

Section C – Business Management

The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Customer Loyalty towards Clothing Stores

G Kodippili¹, M.T.N Jayawickrama¹, O.W.D.Y Yugandari¹, S.D.H Pamudini¹, H.M.U.S.R. Samarasinghe^{1*}

¹*Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology,*

**Corresponding Author: udanee.s@sliit.lk*

Abstract: Social Media has considerably affected to every person as well as every organization that no one cannot simply ignore. It has been a runaway success all over the world in every industry, including the Apparel, Fashion Retailers therefore it considers as an essential marketing tool. In the Sri Lankan context, the use of Social Media has not reached an agreeable phase even though Apparel, Fashion is one of the largest industries in the country and with the widespread of internet and customers having increased access to the internet, there is an opportunity for the Apparel Fashion Retailers to create and keep up strong relationship with customers where loyalty emerges. In this context, the purpose of this study is to explain how the social media marketing influence on customer loyalty towards clothing stores. The information is useful to the Sri Lankan Apparel, Fashion retailers to adjust the current social media marketing practices.

Keywords— Apparel, Customer Loyalty, Fashion Retailers Social Media-Marketing

I. INTRODUCTION

In the present business context companies have considered customers are the biggest asset, where in the past generating a profit was the main priority. Now most organizations have understand that retaining a satisfied customer is one of the most effective ways of making profits, this is where the concept of “Customer Loyalty” comes in. Retaining a customer is less expensive than acquiring a new customer and not only loyal customers will ensure sales they are also likely to purchase supplementary products and services as well because they are more welcoming of the brand (Auth, 2013). This is really important to an industry like clothing or fashion because it is a very competitive industry; this is why most clothing stores are turning to loyalty programs and customers retention programs (McEachern, 2014). One of the cost-effective ways of doing this is the use of social media marketing.

As social media is becoming more and more mainstream the use of sites like Facebook and Twitter for marketing has almost blown-up. As more shoppers are using social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn) and rely on them for marketing, shopping decisions, promotion through these media has become important” (Modi, et al., 2015). Social media sites such as

Facebook are better than other advertising avenues because it stores information on all its users thus ensuring marketing reaches a retailer’s specific target market (Graham, et al., 2011). Social media sites are a great stage for retailers to create an experience and retailers can use information stored on social media sites to improve user experience with their brand.

Consumer loyalty is the primary goal of the customer relationship management (Randeni & Wanninayake, 2011). Loyal customers do not only buy more products more constantly they also do not consider alternatives or competitors when making purchases, so each interaction the retailer have with their customers provides the opportunity to strengthen the satisfaction they have experienced with previous interactions, thus solidifying their loyalty to the store. This is where social media provides a platform to the clothing stores to develop a strong customer loyalty program a social media serves as a venue for conversation, retailers have an unparalleled opportunity to support and assist customers, thus reinforcing customer loyalty.

A. Problem statement

As seen all over the world, almost every organization getting used to using social media to reach and keep their customers. But, the Apparel fashion retailers in Sri Lanka seem to lag behind comparable to the rest of the world, although the number of social media users is high in the country. Social media can capture a potential range of customers as well increased revenues. Therefore, it is important that Apparel Retailers in Sri Lanka also venture into this area to reach out to their customers. So the problem for the research is to look at how Social media marketing influence on customer loyalty which gives more benefits to any organization and not spend resources on extra promotional activities. So to achieve that the researcher have developed five objectives as follows,

- To describe the present level of customers' participation in social media marketing practices in the clothing stores in Sri Lanka.

- To measure the customer loyalty towards clothing stores.
- To explain the relationship between social media marketing on customer loyalty towards clothing stores.
- To provide suggestions to the management to improve the current social media marketing practises.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media is a phrase that is being tossed around a lot these days, but it can sometimes be difficult to answer the question of what is social media; well social media is a concept that has been evolved in the modernized era (Winkleblack, 2011). In this day both the young and the aged like to communicate with each other more frequently by using variety of methods. Apart from the normal gatherings and socializing people also communicate using mobile devices and build social networks in virtual world (Brown, Harvey, 2006). The medium that people use to do this is called social media. To give a more elaborate answer "Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration" (Niles, 2014) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Websites and applications dedicated to forums, micro blogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of social media (Niles, 2014), and these sits belongs to few types of Social Media categories (Ekanayake, 2015).

- Social networks (Facebook, Twiter, Google+)
- Bookmarking sites (StumbleUpon is a popular example of a bookmarking site)
- Social news (example of a social news site is Reddit)
- Media sharing (YouTube is the most well-known media sharing site in the world)
- Microblogging (most commonly used microblogging website is Twitter)
- Blog comments and forums

B. Social Media in Businesses

Business world has changed drastically with the use of modern technologies that are available today (Ritter, 2014). Arguably one of the biggest changes that have occurred is the development of communication (Fagan, 2015). As an example even something as recent as the fax machine is all but extinct. Sure faxes are still being sent and received, but the vast majority of the time they are routed through a computer system (Fagan, 2015). One such big improvement is the emergence of social media. Sharing content with thousands of followers at once is not the only benefit of social media for business; businesses all over the world have been discovering the ways social media can contribute to success and growth in all areas of their companies (Fagan, 2015).

C. Social Commerce Constructs

The next generation of online business will be based on creating communities to attract and retain new and current customers (Fernando & Samarasinghe, 2014). So it is important to business in this generation to have a business model that will address this new social commerce (Mahmood, 2013). Most researchers have found that most consumers in this generation are more interested in other people's recommendations rather than merely vendor generated product information (Mahmood , 2013).

• Forums & Communities

People can be motivated to give out valuable information to the group by expecting to receive useful help in return (Hall & Graham, 2004) Opportunities provided by social media for customers to interact with other customers and non-customers gives them the ability to influence others in their social networks. User-generated content can greatly enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and/or delight, especially as customer needs change over time (Sashi, 2012).

• Ratings & Reviews

The customer ratings and reviews available in social networks can be a good form of information for potential buyers of any product in order to make an informed decision, and also members of the social networks can invite friends and colleagues to join these networks so the members can get the opinion of them (Fernando & Samarasinghe, 2014). The rating or review given in the social media can serve as very good advertisements of the company's product at zero cost. But companies need to be aware of negative feedback campaigns which will influence the company's image (Mahmood, 2013) (Fernando & Samarasinghe, 2014).

• Referrals & Recommendations

Consumers use social media to gain recommendations, reviews and opinions from friends, family, experts and the collective social community, this affect consumer immediate purchasing decision (Fernando & Samarasinghe, 2014)). Word-of-mouth recommendation from peers and significant others has long been recognized as a powerful weapon in any marketer's armory so consumer's attitude towards a certain brand is likely to become more upbeat when that brand is referred to positively by a favorite blogger (Emerald Group , 2012)

D. Importance of Social Media Marketing

With the introduction of new social commerce construct social media marketing has become an essential part of online marketing strategy among all type of businesses. It represents low cost tools that are used to combine technology and social interaction with the use of words (Neti, 2011). Those tools are typically internet and mobile based; commonly use tools include Twitter, Facebook,

Myspace and YouTube (Neti, 2011). Social media gives marketers a voice and a way to communicate with peers, customers and potential customers. It personalizes the brand and helps to spread message in a relaxed and conversational way. And it is a tool that can be used to inform consumers about products (Lake, 2015).

There is lots of importance of social media. Marketers can use social media to (Neti, 2011) (Bendror, 2014)

- Provide and identity about the product or service that they offer in an effective way (brand recognition)
- Create relationships using social media with people who might not otherwise know about products or service or what companies represent
- Improve brand loyalty
- More opportunities to convert- every post marketers make on social media platform is an opportunity for customers to convert. Marketers simultaneously have access to new customers, recent customers and old customers and they will be able to interact with all of them
- Higher conversional rates in a few distinct ways – social media is a place where brands can act like people do, and this is important because people like doing business with other people; not with companies.
- Higher brand authority
- Decrease marketing cost – when comparing with other Medias (broadcast Medias and print Medias) social media advertising is relatively cheap
- Create compelling content – make businesses come alive on social media
- Grow business partnerships

Therefore social media became very important to the marketing in this period of time. According to that businesses have definitely realized the power of social media and accepted social media marketing has to be part of their marketing and promotional mix (Bendror, 2014).

E. Social Media in Clothing Sector

The usage of social media technology encourages customers to interact with brands. These customer interactions build the brand by increasing awareness, involvement, and engagement; thus, adding to brand recall and stimulating purchases (Md1052, 2014). Tweets, blogs, and social networks like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest offer fashion brands ways to connect with audiences (Ozdemir, 2015). Though many fashion brands initially believed social networking would weaken the relationship with consumers, social media is now viewed as an opportunity to improve customer relationships and to ultimately capture a larger audience (Mohr, 2013). The emergence of social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) has boosted interest in word of mouth and viral marketing among clothing/fashion brands. Word of mouth (WOM) – interpersonal communication about products and services between consumers – is one of the

most influential sources of marketplace information for consumers (Mohr, 2013). When WOM travels on the Internet, it can be viral and most powerful, regardless of whether the information is good or bad (Duley, 2015). For followers, it is becoming increasingly challenging to sort out the facts, since the immediacy of information is extreme with no standard to determine the truth. The spread of information brings people to a common sphere to exchange views (Mohr, 2013).

Fashion is everywhere, mostly due to the internet. “Blogs” offer consumers an almost unlimited space for self-expression on the Internet (Mohr, 2013). Blogs are defined as personal websites, “usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video, where entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order” (Gagila & Hinzelin, 2012). Unlike fashion-focused magazines and television shows, there are millions of fashion blogs worldwide that are updated regularly with new fashion trends (Mohr, 2013). The blog’s effectiveness is due to its strong individual, personal, popular, and elitist point of view (Mohr, 2013). Its engaging experience offers readers the opportunity to voice opinions and challenge fashion critics in the past two years, there is a growth in fashion apps for the iPhone, iPad, and iPod. These apps offer customers up-to-the-minute deals, information on the latest fashion trends, the convenience of shopping directly from an iPhone, iPad or iPod, and ease of social sharing (Mohr, 2013). Users can score the latest looks from fashionistas and trendsetters as well as share favorite fashion finds and outfits. Even more, like Facebook, users interact with styles, and share Twitter Pose tweets (Mohr, 2013).

F. Social Media and Fashion Retail industry

“As more shoppers are using social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn) and rely on them for marketing shopping decisions, promotion through these media has become important” (Miryala & Reddy, 2015).

According to (Curran, et al., 2011), social media sites such as Facebook are better than other advertising avenues because it stores information on all its users thus ensuring marketing reaches a retailer’s specific target market. Social media sites are a great stage for retailers to create an experience and retailers can use information stored on social media sites to improve user experience with their brand. (Paquette, 2013)

Furthermore, (Hill, et al., 2006) research establishes that a firm can benefit from social networks to predict the likelihood of purchase intention. This can be done by taking into account a firm’s choice of network (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest etc.) and by examining that network’s data. Assessing a network’s data substantially improves a company’s marketing efforts because it provides the company with vital information on the network’s users,

which helps determine the best social media tactics for that particular site (Hill, et al., 2006). Based on this study, it can further be argued that knowing which social media sites a company's target market utilizes is another key factor in guaranteeing that online marketing will be successful. (Paquette, 2013, p. 20)

(Sorescu, et al., 2011), stress that a retailer must go beyond the advertising aspect of social networking sites and find groundbreaking ways to use them as a way to conduct conversations with consumers, instead of a one-way communication network. (Paquette, 2013)

(Sinclair & Vogus, 2011) Determined that large companies consider social media sites as strategic tools and some businesses are even hiring employees to oversee their social media pages. "Consumers are no longer passive receivers of marketing messages; instead, they are using Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and Twitter to voice their opinions-both positive and negative" (Sinclair & Vogus, 2011, p. 293). Small retailers also need to start utilizing nontraditional methods of marketing in creative and engaging ways to make certain that they attract a larger number of consumers. (Sorescu, et al., 2011, p. 11). (Paquette, 2013, p. 21).

G. Customer Loyalty

A loyal customer is a person who does repeat purchases as well as who promotes the brand to others. Consumer loyalty is one of the primary objective of the customer relationship management (Randeni & Wanninayake, 2011). Customer loyalty is a result of positive emotional feelings towards a particular brand in consumer's mind. Mainly, loyalty emerges through positive experience and higher satisfaction of perceived value. Retaining existing customers is less expensive than attracting new customers (Emond, 2013), and maintaining known customers is the most cost-effective ways to drive customer satisfaction, customer retention and customer loyalty. It seems like creating customer loyalty is very important for any business organization as a result of that number of research have done and previous researchers have identified two types of primary loyalty qualities namely "Attitudinal Loyalty and Behavioral Loyalty" and out of these attitudinal loyalty could be more important for marketers who used social media (Silva & Yapa, 2009).

• Behavioral Loyalty

Basically most of marketers perceived customer loyalty in repeat purchases that only depending on loyal customers generate profits but it just a one type of customer loyalty. And it's "Behavioral loyalty" (Cheng, 2011). If it is a service providing organization those customers can be seen regularly. Customers who are Behavioral loyal is important for generating revenue but dissatisfaction can be easily switch them to competitors and especially they spread

negative word of mouth that affect to the potential customers (Bennett & Bove, 2002).

Behavioral loyalty can be seen where,

- Low cost compare to other competitors.
- When there is an agreement with the company.
- Switching cost is high.
- Relationship is with an employee and not with your company.
- Habits are hard to break.

• Attitudinal Loyalty

Some loyalty customers reduce costs associated with consumer education and promotions and easy to maintain and especially they share positive word of mouth by becoming net promoters of the brand that is the "Attitudinal loyalty" (Bennett & Bove, 2002). Those loyalty customers will never switch to the competitors just because the current supplier's problem and even the offered product or service doesn't match with their requirements, than they try to communicate with the business and they try to correct where the organization where it has wrong by spending their time and effort without expecting returns, because the bond between attitudinal loyalty customer and particular brand is very strong. Attitudinal loyalty customers are great (Cheng, 2011) but compare to Behavioral loyalty customers these customers' purchasing rate might be low because people have their love brands but they can't go for those at every time. If the attitudinally loyal customers are Behaviorally loyal too, the value of the relationship is invaluable (Kumar and Shah, 2006; Jones and Taylor, 2007; Kumar and Reinartz, 2006; Bove et al, 2009; Cheng, Shih-I, 2011).

Most of marketers try to create both attitudinally and behaviorally loyal customers rather than having one type of customers (Rundle-Thiele, 2005). By been ethical, democratic and catering to different type of customers segments and using deferent types of strategies and by rewording the customers marketers try to achieve this (Samarasinghe & Fernando, 2013). They also need to identify their ideal customers and their true requirements.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study concern the influence of social media marketing on customer loyalty towards clothing stores, following the deductive research approach, descriptive research design has applied to the study. Quantitative research approach, through traditional and through online forums questionnaires have been delivered among the target population.

The main purpose of the study was to examine the influence of social media marketing on consumer loyalty in Clothing stores in Sri Lanka. Then it was expected to measure the customer loyalty and describe the present level of social media marketing practice in the clothing stores in Sri Lanka. And finally, to provide suggestions to the

management to improve the current social media marketing practices.

Variables

Mainly there are two types of variables namely independent and dependent variables. In this research the researchers have identified customer loyalty as the dependent variable and Social media as the independent variable in which sub variables were identified based on the new Social Commerce Constructs (Fernando & Samarasinghe, 2014).

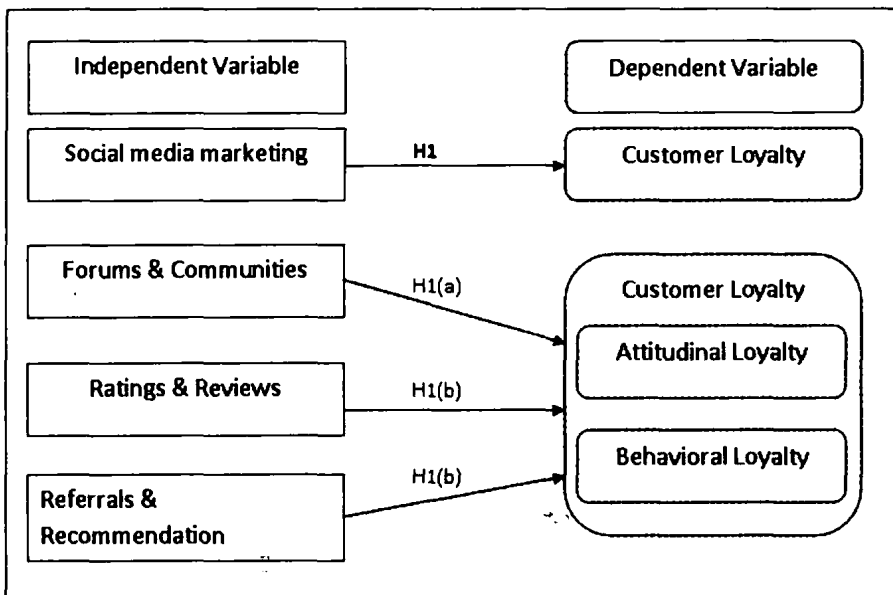


Figure 1:- Conceptual Framework

H. The conceptual framework

Conceptual model was developed based on findings from past researchers. According to (Fernando & Samarasinghe, 2014), (Mahmood, 2013) and (Hall & Graham, 2004) constructs of the independent variable Social Media was identified. The conceptual framework of the study is given in Figure 1.

With reference to the theoretical framework, the below hypothesis were developed. (Fernando & Samarasinghe, 2014), (Mahmood, 2013)

H₁. Social media marketing has an impact on Consumer Loyalty.

H_{1(a)}. Forums & Communities has an impact on Consumer Loyalty.

H_{1(b)}. Ratings & Reviews has an impact on Consumer Loyalty.

H_{1(c)}. Referrals & Recommendations has an impact on Consumer Loyalty.

I. Population and Sample of the Study

All the customers of GFlock, Odel, Fashion Bug, Nolimit, House of Fashion, Kelly Felder, ZigZag.lk are considered as the sample population of the study and customers have been selected based on non-probability sampling method.

As a quantitative method, data collected by using a well-structured questionnaire. And this can be considered as

our main data collection method and primary information source.

The questionnaire was prepared in a way that covered all the aspects of consumer loyalty (both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty) and through that the researcher can get a clear idea about how aspects or variables of social media (Forums & Communities, Ratings & Reviews, Referrals & Recommendations) affect to the loyalty of the customers to the store.

J. Sample Size and Sampling Method

A sample is a subset of the population. As there are cost and time restrictions for conducting a census, the researchers focus were on doing a sample study. The sample of this study consists of 164 respondents taken from the population who were in the Colombo metropolitan area (physically), as they represent the customers of selected clothing stores. And at the same time, e-version of the questionnaires were sent to the selected active social media members of each clothing store.

Due to non-availability of a sample frame, sampling units are selected based on the convenience and the judgment of the researchers. Questionnaires were distributed based on the total weight from each selected clothing store and the responders have selected based on few conditions such as he or she should be a social media user and should have followed selected clothing store through SNS in order to obtain a representative sample. A manager or representative of each clothing store have been interviewed to gain insight into practical aspects of social media marketing. The questioners are constructed according to five point likert scales to collect data.

K. Data Analysis Strategy

Data analysis strategy in the paper consisted of Pearson's r correlation statistical analysis and scatterplots graphs analysis to explain the relationship between social media marketing and customer loyalty towards clothing store. To describe the present level of social media marketing practice in the clothing stores and to measure the customer loyalty towards clothing stores, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted with mean value, standard deviation. The analysis was carried by using "The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)" Statistics version 22.0.

IV. FINDINGS

A descriptive analysis based on the mean and standard deviation was conducted to "**Determine the present level of the customer's participation in social media marketing practices**".

Table 1:- Descriptive Analysis

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviatin	Comments
Social media marketing	164	3.6205	.64187	Above the Neutral Point
Independent(Forums & Communities)	164	.7297	.72596	Above the Neutral Point
Independent(Ratings & Reviews)	164	.5122	.74526	Above the Neutral Point
Independent(Referrals & Recommendation)	164	.6199	.78142	Above the Neutral Point
Customer Loyalty (Dependent)	164	.6301	.68284	Above the Neutral Point
Valid N (listwise)	164			

According to the above table overall mean value of social media marketing is above the average, which indicate individual customers of clothing store use social media at a sufficient level. Standard deviation of 0.641 of overall social media marketing reflect the low spread of responders agreement levels, this indicate that more than average customers/responders from the sample population represent this agreement level. Rating and reviews as the sub variable of social media marketing indicate that the customer in the sample has less usage, compare to other two variables (3.51 on a Five point Likert scale). However, based on the other two variables' (Forums & Communities and Referrals & Recommendation) mean value, social media usage of clothing store among their customers at a satisfactory level (respectively 3.72 and 3.61 on a five point Likert scale).

Second objective of the research is "To measure the customer loyalty towards clothing stores". The researcher has performed a qualitative analysis to measure the consumer loyalty towards the clothing store. In order to perform the analysis information have collected regarding consumer loyalty based on customers' behavior under the three indicators, namely the frequency of visiting to the clothing store, reason for giving feedback and the amount of money spend on transaction with the clothing store.

Frequency of visiting to clothing store

Loyal customers can be seen regular basis at the clothing store rather than other customers. If the customer visiting happened very frequently the customer can be a "wandering customers" cause products like apparel are no need to buy daily basis and they are the least profitable customers. Based on these assumption research has identified that loyalty customers' number of visits should be more than 'once a month' and should not be daily.

Research findings indicate that the regular visit frequency is highest in more than once a month and at the same time there has significant level of customers who visit the store when they want to buy something. The answer of

"when need to buy something, " says to us these customers have kept in their mind that particular clothing store has what they need, therefore the particular clothing store perceived as the best way to satisfy their needs. According to the analysis-more than 60% customers can be identified as loyal customers (More than once a month + Depends on when you want to buy something)

Reason for giving feedback to the clothing store

Researcher was able to gather information like "the reason for the giving feedback" without limiting to customers' willingness to provide feedback to the clothing store. Loyalty customers are always waiting for an opportunity to provide feedback to the company just to improve the service quality or to help the service provider without expecting anything return.

Table 2: Regularly visits

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Comments
Valid More than once a week	15	9.1	9.1	9.1	Wandering customers
Valid More than once a month	49	29.9	29.9	39.0	Loyal
Valid More than once a half year	33	20.1	20.1	59.1	Normal
Valid More than once a year	14	8.5	8.5	67.7	Normal
Valid Depends on when you want to buy something	53	32.3	32.3	100.0	Loyal
Total	164	100.0	100.0		

Table 3 :- Reason for giving feedback

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid To obtain compensation	7	4.3	4.3	4.3
Valid To release your anger	7	4.3	4.3	8.5
Valid To help improve the service	122	74.4	74.4	82.9
Valid Because of concern for other consumers	14	8.5	8.5	91.5
Valid None of the above	14	8.5	8.5	100.0
Total	164	100.0	100.0	

According to the findings, 74.4% customers give feedback to the clothing store to improve their service. This reflects the attitudinal attachment between the customer and the clothing store. Therefore, we can assume 74% customers are loyal to their clothing stores that is why they give feedbacks to improve the service.

The amount of money you spend on cloths in an average year

Here the answer of the responders have stick to the particular clothing store. That means "the amount that have mentioned only spends in the particular clothing store. Generally, loyal customers spend on their selected business or where they loyal, than other customers cause loyal customers spend more or buy more than normal customers. According to the findings majority (33%) of the customers spend more than Rs. 20,000 - Rs. 30000 average year on clothes in selected clothing stores. Around 25% of the responders are spending more than Rs. 30,000 for clothes. As the final verdict is 60% of the customers are loyal to the particular clothing store.

Based on above qualitative analysis under the each indicator it obvious that there have more than average number of customers who loyalty to the particular clothing store therefore the assumption can be built "more than 60% of customers are loyal customers". This is further explained in the below shown table.

Table 4:- Summary of the loyalty indicators

Indicator	Loyalty %	Comment
Frequency of visiting to clothing store	60%	More than once a month + Depends on when you want to buy something
Reason for giving feedback to the clothing store	74%	To help improve the service
The amount of money you spend on cloths in an average year	60%	More than 20,000

An Inferential Statistics analysis based on Pearson's r and scatter plots graphs analysis was carried out to understand the relationship between three independent variables (Forums and communities, Ratings and reviews, Referrals and recommendation) and dependent variable Customer Loyalty as the third objective of the research.

The relationship between Social Media Marketing and Customer Loyalty

According to the results the relationship between social media the independent variable and customer loyalty the dependent variable is a moderately strong relationship but the correlation figure is a positive value; as a result the variables are also positively correlated so the researcher concluded that when the use of social media increases customer loyalty also increases simultaneously.

Table 05:- Correlations

		Correlations	
		Independent	Dependent
Independent	Pearson Correlation	1	.530**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	164	164
Dependent	Pearson Correlation	.530**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	164	164

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

Results of measurements of social media.

As shown in the table the relationship between referral and recommendation and customer loyalty is a weak relationship compared to the results of ratings and reviews and forms and communities. But the correlation figure is a positive value; as a result the variables are also positively correlated so the researcher concluded that when the use of Referrals & Recommendation increases customer loyalty also increases simultaneously but vaguely.

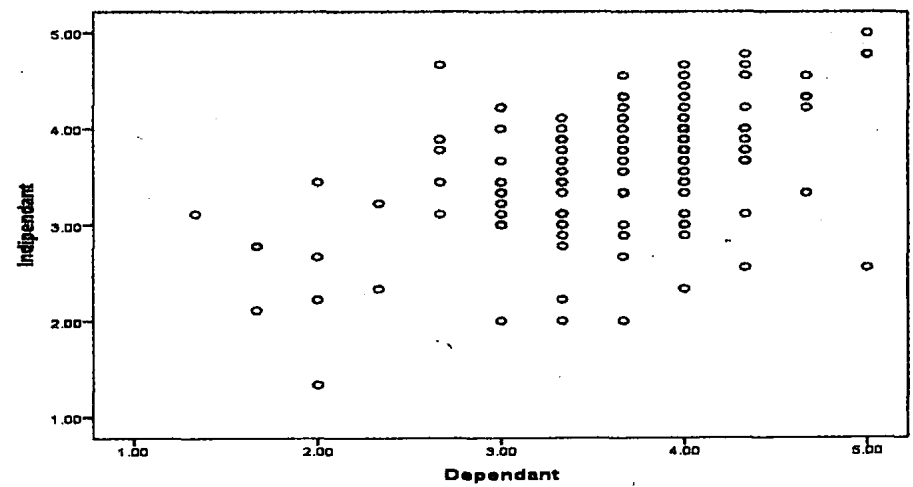


Figure 2:- Scatterplot 01

Based on scatterplot graphs results the researcher conclude that the relationship between the independent and dependent variable is positive but not strong because the spots in the graph are scattered about meaning a weak relationship but on a upward slope meaning a positive relationship

Results of measurements of social media.

• Forums and communities

As shown in the table the relationship between forums and communities and customer loyalty is a weak relationship as the persons r value is close to zero. However

as the correlation figure is a positive value, the variables are also positively correlated so the researcher concluded that when the use of forum and communities increases customer loyalty also increases simultaneously

Table 06:- Forums and communities Correlations

Correlations			
		Independent (Forums & Communities)	Dependent
Independent (Forums & Communities)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 164	.474** .000 164
Dependent	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.474** .000 164	1 .000 164

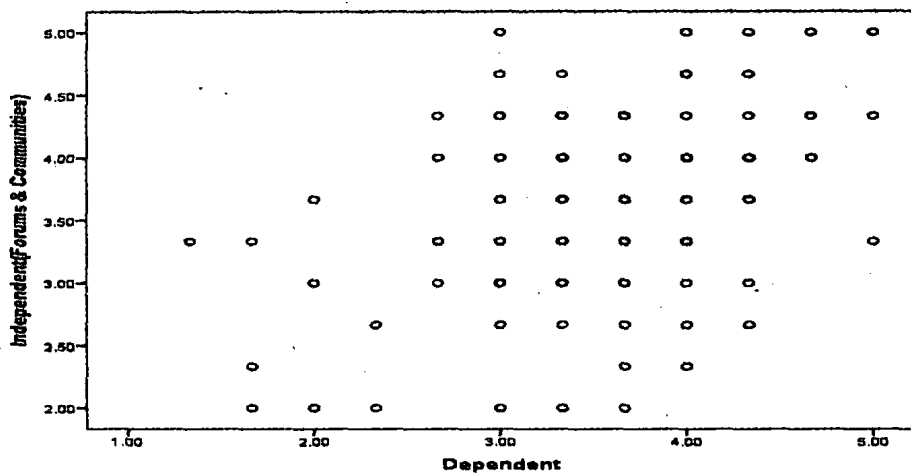


Figure 3:- Scatterplot 02

Based on scatterplot graphs results the researcher conclude that the relationship between the independent(forums and communities) and dependent variable(customer loyalty) is positive but not strong because the spots in the graph are scattered about meaning a weak relationship but on a upward slope meaning a positive relationship.

• Ratings and reviews

As shown in the table the relationship between Ratings and reviews and customer loyalty is a moderately strong relationship compared to the results of forums and communities but the correlation figure is a positive value; as a result the variables are also positively correlated so the researcher concluded that when the use of forum and communities increases customer loyalty also increases simultaneously.

Table 07:- Ratings and reviews Correlations

Correlations			
		Independent (Ratings & Reviews)	Dependent
Independent (Ratings & Reviews)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 164	.502** .000 164
Dependent	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.502** .000 164	1 .000 164

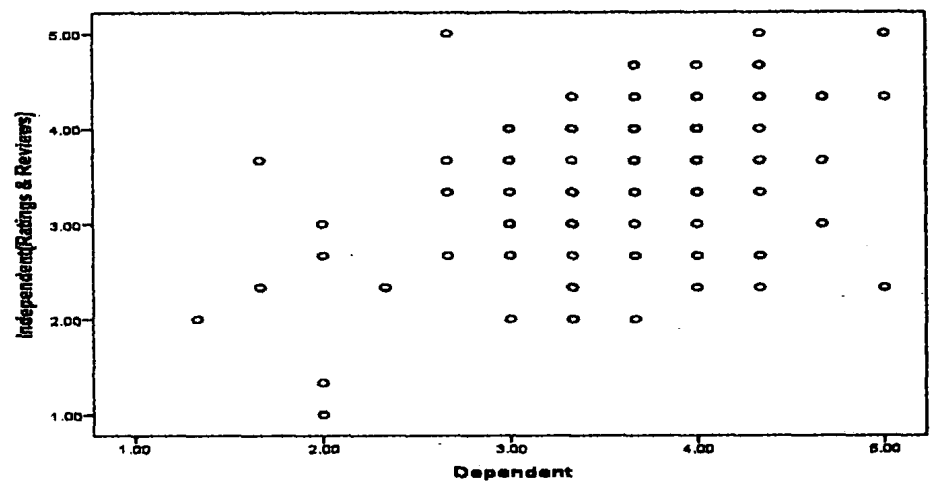


Figure 4:- Scatterplot 03

Based on scatterplot graphs results the researcher conclude that the relationship between the independent(rating and reviews) and dependent variable(customer loyalty) is positive but not strong because the spots in the graph are scattered about meaning a weak relationship but on a upward slope meaning a positive relationship.

• Referrals & Recommendation

As shown in the table the relationship between referral and recommendation and customer loyalty is a weak relationship compared to the results of ratings and reviews and forms and communities. But the correlation figure is a positive value; as a result the variables are also positively correlated so the researcher concluded that when the use of Referrals & Recommendation increases customer loyalty also increases simultaneously but vaguely.

Table 08:- Referrals & Recommendation Correlations

		Independent	Dependent
Independent (Referrals & Recommendation)	Pearson	1	.388**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	164	164
Dependent	Pearson	.388**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	164	164

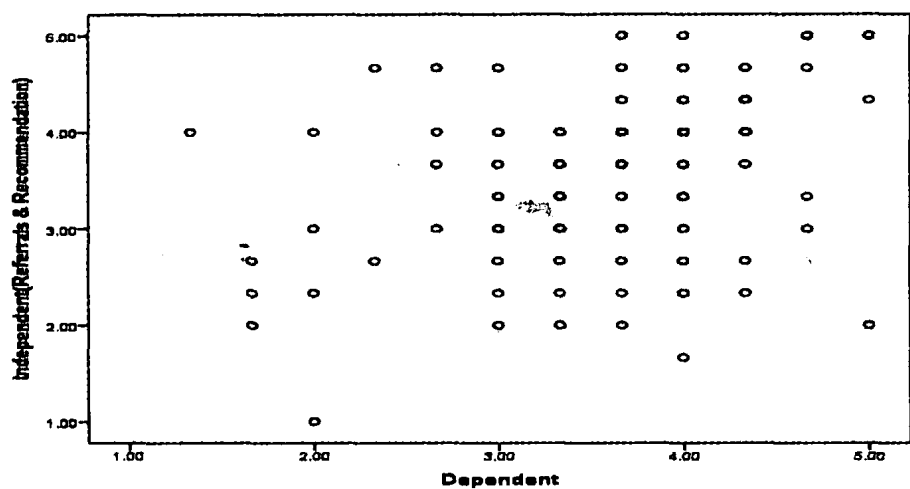


Figure 5:- Scatterplot 04

Based on scatterplot graphs results the researcher conclude that the relationship between the independent(referral and recommendation) and dependent variable(customer loyalty) is positive but not strong because the spots in the graph are scattered about meaning a weak relationship but on a upward slope meaning a positive relationship.

V. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study indicate that the relationship between the Social Media and customer loyalty is moderate. But still the relationship between the two variables is positive, meaning when the use of social media increases the customer loyalty also increase. The reason behind this is the relationship between Forums and communities and Referrals & Recommendation is a weak relationship with customer loyalty and the relationship between ratings and reviews is moderate.

Therefore the apparel fashion retailers must develop strategies to provide information which helps customers to make informed decisions and introduce ways customers can give constructive feed backs for the company using social media.

Since the Referrals and recommendation has the weakest influence towards the customer loyalty researcher have concluded that retailers should not expect immediate sales from customers using social media marketing

Another conclusion the researcher has arrived is the reasoning behind the weak relationship of forms and communities is that although people share their knowledge and expertise in general they do not contribute valuable information regarding fashion stores in social media. But at the same time customers expect information from the stores in their social network sites.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

There are a number of people without whom this thesis might not have been written, and whom we are greatly indebted. Firstly, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to our supervisor Prof. Chandana Perera for the continuous support genuine apprehension, encouragement, patience and guidance and whose expertise and knowledge were generously shared to our research study, His guidance helped us in all the time of research and writing of this thesis. We could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for our research study. Besides our supervisor, we would like to thank our Co Supervisor Mrs. Udanee Sachithra Samarasinghe. Her insightful comments and encouragement, and also for the hard question which incented us to widen our research from various perspectives. Our sincere thanks also go to Dr. Dinesh Samarasinghe from University of Moratuwa and Dr. Sharmini Perera, without their precious support it would not be possible to conduct this research. We are grateful to Dr. Theekshana Suraweera and Mr. Kingsley Bernard for enlightening our first glance of research. We thank our fellow batch mates, for sharing their knowledge, stimulating discussions and idea in helping us while we were doing the thesis. The friendly environment of the SLIIT, the positive thinking of the staff and the facilities provided by the SLIIT deeply resulted in our learning-gaining process. And the people who supported us by filling the questionnaires to continue our research. We should forward our special thanks to all who are using Social Media and Apparel stores, who are using social media as a marketing tool. And the people who supported us by filling the questionnaires to continue our research. But we still owe our largest debt of gratitude to all our parents who bore hardships and have constantly loud, supported and encourage us.

REFERENCES

[1] Auth, J., 2013. *Nice Articals*. [Online] Available at: [HYPERLINK "http://www.9articles.org/searching-for-excellence/"](http://www.9articles.org/searching-for-excellence/) <http://www.9articles.org/searching-for-excellence/> [Accessed 20 June 2015].
 [2] Bendror, Y., 2014. *BUSINESS 2 COMMUNITY: Why Social Media Is So Important for Your Business in 2014*. [Online] Available at:

- HYPERLINK "<http://www.business2community.com/social-media/social-media-important-business-2014-0773321>"
<http://www.business2community.com/social-media/social-media-important-business-2014-0773321> [Accessed 15 February 2015].
- [3] Bennett, R. & Bove, L., 2002. Identifying the Key Issues for Measuring Loyalty. *Australasian Journal of Market Research*, 2(9), pp.27-44.
- [4] Brown, Harvey, D.D.R., 2006. *An experiential approach to organization development*. Pearson Education India.
- [5] Cheng, S.-I., 2011. Comparisons of Competing Models between Attitudinal Loyalty and Behavioral Loyalty. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2, pp.2-3.
- [6] Curran, K., Graham, & Graham, C., 2011. International Journal of E-Business Development (IJED). *Advertising on Facebook* , 1, pp.26-33.
- [7] Curran, Kevin, Graham, S. & Temple, C., 2011. Advertising on Facebook. *International Journal of E-Business Development*, 1, pp.26-33.
- [8] Duley, C., 2015. *Slideplayer*. [Online] Available at: HYPERLINK "<http://slideplayer.com/slide/5700163/>"
<http://slideplayer.com/slide/5700163/> [Accessed 06 July 2015].
- [9] Ekanayake, S.T., 2015. *Impact of Social media on Business performance: Empirical study on Apparent Fashion brand retailers in Sri Lanka*. degree Master Thesis. Moratuwa: University of Moratuwa.
- [10] Emerald Group , 2012. Friends in online places: Business and social media. *Strategic Direction*, 27(10), pp.19-22.
- [11] Emond, S., 2013. Your secret weapons towards customer loyalty on the web. *A study of how social media can enhance customer loyalty on the Internet*, 07 June. pp.10-12.
- [12] Fernando, W.L.N. & Samarasinghe, G.D., 2014. *IMPACT OF A BANK'S DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT IN THE SRI LANKAN RETAIL BANKING SECTOR*. PhD Thesis. Moratuwa: Department of Management of Technology, University of Moratuwa.
- [13] Gagila, S. & Hinzelin, M.O., 2012. *Inflection and Word Formation in Romance Languages*. Gagila, Sascha; Hinzelin, Marc Olivier; ed. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- [14] Hall, H. & Graham, D., 2004. Creation and recreation: motivating collaboration to generate knowledge capital in online communities. *International Journal of Information Management*, 24, pp.235-46.
- [15] Hill, S., Provost, F. & Volinsky, C., 2006. Network Based Marketing. *Identifying Likely adaptors via consumer networks*, 21, p.274.
- [16] Kaplan, A.M. & Haenlein, M., 2010. Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. In *Kelley School of Business Conference*. Paris, France, 2010. Business Horizons.
- [17] Lake, L., 2015. *about money: Understanding the Role of Social Media in Marketing*. [Online] Available at: HYPERLINK Mahmood , , 2013. A research framework for social commerce adoption. *Information Management & Computer Security*, 21(3), pp.144-54.
- [18] McEachern, A., 2014. *Sweet Tooth*. [Online] Available at: HYPERLINK Md1052, 2014. *THEMARKETINGNISTA*. [Online] Available at:
- [19] Miryala, R.K. & Reddy, V.R., 2015. *Trends and Challengers Innovations in Management*. 3rd ed. Hyderabad: Zenan Academic.
- [20] Mohr, I., 2013. Journal of Applied Business and Economics. *The Impact of Social Media on the Fashion Industry*, 15(2), p.22.
- [21] Neti, S., 2011. SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS ROLE IN MARKETING.
- [22] *International Journal of Enterprise Computing and Business Systems*, 1(2).
- [23] Niles, N.J., 2014. *Basics of the U. S. Health Care System*. Jones & Bartlett Publishers.