

## The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Brand Loyalty

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### ABSTRACT

Information technology advancement has given an impact to the customers experience in service as well as their relationship with the service provider. The flexibility of communication channels such as smartphones, social media, email, Facebook, twitter, and others in making it easier for firm to effectively deliver message to target customer. The impact of social media marketing on band loyalty has been widely studied by previous literature in various contexts. However, the empirical research from the apparel company context is still limited. Therefore, this conceptual paper is proposed to fill in the social media marketing literature by focusing on the relationship between social media marketing and brand loyalty from the customer perspective. Academically, this study contributes to the literature of social media marketing in business-to-customer context specifically from customer point of view and practically to the apparel company in comprehending social media marketing in enhancing brand loyalty in apparel industry.

**Keywords:** social media marketing, brand loyalty, entertainment, customization, apparel company

### INTRODUCTION

In theory, brand loyalty is the outcome of consumer's perception of quality towards a brand (Keller, 2008). To win customers to buy a brand on a regular basis, brands need to become exclusive and positive meaning in the mind of customers. In return, brand loyalty increases sales revenues, market share and profitability that enables organizations to sustain their place in the industry. (Keller, 2008; Aaker, 1991). Various means could be applied by the marketer to retain the customer's loyalty to a brand such as incorporating different elements of a brand, the 4Ps marketing mix, organizing events, sponsoring community projects, having one to one personalized marketing activities, internet marketing and social media marketing (Keller, 2008; Kotler & Keller, 2007).

Haudi et al. (2022) stressed that social media is the main choice of company to deliver effective information to their customers in this digital era. Social media marketing is a new method using social media application are developed to market products and services and is fast becoming the marketing intelligence for every company in order to understand consumer's purchasing behavior and the reason why consumer engage with different brands (Rockendorf, 2011). As stated by Ebrahim (2020) , the expansion of social media has significantly change the marketing phenomena and practices. Furthermore, social media will play more of a multi-purpose role in real entertainment

plus driving stronger attitude and behavioral shifts. These attitude and behavior shift could impact customer brand loyalty (Mohit Pande, 2013). Social media become as the marketing intelligence for every company in order to understand consumer's purchasing behavior and the reason why consumer engage to the certain brands (Ashley & Tuten, 2013).

To be successful in business in today's marketplace, firms need to highly consider social media channels as part of their day-to-day business. This is due to the huge changes in customers' attitude, behavior and lifestyle that are towards gadgets and information technologies (Pomirleanu, Schibrowsky, Peltier and Nill, 2013). As proven by Boateng and Okoe (2015) in their study on customer attitudes towards social media advertising reveals that customers have positive attitudes in engaging social media advertising.

Kirtis and Karahan (2011) conclude that since social media can reach millions of people with the highest speed, firms prefer to use social media as substitution for traditional media tools, thus, justifying social media as the best instrument to reach customers globally. Meanwhile, Balakrishnan, Dahnil and Yi (2014) indicate that social media marketing has become an important marketing tool to reach emerging younger generation customers. The use of social media is proven as a most important tolls for marketing and find information that will minimize marketing cost (Haudi et al., 2022). Therefore, global brand players need to consider applying social media marketing activities to promote their product and brand. As social media marketing has gained its importance, companies face the problem of determining their customer brand loyalty, as this medium provides high virtual interaction between customer to customer as well as customer to company in the platform.

However, in ensuring the company's sustainability in the marketplace, brand loyalty needs to be considered. As said by Kotler (2012) it is so important to efficiently manage consumer brand loyalty, as it becomes one of the top priorities in marketing management. Within this perspective, the aim of this study is to focus on marketing on social media as one of the means of building brand loyalty. Specifically, this study tries to examine the effect of marketing using social media on brand loyalty in apparel companies. Apparel company was chosen due to the change in the volume in which the online revenues for apparel websites in Malaysia have grown tremendously (Lim, Heng, Ng, & Cheah, 2016). Hence, this study will contribute to the literature as well as practitioner towards social media marketing in influencing brand loyalty that will improve company long-term profitability. Besides, the exploration of social media marketing towards brand loyalty in Malaysia context specifically apparel product is still rare.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Social Media Marketing**

The term of social media is a top agenda for many businesses today (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to Erdoğan and Çiçek (2012), social media marketing is consider as new but growing rapidly that provide platform for building relationship with customer as well as produce positive brand image in the eyes of the customer. Thus, Tatar and Eren-Erdoğan (2016) considered that social media is a part of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) mix, in which social media offers a platform to

company such as websites, blogs or social networking sites. In addition, social media is a platform for the marketers and advertiser to communicate with their customer through generate, edit and share online information about product and services offers by the companies (Ismail, 2017).

As mentioned by Tuten (2008), marketing on online platforms is a type of online advertising that uses social networks, virtual worlds, social news sites and social opinion-sharing sites to achieve their overall online marketing objectives. According to Chikandiwa, et al., (2013), marketing on online platforms is a system that grant marketers to engage, collaborate, interact with customer for marketing purposes. Hence, online platforms offer communications for both ways and this allows users to interact with each other about the product and services (Angella Jiyoung Kim & Ko, 2010). This reveals the importance of online platforms as stated by Judson, Devasagayam, and Buff (2012), online platforms act as a 'glue' that hold the organizational marketing campaign that connected across with all promotional medium.

Previous study investigate the relationship between social media on brand community (Laroche, Habibi, Richard, & Sankaranarayanan, 2012), firm performance (Öztamur & Karakadılar, 2014), customer equity (Angella J Kim & Ko, 2012) and sales performance (Rodriguez, Peterson, & Krishnan, 2012).

Thus, there is several previous studies that investigate social media marketing as predictor to brand loyalty. Tatar and Eren-Erdoğan (2016) investigate the relationship between social media marketing specifically website on brand trust and brand loyalty. The result shows that the elements of social media marketing (e.g., a clear website, website security, active and updated social media tools, online interactivity and collaboration with other useful websites) have positive relationship with brand trust and brand loyalty for hotel services. Further, Erdoğan and Çiçek (2012) investigate among the online customer that used at least one brand through social media indicates that, social media marketing (e.g. offers advantageous campaigns, offers relevant content, offers popular contents, appears on various platforms and offers applications on social media have positive relationship with brand loyalty. The recent study by Mazzucchelli et al. (2018) indicates that User-generated contents (UGC) via Facebook(FB) have positive effect on customer trust that lead to brand loyalty.

According to Angella J.K. Ko (2010), marketing on online platforms activities consists of word-of-mouth, trend, customization, interaction, and entertainment. Thus, the finding indicates that marketing on online platforms is significant in explaining the relationship between customer bond and purchase intention. Therefore, the current study will also adopt the dimension of marketing on online platforms activities from Angella J.K. Ko (2010). Table 1 below shows the summary of previous research between social media marketing and brand loyalty as well as various consequences.

### **2.1.1 Entertainment**

Entertainment refer to the feeling of being happy and cheerful through online platforms that provide entertainment and clear out pressure (Chiang & Wang, 2018; Gon, Lee, & Hiemstra, 2004). Angella JKim and Ko (2010) investigate the relationship between elements of marketing on online platforms (e.g., word-of-mouth, trend, customization, interaction and entertainment) on intimacy, trust and purchase intention, indicates that entertainment is significantly related to trust and purchase intention. However, based

on the finding by Tatar and Eren-Erdoğan (2016), online interactivity have no relationship on brand loyalty.

### **2.1.2 Customization**

Vasanth and Sultana (2018) stressed online platforms as a medium be reputed to change communication from one sided to two sided that lead to interaction between business brands and customer for create new products, services, and business model. According to Angella J.K. Ko (2010) that investigate the relationship between elements of marketing on online platforms (e.g., word-of-mouth, trend, customization, interaction, and entertainment) on intimacy, trust and purchase intention, indicates that customization have positive influence on trust. Based on the finding by Chang and Chen (2008), customization is one of the factor that influencing e-loyalty. Moreover, Bojei et al. (2011) finding indicates that customization have positive influence on customer retention level.

### **2.1.3 Interaction**

Chang and Chen (2008) define interaction as the availability of customer support tools on a website that promote two-way communication with customers. Moreover, Chiang and Wang (2018), interaction refer to a degree of exchange in the individual with other people through a social networking website. Based on finding by interaction have positive influence on purchase intention. Furthermore, Chang and Chen (2008) finding indicates that interactivity have positive influence on e-loyalty.

### **2.1.4 Word of mouth**

Kozinets, Valck, Wojnicki, and Wilner (2010) stressed that word-of-mouth is an important technique in influencing customers. Word-of-mouth is an influencing factor that contributes to the success of a brand (Podoshen, 2008). Angella J.K. and Ko (2010) found that elements of online platforms marketing such as entertainment, customization, interaction, word-of-mouth and trends have a positive influence on purchase intention. Hernández-Méndez, Muñoz-Leiva, and Sánchez-Fernández (2013) investigates the relationship between word of mouth on travel decision making shows that word of mouth of friends influenced customer travel decision making.

### **2.1.5 Trend**

According to Vasanth and Sultana (2018), online platforms is a platform that provide interaction with customer and brand which leads to trend attributes as well as a part in contributing the current trend. In other word, online platforms furnish the customer to the latest trend and lead customer to interact with the brands. Moreover Pourazad and Pare (2015) possess that content shared in the online platforms has power to create trend that lead to increase follower from different country.

## **2.2 Brand Loyalty**

Brand loyalty has been study as an outcome or focal point of marketing scholar and practitioners previously (Arokiasamy, 2014). According to Tatar and Eren-Erdoğan (2016) to survive in the competitive environment firm need to pursue in building and maintain brand loyalty. Kosiba, Boateng, Okoe Amartey, Boakye, and Hinson (2018) stress that loyal customer has positive attitude towards certain product in which

customer loyalty is link with the brand loyalty. Thus, brand loyalty refers to customer fully commitment towards particular brand (Oliver, 1999).

Consequently, Table 2 shows the four phases of customer loyalty as postulated by Oliver (1999). The table reveals that there are four phases of customer loyalty development that consist of consists of cognitive, affective, conative, and action loyalty (from attitude to behavior) (Yi & La 2004). Cognitive loyalty is the prior phase. In this phase, the customer has basic knowledge and experience on brand information. The next phase is the affective phase, where the customer starts to like the brand based on satisfying experience. Next is conative loyalty. Conative loyalty means that customer's commitment to repurchase a product in the future. Finally, is action loyalty, which refers to the customer's intention to repurchase and transform it to action.

Brand loyalty has been studied by previous researchers and has suggested many factors that influence the customer to be brand loyal. Some of the predictor of brand loyalty are community commitment (Zhang, Zhang, Lee, & Feng, 2015), user engagement, brand innovativeness (Lin, Lobo, & Leckie, 2019), customer engagement (Lee & Lee, 2019) brand satisfaction (Han et al., 2018), brand attachment (Shanahan, Tran, & Taylor, 2019), and brand equity (Garanti & Kissi, 2019). Consequently, based on the discussion and rationale of the link between Social Media Marketing and brand loyalty, the following research proposition is suggested:

P1: There is a relationship between social media marketing and brand loyalty.

**Table 1:** Summary of previous research between Social Media Marketing – Brand Loyalty and Various Consequences

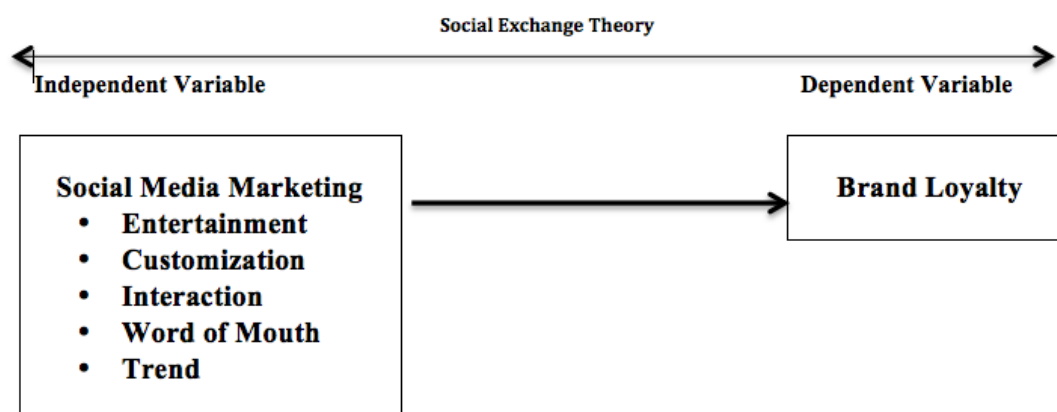
Author	Context	Variable	Finding
(Ismail, 2017)	Social media website	IV: Marketing on social media activities DV: Brand loyalty	Marketing on social media has a significant effect on brand loyalty
(Tatar & Eren- Erdoğan, 2016)	Hotel	IV: Marketing on social media DV: Brand trust and loyalty	Marketing on social media significantly effect on brand trust and brand loyalty
(Salem & Salem, 2019)	Fashion	IV: Marketing on social media DV: Brand loyalty	The significant effects of marketing on social media on brand loyalty
(Helme-Guizon & Magnoni, 2019)	Social media website	IV: Consumer brand management DV: Brand loyalty	Statistically significant impact of the Consumer brand management on brand loyalty
(Angella Jiyoung Kim & Ko, 2010)	Retailer and travel agency	IV: Marketing on social media DV: Customer relationship and purchase intention	Marketing on social media positively influenced customer relationships and purchase intention
(Angella J Kim & Ko, 2012)	Fashion	IV: Marketing on social media activities DV:	Marketing on social media activities significantly efficacious to customer equity

		Purchase intention and customer equity	drivers on purchase intention, value equity, and brand equity
(Erdoğan & Çiçek, 2012)	Islamic banking	IV: Marketing on social media DV: Brand awareness, image and loyalty	The significant effects of marketing on social media campaigns on brand awareness, image and loyalty
(Alhadid & H. Abu-RAhman, 2014)	Mobile service	IV: Marketing on social media and interaction sharing content DV: Brand equity	Statistically significant impact of the marketing on social media on the brand equity

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Social media marketing is proposed to have a relationship on brand loyalty. Figure 1 above is the illustration of the framework. The five dimension of social media marketing were adapted from Angella J.K. Ko (2010) since these dimensions have been proven to influence brand loyalty. Thus, the current study proposed to investigate the effects of social media marketing on brand loyalty from customer's point of views. The proposed conceptual framework is developed based on grounded theoretical background, namely social exchange theory.

**Figure 1.** The proposed conceptual framework



## CONCLUSION

Theoretically, this study enhanced the existing body of knowledge pertaining to the apparel company in Malaysia. It is specifically in the aspects of managing social media marketing in the business operation.

Furthermore, this study provides valuable comprehension to the apparel company in Malaysia to operate effectively and successfully. This is due to the high impact of technological advancement that pressure apparel companies to review their strategy



to retain or maintain in this competitive industry. Therefore, apparel companies should integrate all promotion activities together with social media marketing activities in their promotion strategies in daily business operation. Thus, indirectly apparel companies should provide excellent communication and customer relationship that led to customer satisfaction and drive customer to loyal with the same brand.

Finally, this research gives insight on Malaysian customer on the impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty. Hence, most of the prior studies are more towards Europeans customers.

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