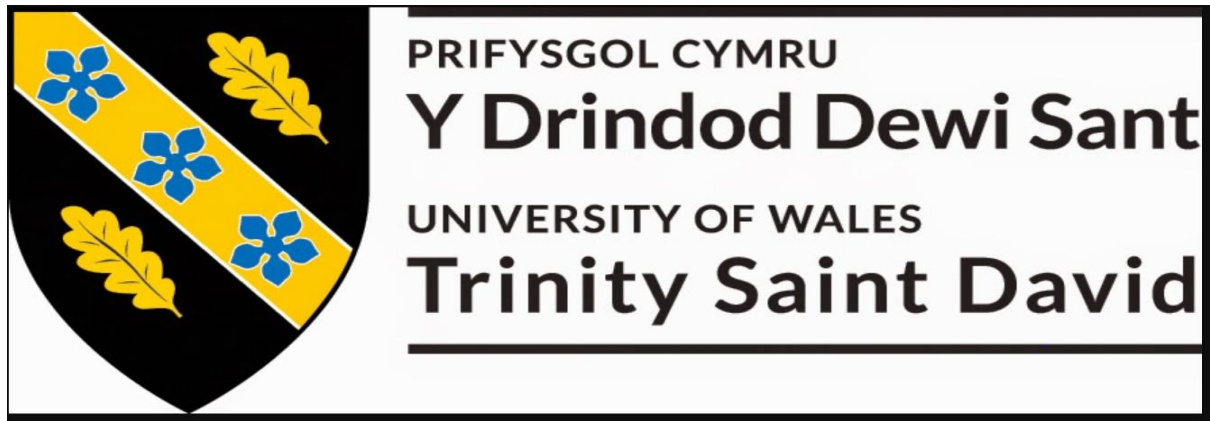




**Investigating the impact of social media marketing
strategies on consumer behaviour in Sri Lankan clothing
industry**

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Part One

01 Abstract

Today, the traditional marketing strategies converted to the new era of marketing and thereby turned the marketing world towards social media platforms. On the social media sites, users are interchanging and interconnecting to share their perceptions, experiences, reviews, beliefs about the products and services and they would like to get more information. Thus, this influence on the companies and they must realize the significant of implementing their marketing strategies on the social media.

This exploratory research study is distillate on facebook and Instagram social platforms as it is broadly used social media in the Sri Lanka (StatCounter Global Stats,2019). Therefore, this research design to investigate the impact of social media on consumer behaviour in clothing industry according to the Sri Lankan context. The main goal is to identify the consumer behaviour towards social media marketing and the four objectives were developed to add value and improve Sri Lankan clothing industry.

Qualitative research methods incorporate with this research study to have a real and in-depth understanding about the concept. Interview and observation data collected methods will facilitate to gather real and reliable data. Literature review will enhance the understanding more about the phenomena and to prove the empirical findings relating to the concept.

Finally, this study delivers key important points to companies to develop and implement their marketing strategies in the social media platform to achieve their marketing goals in effective manner and it is a green light to open their eyes to create value addition and value creation through innovative way.

02. Introduction

2.1 Overview

With the effect of information and communication technology revolution and rapid growth people are more engaged with the social media sites and they live with the new world tendencies. As a result, social media usage has increased worldwide, and it impacts the society. Facebook is the third most popular websites in the world and no 1 in Sri Lanka. A recent study investigated that 86.65% Sri Lankans use Facebook and 13.11% other social media platforms like Pinterest, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and reddit(Social Media Stats in Sri Lanka , 2019). Hence according to the Sri Lankan context Facebook is the most influential social media platform as 86.65% engaged with Facebook. (Please refer figure 1.1.1). Nevertheless, Facebook owns Instagram, and which is directly linked between each other. Therefore, author will consider Facebook and Instagram as social media channels in this research study.

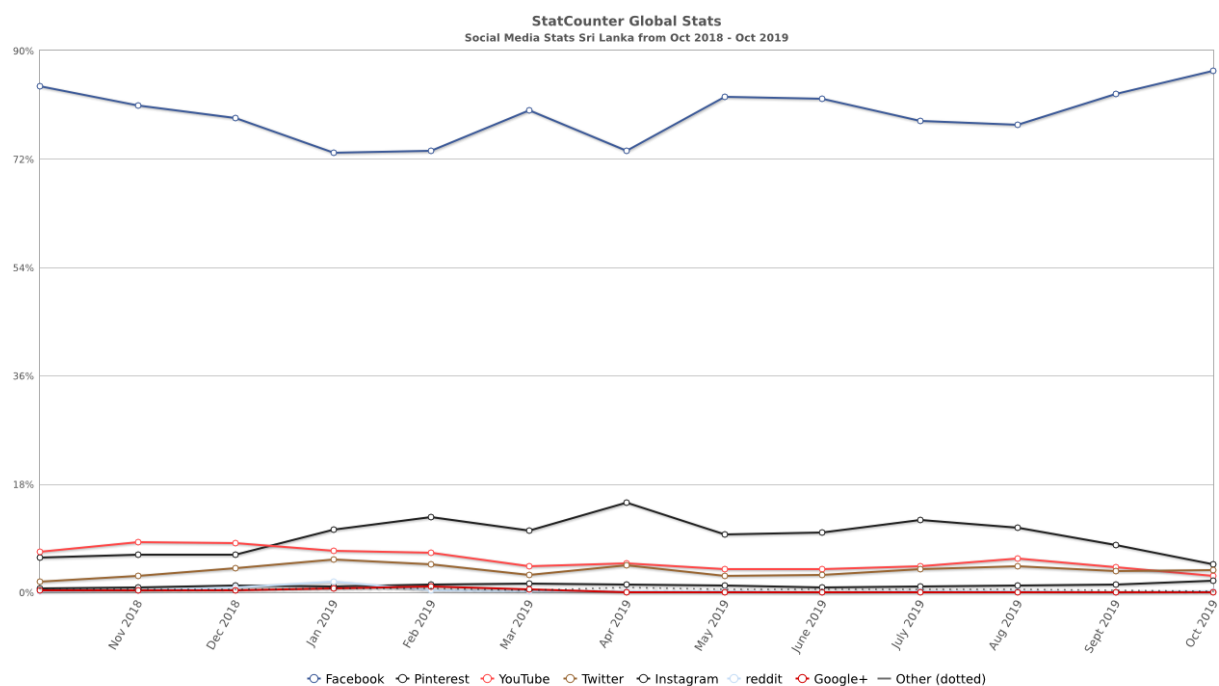


Figure 1 Social media usage in Sri Lanka

Source: (Social Media Stats in Sri Lanka , 2019)

Sri Lankan clothing industry is the largest contributor to the economy, country's leading exporter and creating 33% employment in the country. This has huge impact to the nation and increase its sales every year with the use of innovative marketing techniques (International Trade Administration, 2019). Although marketing environment transformed from offline marketing to online marketing. As a result, organizations essential for online existence to be successful in the market. The problem is to identify how to circumnavigate

the social media activities and techniques to be successful as a company. This requires implementing virtuous social media marketing strategies to improve company performances and create sustainable competitive advantages. (Wilson Ozuem, 2016). On the other hand, it is vital to identify the consumer behaviour towards social media marketing. According to the Blythe (2013) consumer behaviour is an actions or activities when people consuming, locating and disposing products or services.

Therefore, this research study investigates the impact of social media marketing strategies on consumer behaviour in Sri Lankan Clothing Industry.

2.2 Rational of study

2.2.1 Problem Statement

Even though clothing companies in Sri Lanka use online marketing techniques via social media, the influence of those endeavours are not discovered relevant to the Sri Lankan context. Nevertheless, when it comes to customer behaviour towards social media marketing strategies only few research studies have been done; and, most of the research studies carried out in a quantitative manner through an online survey. Hence, those research studies failed to discover the hidden insights of the consumer behaviour towards social media marketing. Furthermore, social media marketing strategies can also target business customers (resellers\ B2B), who act as resellers. Thus, the influence of social media marketing on business customers endeavours are not sufficiently discovered, almost all the researches are only captured end consumer behaviour towards online marketing. Therefore, the influence on social media marketing strategies on consumer behaviour in Sri Lankan clothing industry is needed to be further explored.

2.2.2 Research Questions

- 1) How are social medias used as a marketing strategy in Sri Lanka?
- 2) What are the relevant effective marketing strategies used and how is this impacting on consumer behaviour in Sri Lankan clothing industry?
- 3) How is the role and extent of social media marketing strategies perceived by the main stakeholders?
- 4) What are the common challenges and constraints faced by the clothing industry's in Sri Lanka?
- 5) What are the lessons learned from the past investment and activities, successes and failures, related to marketing strategies and what recommendation can be made?

2.2.3 Aims and Objectives of the study

This research study aims to comprehend the insights of consumer behaviour under the context of social media marketing in the Sri Lankan clothing industry. Besides the main objective of this exploratory study is to investigate how social media influence on consumer behavioural intention and their attitudes towards marketing strategies in the Sri Lankan clothing industry.

The above broad objective is further broken down in to detailed objectives to understand it further.

1. To understand relevant effective marketing strategies used and how is this impacting on consumer behaviour in Sri Lankan clothing industry.
2. To reflect the role and extent of social media marketing strategies perceived by the main stakeholders.
3. To critically explore the common challenges and constraints faced by the clothing companies in Sri Lanka.
4. To explore the lessons learned from the past investment and activities, successes and failures, related to marketing strategies and to make recommendations.

2.2.4 Scope of the study

This research study will be confined Sri Lankan social media users (Facebook and Instagram) who engage with five most active and dominant clothing companies such as; Kelly Felder, Odel, Zigzag.lk, Nils and GFlock (refer figure 2).

Name of the company	Facebook Followers	Instagram Followers
Kelly Felder	595,313	95,400
Odel	882,766	124,000
Zigzag.lk	547,420	74,400
Nils	498,000	47,700
Gflock	559,827	6,109

Figure 2 Facebook and Instagram followers in Sri Lanka for most famous clothing brands

Source: Author created based on page (Facebook and Instagram) followers

This research study is a comparative study considering the gender, cultural differences, geographic areas relevant to the Sri Lankan clothing context. Furthermore, this will consider paid and free marketing strategies. Therefore, the scope of this research study will consider the above five social media platforms and, also both paid and unpaid marketing techniques.

2.2.5 Significance and beneficiaries

Understanding the consumer behaviour intention towards social media will facilitate current marketers, researchers and companies to discover social and practical consequences of the online platform usage among the clothing industry in a more comprehensive manner. This study benefit companies to find out customer insights and to implement their marketing strategies accordingly. Moreover, this will also add value to gain new knowledge about the consumer behaviour of Sri Lankan online clothing industry to entrepreneurs who wants to enter to the industry. On the other hand, it is vital for the social media companies to use the new customer insights from this to create their platforms to attract more companies. Further potential marketing researchers can use this knowledge to the future marketing development.

2.2.6 Hypothesis

1. Most influential social media marketing strategies directly impacts consumer behaviour.
2. Social media marketing strategies assist customers to choose correct product and it positively influences customer decision intention in relation to the Sri Lankan clothing industry.
3. Influential social media marketing strategies will positively assist companies to attract more consumers
4. There is a positive impact of social media marketing strategies on consumer behaviour in Sri Lankan clothing industry

03. Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with the theoretical background of the social media marketing and consumer behaviour as to get the basic knowledge about the subject area and then it moves to the discussion areas with the empirical evidence. This aims to identify the academic insights to ensure and to support to recognise the findings, facts relating to the research area.

3.2 Theoretical background

3.2.1 Social media

Initially social media sites were developed to connect with people to other people and like-minded people to find community. Current social media has become more than making friends and community, it assists connect people to journalists to breaking news, ideas, politicians to citizens, students to teachers, employers to jobs, business to customers, consumers to advertisers, and local to global. All of these are because social media is a platform of far reaching and increasing the influence on the society (Albarran, 2013).

Social media is a technological system database platform that combine public with personal communication (Meikle, 2016). Bodnar and Cohen (2011) states that social media provides opportunity or new way to reach more people to share ideas, get more knowledge, connect with your prospects and identify the worlds trends. On the other hand, it has its own disadvantages as well; personal details can be hacked, fraud and scams can be happened, security issues, cheating and relationship issues etc. However, it is also found that it is the best way to connect with people for low cost, get information updates, social welfare platform, creates innovation and awareness, create business ideas and improve the reputation.

Social media revolution has changed the society, companies and the customers. The internet usage and the expected usage increased from 54 per cent of the world now and over 90 per cent in many counties. In this case it is viral to understand the grown level to consumer behaviour in real time including their interests and demographics. As a result, world marketing strategy has moved towards to social media or digital marking approach (Kingsnorth, 2019).

3.2.2 Importance of social media and social media marketing Strategies

Traditional media marketing such as; TV, radio and newspaper are one-way marketing technique and costly, whereas social media marketing is quick and more effective marketing tool (Zarrella, 2009). Social media has captured the interest of marketers, businesses, consumers and advertisers. Social media is essential for advertisers and marketers. Companies and entrepreneurs are using social media to find start-up capital in innovative and new ways. Therefore, social media is a game changer. Hence it is vital to identify and implement social media marketing strategies to achieve its marketing objectives (Albarran, 2013). Supporting social media create platform for companies to market their products and services in an innovative way and to reach to the target customers and strengthen customer relationships (Kingsnorth, 2019). Social media marketing strategy is a plan or set of activities carried out by the company to achieve on social media. This help to achieve marketing objectives of the company and facilitate to promote the brand awareness and brand engagement across the world (Zarrella, 2009).

Consumer generated content (CGC) is important social media tool as it allows companies self-published content in the online world. This means online information shift from publisher- centric to consumer- centric. This strategy helps companies to communicate and reach to mass audience (Moriuchi, 2019). Social media is a brilliant marketing platform for companies. Thus, the cost is very low, easy to get started and it facilitate massive financial support and impact on company.

Emphasized that strategy is where company wants to be headed and it is viral to create social media marketing strategy to achieve its marketing goals and to make profits. Social media marketing strategy can create by identify company goals on social media, identify target audience, how to share company product details and where to share when to share. The overall social media marketing strategy of a company consist with facebook, Instagram, twitter and linkedIn marketing strategies (Kingsnorth, 2019).

Nevertheless, marketing strategy models can be implemented in the companies to achieve their social media marketing goals (Kingsnorth, 2019).

Model	Summary
The 4 Ps	The established marketing model
Porter's five forces	A view of competitive positioning
Brand positioning mapping	Analysing your perceptual positioning
Customer lifetime value	Understanding true customer value
Segmentation, targeting and positioning	Understanding the customer
Boston Consulting Group matrix	Product categorization

Figure 3 – Marketing strategy models

Source: (Kingsnorth, 2019)

3.2.3 Consumer behaviour

Consumer behaviour is heart of the marketing concept. There is no business without customers, since everything is driven by customers and to satisfy their needs. If a company wants to success they need to identify what customer wants and to ensure that is available in the right time, right place and the price is matching with their wiliness to pay. This entire foundation is based on customer behaviour. Therefore, it is important to understand the consumer behaviour (Blythe, 2013).

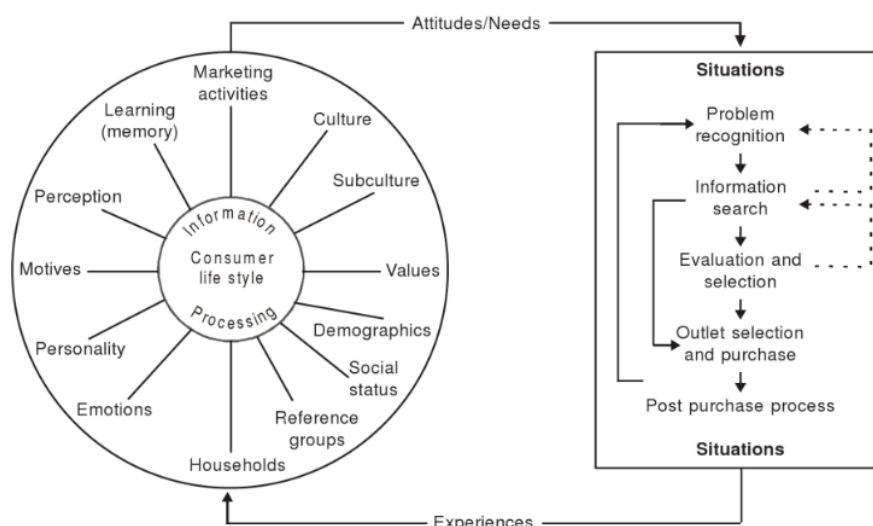


Figure 4 – A framework of consumer behaviour

Source: (Khan, 2007)

According to consumer behaviour is set of activities which involves process of choosing, finding information, purchasing, using and disposing a product or service. Share information about the product and service and comment about it with the other consumers can be seen on the social media platforms (Moriuchi, 2019).

3.2.4 New Era of marketing

Traditional marketing techniques has changed to innovative influence marketing tools as which focus on key individuals and group of individuals rather than whole market. It identifies the individuals who has influence over potential buyers and orient marketing actives towards them. The companies concentrate to satisfying customer needs by identifying their insights and fulfil those needs before their competitors do (Brown, Fiorella, 2013).

As a result of social media platforms, customers are sharing their post purchase behaviour with the others using new way of marketing tool called, electronic word of mouth technique (e-WOM) (Ismagilova, Dwivedi and Slade, 2017). Besides, in the social media marketing traditional 4 P's concept has changed to 5 P's by adding 'Participation' as it is a two-way concept. These changes influence contemporary marketers to use social media platforms for their marketing campaigns. Thus, these changes have guided traditional marketing approach to new era of marketing (Dodson, 2016). Marketing in the new era is determined by developing social media tools such as social media networks, inter-market networks, opportunity and vertical networks. This concept has increased the complexity of the market. Innovation is play viral role as innovation of products/ services, distribution and promotion. Customer driven promotion deliver better value to get the attention from the customers. Which assist for two-way communication as customer can share new ideas and company can react to it by providing innovative products and services (Miryala and Reddy, 2015).

3.3 Empirical evidence

3.3.1 Role and extent of social media marketing as a marketing strategy

Social media is rising and new tool in the marketing world. It done through the internet and it effectively adopted by the companies and international business worldwide. Its scope is expanding in the world (Tripathi and Rai,2019). Social media is growing beast, ever evolving and that continues to spread its antennae deep in to the business processes. It shows the direction to travel to the modern business world and social media revolution has changed the customer behaviour and the business process. Many companies moved towards for creating their marketing strategies on social media platforms and digital marketing activities. Thus, social media marketing is an essential part of all marketing activities. This includes customer relationship management, communication, value creation, brand, product development, creative direction, pricing, direction, proposition and the entire marketing mix (Kingsnorth, 2019). Erdogmus and Cicek (2012) articulates that social media marketing is different from the traditional marketing and it involves special commitments and strategy building to achieve marketing goals. Social media is a tool of relationship marketing where organizations need to shift from 'try to sell' to 'make connection' with the customers. Organizations can save money from the big traditional campaigns and stick with small post, adds on social media since it can reach lot of customers and accomplish objectives in very short period.

Moreover, Saravanakumar and Lakshmi (2012) declares that social media change the society and it directly impacts on organizations where firms need to implement correct social media strategy and plan to connect and win the customers. Social media plays a fusion role in the marketing mix. It allows to communicate with the customer as two-way conversation and ensure to satisfy their needs by achieving company goals. Social media has change extent of the company from traditional marketing strategy to growing social media marketing strategy. It permits companies to establish communication channels with its customers, build brand awareness and equity, market their products and services in an efficient way. Supporting, Vries, Gensler and Leeftang (2012) declares that social media marketing increase company's revenue creation and decrease cost by reducing the staff and time by increasing customer interactions through transactions, recognition management. It encourages two-way communication and it is more effective as both seller and buyer can share their views. On the other hand, Saravanakumar and Lakshmi (2012) argues that this may lead to negative brand image as dissatisfied customers share their views against and protest out loud. Therefore, it is important to identify the role of social media and develop best social media marketing strategy to achieve company goals. Social media marketing objective brand awareness, brand engagement and word of mouth. Below figure shows how companies can implement social media strategy.

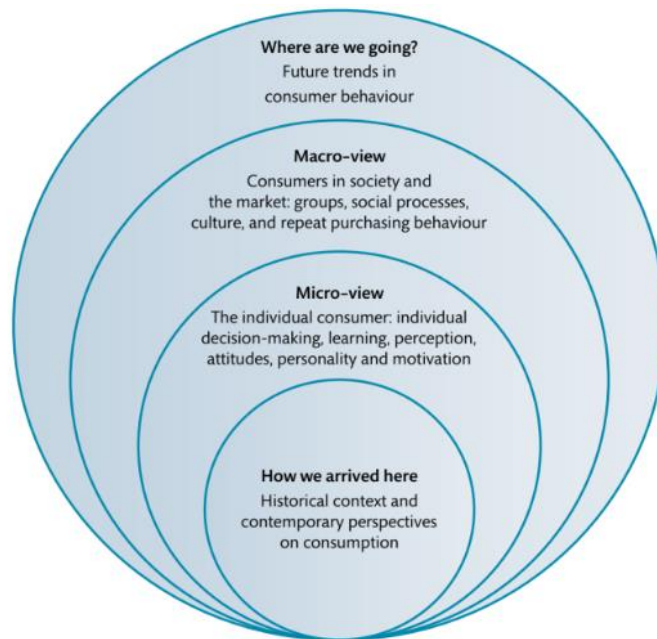


Figure 5 – How to approach customer behaviour

Source: (Szmigin and Piacentini, 2018)

3.3.2 Consumer behavioural intention

Social media marketing has positive influence on consumer behavioural intention and it consist of buying intention, readiness to recommend the product to others (Lee, Fiore and Kim,2006). The research findings of Hijli (2013) indicate that trust, perceive usefulness and intention to buy affects consumer behaviour towards social media marketing.

Husain,Ghufran and Chaubey (2016) states that customers behave differently, some value the quality and some are concern with the price of the product or service, when it comes to social media customers are more considerate about the company behaviour, the way company care about the customer, communication, respect, value and the relationship with customers. If the social media marketing tools are interactive, informative and reliable, then the customer behaviour intention is positive, and it affects positively on their buying behaviour. According to Kim and Ko (2012) the purchase intention is very important, which means combination of customers' interest in a possibility to buy the product. It is strongly related to preference and attitude towards a product and brand. Further identified that brand equity, value equity, relationship equity, purchase equity and customer equity positively influence for the customer purchase intention. Moreover Kingsnorth (2019) identifies, trust and consumer behaviour intention, perceived usefulness and behaviour, brand familiarity and advertising value (informative, entertainment, credibility, Irritation) are the main customer behavioural intentions.

3.3.3 Customer attitudes towards social media marketing Strategies

Customer attitude towards social media marketing has been highest focal topic among the business world. The social media usage is rapidly increasing, and companies develop their marketing strategies towards to improve customer base and creating customer-oriented approach. Therefore, it is essential to identify customer behaviour. Most of the researchers identified that online buying behaviour and the decision-making process; where as new identification of behavioural intention is building trust and confidence (Tripathi and Rai,2019). The research findings of Hoffman and Fodor (2010) indicates that social media marketing develop 4 C's ; creation, connection, consumption and control to motivate customer and it lead to gain higher return on investment of marketing investments. According to the previous research studies of Kim and Ko (2012) female young age (20-35) people are more towards social media and they show positive attitudes towards social media marketing.

3.3.4 Challenges and constraints of social media marketing

Social media build brand awareness, create new opportunities, share information among the sellers and buyers and it is an effective communication method for companies (Asencio, 2015). On the other hand, there are several constraints and challenges in the social media marketing. Adeyinka (2014) identifies these constraints from his research study. They are; **not having proper effective social media marketing strategy**. Social media market is dynamic and competitive, and customers are knowable therefore it is needed to have a best marketing strategy to be successful. **Focusing on the quantity not the quality**. Some marketing concepts attract more customers towards their page but most of the customers are not the right target customers. Therefore, social media marketing tools should identify the correct or quality customer base not the whole unnecessary market. Being **Non-responsive**. Social media promotions hit to large population and when they ask questions relating to the product or service company should respond immediately if not it will lead to dissatisfaction. According to Heggde and Shainesh (2018) negative reaction of the customers towards the social media advertisements, lack of consistency, high competition and new competitors easily can enter in to the market, easy to copy and imitate the products and services and government rules and regulations are impact negatively on social media marketing

3.3.5 Impact of social media marketing on consumer behaviour

A new era of content creation has emerged with the rise in social media where individuals can share product/service experience and information with others. Thereby content sharing is good tool to attract new customers. Online business will be based on communities and it facilitate organizations to create better customer relationship management system. Companies can do posting on their social media platforms (facebook page, instagram page) and which influence consumers' intention to buy. It provides opportunity for companies to become more attractive universally.

04. Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This section describes how this research study will undertake based on philosophical designs and theoretical assumptions. Similarly, this defines the epistemological position implemented in the research study. Therefore, this section specifies rationale for the methodology, chosen approach of this research study. Nevertheless, this will further explore research limitations, validity and the ethical consideration.

4.2 Research Philosophy and Approach of the Study

Research philosophy describe researcher's opinion about the world, where as how they see the world according to their aspects, and which impacts on the research perspectives. On the other hand, it is focus on the nature of reality from the researcher's point of view (Yan-Yan Chen, 2011). The ontological orientation of this study is "interpretivist" as it assists to generate in-depth understanding through interpretation and explanation rather than prediction and quantities. Therefore, researcher desires to deeply understand the consumer behaviour intention. Supporting Klenke (2008) emphasized that interpretivist research is dedicated to the broad philosophy of social construction, reality is constructed through meaningful understandings. Therefore, the goal of this research study is to understand and interpret the subject through descriptive analyses that highlights deep, interpretive understandings of phenomena.

Nevertheless, this study will be based on inductive research approach rather than deductive approach as researcher will generate new theory emerging from the data through in deep understanding of the subject area. Mark S, Glynn (2009) affirms that inductive approach more towards to the critical theory and realism paradigms. Hence researcher will collect data towards to develop theory. On this basis, this research study will be based on qualitative strategy to accommodate to find out the influences which cannot be translated into number-based reasons. The focus of this to identify the insights of the consumer behaviour towards social media marketing through an in-depth investigation. Supporting Heit (2007) stressed that deductive validity is not describe in complete terms but only relative to a logic. On the other hand, expressing the validity is relative to a logic and be a positive point in terms of flexibility and the appreciating that there is no universal agreed single logic. Therefore, deductive approach is subjective.

4.3 Research Design

According to Hoskins and Mariano (2004) research design is a plan of action to conduct the research and it is a function of research questions to be answered. Maxwell (2005) emphasized that good research design assist to achieve research goals, objectives and it effectively reach to the research destination. Since the aim of this research study is to understand the customer behavioural intention, this research will take one direction to answer the set research questions. The main goal of this research study is to identify the most dominate social media marketing factors which influence in customer behaviour and to find out real insights of the consumers. Hence the research objectives will consider deeper to explore to gain in-depth understanding of the situations surrounding the customer behaviour, exploratory investigation process will adopt in this. Leavy (2017) states that exploratory design can fill a gap in knowledge about a under researched, new topic, or approach the topic from a different perspective to create emerging and new insights. This contribute further investigation including the development of an appropriate methodological plan relating to the research topic and conduct interviews to explore the attitudes.

Nevertheless, exploratory design allows to define the problem or opportunity in more precisely, increase the understanding of the issue, generate ideas, provide insights, identify variables and levels of variables and establishing priorities for future research and generate data through interviews and observations (Silver, Stevens, Wrenn and Loudon,2013)

4.4 Research Strategy and Instruments

Research strategy provide procedures, logic to answer research questions, where several methods are available of some of which are; experimental, grounded theory, case study, ethnography, survey, action, archival (Blaika,2009). Survey and observational methods are adopting in this qualitative research study as it was found as useful in finding of the facts by interviewing, observing and the way questioning the customers' behaviour. Silver, Stevens, Wrenn and Loudon (2013) affirm that effective qualitative methods may support by eliciting descriptions, nonverbal indications and unconscious thoughts that lead to the research problem. It is conducted in a natural setting and the underlying assumption is that human create their own reality and that description, observation of the reality is the only way to understand the human behaviour. Besides qualitative method association with observation and survey method of data collection. Therefore, qualitative method can be defined as naturalistic in approach and depending on observation, categorization and description.

This research study is based on exploratory research design and incorporate with qualitative study. whereas interviewing method and observational methods will use to collect primary data. In this research study, interviews will select as the main data collection instrument.

Silver, Stevens, Wrenn and Loudon (2013) stressed that interview is one of the best ways to attain desired clarifications, insights and hypotheses by interviewing the respondents to gain real findings and the unique perspective of the subject. According to the Mathers, Fox and Hunn (2002) interviews are usually used in the exploratory study. Out of three types of interview methods, semi-structured interview will adopt on this study where interviewee can express his/her views as it will help to understand hidden areas of the research questions.

Furthermore, observation method also will adopt in this research study to observe the online customer behaviour over four months of period, where previous researchers disregarded this method due to time consuming. Amertunga, Baldry, Sarshar and Newton (2002) confirm that observation method is best suit to emphasise the importance of human meanings, interactions and interpretations; where the phenomenon can investigate through obscured from public view; where it is contentious, and the assumptions can be made by observing the behaviour. Therefore, this will be best suit to observe consumer behaviour.

Eventually a pilot study will carry out prior to the main data collection as to test the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument to certify the effective response rate.

4.5 Data Collection

Research cannot be undertaken without data. In the research process, data assist to answer research questions and to achieve objectives. Quality of the research is determined on the quantity, adequacy, quality and appropriateness of the data used in the research process. Researches use effective data collection methods based on the nature of the research study, cost in term of money and time also availability of the data to access (Pawar, 2004).

Both primary data and secondary data will be collecting in this research study. Secondary data will collect from the published sources, mainly data collected through specialized search engines and academic data bases such as UWTSD's electronic library catalogue, google book, googleschaloor and the other articles, journals. The main primary data collection method is semi structured interviews where author prepares a list of standard and pre-determine questions and unstructured random questions to identify the real insights. In the first section of the interview, author will ask general and demographical questions to identify the background of the responder.

Nevertheless, author will conduct observation process to generate more facts relating to the research questions. To observe social media behaviour of five clothing fan pages (refer figure 1.1.1) author collect details over four months of period. This include the facebook and Instagram behaviour; postings, stories and the other promotional options and consumer reactions towards them.

4.6 Population

Research population is group that have under the research project with the required common characteristics of the interest of the researcher or certainly related to the research (Jha,2014). There are 5,283,000 people use facebook and 850,500 use Instagram in Sri Lanka (napoleoncat, 2019). The whole population of this research study consist of the whole population of people who engaged with five clothing fan pages which indicates in the figure 2. The target population is the selected customers who engage with those five fan pages.

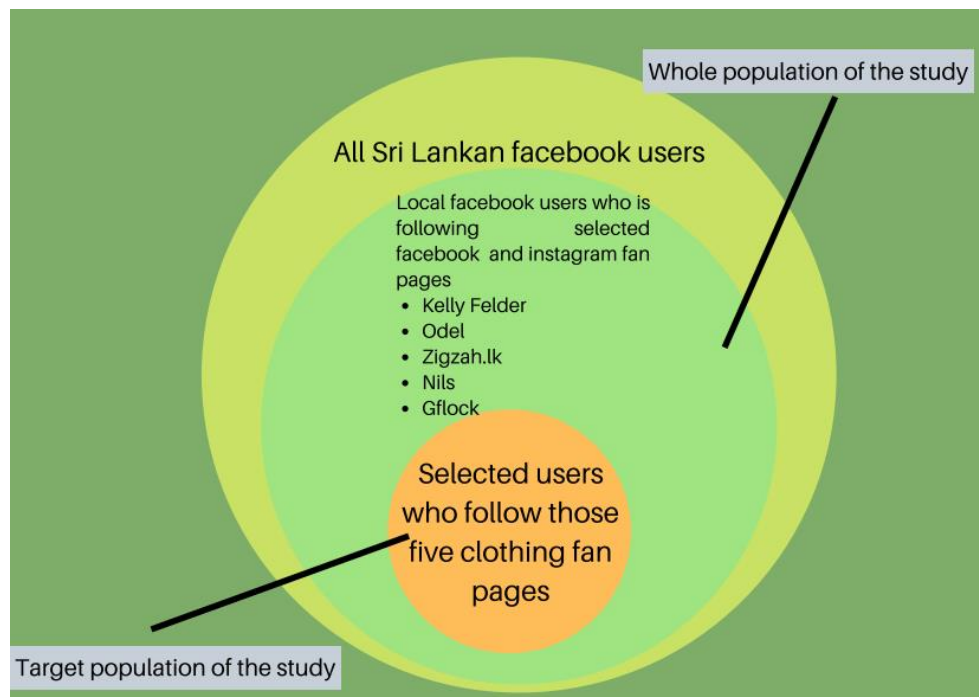


Figure 6 - whole population and the target population of the research study.

4.7 Sampling Technique

A sample is a selected portion from the whole population of the research (Jha,2014). In this kind of social media research, non-probability sampling method will adopt because in the social media it is not possible to access to the random participants through this entire population. Convenience and snowball sampling methods will appropriate under the non-probability techniques according to the social media context. Researcher will interview the people who has access to the researcher in convenience way. Therefore, convenience technique will adopt in this research study. Nevertheless, convenience sample method generates high, accurate and reliable data. Supporting, Gravetter and Forzano (2011) states that in this method, people are selected based on their availability and willingness to respond therefore they will provide factual statements and reliable data.

Author will create request google form by asking convenience time and date to have one to one interview with the people who engage with those five fan pages. Author will send this

to 200 people to get positive reply from at least 150. Will target to conduct 100 successful interviews to get the real insights of impact of social media marketing on consumer behaviour.

4.8 Ethics and Human Subjects and Data Management Issues

4.8.1 *Validity and Reliability*

Validity is important in the research process as it is useful to distinguish between external and internal validity. Internal validity depends on the fact of statements made about the relationship with dependent and independent variables. The external validity refers how to generalize the research findings or ability to apply the outcome of the study to other settings. These factors can be included to identify the validity of the research study; data collection process, data measurement process, data selection methods, sampling process should do without any biases (Cargan, 2007). Research reliability is where consistency of research measurements (Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger, 2005).

In this research author will consider two main threats, the researcher bias and the respondent bias. The researcher will carry out this research process transparently without any negative influences by the researcher or the respondent or other outsiders.

4.8.2 *Research Ethics*

Research ethics refers to standards, applications, decisions make and research planning process, research conducting process and the reporting the results in a right and acceptable way. Researches should follow four practical ethical principles such as; objectivity, truthfulness, relevance and thoroughness to carry out the research in an ethical way (McNabb, 2004).

In this research study, author will communicate the purpose of this research study with those five companies to get their details and to publish them in the research. Author will not publish the security and confidential data of the companies without their approval. A similar approach will undertake for the participants, data protection and participant confidentiality highly maintain and will not publish name of the participants. Likewise, they can withdraw from the process at any given time without any problem. Finally, respondents can make any comments, recommendations, issues and researcher will not force them to answer in any way as they have 100% freedom to answer and give their views. Data will protect using security file in the authors laptop with password system.

05 Data Results and Findings.

5.1 Data Analysis

The interview finding will present as common themes which emerged from the openings gathered from the responders. Framework analysis will adopt on this. Firstly, familiarization of collected data findings, identifying them under the thematic framework, implement and analyse according to the coding and charting the relevant details finally interpret the data to draw conclusions.

5.2 Summary from the Literature

Social media marketing is very powerful and effective strategy to any company. According to the above findings, social media is two-way communication method as it provides window to market the product or service and to get customer suggestions and grievances. It Identify and recognize new and international opportunities to promote the products. Social media marketing is less costly, and it reach to the massive audience in short time period. It is also found that there are many challenges in social media marketing. On the other hand, there are contradictory findings also was presented. Thus, it is vital for new exploring research to be investigated to find the actual consumer behaviour towards social media marketing under the qualitative methods. Most research have carried out under the quantitative way as internet-based questionnaire method. Since it is behaviour and behavioural factors are dynamic in nature. Therefore, this qualitative research add value to the topic.

07. Conclusion

This research study is based on the qualitative methods and which means researcher can identify the real and in-depth understanding about the impact of social media marketing on consumer behaviour in Sri Lankan clothing industry. According to the literature social media marketing is the most effective marketing tool as it has its own advantages. The world is growing day by day and as an impact everything is going to be digitalized. Hence companies should understand the role and importance of social media marketing to be successful.

It is also suggested that importance of social media marketing strategy. Firstly, companies need to identify what they want to achieve through social media marketing and how they going to achieve it. Identify the customer needs and world trends towards developing marketing strategies, analyse customer comments, views and feedbacks, reaction for the competitions create appropriate plan or set of actions to promote brand awareness, brand equity, trust among the customers. Moreover, it is important to peruse customer behaviour towards social media marketing. It is found that 70% customers of the western countries buy products online as it is very easy and get more information in short time period, most of the customers check prices and the details of the product on social media without going to a physical shops and social media selling stores make high profits than the physical stores.

In this study author has generate findings relating to the first three objectives through a comparative literature sources and final objective will be discussed through observational study and the empirical evidence. Nevertheless, this research study can achieve its objectives by carry out the qualitative process where identify the actual scenario by interviewing customers and observing the behaviour. No research study has found regarding an investigating the impact of social media strategy on consumer behaviour in Sri Lankan clothing industry. Therefore, this research study is very important to the Sri Lankan clothing industry as well as the other developing countries.

However, this study is only considered five companies in Sri Lanka and five best companies in Sri Lanka. One can argue that this research findings are only help to the top clothing companies and cannot relate it to the other industries. Thus, it is more effective this study can incorporate the low performances companies to get the better understanding about the real impact and the situation in the Sri Lankan clothing industry. Furthermore, the observation study will conduct only four months of period and customer behaviour will change according to the seasons, as an example customers do shopping specially on the Christmas season and researcher will miss that time period if she observe only four months period and it is suggest that to do the observation over the 12 months of period to get the real findings.

As a future research direction, this research study can explore in another country and another industry or combine industries. This research will point out important facts if the researcher can do mixed methods rather than quantitative way as it can be proven with the numbers.

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Part Two

Reflective Essay

When we do a research, we cannot find answers without proper knowledge development. Hence research approaches play a vital role in any research. The research approaches provide guidance to carried out the research. After developing a research topic, questions researcher needs to design how to answer or achieve research objectives. The research approaches show the road to walk and find end results.

On this study, research topic is concern with the human behaviour and it is not easy and reliable to measure the human factors through quantitative manner. Qualitative method is designed to explore and investigate the human factors and best suit to understand the factors that cannot be translated to the numbers-based results. The results from the qualitative findings are interacted with the researcher, therefore it is important to carry out the research by ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings. Nevertheless, qualitative methods are helpful to develop ideas, views and perceptions by investigating the insights into the problem. This is a market research method as it assists to identify not only the factors also why, how, what are the reasons behind them. Therefore, the qualitative methods allow to address the scenario in-depth and comprehensive way to understand the feelings and facts to make correct decisions that can dive towards to achieve best conclusion. There are several qualitative methods use to collect data; interview, ethnographic research, focus groups, record keeping, case study research and the observations. Supporting Neergaard and Ulhoi(2007) states that qualitative method is a multi-method in focus, naturalistic approach to its subject matter and involving in explanatory way. Thus, the qualitative researchers understand things in their natural settings, investigate and interpret phenomena in terms of the human aspects an in the subjective way. Qualitative study method involves collecting data through empirical materials, personal experience, life story, observations, introspective, interviews etc.

Author adopted interview and observation methods as they provide real insight of the human behaviour towards online marketing.

On the other hand, quantitative method allows to gathered data from large sample size and analyse them using mathematical methods to find the exact answer. This method facilitates to identify the relationship between variables and explaining the phenomenon. Qualitative research is a systematic investigation of concept by gathering measurable data and quantifiable data to make reliable conclusion. The quantitative research models are objective, and the results are logical, unbiased and statistical.

Author has selected qualitative methods for her research study, but qualitative method is subjective and can-not get the exact answer neither definite conclusion relating to the phenomena. Sri Lankan clothing industry is huge, and it is a developing country therefore it is more effective if author can incorporate with quantitatively methods to get the reliable answer. In support social media is on the internet and internet-based questionnaire is more

effective than doing two qualitative methods, and it is time consuming where data collection will take more than five months. However, the research topic is based on the human behaviour and the qualitative aspect is needed.

Nevertheless, in the doctoral level the main aim to conduct successful research by using appropriate methods without finding easy systems to get the answer. Quality of the research is important then the quantity. Thus, it is good to select the method based on the research subject to identify the real insights of the research problem. Therefore, is it more effective if author do mixed methods where data collection will be based on questionnaire and observation of fan pages to get the real understanding and the knowledge of the concepts.

There are many differences between qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative methods incorporate with the numeric data and the qualitative methods are based on human factors which is non-numeric data. Qualitative researches rely on small group to gather data whereas quantitative researches collect data from large population. Qualitative methods are on inductive basis and quantitative methods are on deductive basis. Nature of the qualitative research is holistic, and the quantitative nature is particularistic. Subjective approach incorporate with the qualitative research and objective approach will use in the quantitative research. The objective of the qualitative research is to discover and explore the ideas used in the ongoing processes and the quantitative objective is to examine effects and cause relationship between variables.

On the other hand, both methods use in the research to find out the results and identify real issue and achieve research objectives. Thus, there are similarities in these methods. Qualitative pursue to understand why and how it happened and the specific situation where as quantitative measures the mathematical results to predict the possible outcomes of the research. Meaning qualitative focus on 'why' and whereas quantitative focus with 'what'. Nevertheless, in both method data required to get the research findings and both primary and secondary data considered, and both produce data to analyse. Eventually both methods are very important to understand in the doctoral level where both have own advantages and disadvantages, Therefore, no one can say that one method is good and other is bad because the application of the method is based on the selected topic and the outcome or research questions and the objectives.