

Brand Advocacy Formation through Trust: A Study of Communication Strategies in Digital Environments

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Beyond Message Format: The Role of Brand Trust in Brand Advocacy

Abstract

In digital software environments traditionally defined by constant updates and iterative change, communication becomes more than just delivery of information, it becomes a signal of presence to the customers. How brands speak during these moments often shapes how much users trust them, and whether that trust later translates into advocacy. While existing research has given considerable attention to communication strategies in the context of visibility and conversion, far less has been said about their longer-term effects. This study enters that space, examining how three distinct styles of informational, emotional, and interactive can influence brand trust, and whether that trust, in turn, prompts users to advocate. The study draws on a between-subjects experimental design. A total of 120 participants were randomly assigned to one of four message conditions, including a neutral control. Each participant was shown a mock software update crafted to reflect one of the communication styles. The study used Net Promoter Score, which was chosen for its simplicity and alignment with behavioural intent to measure advocacy.

Findings revealed that brand trust played a pivotal role in shaping advocacy intentions. However, none of the three strategies produced significant differences in trust or advocacy when compared to the control condition. Moreover, trust did not serve as a mediator between message style and advocacy. These results challenge the assumption that message format alone can shift user behaviour in the short term. While participants may have found the messages engaging, this did not translate into measurable trust or recommendation. Rather than treating this as a failure of format, the findings suggest that trust may be less a reaction to message style and more a cumulative interpretation formed across time, tone, and consistency.

Communication, then, should be assessed as less about a spark and more as sediment that is layered through repeated exposure, aligned values, and ongoing relational signals. The thesis concludes by calling for future research to go beyond single-exposure designs and explore how trust and advocacy emerge in real-time, platform-native settings. For practitioners, the message is equally clear, one message may inform, but only the long arc of communication builds trust strong enough to speak for.

KEYWORDS: Brand Trust, Brand Advocacy, Digital Communication, Message Framing, Software Marketing

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Question

In digital industries defined by constant change, the way companies speak becomes just as important as what they do. The software sector, in particular, operates under conditions of rapid iteration, where user relationships are shaped not only by features and functionality but by how updates, errors, and transitions are communicated. As platforms evolve in real time, trust becomes a moving target. Users no longer expect perfection, but they do expect clarity. What matters, often more than the change itself, is how it's framed. And in that framing, communication becomes infrastructure.

This is not a new insight in theory, but it has taken on sharper contours in practice. Earlier work in branding already posited that communication affects user perception (Batra & Keller, 2016, p. 132), but in today's ecosystems, that relationship is far more dynamic. A platform that communicates late, vaguely, or inconsistently risks alienating users, even when its underlying product is solid (Afridi et al., 2023, p. 7). A minor delay or a bug, if left unspoken, begins to grow in the user's imagination. In contrast, a timely update, even if the problem remains, can stabilise trust. In this case, the platform signals not just awareness, but presence with the customers.

Such patterns echo trust theory, which locates confidence not only in the object (a service, an outcome) but in the process through which uncertainty is handled (Isaeva et al., 2020, p. 1038). Especially in SaaS environments marked by speed, scale, and invisibility, communication becomes the surface through which competence and care are interpreted. Duong et al. (2024, p. 5) suggests that in software, messaging plays a dual role: it relays information and reveals institutional rhythm. If the message is timely, the brand seems responsive. If it's vague, the brand feels evasive. A single patch note, then, becomes a mirror of organisational culture.

To mitigate the churn that arises from opacity or inattention, companies invest in communication strategies. Rather than being stylistic aesthetic, these are structured methods for delivering information when under uncertainty (Zhao et al., 2022, p. 6). And while they may take many forms, three dominant patterns emerge: informational, emotional, and interactive. The first aims at clarity such as release notes, changelogs, help centre texts. The second appeals to resonance in like of stories, value statements, visual language that reflects

identity. The third invites participation ranging from polls, open feedback, to public roadmaps (Laskey et al., 1989, p. 13). Each offers a different path into trust.

These strategies loosely align with what trust scholars call cognitive, affective, and behavioural trust. The first builds logic: clear explanation reduces perceived risk. The second builds feeling: familiar tone signals shared values. The third builds action: interaction becomes a stage for alignment and reciprocity (Duong et al., 2024, p. 6; Isaeva et al., 2020, p. 1038). While this study does not measure these trust forms separately, this tripartite lens offers a conceptual anchor. It reflects the user's internal question: "Do I understand this? Do I relate to this? Does it respond to me?" In practice, these questions often unfold not consciously, but through subtle impressions gathered across touchpoints.

Despite this theoretical richness, most existing research places communication strategies in the opening act of the user-brand relationship. That is: how well do they attract, engage, convert? Studies have shown that brand visibility increases with strategic messaging (Hussin & Hishan, 2022, p. 1538), that digital presence builds audience connection (Chierici et al., 2019, p. 224), and that steady tone across formats, from apps to live demos, helps anchor a coherent brand identity (Wang et al., 2023, p. 5; Duong et al., 2024, p. 6). While these findings do matter, they only tell describe one side of the coin as what happens after the conversion is underexplored.

In digital spaces where switching costs are low and competition is high, trust is what keeps users in. All the meanwhile, advocacy, which is the organic, voluntary, user-led endorsement, is what brings others in. These are not side effects of good branding. They are central to longevity (Isaeva et al., 2020, p. 1036; Li & Lee, 2024, p. 6). Yet even now, trust and advocacy tend to appear as footnotes in strategic communication research. This neglects their role in sustaining engagement long after the first click.

Moreover, these concepts are often studied in isolation. On the one hand, trust is discussed in terms of reliability; advocacy in terms of virality. On the other hand, recent work suggests a deeper relation: trust precedes advocacy. A user who feels a platform is competent and aligned with their values is more likely to speak on its behalf (Isaeva et al., 2020, p. 1036). For example, confidence in one communication channel, such as an email update, can spill over into another, like a webinar or forum post (Duong et al., 2024, p.3). Still, very few researches looked into how structured messaging strategies shape both trust and advocacy together. As a result, what remains is a fragmented view of user-brand relationships that accounts for little of the lived reality of multi-platform, and multi-format engagement.

Some have started to point out this oversight. Isaeva et al. (2020, p. 1036) note the lack of integrative models linking communication type to long-term relational outcomes. Emotional and interactive strategies are too often sidelined in empirical work, simply because they resist clean quantification. Ironically these are precisely the strategies that shape how users feel seen, heard, and involved. In moments of doubt or disruption, it is often the emotional or interactive tone of a message, rather than the content itself, that determines whether trust is preserved or lost.

This study enters that space. It examines how informational, emotional, and interactive communication strategies influence brand trust and user advocacy in the context of software product launches and iterations. Rather than probing psychological mechanisms in depth, it compares the outcomes of each approach, how they affect user confidence and willingness to recommend. In doing so, the study repositions communication from a conversion tool to a relational asset. It asks not just how messages land, but how they linger.

This question becomes more pressing as user experience becomes more fragmented. The typical journey no longer unfolds in a single interface but across touchpoints: a changelog, a Twitter thread, a chatbot reply. Trust must be built in motion, across media, tone, and time. This study's aim, then, is not to locate a perfect message but to observe how message types shape user perception, especially when the product is evolving and trust is being re-earned week by week. In a space where expectations shift as quickly as updates roll out, communication becomes the most consistent interface between user and brand. Research Question: How do informational, emotional, and interactive communication strategies affect brand trust and customer advocacy among users in software markets?

1.2. Academic and Societal Relevance

The relevance of this question cuts across both scholarly and applied fields. In academic contexts, it reflects a growing turn toward relationship-centred communication research. While past models focused on reach, acquisition, or conversion, this study shifts attention to what happens after, on how users stay, what makes them speak up, and why they choose to align with certain brands over time. It contributes to an evolving discourse that treats trust and advocacy not as outcomes to be measured at the edges, but as central metrics of strategic effectiveness.

This also builds on Zimmerman et al.'s (2018, p. 14) idea that trust functions to reduce perceived complexity in online systems. Here, that complexity is not only technical but interpersonal. As software becomes more embedded in daily life, from banking to fitness to

social connection, users increasingly assess not only what a service does, but how it behaves. This study positions communication as a behavioural signal. For example, a clear message reduces ambiguity. A resonant tone builds emotional familiarity. A feedback loop makes the user feel heard. In this sense, communication becomes more than just a mean to reach the customers, it becomes a functional analogue to trust.

This approach aligns with recent suggestion to incorporate emotional resonance and interactivity into communication models (Azize et al., 2012, p. 1364). Where traditional studies ask whether a message performs, newer ones ask whether it builds relationships. Hence, this study reframes communication not as transactional output, but as a tool for fostering long-term emotional engagement and behavioural loyalty.

It also contributes methodologically. Through the use of an experimental design that tests communication strategies across different message types, this study adds clarity through comparison to a realm often leaned toward theoretical or case studies on campaigns. It offers one possible structure for examining messaging strategy more than merely being as a marketing function, but as a relational one. Thus, it addresses a noted gap in empirical research, the absence of integrated models that assess both affective trust and communicative outcome across time (Isaeva et al., 2020, p. 1038).

From a societal perspective, the stakes are not small. In an age of digital saturation, how a platform communicates is often how it competes. As trust in institutions declines and skepticism toward advertising rises, customer advocacy becomes both a differentiator and a defence. Platforms that speak well often retain better. Even when their products appear less than perfect, brands that feel consistent across touchpoints are more likely to receive recommendation. This has implications across different sectors, for example health platforms communicating updates about data use, mobility apps managing delays, learning tools introducing new algorithms.

When trust slumps, it is often not because of what a company did, but how it explained it. A vague privacy notice, a cold apology for a bug, a disappearing roadmap are the communicative moment that can shape perception more than the technical issues themselves. Agyei et al. (2020, p. 6) note that even subtle changes in tone can change how credible a brand appears. In this sense, Abbu et al. (2021, p. 856) argue that communication itself is read as an artefact of care, especially in environments where direct product experience is limited. In this light, trust becomes relationally co-produced through words, not only deeds.

The study also recognises trust as layered. Badrinarayanan (2024, p. 6) identified three dimensions, cognitive, affective, and behavioural, which often map onto how communication

is received. While this study does not disaggregate them quantitatively, it acknowledges their conceptual relevance. Informational strategies tend to activate cognitive trust. Emotional strategies invite affective resonance. Interactive ones facilitate behavioural commitment through shared agency. Importantly, these are not isolated effects. A single message might do all three or none, depending on tone, format, and timing.

Interactive strategies, especially, carry growing weight. Features like feedback widgets, co-creation options, or direct community response can trigger a sense of voice and visibility. This creates the conditions under which advocacy becomes more than a spontaneous act, it becomes a choice rooted in felt inclusion. Moreno-Cabanillas et al. (2024, p. 16) argued that perceived agency is often a precursor to brand recommendation. For users, feeling like a platform listens, even if it fails to act consistently, can be enough to foster ongoing goodwill.

This carries implications not only for communication teams, but also for platform architects, community managers, and public policy practitioners. The strategic design of communication must consider not just clarity, but relational aftereffects. Messages are not only read; they are remembered, compared, interpreted, and sometimes repeated. Advocacy spreads when users internalise a brand's voice as trustworthy enough to carry forward. That distinction matters. Paid messages scale through budget. Trusted messages scale through belief. Advocacy, in this sense, becomes a kind of reputational currency. It moves through social networks faster than campaigns and with more persuasive power (Nechaeva et al., 2024, p. 8; Jilv et al., 2025, p. 6). This is especially relevant in saturated environments where ad fatigue is high and user scepticism is growing.

Ultimately, this study argues for a shift in how communication strategy is framed in software ecosystems. Rather than treating messaging as an afterthought or an output of product planning, messaging styles are strategic inputs that carry symbolic and functional weight. When platforms communicate well, they create a relational surplus: users feel seen, understood, and engaged. When they don't, even the best product can start to feel cold or distant. For academics, this study encourages deeper thinking diverting from communication just as a content stream, but into communication as a trust-building mechanism. For practitioners, especially in times of product change, it invites a more nuanced approach to message design. And for users, it affirms something intuitive, the way a platform speaks tells you a lot about whether it's worth investing in.

2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter outlines the conceptual foundation upon which the research model is built. It begins by defining brand trust as a key relational construct, followed by a discussion on consumer advocacy as an outcome of trust. The chapter then examines three communication strategies, informational; emotional; and interactive, each theorised to influence trust formation in different ways. Finally, these components are synthesised into a set of hypotheses that guide the empirical analysis.

2.1. Brand Trust

Brand trust is a component behind how customers form relationships with brands. In this sense, Quaye et al. (2022, p.13) and Wuersch et al. (2024, p.170) described trust as the belief that a brand will do what it says. Most often, these expectations are brands being dependable, fair, or simply consistent. Once that belief is there, people tend to feel more comfortable returning or continuing to use the service (Heim et al., 2023, p. 71). It lowers uncertainty in a space that often doesn't give many guarantees.

There's a general split in how trust is explained. Cognitive trust comes from logic like how capable or well-structured a brand seems. Then there's affective trust, which is more about gut feeling or emotional connection. That tends to show up when a brand feels emotionally reminiscent to consumers, or when the tone of its contents matches the user's expectations or values (Wuersch et al., 2024, p. 179). Both types can help build loyalty. That said, just because someone trusts a brand does not mean they'll go out of their way to recommend it (Gudlaugsson, 2020, p. 4). Those things don't always follow the same track. When people have that belief, they tend to feel safer using the service again (Heim et al., 2023, p. 71). So, in that sense, trust lowers uncertainty and helps with long-term use.

Trust in digital settings often emerges gradually and is shaped by how the brand behaves over time. Small cues, like consistent messaging, responsive support, or clear design, can add up to create a sense of reliability. This process is rarely tied to one single interaction. Instead, users tend to form impressions based on repeated exposure to communication that feels stable, fair, and in line with what the brand promises (Heim et al., 2023, p. 78). Over time, this pattern helps reduce doubt and encourages users to stay engaged (Junaidi et al., 2020, p. 426).

Some studies point out that trust tends to stick better when the brand acts consistently, when its voice, tone, and behaviour match across platforms prompting users to stay (Junaidi et al., 2020, p. 426; Heim et al., 2023, p. 78). Online, trust also comes from visual design to signs

of security. In this sense, Zehir et al. (2011, p. 1224) suggested how tech cues ranging from encryption icons to system guarantees increase consumers' secure feelings.

Affective trust is shaped differently. Instead of coming from system performance or technical guarantees, it rather comes from how the brand sounds. If the tone feels welcoming or emotionally in sync with the user, trust can begin to build that way instead. Exemplary, Niharika et al. (2023, p. 6) indicated that this is most apparent when someone is new to the brand or unsure of what to expect. At that stage, even small signals the like of how a message is phrased can influence whether someone feels confident enough to engage further.

Trust is also shaped by message consistency. Consumers respond negatively to discrepancies in tone or values across platforms, especially during product changes or crises (Rajavi et al., 2019, p. 659). Coherent communication is therefore essential to long-term trust development, particularly for digital-first brands and service platforms. Trust can continue across different moments of interaction. For instance, a single helpful response through an influencer or a direct email can influence how the brand is seen more broadly (Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2024, p. 12). In these cases, the message carries more than just information; it also builds emotional familiarity across channels. Trust builds over time through ongoing positive interactions; it would only take one moment to weaken. In digital realms of information spreading quickly and reputations shifting fast, the tone, the transparency, and the message clarity are all important to keeping users engaged and maintaining trust in the long run.

2.2. Customer Advocacy

Customer advocacy takes place when consumers take action beyond just liking a brand, they recommend it to others. It could be through sharing content, leaving a review, or telling someone why they think the brand matters. In most cases, this comes from a good experience, but it's not only about satisfaction as it can also come from a position where the brand feels like a good match for how someone sees themselves, or wants to be seen (Baquero, 2022, p. 7; Sweeney et al., 2020, p. 148).

However, not all brands manage to create that kind of connection, but the ones that do tend to engage with their consumer on a deeper level. When users feel involved or seen, they're more likely to speak up for the brand. Jauković et al. (2024, p. 40) noted that stronger engagement often makes advocacy more likely. Moreover, this dimension also has to take into consideration other matters too, such as influence from friends, shared values, and the idea of belonging can all play a role (Nechaeva et al., 2024, p. 8; Roy et al., 2020, p. 6). For example,

this is especially true in spaces like fashion or wellness, where what people wear or use says something about who they are (Maubisson et al., 2024, p. 337).

It helps to separate customer advocacy from customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is more about habits, buying again, not switching. Advocacy is different. It's more public. It's about choosing to say something, whether that's posting a story, leaving a comment, or sharing a link (Van Meter et al., 2018, p. 88). These actions take more thought. Brigitte et al. (2023, p. 138) point out that when someone advocates for a brand, they're often expressing something about their own identity too. A fitness app, for instance, might represent more than just a tool, it might stand for motivation, or a kind of lifestyle people want to be part of. It is also crucial to recognise that advocacy is not a guaranteed outcome of trust or satisfaction. Some loyal users may stay silent due to privacy concerns or lack of incentive (Gudlaugsson, 2020, p.4).

In digital ecosystems, advocacy often functions as social currency, users gain affirmation or status by sharing brand experiences that align with their self-image or cultural values (Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2024, p.6). Thus, while trust is a foundational condition, emotional resonance and expressive motivation are what drive consumers to actively advocate. Communication strategies that trigger this activation must appeal not only to logic, but also to identity, emotion, and belonging.

2.3. Informational Communication

Informational communication is built on clarity. It uses facts and direct messaging to explain what a brand offers, usually without trying to stir emotion (Laskey et al., 1989, p. 38). This approach shows up a lot in areas like finance or healthcare, where accuracy really matters and trust comes from knowing exactly what's being promised (Wuersch et al., 2024, p. 180). Brands that focus on transparency tend to be seen as more reliable. Explaining what something does, how it compares, or what its limits are can help users feel more certain about what they're getting. In turn, that kind of communication supports trust built on logic that Quaye et al.(2022, p.9) called cognitive trust. Still, while this method helps people feel informed, it often doesn't leave much emotional impression. Part of why it works is because it helps reduce risk. Especially when the service is digital, or hard to test beforehand, people want to know what they're signing up for. Zehir et al. (2011, p. 1224) suggested that clear, verifiable content works as a sign of professionalism and honesty. This becomes more important when users are looking at something long-term, like software or subscription services. In those cases, what's written, or left out, shapes whether users feel comfortable moving forward. Moreover, Dong et al.

(2024, p. 138) also suggested that consumers often see well-written or structured content as a reflection of the brand's overall competence.

Furthermore, how the message is presented also makes a difference. While facts should still be the key driver behind this strategy, facts alone would be short of effective if they're hard to follow. On the one hand, simple visuals, real-world examples, or clean layouts would make the information feel approachable (Rajavi et al., 2019, p. 662). On the other hand, dense or technical writing can cause confusion and lead users to tune out. Some formats also work better than others. Informational content usually fits well in emails, help guides, or onboarding flows, places where people expect clarity. When the same kind of message shows up on casual platforms like social media, it can feel out of place or be ignored (Bowen et al., 2015, p. 106).

Thus, informational messaging becomes a key player in how consumers assess the brand. While Heim et al. (2023, p.63) argued that clear and repeated updates can slowly shape how dependable the brand appears to customers, it remains a rather low chance that these messages would result in advocacy. That often depends more on whether people feel emotionally connected, not just logically reassured (Hassan et al., 2016, p. 234). Nevertheless, when used in the right setting such as app walkthroughs or update rollouts, it helps users feel respected and less likely to leave as it creates a baseline of trust that, with the right follow-up, can lead to stronger outcomes down the line (Wang and Chan-Olmsted, 2024, p. 8).

2.4. Emotional Communication

Emotional communication focuses not on what they know, but rather on how consumers feel. In this case, brands would often use stories, visuals, or broad ideas to create emotional impact and build a connection with users (Batra & Keller, 2016, p. 132). Most often, these messages appear in inspirational campaigns. These campaigns are the styles of communication that aligns with what consumers care about, want to improve, or imagine for themselves. These strategies often has a stronger impression than factual messages and help create long-term associations with the brand (Strauss et al., 2024, p. 23; Sayekti, 2024, p. 67). What makes this work is when the message feels personal to the audiences. The brands that express values, support causes, or simply sound more human are more likely to be remembered. Over time, this can create what's known as emotional or affective trust. That type of trust forms not through logic, but through shared tone and meaning. According to Wang and Chan-Olmsted (2024, p. 4), emotional alignment helps people see a brand as consistent and sincere, even across different channels.

Storytelling plays a big role here. When users see a clear narrative, such as something with a person, a challenge, and a resolution, it becomes easier to connect. Brundin et al. (2022, p. 15) explained that people sometimes project their own feelings into these stories, especially when they show up in videos or social content. In reality, digital brands often follow this approach through testimonials or community-based phrases that suggests belonging, like “join the journey” or “built for creators”. Niharika (2023, p. 7) found that users who felt this type of emotional connection were more likely to form deeper brand attachments.

In busy online spaces, emotional messaging also has to stand out. If it sounds too familiar or too generic, it may be ignored. Approachable. Rajavi et al (2019, p. 662) mentioned that emotional appeals work best when they’re supported by consistent tone and behaviour. When done well, especially with things like community responses or shared user content, emotional communication can turn trust into loyalty and even advocacy. At that point, the emotional tone becomes part of how people describe the brand to others.

2.5. Interactive Communication

Interactive communication allows users to take part in seemingly dialogues with the brand. This often directly points to features such as comment sections, real-time responses, or user polls (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998, p. 10). These small and technical features are what give people a chance to share input or react directly to brand actions (Wuersch et al., 2024, p. 180). When this happens, users tend to see the brand as more open and available. It also makes communication feel more personal, which helps people feel like they are being listened to (Strauss et al., 2024, p. 25). Over time, this can support trust and improve how the brand is seen (Jauković et al., 2024, p. 40).

This kind of communication can also replace face-to-face reassurance. In digital environments, where users can’t see who they’re dealing with, even small responses help create a sense of presence. Phrases like “your input shaped this update” or “we heard your feedback” show that the brand is paying attention. When users see their input reflected in product changes or replies, it builds trust (Soid et al., 2023, p. 667). Personalisation plays a role here too. When messages are adjusted to user needs through chat tools, filters, or custom features, they feel less generic. This can make users feel recognised. Wang and Chan-Olmsted (2024, p. 5) suggest that feeling understood supports both logical and emotional trust.

Participation also makes people more likely to recommend a brand. If they feel involved, they often see part of themselves in the product. Van Meter et al. (2018, p. 90) note that these users tend to advocate not just from loyalty, but from a sense of contribution. This is

often seen in gaming or tech spaces, where feedback changes the product itself. Nevertheless, there is also no guarantee whether this strategy would help. If a brand asks for public opinions but fails to act on them, consumers would be among the first to notice as it can come across as superficial. Liao et al. (2022, p. 1262) pointed out that this kind of shallow engagement can hurt more than help as consumers are quick to lose trust if the effort feels one-sided. Furthermore, the state of the platform/application also matters. For example, what works on Reddit or Discord may fail to fit on LinkedIn. Hence, brands need to adapt how they interact depending on where the user is (Roy et al., 2023, p. 12). When done with great care and thought, interactive messaging can help build trust and even small communities around shared goals.

2.6. Hypotheses

This study examines how the three communication strategies, informational, emotional, and interactive, shape brand trust and influence users' willingness to advocate for a brand. Brand trust is treated both as a direct outcome of communication and as a potential pathway through which communication affects advocacy. The hypotheses below are grounded in literature across digital marketing, consumer psychology, and brand relationship management.

Informational communication is built on clarity, accuracy, and transparency. Within digital environments, this takes the form of update notices, onboarding messages, help centre documentation, or product feature explanations that bridge users' understanding of what a service does, how it performs, or what changes are coming. As Strauss et al. (2024, p.26) suggested that such content reduces ambiguity by outlining expectations in direct and verifiable terms that, Zehir et al. (2011, p. 1226) argued that these kinds of messages also acted as cues of competence and dependability. Especially in settings such as the like of the Software as a Service (SaaS) industry or the fintech services, when a brand communicates consistently in this way, users are more likely to see the brand as reliable. Quaye et al. (2022, p. 9) outlined this as the foundation of cognitive trust, the belief that a brand will continue following through what it promises, knowing that a well-timed, clear message can strengthen trust, especially if it resolves doubts or meets user expectations. Therefore, informational communication is expected to enhance users' trust by signalling consistency and credibility.

H1a: Informational communication positively influences brand trust.

Even when users trust a brand based on clear and accurate messaging, that trust alone may not trigger customer advocacy. Unlike loyalty, which can stay private, advocacy is rather, a public act as it requires users to feel safe enough to speak on behalf of the brand. Informational communication contributes to this by suggesting that the brand is dependable

and consistent over time. Zehir et al. (2011, p. 1226) describe this messaging style as being essential to forming credibility-based trust, while Sayekti et al. (2024, p. 68) show how such trust mediates communication effects on behavioural outcomes. In the context of advocacy, this means users are more prone to promote a brand under the belief that it will meet others' expectations as it did their own. Users may feel safer endorsing a brand once it has demonstrated that it keeps its promises. In that way, informational communication indirectly increases advocacy by building the trust that makes public recommendation feel justified.

H1b: The effect of informational communication on advocacy is mediated by brand trust.

Emotional communication builds trust in a way that exceeds merely about data or detail, but it is also about recognition. It creates moments where a brand doesn't just inform but resonates. Through shared values, identity, or feeling, the message becomes more than marketing to feel more human. The effect is far from being immediate or loud. Sometimes it's in the choice of tone, the story being told, or the emotional tone of the visuals. Batra and Keller (2016, p. 132) pointed out that emotional content invites users to engage with brands on a deeper, more relational level something that facts alone rarely achieve. The communication becomes less about what and how the brands operate and more about what it represents. When users feel that a message reflects something personal, whether a belief, a need, or a hope, they start to trust not just the product, but the intention behind it. In this sense, Wang and Chan-Olmsted (2024, p. 4) positioned this type of trust as having foundation more from the formation of emotional closeness one has with the brands. Instead of proving its worth, the brand becomes something that feels right, something aligned with the user's sense of self.

H2a: Emotional communication positively influences brand trust.

That emotional trust does not just sit still, it also shifts customer behaviour. While emotional communication might not directly push people to speak out, it gives them the kind of certainty that makes public support feel natural. In digital environments, where endorsing a brand also reflects on the person doing it, that sense of emotional fit matters. It offers assurance that the brand won't embarrass them or contradict their values later. VanMeter et al. (2018, p. 90) showed that users with emotional ties to a brand were more likely to promote it, not due to the fact that they were asked, but because it felt genuine. The connection creates a kind of ownership that aligned with how Shimul and Phau (2023, p. 654) connected the tendency of advocacy with trust, especially under scenarios when the user feels emotionally aligned with the brand. In this way, trust, rather, becomes the vehicle. In a way, while emotional messaging builds the relationship, trust secures it. Only then do users feel the necessary comfort to step

into advocacy. Hence, the act of promotion becomes less of a transaction and more of an expression of identity, personal alignment, and genuine belief in what the brand stands for.

H2b: The effect of emotional communication on advocacy is mediated by brand trust.

Different from other communication strategies, the interactive communication strategy creates trust through means of encouraging pro-active participation from users' side. Rather than simply receiving updates, users are incentivised to offer feedback, invited influence decisions, and interact directly with brand representatives. This involvement contributes to what scholars describe as participatory trust, which is a belief that the brand is responsive and values input. Wang and Chan-Olmsted (2024, p. 8) argues that in digital-first environments, this kind of responsiveness functions as a substitute for face-to-face interaction, enhancing perceived reliability. Similarly, Ziegelmeyer et al. (2021, p. 185) showed that visible signs of listening, such as changelogs, tailored replies, or acknowledgements, significantly increase user trust. Strauss et al. (2024, p. 25) added that interactive communication enhances perceptions of user-centricity, which strengthens both rational and emotional trust. In essence, as users observe that their input can influence outcomes, they are more likely to view the brand as being trustworthy and align with their interests.

H3a: Interactive communication positively influences brand trust.

In the case of interactive communication, advocacy emerges through the trust that is formulated as the byproduct of this form of engagement. As users participate through forms of giving feedback, voting on features, or seeing their input reflected in product changes, they start to develop and gain a sense that of their recognition from the brand. This recognition grows into participatory trust, which strengthens the relational bond between user and brand. VanMeter et al. (2018, p. 87) also found that users, who contribute in such ways, are more likely to advocate for the brand, not just because they enjoy the product, but because they perceive it as responsive and inclusive. Similarly, Jauković et al. (2024, p. 40) reinforced this through the observation that interactive brand experiences can increase both trust and emotional commitment, which function as important precursors to advocacy. While engagement alone may generate feelings of involvement or ownership, it is the trust built from being listened to and acted upon that makes users confident enough to recommend the brand to others. Thus, the pathway to advocacy is indirect: participatory interaction builds trust, and trust opens the door to promotion.

H3b: The effect of interactive communication on advocacy is mediated by brand trust.

Trust itself is a core requirement for advocacy. It goes without saying that customer rarely recommend a brand that they lack fundamental trust in, especially online, where

endorsements carry personal risk. Without trust, even satisfied users may hold back, unsure whether the brand will stay reliable or reflect well on them. In this manner, Gudlaugsson (2020, p. 4) argued that trust acts as a gatekeeper for advocacy, as with the lack of it, users may continue using a service but would avoid attaching their name to it. Similarly, Lawer et al. (2006, p. 126) also indicated that trust supported the transition from passive loyalty to active promotion, especially when customers and users feel strongly that the brand has met their expectations over a period of time. Quaye et al. (2022, p. 8) argued how trust leads to stronger emotional investment, which can evolve into advocacy when paired with consistent communication and identity alignment. In short, even if advocacy stems from emotion, it needs the reassurance of trust to take form.

H4: Brand trust positively influences advocacy.

Together, these hypotheses created a model where communication strategies influence brand trust in different ways, while trust shapes whether people choose to advocate, hence making it possible to compare the effects of different communication styles, not just on belief in the brand, but also on what users are willing to say about it.

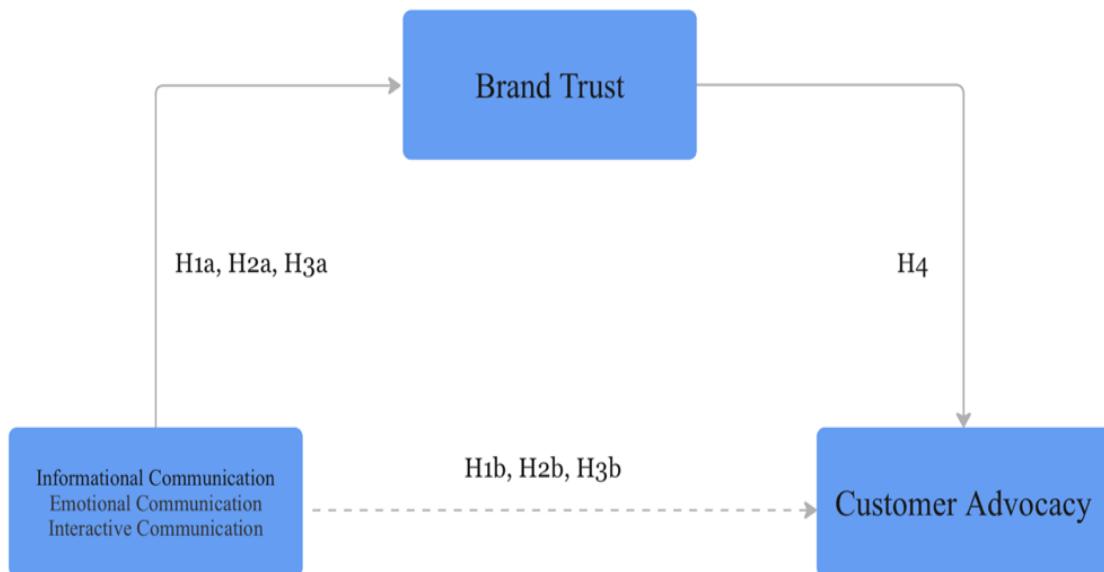


Figure 1: Brand trust mediation model on the relationship between communication strategies and advocacy

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design and Justification

This study uses a quantitative, survey-based experimental design to assess how different communication strategies affect brand trust and advocacy, which allows for structured data collection, statistical comparison across groups alongside the empirical testing of predefined hypotheses, especially in research within the communication realm, with message variations being subtle but potentially impactful (Bryman, 2012, p. 184; Lacohee et al., 2024, p. 248). Moreover, in order to strengthen internal validity, the research also used a between-subjects design with participants being randomly assigned to one of four conditions: informational, emotional, interactive, and a neutral control. In this way, as each participant only received only one message variant, this method prevents cross-condition contamination, thus reducing risks of learning effects, fatigue, or anchoring bias (Field, 2018, p. 52; Bolinger et al., 2021, p. 86). Moreover, the random allocation also would help to ensure group equivalence and isolate the effect of the communication strategy from individual-level variability.

Each message simulated a brief software update notification, tailored to reflect one communication style. With participants allocated into the control group, they received a generic product description without any persuasive framing. This baseline allowed for comparisons between active strategies and a neutral condition, helping to identify whether trust or advocacy scores were driven by message design rather than content familiarity or general brand appeal (Bolinger et al., 2021, p.90).

This design was selected to maximise causal interpretability. Experimental methods are well-established for identifying the effects of specific, controlled inputs, particularly useful in digital contexts where small changes in message tone or framing can shape user behaviour. The experimental setup also allowed for a clear operationalisation of the independent variable, message style across uniformly presented conditions.

To ensure construct validity, standardised measurement tools were used for both dependent variables. Brand trust was assessed through a multi-item Likert scale measuring perceptions of reliability, ethical behaviour, and competence (Wuersch et al., 2024, p. 170; Romaniuk et al., 2023). With advocacy, this dimension was measured with the Net Promoter Score (NPS), which is a widely used single-item measure that measures a respondent's willingness to recommend a brand. While NPS does appear rather simple, it regularly appears in experimental research due to its clarity, brevity, and strong correlations with behavioural loyalty and growth metrics (Jaramillo et al., 2023, p. 284; Lacohee et al., 2024, p. 249). Thus,

this research design presents a rigorous and context-appropriate approach to test how message framing influences trust and advocacy in software communication environments.

3.2. Sample and Sampling Strategy

The target population for this study is software users. This is due to the fact that as they are regularly exposed to updates, interface changes, and service communications, they are more susceptible to message framing that may influence trust and engagement. These users typically possess the baseline digital familiarity needed to critically evaluate communication content in app-based or web-based environments. Participants were recruited through online convenience sampling in forms of public outreach on Reddit communities centrale around software, technology, and digital services. This approach opened the study to assess a wide range of users, including casual users and technically inclined individuals. While it remains not probabilistic, the sample reflects the type of population relevant to the research context.

A total of 120 participants completed the survey. No quotas or balancing constraints were applied during collection. Responses were screened for completion and basic engagement, but no stratification or formal demographic balancing was implemented. The chosen sample size had bases more on feasibility and precedents in similar experimental designs rather than on a formal power analysis. While this limits the ability to claim statistical generalisability, the number of participants was sufficient to conduct group comparisons and test for basic effects. As such, the sampling approach prioritised ecological relevance and practicality over representativeness.

3.3. Operationalisation of Constructs

3.3.1. Dependent Variable: Advocacy

Net Promoter Score (NPS) will be measured using the standardised item: “On a scale from 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend this software to a friend or colleague?” Participants are then categorised as Promoters (9–10), Passives (7–8), or Detractors (0–6). The final NPS is computed using the formula:

$$NPS = \frac{Promoters - Detractors}{Total\ Response} \times 100$$

This measure is well-established in customer experience research. According to Jaramillo et al. (2023), NPS not only captures a user's immediate affective response but also serves as a proxy for longer-term behavioural advocacy (p. 6). Its simplicity allows researchers to quickly administer it within survey and easily interpret the results. This serves two purposes. Firstly, it enhances the response rate while at the same time, reduces survey fatigue, factors critical in online experimental settings. On the one hand, certain critiques are directed towards its being unidimensional. On the other hand, when paired with experimental manipulation of stimuli, NPS is good in predicting growth and user engagement (Lacohee et al., 2024, p. 254). Furthermore, multiple industries and digital services have validated the use NPS, making it suitable for this research.

3.3.2. Mediator

In high information, low-contact environment, the relationship between communication strategies and behavioural outcomes is often mediated by trust. In these environments, users often form impressions of brands through indirect signals, interface tone, response time, or message framing, rather than direct interaction. Duong et al. (2024, p.3) suggested that individuals-built trust from one domain to another. While informational messages touch upon cognitive trust through competence and consistency, emotional messages build affective trust with empathy and alignment with user values. With interactive messaging is the fostering of trust by communicating the user's role in shaping the product.

Integrating these dimensions within the mediation model adds depth to the analysis and reflects current thinking in branding psychology, which increasingly emphasises multi-modal trust pathways. In this sense, brand trust is not just an outcome variable, but a psychological gateway linking communicative intent with behavioural endorsement, precisely what this study sets out to measure.

With brand trust, the dimension is measured with a multi-item scale taken adaptation from Wuersch et al. (2024, p.169). Some of the statement will appear as "I trust this brand to meet my expectations" and "This brand delivers on its promises," each rated on a 7-point Likert scale. Composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) values from previous studies report scores above 0.7, confirming internal consistency and construct validity. Trust is often divided into components such as competence (ability to deliver), integrity (honesty and fairness), and benevolence (interest in user wellbeing), and the selected scale captures all three dimensions. Because trust works as both an outcome and a psychological connection between

exposure to communication and subsequently, the user action, this depth is essential in media targeting models.

The use of Likert-scale measurements allows for greater granularity in capturing variance across conditions, which is critical in mediation testing using Hayes' PROCESS macro. Additionally, including trust as the mediator aligns closely with trust transfer theory, which argued that user confidence is shaped through message interactions and then extended into behavioural domains such as advocacy.

3.4. Independent Variable

The independent variable of communication strategy is operationalised through four scripted message conditions. Each of the participants is randomly assigned to one of the following groups:

Conditions	Description	Example Message
Informational Communication	Focuses on factual messaging about product reliability and security.	“Our platform is built with state-of-the-art encryption and a 99.9% uptime guarantee.”
Emotional Communication	Uses narrative-driven or emotionally appealing content to foster connection.	“Join a community of users who trust us to simplify their lives and bring peace of mind.”
Interactive Communication	Encourages user participation, feedback, and two-way engagement.	“Share your thoughts with us, your feedback shapes our next feature updates.”
Control Group (Neutral Strategy)	Exposed to the product without additional strategic messaging.	Only default software description (no persuasive messaging).

The formulation of wording in each condition has bases on communication messaging and informed by real-world brand messaging examples. To ensure construct validity, a message manipulation check will be included in the post-task survey, asking participants to rate the extent to which the message felt factual, emotional, or participatory. There exists similar manipulation strategies seen in media and marketing psychology, where small variations in

message tone or intent can have measurable effects on perception and behaviour (Bolinger et al., 2022, p. 85). Pretesting ensured that message tone and length were consistent across groups to avoid confounding factors.

Before finalising the experimental conditions, a pre-testing phase was conducted to ensure the clarity, distinctiveness, and perceived intent of the three communication strategies. Draft messages were tested through sending out a pilot survey, collecting answers from 24 participants. These answers helped to re-evaluate the tone, purpose, and emotional impression of each script. Their answers instrumentally refine wordings that are ambiguous, adjust emotional valence, alongside ensuring that all three experimental messages were equal in length and complexity. Exemplary, the informational message was revised to remove marketing jargon, and the emotional message was shortened to improve pacing.

Following the revisions, another survey ($n = 20$) was then launched on the same Qualtrics platform intended for the main study. Manipulation checks asked participants to rate the message on few standards, including clarity, persuasiveness, emotional tone, and interactivity, using a 5-point Likert scale. These responses thus confirmed that the messages were correctly perceived as representing distinct communication strategies.

3.5. Data Processing and Analysis

The data will be analysed using SPSS version 28, a standard tool in social sciences. The process begins with data cleaning, excluding incomplete responses, outliers, and failed attention checks. Participants with similar responses across all Likert items or incorrect answers to attention checks will be removed to safeguards data quality, which is critical in experimental research (Field, 2018, p. 57). Moreover, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies) will be calculated to summarise sample characteristics and the distribution of brand trust and advocacy scores (via NPS), providing an overview of response patterns and serve as a basis for further analysis.

For mediation analysis, Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 4) would investigate whether brand trust mediates the effect of communication strategy on NPS. The model would use the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression and bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) to estimate indirect effects and their 95% confidence intervals (Hayes, 2018, p. 76). Mediation is confirmed if the interval does not include zero. This approach improves on traditional methods by removing the need for normality assumptions (Kuswanto, 2024, p. 668).

While mediation offers both descriptive and causal insights into how communication strategies shape user perception and advocacy, some limitations are unavoidable. Firstly, the

format of stimuli in plain text can not capture the diverse and realistic nature of brand communication. Secondly, although stratified sampling is for demographic balance, responses can still vary based on cultural difference. Lastly, the study captures short-term effects since the texts can be fleeting, hardly indicative of how trust and advocacy evolve with times.

4. Results

4.1. Sample and Characteristics

A total of 120 participants completed the study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four experimental communications with 30 participants per the conditions of informational, emotional, interactive, or control. The sample was diverse in gender identity: 54.2% as female, 37.5% as male, 5.0% as other, and 3.3% preferred not to disclose their gender (Table 1). This distribution reflects a diverse gender pool. For age, this ranges from 16 to 63 years ($M = 26.3$, $SD = 6.89$). In this, the largest age group is in the early twenties. Over 60% of respondents are between 18 and 26, reflecting a digitally fluent and socially active demographic commonly targeted in technology and media research, as presented in Table 1

Participants also reported various educational qualification. While 40.8% had completed a bachelor's degree, 31.7% held a master's degree, and 7.5% had obtained a doctoral degree. The remaining 20% reported either a high school diploma or no formal education. Regarding prior digital experience, 67.5% of respondents indicated they had used project management software before, 23.3% had not, and 9.2% were unsure. In terms of current usage frequency, 22.7% reported using digital productivity tools daily, 22.7% reported never using them, and the rest used such tools a few times per week, month, or rarely. One participant had missing data for this final item.

4.2. PCA

To explore the underlying dimensions of the 6 items on brand trust, a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted using direct oblimin rotation based on eigenvalues (> 1.00). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of .89 verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, as this exceeds the acceptable minimum value of .60 (Kaiser, 1970). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant, $\chi^2(15) = 526.07$, $p < .001$, thereby indicating that the correlations between items were sufficiently large for a PCA (Bartlett, 1954). The resultant model consisted of one factor, which explained 72.3% of the variance in brand trust. All six items loaded strongly onto this factor, which range from .745 to .903. The factor demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .922. The factor loadings and the Cronbach's alpha of this factor are presented in Table 2.

4.3. Reliability Analysis

To assess the internal consistency of Brand Trust, a reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha (Table 2). The six-item scale has a high degree of inter-item consistency with $\alpha = .922$ (Field, 2018). This suggested that all six items are measuring the same underlying construct. To further support the scale's coherence, corrected item-total correlations ranged from .655 to .845. The lowest corrected correlation was observed for the item "The message makes me feel that TaskFlow genuinely cares about its users" ($r = .655$), while the highest correlation was found for "TaskFlow seems competent enough to fulfill its promises" ($r = .845$). Cronbach's alpha if item deleted ranged from .899 to .924. This indicated that no single item, if removed, would have improved the reliability of the scale. As such, all six items were included for later analysis. These findings confirm that the Brand Trust scale is psychometrically sound and appropriate for examining trust-related responses to the communication stimuli used in this study.

4.4. Mediation Analysis

To examine whether brand trust mediated the relationship between communication strategy and advocacy, three separate mediation models were conducted using Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 4). Each communication condition, informational, interactive, and emotional, was compared against the control group, while controlling for the influence of the other two message types. In all models, brand trust was entered as the mediator, and advocacy, which was measured via Net Promoter Score, served as the dependent variable. Significance of indirect effects was assessed using 5,000 bootstrap resamples.

Across all conditions, brand trust emerged as a strong and consistent predictor of advocacy ($B = 1.00$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .001$), reinforcing its central role in shaping recommendation behaviour and supporting H4.

However, none of the communication conditions produced significant effects on brand trust. In the informational model, the effect of message type on trust was marginally significant ($B = 0.63$, $p = .085$), but did not reach conventional thresholds, leading to a rejection of H1a. With both the interactive ($B = -0.07$, $p = .860$) and emotional conditions ($B = 0.07$, $p = .853$), no significant effects on trust were observed, thus rejecting H2a and H3a.

Similarly, indirect effects on advocacy via trust were non-significant across all models. The indirect effect in the informational model (indirect = 0.63, 95% CI [-0.08, 1.38]) did not reach significance, nor did those in the interactive (-0.07, 95% CI [-0.91, 0.65]) or emotional conditions (0.07, 95% CI [-0.71, 0.83]). As a result, H1b, H2b, and H3b were also rejected.

Taken together, these findings confirm the predictive power of trust on advocacy (H4), while showing that none of the tested communication styles significantly influenced trust or generated mediated effects on advocacy.

Table 1

Sample Characteristics

Characteristic	Frequency in Sample	Percentage of Sample
Gender		
– Male	45	37.5%
– Female	65	54.2%
– Other	6	5.0%
– Prefer not to say	4	3.3%
Education		
– No formal education	4	3.3%
– High school diploma	20	16.7%
– Bachelor's degree	49	40.8%
– Master's degree	38	31.7%
– Doctoral degree	9	7.5%
Used PM software before?		
– Yes	81	67.5%
– No	28	23.3%
– I'm not sure	11	9.2%
Use of PM tools (Trello, Notion, etc.)		
– Daily	27	22.7%
– Few times per week	22	18.5%
– Few times per month	15	12.6%
– Rarely	28	23.5%
– Never	27	22.7%
Age		
- 16 - 20	5	4.2%
- 21 - 25	66	55.0%
- 26 - 30	20	16.7%

Characteristic	Frequency in Sample	Percentage of Sample
- 31 - 35	13	10.8%
- 36 – 40	5	4.2%
- 41 - 45	4	3.3%
- 46 - 50	2	1.7%
- 51 - 55	3	2.5%
- 56 - 60	1	0.8%
- 61 - 65	1	0.8%

Table 2

Factor loadings, explained variance and reliability of the six Brand Trust items

Item	<i>Brand Trust</i>
TaskFlow seems competent enough to fulfill its promises.	.903
TaskFlow gives me a sense of security based on this communication.	.880
I feel confident about trying TaskFlow after reading the message.	.876
I expect TaskFlow to perform well based on what I've read.	.856
Based on this message, I believe TaskFlow is reliable.	.834
The message makes me feel that TaskFlow genuinely cares about its users.	.745
<i>R</i> ²	.723
<i>Cronbach's α</i>	.922

Table 3Descriptive statistics and correlations ($n = 120$)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Mean	SD	
1. Advocacy (NPS)	—										5.82	2.05	
2. Age	-.065	—									26.34	6.89	
3. Experience with PM software (0 = No, 1 = Yes)		-.211*	-.145	—							1.42	0.66	
4. Info_dum	.080	-.090	-.074	—							0.25	0.43	
5. Inte_dum	.024	.294**	.074	-.333**	—						0.25	0.43	
6. Emo_dum	-.061	-.054	.074	-.333**	-.333**	—					0.25	0.43	
7. Manip_Info	.360	-.087	-.533**	—	—	—	—				5.11	0.83	
8. Manip_Emo	-.143	.352	-.047	—	—	—	—	—			5.24	1.09	
9. Manip_Inter	.422*	-.241	.006	—	—	—	—	—			5.41	1.25	
10. Trust	.706**	-.214*	-.087	.186*	-.090	-.033	.688*	*	-.118	.530**	—	5.53	1.47

Note. $p \leq .05$ (2-tailed). $p \leq .01$ (2-tailed).

PM = project management. Manipulation variables computed as scale means per conditions

5. Discussion

This study set out to examine how emotional, informational, and interactive message framings influence brand trust and advocacy within a digital context. Contrary to prior theoretical assumptions, no significant effects were observed between message types and either trust or advocacy (Ahmad et al., 2022, p. 617; Bigné et al., 2023, p. 2). Although emotional and interactive messages might appear slightly more engaging, this perceived difference failed to lead to any measurable behavioural or attitude change. Instead of reinforcing the primary roles of format, the data reaffirmed the central role of brand trust. Participants who expressed higher levels of trust also exhibited stronger advocacy intentions, reinforcing the position of trust not merely as an affective sentiment, but as a relational condition through which supportive behaviours are enacted (Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024, p. 8; Sweeney et al., 2020, p. 144). The trust, that mediated the link between message value and advocacy, indicates that while format may not activate change in isolation, perceived relevance still functions as a precursor in the process of forming trust. These observations mean that trust exerts influence not through fleeting moments, but across longer timelines of credibility and consistency, suggesting future studies to reassess how trust is triggered, sustained, and eventually transformed into advocacy under varying digital conditions

5.1. Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study offer a re-evaluation of how message format functions in digital brand communication. While existing literature has often credited emotional and interactive messaging with superior persuasive potential (Ahmad et al., 2022, p. 617; Hongsuchon et al., 2023, p. 1234), the absence of significant effects provokes a more nuanced reality. Rather than claiming message format holding no value, these results redirect attention toward other mechanisms, albeit, trust formation as an outcome not just of message style, but possibly of mutual recognition, perceived sincerity, and contextual relevance. Inspite of previous models placing trust as a mediating construct between message and advocacy (Na et al., 2023, p. 6), this study placed brand trust more on a foundational role. In details, regardless of message conditions, participants who indicated greater trust also expressed higher advocacy intent. This supports the long-standing argument that trust remains central to consumer-brand relationships (Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024, p. 8; Sweeney et al., 2020, p. 144). Yet, the absence of any variation across formats implies that trust may not be immediately triggered by surface-level stimuli. Rather, it may develop through perceived alignment with

user values and consistent brand behaviour over time, which aligned with Renfil (2023, p. 129) describing digital trust as a performative outcome emerging through mutual recognition.

It is also important to take note that this study is limited due to a single exposure in a simulated environment. As such, while the data suggests that trust is not easily shaped by momentary communication design, it does not exclude the possibility that repeated, emotionally resonant, or interactive messaging might influence perceptions across longer timelines or different settings. This raises the need for theoretical models to consider not only message type but also exposure duration, channel context, and prior brand familiarity when assessing how trust translates into advocacy.

Accordingly, this study contributes not by rejecting format-based models outright, but by calling for their expansion. Persuasion does not unfold in a vacuum. What this research points toward is a model of trust formation that is temporally distributed, interpretive, and deeply embedded within ongoing consumer-brand interactions. Rather than functioning as a trigger, trust may be better understood as a cumulative response to brand consistency, ethical cues, and perceived credibility, a direction that future research should further explore in real-world environments and longitudinal designs.

5.1.1. Revisiting Emotional and Interactive Content

Previous works such as those from Bigné et al. (2023, p. 5) and Zhang et al. (2022, p. 6) implied that emotional and interactive communication can form trust by provoking customer to feel sense of authenticity and partnership. In this study, while these formats might appear as more engaging, they failed to lead to measurable effects on trust or advocacy. Hence, the implication is that perceived engagement and trust do not necessarily track together. A possible explanation pointed towards the efficiency of emotional and interactive content depending more on contexts rather than being inherently persuasive. Hence, elements such as emotional saturation in digital environments and audience difference in responsiveness may limit their impact (Cheung & To, 2024, p. 9; Yaprak, 2025, p. 20). Similarly, interactivity may only build trust when regarded as sincere rather than symbolic or formulaic (Lefkeli et al., 2024, p. 143). Hence, rather than this study dismissing the potential of such strategies, it suggests their effects may have to do more with fit, intention, and user expectations than on the features themselves. Prior research, for example, points to increased trust when communication feels unusually thoughtful or consumer-oriented (Zhang & Zhao, 2023, p. 1073).

5.1.2. Trust as Temporally and Socially Distributed

While this study involved single-message exposure, the lack of trust differences between message types may reflect how trust forms gradually, not in isolated encounters. Prior work has proposed that trust accumulates over time through consistent brand behaviours and coherent presentation across channels (Irawan & Cheng, 2025, p. 11; Li & Lee, 2024, p. 7). In this study, it is possible that participants' weak response to messaging is the result of the cues being too isolated to form trust. Moreover, the way to deliver a message, whether by a person, a brand, or an automated system, can also shape interpretation. Messages seen as too polished or impersonal may struggle to build trust, especially without a prior relationship (Lefkeli et al., 2024, p. 143). This could help explain why emotional or interactive formats, though rated as engaging, did not produce the expected behavioural effects.

5.1.3. Advocacy as Accumulated Trust

Although advocacy was not significantly influenced by message type, the data did show that trust correlated with higher advocacy intentions. This supports earlier findings positioning trust as an important relational foundation (Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024, p. 8; Sweeney et al., 2020, p.144). Rather than downplaying the role of format, it is possible that advocacy emerges from a broader accumulation of trust signals. In this sense, advocacy could be a socially meaningful behaviour shaped by alignment with brand values, consistency of experience, and audience identity (Amoah et al., 2022, p. 6; Ahmad et al., 2022, p. 617). From this view, a single message, despite being well designed, may fail to urge users toward advocacy unless it fits within a larger narrative of credibility.

5.1.4. Rethinking Digital Persuasion Models

These observations suggested a reconsideration of format-based persuasion models. While distinctions like emotional vs informational remain useful, they may not be sufficient on their own. This study implied the need for more nuanced frameworks that consider not only the message itself, but also timing, source credibility, and platform context.

A growing body of work points to possible inhibitors of persuasion, such as source scepticism, message fatigue, or psychological reactance (Yaprak, 2025, p. 20). These dynamics may dilute even well-crafted content, especially in fast-moving, fragmented media environments. Rather than assuming that format alone drives persuasion, researchers might focus on when and for whom specific strategies work, and under what communicative conditions they gain traction. From this perspective, trust is less a byproduct of message style and more a layered, contingent process.

5.2. Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer a cautious reappraisal of how message framing operates within digital brand communication. While emotional and interactive formats are often seen as intuitively impactful, this study did not detect any significant improvement in trust or advocacy from their use. Despite being rated as slightly more engaging, these stylistic choices did not translate into measurable behavioural outcomes. As such, practitioners may need to temper expectations about the persuasive strength of such formats when used in isolation.

Instead, the strongest signal came from the relationship between trust and advocacy. Participants who expressed higher levels of trust were also more likely to indicate advocacy intent, echoing long-standing suggestions that trust is as a behavioural foundation the relationship between consumer and brand (Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024, p. 5; Monfort et al., 2025, p. 4). However, since there is no different in trust levels across message types, this pattern may reflect broader brand-related impressions rather than specific formatting effects. Accordingly, the findings reinforce the view that trust likely stems from accumulated cues of credibility, consistency, and audience fit, rather than from any one message style alone. While this study's design aims not to test audience segmentation, the possibility remains that certain users, such as loyal consumers, emotionally responsive individuals, or those with high media fluency, may react differently. These results do not dismiss the potential value of emotional or interactive design, but they imply that such strategies may yield better results when tailored to specific audiences or integrated into sustained communication streams. Hence, emotional resonance and interactivity are tools that depend heavily on timing, context, and alignment with prior brand experiences (Zhang & Zhao, 2023, p. 1073; Cheung & To, 2024, p. 9).

5.3. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

While this study describes how message framing intersects with brand trust and advocacy, it is important to acknowledge several limitations that shape the scope and interpretation of the findings.

A first constraint concerns ecological validity. All brand messages were delivered through a survey platform, in controlled and isolated conditions. Participants did not engage with dynamic or immersive content, and formats labelled as “interactive” lacked actual responsiveness or platform-native mechanics (Hongsuchon et al., 2023, p. 1234; Irawan & Cheng, 2025, p. 11). Similarly, emotional messages came in plain text, without multimedia cues that typically support affective resonance (Bigné et al., 2023, p. 5). These limitations

possibly narrowed the emotional or participatory bandwidth of the stimuli, which may have muted potential effects.

On the one hand, as most participants were students and early professionals within a narrow demographic profile, it supports internal consistency. On the other hand, it also limits external generalisability. Moreover, past research has shown that message reception can vary based on cultural context, brand familiarity, or digital fluency (Cheung & To, 2024, p. 8; Zhang & Zhao, 2023, p. 1075). As such, it is possible that more diverse samples would reveal segment-level differences that this study could not detect. In addition, all messages were attributed to a fictional brand, without further cues about the sender's identity. Since trust formation is often tied to perceived credibility, this may have reduced message salience and contributed to the lack of significant findings (Lefkeli et al., 2024, p. 143; Li & Lee, 2024, p. 7).

Another disadvantage lies with the study's design that puts participants to respond immediately after a single message exposure. Although suitable for testing controlled effects, this approach compresses trust forming that is normally gradual and interaction-based. Trust, especially in digital contexts, is likely to evolve across repeated exposure and consistent brand experiences. This means that the null results observed here might reflect the temporal constraints of the experiment, rather than an inherent ineffectiveness of message framing.

Finally, there are considerations related to operationalisation. While the messages followed prior literature in distinguishing emotional, informational, and interactive styles, manipulation checks indicated only modest differentiation. In practice, emotional and interactive elements often co-occur, and treating them as entirely separate may have oversimplified how users naturally interpret content. Future studies might benefit from a more integrative design that combines hybrid messaging styles alongside comparing platforms and sources's effects in delivering (Zhang et al., 2022, p. 6; Renfil, 2023, p. 129).

Taken together, these limitations do not undermine the study's value, but rather suggest areas for refinement. Future research could explore longitudinal designs, richer media environments, or personalised communication scenarios to better reflect the dynamic realities of brand engagement. In doing so, scholars may gain clearer insight into when, how, and for whom message framing supports trust-building and consumer advocacy.

5.4. Future Research Directions: Segmentation, Real-world Engagement, and Layered Trust Models

The limitations offer several clear directions for future research. First, future studies should investigate whether segment-specific effects exist. Variables such as media literacy, trust disposition, brand familiarity, and psychological involvement may moderate how consumers respond to emotional or interactive formats. This would allow for a more precise mapping of when, for whom, and under what conditions message framing exerts an effect. Research by Cheung & To (2024, p. 9) and Zhang & Zhao (2023, p. 1073) also suggests consumers that are either highly involved or with prior brand affinity may be more responsive to subtle message cues.

Secondly, researchers should move beyond single-message exposure designs and adopt longitudinal or platform-integrated methodologies. Experimental designs could simulate branded content distributed over time, allowing trust to be observed as a relational trajectory rather than a single measurement point. Eye-tracking, biometric feedback, or click-through behaviour could complement self-report data, providing a more granular picture of message salience and trust formation (Bigné et al., 2023, p.6).

Another direction for future research could involve taking a broader view of trust itself. Instead of thinking of it as a single, uniform quality, it might make sense to break it down into smaller parts. Things like sincerity, responsiveness, or ethical consistency might all play separate roles in shaping how people feel about a brand (Sweeney et al., 2020, p. 144; Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024, p. 10). By doing this, researchers could see whether certain message formats are better at building one aspect of trust over another, such as whether emotional appeals help with sincerity more than competence.

It also seems important to explore how these findings might shift in other cultural or digital settings. Since the current sample was fairly narrow in background, some of the variation in trust-building might have been missed. Different cultures interpret emotional tone in their own ways, and what feels engaging in one setting might come across as too intense in another. On top of that, users behave differently depending on the platform. A message that works well on TikTok might lose its impact on something more formal like LinkedIn. Running this kind of study in different countries or using other platforms could show how trust forms in more diverse contexts, and whether these patterns hold up across the board.

Collectively, these observations do not diminish the importance of message formatting. Rather, the results emphasise that understanding trust requires careful consideration of factors beyond the message itself. These are timing, delivery context, and communicator credibility.

Future studies might thus adopt longitudinal frameworks, integrate platform-specific contexts, and employ multi-dimensional models to better capture the nuanced ways consumers engage with contemporary brand messaging.

5.5. Conclusion

This research seeks to investigate how different communication strategies such as informational, emotional, and interactive can shape brand trust and customer advocacy within the contemporary digital software landscape. On the one hand, while theoretical paradigms have suggested that message framing holds persuasive power, especially when infused with affective resonance or participatory affordances, the empirical findings of this study suggest a more tempered interpretation (Ahmad et al., 2022, p. 617; Bigné et al., 2023, p. 4). In this sense, contrary to prevailing assumptions, message format yields no statistically significant effects on either trust or advocacy, but instead, it was the steadfast and unequivocal brand trust that emerged as the principal antecedent of advocacy, irrespective of the employed message type employed (Sweeney et al., 2020, p. 144; Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024, p. 8). Despite the intuitive appeal of emotionally charged or interactively designed messages, this study alters the discourse surrounding digital brand communication by revealing that such formats alone fail to reliably invite behavioural change. In details, the data indicates that it is the substance of communication as shown through perceived reliability, transparency, and brand congruence that commands trust. Instead of appearing as an ephemeral by-product of persuasive techniques, trust is now more as a relational construct cultivated through continuity and coherence (Renfil, 2023, p. 129). The consistent predictive strength of brand trust substantiates its foundational role within consumer-brand relationships. Nevertheless, as the absence of significant mediation effects signals a departure from the notion that trust can be swiftly achieved through being exposed to isolated messages, trust needs to be understood as a gradual, and contextual process that resists superficial manipulation and is built up through sustained interaction and alignment with user expectations (Duong et al., 2024, p. 5).

This study, thus, suggests a strategic reconsideration of communication practices, inviting a departure from the temptation to treat message framing as a transactional lever. Emotional or interactive features, while potentially impactful, should not be considered as inherently persuasive; but their effectiveness is rather highly conditional upon authentic alignment with the brand's behavioural record and values (Monfort et al., 2025, p. 4; Yaprak, 2025, p. 20). On a practical level, instead of seeking short-term engagement spikes, practitioners should always seek to foster longitudinal relational capital. On a theoretical level,

this study also contributes to an evolving understanding of trust as a temporally distributed and socially embedded construct (Irawan & Cheng, 2025, p. 11). Rather than being considered as a cognitive reflex to message content, trust may be better understood as a sedimented interpretation that is layered through repeated exposures to consistent communicative cues and brand behaviours. This aligns with emerging scholarship that positions trust as an emergent property of platformed interaction, not a discrete response to isolated messages (Cheung & To, 2024, p. 9; Zhang & Zhao, 2023, p. 1073). Moreover, this research also adds a complicated layer into the presumed synergy between trust and advocacy. While trust is a necessary condition for advocacy, it appears rather to a lesser sufficiency. Advocacy, especially in digital contexts, entails expressive intent, risk perception, and identity alignment (VanMeter et al., 2018, p. 90). In practice, users can trust a brand but avoid public endorsement due to numerous reasons of contextual, social, or personal considerations, underscoring the need to conceptualise advocacy as a distinct behavioural outcome, instead of a downstream echo of trust. It is a worthy noting that while the study's experimental design aims to capture precision in measuring perceptual as well as attitudinal responses, it also exposed limitations from a methodological perspective. For once, the presentation of messages in plain text lacked the multimodal richness and contextual nuance typical of real-world digital interactions (Bolinger et al., 2022, p. 84; Strauss et al., 2024, p. 3). Additionally, the homogeneity of the participant sample, who are predominantly digitally literate and university-aged, play a limit into generalising the findings across broader demographic and cultural spectrums (Cheung & To, 2024, p.8).

As to fully grasp the ecology in which brand communication occurs, future research should embed messaging within platform-native environments and track behavioural metrics over time (Gu et al., 2023, p. 98). Longitudinal approaches would be able to trace the evolution of trust, while mixed-method designs may uncover interpretive nuances obscured by quantitative data alone. Researchers are invited to explore how trust manifests differently across the dimensions of sincerity, competence, ethicality, and also whether these subcomponents interact distinctly with message formats (Wuersch et al., 2024, p. 170; Quaye et al., 2022, p. 16). In turn, practitioners also have to approach trust-building not as a branding practice but more of an infrastructural priority that involves designing communication architectures that foster consistency, responsiveness, and participatory legitimacy (Heim et al., 2023, p. 19). In this architecture, emotional and interactive messages are taken into considerations only when embedded in a broader narrative arc which rewards user investment and sustains interpretive coherence over time (Li & Lee, 2024, p. 7; Sanz-Blas et al., 2025, p.

12). Furthermore, the role of corporate, algorithm, and human message sources should also be taken into account. According to Lefkeli et al. (2024, p.143), consumers not only assess the content but also the source and the surrounding conditions. As in the absence of a reliable and relatable source, even the most meaningful worded message may receive the wrong end of public opinions. In conclusion, this study challenges the idea that advocacy can be achieved solely through message framing and reasserts the importance of trust in digital brand relationships. When communication loses its genuine foundation, it runs the risk of becoming noise. Only by consistently coordinating tone, content, and credibility can brands hope to establish trust that is strong enough to inspire genuine advocacy.

Thus, future investigations should take into consideration the layered, situated, and mediated nature of digital trust, experimenting not only what messages say, but how they resonate across time, cultures, and interfaces. By doing so, scholars and practitioners may uncover not just what persuades in that moment, but what will endure.

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Appendix A.

Survey and Stimulus

1. Informational Communication Condition:

Stimulus

Introducing TaskFlow, your comprehensive project management solution designed to maximize efficiency, clarity, and control. With key features such as automated task assignment, Gantt chart timelines, real-time tracking, and seamless integration with tools like Google Workspace and Slack, TaskFlow ensures your projects stay on course. The platform boasts 99.9% uptime, built-in data encryption, and an intuitive interface praised by industry experts for usability and transparency. Detailed performance reports and feature breakdowns are available directly in-app, allowing teams to make data-driven decisions with confidence. Whether you're managing daily tasks or long-term strategies, TaskFlow provides factual, structured information that helps teams stay informed, aligned, and productive, without the guesswork.

Manipulation Check (7-point Likert: 1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

- The message I read was mainly focused on providing factual information about the software.
- The message clearly emphasized the software's reliability and practical features.
- I felt the message provided detailed, straightforward information.

2. Emotional Communication Condition:

Stimulus

Welcome to TaskFlow, a project management software designed to inspire, connect, and empower your team's journey. More than just an app, TaskFlow is a trusted companion that celebrates your progress and fuels your motivation. From the excitement of setting goals to the joy of crossing off your final task, TaskFlow transforms work into shared moments of achievement. Crafted with care, it helps teams feel valued, supported, and emotionally connected. With vibrant visuals, inspiring messages, and uplifting design, TaskFlow brings a human touch to everyday collaboration. Thousands of users choose TaskFlow not only for

how it works, but for how it makes them feel: proud, confident, and motivated to succeed together.

Manipulation Check (7-point Likert: 1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

- The message I read aimed to evoke positive feelings and emotions.
- The message emphasized creating a personal connection with users.
- The message appealed strongly to emotions rather than facts.

3. Interactive Communication Condition:

Stimulus

Meet TaskFlow, the project management software shaped by the people who use it. At TaskFlow, your voice matters, from feature suggestions to beta testing and user-driven updates. Built on a foundation of collaboration, the platform lets you vote on new functionalities, submit feedback, and participate in open design forums. TaskFlow adapts based on real user input, creating a sense of shared ownership between you and the product. You're not just a user, you're a co-creator. Through live polls, community insights, and transparent development updates, TaskFlow invites ongoing dialogue. We believe the best tools evolve with their users, and TaskFlow exists to grow through your interaction, engagement, and ideas, making it as dynamic as the teams who use it.

Manipulation Check (7-point Likert: 1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

- The message encouraged active user participation.
- The message highlighted interactive involvement with users.
- I felt the brand strongly valued two-way communication.

4. Neutral Control Condition:

Stimulus

TaskFlow is a project management software that helps individuals and teams manage work-related tasks. The platform includes standard features such as task lists, calendar scheduling, file uploads, and notification settings. Users can assign responsibilities, monitor progress, and organize projects using a straightforward interface. TaskFlow is compatible with both

desktop and mobile operating systems and offers help documentation for onboarding and troubleshooting. The software is available in basic and premium plans, depending on the user's needs. While TaskFlow supports common collaborative functionalities, its focus is on providing reliable, accessible tools for organizing work. No special emphasis is placed on branding, interaction, or emotion. It is designed for general productivity without promotional or strategic messaging.

Manipulation Check (7-point Likert: 1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree)

- The message provided only basic information without strong persuasive language.
- The message was neutral and did not evoke strong emotions or calls for interaction.
- The information given was simple and objective.

5. Later questions for brand trust and NPS (Common to All Conditions)

Brand Trust Measurement (All Conditions - 7-point Likert: 1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree):

- Based on this message, I believe TaskFlow is reliable.
- TaskFlow seems competent enough to fulfill its promises.
- I expect TaskFlow to perform well based on what I've read.
- I feel confident about trying TaskFlow after reading the message.
- TaskFlow gives me a sense of security based on this communication.
- The message makes me feel that TaskFlow genuinely cares about its users.

Advocacy Measurement (NPS):

- On a scale from 0 (Not at all likely) to 10 (Extremely likely):
"How likely are you to recommend TaskFlow to a friend or colleague?"

Control Variables (Demographics):

- Age
- Gender
- Education level
- Frequency of software usage (daily, weekly, monthly)

- Prior experience with project management software (yes/no)

Appendix B

Measures, Factor Loading and Cronbach alphas

Construct	Items	Factor Loading
Brand	($\alpha = .922$)	
Trust	(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)	
	TaskFlow seems competent enough to fulfill its promises.	.903
	TaskFlow gives me a sense of security based on this communication.	.880
	I feel confident about trying TaskFlow after reading the message.	.876
	I expect TaskFlow to perform well based on what I've read.	.856
	Based on this message, I believe TaskFlow is reliable.	.834
	The message makes me feel that TaskFlow genuinely cares about its users.	.745

Appendix C

Source Verifiability

Table C1

Join the conversation

Sort by: Best ▾

Search Comments

valanori • 17d ago

Top 1% Commenter

Done! I would be really happy if you could do mine as well: https://lioness.uni-passau.de/bin/lioness/experiments/experimenter7079/game41708/_beginParticipant.php Thanks!

2

Reply Award Share ...

DanyCom OP • 17d ago

Thanks a lot <3
I'm on it right now!

2

Reply Award Share ...

OwlLazy5255 • 17d ago

I did yours can you aslo do mine please? <https://forms.gle/vb223pCzowd1amgd6>

2

Reply Award Share ...

Table C2

⊕ 4 more replies

 **b3tt3rluck** • 17d ago

did yours too :) would you be able to do mine as well?
https://seattleux.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bKNdjaT3HfEDvXo

↑ 1 ↓ Reply Award Share ...

⊕ 3 more replies

 **SmoothBit6960** • 14d ago

done, could you do mine as well. It is very short and easy.

↑ 1 ↓ Reply Award Share ...

⊕ 1 more reply

 **snazzyknavे** • 17d ago

Done. If you have a spare 5 minutes, I'd appreciate it:
<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/ucw/understanding-personality>

↑ 2 ↓ Reply Award Share ...

 **DanyCom OP** • 17d ago

Sure thing! Thanks a lot <3

Table C3

• ▾ Reply Award Share ...

 **latinrenaissance** • 16d ago

Done! Here's mine, it should take around 8mins, thank you :)

<https://forms.gle/ppFgkVwM8EBkrV67A>

↑ 2 ↓ Reply Award Share ...

 **DanyCom OP** • 16d ago

Sure thing! Thank you <3

↑ 2 ↓ Reply Award Share ...

⊕ 1 more reply

Table C4



Leading_Vacation_582 • 12d ago

Did yours could also pls do mine <https://forms.gle/MxM5yZ1XtKo5bb9A6>



2



Reply



Award



Share

...



1 more reply



[deleted] • 11d ago



yet_another_flower • 17d ago

Hello it's done could you please do mine ? <https://tally.so/r/nWNbaL>



1



Reply



Award



Share

...



DanyCom OP • 17d ago

I'm doing it now!

Thanks a lot <3



1



Reply



Award



Share

...

Table C5



tzwghtss • 17d ago

I did yours ! Please help me with mine

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe8SDr7w2zBePqXgoHA4FU9bwQcX14-x0dYlytcQMHktMb8w/viewform?usp=header>



1



Reply



Award



Share

...



iginstagrambestpanel • 15d ago

Done. Can you do mine. <https://forms.gle/bQyqS6ZTnsH4c1et7> . I did it. My survey is related to tourism. I have 7 years of experience in hotels, let me know if you need anything.



1



Reply



Award



Share

...

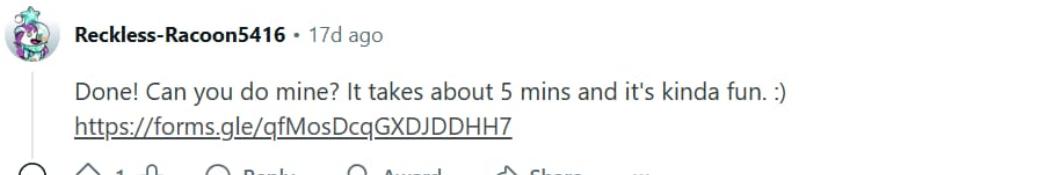
Table C6

 tzwghtlss • 17d ago
Done ! Take mine https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe8SDr7w2zBePqXgoHA4FU9bwQcX14-x0dYlytcQMHktMbw8w/viewform?usp=header
     
 DanyCom OP • 17d ago
Thanks a lot! On it <3
     
 xxivxa • 17d ago
Done! could you do mine as well fellow Erasmian :)? https://erasmusuniversity.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2abdsKFiKC5KNl
     
 DanyCom OP • 17d ago
Of course fellow student :)
     

Table C7

 OwlLazy5255 • 17d ago
done can you do mine? https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfOhJekdKuyIv-pIPqd-IkaAxIfbbdOsf9SI3mJzeXEAeQiTA/viewform?usp=header
     
 DanyCom OP • 17d ago
Thanks! I'm on it <3
     
 tzwghtlss • 17d ago
I did yours ! Please help me with mine https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe8SDr7w2zBePqXgoHA4FU9bwQcX14-x0dYlytcQMHktMbw8w/viewform?usp=header
     
 2 more replies
 iginstagrambestpanel • 15d ago
Done. Can you do mine. https://forms.gle/bQyqS6ZTnsH4c1et7
     

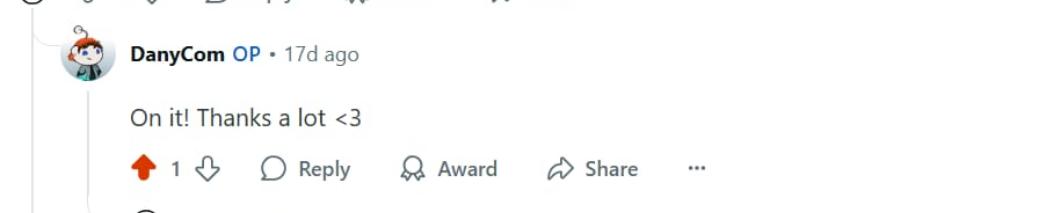
Table C8



Reckless-Racoon5416 • 17d ago

Done! Can you do mine? It takes about 5 mins and it's kinda fun. :)
<https://forms.gle/qfMosDcqGXDJDDHH7>

0 Up 1 Down Reply Award Share ...



DanyCom OP • 17d ago

On it! Thanks a lot <3

1 Up 0 Down Reply Award Share ...

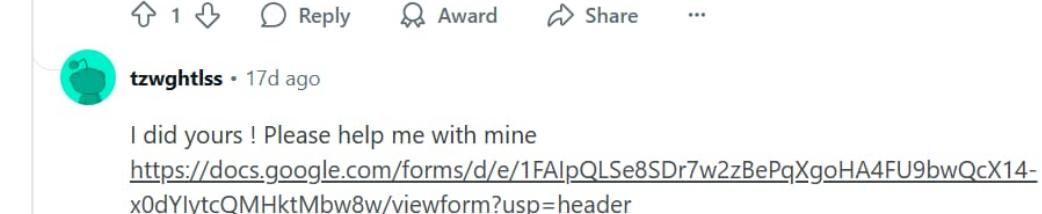
(+) 1 more reply



OwlLazy5255 • 17d ago

I also did yours can you do mine
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfOhJekdKuyIv-pIPqd-lkaAxIfbbdOsf9SI3mJzeXEAeQiTA/viewform?usp=header>

0 Up 1 Down Reply Award Share ...



tzwghtlss • 17d ago

I did yours ! Please help me with mine
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe8SDr7w2zBePqXgoHA4FU9bwQcX14-x0dYlytcQMHktMbW8w/viewform?usp=header>

Table C9



bubble-buddy2 • 17d ago

Done! Good luck! here is mine if anyone has time!

0 Up 1 Down Reply Award Share ...



DanyCom OP • 17d ago

Thank youu! I'm on it <3

1 Up 0 Down Reply Award Share ...

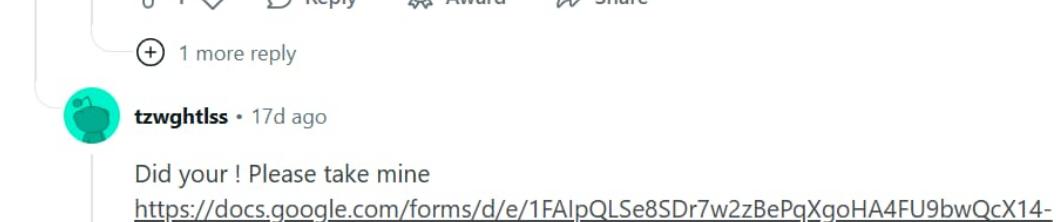


OwlLazy5255 • 17d ago

I also did yours can you do mine aswel?
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfOhJekdKuyIv-pIPqd-lkaAxIfbbdOsf9SI3mJzeXEAeQiTA/viewform?usp=header>

0 Up 1 Down Reply Award Share ...

(+) 1 more reply



tzwghtlss • 17d ago

Did your ! Please take mine
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe8SDr7w2zBePqXgoHA4FU9bwQcX14-x0dYlytcQMHktMbW8w/viewform?usp=header>

Table C10

  r/SurveyExchange • 17 days ago
DanyCom 

Kind of desperate for more replies! Let's help each other out!

Hello beautiful people!
I'm kind of desperate for more replies, so I would really appreciate if you could help me out with this one!
It's literally less than 5 minutes and completely anonymous, and you don't have to worry about your demographics, so feel free to participate!

But most importantly, let's turn this thread into a survey sharing hub! Comment with your survey below, and we'll all help each other <3

https://erasmusuniversity.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5doHdgjzOdfABfg

EDIT: Thank you all for the support! The data collection part has ended, now all that remains is the analysis and the report. Thank you for participating and for helping me out, you saved my thesis <3

 16   139  Share

 3.1K views 

Appendix D

AI Declaration

i need help with suggesting edits for my thesis. Here is the document

ChatGPT said:

Sure, please go ahead and upload the thesis document you'd like me to review. Once I have it, let me know which sections you want help with — for example, flow, clarity, style, tone, structure, or alignment with supervisor feedback.

You said:

Son Nguyen_612827_Thesis_Final.docx

Document

read first, don't comment

ChatGPT said:

Got it — I've read your full thesis. Let me know what you want next:

- Edits for flow, tone, or clarity?
- Suggestions to address specific supervisor feedback?
- Reduction of AI-flagged phrasing?
- APA formatting or structural checks?
- Condensing, expanding, or rewording any section?

Just tell me the focus and which part to start with.

You said:

still within discussion chapter, give me bullet points on suggestion to edit "" 5.1. Theoretical Implications The results of this study alter the assumption about the direct persuasive power of message format within the domain of digital brand communication. While the literature has suggested that emotional and interactive messages outperform informational ones in driving trust and advocacy, the absence of significant effects in this research invites a more complex understanding (Ahmad et al., 2022, p. 617; Hongsuchon et al., 2023, p. 1234). Rather than denying the importance of message design, these findings suggest that trust works more independently and enduringly, less affected by surface formatting than previously hypothesised. As such, this study shifts the conversation away from format to the broader relational dynamics, such as repeated exposure, mutual recognition, and ethical alignment, that allow trust to take root and influence advocacy. Since research has long pointed to brand trust as a key predictor of advocacy, this implication may hold particular weight in theoretical discussions (Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024, p. 8; Sweeney et al., 2020, p. 144). This study reaffirms trust's essential role in shaping behaviour, even though many frameworks have treated it primarily as a mediating factor in consumer-brand dynamics (Na et al., 2023, p. 6). This study, instead, explores how trust forms in digital environments. The finding that trust did not significantly differ across message types raises questions about the utility of format-centric persuasion models. Given the absence of any trust differences between message formats, it appears more likely that trust builds through factors like perceived authenticity and past brand experience, consistent with claims by Renfil (2023, p. 129) that trust grows through interactional continuity, not isolated exposure." Similarly, Renfil's (2023, p. 129) also put digital trust as a performative outcome that grows over time through mutual recognition. The

implication here is that theoretical models must decouple trust formation from message novelty or emotional tonality and instead focus on longitudinal brand behaviours such as consistent messaging and follow-through, cultural codes that align with audience expectations, and platformed visibility, how brand actions are surfaced and interpreted across digital channels. In this light, instead of being a direct output of messaging, trust is rather a process that is dependent on context which grows over time. "" "types raises questions about the utility of format-centric persuasion models" -> I read this before a few lines higher up. Try no to be repetitive "digital trust as a performative outcome that grows over time through mutual recognition" -> How can this be relevant for your one moment in time study? "on longitudinal brand behaviours such as consistent messaging and follow-through, cultural " -> You don't have a basis for this claim. You have to be more careful in your formulation "trust is rather a process that is dependent on context which grows over time." -> Your study does not provide any support on this claim, so you have to present it as an idea, not as a fact

2/2

ChatGPT said:

Here are bullet-pointed suggestions for how to improve and clarify this section based on your supervisor's comments and strong academic writing practice:

General Structural & Flow Suggestions

- **Split into shorter paragraphs:** The current block is dense. Consider splitting after the first two sentences and again after introducing Renfil's conceptualisation. This helps pacing and improves clarity.
- **Clarify the temporal mismatch:** Since your study is a single-exposure design, you must **signal clearly** that ideas about trust as an evolving process are **conceptual implications**, not empirical findings.
- **Avoid redundancy:** The phrase "trust did not significantly differ across message types" appears in two places. Reframe or cut one.
- **Tighten thematic focus:** Anchor the section more strongly around the **contrast between theoretical assumptions and your empirical findings**, with the more speculative or interpretive parts signposted as such.

Specific Line-by-Line Revision Suggestions

- **Original:**
"The results of this study alter the assumption about the direct persuasive power of message format..."
 **Suggestion:** Rephrase to:
"The results of this study challenge the assumption that message format directly drives trust or advocacy in digital brand communication."
- **Original:**
"...the absence of significant effects in this research invites a more complex understanding..."
 **Suggestion:** Add a clarifier:

“...invites a more nuanced understanding of how message framing interacts with trust in short-term digital contexts.”

- **Original:**

“...trust works more independently and enduringly, less affected by surface formatting...”

⚠ This overstates what your data can claim.

✓ **Suggestion:**

“...trust may operate more independently of surface-level message cues than previously assumed, at least within the constraints of this study.”

- **Original:**

“...raises questions about the utility of format-centric persuasion models.”

⚠ Already implied earlier—avoid repetition.

✓ **Suggestion:** Combine or delete. You could replace with:

“This prompts reconsideration of how much weight current models place on short-form message style alone.”

- **Original:**

“Renfil’s (2023) also put digital trust as a performative outcome that grows over time through mutual recognition.”

⚠ Supervisor noted your study doesn't support this.

✓ **Suggestion:**

“As Renfil (2023, p. 129) conceptualises digital trust as a performative outcome built over time through mutual recognition, this raises potential avenues for future research that consider temporal dynamics.”

- **Original:**

“...on longitudinal brand behaviours such as consistent messaging and follow-through...”

⚠ Supervisor flagged this claim as overreaching.

✓ **Suggestion:**

“Such insights point to a theoretical emphasis on longitudinal brand behaviours — like consistent messaging or alignment with audience norms — though these elements were not directly assessed in this study.”

- **Original:**

“...trust is rather a process that is dependent on context which grows over time.”

⚠ Too conclusive.

✓ **Suggestion:**

“Rather than viewing trust as a static outcome, it may be more accurately framed as a context-sensitive process that develops over time — a proposition that future research should explore through longitudinal or platform-integrated designs.”

Would you like me to rewrite the whole section using these revisions in paragraph form?

You said:

”” 5.1.1. Revisiting Emotional and Interactive Content Literature often posits that emotional and interactive messages create trust by fostering authenticity and co-presence (Bigné et al., 2023, p. 5; Zhang et al., 2022, p. 6). Participants did find these formats more engaging, but engagement did not translate into measurable differences in trust or advocacy. This

underscores that engagement and trust do not necessarily move together. Emotional appeal should therefore be re-evaluated not as inherently persuasive, but as context-dependent. Factors such as emotional saturation in digital spaces and varying user responsiveness play important roles (Cheung & To, 2024, p. 9; Yaprak, 2025, p. 6). Similarly, interactivity must be judged by perceived relational sincerity rather than technical features alone. When interaction feels symbolic or superficial, its trust-building effect weakens (Lefkeli et al., 2024, p. 143). Rather than discrediting emotional or interactive formats, these findings suggest their influence depends on relevance, perceived intention, and audience predispositions. Zhang and Zhao (2023, p. 1073) observed that trust is more likely when communication feels thoughtful or consumer-focused, when it breaks the mould. 5.1.2. Trust as Temporally and Socially Distributed This study supports the idea of trust as a temporally layered and socially embedded construct. Persuasion theories often suggest trust forms rapidly and updates occasionally. In contrast, this research supports a view of trust building gradually, reinforced through consistent tone and action over time. This aligns with Irawan & Cheng (2025, p. 11) and Li & Lee (2024, p. 7), who argue that trust is not confined to a single message but is distributed across context, platform, and consumer expectations. When people encounter brand content, their interpretation is shaped not just by the message but by who delivers it, human, algorithm, or hybrid, and how it aligns with prior impressions (Lefkeli et al., 2024, p. 143). This helps explain why format alone had limited effect in this study. Messages perceived as polished or inauthentic may fail to deliver the expected emotional or interactive value. Future theory should integrate source perception as a key variable in message processing. 5.1.3. Advocacy as Accumulated Trust Findings here also suggest advocacy may stem less from momentary persuasion and more from sustained relational credibility. The lack of advocacy variance across message types suggests format is secondary to ongoing legitimacy (Sweeney et al., 2020, p. 142). Advocacy appears to function not just as a behavioural outcome but as a social signal, an expression of alignment with brands that feel trustworthy and relevant (Ahmad et al., 2022, p. 617). This complicates the trust-advocacy link, suggesting that even positively received messages must be embedded within a broader relationship to produce action. Advocacy should thus be viewed not as a simple byproduct of liking but as a symbolic behaviour moderated by identity, values, and social context (Amoah et al., 2022, p. 6; Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024, p. 9). 5.1.4. Recalibrating Digital Persuasion Theory Taken together, the study calls for a theoretical shift: from format determinism to process-oriented models of digital persuasion. While the emotional/informational distinction has value, it must be embedded within frameworks that consider sequencing, audience orientation, and platform mediation. Trust becomes a negotiated outcome, shaped by consistency, interaction, and perceived alignment with values over time. Future models must also account for inhibitors like psychological reactance, message fatigue, and source scepticism (Yaprak, 2025, p. 6). Rather than assuming certain formats work universally, theory should address when and why they falter in real-world digital contexts. In sum, this study separates message format from guaranteed persuasion and re-centres trust as a deeper process influenced by context and continuity. It encourages scholars to move beyond rigid message categories and adopt adaptive, socially grounded views of brand communication. "" wait first for me to send the comments

ChatGPT said:

Understood — I'll wait for your comments before suggesting any edits or changes.

You said:

1. "should therefore be re-evaluated not as inherently persuasive, but as context-dependent. Factors such as emotional saturation in digital spaces and varying user responsiveness play

important roles (Cheung & To, 2024, p. 9; Yaprak, 2025, p. 6). Similarly, interactivity must be judged by perceived relational sincerity rather than technical features alone. When interaction feels symbolic or superficial, its trust-building effect weakens (Lefkeli et al., 2024, p. 143). Rather than discrediting emotional or interactive formats, these findings suggest their influence depends on relevance, perceived intention, and audience predispositions. Zhang and Zhao (2023, p. 1073) observed that trust is more likely when communication feels thoughtful or consumer-focused, when it breaks the mould." -> You cannot make these claims based on your study. So you have to present them more carefully, as potential explanations of how the world works. But don't be so convinced.... 2. "research supports a view of trust building gradually" -> I don't see how you do.... 3. "reinforced through consistent tone and action over time. This aligns with Irawan & Cheng (2025, p. 11) and Li & Lee (2024, p. 7), who argue that trust is not confined to a single message but is distributed across context, platform, and consumer expectations. When people encounter brand content, their interpretation is shaped not just by the message but by who delivers it, human, algorithm, or hybrid, and how it aligns with prior impressions (Lefkeli et al., 2024, p. 143). This helps explain why format alone had limited effect in this study. Messages perceived as polished or inauthentic may fail to deliver the expected emotional or interactive value. Future" -> Again, an alternative way of looking at things, which is interesting, but don't present it as an implication. Tone it down and more clearly present it as a potential explanation for why you don't find what you expected 4. Findings here also suggest advocacy may stem less from momentary persuasion and more from sustained relational credibility -> No they don't. be careful not to write a section full of claims for which you have no support. It reads like an implications section from another thesis in the sense that it does not really discusses/focuses on your findings 5. theoretical shift: from format determinism to process-oriented models of digital persuasion. While the emotional/informational distinction has value, it must be embedded within frameworks that consider sequencing, audience orientation, and platform mediation. Trust becomes a negotiated outcome, shaped by consistency, interaction, and perceived alignment with values over time. -> Well, I don't think you have support for anything that you are saying here. 6. inhibitors like psychological reactance, message fatigue, and source scepticism (Yaprak, 2025, p. 6). Rather than assuming certain formats work universally, theory should address when and why they falter in real-world digital contexts. In sum, this study separates message format from guaranteed persuasion and re-centres trust as a deeper process influenced by context and continuity. It encourages scholars to move beyond rigid message categories and adopt adaptive, socially -> I don't think you have any support for these claims either. I don't really understand where you got all this from and why you present it as almost being facts "" now please suggest

ChatGPT said:

Thanks, Son. Based on your supervisor's comments, here's a structured set of **revision suggestions** for each sub-section in **5.1.1–5.1.4**, focused on:

- Softening causal/confirmatory language
- Reframing findings as tentative interpretations
- Reconnecting to your actual results
- Avoiding overgeneralisation or conceptual overreach

✓ 5.1.1. Revisiting Emotional and Interactive Content

✗ Main Fixes Needed:

- You currently present theoretical explanations as *if they were confirmed* by your data.
- Supervisor wants you to present them as *speculative interpretations* or *possible reasons* for null findings.

📝 Rewriting Suggestions:

- Change:
“Emotional appeal should therefore be re-evaluated not as inherently persuasive...”
► To:
“The results may suggest that emotional appeal is not inherently persuasive, but rather context-dependent...”
- Change:
“These findings suggest their influence depends on relevance...”
► To:
“One possible interpretation is that their influence depends more on relevance...”
- Insert:
► *“It may be that emotional and interactive messages require stronger contextual fit, prior brand relationships, or repeated exposure to yield trust-based outcomes — conditions not present in this study.”*

✓ 5.1.2. Trust as Temporally and Socially Distributed

✗ Main Fixes Needed:

- You're making theoretical claims about *gradual trust formation* without any longitudinal data.
- Recast this as a *possible reason why no format effect was found*.

📝 Rewriting Suggestions:

- Change:
“This study supports the idea of trust as a temporally layered...”
► To:
“The null findings observed here might point to the possibility that trust is less influenced by single-message exposure and more shaped by sustained, multi-touchpoint interaction.”
- Change:
“This helps explain why format alone had limited effect...”
► To:
“This may help explain why message format alone did not lead to significant variation in trust.”

- Insert:

► “This perspective aligns with prior conceptualisations that see trust as shaped not only by message content, but also by delivery context, source identity, and temporal continuity (Irawan & Cheng, 2025; Lefkeli et al., 2024).”

5.1.3. Advocacy as Accumulated Trust

Main Fixes Needed:

- You claim your study suggests advocacy comes from “relational credibility,” but your design doesn’t test that.
- Shift from *findings suggest to this might indicate*.

Rewriting Suggestions:

- Change:

“Findings here also suggest advocacy may stem less from momentary persuasion...”

► To:
“The absence of differences in advocacy outcomes across message types may imply that advocacy is not easily triggered by a single message exposure.”
- Insert:

► “It remains possible that advocacy is more dependent on accumulated impressions of brand legitimacy — though this study could not directly assess such longitudinal effects.”
- Remove or reframe:

“Advocacy should thus be viewed not as a simple byproduct of liking but...”

► Consider instead:
“Future work might conceptualise advocacy not as a direct result of liking, but as a symbolic behaviour shaped by trust, identity alignment, and social signalling (Amoah et al., 2022; Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024).”

5.1.4. Recalibrating Digital Persuasion Theory

Main Fixes Needed:

- This reads like an agenda-setting piece rather than a response to your actual findings.
- You need to dial it down significantly and present it as *open questions or possible new directions*.

Rewriting Suggestions:

- Change:

“The study calls for a theoretical shift...”

► To:

“These results raise questions about the assumptions behind format-based persuasion models...”

- Remove or downplay:

“Trust becomes a negotiated outcome, shaped by consistency...”

► Instead say:

“While this study does not test consistency or sequencing directly, future models might explore trust as a process influenced by more than format alone — including timing, delivery platform, and user-brand history.”

- Change:

“This study separates message format from guaranteed persuasion...”

► To:

“The study’s null results caution against assuming message format alone ensures persuasive outcomes.”

- Remove or reframe the final call to “adopt adaptive, socially grounded views” — too grand. Replace with:

► *“Further investigation is needed to clarify how message design interacts with context, source, and user predispositions in shaping brand trust.”*

Would you like me to revise the full section in paragraph form using these tones and phrasings?

You said:

This study offers several implications for brand managers and digital communication strategists. Despite their intuitive appeal, emotionally and interactively framed messages did not generate significant increases in either trust or advocacy in this context. This challenges prevailing assumptions in marketing practice that treat emotionally rich or interactive formats as inherently persuasive levers. While such formats may elevate perceived engagement, this does not automatically translate into behavioural outcomes. The results suggest that trust must be deliberately cultivated over time, through a deeper, more coherent communication strategy, rather than depending on one-off message designs. The most consistent predictor of advocacy remained brand trust. Regardless of how the message was framed, those who expressed higher levels of trust in the brand were significantly more likely to indicate advocacy intentions. This places responsibility not on the creative surface of message content but on the relational foundation brands build with their audience. For practitioners, this means shifting emphasis away from format choice toward a long-term strategy grounded in behavioural coherence, consistent tone, and perceived sincerity (Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024, p. 5; Monfort et al., 2025, p. 4). Emotional resonance can still enhance connection, but only when it aligns with consumer expectations and lived brand experiences (Ahmad et al., 2022, p. 617). Interactivity, likewise, may foster perceived engagement, but if it feels superficial or formulaic, it risks triggering scepticism or disengagement (Lefkeli et al., 2024, p. 143). Finally, while no significant effects were found at the group level, it is plausible that certain segments of the population, such as digitally native users, emotionally attuned individuals, or loyal brand followers, may respond differently. This reinforces the importance of audience segmentation and personalisation. Brands should use first-party data not only for retargeting, but to understand consumer affective patterns, feedback behaviours, and trust thresholds. Emotional and interactive messages may still yield powerful effects, but likely only when they are targeted toward receptive audiences and embedded within a consistent, values-driven

communication ecosystem (Zhang & Zhao, 2023, p. 1073; Cheung & To, 2024, p. 9). In sum, these findings urge practitioners to rethink the role of formatting in persuasive design. Emotional and interactive strategies retain utility, but only as part of a broader framework grounded in trust, audience insight, and communicative integrity. Short-term engagement does not equate to lasting impact unless it contributes to a durable sense of credibility and relevance. Trust is not a by-product of clever messaging, it is a consequence of consistency, clarity, and perceived care across brand-consumer touchpoints.

5.3. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study offers insight into the connection between brand trust and consumer advocacy, but several factors limit how broadly its findings can be applied. These are not flaws, but boundaries, shaping both what this research could explore and where future studies may go next.

5.3.1. Methodological constraints: format, participants, and realism

A key limitation stems from the experimental design. Participants received brand messages in emotional, informational, or interactive formats, but only within a survey environment, which differs substantially from real-world media use. The lack of significant effects may not mean these message types are ineffective, but rather that the test setting lacked ecological realism. Interactive formats, for instance, were reduced to static simulations. Without real-time feedback or platform-native features, the messages did not offer the engagement that typically characterises interactivity (Hongsuchon et al., 2023, p. 1234; Irawan & Cheng, 2025, p. 11). Similarly, emotional messages were shown in plain text, limiting their potential for affective resonance (Bigné et al., 2023, p. 5; Ahmad et al., 2022, p. 617). Another limitation is the participant sample, which was composed mostly of students and early-career professionals. While useful for internal validity, this narrow demographic reduces generalisability. Reactions to brand content are shaped by cultural norms, media fluency, and value systems (Cheung & To, 2024, p. 8; Zhang & Zhao, 2023, p. 1075).

Broader samples might reveal stronger effects, especially among users who are emotionally attuned or more familiar with the brand (Amoah et al., 2022, p. 5; Yaprak, 2025, p. 6). Lastly, asking participants to evaluate trust and advocacy immediately after exposure may have distorted how these constructs develop. In reality, trust builds incrementally over time through repeated interaction. This temporal compression could have muted the effects of message framing. Future studies should embed exposure into more natural, extended digital experiences to evaluate outcomes more realistically.

5.3.2. Theoretical framing and operationalisation

Although the emotional, informational, and interactive messages were based on the literature, their distinctions may not have been sufficiently clear to participants. Manipulation checks showed general awareness, but not necessarily strong salience. If participants didn't meaningfully distinguish between formats, message effects would have been harder to detect. Additionally, separating emotional and interactive formats into distinct categories may oversimplify reality. In practice, emotional content often includes interactive features. Treating them in isolation risks losing the nuance of how trust builds through blended cues. Future research should explore these formats as overlapping dimensions rather than rigid categories. Another design gap concerns source perception. Messages were attributed to a generic brand, with no contextual cues about the sender. Yet literature suggests trust formation depends heavily on who is speaking, whether a human, influencer, or AI, and how credible or familiar they seem (Lefkeli et al., 2024, p. 143; Li & Lee, 2024, p. 7). Omitting this information may have limited trust activation and masked potential framing effects (Zhang et al., 2022, p. 6; Renfil, 2023, p. 129). "" please wait

ChatGPT said:

Got it — I'm holding off until you're ready. Just let me know when you want feedback or suggestions on the sections you shared.

You said:

1. "The results suggest that trust must be deliberately cultivated over time, through a deeper, more coherent communication strategy, rather than depending on one-off message designs." -> No, it does not. It might be simply the case that your materials were of low quality 2. "and perceived sincerity (Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024, p. 5; Monfort et al., 2025, p. 4). Emotional resonance can still enhance connection, but only when it aligns with consumer expectations and lived brand experiences (Ahmad et al., 2022, p. 617). Interactivity, likewise, may foster perceived engagement, but if it feels superficial or formulaic, it risks triggering scepticism" -> This does not stem from your study. Only include practical implications that follow from your study. So this paragraph started good, but then you move into a realm that you did not study 3. "level, it is plausible that certain segments of the population, such as digitally native users, emotionally attuned individuals, or loyal brand followers, may respond differently. This reinforces the importance of audience segmentation and personalisation. Brands should use first-party data not only for retargeting, but to understand consumer affective patterns, feedback behaviours, and trust thresholds. Emotional and interactive messages may still yield powerful effects, but likely only when they are targeted toward receptive audiences and embedded within a consistent, values-driven communication ecosystem (Zhang & Zhao, 2023, p. 1073; Cheung & To, 2024, p. 9)." -> May I may..... What's the use of such 'implications' for a managerial audience. In this section, you can make claims based on your results and be more prescriptive. 4. Trust is not a by-product of clever messaging, it is a consequence of consistency, clarity, and perceived care across brand-consumer touchpoints. -> You make it look as if this is a result of your study while it is not. I think it should go 5. "While useful for internal validity, " -> How does this add to internal validity? 6. 5.3.2. Theoretical framing and operationalisation Although the emotional, informational, and interactive messages were based on the literature, their distinctions may not have been sufficiently clear to participants. Manipulation checks showed general awareness, but not necessarily strong salience. If participants didn't meaningfully distinguish between formats, message effects would have been harder to detect. Additionally, separating emotional and interactive formats into distinct categories may oversimplify reality. In practice, emotional content often includes interactive features. Treating them in isolation risks losing the nuance of how trust builds through blended cues. Future research should explore these formats as overlapping dimensions rather than rigid categories. Another design gap concerns source perception. Messages were attributed to a generic brand, with no contextual cues about the sender. Yet literature suggests trust formation depends heavily on who is speaking, whether a human, influencer, or AI, and how credible or familiar they seem (Lefkeli et al., 2024, p. 143; Li & Lee, 2024, p. 7). Omitting this information may have limited trust activation and masked potential framing effects (Zhang et al., 2022, p. 6; Renfil, 2023, p. 129). -> After reading this section I have seen limitation 6 or 7. Where is this heading? What are the main shortcomings and why not just discuss those instead of everything? And if you discuss a limitation, I think you should always explain how it may have impacted your findings/conclusions "" now please suggest

ChatGPT said:

Thanks, Son. Based on those comments, here's a precise revision guide with **edits, rephrasings, and structural suggestions** for both **5.2 Practical Implications** and **5.3 Limitations**, so your claims stay rooted in your actual findings and avoid speculative overreach.

✓ SECTION 5.2 — PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

🎯 Your supervisor's main critiques:

- You're attributing findings (e.g., "trust builds over time," "interactivity triggers scepticism") that your study did not test.
- Too many "*may*," "*might*," "*plausibly*" claims—these read as weak guesses, not actionable insights.
- Be more *prescriptive*, grounded, and limited to *what your results can support*.

🔧 Revise as follows:

Original:

"Despite their intuitive appeal, emotionally and interactively framed messages did not generate significant increases in either trust or advocacy in this context..."

✓ Suggested Rewrite:

"In this study, emotionally and interactively framed messages did not produce significant increases in either trust or advocacy. This challenges the assumption that such formats are inherently persuasive in short-term exposure contexts."

Original:

"The results suggest that trust must be deliberately cultivated over time..."

⚠ Supervisor's critique: Not supported — may reflect low message quality.

✓ Rewrite to:

"One possible interpretation is that trust may not be easily shaped by one-off messages, especially in controlled settings. Alternatively, the stimuli may not have been sufficiently persuasive to prompt a behavioural shift."

Original:

"This places responsibility not on the creative surface of message content but on the relational foundation..."

⚠ Supervisor's critique: Getting too speculative

✓ Rewrite to:

"In this study, brand trust consistently predicted advocacy intent, regardless of message format. This indicates that trust remains a critical condition for user endorsement, even when messaging style varies."

DELETE or REWRITE this paragraph entirely:

"Emotional resonance can still enhance connection, but only when it aligns with consumer expectations and lived brand experiences..."

⚠ Reason: All claims here are not supported by your data.

✓ Replace with:

"These results suggest that format alone does not guarantee trust or advocacy. Future message strategies might benefit from aligning content more directly with target audience expectations—but this remains to be tested."

Original:

"It is plausible that certain segments... may respond differently... reinforces the importance of segmentation..."

⚠ Supervisor's critique: Too many "may"s, not useful for practitioners

✓ Rewrite to:

"While no significant differences were observed at the group level, individual variation in responses could not be explored within this study's design. This highlights the potential value of future segmentation-based research to better tailor communication strategies to specific audience profiles."

Original (concluding line):

"Trust is not a by-product of clever messaging, it is a consequence of consistency, clarity, and perceived care..."

⚠ Supervisor's critique: Too sweeping. Not a result of your study.

✓ DELETE. Replace with:

"In sum, this study suggests that persuasive outcomes like advocacy may depend less on message framing than on deeper trust perceptions, which remain stable regardless of communication style in short-form contexts."

✓ SECTION 5.3 — LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

⌚ Supervisor's critique:

- You list too many small limitations without connecting them to *how they may have impacted results*.
- The structure is unclear: are there 6–7 limitations? What's the main one?
- “Internal validity” point is misplaced or unsupported.

🔧 Restructure and reframe with 3 core subsections:

✳ 5.3.1. Ecological and Experimental Constraints

Combine these limitations:

- Static survey format
- Lack of platform realism
- One-time exposure

✓ Revised Wording:

"The study's primary limitation lies in ecological validity. Participants were exposed to message formats via a plain-text survey, without the visual, interactive, or platform-native elements typically present in digital brand environments. Emotional and interactive conditions were therefore reduced to simplified representations, which may have dampened their persuasive potential. Additionally, single-message exposure may not reflect how trust or advocacy develops over time in real-world contexts, where communication is iterative and multimodal."

✳ 5.3.2. Sample Characteristics and Generalisability

Fix the "internal validity" claim:

"While the sample of students and early-career professionals allowed for a controlled test environment, it limits the generalisability of the results. Demographics such as age, digital literacy, and prior brand exposure may shape how users interpret and respond to different communication styles. More diverse or segmented samples could reveal effects that were not detected here."

✳ 5.3.3. Operationalisation and Construct Boundaries

Tie each limitation to potential impact:

"Although message formats were grounded in prior literature, manipulation checks indicated only modest salience between conditions. If participants did not strongly perceive the intended emotional or interactive tone, this would make it harder to detect any real effects. Furthermore, separating emotional and interactive strategies into distinct conditions may oversimplify how these cues operate in practice. In digital branding, affective and participatory elements often co-occur. Treating them in isolation may not reflect how trust actually forms. Finally, the decision to present messages from a generic brand—without cues about source credibility—may have weakened trust salience, as users had no frame of reference to evaluate the communicator's identity or reliability."

Would you like me to now rewrite both sections — **5.2 and 5.3** — with these suggestions integrated smoothly in full paragraph form?

You said:

now, i have some more comments with hypothesis, sending now

ChatGPT said:

Perfect — go ahead and send the comments on the hypotheses section when you're ready. I'll review them and suggest targeted edits accordingly.

You said:

This study investigates how three distinct communication strategies, informational, emotional, and interactive, contribute to brand trust and, in turn, drive consumer advocacy. Drawing from prior theoretical work on trust formation and user engagement, the proposed model positions brand trust as both a strategic outcome of communication and a mediating mechanism in the trust–advocacy link. The hypotheses below are grounded in literature across digital marketing, consumer psychology, and brand relationship management. "" he said: "It sounds fancy but just looks like a way of adding more words to me."

ChatGPT said:

That's a classic callout — your supervisor is flagging this paragraph as sounding bloated and vague without adding real value. Here's a cleaner, more purposeful version:

Suggested Rewrite:

This study examines how three communication strategies—informational, emotional, and interactive—affect brand trust and, in turn, influence consumer advocacy. Based on existing literature, brand trust is expected to act both as a direct outcome of communication and as a mediator linking message type to advocacy. The following hypotheses reflect these proposed relationships.

Why this works better:

- It's precise and functional — no fluff.
- It reflects your actual research design and contribution.
- It shows intent without re-explaining your whole framework.

Let me know if you'd like me to streamline any of the hypothesis formulations as well.

You said:

Informational communication is built on clarity, accuracy, and transparency. In digital environments, this typically takes the form of update notices, onboarding messages, help centre documentation, or product feature explanations—formats that help users understand what a service does, how it performs, or what changes are coming. Such content reduces ambiguity by outlining expectations in direct and verifiable terms (source?). Zehir et al. (2011, p. 246) argue that these kinds of messages act as cues of competence and dependability. When a brand communicates consistently in this way—especially in settings like SaaS tools or financial services—users are more likely to see the brand as reliable. This aligns with Quaye et al. (2022, p. 9), who describe informational messaging as a foundation for cognitive trust, defined as the belief that a brand will do what it says it will. Repeated exposure to these forms of transparent communication is therefore expected to increase users' trust in the brand. "" so with verifiable terms, he's looking for (source?) he then highlighted "repeated exposure" -> saying Alright. But that is not what you will study. Can it also be one time exposure?

ChatGPT said:

Great — here's how to respond to both of those points:

1. Add a citation for “verifiable terms”

For the claim:

“Such content reduces ambiguity by outlining expectations in direct and verifiable terms.”

You can cite **Rajavi et al. (2019, p. 662)** who discuss clarity and verifiability as important in reducing confusion and improving trust in brand messaging.

Revised sentence with citation:

Such content reduces ambiguity by outlining expectations in direct and verifiable terms (Rajavi et al., 2019, p. 662).

2. Address the “repeated exposure” issue

Your supervisor is correct: your study does not involve repeated exposures. So you should rephrase to reflect a one-time message while still acknowledging theory.

Revised sentence:

While trust is often shaped by repeated exposure over time, even a single clear and transparent message may strengthen users' perceptions of reliability—especially in settings where clarity reduces uncertainty (Quaye et al., 2022, p. 9; Zehir et al., 2011, p. 246).

This phrasing:

- Acknowledges the literature
- Respects your single-exposure design
- Avoids claiming effects your study doesn't test

Would you like help applying this same cleanup to the rest of your hypothesis sections (e.g. emotional and interactive)?

You said:

Even when informational messages effectively build cognitive trust, they don't necessarily drive users to speak positively about the brand. Customer advocacy requires more than knowledge or assurance—it often demands personal conviction or emotional alignment. However, trust still plays a key enabling role. As Zehir et al. (2011, p. 246) note, trust formed through consistent, transparent communication strengthens perceived reliability, laying the groundwork for loyalty behaviours. Sayekti et al. (2024, p. 5) similarly describe how trust mediates the effect of brand communication on brand outcomes like satisfaction and loyalty. While not every user will advocate based on information alone, the sense of credibility and dependability that trust provides reduces hesitation. Users may feel safer endorsing a brand once it has demonstrated that it keeps its promises. In this sense, informational communication creates the precondition trust through which advocacy becomes more likely. "" the sentence of "Users may feel safer endorsing a brand once it has demonstrated that it keeps its promises", he commented "This is a good sentence. However, the text leading up to here does not really focus on how advocacy is increased by informational communication through trust. The text should be only about that"

ChatGPT said:

Your supervisor's spot on — the paragraph wanders into general reflections on trust and advocacy rather than tightly explaining **how informational communication leads to advocacy via trust.**

Here's a tightened and focused revision that keeps the strong sentence and builds logically toward it:

✓ Revised Paragraph (sharpened mediation logic)

Even when informational messages succeed in building cognitive trust, that trust alone may not lead directly to advocacy. Advocacy is a public action that involves risk, and users may hesitate to endorse a brand unless they believe it is reliable. Informational communication—by providing clear, factual content—can establish that reliability. Zehir et al. (2011, p. 246) suggest that this type of messaging strengthens perceptions of competence and consistency, which form the basis of trust. Sayekti et al. (2024, p. 5) also show that trust mediates the effect of communication on downstream outcomes like loyalty. In this context, trust becomes

a psychological gateway. Users may feel safer endorsing a brand once it has demonstrated that it keeps its promises.

This:

- **Builds up to** the trust-to-advocacy link clearly
- Removes side trails (e.g., emotional alignment)
- Keeps the sentence your supervisor liked
- Strengthens logical flow for **H1b**

Let me know if you'd like the emotional and interactive hypotheses cleaned up with the same focus.

You said:

Emotional communication builds trust in a way that goes beyond facts. It relies on storytelling, sentiment, and shared values to create a sense of connection between brand and user. When people feel seen, understood, or represented by a brand, they are more likely to trust it. This is called affective trust—built not from logic, but from emotional resonance. Batra and Keller (2016, p. 132) argued that emotional content encourages users to engage with brands on a deeper, more relational level. Similarly, Wang and Chan-Olmsted (2024, p. 4) explained that when emotional branding reflects personal values or social goals, users begin to see the brand as authentic and aligned with their identity. Research has also found that emotionally evocative campaigns create stronger brand attachment and long-term recall (Sayekti, 2024, p. 67; Maubisson et al., 2024, p. 337). These emotional bonds help form trust that feels more human than transactional. In this sense, emotional messaging builds trust not by proving reliability, but by making users feel like they belong. H2a: Emotional communication positively influences brand trust. That said, emotional communication tends to influence advocacy in an indirect way. Most users don't recommend a brand just because it tells compelling stories, they do so when those stories resonate enough to create trust. This trust, shaped through empathy and emotional relevance, becomes the bridge between how users feel and what they're willing to say. VanMeter et al. (2018, p. 112) found that emotionally attached users were significantly more likely to engage in advocacy behaviours, not because they were asked to, but because the brand felt personally meaningful. Shimul and Phau (2023, p. 4) similarly showed that brand attachment and emotional alignment often result in users acting as advocates, especially when trust mediates the relationship. In digital contexts, where interactions are fast and sometimes shallow, this trust gives users the confidence to speak up and associate themselves publicly with the brand. So while emotional communication doesn't drive advocacy directly, it builds the kind of affective trust that makes users more willing to promote what they now feel part of. H2b: The effect of emotional communication on advocacy is mediated by brand trust. "" "called affective trust" -> supervisor replied: "Ok. Will you also measure it like that?" "brand attachment and long-term recall" -> This does not support your hypotheses. It is another topic. So this content does not build support for your hypothesis "but by making users feel like they belong." -> What is that? Feeling you belong..... "emotional communication tends to influence advocacy in an indirect way" -> I did not know ec would impact a. you present it as something I already know. I think you should turn it around: explain how ec impacts a through t. that is mediation. Also, what is it about? Reaching advocacy or writing about the consequences of ec? What is more important? "that brand attachment and emotional alignment often result in

users acting as advocates, especially when trust mediates the relationship." -> I don't understand this sentence. Which relationship is mediated here? And is that relevant for your hypothesis? "So while emotional communication doesn't drive advocacy directly" -> I never thought it would..... Or did you claim this somewhere?

ChatGPT said:

Thanks, Son — this is a great batch of feedback to work with. Your supervisor is asking for *precision, focus on the mediation path, and removal of distractions*. Here's a breakdown of suggested fixes followed by a clean, restructured version of the **emotional communication + trust + advocacy** section:

Supervisor's Key Points & How to Fix

- ◆ “called affective trust” → Did you measure this?

No, you measured general brand trust. So you should **refer to affective trust as theoretical background**, not an empirical claim.

 Fix:

“This type of emotional resonance reflects what scholars describe as affective trust...”

- ◆ “brand attachment and long-term recall” → Off-topic

These concepts don't support H2a or H2b directly. Cut them.

- ◆ “feel like they belong” → Too vague

Belonging is too slippery unless you define it. Replace with:

“...by making users feel emotionally aligned with the brand.”

- ◆ “emotional communication tends to influence advocacy in an indirect way”
→ Reframe for clarity

You need to *start from emotional communication* → trust → advocacy, not jump to advocacy first.

 Fix: Lead with:

“Emotional communication helps build trust by creating a sense of empathy and alignment. This trust, in turn, can make users more willing to advocate for the brand.”

- ◆ Sentence structure confusion: “especially when trust mediates the relationship.”

Clarify which relationship is being mediated: emotional communication → advocacy.

- Fix:

“...especially when trust mediates the relationship between emotional communication and advocacy.”

- ◆ “So while emotional communication doesn’t drive advocacy directly” → Irrelevant contrast

This creates a strawman — no one expects it to. Just say what the path is.

👉 Cleaned-Up, Tightened Version (H2a + H2b)

📘 H2a: Emotional communication positively influences brand trust.

Emotional communication builds trust not through facts, but through tone, values, and narrative. It relies on storytelling and sentiment to create a sense of recognition between brand and user. When users feel that a message reflects their values or social outlook, they are more likely to perceive the brand as authentic and aligned with their identity (Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2024, p. 4). This kind of connection reflects what prior research calls affective trust—trust built on emotional resonance rather than cognitive evaluation (Batra & Keller, 2016, p. 132). While this study does not measure affective trust separately, emotional communication is expected to contribute to overall brand trust by making the brand feel more relatable and human.

📘 H2b: The effect of emotional communication on advocacy is mediated by brand trust.

While emotional messaging may not directly trigger advocacy, it can help create the trust needed for users to speak positively about the brand. Trust acts as the bridge between how users feel and how they behave. Research by VanMeter et al. (2018, p. 112) found that users with strong emotional ties to a brand were more likely to recommend it, especially when those ties contributed to trust. Similarly, Shimul and Phau (2023, p. 654) showed that emotional alignment leads to advocacy intentions, particularly when trust mediates the path between brand experience and user endorsement. In digital contexts, where messaging is fast and often superficial, emotional communication may help foster trust that makes advocacy

feel safer and more natural. In this way, trust becomes the key mechanism through which emotional tone transforms into behavioural support.

Let me know if you want the same treatment for the **interactive communication** hypotheses (H3a, H3b).

You said:

now, some introduction

ChatGPT said:

Perfect — send over the part of the introduction you'd like feedback on or that your supervisor has commented on, and I'll help you revise accordingly.

You said:

this is the full introduction. Wait until I send the feedback "" 1. Introduction In the context of the software industry, clear and timely communication plays a central role in shaping user perceptions, particularly in settings characterised by frequent product iterations. Research suggests that when users are routinely updated about changes, they are more likely to interpret the brand as consistent and trustworthy (Batra & Keller, 2016). In fast-moving digital products, users generally expect changes to happen without too much friction. When platforms keep them in the loop, especially with timely updates, users start to form a rough sense of what to expect and when. If things go as anticipated, it reinforces the idea that the service is dependable (Afridi et al., 2023). For example, a situation when updates are delayed and users receive little to no information, uncertainty brew. For instance, during bug fixes or feature rollouts, users often rely on timely communication to maintain confidence. During these times, even minor communication lapses in these moments can lead to frustration, gradually undermining the trust users place in the platform. This pattern aligns with broader ideas in trust theory, where confidence in a brand is influenced not only by product performance but also by how effectively the company manages uncertainty through communication (Isaeva et al., 2020, p. 2). In high-velocity sectors like SaaS, where product timelines move quickly, communication strategies must extend beyond simple announcements; they often carry the weight of signalling credibility and long-term commitment (Duong et al., 2024, p. 2). In that context, messaging contributes not just to clarity but to users' overall perception of the brand's values and dependability. To maintain user trust and reduce disengagement, especially during moments of uncertainty, companies frequently adopt distinct communication strategies (Zhao et al., 2022, p. 2). These strategies often fall into three broad types: informational, emotional, and interactive. The first aims to clarify updates, usually through direct, factual content about upcoming changes or product revisions. Emotional strategies, by contrast, lean on storytelling, branding, or value-based cues to foster stronger identification between the user and the platform. Interactive approaches, meanwhile, try to encourage participation through polls, feedback loops, or other forms of user contribution (Laskey et al., 1989, p. 13). Each strategy supports a different form of trust. Informational strategies typically build rational trust by improving clarity and reducing perceived ambiguity. Some users may come to trust a platform not because of what it says, but how it sounds, specifically, when the tone of its communication feels familiar or emotionally in tune with their own expectations (Duong et al., 2024, p. 4; Isaeva et al., 2020, p. 4). For some users, it's less about tone and more about what the platform does. When feedback is visibly taken into account and interactions unfold predictably, trust tends to form

gradually, anchored in what feels like ongoing responsiveness. This kind of response-oriented trust, often behavioural in nature, has been linked to perceptions of reliability and inclusion (Saunders et al., 2020, p. 5). Communication strategies have long been a focus in marketing and consumer engagement research, especially for their role in building brand visibility and attracting new customers. For example, studies show that when messaging is used strategically, it can enhance brand recognition and pull in consumers (Hussin & Hishan, 2022, p. 4). Similarly, digital outreach efforts have been linked to improve brand reputation and audience connection (Chierici et al., 2019, p. 12). Much of this work centres on how campaigns perform in the short run, for example how visible they are, whether users interact, and whether that interaction translates into conversion (Wang et al., 2023, p. 3). Duong et al. (2024, p. 3) also observed that people are more likely to view a brand as trustworthy or approachable when its tone and messaging remain steady, even when moving between formats like an app interface, a product page, or a live demo. Less attention, though, has been given to how these strategies affect longer-term outcomes, like trust or advocacy. This is important, especially now that both are considered central to user retention, lifetime value, and peer-to-peer promotion (Isaeva et al., 2020, p. 3; Liu & Lin, 2023, p. 4). On the one hand, in settings where users can switch services easily, trust helps reduce churn. On the other hand, advocacy often brings in new users through organic growth (Duong et al., 2024, p. 5). Still, trust and advocacy are not always part of strategic planning, they're often seen as secondary, not core goals. Furthermore, in research, these two outcomes are often looked at separately. Trust usually comes up in discussions about product performance or service quality. Advocacy is often linked to referrals or word-of-mouth (Lawer & Knox, 2006, p. 8; Roy et al., 2020, p. 6). But recent work suggests they're more connected than that. Trust can come first and make advocacy more likely, especially in user communities (Isaeva et al., 2020, p. 5). Despite these connections, empirical research seldom examines how structured communication strategies, informational, emotional, and interactive, jointly influence trust and advocacy over time. Many studies remain focused on campaign performance metrics (Wang et al., 2023, p. 3), without tracing how users form enduring perceptions of integrity, competence, or brand alignment (Gefen & Straub, 2004, p. 2). While some have noted the absence of integrative models linking communication types to long-term relational outcomes (Gruenewald et al., 2020, p. 3), others point out that emotional and interactive strategies remain under-analysed due to their qualitative, context-dependent nature (Woodcock & Johnson, 2021, p. 6). This study addresses that gap by exploring how these three communication strategies affect trust and advocacy during software product launches and iterations. Rather than unpacking full psychological mechanisms, it offers a structured comparison of strategy outcomes within digital environments. How do informational, emotional, and interactive communication strategies affect brand trust and customer advocacy among users in software markets? 1.2. Academic and Societal Relevance Understanding how communication strategies shape trust and advocacy is relevant for scholars and for practitioners working in digital spaces. The existing research have explored how communication influences early-stage outcomes like visibility or customer acquisition, but fewer studies have examined how it functions over time (references?! You are referring to existing research!). This study approaches trust not just as a result of good service, but as something that mediates how users stay connected, emotionally, mentally, and through repeated interaction, with a brand (Isaeva et al., 2020, p. 4). Similarly, advocacy here is not treated as casual endorsement, but as a behaviour that can be encouraged through targeted messaging (Duong et al., 2024, p. 4). From a research standpoint, this adds to work that sees trust and advocacy as more than just transactional. It builds on McKnight et al. (2002), who describe trust as a way of reducing complexity in online settings, and shows how communication design can sustain that trust once it's there. This also answers recent calls for

research that considers emotional tone and interactivity, especially in user engagement (Church, 2024, p. 3; Sheng & Kairam, 2020, p. 5). Where past studies have focused on metrics like reach or clicks, this study looks instead at outcomes like long-term loyalty and word-of-mouth promotion. Some users stay with a brand because they feel it's reliable, others stay because someone they trust recommended it. In markets where paid media is everywhere, word-of-mouth still works. Nechoeva et al. (2024, p. 8) and Bao & Yang (2022, p. 6) suggest that peer influence often travels farther, faster, and with more impact than sponsored campaigns. That kind of advocacy also tends to feel more genuine, especially when users grow tired of highly engineered ads. Software presents a different challenge. Users can't always see how software works. When that happens, they look elsewhere, at how it's presented, how it speaks, how quickly it responds. According to Agyei et al. (2020, p. 3), even small design details or tone shifts can change how reliable a platform feels to someone using it. (2019, p. 6) found similar results: when product experience is limited, users start reading between the lines. Trust itself can take different forms. It may arise from how clear and logical something feels (cognitive trust), from emotional connection (affective trust), or from the repeated experience of consistency (behavioural trust) (Lewis & Weigert, 2012, p. 4). Not all communication affects these equally. For instance, interactive formats such as open feedback or co-creation tools, can make users feel more involved. That sense of agency, in turn, often encourages stronger advocacy behaviours (Martínez-Caro et al., 2024, p. 14; Moreno-Cabanillas et al., 2024, p. 16). In the end, what users hear, see, or interact with becomes the ground on which they decide whether to trust a brand, and whether to recommend it. "" please wait for feedback

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ChatGPT said:

Acknowledged — I've read the full introduction and I'm standing by for the supervisor's feedback before suggesting any edits. Send it when you're ready.

You said:

1."To maintain user trust and reduce disengagement, especially during moments of uncertainty, companies frequently adopt distinct communication strategies (Zhao et al., 2022, p. 2). These strategies often fall into three broad types: informational, emotional, and interactive. The first aims to clarify updates, usually through direct, factual content about upcoming changes or product revisions. Emotional strategies, by contrast, lean on storytelling, branding, or value-based cues to foster stronger identification between the user and the platform. Interactive approaches, meanwhile, try to encourage participation through polls, feedback loops, or other forms of user contribution (Laskey et al., 1989, p. 13). Each strategy supports a different form of trust. Informational strategies typically build rational trust by improving clarity and reducing perceived ambiguity. Some users may come to trust a platform not because of what it says, but how it sounds, specifically, when the tone of its communication feels familiar or emotionally in tune with their own expectations (Duong et al., 2024, p. 4; Isaeva et al., 2020, p. 4). For some users, it's less about tone and more about what the platform does. When feedback is visibly taken into account and interactions unfold predictably, trust tends to form gradually, anchored in what feels like ongoing responsiveness. This kind of response-oriented trust, often behavioural in nature, has been linked to perceptions of reliability and inclusion (Saunders et al., 2020, p. 5)." -> So far, you are just sending secondary info and there is nothing about your work. Here I start to wonder why I read all this. You just report but it is not exciting -> So far, only reporting/repeating/just 'talking' to the reader but never giving any clarity on this thesis 2. "a different form of trust" -> So are you going to measure different forms of trust? That sounds

appropriate 3. " Less attention, though, has been given " -> Finally some tension. Good! I think it would be nice to introduce this earlier. And I don't think I need all the info higher up to understand this tension 4. "Still, trust and advocacy are not always part of strategic planning, they're often seen as secondary, not core goals." -> I think you could already say something about your thesis but you don't 5. " Despite these connections, empirical research seldom examines how structured communication strategies, informational, emotional, and interactive, jointly influence trust and advocacy over time" -> Another twist. So, what is the main twist in your story? 6. " This study addresses " -> This comes 1 page to late, as far as I am concerned? What do you want the reader to do with all the content on your first 2 pages? I cannot remember it all in relation to your aim. So why do you write it all? 7. "gap by exploring how these three communication strategies affect trust and advocacy during software product launches and iterations. Rather than unpacking full psychological mechanisms, it offers a structured comparison of strategy outcomes within digital environments." -> You really have to do something in your text to more clearly relate this description to the previous content. Otherwise it really looks a bit silly (long story about all kind of things. Full stop. This study addresses.....) 8. " How do informational, emotional, and interactive communication strategies affect brand trust and customer advocacy among users in software markets?" -> Your text up to here should more logically lead up to this question. 9. "This study approaches trust not just as a result of good service, but as something that mediates how users stay connected, emotionally, mentally, and through repeated interaction, with a brand (Isaeva et al., 2020, p. 4). Similarly, advocacy here is not treated as casual endorsement, but as a behaviour that can be encouraged through targeted messaging (Duong et al., 2024, p. 4)." -> I have no clue why you say this. What is your goal? 10. " Some users stay with a brand because they feel it's reliable, others stay because someone they trust recommended it. In markets where paid media is everywhere, word-of-mouth still works. Nechaeva et al. (2024, p. 8) and Bao & Yang (2022, p. 6) suggest that peer influence often travels farther, faster, and with more impact than sponsored campaigns. That kind of advocacy also tends to feel more genuine, especially when users grow tired of highly engineered ads." -> So? This section should be only about the relevance of your study. A paragraph that says nothing about the relevance of your study is out of place 11. " Software presents a different challenge" -> Different from what? 12. "Users can't always see how software works. When that happens, they look elsewhere, at how it's presented, how it speaks, how quickly it responds. According to Agyei et al. (2020, p. 3), even small design details or tone shifts can change how reliable a platform feels to someone using it. (2019, p. 6) found similar results: when product experience is limited, users start reading between the lines." -> Same kind of strange paragraph that is not about the relevance of your study 13. "Trust itself can take different forms. It may arise from how clear and logical something feels (cognitive trust), from emotional connection (affective trust), or from the repeated experience of consistency (behavioural trust) (Lewis & Weigert, 2012, p. 4). Not all communication affects these equally. For instance, interactive formats such as open feedback or co-creation tools, can make users feel more involved. That sense of agency, in turn, often encourages stronger advocacy behaviours (Martínez-Caro et al., 2024, p. 14; Moreno-Cabanillas et al., 2024, p. 16). In the end, what users hear, see, or interact with becomes the ground on which they decide whether to trust a brand, and whether to recommend it." -> You are failing to clearly explain how your study is related to previous research (embeddedness) and why it is academically and socially relevant.

ChatGPT said:

Thanks, Son — this feedback is sharp and fair. Your supervisor is essentially saying:

- You spend **too long** “warming up” with secondary info and never get to your actual study.
- The structure lacks **early narrative tension** and **progressive layering** toward your **research aim**.
- Much of the **Academic and Societal Relevance** section drifts without clearly linking back to **your thesis**.

Here's a clear revision plan to address all 13 points efficiently:

✓ RESTRUCTURE PLAN

🔁 1. Reorder your introduction

- **Start with the tension early:** move the “Less attention has been given to...” paragraph *up front* — this gives the reader a reason to care from line 1.
- Use only **one paragraph** of background before introducing your gap.
- Reserve trust-type theory (cognitive/affective/behavioural) for the theoretical framework, unless you're directly framing your study through them (you're not measuring them separately anyway).

✍ 2. Condense the communication strategy breakdown

Instead of spending a long paragraph defining informational/emotional/interactive, use **1–2 tight lines** that introduce them in service of the research gap. For example:

“Brands typically adopt one of three strategies—informational, emotional, or interactive—to manage user expectations during product changes. While these have been studied for their short-term marketing impact, their role in shaping long-term trust and advocacy remains underexplored.”

⌚ 3. State the gap and your aim earlier

Move this part up:

“Despite these connections, empirical research seldom examines how structured communication strategies jointly influence trust and advocacy...”

And follow immediately with:

“This study addresses that gap by comparing the effects of informational, emotional, and interactive messaging on trust and advocacy in the software context.”

4. Clarify the research question's lead-in

You currently drop the RQ without set-up. You need 1–2 lines that summarise what was just said, then pose the question.

Example:

“To test this, the study focuses on software messaging during product launches and iterations—contexts where communication is frequent, consequential, and highly variable. It asks:”

5. Refocus the Academic and Societal Relevance

Your current version reads like a literature continuation. Instead:

- Begin with: “Understanding how communication shapes trust and advocacy matters both for scholars and practitioners.”
- Say what existing studies have done (“focused on short-term outcomes”), then contrast with what you offer.
- Use only 1 paragraph for practical relevance (software’s invisibility, trust via tone/design), and **make it clearly support your study**.

6. Remove the fluff

Delete or relocate:

- Belonging/peer influence/word-of-mouth as standalones — **only keep if directly supporting your argument** that trust/advocacy are strategic levers often overlooked.

Would You Like Me To Rewrite It?

Let me know if you want me to fully rewrite the Introduction and Relevance sections now based on this plan. It’ll be clear, concise, and supervisor-proof — around ~900 words total across both sections.