidsson, 2017). Content marketing should seek to be informative, entertaining and helpful; a proof of content marketing is if the content itself helps audiences solve a problem even though they never end up buying a product or service (Moran 2016). According to Moran (2016) content marketing should possess four properties; credibility, targeted, differentiated and measurable. Content plays an important part in digital marketing since creative, good and valuable content can drive customer engagement (Ahmad, Musa and Harun 2016). It can be taken as a strategic marketing approach that focuses on creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience to gain profit (Maslowska, et. al., 2016).

The opportunity for companies to communicate about their marketing “story”, brands and products and to get their message out in times of a pandemic crisis have been identified as reasons companies have turned to social media as a new marketing function. Another reason that companies are utilizing social media as a new marketing function is that social media may help establish emotional connections with consumers, and in turn to foster strong consumer relations (Cornelissen, 2020). Reitz states that building and maintaining strong consumer relations through social media allow companies a chance to engage with their customers in a whole new way – akin to a system of “conversation.” This means creating a dialogue between a company and its customers where useful information- is exchanged so that both parties build and benefit from the relationship. As a result of the dialogue, loyal consumers can transform into passionate and outspoken brand and business advocates. In these regards, HP – previously named after Hewlett Packard plc, is the most prominent company creating a content hub – “The Garage” (Reitz, 2012).

The Garage is an owned content hub designed to help HP carve out a brand identity through high-quality, multi-channel branded content which facilitated to raise its profile even further as a thought leader in the technology industry. Shiffman (208) indicates, by creating engaging content about technology, HP builds brand awareness and affinity, which in turn would entice consumers to seek out its products and services. However, the effectiveness of its content marketing significantly differs in different countries. As customers at different continents don’t equivalently trust in brand and haven’t confidence in online store as well (Natchaya & Siriluck, 2010). This behavioural intention adversely affects long term relationship or loyalty of customers. Thus, it needs to analyze the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty in different countries’ context.

Thus, the purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of content marketing on customer loyalty in the case of Hewlett Packard Company in Ethiopia. It helps to provide knowledge and insights on why consumers choose whether to engage with content in an online environment. This is for the fact that emerging marketing techniques akin content marketing are becoming more common, with the main goal of attracting customers to online platforms through high quality content.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The emergence of social media fuels the importance of digital marketing in contemporary business arena (Hinchcliffe & Kim, 2012). Social media have been changing the way of communicating, interacting, sharing, and ultimately conducting users' relationships with others. As collaborative environments focused on the exchange of content, social media provide users with unique platform not only to receive content similar to traditional media outlets but also to actively participate in the creation, development, and dissemination of content (Universal McCann, 2008). It represents a big improvement in regards to a shift in how people discover, read and share news, information, and content rather than monitoring static messages and information with basically no interaction with the consumers (Kingsnorth, 2016).

With the rapid increase in the usage of social media platforms, marketers have realized the importance of using social media marketing to attract and retain their target audience. However, considering the number of brands on social media it is difficult for a company to reach to its potential target audience and generate their interest (Mathwick & Ridgon, 2004; Rappaport, 2007; Wang, 2006). Hence, marketers are focusing on generating content which can appeal to its target audience and ultimately grab their attention in the crowd (Laila, 2014). Also, strong content enables a company to build its credibility on the internet and gets strong search ranking on google.

Previous researches (Patrutio & Baltes 2016; Ahmad, Musa & Harun 2016; Musa & Harun 2016) state that content marketing is an important part of an enterprise's marketing. Content created and shared on various online platforms is what engages consumers which build a customer-company relationship and further leads to purchase intent and brand loyalty. This is particularly important since the way content is shared and perceived by users cannot be controlled by an enterprise, whether positive or negative (Baines & Fill 2014), Users are no longer passive recipients of content, they actively engage and co-create by liking, sharing or commenting on content posted by



enterprises (Kilgour, 2015), which is why it is important to understand why consumers chose to engage with content or not.

In this regard, HP plays significant role in promoting content marketing through different social media platforms and establishing strong relationship with known universities in different countries. Addis Ababa University is one of institutes collaborating with HP to cater to the needs of new graduating students (Mesfine, 2012). Besides, it also helps to show the options and the advancement of Information and Computer Technology (ICT) that currently exists and where it would be reached on the future including government institutions, private organizations and educational institutions. As a content marketing strategy, this is basically intended for showing the future market potential in ICT industry and how to apply it correctly before and after purchase decisions are made so as to build strong brand loyalty. However, the strategy hardly met its objectives in Ethiopia as the market share declines through time. According to HP marketing repetitive (2019), the company couldn't achieve the targeted sales growth in the country as planned and the market share declines drastically for last half a decade though different online content marketing strategies have been implemented.

Scholars proclaim that online consumer engagement can build relationships between a company and its consumers and positively impact brand loyalty (Meskauskas, 2016; Rappaport, 2017). According to Kilgour (2015), it is important for enterprises to get customers to engage in their content, since it creates trust relationships and positive actions such as purchase or positive word of mouth (WOM). Eisingerich (2015) on the other hand argues that customers avoid cocreation on social media, such as online WOM since it is associated with high social risk. In support of this idea, Sasse (2015) further advocates the importance of choosing the right content since users play an active role in content sharing.

The quality of content marketing depends on the perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity. They are frequently cited within the website design literature as imperative characteristics to include when designing an effective content marketing (Cao, Zhang & Seydel, 2015; Koufaris, 2012; Ou & Sia, 2014). Website design literature supports that informational content, operational content, and perceived interactivity are appropriate constructs to consider as influences on online consumer engagement in the course of build long term customer loyalty. Rappaport (2017) posits content marketing has a causal relationship with consumer engagement while consumer engagement with brand loyalty.

Despite consumer engagement prominence in marketing literature, it is relatively a new term within online marketing context and there is a lack of consensus on how online consumer engagement leads to positive brand and marketing objectives through content marketing (Sia, 2014). However, limited research works have investigated the effects of content based social media marketing on brand loyalty in Ethiopian manufacturing companies. Moreover, so far, no study has examined the mediating roles of customer online engagement in the relationship between content based social media marketing on brand loyalty in the selected company. This implies that such an investigation in manufacturing company in general and in Hewlett Packard Company in particular is essential to assure better quality services to their customers. To this end, the study inquiries into and measure the role of online consumer engagement on the relationship between content marketing practices and brand loyalty in Ethiopian context. The output helps to fill the aforementioned empirical gap through addressing the influence of online consumer engagement on building strong brand loyalty through effective implementation of online content marketing on Facebook social media in particular.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The main research question is how does content marketing affect brand loyalty through customer online engagement in the case of Hewlett Packard Company in Addis Ababa? Specifically,

1. What is the effect of perceived quality of information affect brand loyalty of HP customers in Addis Ababa?
2. How does perceived enjoyment influence brand loyalty of HP customers in Addis Ababa?
3. What is the effect of user interactivity affect brand loyalty of HP customers in Addis Ababa?
4. What is the effect of content marketing on HP customer online engagement?
5. How does customer online engagement have mediating role on the relationship between content marketing and brand loyalty?

## **1.4. Objectives of the Study**

### **1.4.1. General Objective**

The general objective of this study was to investigate the influence of content based social media marketing on brand loyalty mediated by customer online engagement in the case of Hewlett Packard Company in Addis Ababa.

### **1.4.2. Specific Objectives**

- i. To investigate the effect of informational content of marketing on brand loyalty
- ii. To evaluate effect of operational content of marketing on brand loyalty
- iii. To evaluate the effect of perceived interactivity of content marketing on brand loyalty
- iv. To analyze the effect of content marketing on online consumer engagement
- v. To analyze the mediating role of online customer engagement on the relationship between content marketing practices and brand loyalty

## **1.4. Significance of the Study**

The framework for this study attempts to understand the relationship between the antecedents – perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity – with online consumer engagement, and it identifies loyalty or (re)purchase intent as behavioural outcomes of engagement. However, past research has yet to consider outcomes of engagement or has not specifically identified outcomes of engagement. By specifically identifying and testing outcomes of online consumer engagement, a better understanding of the construct can be achieved. It may contribute its own footprint on the existing content marketing knowledge in Ethiopian context.

Managers of HP Company will use this study's findings to consider social media network to present their brands with enormous reach, endless communication possibilities and with a very limited promotion cost and grab the possible opportunities of exploiting the brand building potential through the richest and fastest communication form available. Since social media as a form of content marketing which might present a whole new phase challenge, it may help concerned managers to develop their marketing strategy with special care in order to minimize the risk and challenges of online branding.

The study provides insights to digital marketers to create a content which is creative, original, and must include the element of appeal so as to engage consumer with the brand and spread positive word of mouth in the online community. It can be taken as a springboard for further studies in the field.

### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is based on the social media content marketing and its effect on brand loyalty, specifically ICT products marketing. Conceptually, the variables to be included in the research involve social media online content marketing (in terms of informational content, operational content and interactivity), customer engagement and customer loyalty or brand patronage behavior which can all be covered under the broad subjects of marketing communications and consumer behavior respectively. Also, geographically, it covers HP computer and IT products' customers in Addis Ababa who have online (social media especially Facebook) presence or engagement. Methodologically, the intended unit of measurements will be HP ITC products' customers, particularly 2012 and on graduates of Addis Ababa University.

### **1.6. Limitations of the Study**

This thesis is limited to the platform for sharing of content marketing. The main focus is official website of HP brands together with Facebook which is the most used social media platforms in Ethiopia, where the study is taking place. In regards to content marketing, this platform is mentioned most frequently, which further motivates the choice of this study. Choosing the official website of HP brand is because content posted on other media is to drive traffic to its specific website. Boateng (2015) mentions the importance to link social media content to their website to enable consumers to validate content. The research is not a comparative study between social Medias, but rather seeks to gain generalized knowledge on the perception of content marketing and its effect on brand loyalty through online engagement from a consumer's point of view. Note that in the thesis, the words customer and consumer are used, however we emphasize that in this thesis they have the same meaning and are used dependent on the context and reference used.

### **1.7. Organization of the Study**

This research report comprises of five chapters. Chapter One consists of introduction that includes background of the study, statement of the problem, General and specific objectives, research

questions, significance of the study, definition of terms, limitations and scope of the study. Chapter Two consists of Review of Related Literature. Chapter Three refers to methodology which includes description of the study area, research design and strategy, method of data collection, sampling design, data collection instruments and method of data analysis. Chapter Four shows data analysis and interpretation and Chapter five which is the last chapter consisting of summary of the major findings, conclusions and recommendations drawn based on the conclusions of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1. Theoretical Review**

##### **2.1.1. Content Marketing**

Content marketing is one of advertising concept to achieve the target market. According to the Content Marketing Institute, content marketing is a marketing technique of creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience with the objective of driving profitable customer action. According to Rowley (2008), content marketing can be considered as a management process where a firm identify, analyse and satisfy customer demand to gain profit and build unique strong brand with the use of digital content distributed through electronic channels. Milhinhos (2015) Content can be present in a variety of formats including: blogs, infographics, slide decks, case studies, white papers, e-books, videos, quizzes, memes and images, etc. Strauss (2014) mentioned that content marketing is a strategy involving creating and publishing content on Web sites and in social media prepared contents in a shareable, easy to understand, incentive and easily accessible ways.

Customers nowadays educate themselves by searching various platforms to receive information about a specific object. Thus, it is important for enterprises to provide consumers with content that

enables them to engage in the brand, which successfully leads to purchase intent and brand loyalty at large (Kilgour, 2015). The concept of content marketing is that it should be informative, entertaining and helpful in the way that it helps the audience to solve a problem (Moran 2016). Moran (2016) states that for content marketing to be successful it needs to possess the four following properties: credibility, targeted, differentiated and measurable.

Credibility means that the content stands out from traditional kind of marketing which tends to be extravagant and loud, instead it is more similar to an article or documentary. Credibility is also created by not mentioning the specific product that is actually marketed since consumers nowadays are very prone to lose their trust towards content that explicitly does this. Targeted, just like other marketing, content marketing also needs to be targeted. However, it is more precise than most other marketing since today's marketers have access to large amounts of customer data. It includes creating personas out of audiences such as motivations and psychographics, analyzing different stages of a buyer's journey and also considering message resonance where the content exposed to a potential buyer matches his/her relationship to the product/website. The third property is differentiation, meaning that an enterprise must offer to solve a consumer's problem better than its competitors. This difference must, except from being different in product/service, also possess a difference that a market is willing to pay for. The last property is that the content strategy must be measurable, digitization has brought almost endless possibilities to analyze and measure different types of data that varies in volume, velocity, variety and veracity. Both structured data that can be put into spreadsheets and databases must be measured, as well as unstructured data such as images, videos and text (Moran 2016).

### **2.1.2. Content Marketing on Brand**

Holliman and Rowley (2014) opine that the content marketing may assist a firm in brand building and developing trust in this digital era. The widespread access to internet and the popularity of social media and microblogging portals have opened the new windows to the marketers to increase the brand awareness in the market. Nosrati (2013) mentioned that good quality information content shared on social media might convince the customers to make purchase decisions in favor of a specific brand. Korfiatis (2012) states that the success of the content marketing depends on the quality of the information, its ability to enjoy the customer and the interaction amongst customers. In the content marketing, the marketers offer the educational or entertainment-oriented information to the potential customers or an audience base with a hope that it may bend the customers' behavior

in the favor of their brand. However, the exposed information is only effective if it deems to be good and interesting. Good quality content contains reliable and useful information as per the perception of the audience. (Hilligoss & Rieh, 2008). Keh and Xie (2009) argue that the perceived nature of content largely depends on the credibility of the source of the information. Good quality content may significantly improve the brand image among the customers if it could realize the use of a particular product for a maximum value to the customers and it also perceives to be reliable and trustworthy.

Zalmanson (2013) points out the utility of content marketing in fostering a high degree of customer engagement. The content marketing has an ability to engage the customers to a great extent, especially through social media platforms. The rising popularity of social media gives the opportunity to the marketers to share their content with a large number of people (Palmer, 2009). Moreover, the marketers may engage the customers through the conversations published in the content and consequently may create the bond between the customers and the brand (Bijmolt, 2010). Therefore, content marketing may help in fostering the customer engagement, which may lead to accelerated customer loyalty and trust.

Some studies have focused on the use of social media in the marketing of the products in the sectors other than hospital or health sector. For example, Ajina (2019) highlights the importance of word of mouth (WOM) on the different social media as a cheapest and fastest channel of advertising. He finds that behavior and attitude of customers are found very effective in fostering the WOM on the social media. Ajina (2019) investigates and estimates the perceived value of social media marketing. He finds that customer's engagement has significant effect on the perceived value, customer's loyalty and WOM. Further, perceived value has positive effect on WOM and loyalty and WOM has in turn positive effect on the loyalty.

### **2.1.3. Online Consumer Engagement**

Engagement occurs when internet users connect or collaborate with brands, companies, or each other. Judy Strauss, (2014) mentioned that the engagement involves connecting with a user emotionally and intellectually. Online engagement provides the basis to purchase the products. As well as, online engagement is analogous to offline experience marketing. It means that online engagement provides the basis to purchase the products. Online marketers engage users by enticing them to participate in their content or media. Patterson (2006) indicated that the elements of

customer engagement included idea (Vigor and Absorption), emotions (Dedication), and behaviour (Interaction).

Considering engagement within an online consumer context, Wilson (2010) attempted to reconcile the engagement construct and propose a working definition that describes the online consumer experience. Using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model to better understand the consumer online experience, Wilson situates engagement in the “internal state” portion of the model. The researchers describe the internal state portion of the model as “a dynamic, tiered perceptual spectrum” (p. 920). They believe consumers respond to a company’s website or other computer-mediated entity through interaction and then undergo an experiential construct of telepresence (considered presence in this study), which is defined as cognitive immersion in the medium and website, before consumers feel engaged.

Engagement is more dynamic whereas involvement is more passive (Mollen& Wilson). Additionally, Mollen& Wilson state that although sometimes involvement can contain affective components (Zaichkowsky, 1985), most of the time the construct is considered purely cognitive (Thomson, 2005). However, engagement, from Mollen& Wilson’s perspective, as well as in this study, is defined both cognitively and affectively. Lastly, for this study, engagement includes the dimension of participation, which is not included in definitions of involvement.

Furthermore, Mollen& Wilson (2010) recognize that there is limited research on online consumer engagement; specifically, research is lacking showing support of a relationship between engagement and optimal consumer behaviors (e.g., word of mouth, purchase intent). However, they state that a relationship is “both plausible and consistent with the available data. They urge researchers to investigate the relationship thus further validating the need for this study. Lastly, Burns (2010) considered engagement to be an online behavior similar to the industry’s definition of engagement.

In one study, Thomson, (2005) measured engagement behaviors (e.g., read wall postings by brand, read fan comments, posted comments on the brand’s wall, and played games or other activities) by comparing Facebook users who had “fanned” brands and those who had not. Burns found users who “fanned” a brand and exhibited more engagement behaviors scored significantly higher on inner self-expression and self-disclosure indices and were more willing to tell a friend about the brand’s profile, continue the Facebook relationship with the brand, and friend the brand again. Based on



this, Burns concluded that the more a consumer is engaged on Facebook with a brand, the more positive outcomes occur for a brand.

Although no agreed upon definition of engagement exists, several consistent themes seem to emerge from the literature to describe the construct. First, engagement is a complex cognitive process that requires focus, sustained attention, absorption, and thoughtfulness. Second, engagement encompasses an affective component that involves connection and bonding with the brand, emotional congruence, and pleasure and satisfaction. Lastly, engagement is participating, interacting, and co-creating experiences. Deriving from the persistent themes that have emerged, the definitions of engagement provided by both industry practitioners and academics, and the frameworks proposed by academics, the following definition of online consumer engagement reconciles the practitioner and scholarly views of the construct and puts forth that engagement is a multidimensional construct that encompasses cognition, affection, and behavior. It is different than previous definitions presented in the marketing literature of engagement as it includes cognitive and affective presence and participation. The definition is meant to serve as a benchmark to define online consumer engagement:

Online consumer engagement is the state of being present in a mediated branded space where the consumer is immersed in the brand's offerings meant to deliver purpose and value. Cognitive engagement requires intense levels of focus and concentration in seeking, interpreting, analyzing, and summarizing information to a point where consumers may lose themselves in the process and may lose a sense of time and space. Additionally, brand learning (e.g., mission, goals, product offerings, philanthropic efforts, and promotions) occurs while negative responses toward the brand are minimized. Furthermore, online consumer engagement requires affective feelings, which involves emotional bonding and connection with the brand, products, and other users that leads to overall satisfaction. Lastly, consumers must invest themselves within the online vehicle by participating through sharing, conversing, and co-creating with the brand and/or other users.

In sum, online consumer engagement could be described as the three H's – head, heart, and hands (K. Hallahan, personal communication, March 21, 2011). The "head" represents the cognitive aspect of engagement that is thoughtful and process oriented. The "heart" represents the affective aspect of engagement that is and emotionally driven. And, the "hands" represent the participative aspect of online consumer engagement that is active and transactional.

#### **2.1.4. Brand Loyalty**

Commitment-trust theory Morgan & Hunt (1994) argue that commitment and trust are key factors that contribute to successful relationship marketing. So, when both are present, it results in cooperative behaviours, which positively stimulate the success of relationship marketing. Trust is “when one party has confidence in an exchange partner’s reliability and integrity” (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; p. 23). Furthermore, relationships characterized by trust have higher perceived value, so parties are more motivated to commit themselves to such relationships (Hrebiniak, 1974). Relationship commitment is the belief that a long-term relationship is with another person is so important that you should invest in maintaining it (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). As the definition of brand loyalty has changed from initially ‘repeat purchases’, to nowadays a more elaborate definition that comes close to Morgan and Hunt’s (1994) definition of commitment.

According to many researchers, profit will be enhanced when companies focus on retaining existing customers (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Fornell & Wernerfelt, 1987). Developing and maintaining customer loyalty is consequently an important contributory factor to a firm’s profitability (Clark, 1997; Oliver, 1999; Reichheld, 2003). Due to the fast development of the Internet, the old ways of doing business have been overturned but when it comes to loyalty among customers, not much has changed. Reichheld & Schefter (2000) argue that the old rules are as vital as ever. To them, customer loyalty is still about earning trust from the right kind of customers, which will make them want to do all their business with that particular company. Both Oliver (1999) and Yin (1999) conclude that loyalty generally has been defined as repeat purchasing frequency and same brand purchasing. Reichheld (2003) on the other hand means that loyalty is so much more than repeat purchase and that a customer who keeps purchasing products from the same company may not necessarily be loyal. It can be a result of limited options, personal inertia or indifference.

Always flying with the same airline might for example be due to the fact that they are the only ones flying that route (Reichheld, 2003). Parasuraman and Grewal (2000) mean that the main factors that are influencing customer loyalty mostly depend on the products, services and prices that a company is offering. Stratigos (1999) defines loyalty as a kind of commitment that is similar to a resistance to change. Loyal customers are also more tolerant when it comes to defects and flaws and they will continue to use the provided products since the business fulfill their personal needs (Stratigos, 1999; Reichheld, 2003). Staying with a company only because of the fact that they have good promotion campaigns is, according to Thatcher and George (2004), not seen as loyalty but more as unloyalty.

An unloyal customer is also characterized by not complaining if problems or inconvenience occur, but instead simply switch to another competitor on the market.

Companies can on the other hand expect to get complaints from loyal customers since they care about the business and want it to act in its best way. Such complaints should be seen as feedback and the input from the customers can help to improve the performance of the company (Thatcher & George, 2004). Grönroos (2000) have declared that paying attention to customer feedback as well as dealing with complaints and questions is an important part in building long term relationships. Building a relationship between a customer and a business will contribute to both sides trusting each other and that will eventually lead to commitment (Grönroos, 2000). Braum (2002) declares that companies can do certain things to persuade the customers into being loyal and one strategy is to make the customers a part of the daily business activities. This approach will make them passionate about the brand and, according to Braum (2002), a true loyal customer is someone who is passionate about the brand and not only about the provided products.

Reichheld and Scheffer (2000) further state that customer loyalty is essential for an online retailer for mainly two reasons. It is a competitive necessity since figuring out a way to create exceptional value for the customers will make them stick around. It is also an economic necessity since it costs more to attract new customers on the Internet than to retain old ones (Reichheld & Scheffer, 2000). Other findings in the traditional marketing literature also conclude that greater customer loyalty positively influences profitability by both increasing sales per customer as well as helping to reduce marketing costs (Fornell & Wernerfelt, 1987; Clark, 1997; Oliver, 1999; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). This is, according to Reichheld and Sasser (1990), because of the fact that acquiring new customers entails some onetime costs in the form of advertising, promotions and so on. Having long time customers who are loyal to the company will, on the other hand, provide free advertising (Reichheld, 1990).

This is since loyal customers tend to make positive recommendations to their friends about brands they have utilized or been in contact with, which further reduces customer acquisition costs (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Oliver, 1999; Reichheld, 2003). Referrals from existing customers are particularly lucrative on the web since word of mouse spreads even quicker than word of mouth. Customers can use email (Reichheld & Scheffer, 2000) or various social media platforms to broadcast a recommendation of a favorite online retailer to dozens of friends. In addition to

reducing customer acquisition costs, having loyal customers can also reduce costs in the form of customer service and helpdesks. This is since referred customers tend to turn to the friend who recommended them for help and guidance instead of calling the brands customer service (Reichheld & Schefer, 2000). Also, companies that have succeeded in establishing long term relationships with their customers can usually charge more for their products. It is due to the fact that most customers prefer to pay a slightly higher price for something they know than to trust a less expensive competitor (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Bentley, 1999; Thatcher & George, 2004).

Trust plays a critical role in developing and maintaining loyalty for e-businesses and to gain customer loyalty you must first gain their trust (Hoffmann, Novak & Peralta 1999; Reichheld & Schefer, 2000; Braum, 2000). Since business is conducted at a distance there are more risks and uncertainties that are magnified (Reichheld & Schefer, 2000). Hoffmann (1999) argues that it is mainly the part concerning transactional security and privacy that influence customers in the online buying process. Reichheld & Schefer (2000) continue that the consumers cannot touch, feel or smell the products nor can they look into the salesperson's eyes when they purchase the product. They instead fully have to rely on images and product descriptions on the website and if they do not trust those promises, they will shop elsewhere (Reichheld & Schefer, 2000). The traditional way of developing trust is therefore excluded on the Internet. For e-businesses, Gommans (2001) mean that brand trust and loyalty in general, are particularly important since those components can be helpful in overcoming some of the Internet's disadvantages. Such disadvantages are perceptions that the Internet is a dishonest, unsafe and unreliable marketplace. A company cannot buy trust with promotions or advertising, they have to earn it by acting in the best interests of their customers, as Reichheld and Schefer (2000) put it.

#### **2.1.1.1. Dimensions of Content Marketing**

The following section describes the dimensions of content marketing which comprises perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment, and perceived interactivity. The three concepts are proposed antecedents of online consumer engagement as each of these concepts has been heavily studied in website design literature and has been deemed an appropriate feature to include on a company's website (Bhatti, 2000; Cao, Zhang, Seydel, 2005; Cyr, Head, & Ivanov, 2009). Furthermore, research has found that the presence of these three constructs on a company's website

can help shape consumer perceptions that eventually can lead to a more loyal consumer base, which can ultimately influence consumer behavior, such as (re)purchase intent (Cyr, 2009).

#### **2.1.1.1.1. Perceived Information Quality**

Because providing information is the basic goal of a website (Bhatti, 2000), information quality has drawn considerable attention in the website development and design literature. Similar to other studies, this study defines information quality as “a consumer’s perception of product and company information based on a set of judgment criteria that cover accuracy, relevance, helpfulness, up-to-datedness, and unbiased measures” (Ou & Sia, 2010, p. 918). Information quality has been addressed in the consumer behavior literature as a key website trait influencing consumer evaluation and attracting online customers.

Research in this area has suggested that information quality plays a key role in consumers’ assessment of a company’s website (Dran, 2000). In fact; Huizingh (2000) argues that information quality is one of the most important website features, as illustrated in his well-known slogan “content is king.” Huizingh’s slogan emphasizes the importance of information quality, which he derived from his work based on the substantial role content has on consumer’s positive upward and negative downward judgments of a website. In this study, a company’s profile page on Facebook is considered one of a company’s websites that is maintained and operated by a representative of the company, and information quality on Facebook is considered information about upcoming sales, coupons, product launches, discontinuations, and stories about the products or about consumers using the product.

Lyer (2001) reason that site content attracts a company’s target audience so content must be at the forefront of design and development. Lin & Lu (2000) found that a customer’s acceptance of a company’s website is contingent on the information presented. Cao (2005) found that online customers are attracted to websites based on the quality of information presented on the site. In addition, Ou & Sia (2010) found that consumers who perceived information quality negatively on a company’s website distrusted the site, which ultimately led to low purchase intent.

As research has suggested (Cao, 2005; Ou & Sia, 2010; Zhang & von Dran, 2000), information quality is extremely important to the development of a company’s website to draw in and continue

to attract online customers. It is crucial for customers seeking information about a company have up-to-date, relevant, and accurate information in order to meet their needs.

#### **2.1.1.1.2. Perceived Enjoyment**

Research has found that the quality of information included on a website can be regarded very highly among consumers, but if the site is not enjoyable, consumers will lose interest and vacate the site (Cao, 2005; Smith & Merchant, 2001). Perceived enjoyment moves consumers beyond the fundamental to the hedonic (Ou & Sia, 2010), where the consumer experiences emotional involvement while using the vendor website (Zhang & von, 2000). Research has found that enjoyment – website features that are fun, interesting, exciting and entertaining has a positive effect on a customer’s evaluation of a company’s website. Eighmey (1997) verified that statement, finding that by including enjoyable features within a site not only sets it apart from other sites but also contributed to overall customer satisfaction. Additionally, research has confirmed that enjoyable website features such as online games, software downloads, and Q&A heavily shaped online consumer experiences. Pitt (1998) state that online consumers visit companies’ websites to seek gratifications, including enjoyment. Given this, Liu and Arnett (2000) suggest that website features that promote consumer excitement (e.g., online games, software downloads, and Q&A) be included in website design and development to attract consumers and to help them enjoy and enrich their online experience. By providing an enjoyable online experience, Schmidt (1996) found that online customer activities increase, including participation, promotion, excitement, and concentration. Furthermore, Ou & Sia (2010) discovered that consumers who enjoy their website experience tend to trust the company’s website more, which positively shapes repurchase intent.

#### **2.1.1.1.3. Perceived Interactivity –**

Another website feature that has been found to produce favorable attitudes toward a brand and its online presence and ultimately influence purchase intent is interactivity (Mollen& Wilson, 2010). Although no agreed upon definition exists for interactivity, there are agreed upon assumptions to describe the term. First, interactivity is usually associated with new technology platforms, including the Internet, World Wide Web, and social media. Secondly, interactivity facilitates two-way communication similar to interpersonal communication that produces feedback (Kiouisis, 2002;). Lastly, interactivity can be characterized by the user’s feelings of control. Steuer (1992) defines interactivity as the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of the

mediated environment in real time. Drawing from past research, perceived interactivity in this study is defined as “the degree to which the users perceive that the interaction between the brand and themselves to be two-way, controllable, and responsive to their actions” (Mollen& Wilson, p. 921).

Interactivity has been studied from two different perspectives. First, interactivity has been considered variable to describe a medium’s (e.g., website) interactive capabilities (Kiouisis, 2002). This approach views interactivity from a website’s design and features perspective and is considered “the hardwired opportunity of interactivity provided during an interaction” (Liu & Shrum, 2002, p. 55). Secondly, interactivity is considered a dependent variable measuring users’ perceptions. This approach is a more experiential approach that considers perceived interactivity as “a psychological state experienced by a site user during his or her interaction with the website” (Wu, p.91). The later perspective has recently been a popular approach adopted among researchers (Mollen& Wilson, 2010) who have come to a consensus among the key perceived interactivity dimensions including perceived user control, two-way communication and perceived responsiveness.

Perceived interactivity is critical to online marketing success (Lee, 2005). Ha &James (1998) concluded that interactivity is of the utmost importance in an online commerce environment. Additionally, Lee, who identified user control, responsiveness, personalization, and connectedness as crucial components of perceived interactivity, found that control, responsiveness and connectedness lead to trust and eventually consumer behavioral intentions. Furthermore, Cyr(2009) introduced a model proposing a relationship between perceived interactivity (user control, connectedness, and responsiveness) to cognition, affect, and trust. After conducting an experiment where participants were required to browse destination vacation websites that varied in levels of interactivity, the researchers verified that all of the proposed relationships in their model were supported, providing further support of the role perceived interactivity has on loyalty through cognition and affect.

### **2.1.5. Content Marketing on Customer Online Engagement**

Companies try to engage customers through content marketing in the Web 2.0 environment. Finally digital content functions as inbound marketing to attract customers and prospects, with appropriate content available when and where users seek information. The most important strategy for creating attention to product of consumer is to provide a good content to build consumer brand engagement;

it will lead to purchase intention in the future (Vivek, 2012). Creating quality content may influence the consumer to engage with brand which companies need to create content that keeps customers visiting website and stimulate them to engage on purchase intention. Content marketing is one of the best strategies has used for stimulate online engagement (Hollebeek, 2011). The key to create an effective engagement can be created by creating a persuasive content. Creating the appropriate content brings success. Content marketing is one of the best strategies has used for stimulate online engagement and has emerged simultaneously with the rise of social media (Vivek, 2012).

#### **2.1.6. Linking Content Marketing, Consumer Engagement and Brand Loyalty**

Kietzmann (2011) define social media as highly interactive internet based platforms where users can share, cocreate, discuss, and modify user generated content. Whereas marketing with traditional media, such as magazines, television and news websites, was focused on delivering a message, social media is focused on building a relationship and about conversation with others.

It is consequently about receiving and exchanging ideas and perceptions with the customers and not just about delivering a message (Romero & Gómez, 2008). Mangold and Faulds (2009) argue that social media has become a significant factor in the influence of consumer behavior, including aspects such as awareness, information gathering, opinions, attitudes, purchase behavior and evaluation of the product. Kaplan (2010) claim that, despite the fact that there is a huge interest in social media among companies today, the understanding of what the term actually means is not widely spread. As a consequence of this lack of understanding, companies often miss opportunities or threats given by creative consumers (Kietzmann, 2011). Using social media to engage with customers is thus, according to Baird (2011), more complex than it might initially sound and there is often a gap in terms of what consumers seek on social media and what companies are offering.

With the rise of social media, companies have increasingly less control of the information that is spread about them on the Internet (Vollmer, 2008; Kaplan, 2010; Baird, 2011). According to Kietzmann (2011), the power has shifted from those working in marketing and PR to the users of social media. It is no longer the company is in control of the relationship but instead the customers (Mangold,2009; Kaplan, 2010; Baird, 2011). Mangold &Faulds (2009) argue that it is the possibility for one person to write to a hundred, or even a thousand other consumers, about a product that has led to the great impact of consumer to consumer communication.



According to Vollmer (2008), consumers are nowadays turning away from traditional sources of advertising and instead turn to various social media platforms for information regarding products they wish to purchase. The fact that the customers are in control and that they are much closer can also affect a company's marketing, sales and service efforts and therefore requires a different approach from the company's side (Constantinides, 2008; Baird, 2011). As a result of customers increasingly taking over typical company activities, Constantinides (2008), claim that companies need to work much more "on demand". By this, they mean to only market the T-shirts demanded by the customers, create assortments suggested by the consumers or launch advertising campaigns that are approved or developed by their customer. Baird (2011) mean that companies need to embrace the power shift and instead of trying to manage the customers, they should strive for facilitating collaborative experiences and a dialogue that the customers value. They need to understand what it is that triggers customers to use social media to seek out a brand and also what it is that would make them reluctant to interact.

Consumers join brand communities and follow brands on social media to fulfill their need of being identified with groups or symbols that they wish to associate with, or that they find desirable (Laroche, 2013). Mangold & Faulds (2009) also emphasize that consumers like to feel connected to other consumers that share the same interests and desires, which lead them to join communities that are centered on shared values and interests. This could for example be a fashion site for men's fashion. To find communities that share the same target market can provide and company with huge advantage, such as excellent sponsorship or collaboration opportunities (Mangold, 2009). In their research, Baird (2011) has found that before consumers use social media to interact with brands, they need to feel that they trust the company and that they are communicating honestly.

Transparency is consequently of high importance and a company that is not being transparent risk being perceived as manipulative and insincere. Mangold and Faulds (2009) share that opinion and state that when customers feel that they are well informed about a company and their products, they are more likely to talk about them. Hence, giving sufficient information about products is of great importance. Some customers also think that a passion for the brand is a prerequisite for interacting with that brand on social media (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

Baird and Parasnis (2011) further found that customers, to a certain extent, feel connected to the brand after engaging with them via social media, but it is not what drives them to interact in the first

place. To get recommendations, opinions and reviews from friends and family is also an increasing reason behind consumers social media use. The power of recommendations and endorsements from friends on social networks can be felt every time someone “retweets” a company’s status on Twitter or “likes” a company on Facebook.

Companies should according to Baird (2011) take advantage of these tools and motivate customers to share their experiences with others. This can be done through creative and fun marketing campaigns on social media platforms where consumers are encouraged to like and share a company’s page. It can also be connected to charity if the company for example donates one Euro to charity for every “like” they get on Facebook. Two of the reasons why some customers are reluctant to interact with brands via social media are privacy concerns and the fear of being spammed with news and updates (Baird & Parasnis, 2011).

## **2.2. Empirical Literature Review**

Online customer engagement strategy is an association among consumers and organizations by mean of various digital online communication endeavors, incorporated by the organization to enhance the effectiveness of their content marketing to assure customer loyalty to their brands or company image. The quality of content marketing and the intensity of online customer engagement are determinant factors for building strong customer brand preference in today's technologically connected society. The following paragraphs give a brief review of empirical literature regarding the relationships amongst content marketing, customer engagement and brand loyalty.

Greve (2014) assessed the moderating effect of customer engagement on the relationship between content marketing and brand loyalty relationship. He developed a model for measurement of antecedents of customer engagement, to explain customer engagement behaviour on Facebook fan page and to analyze effect of customer engagement on content marketing-brand loyalty relationship. He found that the relationship between content marketing and brand loyalty is positively moderated by engagement activity. This meant that a higher level of engagement can escalate the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty. Consequently, this outcome can give administrators direction how to allocate scarce marketing budgets.

Huizingh (2000) found that information quality is extremely important to the development of a company’s website to draw in and continue to attract online customers. Through in-depth

interviews, O'Brien and Toms (2008) found that consumers become engaged when a system possesses the information that is sought.

Wirtz (2013) explored the role of implementing content marketing on online brand communities to engage. For this purpose, he developed a conceptual framework having three key dimensions of online content marketing namely perceived information quality, enjoyment and interactivity. He stated that companies must focus on the quality of their content marketing to building online brand communities to engage customer's results in retaining loyal customers.

Bolton (2011) studied opportunities and challenges for organizations as far as customer Engagement is concerned. The focus of this paper was to identify how customer engagement can be measured and managed and what is the relationship between established constructs and measures used by managers-such as brand equity, quality, satisfaction, trust, loyalty and customer value.

E-consultancy & C-scape (2011) prepared customer engagement report on 2011 in which more than 1000 companies took part in research. This report looked at trends relating to customer behavior and attitudes and various customer engagement strategies being adopted by companies. It was concluded that online and offline strategies both are significant in engaging customers.

So (2013) examined the role of customer engagement in promoting brand loyalty. The author used a sequential mixed methods approach to consisting of two phases: quantitative and qualitative. Phase one developed a customer engagement scale which was employed to test conceptual model. Phase two involved conducting interview of 16 highly engaged customers. Findings of study suggest that customer engagement has positive impact on brand loyalty.

O'Brien & Toms (2008) further found that if consumers have the opportunity to locate information on a system that is relevant and appropriate to their needs, that captures their attention, defined very cognitively as the concentration of mental activity and focus, become engaged in the system. Perceived information quality refers to a consumer's assessment of the information presented on a website based on accuracy, relevance, helpfulness, currency (being up-to-date), and unbiased (Zhang & Dran, 2000). Information quality is thought to be a key website feature that influences consumer online engagement and brand preference.

Eighmey (1997) found that consumers who view their time on a company's website as enjoyable also experience emotional involvement with the brand, which can lead to positive brand bonding

and increase overall satisfaction. Additionally, enjoyable online experiences can make users feel cognitively involved with a brand, which can promote branding and concentration.

Matlin (1994) found that websites with aesthetically appealing features, an experience that is interesting and pleasurable and novelty appealing features, features that are surprising that cause excitement and joy move consumers forward into engagement. Based on this, the construct of enjoyment is proposed to be one of content marketing dimensions.

Mollen & Wilson (2010) found that enjoyment influences the cognitive (brand learning and concentration), affective (emotionally involvement, brand bonding and satisfaction), and participative (providing input) components found in online consumer engagement.

Cyr (2009) also found that perceived interactivity as allowing the consumer control and access to information on the site in a variety of ways, which is both personally satisfying and responsive. O'Brien & Toms (2008) confirmed that interactivity had positive and significant effect on consumer online engagement. They proposed that users are engaged when feedback is present and when users feel they are in control of the interaction. They consider that engagement occurs when there is interaction between the users and the system.

Howard & Tyebjee (1977) showed that brand loyalty is stronger when consumers are psychologically or cognitively committed to a brand. Shang (2006) also confirmed that when consumers are cognitively engaged in a brand, their knowledge/information and learning about the brand increases, therefore, promoting consumer loyalty.

In summary, review of related empirical literature, content marketing has direct positive effects on the customers' engagement and loyalty. Hence, the content marketing may have direct effect on the customers' loyalty and also have the indirect effects on the customers' loyalty through the customer online engagement. Loyalty is becoming increasingly important as it can provide the organization with a valuable and sustainable competitive advantage. The development of customer loyalty and engagement is an inimitable resource for the companies because customers' loyalty is becoming increasingly harder to attain due to higher customer switching activities. Enhancing customer engagement has been an area of focus for electronic product manufacturing companies now-a-days. The advantages of adopting customer engagement strategies are well understood since customer engagement leads to customer loyalty.

Keep in perspective this fact, HP in Ethiopia should go beyond giving a satisfactory experience to customers. The marketers should instead strive to engage them by developing a rational and emotional connection with target customers through content marketing. An engaged customer will have strong attachment with the brand and recommend brand to other customers if the information quality, ability to enjoy and interactivity of the content is perceived positively. Clearly, a focus on customer engagement will make a difference to business by moderating the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty. HP company in Addis Ababa that engage online more of their customers gain competitive edge over competitors. Considering these hypotheses, no comprehensive study is available to test the multi-dimensional nature of the relationships among the content marketing, customer online engagement and loyalty in case of HP company in Addis Ababa. Based on the theoretical and empirical literature reviewed, the present study is motivated to fill this literature gap by testing the following proposed alternate hypotheses:

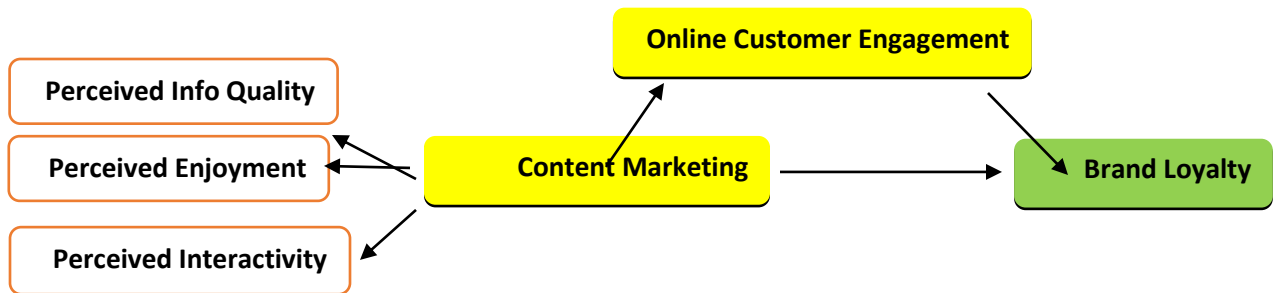
- *H1 – Perceived Information Quality has positive and significant effect on brand loyalty*
- *H2 – Perceived enjoyment has positive and significant effect on brand loyalty*
- *H3 – Perceived interactivity has positive and significant effect on brand loyalty*
- *H4 – Content marketing has positive and significant effect on online customer engagement*
- *H5 – Customer engagement has mediating effect on the relationship between content marketing and brand loyalty*

### **2.3. Conceptual Framework**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of online content marketing on customer brand loyalty mediated by customer online engagement. The framework integrates theories from website design, psychology, communication, and consumer behavior. Based on the theories and empirical reviews, this study considers online content marketing in terms of perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment and perceived interactivity as independent variables; customer online engagement as a mediator; and customer brand loyalty as dependent variable (Figure 2.1).

The proposed framework for this study is drawn from the frameworks of O'Brien & Toms (2008) and Mollen& Wilson (2010) as starting points to help understand the online consumer engagement process. Relevant portions of O'Brien & Toms' (2008) and Mollen& Wilson's frameworks are reviewed to provide the groundwork for the present study's framework. It states the relationship between content marketing and online consumer engagement; consumer engagement with brand

loyalty; and the mediating role of consumer engagement on the relationship between content marketing and brand loyalty as depicted on the figure below.



Source: Adopted and contextualized from O'Brien & Toms, 2008; Mollen & Wilson, 2010

*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study*

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research Approach**

This study employed quantitative approach. Quantitative research explains phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods to analyze the data and identify the relationship between dependent and independent variables so as to test hypothesis forwarded as well as test the correlation between independent variables (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2010). Thus, adoption of quantitative research approach is appropriate as it describes the relation between content marketing and brand loyalty through the mediation of online consumer engagement. The quantitative approach is thus suitable for investigating the effects social media has on customer patronage behavior as well as mediation of customer engagement along with the examination with facts and figures assists in making a relationship between consumer behaviour with marketing promotion strategy.

#### **3.2. Research Design**

This study adopted explanatory research design. Explanatory research design which is an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to investigate the cause-effect relationship of the study variables based on perception of the targeted respondents (Saunders, 2010). Since it is a sort of cause-effect research design, thus, the study explanatory research design is necessary to gauge

the relation amongst the stated variables as it relates to content marketing, online engagement and consumer brand loyalty.

### **3.3. Population**

Population is known as the whole accumulation of individuals from which we may gather information. It is the whole group of interest, which we wish to portray or make conclusions about. As such it is all the individuals about whom the study intended to be summed up (Jackson, 2008). This study evaluates social media content marketing activities and customer patronage as well as the mediating role of customer engagement. In that case, the population of this research is defined as the graduates of Addis Ababa University (AAU) since 2012. This is for the fact that HP company has started to collaborate with the university to cater the prospect graduates as well as to advocate different governmental and non-governmental institutions how to adapt ICT technologies effectively. Since the company targets graduate students to build its brand through different content marketing, graduate students of AAU who use social media, Facebook in particular, are considered as a study population. The total number of Ethiopians subscribed on Facebook is estimated around 20,972,104 in number of which 3.5mil subscribers reside in Addis Ababa (Ethio Telecom, 2020).

Based on preliminary assessment on HP's social media content marketing practices by student researcher, it is found that there are about a total of 3.5k followers of official website of HP company on Facebook, despite there are more than 61 active HP product importers in Ethiopia (Ethiopian Revenue and custom Authority, 2020). Therefore, the population of the study is 3,557 online Facebook followers who "liked" and interacted/ interacted specifically on advertising schemes of HP company in Ethiopia (HP official Facebook Page, 2021).

### **3.4. Sampling Technique**

Convenience sampling technique was applied for selecting targeted respondents from HP Ethiopia's Facebook site. The sampling technique that was used to draw a sample from the target population is non-probability sampling technique. The reason for taking non-probability sampling is that in the first place, it was hard to get list of followers on Facebook site; second, the non-response rate was expected to be high due to unknown users' demographic and other psychographic status. Based on these, utilizing random sampling would be unrealistic but convenience sampling technique is found to be appropriate since the target population in this study wasn't accessible to select them randomly.

### 3.5. Sample Size

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of study units from a defined study population (Zikmund, 2010). It is economical to take representative sample for the intended investigation when conducting census is unrealistic. Since the number of the population is known, simplified formula for proportion sample size is determined by the following formula as it stated by Yamane (1967). Therefore, the formula to determine the sample size is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} = \frac{3,557}{1 + (3,557 * .05^2)} = 359.5 = 360$$

Where: n -designates total number of permanent employees; e - designates maximum variability or margin of error 5% (0.05); and n- designates computed sample size.

### 3.6. Source of Data

There are two sources of data namely primary and secondary data which could be used for research analysis. In this study, basically only primary data are used for analysis. Primary data regarding the targeted respondents' perception towards social media content marketing, brand loyalty and customer engagement were collected directly from the followers of HP company's official Facebook page in Ethiopia for having advantages of getting fresh first-hand data along with their relevancy for specific study. Whereas, no secondary data will be used for analysis in this study except acknowledging different scholarly articles reviewed to compile and articulate the related literature review.

### 3.7. Data Collection Instrument

A survey questionnaire is used to collect the primary data. As suggested by Creswell (2009), administering questionnaires allows the researcher to collect data with low cost even when the universe is large and is widely spread geographically. Respondents who are not easily approachable can also be reached conveniently and large samples can be taken.

### 3.8. Data Collection Procedure

The survey was conducted in person for the fulfillment of academic requirement. A total of 30 questionnaires were first distributed for pretesting the reliability and validity of the scale.



The content and construct validity should be checked to ensure the quality of the research design. The validity of the scale was confirmed through involving marketing scholars to review the content of the questionnaire for inclusion of relevant information, absence of jargons, and appealing face validity. It was also evaluated by assigned advisor and some amendments were made accordingly. Besides, the student researcher has established the questionnaire in its final version, after highlighting some previous studies related the subject of this study.

To evaluate the data collection instrument, reliability is one of the major criteria. Reliability estimates the consistency of the measurement or simply, the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same conditions with the same subjects(John, 2007). In this research Cronbach’s alpha was used to test the reliability of the measures. Cronbach’s alpha is an index of reliability associated with the variation accounted for by the true score of the underlying construct. Construct is the hypothetical variable that is being measured (Hatcher, 1994). Alpha coefficient ranges in value from 0 to 1, may be used to describe the reliability of factors extracted from dichotomous (that is, questions with two possible answers) and/ or multi point formatted questionnaires or scales (that is, rating scale: 1= poor, 5=excellent). The higher the score, the more reliable the generated scale is. Nunnaly (1978) suggests 0.7 to be an acceptable reliability coefficient.

As shown on Table 3.2., the reliability of the questionnaire was tested by conducting a pilot test. The calculated Cronbach's Alpha for all content marketing namely perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment and perceived interactivity; online consumer engagement (mediator) and brand loyalty (dependent) variables’ reliability test was found to be  $r = 0.829$  on average. This indicates the stability and suitability of the results for this study.

*Table 1: Reliability Test Results*

<b>Measurement</b>	<b>No. of items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Perceived Information Quality	5	.881
Perceived Enjoyment	5	.725
Interactivity	4	.886
Online consumer engagement	6	.722
Brand Loyalty	5	.804

<b>Reliability of all items</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>.829</b>
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*Source: Own Survey, 2021*

### **3.9. Methods of Data Analysis and Presentation**

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data gathered through structured questionnaire. After having carried out data screening and cleaning, all the variables were coded and entered into the SPSS to analyze data obtained through questionnaires. Descriptive statistics is used to describe the usefulness of the data set and examine relationships between variables. To describe the data, preliminary descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, mean scores and standard deviation are computed. Regarding the inferential statistics, multiple linear regression analysis is performed using the three dimensions of social media content marketing (independent), brand loyalty (dependent) and customer engagement (mediating) variables.

Regression analysis is a statistical method to deal with the formulation of mathematical model depicting relationship amongst variables which can be used for the purpose of prediction of the value of dependent variable, given the value of the independent (Kothari, 2004). The basic aim is to evaluate the extent to which the social media content marketing practice affect the overall brand loyalty and mediating role of customer engagement in terms of coefficient of determination ( $r^2$  value), the regression (beta) coefficient and the p-values (ANOVA Test) for the significance of each relationship.

Before conducting the regression analysis, assumption tests for the regression model (multi-collinearity, homoscedasticity, linearity and normality) were carried out; and correlation coefficients were used to quantitatively describe the strength and direction of the association between the variables. According to Hair (2016), the Pearson correlation coefficient measures the degree of linear association between two variables. It varies between -1.00 to +1.00, with 0(zero) - representing absolutely no associate on between the two variables. Regarding the model specification, mathematical model is applied in this study. The multi-regression model is set for regressing each independent (predictor) variables on the dependent (outcome) variable along with determining the mediating role of online consumer engagement (mediator). To do so, three relationships between the study variables or based on the proposed hypotheses) were established as:

**Note:**

$X$  – *Independent Variable (content marketing - Perceived Information Quality PIQ -Perceived Enjoyment – PEJ; Interactivity Quality – ITQ)*

$Y$  – *Dependent Variable (Brand Loyalty – BLY)*

$Y_1$  – *Mediator Variable (Online Consumer Engagement - OCE)*

- Model -1. *The effects of content marketing on brand loyalty (H1 – H3)*

$$Y_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PIQ + \beta_2 PEJ + \beta_3 ITQ + e$$

- Model -2. *The effects of content marketing on Online Consumer Engagement (H4)*

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PIQ + \beta_2 PEJ + \beta_3 ITQ + e$$

- Model -3. *The mediating effect of online customer engagement between content marketing and brand loyalty (H5)*

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_{BLT} X + \beta_{BLT} Y_1$$

### **3.10. Ethical Considerations**

After taking ethical principles into considerations and fully living up to the requirements this study was classified as ethical for the fact that there were descriptive questions about the respondent's demographic profile but this information was not enough to identify the person.; considered ethical principle was the lack of informed consent; and targeted participant received as much information needed to make a decision whether to participate or not. The survey contained information about the research and contact details for further questions. The third ethical principal concern was the invasion of privacy. The respondent might find some questions too private and wouldn't wish to make the answer public. In this study the respondent had the opportunity to skip a question if it was judged sensitive.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

This chapter presents the data presentations, analysis, and interpretations in relation to evaluate the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty through online consumer engagement taking Hewett Packard Company in Addis Ababa. To address proposed hypotheses, the data that were gathered from the primary source using questionnaire were analyzed, presented, and interpreted in this section accordingly. SPSS 20.0 statistical software application is used for analysis.

After having collected the primary data from the targeted respondents, prior to conduct the analysis, the questionnaire was reviewed and carried out data cleaning (Rubin & Babbie, 2010) for certifying whether the questionnaires were filled appropriately. Any incomplete or missing responses were rejected from the subsequent analysis. A total of 360 questionnaires were distributed to the targeted respondents as per the calculated sample size. The number of filled and returned questionnaires counts 289 of which drawn a total of 264 valid and usable responses for analysis. Thus, 82% response rate had been obtained.

#### **4.1. General Information of Respondents**

Demographic profiles of respondents provide a good picture of the study participants to the readers. If taken as a factor, it would also be very important indicators of a construct under study. In this study, demographic profiles of the respondents comprise gender, age, education, income and profession. Other general information regarding how long since their subscribed, how many hours and on which activity they spend on Facebook are also described accordingly as follows.

Referring Table 4.1., the distribution of gender of the respondents, 53.4% of them were female and the rest 46.6% of them were male counterparts. The result implies that majority of the respondents were female subscribers of HP company's Facebook page.

With regards to the age ranges of the respondents, 51.9% of the respondents was found to be below 30 years old, followed by 33.7% within the range between 30-45 years old. The rest 11.4% and 3.0% were found between the age categories of 46-60 years and above respectively. This reveals that about half of the respondents were young while one third in the middle age. Based on the

results, it can be seen that young subscribers/ customers were more in number and the number of adult subscribers were also being escalate.

Table 2: Summary of Demographic Profile

<b>Category</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	141	53.4
Female	123	46.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age/ Years</b>		
<30	137	51.9
30 – 45	89	33.7
46 – 60	30	11.4
>60	8	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Education</b>		
Degree	172	65.2
Masters	45	17.0
Ph.D.	9	3.4
Others	38	14.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Income (Birr) / Month</b>		
< 5,000	82	31.1
5,000 – 10,000	106	40.2
>10,000	76	28.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Profession</b>		
Unemployed	61	23.1%
Employed	171	64.8%
Self Employed	32	12.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100</b>

[Source: Own Survey, 2021]

With respect to the educational status of the respondents, 65.2% of the respondents were first degree holders, 17.0% were Masters, 14.4% of them were the holder of other qualifications. Meanwhile, PhD. degree holders were the least in number and accounted for only 3.4% of the total respondents. Therefore, this result implies that the majority of the respondents overcome a high level of education and as a result they may evaluate and identify factors affecting brand loyalty.

Referring the monthly income of the respondents, the results revealed about one third (31.1%) of them earned below 10,000 Birr; while those who got monthly income with in the range of 10,000 – 20,000 accounted for 40.2%. Meanwhile, 28.8% of the respondents earned above 20,000 Birr. This implies that majority of the respondents were low-income citizens in terms of their monthly earnings. It is premature to conclude within the scope of this study that income of the respondents has an implication of their purchasing capability but with other demographic variables it would have significant meaning. Thus it requires further investigation to identify the mediation or moderator role of psychographic variables.

The last demographic characteristics is occupational status of the respondents. In this regard, two third (64.8%) of them were employed in different organizations. However, 23.1% of the respondents were unemployed while the rest 12.1% were found to be self-employed. This also implies that majority of the respondents/ subscribers of HP Company’s Facebook page got employed in different organizations but unemployed participants were also considerably high.

Referring Figure 4.1, regarding the subscription period of the respondents, those who subscribed 5-years ago accounted for 46.2%, followed by 17.8% and 8.0% within 2-3 years 1-2 years. The rest 3.4% was less than a year since subscribed. This indicates that majority of the respondents had longer subscription period or they are not new subscribers on Facebook. Their familiarity with Facebook social media would make them understand the subjects under study.

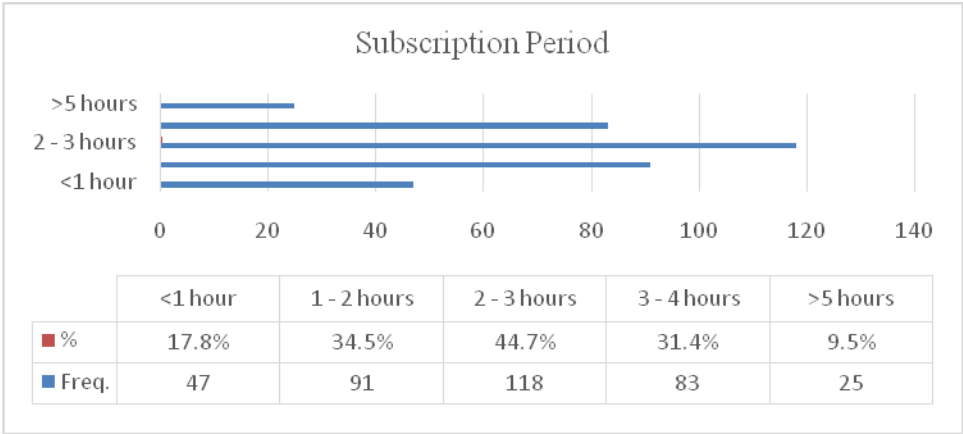


Figure 2: The subscription period of the respondents

For the question how many hours a week on average the respondents spend on Facebook, the respondents who spent 2-3 hours took a share of 44.7%, followed by 34.5% from 1-2 hours and

31.4% from 3-4 hours while the rest 17.8% spent less than an hour. The results imply that majority of the respondents confessed that they spent few hours on Facebook. Spending some times on Facebook by the respondents/ followers of HP company would have make the respondents to have better understanding and interaction on social media with the company or other fellows.

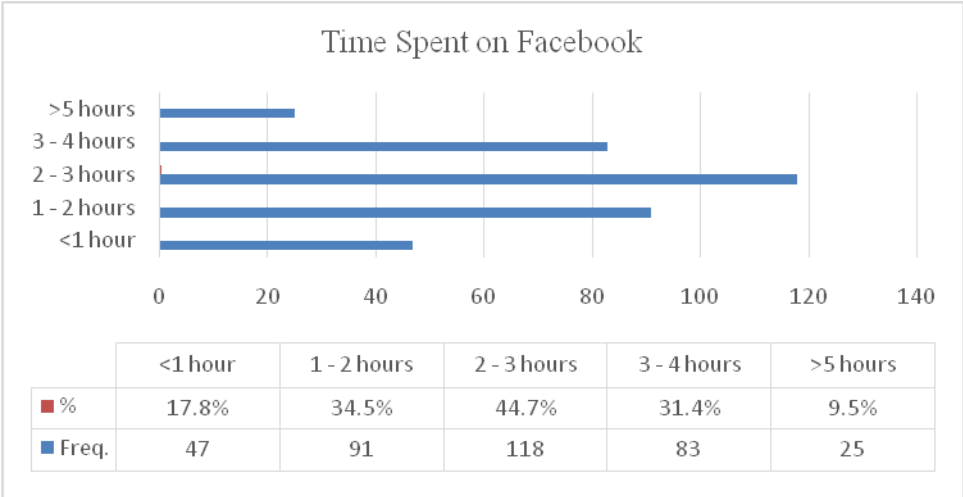


Figure 3: Time Spend on Face book

**4.1.2. Descriptive Analysis of the Variables of the Study**

To analyze the responses on content marketing (in terms of information quality, enjoyability and interactivity), online consumer engagement and brand loyalty, mean & standard deviation descriptive statistics were applied. One of the advantages of descriptive Statistics is that it helps to present quantitative descriptions in a manageable form - minimizes bulk of data into a simpler summary (Gelman, 2006). The respondents were asked to rate their perception on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1- being very dissatisfied to 5- very satisfied. The mean scores have been computed for all the variables by equally weighting the mean scores of all the items under each dimension. The mean value provides the idea about the central tendency of the values of a variable. Standard deviation is to give the idea about the dispersion of the values of a variable from its mean value. The results of the descriptive analysis are shown in the table below.

The result on Table 4.2 indicates the mean and standard deviation of study variable (independent, mediator and independent variables) incorporated in this study. The individual mean value of all the variables is above the point of indifference (neither agreed nor disagreed). This indicates that the respondents had positive perception towards content marketing offered by HP company, their online engagement and their brand loyalty towards the brand of HP products.



Table 3: Summary of study Variables Description

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>			
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Perceived Information Quality	264	4.22	.725
Perceived Enjoyability	264	3.70	.518
Perceived Interactivity	264	3.65	.626
Online Consumer Engagement	264	3.86	.444
Brand Loyalty	264	3.63	.492
Valid N (listwise)	264		

*Source: SPSS output, 2021*

Referring Table 4.2, perceived information quality dimension of online content marketing had relatively the highest mean value of 4.22 which could be taken as a variable substantially affecting the brand loyalty of HP company’s Facebook page followers. Following perceived information quality variable, perceived interactivity and enjoyment had also mean values of 3.70 and 3.65. Besides, they have nearly similar mean values compared to online consumer engagement’s and brand loyalty’s mean value of 3.86 and 3.63 respectively. This implies that both perceived enjoyment and interactivity had also considerable influence on the level of brand loyalty towards HP products.

The standard deviation of the statistical summary shows that on average the individual study participant’s responses deviates from the mean with lesser than a unit standard deviation for all the variables. Thus, it can be concluded that, as theoretically indicated in different literatures, the deviation is low implying that the data points tend to be very close to the mean values of the study variables. The responses of HP Company’s Facebook Page followers who participated in this study had nearly similar perception towards each variable.

## **4.2. Inferential Statistics**

The inferential statistics in this study comprises correlation analysis, assumption for regression model test and the regression analysis.

### **4.2.1. Correlation Analysis**

To determine the relationships among content marketing, online consumer engagement and brand loyalty, Pearson correlation was first investigated. The three dimensions of content marketing namely perceived information quality, Enjoyment and Interactivity were taken as independent

variables; while online consumer engagement as mediating variable and overall brand loyalty as a dependent variable in this study. The strength and direction of the relationships are determined as per the guideline suggested by field (2005)., the strength of relationship 0.1 to 0.29 shows weak relationship; 0.3 to 0.49 is moderate;  $\geq 0.5$  shows strong relationship between two variables.

The result on Table 4.5 shows that all dimensions of content marketing and online consumer engagement had positive and significant relation with brand loyalty variable. Also, content marketing and online consumer engagement variables showed positive and strong relationship. Specifically, regarding the content marketing variables, perceived information quality ( $r = .622$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), perceived enjoyment ( $r = .677$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and interactivity ( $r = .686$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) had relatively strongest and positive relations with brand loyalty. Similarly, perceived information quality ( $r = .673$ ), perceived enjoyment ( $r = .567$ ) and interactivity ( $r = .679$ ) had also strongest and positive relations with online consumer engagement. Online consumer engagement variable had also strong and positive relationship with brand loyalty ( $r = .519$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Having significant relationship is an indication that the talent management dimensions are good predictors of employee retention.

*Table 4: Correlation Analysis*

Correlations	PIQ	PEJ	ITQ	OCE	BLY
Perceived Information Quality	1				
Perceived Enjoyability	.567**	1			
Perceived Interactivity	.598**	.668**	1		
Online Consumer Engagement	.673**	.601**	.679**	1	
Brand Loyalty	.622**	.677**	.686**	.519**	1

\*\* correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Own Survey, 2021

#### **4.2.1. Assumption Tests for the Regression Model**

Multiple linear regression is an analysis that assesses whether one or more predictive variables (predictors) explain the dependent (criterion) variable. The regression assumptions are linearity, multicollinearity, multivariate normality and homoscedasticity.

#### 4.2.1.1. Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity refers to the situation in which the independent/predictor variables are highly correlated. When independent variables are highly related, there is “overlap” or sharing of predictive power. Thus, the impact of multicollinearity is to reduce any individual independent variable’s predictive power by the extent to which it is associated with the other independent variables. Either “Tolerance” or “variance inflation factors” (VIF) values of each predictor is a means of checking for the presence of Multicollinearity issue. Tolerance value below 0.1 and VIF value above 10 percent indicate a Multicollinearity problem, (Robert, 2006).

Table 5: Collinearity Diagnosis

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>			
<b>Model</b>		<b>Collinearity Statistics</b>	
		<b>Tolerance</b>	<b>VIF</b>
1	Perceived Information Quality	.333	3.003
	Perceived Enjoyability	.297	3.367
	Perceived Interactivity	.362	2.762
	Online Consumer Engagement	.305	3.279
a. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty			

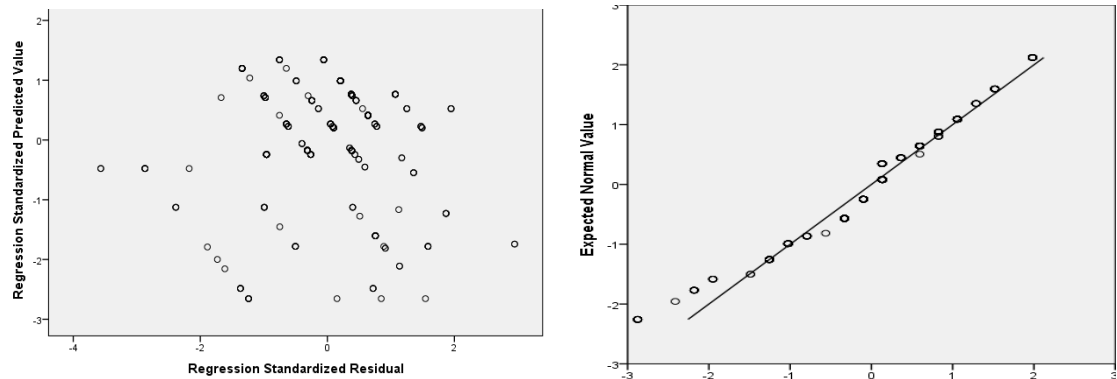
*Source: SPSS output, 2021*

Referring Table 4.3., it shows that the Collinearity statistics analysis of variance inflation factors (VIF) value ranges from 2.762 to 3.279 and tolerance value ranging with .305 to .279 indicated that there was no Collinearity problem. This could be taken as a confirmation that there were no multicollinearity problems to proceed for regression analysis. That means when the independent variables in this model were highly related with one another, they would have been basically measuring the same thing or they both convey essentially the same information.

#### 4.2.1.2. Homoscedasticity and Linearity Test

Homoscedasticity is one of the assumptions in multiple linear regression model. Testing for homoscedasticity or error term variance homogeneity refers to the presence of similar variance between the predicted and actual values. Using the plots of standard residual (Zresid) against standard predicted (Zpred) values, the distribution is checked whether the graph looks like a random

array of dots evenly dispersed around zero. This is to mean that at each point along any predictor variable, the spread of residuals should be fairly constant. It shows that each of the overall brand loyalty values against the predictor variable of content marketing. The plot shows that how the points are randomly and evenly dispersed throughout the plot. And, these patterns are indicative of a situation in which the assumption of linearity and homoscedasticity have been met if the frequency distribution of the residuals found to be normal.



*Figure 4: Scatter plot of Residual Values*

*Source: Own Survey, 2021*

This plot is used to detect homoskedasticity (assumption of equal variance). It shows how the residual are spread along the range of predictors. It's similar to residual vs fitted value plot except it uses standardized residual values. Ideally, there should be no discernible pattern in the plot. This would imply that errors are normally distributed. If the plot illustrates any discernible pattern (probably a funnel shape), it can be taken as an indication of non-normal distribution of errors terms.

#### **4.2.1.3. Multivariate Normality**

To check that a distribution of scores is normal, it needs to look at the values of kurtosis and Skewness which both have an associated standard error. The values of Skewness and kurtosis should be zero in a normal distribution. Positive values of Skewness indicate a pile-up of scores on the left of the distribution, whereas negative value indicates a flat distribution. The further the value is from zero, the more likely it is that the data are not normally distributed. The actual value of Skewness and kurtosis are not, in themselves, informative. Instead, it needs to take the value and

convert it to a z-score. The z-score is simply a standardized score from a distribution that has a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.0. Both skewness and Kurtosis have associated standard errors.

Table 6: Normality Test

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Perceived Information Quality	264	.281	.150	-.410	.300
Perceived Enjoyability	264	.689	.150	-.334	.300
Perceived Interactivity	264	.477	.150	-.308	.300
Online Consumer Engagement	264	.295	.150	-.287	.300
Valid N (listwise)	264				

Source: Own Survey, 2021

As presented in Table 4.4, all content marketing dimensions' z-scores skewed to the right side but it was found to be within an acceptable range (Skewness and Kurtosis within -2.0 to 2.0). Therefore, it is pretty clear that the numeracy scores are negatively skewed, indicating a pile-up of scores on the right of the distribution and relatively peaky than the expected values.

#### 4.2.3. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical method to deal with the formulation of a mathematical model depicting a relationship amongst variables which can be used for the purpose of prediction of the values of dependent variables, and given the values of the independent (Kothari, 2004). Multiple regression estimates the coefficients of the linear equation, involving one or more independent variables that best predict the value of the dependent variable. In this study, three multiple regression analyses were conducted to identify the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty through the mediation of online consumer engagement of HP company in Addis Ababa.

#### *The effect of content marketing on brand loyalty*

To evaluate whether content marketing dimensions (information quality, enjoyment and interactivity) has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The results of the model summary (Appendix II, Table -1) indicate that  $R^2 = 79.6\%$  of variation in brand loyalty is accounted for by variation in content marketing. I.e., variability in observed content marketing claims a proportion of  $R^2 = 0.796$  in variation of brand

loyalty. The linear combination of content marketing variables namely information quality, enjoyment and interactivity strongly predicted consumer loyalty towards HP Company's products.

Referring (Appendix III, Table -2), ANOVA Test helps to test the overall significance/ acceptability of the model from a statistical perspective. The F-Value of 77.885 is significant at  $p < 0.05$ . P-value is less  $< 0.05$ , i.e., the variation explained by the model is not due to chance. Thus, it shows that the significance or acceptability of the model and the potential of the content marketing variables to explain the brand loyalty.

As far as the beta coefficients of the model concerned, the results on Table 4.6 revealed that the beta coefficient of overall content marketing dimensions (CMK), regressed on brand loyalty, is depicted by substituting the result in the model yields (Table 6.):

$$BLY = .481 + .692CMK = .481 + .292 PIQ + .377 PEJ + .395 ITQ$$

This indicates that content marketing had positive and significant effect on brand loyalty ( $\beta = .692$ ). This predicts change in brand loyalty for every unit change in content marketing variables. It means that for every additional value in content marketing, there would be a gain of 0.692 points on the overall brand loyalty of subscribers on official Facebook page of HP Company in Addis Ababa, taking other variables being held constant.

*Table 7: Estimated Regression Coefficients*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.481	.125		3.848	.000
1 Information Quality	.292	.054	.290	5.407	.000
Enjoyment	.377	.684	.374	0.551	.000
Interactivity	.395	.135	.391	9.746	.000
Overall Content Marketing	.692	.071	.692	5.521	.000

<sup>b</sup> Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

Source: Own Survey, 2021

Specifically, perceived interactivity has relatively the highest positive and statistically significant effect on brand loyalty. Similarly, perceived enjoyment also had nearly similar effect on brand loyalty compared to perceived interactivity as the beta coefficient was found to be .377. Besides, perceived information quality also has positive and significant effect (.292) on brand loyalty but

relatively the least compared to the other two dimensions of content marketing. This implies that content marketing practice has significant and positive influence on overall consumer brand loyalty at 95% confidence level ( $p < 0.01$ ), which signifies that, for HP company in Addis Ababa, content marketing factors are vital in predicting overall customer's consumer brand loyalty.

#### *The effect of content marketing on online consumer engagement*

Referring Appendix – II, Table -3., the regression of online consumer engagement based on content marketing dimensions (information quality, enjoyability and interactivity) revealed approximately 66.4 % ( $R^2$ ) of the variance of online consumer engagement is accounted for content marketing variables. But, the remaining 33.6% was explained by other variables not included in this study.

The ANOVA test, F value of 102.214 is significant at  $p < 0.01$ . Therefore, it can be inferred that with 66.4% of variance (R Square), content marketing is significant and the model appropriately measured the dependent variables – online consumer engagement. In short, the regression model predicts overall consumer engagement and has been significantly explained by the three independent (content marketing) dimensions (Appendix -II, Table 4.)

The regression analysis revealed that overall content marketing has positive and significant effect ( $B = .314$ ,  $p < .05$ ) on online consumer engagement. The output for the beta coefficients of content marketing regressed online consumer engagement (OCE) is substituted on the regression model equation as follows:

$$OCE = .227 + .314CMK$$

This signifies that for every additional point of content marketing, one could predict a gain of 0.314 points on the overall online consumer engagement of subscribers on HP Company's Facebook page, provided that other variables being held constant. It implies that content marketing had significant influences on overall online consumer engagement at 95% confidence level ( $p < 0.05$ ). That means, investing on improvement of information quality, attractiveness of contents and increasing user's interactivity will improve the overall online consumer engagement in the case of HP Company.

#### *The mediation role of online consumer engagement on the relationship between content marketing and brand loyalty*

The results on Table 4.7 show that the value of correlation coefficient equates  $r = .930$  which indicated the existence of relationship between content marketing and online customer engagement dimensions with brand loyalty. The variation in content marketing and online consumer engagement were accounted for approximately 86.6% ( $r^2$ ) of the variance in brand loyalty. However, the remaining percent (13.4%) was explained by other factors which weren't included in this study.

Table 8: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of The Estimate	Sig.
1	.930 <sup>a</sup>	.866	.862	.037	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Content Marketing, Online Customer Engagement

b. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

Source: Own Survey, 2021

As indicated on Table 4.8 of ANOVA test, F-value of 39.380 is significant at  $p < 0.001$ . Therefore, it can be inferred that with 86.6% of variance ( $r$  square), content marketing and online customer engagement are significant and the model appropriately measured the brand loyalty of HP company Facebook page subscribers. In general, the regression model predicts overall brand loyalty and has been significantly explained by the three independent dimensions of content marketing and online customer engagement.

Table 9: ANOVA Analysis

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	66.108	3	16.527244	205.201	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	20.860	260	.081		
Total	86.968	263			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Content Marketing, Online Customer Engagement

b. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

Source: Own Survey, 2021

The last output in the analysis of the multiple regression models represents the output for the beta coefficients of each content marketing and online customer engagement dimensions. Based on multiple regression analysis on Table 4.9, substituting the results in the model yields:



$$BLT = .227 + .314CMK$$

The results of the regression model analysis showed that each content marketing dimension had positive and significant effect on overall brand loyalty through the mediation of online customer engagement. It is evidenced by the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty was affected by the inclusion of online consumer engagement variable. That means the aggregate effect of content marketing and online customer engagement (.692 + .222) is greater than the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty (.692).

Table 10: Estimated Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.707	0.309		2.288	.000
Information Quality	0.292	0.054	.290	5.407	.000
<sup>1</sup> Enjoyment	0.377	0.084	.374	4.488	.000
Interactivity	0.395	0.135	.391	2.926	.000
Online Customer Engagement	0.222	0.04	.222	5.550	.000

<sup>a</sup>. Predictors: (constant), Brand Loyalty

Source: Own Survey, 2021

It can be concluded that online consumer engagement had a mediating role on the relationship between content marketing and online customer engagement. The more the content marketing improved, the more the online customer engagement escalated results in improved brand loyalty of customers in the case of HP company Facebook page followers in Ethiopia.

Table 11: Summary of the Research Hypothesis Test Result

Code	Hypothesis	Result
<b>H1</b>	Perceived information quality has significant positive effect on brand loyalty	Supported
<b>H2</b>	Perceived Enjoyment has significant positive effect on brand loyalty	Supported
<b>H3</b>	Perceived interactivity has significant positive effect on brand loyalty	Supported
<b>H4</b>	Content marketing has significant positive effect on online customer engagement	Supported
<b>H5</b>	Online customer engagement has a mediating role on the relationship between content marketing and brand loyalty.	Supported

Source: Own Survey, 2021

Based on the results of the regression models, all the three dimensions of content marketing namely information quality, enjoyment and interactivity had positive and significant effect on brand loyalty. The mediating role of online engagement also explained positive and significant effect on brand loyalty. In these regards, the five proposed (alternate) hypotheses are supported. The results are summarized on Table 4.10 above.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the major findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations. Accordingly, the first section of this chapter described the findings of the study that present summary of major findings, and the conclusion drawn from it, followed by recommendations.

#### 5.1. Summary of Major Findings

This study sought to investigate the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty through online customer engagement taking Hewlett Packard Company in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The followers and who liked the HP Company's Facebook page were participated in this survey.

##### *The effect of perceived information quality on brand loyalty*

- perceived information quality dimension of content marketing had relatively the highest mean value of 4.22 which could be taken as a variable substantially affecting the brand loyalty of HP company's Facebook page followers.
- perceived information quality ( $r = .622$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) had relatively strongest and positive relations with brand loyalty.
- Perceived interactivity has relatively the highest positive and statistically significant effect (.392) on brand loyalty.

##### *The effect of perceived enjoyability on brand loyalty*

- Following perceived information quality variable, perceived interactivity had also mean values of 3.70.
- Perceived enjoyment had relatively strongest and positive relations with brand loyalty ( $r = .677$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).
- Similarly, perceived enjoyment also had nearly similar effect on brand loyalty compared to perceived interactivity as the beta coefficient was found to be .377.

##### *The effect of perceived interactivity on brand loyalty*

- Perceived enjoyment had also mean values of 3.65.

- Interactivity had relatively strongest and positive relations with brand loyalty ( $r = .686$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).
- Besides, perceived information quality also has positive and significant effect (.292) on brand loyalty but relatively the least compared to the other two dimensions of content marketing.

*The effect of content marketing on customer online engagement*

- The results also revealed that consumer online engagement was perceived positively as the mean scored value was found to be 3.86.
- Similarly, perceived information quality ( $r = .673$ ), perceived enjoyment ( $r = .567$ ) and interactivity ( $r = .679$ ) had also strong and positive relations with online consumer engagement.
- The regression analysis revealed that overall content marketing has positive and significant effect ( $B = .314$ ,  $p < .05$ ) on online consumer engagement.

*The mediating role of customer online engagement on the relation between content marketing and brand loyalty*

- Online consumer engagement variable had also strong and positive relationship with brand loyalty ( $r = .519$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).
- The results of the regression model analysis showed that each content marketing dimensions had positive and significant effect on overall brand loyalty through the mediation of online customer engagement. It is evidenced by the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty was affected by the inclusion of online consumer engagement variable. That means, the aggregate effect of content marketing and online customer engagement (.692 + .222) is greater than the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty (.692) alone.

## 5.2. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty mediated by online customer engagement in the case of Hewlett Packard (hp) company in Addis Ababa.

Based on the related literature reviewed, Hewlett Packard Company strived for providing quality information, their content's ability of entertaining subscribers and their interactivity through posting and sharing relevant information. These three dimensions or functions of the company were considered as independent variables which affect the brand loyalty of subscribers/ customers towards HP branded products (dependent variable) through mediation of online customer engagement. Thus, HP Company's content marketing strategy in Ethiopian context had significant and positive relationship with online customer engagement which significantly affects brand loyalty of the customers. This study sought to evaluate the individual effect of content marketing variables on brand loyalty along with the mediating role of online customer engagement on the relationship between the two aforementioned variables.

In this regard, the study undertook appropriate estimation model to address the objectives of analyzing the effect of perceived information quality, perceived information enjoyment and perceived interactivity on brand loyalty of customer towards Hewlett Packard company's products along with investigating the mediating role of Facebook subscriber's engagement. Based on this, the following conclusions are drawn out of the research findings of this study.

In this study, overall content marketing and online customer engagement variables contribute substantial influence on brand loyalty of customers towards HP products. It is evidenced by 86.6% ( $R^2 = .866$ ) of model variation is accounted for the variation in content marketing and online customer engagement. This implies that rest 13.4% of the variability of overall customer's brand loyalty not explained in this study, meaning there are other factors that affect the model.

It can also be concluded that all the three content marketing variables have positive and statistically significant effect on brand loyalty. They all have their unique contribution and effects with different intensity on brand loyalty. Interactivity has relatively the highest effect while enjoyment and perceived information quality took the second and third place. In addition, the findings show that the online engagement of the subscribers of HP Company Facebook page enhances the effect of content marketing strategies of the company to escalate customer brand loyalty.

Therefore, based on the results of the regression analyses, there is a support for the five proposed hypotheses which posited information quality, enjoyment and interactivity has positive and significant effects on brand loyalty and online customer engagement; and the mediating role of online customer engagement on the relationship between the two variables (content marketing and brand loyalty). Customer brand loyalty towards HP products is proportionally subjected to subscriber's interaction, content enjoyability and quality information posted or shared on Facebook at most. It can be concluded that enhancing content quality, increasing subscriber's interaction and better quality of contents would improve online consumer engagement leads to better customer brand loyalty towards Hp products.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the research forwarded the following recommendations. Among these:

- Marketers of Hp can deliver tangible benefits to prospects and customers by providing quality content that helps provide solutions to some of the toughest problems they are facing while operating HP products. Content production, scheduling, keyword selection, search engine optimization of posts, style corrections, tagging and images should be carefully managed by the marketers with analysing the customers.
- Perceived enjoyment of the content posted on Facebook page of HP Company also had positive and significant effect on brand loyalty. Managers should think and act like a publisher. Content marketing requires to the marketer to view themselves more like a publisher delivering appealing and entertaining editorial products than as a marketer just selling products.
- Perceived interactivity was found to be relatively the highest determinant factor for brand loyalty in the case of HP Company in Addis Ababa. Marketers of HP Company could provide relevant, valuable and timely information about its products; and should motivate/reward prospects and customers to share their experiences regarding functionality of HP products.
- The results of this study illustrated that content marketing had positive and statistically significant effect on brand loyalty. Marketers of HP company should improve the quality

and entertainability of their information posted on their Facebook page, and trigger customer's interactivity so as to build strong brand loyalty in the long run. Create content that is not available to the general public, content that is so special and exclusive, that only members can view it. But require users to at least go through a registration process to gain access to it. It'll make them feel special/ part of HP Company's exclusive group.

- In this study, the results also revealed that consumer online engagement has moderating effect on the relationship between content marketing and brand loyalty. By mixing knowledge of the customer and organizational objectives, marketers of HP Company should be able to build an online community to more effectively interact and engage with its customers. Forums have been around for years and are still a widely used method of engaging with customers and allowing customers to engage with each other.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

The study sought to investigate the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty through the mediation of customer online engagement in the context of Facebook page followers of HP Company in Addis Ababa. Only university students and graduates were considered in this study. This limits the overall generalizability of the study. Thus, further research is required to include other customers of HP products in the country

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix – I Survey Questionnaire



**ST. MARY UNIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

#### **Questionnaire to be filled by the respondents**

**Dear Respondent,**

My name is Mesfin Ayele, a postgraduate student of St. Mary's University, School of Graduate Studies. I am conducting a study to assess the effect of content marketing on brand loyalty mediated by online customer engagement in the case of Hewlett Packard (hp) company in Ethiopia. The purpose of this questioner is to gather data regarding how the content marketing in terms of perceived information quality, perceived enjoyment and perceived interactivity affect brand loyalty, and the mediating role of online customer engagement. Your honest and sincere responses for this questionnaire will play a great role in making the research successful. I assure you that all the responses will be treated confidentially and only be used for academic purpose. Participation is purely voluntary and no need to write your name.

I thank you in advance for offering your golden time and if you have any question, please feel free to contact me by the below contact:

**MesfineAyele**

**Phone: +251 911 981139**

**Email: [mesfinayearone@gmail.com](mailto:mesfinayearone@gmail.com)**

## **I. General Information**

Please mark [X] in the appropriate box to indicate your choice

1. Sex                     Male         Female
2. Age (Years)         18 – 30     31 – 45     46 – 60     > 60
3. Education          High School                     Degree     Masters  
 Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
4. Income              < 5,000 Birr                     5,000 – 10,000 Birr         >10,000 Birr
5. Profession         Student     Academician     Businessman     Other Profession
6. How long have you been a Facebook user?  
 < a year     1 – 2 years     3 – 4 years     5 years and above
7. Approximately, how many hours a week do you spend using Facebook  
 < 24         24 – 48         49 – 72         > 72 hours

## **II. Questions regarding Study Variables**

Herein the questions with regard to the content marketing, brand loyalty and online customer engagement are presented. Therefore, you are kindly requested to put “X” mark on the box which represents your degree of agreement. Note that the Likert scale is represented by:

5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

### *1. Perceived Quality of Information*

Referring the information quality of the Hewlett Packard (HP) Company’s page, please rate the statement with the scale which suits you most.

<b>Statements</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
It provides me useful information.					
It provides me accurate information.					
It is informational/ provides sufficient information					
The information posted by the company is relevant to me					
The information posted by the company is helpful to me to make decision					

## 2. Perceived Enjoyment

Referring the ability of information posted or shared on the Hewlett Packard (HP) company's page to entertain you, please rate the statement with the scale which suits you most.

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
The contents are interesting					
The shared contents are exciting					
Followers make fun by sharing funny videos, pics, texts, etc.					
Overall. The contents shared on the page are entertaining.					

## 3. Perceived Interactivity

Referring the followers' interactivity on Hewlett Packard (HP) Company's page, please rate the statements with the scale which suits you most.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Customers share experiences about hp products with other Facebook users					
The company's Facebook page shares information about its product(s) with users.					
The company responds to user's posts in a timely manner.					
It is important to me that the company responds to posts in a timely manner.					

## 4. Online Customer Engagement

Referring the followers' engagement on Hewlett Packard (HP) Company's page, please rate the statements with the scale which suits you most.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
When I am on the company's Facebook page, I get mentally involved in the company (its story, history, mission, goals).					
I am able to make product related decisions on based on the information presented on the company's Facebook page					
I feel like I learn a tremendous amount of information about the company featured on tits Facebook page					

I have a much greater understanding about the company/ products featured on its Facebook.					
The company's Facebook page is satisfying					
On the company's Facebook page, I have read fan comments, responded to fan comments, posted a comment or Watched video...					

### 5. *Brand Loyalty*

Referring the brand loyalty of Hewlett Packard (HP) company's products, please rate the statements with the scale which suits you most.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I am very loyal to Hewlett Packard (HP) company					
I am very committed to hp company					
I consider myself a loyal consumer to hp company					
I have a positive attitude toward hp company					
I hold hp company in high regard.					

Many thanks!!!



## Appendix – II

Table 1. Model Summary

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.892 <sup>a</sup>	.796	.796	.300	2.108

a. Predictors: (Constant), Information Quality, Enjoyment, Interactivity

b. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

Table 2. ANOVA Test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.580	3	4.860	77.885	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	6.224	260	.062		
	Total	20.804	263			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Information Quality, Enjoyment, Interactivity

b. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

Table 3. ANOVA Analysis

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.580	3	4.860	77.885	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	6.224	260	.062		
	Total	20.804	263			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Information Quality, Enjoyment, Interactivity

b. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

Table 4. ANOVA Test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.580	3	4.860	203.021	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	6.224	260	.024		
	Total	20.804	263			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Information Quality, Enjoyment, Interactivity

b. Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty