



IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY IN COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

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This research aims to investigate how social media marketing affects clothing related consumer behaviour in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The study with the objective to examine the historical development of Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube, assess the influence of social media on customer behaviour in the clothing industry, and provide guidance to clothing firms on enhancing their social media marketing tactics. The study specifically targeted active social media users in Colombo, with a focus on 100 consumers as samples from the clothing industry who utilize social media through random sampling. The data were collected through questionnaire which was distributed via WhatsApp groups using Google Forms and through QR codes distributed in shopping malls, starting on December 20, 2023. The data collected underwent reliability analysis to assess its dependability, while additional statistical techniques such as Pearson correlation, multiple linear regression, simple linear regression, and descriptive statistics were employed to examine the proposed hypotheses. The results of this study showed that customer purchasing behaviour towards the clothing industry is positively impacted by social media marketing. The empirical evidence gathered from this study unequivocally supports the notion that social media marketing plays a significant role in shaping consumer behaviours. It is worth noting that the impact of social media marketing varies from country to country. The collected results indicate that Facebook is the most frequently utilized platform, with an average social media usage of 1 to 3 hours identified. Additionally, there is a higher representation of females compared to males, and the age group of 21 to 35 years has the largest number of respondents.

Keywords: clothing industry, consumer behaviour, marketing, social media

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1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary world of customers' behaviour and thought processes has been profoundly influenced by social media and digital marketing. (Zyman, 1999) states that traditional marketing is no longer relevant; it has passed its prime. In the current business environment, digital media and internet marketing are more important than traditional marketing for corporate strategy. The digital revolution has had a tremendous effect on consumers. Using social media and platforms at every step of the process, the consumer decision-making process model raises consumer awareness of fashion-conscious products. Modern society is almost universally connected to the internet, and most people use smartphones to monitor all social media platforms (Kemp, 2017).



Figure 1- Transformation of marketing process. (source: author developed)

In Sri Lanka's local environment, social media marketing has become essential, particularly in Colombo. Colombo, a highly interconnected city in Sri Lanka, offers a prime opportunity to study the impact of social media marketing due to its large population participation on these platforms. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become more significant in linking local customers with garment producers as more people use the internet. Influencers have a significant impact on consumer preferences and fashion trends, and social media facilitates instantaneous connection between firms and customers while fostering a feeling of community (Daily News, 2024).

1.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main research objective is to identify how social media marketing factors have impacted consumer behaviour in the clothing industry in Colombo.

In order, to achieve the main research objective, the paper sets out the following sub objectives:

1. To identify the nature of responses by consumers of social media marketing and consumer behaviour in the clothing industry in Colombo.
2. To examine the association between social media marketing and consumer behaviour in the clothing industry in Colombo.
3. To analyse the effect of social media marketing on consumer behaviour in the clothing industry in Colombo.

The research questions were developed through the research objectives.

1.2 HYPOTHESES

The main hypotheses are summarised as follows:

H_{1a}-There is a significant relationship between virtual customer relationship on social media marketing and consumer behaviour in the clothing industry.

H_{2a}.There is a significant relationship between advertisement on social media marketing and consumer behaviour in the clothing industry.



H_{3a} -There is a significant relationship between EWOM on social media marketing and consumer behaviour in the clothing industry.

H_{4a} -There is a significant relationship between trends in social media marketing and consumer behaviour in the clothing industry.

In this study, the null hypothesis (H₀) posits that there is no significant difference in social media marketing and consumer behaviour. Conversely, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) suggests that a significant difference does exist.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study aims to understand how social media marketing factors affect consumer behaviour in the garment business in Colombo. Quantitative study reveals impartiality in the data collected, leading to insight. Using a descriptive study approach, the unique features of social media marketing that influence customer behaviour in the garment business are discovered. The probability sampling method is the sample approach used in this thesis. Residents of Colombo are chosen at random, and they are then given the necessary questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed via WhatsApp groups using Google Forms and through QR codes placed in shopping malls, starting on December 20, 2023. Furthermore, because there were so few options available for this study—six clothing manufacturers and four social media sites that are based in Colombo—a cluster sample technique was employed inside the larger probability sampling framework. Data from 100 clients who fit the study's target demographic—clothing buyers and frequent social media users living in Colombo—was gathered using cluster sampling.

The analytical package that has been utilised to examine the collected data is Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS-26), as the study is mostly quantitative in nature. Upon first subjecting the data to a reliability analysis using Cronbach Alpha, all variables were deemed reliable for the purposes of this study. Additionally, descriptive statistics were used to assess the data's mean value and the agreeability of the hypotheses' responses. Since the researcher utilised an interval scale for the questionnaire, multiple regression analysis was performed to assess the impact of the variables, while Pearson's correlation analysis was used to ascertain the relationship between two variables. Furthermore, scatterplots and validity tables were used to confirm the assumptions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The table below represents the descriptive statistics:

Table 1 - descriptive statistics (source: survey data, 2024)

Descriptive Statistics						
Measures		Virtual	Add	EWOM	Trend	Behaviour
N	Valid	100	100	100	100	100
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.2725	4.3575	4.4325	4.3567	4.4967
Std. Deviation		.73777	.70465	.53637	.64311	.66582
Skewness		-.995	-1.163	-1.087	-1.462	-1.696
Std. Error of Skewness		.241	.241	.241	.241	.241
Kurtosis		-.164	.279	.889	2.573	2.790
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.478	.478	.478	.478	.478

The researcher has tested the deviation of the customer responses against standard deviation. With a standard deviation of 0.7377, the virtual customer connection exhibits the highest value. Consequently,



in comparison to the other variables, the answers provided about virtual client interactions are more erratic. EWOM has the lowest standard deviation, which is 0.536. For this reason, compared to the other components, the answers provided for EWOM are relatively less erratic. Consumer behavior, social media trends, and additions fall between 0.7 and 0.6; this suggests that the deviation is in the middle, where consumers have reacted to the products more favorably than word-of-mouth.

3.2 RELIABILITY TEST

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items	Status
Virtual customer relationship	0.782	4	Good
Social media advertisements	0.876	4	Good
EWOM	0.785	4	Good
Social media trends	0.754	3	Good
Consumer behaviour	0.828	3	Good
All variables	0.950	18	Excellent

Table 2-

Reliability test (source: survey,2024)

On the interval scale, which includes virtual customer interactions, social media advertisements, word-of-mouth (EWOM), social media trends, and consumer behavior, the researcher performed a reliability analysis. Cronbach's alpha scores above 0.7 indicated strong internal consistency among the variables in the results. The reliability of the second independent variable, SMA, EWOM, and the fourth variable, SMT, were 0.876, 0.754, and 0.828, respectively, whereas the dependability of the first independent variable, VCR, was 0.782. After addressing the objectives, the researcher operationalized the variables and confirmed their high dependability and internal consistency. For every variable, the Cronbach's alpha value is 0.950.

3.3 HOMOSCEDASTICITY

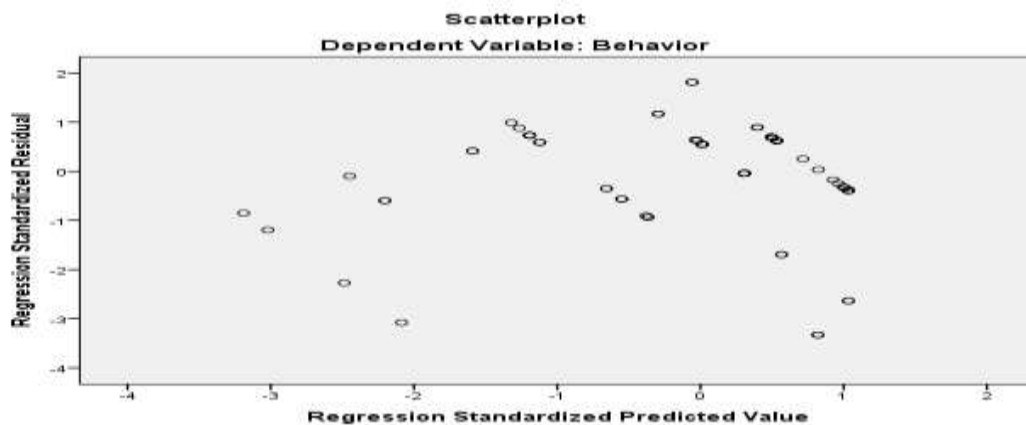


Figure 2- Homoscedasticity.



The standardized residuals were plotted against the standardized expected value in a scatter plot by the researcher. Customers' residual behavior is explained using scatter plots. They lack a regular pattern and are dispersed haphazardly. This indicates that the regression model does not have a heteroscedasticity issue because there is no funnel shape. Which demonstrated the validity of the model.

3.4 PEARSON'S CORRELATION COEFFICIENT ANALYSIS

Table 3 - Pearson Correlation (Source: Survey,2024)

Pearson Correlations						
		Virtual	Add	EWOM	Trend	Behaviour
Virtual	Pearson Correlation	1	.782**	.727**	.655**	.716**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100
Add	Pearson Correlation	.782**	1	.905**	.786**	.843**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100
EWOM	Pearson Correlation	.727**	.905**	1	.737**	.774**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100
Trend	Pearson Correlation	.655**	.786**	.737**	1	.853**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100
Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	.716**	.843**	.774**	.853**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100	100	100

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

Virtual customer interactions and consumer behavior have a highly substantial positive association, according to the correlation analysis. The likelihood of incorporating social media content into customer behavior is likewise strong (0.843 coefficient of correlation). Additionally, the likelihood of EWOM exhibits a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.774$) with customer behavior. With a coefficient of correlation of 0.853, the trend and consumer behavior association also have a strong p value. The study's overall findings show a substantial positive correlation between customer behavior and social media marketing parameters.

3.5 MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION MODEL

Table 4- Model Summary (Source: Survey,2024)

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.900 ^a	.809	.801	.29666	1.598
a. Predictors: (Constant), Trend, Virtual, EWOM, Add					
b. Dependent Variable: Behaviour					



A coefficient of determination of 0.809, with an adjusted coefficient of determination of 0.801, is displayed in the model summary, accounting for 80.9% of consumer behavior. That means there aren't any extraneous independent variables, and the model fits the data effectively. EWOM, trends, virtual customer relationships, adds, and other social media marketing elements are strongly correlated, as evidenced by the multiple correlation of 0.900. As the residuals are independent, the model's validity is confirmed by the Durbin Watsons statistic of 1.598.

Table 5- Anova (Source: Survey,2024)

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	35.527	4	8.882	100.919	.000 ^b
	Residual	8.361	95	.088		
	Total	43.888	99			
a. Dependent Variable: Behaviour						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Trend, Virtual, EWOM, Add						

In the regression ANOVA probability of F statistics is 0.000. This is highly significant this means that the model is jointly significant. Therefore, all the independent factors of social media marketing jointly influence on consumer behaviour. This means that virtual customer relationship, adds, EWOM and trends are jointly influence on consumer behaviour.

Table 6 - coefficient (source: survey 2024)

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.375	.276		1.362	.177		
	Virtual	.085	.065	.094	1.298	.197	.382	2.615
	Add	.380	.117	.402	3.246	.002	.131	7.657
	EWOM	-.024	.131	-.020	-.186	.853	.179	5.582
	Trend	.508	.076	.490	6.706	.000	.375	2.665
a. Dependent Variable: Behaviour								

Based on the individual coefficients, the probability of adds is 0.002, indicating high significance. The individual Beta value of 0.380 suggests that adds have a significantly positive impact on consumer behaviour. The trend also shows high significance with a P value of 0.000 and an individual Beta value of 0.508, indicating a positive effect on consumer behaviour. However, virtual customer relationship and EWOM have P values of 0.197 and 0.853 respectively, making them individually insignificant in influencing consumer behaviour.

Nonetheless, when considered together, they do have an impact on consumer behaviour. The most influential factor based on standardized Beta coefficient is the trend at 0.490, followed by adds at 0.402. Collinearity statistics show that all VIF values are less than 10, indicating no perfect correlation among independent variables. This suggests that the Beta values accurately represent the effects of the variables, without any issues of multicollinearity, making the model valid.



3.6 VALIDITY TEST

Table 7 - Validity Test (Source: Survey,2024)

Social media		Standardized Residual
Virtual	Pearson Correlation	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
	N	100
Add	Pearson Correlation	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
	N	100
EWOM	Pearson Correlation	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
	N	100
Trend	Pearson Correlation	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
	N	100

Based on the correlation between social media marketing factors and standardized residuals, all the P values are extremely significant with a value of 1.00. Consequently, there is no correlation between the independent variables and residuals, indicating a high level of validity for the model. As a result, all variables exhibit a positive linear correlation with the dependent variable, consumer behaviour. Therefore, all the H₁ hypotheses are accepted, while all the H₀ hypotheses are rejected based on the findings, confirming the high validity of the models.

4. CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

To summarize, the study aimed to assess the impact of social media advertising on consumer behavior, specifically in the apparel sector. The data collected underwent both inferential and descriptive statistical analysis. The results of the regression analysis demonstrated that the independent variables - VCR, trend, EWOM, Add - had a significant positive influence on the dependent variable, consumer behavior. This study provides valuable insights for apparel retailers and marketers. Additionally, it serves as a literature source for future researchers.

It is important to note that culture can influence the fashion business, and therefore, future research should focus on cross-cultural aspects. This study primarily examines the overall changes in customer behavior due to social media marketing. Hence, it is crucial for future researchers to quantify the influence of each aspect of the behavioral process. Furthermore, the survey method used to collect data may have limitations, as some questions may be unclear to respondents and lead to non-responses. Thus, it is recommended that future research modifies the questions to uncover deeper emotional drivers. From a methodological standpoint, this study primarily focused on quantitative analysis. Therefore, it is advisable to incorporate both qualitative and quantitative approaches to obtain more accurate data. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior is limited to the fashion industry. Therefore, further research is needed to generalize the findings to other contexts. The sample size of this study was limited to 100 participants, which may restrict the generalizability of the results to a larger population. As the geographic scope of the research is limited to Colombo, additional investigations are necessary to validate and expand upon the findings.



5. REFERENCES

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6. ABBREVIATION

Add/ Adds – Advertisement

App – Application

EWOM – Electronic word of mouth

P value – probability

SM – Social media

SMA – social media advertisement

SMT – social media trend

VCR – virtual customer relationship

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