

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND BRAND IMAGE ON CONSUMERS ATTITUDE TOWARDS SINGLE-BRAND APPAREL RETAILERS

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Abstract

This study investigates the effects of social media marketing and brand image on consumers attitude towards single -brand apparel retailers to meet consumers response. A total of 175 respondents from three private banks in Yangon were surveyed through the structured questionnaire instrument with this respect. Both the correlation and regression were evaluated. Results reveal that customers are achieved approach behavior with the affective evaluation by providing the social media marketing (interesting content, scenario-based experience and user participation interaction). Regression analyses confirm that scenario-based experience and user participation interaction positively have significant effect on consumer internal evaluation; moreover, affective evaluation have the positive effect on customer response. Therefore, this study suggests that the single-brand apparel retailers need to provide positive interaction with the customers to achieve deep interaction and participation with social media marketing and brand image provided by single-brand apparel retailers.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Brand Image, Affective evaluation and Response (Approach and Avoidance Behavior)

Introduction

Nowadays, Social media can be seen as effective communication channels for marketers to attract the customers. Marketers deliver the valuable information of the products easily while direct interaction with the customers. (Song & Yoo, 2016) developed that social media is concerned with influential web-based communication channel that present the communication activities, particularly in marketing. Social media allows both the customer and seller to contact in a virtual platform and exchange the relationship among people (Gretzel & Dinhopl, 2013).

It can be created the communication network by using social media to capture the consumers with different contents to achieve the experience by exchanging information and sharing knowledge (Khang et al., 2012). In this transformation era, social media plays the vital role of online shopping. As the click and motor store developed, customers received the product information in a save time from the social media and then efficient and effective communication achieve to buy and sell the merchandise through the internet (Huang & Benyoucef , 2015). Social commerce is a new approach for every business to achieve competitive advantages (Hajli, 2014).

Nowadays, social media is important for every business organization through the marketing strategies (Song & Yoo, 2016). The study develops the effect of social media marketing activities and brand image on response through the consumers attitude. It also examines how these factors influence the consumers response (approach or avoidance) behavior through the affective evaluation. The importance of socisal media had already been established in several research. Social media proponents mentioned that social media influences brand attitudes, and consumer response. Previous studies revealed that Social media positively influences consumer purchase

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decisions in reputable markets (Abzari et al., 2014). Social media marketing activities are more effective rather than traditional media (Hoyer et al., 2010).

Consumer brand image and brand attitude is an important research topic in consumer behavior. Accurately grasping consumers' attitudes towards their own brands helps companies to tap the needs of consumers. Brand attitude is the trust and brand dominance of consumers towards a certain brand. A comprehensive evaluation of a brand's ability to meet its needs and goals. Consumer attitude towards the brand is perception and emotional feeling of the brand value provided by marketers. In an assent, attitude towards the brand refers to cognitive thinking and emotional feeling of the stimuli of marketers through the social media. There are three elements in concerned with the attitude towards brand: cognition, emotion (affective) and behavioral intention. Scholars have analyzed the relationship between these three elements. These three elements effect with each other such as affective-cognitive sequence and cognitive-affective sequence respectively. In the study, it is developed the effect of social media marketing on consumers response (approach or avoidance behavior) through the internal evaluation (affective evaluation).

Rationale of the Study

These days, there are a lot of single-brand apparel retailers in Myanmar and the numbers of these stores increasing over time. This study aims to examine the consumers' attitude toward single branded apparel retailers. Single brand apparel market is a booming in present time because the numbers of such retailers are increasing year by year. Although there were few single-brand apparel retailers in the mid-1990, nowadays its numbers are increasing to 36 shops.

Even though retail branding is one of the most main current developments in the retail industry, few studies have been focused on retail branding in the apparel sector. This study focuses on the effect of social media marketing on consumer behavior through internal evaluation (affective evaluation) towards single-brand apparel stores. To achieve this, this study aims to understand consumer perceptions of social media marketing delivered by the single-brand apparel retailer.

Objectives of the Study

To analyze the relationship among the stimuli, organism and response, the specific objectives of this study are developed. Accordingly, the objectives of the study are:

1. To examines the effect of social media marketing on affective evaluations and cognitive evaluation towards the single-brand apparel retailers
2. To analyze the effects of cognitive evaluations and affective evaluation on approach or avoidance behavior towards the single-brand apparel retailers

Method of the Study

In this study, both primary and secondary data are used. The required data for this study were collected from the consumers who shopped at single brand apparel retailers two-stage stratified random sampling methods from the three banks (KBZ bank, CHID bank and MTB bank among 27 banks in Yangon. Structured questionnaires were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative primary data. Primary data were used to explore the consumers' approach and avoidance behavior. The secondary data were collected from the sources such as internet websites, journals, books and documents that have conducted by previous researchers. The sample size of

the study was 175 respondents from the three banks (KBZ bank, CHID bank and MTB bank among 27 banks in Yangon. The research model was tested applying a multiple regression.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study only focused on consumer attitudes towards the single brand apparel retailers and utilized the stimulus organism and response (SOR) framework. In this study, there were 175 respondents to analyze the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables. The variables were social media marketing (interesting content, user participation interaction and scenario-based experience), affective evaluation of the store and response (approach or avoidance behavior).

The limitation would be that this study tested only in the context of single-brand apparel retailers which adopting social media marketing. Besides, the proposed model was tested only in the context of single-brand apparel retailers. Attention has to be paid when generalizing the findings to other sorts of retail stores or product categories. The social media marketing of the single-brand apparel retailer catering to a particular customer segment might be perceived differently from social media marketing within other apparel retailer catering to a different customer segment. Moreover, this study did not measure any certain cognitive evaluation (e.g., perceived quality, perceived price) and affective evaluation (e.g., pleasure, arousal).

Literature Review

Relevant literature related to marketing activities through social media marketing, consumers' attitude (cognitive and affective evaluation) to approach or avoidance behavior in the case of apparel products are compiled and presented as follows:

Social Media Marketing

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is a connection network of marketers to meet customers awareness through the internet with the effective content and short video. Social media marketing is also defined as the use of social media channels to promote a brand and its products as a subset of online marketing activities with traditional web-based promotion strategies combining technology, social interaction, weblogs and exchange of user-generated content (Kim & Ko, 2010; Laksamana, 2018). As a result, it can be created branding concept through social media marketing while the marketers provide the information as the stimuli to engage consumers and enhances brand image so as to meet customers response (approach behavior). Along this line of discussion, it can be concluded that the single-brand apparel retailers emphasized on social media to capture the loyal customer and to achieve competitive advantages. Hence, customer interesting in the single-brand apparel retailers can be engaged with positive emotional feeling.

Chen and Rodgers (2008) argued that marketers need to create interested and entertained content to dominate and arouse. Rose (2013) In content marketing, it needs to provide the information of short video with useful and interesting. Short video marketing often builds real-life consumption experience through consumers expected brand value. Today, it can motivate the target customers by providing the message with internet while these customers can dissatisfy with receiving stimuli.

Brand Image

Wells et al. (2011) developed that brand image is concerned with consumers' emotional evaluation which have the positive influenced on consumer' response (approach behavior) (Hutteret al., 2013). Moreover, it exists brand recall and recognized through the brand awareness that can meet the consumers' desire to purchase (Yasmin &Buzdar, 2017). With regard to Keller's brand equity model, brand image is consumers' perception of brand association provided by marketers while the brand image plays the vital role in consumers' response. The brand equity is the consumers' responses with regard to preference and differentiate perception of the marketers' stimuli such as social media in which grow the brand image. As a result, consumers perception towards brand image with regard to the providing the differentiate stimuli of social media can increase consumer approach behavior (Rahman & Haque, 2011; Yasmin & Buzdar, 2017;) evaluation).

Consumers Attitude

Consumers' attitude means the perception or opinion of consumers about a product that is determined through market research (Suh & Youjae, 2006). Proponents of the brand attitude stated a approach response through preference emotional feeling with stimuli of social media. It can be achieved the consumer response through the social media. (Abzari, Ghassemi, & Vosta, 2014). Attitude is concerned with internal evaluation. Scholars have founded two forms of individuals' internal evaluation states which were caused by the physical environment, namely cognitive and affective (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Zeithaml, 1988).

Affective Evaluation

Emotional state or affective evaluation is an assessment if an object is pleasant, attractive, valuable, likable, or preferable (Russell & Snodgrass, 1987). Mehrabian and Russell (1974) postulated that any atmosphere could supply creating and generating various emotional states in a person. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) proposed three elements for the emotional states which were built in a person's mind: pleasure, arousal and dominance, which were also known as the PAD framework. The three elements generally depict the organism aspect of the SOR framework. The 'pleasure' assesses whether a person perceives the atmosphere as pleasant or not. The 'arousal' assesses how much the atmosphere encourages a person. The 'dominance' pertains to if a person feels dominant (in control) or submissive (under control) in the atmosphere (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974).

The Response (Approach or Avoidance Behavior)

Response is related with the psychological reactions like attitudes and behavioral reactions of customers (Bagozzi, 1986). Approach is the willingness to remain at the store, keep buying and enthusiasm to stay for quite long time. However, avoidance behaviors were related to negative reactions comprising an aspiration to leave the store and not return (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Approach-avoidance behaviors were the actions causing from an individual's internal states. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) argued that approach behaviors consisted of physical approach, work performance, exploration, and social interaction. Turley and Milliman (2000) asserted that atmospheric cues led to a particular behavioral response by the customer, for instance, time consumed of consumers in the store, items examined, information acquired, and satisfaction. Besides, Donovan and Rossiter (1982) stated a number of responses related to a retail setting,

containing the volume of items bought, time consumed and money used at the store, and whether the shopper enjoyed the store atmosphere. Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) presented five proportions of behavioral intention: intention to be loyal, tendency to switch, disposition to pay more, external response to problem, and internal response to problem. Donovan and Rossiter (1982) stated that approach behavior and the related behavioral intentions were influenced by consumers' emotional responses to an atmosphere within an environment.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

In this section, proposed research model was developed in concerned with the participants characteristics and consumers' internal evaluation. Figure shows the proposed research model of the study.

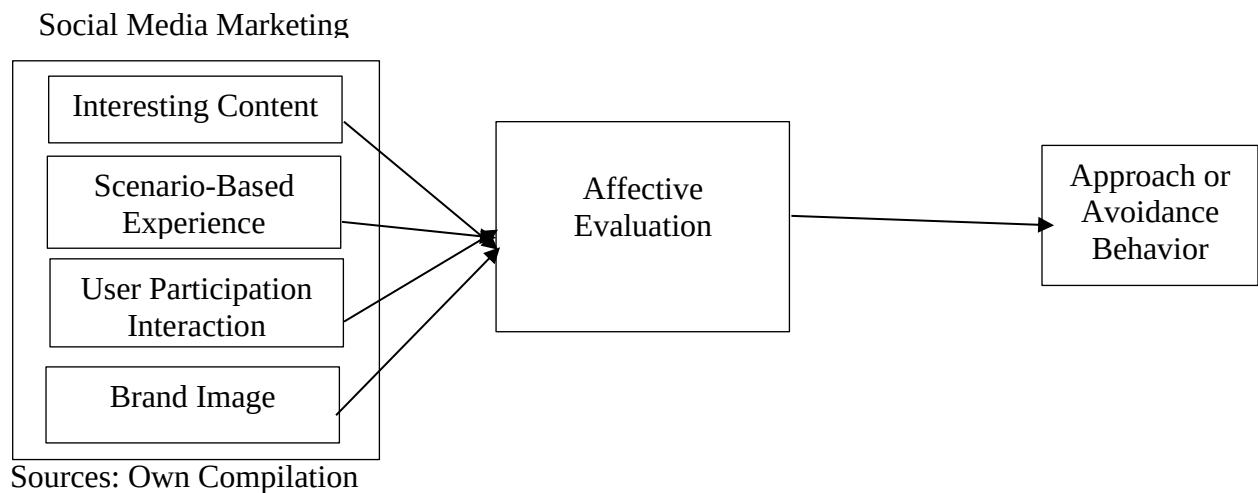


Figure: Conceptual Framework of the Study

In the course of testing the relationship between variables, the study generates the theoretical contribution. The study needs to investigate whether the influence of social media marketing on consumers attitude to meet the consumers response (approach or avoidance behavior) is existed or not because social media marketing is important in studying the consumers attitude. In the conceptual model of the study, the independent variables are social media marketing (interesting content, Scenario-based interaction and user participation interaction). Moreover, dependent variable is customer response through the customer internal evaluation sates (affective evaluation).

Analysis of Reliability of Consumer Attitudes

The measurement scales employed in this study were adapted from the literature and, in some cases, modified to be tailored to the single-brand apparel retail context. The questionnaire was composed of six sections.

Table 1 Reliabilities Test of Items Used in the Main Survey

Constructs	Number of Items	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha
Interesting Content	10	0.709
Scenario-based experience	10	0.731
User participation interaction	5	0.671
Brand Image	7	0.935

Constructs	Number of Items	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha
Affective Evaluation towards store	8	0.877
Approach or avoidance behavior	8	0.782

Sources: Survey Data (2024)

As shown in Table 1, it can be found that the Chronbach's alpha value for all scales items are acceptable with the cut-off value of 0.65, indicating high reliability and thus it can be expected that scale items used in this study will produce reliable data.

Correlation Matrix of the Items

In this section, the correlation matrix of the variables was analyzed to identify the presence of highly correlated variables. As shown in the correlation matrix table, there are correlated between variables identified in the study: interesting content, scenario-base experience, user participation interaction and brand image. There is also low correlated between the independent variables.

Table 2 Correlation Matrix

Contracts	Interesting Content	Scenario-Based Experience	User Participation Interaction	Brand Image
Interesting Content	1.000	0.046	0.083	0.063
Scenario-Based Experience	0.046	1.000	0.644	0.018
User Participation Interaction	0.083	0.644	1.000	0.026
Brand Image	0.063	0.018	0.026	1.000

Sources: Survey Data (2024)

The calculated value of correlation coefficient for independent variables (interesting content and scenario-based experience is 0.046, interesting content and user participation interaction is 0.083, user participation interaction and scenario-based experience is 0.644, then it can be concluded multicollinearity is not considered as a significant problem.

Empirical Analysis of the Effect of Social Media Marketing on Consumers' Internal Evaluation and Response towards Single-Brand Apparel Retailers

In this section, social media marketing are considered as independent variables and consumers response is considered as dependent variables through customers' internal evaluation. When estimating regression coefficient in concerned with the effect of Social Media Marketing on Consumers' Internal Evaluation and Response towards Single-Brand Apparel Retailers, it was calculated regression coefficient, standard error and significant 'p' values presented as follows.

Table 3 Effect of Social Media Marketing on Affective Evaluation of Single-Brand Apparel Retailers

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.519	1.913		3.688	0.000
Interesting Content	-0.044	0.078	-0.039	-0.557	-0.578
Scenario-Based Experience	0.246**	0.117	0.193	2.102	0.037
User Participation Interaction	0.210***	0.082	0.235	2.566	0.011
Brand Image	0.127**	0.055	0.162	2.321	0.022
R			0.424		
Adj R ²			0.160		
F Value			9.331		

Sources: Survey Data (2024)

Dependent Variable: Affective Evaluation

According to the Table 3, adjusted R squared value is the percentage or the value that indicated how the independent variables can explain the dependent variable. The adjusted R-squared value of the current study is 0.1600. Therefore, 16% variation of customer satisfaction can be explained by social media marketing. Moreover, F value is 9.331 which indicates that the model is less error and significant.

Based on the regression analysis, the effect of scenario-based experience on affective evaluation is found to be positively significant ($B = 0.246$) with 5% significant level. This implies that a greater level of scenario-based experience can increase the affective evaluation. Moreover, the effect of user participation on affective evaluation has the significantly influenced with the standardized coefficient ($B = 0.210$) with 1% significant level. This implies that customers emotional feeling can be much enhanced if the retailers provide its experience. In concerned with the effect of brand image on consumers affective evaluation, there is positive effect with the standardized coefficient ($B = 0.127$), 1% significant level. It can be concluded that the best consumers brand image can increase consumer affective evaluation.

As this result, the retailers can provide well train staff and preference service to achieve customer interaction with brand recall and recognize from the pleasant emotional feeling.

Analysis of the effect of Affective Evaluation on Customer Response

In this section, consumer affective evaluation is considered as independent variables and customer response is considered as dependent variables. The regression model is estimated by using backward method to examine the effect of affective evaluation on customer response. When investigating the significant factors, the calculated 't' values for each coefficient is examined. The calculated 't' values are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 The Effect of Affective Evaluation on Customer Response

	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.242	0.173		7.168	.000
Affective Evaluation	0.417***	0.041	0.582	10.134	.000
R			0.835		
Adjusted R ²			0.694		
F Value			198.223		

Sources: Survey Data (2024)

Dependent Variable: Customer Response

According to Table 5, affective evaluation have the positive effect on customer response at 1% significant level. The affective evaluation has regression value of 0.417. The variable is significant at 1% significant level. F value is 198.223 which indicates that the model is less error and significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that the more the retailers used the successful qualify social media marketing, the more the customers achieved customer response through the positive emotional feeling and cognitive thinking.

Findings and Discussion

This study offers several contributions that can help single-brand apparel retailers which want to appeal to more customers and increase patronage (approach behavior). It can be concluded there is approach behavior. As expected, scenario-based experience and user participation had significant influence on affective evaluation. In the current study on response, it can conclude that social media marketing has the positive effect on customer response through affective evaluation. This means that customer response is due to social media marketing (scenario-based experience and user participation interaction rather than interesting content) because of reasonable information-inference from the preference or positive emotional feeling. This implies that customers emotional feeling can be much enhanced if these retailers provide social media marketing such as scenario-based experience and user participation interaction rather than interesting content.

Conclusion

The conceptual framework for this study aims to understand attitude towards single-brand apparel retailers. The model explained the relationships among social media marketing and consumer response through the internal evaluation (affective evaluation). This study found that the retailers can maintain the customers through the affective evaluation by providing the appropriate scenario-based experience because affective evaluation is more influence rather than cognitive evaluation on consumer response. In concerned with social media marketing, scenario-based experience is the most influencing factors on affective evaluation. It is also essential for the retailers to build the preference experience of customers. Similarly, even if social media marketing meets the customer's expectations, the customer perceives the banks to be satisfactory that will lead the approach behavior.

Limitation and Needs for Further Study

First limitation would be that the study analyzed only in the context single-brand apparel retailers. Second, attention must be exercised when generalizing these findings to other types these retailers. Third, the social media marketing within these retailers catering to a particular customer segment might be perceived differently from others. Fourth, this study did not measure any specific cognitive and affective evaluation. This section attempts to explain the requirement for further study. Firstly, this study only focuses on consumers' attitude towards single brand apparel retailers.

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