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*GJMBR-E Classification:* *JEL Code: M39*




*Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:*




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# The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Customer Purchase Intention among the Fashion-Wear Customers in Sri Lanka

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*Abstract-* **Social media provide new varieties of communication between marketers and consumers. The amount of information available to consumers' increases day-by-day, resulting in being expose to different types of information via social media. Most of the marketers want to find some way to follow their target audience with a small period. Customers make use of information published on different social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter and, Instagram as a guide for their future purchases. When considering about the purpose of the study, mainly this study target to give information and knowledge for future researchers and people who are interested in fashion. Moreover, how the Facebook impact on purchase intention among customers is also concentrate in this study. Furthermore, this study important for academic purpose and which use for business purpose also. This research also has some limitations. The main limitation is less number of availability of past researchers. Moreover, less concentrate on how the Facebook impact on fashion wears customers is also considering as a limitation of this study.**

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## I. Introduction

"The media has got huge development within the past years. Recent statistics indicate that the number of users accessing the internet exceeds two billion four hundred thousand, i.e., 34% of the world's population"(Mangold and Faulds, 2009). The advantages of social media have transformed traditional one-way communication into multi-dimensional, two-way, peer-to-peer communication (Berthon and Campbell, 2015). According to the past researchers, 70% of consumers have visited social media sites to get information, 49% of these peoples have made a purchase decision based on the information they found through social media sites. (Deiworldwide.com, 2008). Social media communication is a one of the best opportunity for small businesses to market their product and services with minimum cost. "This research try to fill a gap in the literature and concerning to understanding the effects of firm-created and user-generated communication on social media (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016).

When considering the fashion industry, marketing is gaining ground in recent years, in terms of both business-to-consumers and consumers to consumers, the latter is evidence through the growth in the sample size. Facebook flea markets (Sihvonen and Turunen, 2016). "Recent reports maintain apparel retailers' websites are powerful drivers of online sales; In the United States, for example, online apparel sales for 2008 versus 2007 increased to $26.6 billion, which exceeded both computer and automobile sales; Estimates U.S. online sales will rise by 17% to $204 billion in the near future" (Park *et al.*, 2012). Social media marketing is good opportunity for individual small businesses to enter the market. E.g:, Vivy Yusof's dUCkscarves is a luxury brand and has gotten worldwide attention ever since it came out; Sophia Amoruso's Nesty Gal is online fashion wear and faster-growing retailer in New York; Zara is a major international fashion-wear retailer. Moreover, most of the ways fast fashion 'principles, provides evidence in which retailers source globally.

However, in Sri Lanka, social media the most valuable thing for marketers and customers. For example, when it's come to Sri Lanka 65.88% Facebook accounts, 9.1% of Twitter accounts, 3.97% of YouTube users & 1.69% Instagram accounts (*Statcounter*, 2019). According to this analysis, Facebook is the most prominent marketing site. Because most peoples in Sri Lanka link with Facebook. In witnessing the increase of the fashion industry, the retail market is prefer to grow by 50% of the number of pieces made or displayed and sold (Sunimalee Dias, 2011).

### *a) Social media marketing*

According to the past research articles, they investigated social media activates positively affected organizations profitability. Furthermore, they mentioned, how social media effect to various industries includes fashion-wear.

According to the UK study, "A powerful tool of social media is differentiating e-commerce from social commerce; social commerce is the use web 2.0 applications to support that users to the acquisition of

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service and product" (Liang and Turban, 2011)Individuals can market their product through the online (Chen, Xu and, Whinston, 2009).

Based on Australian study, the Internet reaches a potential audience of over 11 million users of which more than 70% use a social network; Facebook has over 6 million registered users and Twitter has 800,000 registered followers; that active users reading blogs grew from 54%-77% within two years (*Comscore*, 2009) Hover Italy study investigate, "Social media allowsfirms to achieve many goals that go beyond simply having a direct relationship with customers; For example, these include recognition of new business opportunities, delivery of commercial and institutional content, collection of customer feedback and the creation of communities" (Michaelidou, Siamagka and, Christodoulides, 2011). The important role is social media developing strong market knowledge and data required to deal with competitive challenges have been quickly relocated from published and proprietary sources to open social platforms (Bharati, 2015).

*b) Facebook marketing*

Through the development of technology, most people have a Facebook account. Therefore, it becomes a new element for a marketer to attract customers. Among the Facebook communication, marketers can influence consumer behavior, create awareness, and build trust. To compare with the current market trend, every luxury brand has their own Twitter account or Facebook account (Converse, Victoria secret, Adidas Originals, Nike football, Zara, Levis, Burberry) (Gautam and Sharma, 2017) .

In additionally when compare with Thailand study, joining a Facebook fan page and its simple activities have impact to a rather high popularity on numerous valuable fast-fashion brands social network platforms (demonstrated as the number of "likes"), the lack of fans actual and long-term engagement still remains a problem that may harm the brand-customer relationship (Pöyry, Parvinen and Malmivaara, 2013). Additionally, fast-fashion brands via company-hosted Facebook fan pages, using the survey data collected in Taiwan where the Facebook using rate gets high value 83.8% (*Internet world stats*, 2016)."Fans continuance intention of usage in the context of company-hosted Facebook fan pages may influence on the performance of organizations, including sales, future purchase and potential value of community members who might be non-buyers at present" (Pöyry, Parvinen and Malmivaara, 2013).

However mention in USA study, Facebook advertising consists of multiple forms of advertising including officially sponsored advertisements on the right column of each profile page, explicit promotional messages by companies or brands and implicit product placement or promotional posts endorsed or shared by ordinary Facebook users (Jin and Ryu, 2018).

*c) Online fashion-wear industry*

Most of the users are using different online formats to communicate the audience. Fashion-Wear is a very specific and high involvement product in every country.

According to the Taiwan study, scholar's analyses,"Businesses implement online marketing strategies to achieve their marketing objectives" (Chiang, 2013).

When considering the UK study in 2003, these include access to a wide audience, cost savings, direct communication, increased personalization with the consumer and the web sites will be available to consumers on every day.(Jones and Biasiotto, 2002). It recognized that costs incurred by established retailers in attracting web customers are lower than those for online-only operators (B, Barsh. JCrawford.B and,Grosso, 2000).Furthermore, Hong Kong study investigated in 2008, consumer behavior suggests that consumers behave and perceive value differently in an online environment than in an ofline because of C to C interactions (Chan and Li, 2010) and they task-specific use of online shopping (Overby and Lee, 2006).

However, USA study, concerning shopping in an online environment has typically stressed the relevance of the functionality and accessibility of the online platform and website (Jiang, Yang and, Jun/ 2013)and e-trust (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2003).However the role of the fashion industry, e-WOM is increasingly gaining importance as more and more fashion houses are selling their products online, and recognizing the importance of e-WOM (Kim and Ko, 2012).

When compared with Bangladesh study, Online platforms such as blogs, customer's online reviews, and social networking websites are consumers to discuss and share information regarding various aspects of fashion clothing" (Rahman and Mannan, 2018).

*d) Firm-created social media communication on customer purchase intention*

Presently, most of the companies are taking advantage of web 2.0 technology by using social media communication to market their brands.

According to the Poland study (2015) investigated companies are now aware of the imminent need to focus on developing a personal two- way relationship with consumers to foster interactions (Li, 2011).Firm-created social media communication is include in the companies promotion mix" (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

In contrast, traditional firm-created social media communication has recognized as a mass phenomenon with an extra demographic appeal (Kaplan and



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Haenlein, 2010).“Although the firm created social media communication is increasing, it is still a relatively new practice among advertises” (Nielsen, 2012).This popularity of the implementation of social media communication among companies can be explained by the viral dissemination of the information via the internet (li, 2010) and greater capacity for reaching the general public compared with traditional media (Keller, 2013).

Consumers require instant access on demand to information at their own convenience (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

This study understanding the firm-created Facebook advertising how customers influence purchase intention and how companies involve for reach customers through Facebook marketing. When considering the conceptual framework is an impact on firm-created Facebook marketing communication how influence in customer purchase intention. Firm-created communication is the dependent variable in customer purchase intention.

*e) User-generated social media communication on customer purchase intention*

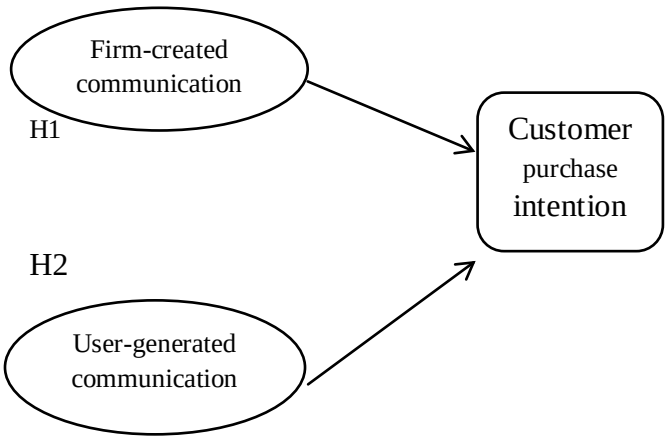
According to the USA study, “the development and growing popularity of these sites has led to the notion that we are in the Web 2.0 era, therefore user generated communication has more priority for interaction with other customers and get information(Winer, 2009). “The Internet and Web 2.0 have improve consumer behavior in the information and purchase process” (Daun,Gu, 2008).

In additionally UK study investigated, “The increase of online brand communities and social networking sites, has influenced the improvement of user-generated social media communication” (Gangadharbatla, 2013).

When an address in Poland study, "UGC is focusing on the consumer dimension, which is create through the general public more than by marketing professionals and is basically distributed on the internet”(Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016).User-generated content is a benefit of practical processes for marketers to communicate managers and can use UGC to pool the ideas of interact with consumers while keeping communication costs low compared to traditional channels (Krishnamurthy and Dou, 2013).Moreover, UGC and e-WOM are related to consumers and brands, with no commercially oriented intentions and not controlled by companies; UGC also suggested that consumers involve to the process of content applying for reasons such as self-promotion, intrinsic enjoyment, and desires to change public perceptions (Berthon and Campbell, 2015).

This study focuses on user-generated Facebook advertising on how customers influence purchase intention and how they are involved in reaching customers through Facebook marketing. When considering the conceptual framework is an impact on user-generated Facebook marketing communication, how to influence customer purchase intention. User-generated communication is the dependent variable in customer purchase intention.

## II. Conceptualization



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## III. Hypothesis of the Study

The following hypothesis was develop according to the conceptual framework,

*H1:* Firm-created Facebook communication positively influences customer purchase intention in Sri Lanka.

*H2:* User-generated Facebook communication positively influences customer purchase intention in Sri Lanka.

*H3:* There are differences between firm created and user-generated Facebook communication on customer purchase intention in Sri Lanka.

## IV. The Significant of the Study

This study contributes towards advancing knowledge in online fashion-wear in firm-created and user-generated businesses by showing the effect that Facebook communication has on how consumers perceive brands and consequently on the online fashion-wear purchase intention. Furthermore, in evaluating past study can identify more advantages in online fashion-wear industry. In UK online sales of fashion have increased to account for 24% of total spends in 2017, up from 17% in 2013; "Over the next five years, the online fashion market will continue to see strong double-digit growth, with the market forecast to increase a further 79% by 2022, reaching just under £29 billion." (*Mintel press office*, 2017). The internet is a more different shopping medium and it is use for a new set of rules and expectations between the online shopper and the fashion retailer (*Business and management horizon*, 1997). "These have ability to announce the wide audience, increase the cost savings, direct communication improve the personalization with the consumer and the web sites will be available to consumers on every day" (Rowley, 2011). "It is recognized that costs incurred by established retailers in attracting web customers are lower than those for online operators" (Rao, 2000). "Additional value-added features offered to the online shopper include in-depth product information, two-way communication, demonstration of products and services in real time and up to date online information" (Rowley, 2011).

However, when consideringthe academic side there are fewer numbers of research doing in the fashion-wear field. Sri Lankan fashion retail sector is creating a home for retailers where growth and success are in the forefront, less amount of research has been done so far to asses different issues involved in the industry (Ranaweera H.R.A.T and Halwatura R.U, 2014).

## V. Summary

The fashion industry has more awareness among the people. With technological development, online fashion becomes a new trend. This study tries to understand how the importance of customer purchase intention regarding user-generated communication and firm created communication. Conceptual framework based on two dependent variables; they are firm-created communication and user generated communication. Independent variable mentioned as customer purchase intention. In additionally focus on what are the benefits gains from user generated and firm created. The sample based on a probability sampling method and distributing online survey through Facebook to gather data. The size of the sampling is 300 Facebook users who are, using regularly Facebook. After that, using SPSS for analyze data which was gather.

## VI. Limitations

There was limited time for gather information, which is relevant to the research proposal and lack of availability of the previous study in Sri Lanka.

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