

# Social Media Platform and Apparel Sector: A Relative Analysis of Select Online Apparel Brands.

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## Abstract

***Don't use social media to impress people; use it to impact people."***

***- Dave Willis***

Social media is having a momentous impact on digital marketing, as firms are now competent to sell their products virtual. Every brand in almost every area recognises the prospective of social media. Fashion brands, of course, are no exception. Furthermore, in this age of increasing social media usage, businesses must implement well-targeted social media strategies to build relationships with customers. Consumer engagement and brand awareness are both boosted by social media marketing. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the influence of Facebook content posted by five online apparel brands on consumer trust. Consumers' desires for self-gratification, as well as their level of engagement and participation with a company, influence how they behave online. A multiple linear regression analysis is used to examine the impact of an organization's total number of posts, as well as the number of reactions and comments, on consumer trust. The study found a link between trust and the number of posts, comments, and reactions.

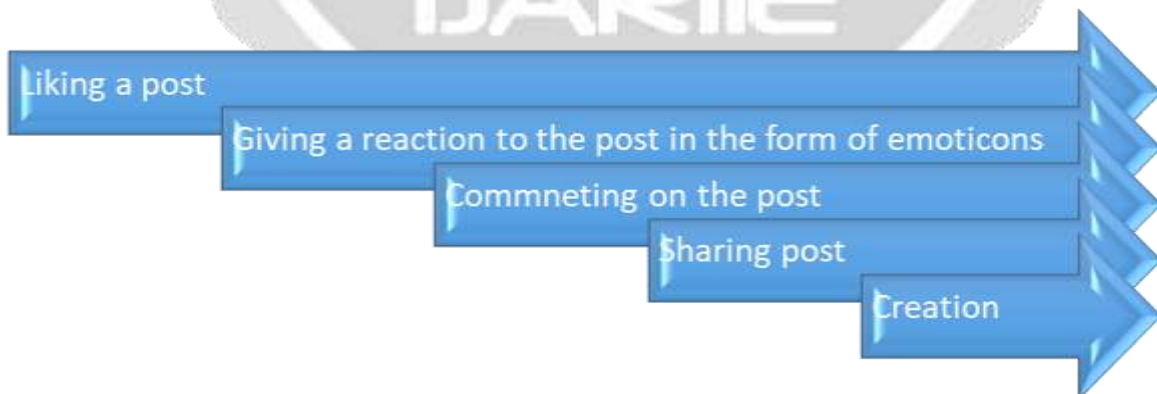
***Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Apparel Sector, Trust, Digital Marketing, Multiple Regression Model etc***

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## Introduction

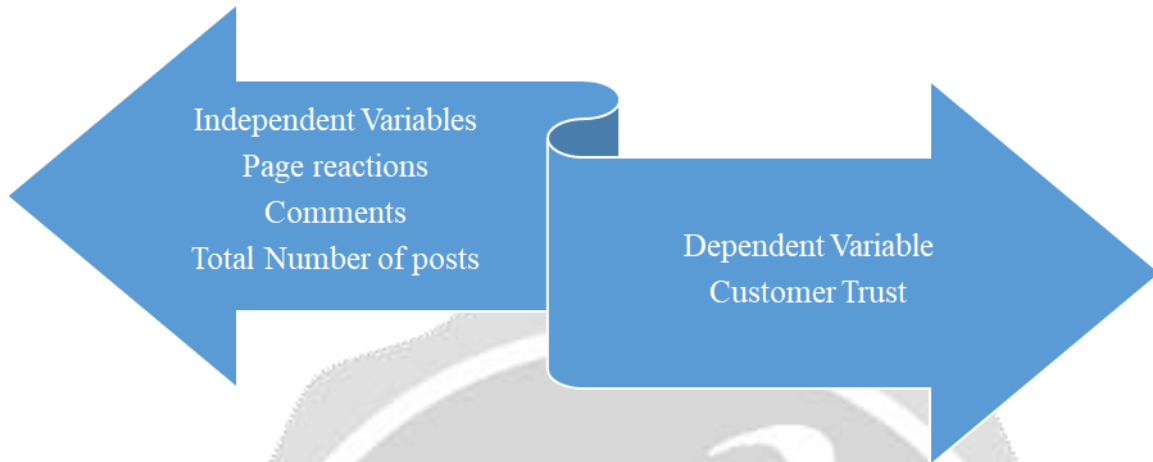
Social media marketing is a logical progression that has been adopted by an increasing number of businesses in recent years. This increases the number of points of contact between businesses and their customers. Companies who have not adopted social media are always lagging behind their competitors. Consumers today are computer savvy individuals who enjoy sharing their thoughts with their peers at the touch of a button. Brands have benefited greatly from platforms like Facebook, which have provided major marketing, branding, promotional, and selling options. People are selling directly through Facebook pages and communities, converting even a customer into a seller. Consumers can freely give feedback, show their reactions to a post or product, and share their thoughts with their peers on these social networking networks. They can also express their dissatisfaction with the companies. These social media sites are a goldmine of unstructured data, and sentiment mining, netnography, and social network analysis may all be used to extract important insights from it. The growing number of Facebook users has given marketers permission to exploit the platform to strengthen consumer-brand ties. Online apparel shopping has become a popular pastime among young people all over the world. Several online apparel firms have grown and expanded as a result of this. Craftsvilla, India Rush, Stalkbuylove, Voonik, and Limeroad are the five online garment brands investigated in this paper. Using social media analytics, the article investigates how Facebook might be used to build consumer trust. When a company posts content on Facebook, it creates a certain level of engagement with the consumer. In Fig 1, the levels of consumer engagement on Facebook encompass:

1. **Liking a post**-If a consumer scrolls down his Facebook newsfeed, he/she may 'like' content which catches his/her attention. This is a mild level of consumer engagement.
2. **Giving a reaction to the post in the form of emoticons (Love, Anger, Sad, etc)** - Facebook introduced a series of emoticons which enabled consumers /individuals to not only share their 'liking' for a piece of content, but also their anger/sadness towards the same. Certain consumers may actually bother to share the exact nature of their emotion towards a brand, by using emoticons showing anger or even love.
3. **Commenting on the post- Words play a bigger role than emotions.** A consumer, who is more engaged with a brand, may go beyond *liking* to *commenting* on the content created by the organisation.
4. **Sharing post** - Highly engaged customers may bother to *share* content created by an organisation. This is indicative of consumer trust, in an organisation.
5. **Creation**- Customers who have moved beyond a state of *engagement*, to a state of *involvement*, may actually get involved in co-creation and even create content for an organisation.



**Figure1: Levels of Consumer Engagement**

A customer will only share a post if he feels a connection to the brand. When a customer progresses from a state of engagement to one of involvement with a firm, he may even share the company's content.



Hence the following independent variable become important in this context-

- Page reactions (likes, emoticons depicting laughter, anger etc.)
- Comments (on an organisational post by a consumer) and
- Total number of posts (indicative of volume of content).

These are used to measure the impact on trust: a dependant variable, measured by the number of times the content is shared by the consumers. In this paper, a relative analysis has been conducted on select five brands across the above independent variables. A multiple regression analysis was conducted for this purpose.

### Literature Review

**McCarthy (2013)** in his study “The Effects of Social Media on Fashion Consumption.” revealed that Social Media has changed the way in which people not only communicate but also how firms reaches its customers. The study highlighted the four major social media outlets dominating the market namely Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram, which would benefit the business organizations to focus on creating their sites. There has been a significant impact on the fashion industries by the introduction of online social media in the recent years. Quantitative and Qualitative Research was conducted for the study which included personal interviews and surveys. These social media networks allowed significant opportunities for business growth and innovation. The study provided the fashion retailers with a guideline for mastering social media usage.

**Bilal et al. (2014)** has examined the role of various social platforms and media towards consumer buying behaviour towards the clothing industry. With Logistic Regression employed as an Analysis Technique to the self-administered questionnaires distributed among the students of University of Gujarat, Pakistan, it shows the importance of the presence of Social media platforms and how consumers can use them. It also emphasizes on the need of an online presence for all the companies in order to gain a competitive market share and have a competitive edge.

**Gul et al. (2014)** talks about the impact of social media on the Fashion Consciousness and Consumer Behaviour in his study, “The Relationship of Social Media with Fashion Consciousness and Consumer Buying Behaviour.” Consumers nowadays highly depend upon the social media to know about the latest fashion. The study further revealed that consumers spend less per shopping trip (average majority spending below Rs.4000/month) and believe in seeking value for money. This meant that they are not willing to buy premium brands online. However, one drawback of the study was small sample size and only students of Higher Educational Institutes of Karachi being the target population, showing limited generalizability of the research. The major emphasis of the study was to study the relationship of

Social Media with Fashion Consciousness and Consumer Buying Behaviour through an Exploratory Research with a convenience sampling strategy being adopted for the collection of data. The study concluded that there was a weak relationship between social media and the fashion consciousness of the consumers.

**Mishra and Tyagi (2015)** talks about the retailers using social media to target the young adults to highlight the importance of social networking sites (SNS) in the day to day perspective in knowing the Social Media view point of consumers in the Indian Context. The study further analyses perceptions of the customers in the area of social media marketing, by examining the variables of TAM Model. Social media plays a very important role as a marketing platform. Research was conducted keeping in mind the positive ease of use and the personal fit with the brands. It was found that both had a positive impact on marketing through the social networking sites, but was not that much significant. Social networking sites in India are the domain of potential marketing opportunities for business engaged in the internet marketing. Further, the conclusion derived from the study was that the ultimate buying in of customers' loyalty would be through personalised, skilful and sensitive experience created by the online marketing.

**Elaydi (2018)** investigated the impact of social media marketing activities on Facebook on brand awareness keeping into consideration the moderating effect of demographics, namely; age and gender. This study is descriptive in nature. Primary data has been obtained by 402 users of mobile network providers (Vodafone, Etisalat, We, and Orange) through social media in Egypt with the help of questionnaires and interviews. Data collected was analysed through AMOS and SPSS software. The findings of the study reveals that there is moderation role of age and gender as a personal profiles of customer in the relationship social media marketing activities on facebook and brand awareness of mobile network services. Also, social media was used for building or enhancing brand awareness that in turn may lead to increasing sales revenue in the future.

**Ceyhan (2019)** aimed to measure the effect of consumer perception on marketing applications of brands on Instagram pages and their impact on brand loyalty as well as purchase intention. In this context, the research model developed was tested on Beykent University students. Data obtained by the survey method were analyzed using SPSS and Amos package programs. According to research findings, the functional value, hedonic value and self-brand image congruency perceptions towards the Instagram page of the brand in question positively affected the purchase intention, whereas the social value and co-creation perceptions did not have a significant effect on purchase intention. The functional value, social value and self-brand image congruency perceptions towards the Instagram page of the brand in question positively affected brand loyalty, whereas the hedonic value and cocreation value perceptions were found to be unrelated to brand loyalty. Furthermore, it was observed that brand loyalty mediates the whole effect of the functional value and co-creation perceptions towards the Instagram page of the brand in question on purchase intention.

**Bhosale & Phadtare (2020)** identified and analyse the reasons which encourage the consumers to follow or unfollow a particular brand over various social media platforms. This study also provided insights into previous available literature related to social media and online consumer behaviour for the usage of social media in small business. This study is entirely based on the secondary data such as previous research articles, reports, surveys and websites etc. They suggested that Social Media Analytics can be adopted by businesses to see the quantitative specifications of customers. Accordingly, companies can design their product promotion strategies to acquire new customers and maintain a relationship with existing customers.

**Hafez (2021)** aimed to explore the impact of social media marketing (SMM) activities on brand equity (BE) in the banking sector in Bangladesh. Data were collected from a total of 289 banking customers in Bangladesh through a structured questionnaire and the hypotheses were examined using structural equation modeling (SEM). The results validated that SMM activities have no significant influence on BE directly. Furthermore, brand love fully mediates the linkage between SMM activities and BE. Likewise, brand trust was found to have a partial mediation effect on SMM activities and BE.

## Research Objectives

On the basis of literature review, the core objectives of the study are:

- To highpoint the prominence of Facebook as a trust building platform among consumers

- To conduct a relative analysis of 5 online apparel brands.

**On the basis of objectives, the following three hypotheses have been formulated**

H1: Greater volume of posts hosted by 5 online apparel brands has a significant impact on developing trust among consumers.

H2: Greater number of reactions on posts of 5 online apparel brands has a significant impact on developing trust among consumers.

H3: Greater number of comments on posts of 5 online apparel brands has a significant impact on developing trust among consumers.

**Research Methodology**

**Research Variables:** This study conducts a Facebook analysis of 5 online apparel brands in terms of their total number of posts, comments, reactions and shares. Studies of the Internet and Mobile Association of India, revealed a list of 20 online apparel brands. From the list, 5 brands which have a reasonable presence across Social Media, were chosen. The five online apparel brands are Stalkbuylove, Voonik, Limeroad, Craftsvilla and Indiarush.

**Research Design:** Descriptive research design is used in the present study.

**Span of the Study:** The time period of the study is one month i.e. from 7th November 2019 to 7th December 2019.

**Data Collection Source:** The data from the Facebook pages of the respective brands is extracted using a software tool, Quintly.com. Quintly is a social media analytics tool which helps organizations to track, benchmark and optimize social media performance against their competitors. The data for these five brands is collected using this social media analytics tool. It provides post wise data in terms of number of likes, comments, shares and posts. This tool helps in mapping the effectiveness and reach of a marketing campaign. We have collected post wise data across these five online apparel brands.

**Data Analysis:** A multiple regression analysis was conducted. Regression analysis is a powerful and flexible statistical tool used for analysing associative relationships between a dependent variable and independent variables. In this paper, a multiple regression analysis is conducted to study the impact of reactions, comments and total number of posts on building trust on Facebook. When the company, hosts content through posts on the Facebook page, consumers like the content, comment on the posts and also share it. Trust generated by content is taken as the dependent variable and the number of reactions, number of comments and number of posts are the independent variables. Trust can be measured through number of shares of the Facebook posts.

**Findings and Discussions**

*A.1. Craftsvilla*

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.746 <sup>a</sup>	.556	.507	417.866	.556	11.277	3	27	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Comment, Posts, Reaction.

b. Dependent Variable trust

**Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		



Constant	-517.2014	844.564		-612	.545
Posts	11.618	94.978	.018	.122	.904
Reaction	.023	.006	.722	3.778	.001
Comment	.053	.467	.021	.113	.911

a. Dependent Variable: Trust

A.2. IndiaRush

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.680 <sup>a</sup>	.463	.403	5.872	.463	7.755	3	27	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Comment, Posts, Reaction.

b. Dependent Variable trust

**Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	-7.024	4.129		-1.701	.100

Posts	2.481	.951	.380	2.610	.015
Reaction	.017	.006	.452	2.978	.006
Comment	.021	.039	.080	.542	.593

b. Dependent Variable: Trust

A.3. Limeroad

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.870 <sup>a</sup>	.757	.731	73.568	.757	29.093	3	28	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Comment, Posts, Reaction.

b. Dependent Variable trust

**Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	-14.498	40.536		.358	.723
Posts	-2.716	11.216	-.023	-.242	.810
Reaction	.004	.001	.893	3.869	.001
Comment	-.021	.203	-.024	-.104	.918

A.4. Stalkbuylove

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.999 <sup>a</sup>	.998	.998	2.953	.998	6173.664	3	28	.000

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Comment, Posts, Reaction.
- b. Dependent Variable trust

**Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	-.963	1.205		-.799	.431
Posts	.482	.808	.006	.597	.556
Reaction	.012	.006	.048	1.917	.065
Comment	.039	.001	.956	38.035	.000

A.5. Voonik

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.746 <sup>a</sup>	.609	.567	417.866	.556	11.277	3	27	.000

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Comment, Posts, Reaction.
- b. Dependent Variable trust

**Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	-2.199	2.882		.763	..452
Posts	-1.155	.965	-.231	-1.197	.241
Reaction	.017	.004	.857	4.424	.000
Comment	-.280	.162	-.323	-1.729	.095

In this section a regression model of the factors that contribute towards the generation of trust through the content posted by Craftsvilla on their Facebook page, is developed. Here we make an assumption that there is a linear relationship between the number of posts hosted by Craftsvilla and trust developed (measured by number of shares), the number of reactions by consumers and trust (measured by the number of shares) and number of comments by consumers and trust (measured by the number of shares). The same assumption is made for each of the dependent variable and the independent variables collectively. Thus we take trust generated by content as the dependent variable. This is measured by the number of shares. The number of posts, the number of reactions and the number of comments on these posts are the independent variables. We conduct a regression analysis across a dataset of 299 posts. The multiple regression model and overall fit statistics are depicted in Table A1.

We find that the adjusted R Square of our model is 0.507 and the R square is 0.556. This means that the regression model explains 55% of the variance in the data. The results of the F test further indicate the presence of a linear relationship among the variables. The Beta values further express the relative importance of the independent variables in the standardized terms. The positive and significant beta values of each of the variables-Posts, Reactions and Comments indicate that they all have a direct impact on trust. Interestingly, the variable Reactions has the highest impact (Beta=0.722) on the generation of trust. The above discussion enables us to accept the three hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 for **Craftsvilla**.

For **IndiaRush** the adjusted R Square is 0.403 and the R square is 0.463. This means that the regression model explains 46% of the variance in the data. The positive and significant beta values of each of the Variables-Posts, Reactions and Comments indicate that they all have a direct impact on trust. Interestingly, the variable Reactions has the highest impact (Beta=0.452) on the generation of trust. The above discussion enables us to accept the three hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 for IndiaRush.

For **Limeroad** the adjusted R Square is 0.731 and the R square is 0.757. This means that the regression model explains 76% of the variance in the data. The beta coefficient is negative for posts and comments, whereas it is positive for reactions (Beta=0.893). Interestingly, the variable Reactions has the highest impact (Beta=0.893) on the generation of trust. The above discussion enables us to reject the two hypotheses H1, H2 and accept H3 for **Limeroad**.

In case of Stalkbuylove, we find that the adjusted R Square of our model is 0.998 and the R square is 0.998. This means that the regression model explains 99% of the variance in the data. The results of the F test further indicate the presence of a linear relationship among the variables. The Beta values further express the relative importance of the independent variables in the standardized terms. The positive and significant beta values of each of the Variables-Posts, Reactions and Comments indicate that they all have a direct impact on trust. Interestingly, the variable Comments has the highest impact (Beta=0.956) on the generation of trust. The above discussion enables us to accept the three hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 for Stalkbuylove.

For **Voonik**, we found that the adjusted R Square of our model is 0.567 and the R square is 0.609. This means that the regression model explains 61% of the variance in the data. Posts and comments have negative beta coefficient value. Interestingly, the variable Reactions has the highest impact (Beta=0.857) on the generation of trust. The above discussion enables us to reject the two hypotheses H1, H2 and accept H3 for Voonik.

### **Conclusion and Limitation of the Study**

The three brands Craftsvilla, IndiaRush and Stalkbuylove supported all the three hypothesis and have a positive beta coefficient where as Limeroad and Voonik have negative beta coefficients for comments and number of posts. Craftsvilla, which has created maximum number of posts (299), has the maximum number of shares in a month (26180). No other brand is even seen close to Craftsvilla as this brand has maximum number of posts as well as maximum number of followers (64,13,254). Stalkbuylove, inspite of posting only 56 posts in a month has greater number of posts and greater number of shares, probably because the brand has greater number of followers (943530). And as the brand, Indiarush has minimum number of followers (5,31,702) among the 5 brands, it has minimum number of shares.

The limitation of this study is that it ignores other factors which effect the number of shares like number of followers, number of campaigns run by a brand, organic growth or paid advertising, etc. Trusting a brand involves various other measures as well like peer review, feedback, experience with the brand, etc which are not included in the study.



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