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The Role of Facebook Marketing on Customer-based Brand Equity and Purchase Intention in Fashion-Wear Retail Industry, Sri Lanka

Nisha Anupama Jayasuriya [α], Dr. S. M. Ferdous Azam [σ], Dr. Ali Khatibi [ρ], Dr. Halinah Atan [ω] & Dr. Isuri Roche Dharmaratne[¥]

Abstract- In the contemporary environment, people experience things in a completely different way than the previous generation. The consumables, lifestyles and decision making has been affected and controlled by social media. With this new shift in consumer behavior, reaching the target customer groups via traditional channels may not be effective for business firms. Due to this reason, identifying the potentials of new channels become vital for business firms. This paper study the activities on marketing on such giant social network named Facebook and components of customer-based brand equity and purchase intention on the same platform. Customers of the fashion-wear retail industry were targeted for this study and survey method has been used for data collection. The relevant questionnaire was pilot tested among 40 Facebook fans of the reputed fashion-wear retailers in Sri Lanka. Based on the theories and expert opinions the measures of Facebook marketing, customer-based brand equity and purchase intention were identified. Reliability and validity of these constructs were tested and the remaining items were selected as the measures for these variables. This study provides a good starting point to identify measures of the three variables and lead to a more comprehensive research.

Keywords: facebook marketing, customer-based brand equity, purchase intention, fashion-wear industry.

I. Introduction

Fashion-wear industry in Sri Lanka, one of lucrative as well as ideal industry for social media, is still at its infant stage of using it as a marketing tool. Currently, new small and medium players entering into the platform seeking the potentiality of this new medium. In Sri Lankan context, Facebook is considered as the most popular medium among public and business firms. It is used with the purpose of reaching the largecustomerbase. This new platform allows firms to be more interactive with their target customer group at low cost. The filtering techniques available on Facebook provides an opportunity to do exact filtering of the right audience which enhances the efficiency of marketing messages further. All these techniques lead business firms to use this media effectively to gain some sales. However, the use of social media to uplift brands into the next level has largely forgotten due to poor awareness among business firms(Kamburugamuwa, 2015). Even in the interview of leading businessmen in the field, this point was proven. According to him, the main aim of utilizing social media was directed to the creation of demand/sales. No attention was given on the development of brand equity.

(Nawarathna, D. 2017, November, 18. Personal Interview). It indicates that industry is still at its infant stage in the use of social media and the strategic purpose of social media has not been discussed adequately. Thus, the purpose of this study directed to identify the impact of Facebook marketing on the brand equity creation as well as purchase intention of fashion-wear retailers in Sri Lanka.

Considering the fast phase that the retail industry is moving in the online platform, it will be risky for fashion-ware retailers to operate “Brick and Motor” (Ahlam, 2013). Businesses should ready for addressing the requirements of millennials who will be their main target market soon. Those millennials who live in a digitalized world, mostly prefer to do their shopping in online platform rather than in physical stores. It provides them with great convenience, vast choice and good deals (Godey et al., 2016). Therefore, the social media in the Sri Lankan contexthas enormous opportunities yet to be explored for businesses. Despite this emerging opportunity only 10–15 percent apparel retails are online in Sri Lanka (Kambrugamuwa, 2015). As the reasons behind this poor presence, the poor understanding of social media potentials and the requirement of ‘touch and feel’ element in the fashion-ware sector lies (Bhatnagar, Misra, & Rao, 2000).

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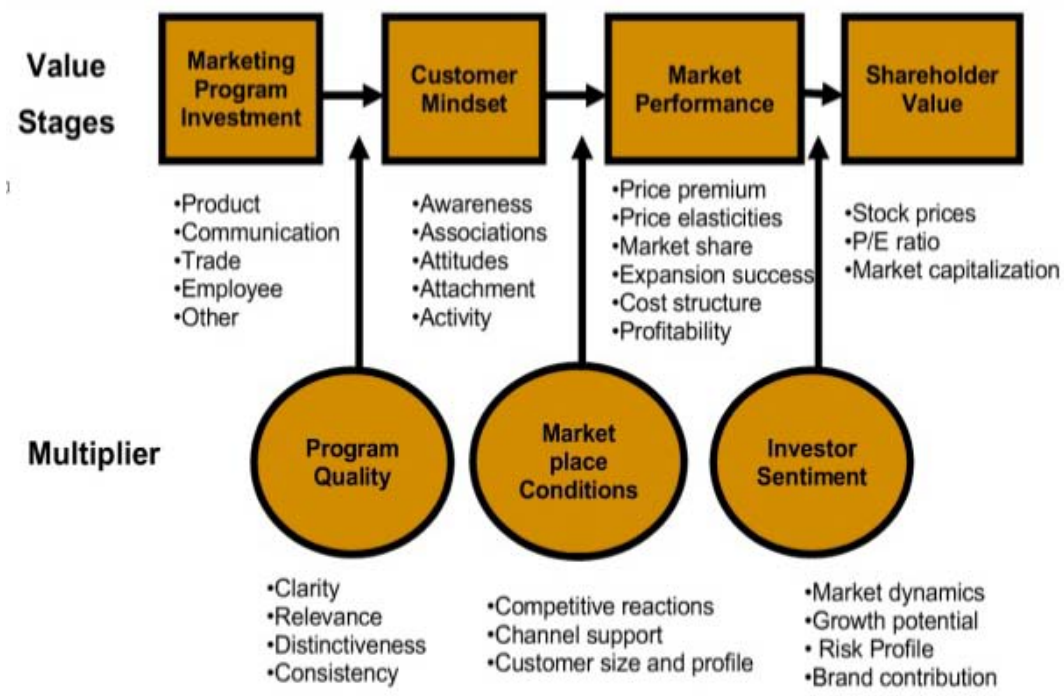
II. Review of the Concept

a) Keller brand value chain model



Source: (K.L.Keller, 2007)

Figure 1: Keller brand value chain model

According to Prof Kevin Keller, in a slowdown economy customers are very much careful in money they spent. Customers expect good value for their offerings. So business firms should clearly understand the concept of value in a broader perspective and deliver it overtime. In this model, the brand is looked at more business perspective that would enhance the shareholder value.

It starts with the marketing programme investment. Business firms develop programmes considering the elements of the marketing mix as product, price, place, and promotion. These elements establish to tell the world who we are. Business firms should develop them in a way they want to see them as, feel them as and interact with them as by customers. Customers' process information they receive and going through different stages. After customers know the brand exists, they connect things and develop an association. That is about their feeling towards a brand such as excitement, friendliness, fun, warm, security etc. This understanding creates a meaning for a brand in customers mind and heart. This understanding leads to change their attitude towards the brand. Customers may be attracted to a brand or detracted from it based on it. Finally, all those things lead to activities of customers. That activity is purchase. Not only they purchased once, but also become loyal to that brand. This study is based on this part of the framework.

Then this customers' mindset leads business to marketing performance. It tells about how brands are performing in the marketplace such as how the price of the product work in the marketplace and does the business grow or stagnant regarding market share and expansion. Clearly, organizations should have positive customer mind shares which leads the action of purchase which leadsto great market performance. Because when organizations have good market performance, that going to increase the shareholder value. It will increase the stock price, P/E ratio, and market capitalization. Thus, if business firms enhance the brand value, ultimately it leads to the shareholder value as well.

However, this process is not that easy. There are some multipliers as well. Having a quality programme would be a factor to have a quality customer base. If it is a low-quality one the firm will end up with poor customer mindshare. However, a clear, relevant and outstanding one can generate a positive customer mindset.

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Even though, a company offers a quality marketing programme the things going on the marketplace may interrupt or downplay that quality. As the examples, the actions and reactions of competitors and the support getting from intermediaries can be considered. No matter the campaign is high quality if the intermediaries do not provide adequate support for it. Then the size of the customer group. When you are targeting a niche market, the high-quality programme that developed for mass market will not be successful.

The other issue that impact on shareholder value is the investor sentiment. If investors see growth potential for the business, they may have a very positive attitude towards the brand. Otherwise, they may have a very negative attitude. The reason is they perceive a lot of risk with that brand. So these multipliers determine how effectively a brand is moving through the brand value chain.

b) Social Media

Social media can be defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).There are four types of social media like blogs, social networks micro-blogs, photo, and video sharing sites. The main advantage of these platforms is that there are no restrictions regarding time, place, media and low in cost (Kim & Ko, 2012). The growing interest in the use of social media is visible through the behavior of consumers. Most of the customers search online before making their purchase decision. They are highly sensitive to the reviews of other customers in the online platform (Godey et al., 2016). Even though they visit a place physically, they tend to use their mobile to find a better deal elsewhere (Ahlam, 2013). In fashion retailing sector this is prominent, and people do engage very much when making their purchase decision. Therefore, it will be a fertile ground to practice innovative social marketing tactics.

Social Media Marketing can be identified as the process that empowers the promotion of websites, products, and services via online social channels. It involves marketing related activities such as blogging, sharing photos and posts online(Yazdanparast, Joseph, & Muniz, 2016).About the fashion industry, there are millions of fashion blogs that update the latest fashions and fashion apps that provide more engagement opportunity for customers. In addition to that, customers are encouraged to share favorite fashion items and outfits among their networks(Mohr & John, 2013). As more shoppers use social media and rely on them in decision making in the apparel sector, the promotions on this platforms become vital.

c) Facebook Marketing in Fashion-wear Industry

All over the world, Facebook is considered as the popular social media network. It has the highest daily active users compared to other social networks. Therefore, Facebook can be identified as a great social platform for organic and paid opportunities which has highest potential reach(Chaffey, 2018). When considering the Sri Lankan market 36% internet penetration is there, and social media usage is at its fast-growing stage (22% growth). Currently, it accounts for approximately 6 million users, and it has only 29% penetration in the population. Therefore, Facebook has not reached its peak yet in the Sri Lankan context and has a high potential to grow.

When considering the usage of social media in the Sri Lankan context, Facebook is showing a remarkable upscale among the other platforms (figure 1).

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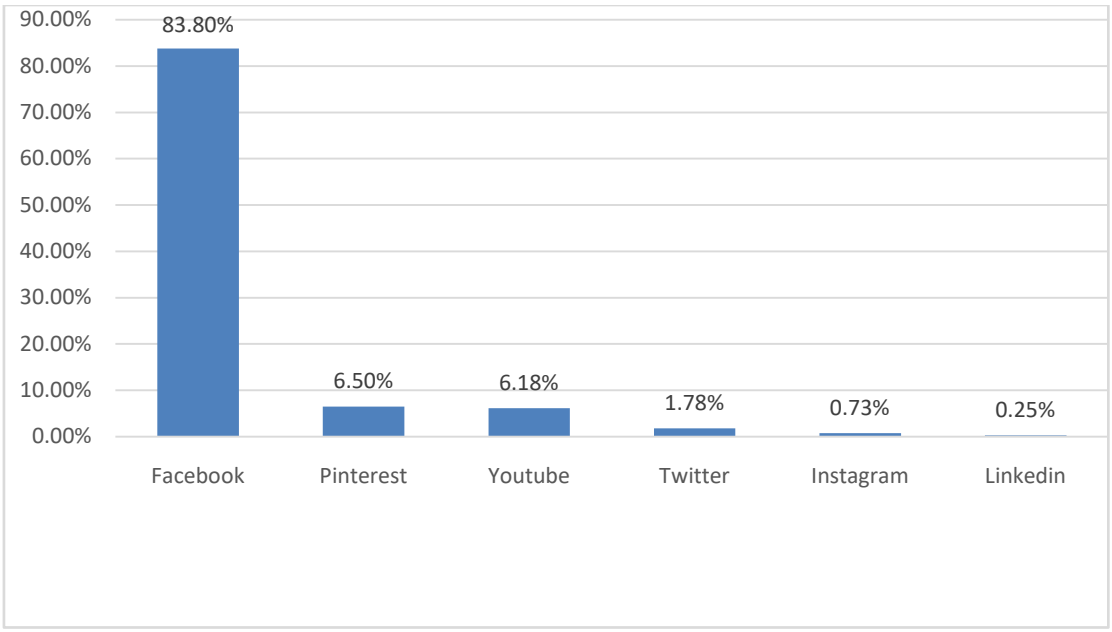

(Social Media Stats Sri Lanka, 2018)

Figure 2: Social Media Stats of Sri Lanka from August 2018

Facebook is already considered as a business take-off tool (Kim & Ko, 2012)and a tool that widely impacts on customer preferences (Godey et al., 2016) and buying decisions of publics(Yazdanparast et al., 2016). This platform provides a decent opportunity for fashion-ware retailers to "showrooming" their products to potential customers online. Majority of customers tend to search online before coming to a shop as well as while shopping to know whether there is a good deal elsewhere(Ahlam, 2013).

All the above evidence prove the role played by Facebook in society. As a tool with a very high amount of users and high growth potentiality, Facebook provides a clear opportunity for Sri Lankan business firms. In that situation, fashion-wear industry in Sri Lanka increasingly uses Facebook for business purpose.

d) Brand Equity

A brand can be identified as a name, term, sign, symbol or design or combination of these, intended to identify goods or service of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors (Kotler, Baker, Gummesson, & Buttle, 1993). Brand Equity is identified in two forms as financial-based brand equity and customer-based brand equity. The customer-based brand equity is a psychological concept. Keller, define CBBE as "the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand."

Considering the brand equity as the knowledge that customers have related to the brand, Keller identified the brand image and brand awareness as measures for brand equity. Aaker has presented slightly different idea addressing the measure of brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty for brand equity. Among these elements, brand loyalty was identified as the most important item to determine brand equity. Brand loyalty is differentiated from repurchasing and work as an entry barrier, price premium and competing tool. Brand awareness is the customers' ability to recall the brand name relevant to certain product category and brand association is linking a brand to something in customers' memory. Perceived quality has been identified as the overall impression of product or services come under a brand(Aaker, 1991).

e) Purchase Intention

Purchase intention can be defined in different terms. It can be identified as "consumers' willingness to consider buying', "buying intention in future" and "decision repurchase." In addition to that, it can be defined as the degree of conviction that consumers have to purchase a product or service. Ultimately it is a subjective judgment of customers after evaluating a product or service to buy(Balakrishnan, Dahnil, & Yi, 2014).

f) Facebook Marketing and Brand Equity

Social media has a direct link to the brand equity rather than traditional media which focus on improving brand awareness. This relationship has been proven in the study of (Godey, Manthioua, Pederzoli, Rokka, & Aiello, 2016). In that study, Keller's brand equity dimensions which are brand awareness and brand image has been tested. This research invites future researchers to incorporate other dimensions of brand equity as well for the study. The social media components such as entertainment, interaction and

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trendiness have been identified as the main factors that have an impact on brand equity (Godey, et al, 2016).

g) Facebook Marketing and Purchase Intention

Some elements of Facebook marketing have been identified as the factors which impact on purchase intention. Those elements are entertainment, interaction and word of mouth (Kim & Ko, 2010). However, the study of (Bruhn, Schoenmueller, & Schäfer, 2012)presents a different result proving a weak relationship between SMM and PI. Further, the study of Dehghani & Tumer, (2015) found that Facebook leads to enhance the brand value and then the purchase intention. They conclude that FBM should not intend the sales but the brand value.

h) Brand Equity and Purchase Intention

Brand equity has been identified for its positive impact on purchase intention. The study of Vihn & Huy, (2016), provide empirical evidence that even in service or product category, high brand equity generates high purchase intention. Customers tend to defend their purchase intention based on the brand name (Pütter, 2017). Further, the studies of that Moradi & Zarei, (2011), Chang & Liu, (2009), Chen & Chang, (2008) also prove the strong relationship between brand equity and purchase intention.

III. Research Design

The study focus on identifying the impact of Facebook Marketing on customer-based brand equity and purchase intention. As the study focus on Facebook marketing, components have been selected based on the Honeycomb model. Two other components as entertainment and eWoM have been added based on the findings of past literature.

The questionnaire comprising profile questions and items for each construct in the conceptual model. Accordingly, it was organized by the five areas as Facebook marketing, customer-based brand equity, purchase intention, an open question, and personal data. Items have been developed referring the past literature and reviewed by industry experts for clarity and accuracy. A 5-point Likert scale is used, where a value of 1 indicates disagreement, while a value of 5 indicates agreement to the statement. In total, the questionnaire was contained 55 Likert scale questions and one open-ended question.

Since this study focuses on identifying the impact of Facebook marketing, sample unit of the study was the Facebook fans of Fashion-wear retailers in Sri Lanka. Hence the pilot study was conducted among 60 Facebook fans of leading Fashion-wear retailers who have been active in the Facebook. The questionnaires were sent as a link via the messenger, and altogether 40 participants joined the survey voluntarily and filled the questionnaire. By giving priority to the respondents' privacy, contact details and emails have been eliminated. Further, assurance has been given that information is exclusively used for academic purpose.

The collected data was analyzed using SPSS 21 version. The Cronbach's alpha method was used to check the internal consistency of the data set. To consider the internal consistency of the data set the Cronbach Alpha needs to be greater than 0.70. Further, the correlation was tested to check the construct validity. The correlation value needs to be between 0.3, and 0.9 and the minimum correlation value need to be greater than 0.30 (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

IV. Results

The profile of the selected sample for the pilot survey is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Measure	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	28	70
	Male	12	30
Age	Under 23	7	17.5
	24 – 29	17	42.5
	30 – 34	10	25.0
	35 – 39	5	12.5
	45 – 50	1	2.5
	50 above	0	0
Occupation	Senior manager	6	15.8
	Manager	6	15.8
	Executive	8	21.1
	Entry level employee	3	7.9
	Non-administrative employee	2	5.3
	Self-employed	1	2.6
	Student	11	28.9

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	Unemployed	1	2.6
Education	High School	3	7.5
	Diploma	5	12.5
	Degree	15	37.5
	Professional qualification	2	5.0
	Master degree	15	37.5
	Doctorate degree	0	0

Source: Pilot Survey

As expected, the majority of participates are female (70%) and age 24 – 29 (42.5%). The remainder respondents are at age between 30 -34 (25.0%), 35 – 39 (12.5%) and under 23 17.5%.Regardingoccupation-wise, the majority of respondents were executed grade (21.1%), senior manager level (15.8%), manager (15.8%), entry-level employees (7.9%) and non-administrative employee (5.3%) (Table 1).

a) Facebook Marketing

There were 34 items under the six components of Facebook Marketing. When considering them separately, the reliability results are as follows.

In brand identity (BI), according to descriptive statistics and intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, the highest correlation for each item with at least one other item in the construct is between 0.3, and 0.9. Hence, all the items correlate adequately in this construct. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.725. Hence, disclosing the brand identity information such as corporate name, logo, slogan, and colour can be identified as elements in developing a brand identity (Hamzah, Alwi, & Othman, 2014). In addition to that, contents that they shared on the Facebook page and brands that they represent also contribute to generating a brand identity (Tresna & Wijaya, 2015).

In conversation (CV), according to descriptive statistics and intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, the highest correlation for each item with at least one other item in the construct is between 0.3, and 0.9.Hence, all the items correlate adequately in this construct. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.828, which is more than 0.7. The minimum corrected item total is 0.566. Conversation reflects the communication between a brand and customers as well as between consumers themselves (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).This finding validates the study of (Schmitt, 1999), which tells generating an affective brand experience will be an effective motivator for customers.

In reputation (RP), according to descriptive statistics and intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, the highest correlation for each item with at least one other item in the construct is between 0.3, and 0.9.Hence, all the items correlate adequately in this construct. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.831, which is more than 0.7. The minimum corrected item total is 0.531. This finding agrees with the study of (Veloutsou,Cleopatra; Moutinho, 2009)stating that reputation is significant to be a successful and profitable brand.

In Relationship (RL), according to descriptive statistics and intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, is not within the range of 0.3 to 0.9. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.529, which is less than 0.7. Furthermore, the minimum corrected item-total correlation is 0.115. Hence, these five items have been removed. The relationship in the honeycomb model can be identified as the relationship between individuals (Babac, 2011). It includes the relationship retailer has with other retailers and with customers. However, it seems customers do not much worry about the retailer's relationship with other relevant organizations as well as with other customers. Sharing pictures of customers is not considered as a sign of a good relationship in this context.

In Entertainment (En), according to descriptive statistics and intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, the highest correlation for each item with at least one other item in the construct is between 0.3, and 0.9.Hence, all the items correlate adequately in this construct. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.844, which is more than 0.7. The minimum corrected item total is 0.624. Entertainment is not a honeycomb component. However, it indicates a high level of importance as a Facebook marketing component. Entertainment is the result of the fun, excitement, cool and plays in social media. When considering Facebook, it is an entertainment medium. Therefore, customers visit Facebook with the purpose of exposing to entertaining contents(Godey et al., 2016).

In e-Word of Mouth (WOM), according to descriptive statistics and intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, the highest correlation for each item with at least one other item in the construct is between 0.3, and 0.9.Hence, all the items correlate adequately in this construct. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.846, which is more than 0.7. The minimum corrected item total is 0.622. e-WOM represent any positive or negative comment made by the existing, potential or past customer about a brand(Park & Lee, 2009). Sometimes it may happen between totally unknown people. Still, e-WOM has been identified as a high credible and believable medium among customers(Kapoor, Jayasimha, & Sadh, 2013).

In Sales Promotion (SP), according to descriptive statistics and intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, is not within the range of 0.3 to 0.9.

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Hence, these items are not correlated adequately in this construct. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.830, which is more than 0.7. If SP1,SP2 are dropped, intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, the highest correlation for each item with at least one other item in the construct is between 0.3, and 0.9.Hence, all the items correlate adequately in this construct. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.826, which is more than 0.7. The minimum corrected item total is 0.466.

b) Customer-based Brand Equity

There were 16 items under the four components of customer-based brand equity. When considering them separately, the reliability results are as follows.

In Brand Awareness (BA), according to descriptive statistics and intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, is not within the range of 0.3 to 0.9. Hence, these items are not correlated adequately in this construct. If BA3 is dropped, intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, the highest correlation for each item with at least one other item in the construct is between 0.3, and 0.9.Hence, all the items correlate adequately in this construct. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.818, which is more than 0.7. The minimum corrected item total is 0.723.In Brand Association (BS), according to descriptive statistics and intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, the highest correlation for each item with at least one other item in the construct is between 0.3, and 0.9. Hence, all the items correlate adequately in this construct. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.786, which is more than 0.7. If BS3 is dropped, the minimum corrected item total is 0.725, and the Cronbach's alpha value will be 0.837. In Perceived Quality (PQ), according to descriptive statistics and intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, is not within the range of 0.3 to 0.9. Hence, these items are not correlated adequately in this construct. If PQ1 is dropped, intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, the highest correlation for each item with at least one other item in the construct is between 0.3, and 0.9.Hence, all the items correlate adequately in this construct. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.884, which is more than 0.7. The minimum corrected item total is 0.732.In Brand Loyalty (BL), according to descriptive statistics and intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, is not within the range of 0.3 to 0.9. Hence, these items are not correlated adequately in this construct. If BL5 and BL6 are dropped, intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, the highest correlation for each item with at least one other item in the construct is between 0.3 and 0.9.Hence, all the items correlate adequately in this construct. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.853, which is more than 0.7. The minimum corrected item total is 0.639. All these components adequately represent the customer-based brand equity. This finding is in line with the theory developed by (Aaker, 1991). He has identified the components of customer-based brand equity as brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. The same components have been considered here and the pilot study found out items tested under these components are reliable.

c) Purchase Intention

In Purchase Intention (PI), according to descriptive statistics and intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, is not within the range of 0.3 to 0.9. Hence, these items are not correlated adequately in this construct. If PI8 is dropped, intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, the highest correlation for each item with at least one other item in the construct is between 0.3 and 0.9.Hence, all the items correlate adequately in this construct. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.880, which is more than 0.7. The minimum corrected item total is 0.598.

Purchase intention can be identified as the possibility to purchase in the future (Kim & Ko, 2010). It can be considered as customers' action according to the brand value chain. As it predicts the future willingness of customers to relate to a brand, most of the studies consider purchase intention as an indicator or market success. As the forecasting customer value become one of an important factor in the business field, purchase intention can be identified as a critical element to study punctually (Park, Ko, & Kim, 2010).

The overall model contains three constructs. According to descriptive statistics and intercorrelation values for the test of reliability, is within the range of 0.3 to 0.9. Hence, these items are correlated adequately in this construct. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.855, which is more than 0.7. The minimum corrected item total is .710. Table 2 summarises the results of the pilot test.

Table 2: Summary of the Results

Constructs	No. of Items		
	Initial	Final	Cronbach's Alpha
Facebook Marketing	31	21	0.894
Customer-based Brand Equity	16	11	0.925
Purchase Intention	8	7	0.780
Entire Framework	55	39	0.949

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V. Conclusion and Future Research

Three constructs were identified based on literature and expert opinion. Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of these constructs. All three constructs have a reliability value of 0.7 and greater. Hence the internal consistency of these constructs has been achieved.

The inter-item correlation value of each construct was studied to test the discriminant validity. Accordingly, the components such as conversation (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), brand identity ((Tresna & Wijaya, 2015)), entertainment(Godey et al., 2016), reputation (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009) brand identity(Tresna & Wijaya, 2015) and e-WOM (Park & Lee, 2009)and sales promotions have been identified as the components of Facebook Marketing. In the construct measuring FBM, the five items of the component relationship have to be removed as there is no correlation among these items. It means customers are not aware or interested to know about the relationships that their fashion-wear retailer has with other relevant businesses. In the component of sales promotion, SP1 and SP2 havethe highest correlation <0.30. Hence these items were dropped from that component and tested for reliability and validity. It indicates that customers do not experience frequent price discounts of their fashion-wear retailer and they do not believe that the price deals of their retailers are reasonable. It validates the findings of Chandon, Wansink, & Laurent, (2000).

In the construct of customer-based brand equity, under the construct of brand awareness, BA3 has the highest correlation <0.30. Hence this item was dropped from that component. It indicates that identifying brand separately from competitors brand do not contribute for the brand awareness. In the perceived quality, the item PQ1 was dropped as the highest correlation <0.30. It indicates that customer service of the retailers does not have an impact on the perceived quality. However, in online context service quality is very much important. Still, retailers provide low-quality service to the customers (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Malhotra, 2005).

In the component of brand loyalty, BL5 and BL6 were dropped as the highest correlation <0.30. It means that selection of that particular retailer while other retailers available and being the first choice in the future do not reflect the brand loyalty of that retailer.

In the construct of purchase intention, PI8 has the highest correlation <0.30. Hence this item was dropped from that component. This means that intention to replace the service provider with other brands does not have an impact on the purchase intention of the customers.

All three constructs comprise of valid items to measure these variables. The removed items are marked with (R) in the appendix. To summarize, all three constructs fulfill the requirement of reliability. Out of 55, 16 items have been removed.

This pilot study attempts to identify the Facebook marketing activities and develop appropriate measures for Facebook marketing, customer-based brand equity and purchase intention. At the end of the reliability of a construct validity test, the items representing three constructs have been identified. Then these items can be used to test these constructs with a larger sample.

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