



DOES SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IMPACT PURCHASE AND LOYALTY INTENTIONS IN CUSTOMERS

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1. Introduction

How, when and where the business needs to engage with customers have changed significantly and rapidly due to the broad adoption of the social web. Today's Business landscape is characterised by Social media proliferation. The critical point for the Companies is to exist where customers exist. This has been called the communications revolution. Customers are now sharing their experiences and feedback on companies and brands in Social network sites. This means that whether or not the company chooses to be involved, these experiences will still be shared. This type of communication and interaction mainly happens from their computers and mobile devices. Prior to making any kind of purchasing decisions, customers now turn to peers and non-traditional industry influencers for answers through very public social networking platforms - more so than any other source for information gathering. In order to succeed in this hyper-connected environment, companies will need to adapt their business strategy, apply new technology, expand their marketing and PR efforts, and alter and adapt their internal culture. Businesses will have to locate, educate and engage their current and potential customers where they prefer to communicate that are social media platforms such as facebook, twitter, Interest etc.

Lang, (2010) observed that advent of Smart phones and laptops are making people spend more than one third of their waking day consuming social media. Facebook alone, the hallmark of social media, has over 1.44 billion active users. **Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, (2011)** reiterate that interactive digital media has catapulted company and consumer contacts from a Web 1.0 passive model, to a Web 2.0 interactive model. **Kaplan and Hein(2011)** postulates social media to be the "social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feelings, to form webs of personal relationships in Cyberspace."

According to **Miller, Fabian, and Lin (2009)**, the importance of social media lies in the interaction between consumers and the community, and in the facilitation of immediate, interactive, and low-cost communications. Nowadays, internet communities, blogs, and social networks have become a part of life for most people, so that social media have become alternative communication tools supporting existing relationships and activities in a joyful way that can enrich the users' experience. Moreover, increased use of social media provides a platform for nurturing brands and affecting consumers' purchase decisions.

Social media gives consumers powerful and active voices in their relationships with Organizations. At its core, social media stands to transform the way that businesses communicate with consumers, fulfilling the goal of relationship marketing in which both parties make investments in, and benefit from, the relationship. Social media gives consumers a voice that marketers cannot ignore. In fact, 85% of marketers cited one of the benefits of social media marketing was the ability to engage in dialogue with consumers (**Mershon, 2012**). However, in order for social media to fulfil its function as a tool to co-create value, Companies must make efforts or investments in consumers in order to provide them with incentives to share information and engage in relational behaviours with the organization. Consumers must also provide inputs to the relationship in terms of not only passive permission for companies to track customer information, but also in terms of providing content and conversation for many social media strategies. It is important to understand how Consumers view social media marketing efforts by an organization, and equally important to understand how social media interactions influence the purchase decisions of customers.

The above discussion clearly indicates that Social media marketing has the capability to create Purchase and loyalty intentions in the Customer's minds. Maintaining a social media image especially in facebook is very much important for the Companies in all industries.

Yet studies regarding as to what content of facebook pages have the capability to strengthen the relationship and induce Purchase and loyalty intentions have been rarely conducted worldwide and more so in the Indian context.

Therefore, the present study proposes the necessity of identifying and understanding the factors that attract consumers to Company facebook pages investigating how social media will affect the Purchase and loyalty intentions of customers. From a theoretical perspective, this research provides an enhanced understanding of consumers 'motives for online social exchanges (e.g., Internet-based social gatherings with other consumers and with a company) and whether Social media activities of companies induce Purchase and loyalty intentions in customers. The next section deals with Social media usage in India.



1.1 Social Media Usage in India

Social media usage in India increased in leaps and bounds, as number of internet users in India reached 302 million users by December 2014. India is a key market for social media giants - active social media users in India grew to around 146 million and India is among the top three countries in terms of number of people using Facebook (100m+ users), whereas Twitter is seeing an increased user base of over 33 million. The increased mobile web penetration is also seen as a key contributor to increased growth in active social media usage. 84% Facebook's 100 million users in India access it from their mobile devices. 40 million Indians are online every day, spending ~40-45 hours over the Internet per month. It is estimated that there will be over 500 million Internet users in India by 2018 - making India the second largest population of Internet users in the world. (India Digital Bharat).

Usage of social media in rural India has grown by 100 percent during the year 2015 with 25 million users residing in that belt. However, urban India registered a relatively lower growth of 35 percent with the total number of users at 118 million as on April 2015, says the 'Social Media in India 2014' There are 143 million social media users in India as on April 2015. The report stated that the top four metros continue to account for almost half of the social media users in urban India. The report said the largest segment accessing social media consists of the college going students with 34 percent followed by young men at 27 percent. School-going children constitute 12 percent of the social media users. College-going students and young men still form the 60 percent of the social media users in urban India. The report further stated that 61 percent of these users access social media on their mobile device.

This level of engagement has led to an increase in the awareness level of brands on social media. And this shows the intent of Indians to communicate with brands over social network sites indicating that social media has the capacity to alter the traditional dynamics between brands and consumers who are time hungry and may find traditional forms of advertising obtrusive and unattractive. Social network sites have therefore become one of the multiple touch points for marketers to reach consumer to assist in purchase of product or service.

1.1.1 Social Media Marketing in India

According to the report **Social Media Marketing - India Trends Study**, by Ernst and young, 75% of India's online population are digital consumers⁴ (who use digital for all, or part, of their purchasing journey). Trust in a company and brand is no longer dependant on company-controlled, traditional, mass channels, but rather on communities and of their marketing budget to digital and social media marketing in order to successfully reaches and market to these customers. The increasing internet penetration rate will increase digital advertisement spend in India. According to the same study, 81% of the brands surveyed considered Facebook to be the most important platform while almost 48% of surveyed brands think that Twitter is the second-most important platform to be on, closely followed by YouTube (43% surveyed brands considered it to be the third-most important channel). Businesses are also establishing their own YouTube channels while actively producing, creating and distributing video content for promotional material and showcasing new developments for the brand. Meanwhile, Vine, the latest entrant in social media platforms, concentrates on short six second video snippets that can be shared using Face book or Twitter.

The statistics look very promising and it indicates that Social media marketing will be the focus of Companies in the coming years. However, not many studies in India throw light on how the Indian consumer is influenced by the content on social networks especially face book. Therefore an effort has been made in the next section to explain how companies can use the facebook page for marketing.

1.2 The Face book Page Explained

A Facebook Page is a public profile specifically created for businesses, brands, celebrities, etc. Unlike personal profiles, pages do not gain friends, but fans which are people who "like" page (who pressed the Like button on the page). Pages work similarly to profiles, updating users with things such as posts, events, photos. When a User likes a Page, this means: a link to this Page will appear on the user's Timeline (personal profile site). What is more, a notification that he liked Page will appear on his profile (temporarily) under Recent Activity box and since that moment all posts published by brand Page will be appearing in his News Feed (part of the Timeline). All those people, who liked Page, form the Community (fans) of the page. Each brand Page has the same layout (Figure 1), that can be customized by the admin. It consists of the set of static elements, such as: cover photo and profile picture. First one is the larger image at the top of the Page and the smaller one on the left is Page's profile picture. They should be unique, presenting brand's logo, products or something associated with the brand; Page information box an area below cover photo, providing an overview of the basic information about the Page its name, category, Page's statistics (eg. number of fans), applications and buttons; applications (apps) can be found on the top right, within the Page information box. Apps are designed to enhance experience on Facebook with engaging games, media resources and useful features; buttons with a dropdown menu just above the apps there are two buttons and a drop down



menu option with a set of settings. First button Like enables becoming a fan of the Page and the second one Message enables sending a private message to the Page's administrator posts updates, which appear on the main Page's area in a chronological order, published by Page admin or by fans (if the Page's settings enable it).



Figure 1

There are six types of posts to choose from on Facebook page: Video, Photo, Link, Question, Event, and Text Videos, usually from YouTube service can be used for product promotion and for branding, whereas photos along with questions (poll) create a lot interactions and drive engagement among fans Considerable alternative for simple text-only posts are also posts with urn address preferably link to Facebook app or custom landing page. Events are mainly for those that take place at physical locations, but they are not restricted to that and they can be used for special promotions.

Facebook Page enables three interaction features connected with each post, such as: like, share and comment. When a user likes a post, this means that also other users can see that he has liked it (including their friends). If enough people like it, their name will be replaced by a total count of Likes. The more likes the post gained, the higher value it has in the context of Page marketing value. Share feature makes it possible to publish someone's post on own profile (Time-line) or Page. This is the way content goes viral in social media– one post published by Page's moderator can be shared by thousand fans. Sharing a post is not only a commitment to the message, but also to the brand and the more shares, the more chance to reach many Facebook users. The most engaging are comments a feature that enables Facebook users sharing their thoughts about the post. Comments can be both positive and negative and they can form along conversation between users and Page moderator. It can damage brand reputation, if there's no proper reaction from the Page moderator.

2. Literature Review

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines social media as “forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos).” The same source defines networking as “the exchange of information or services among



individuals, groups, or institutions; *specifically*: the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business.” **Boyd & Ellison, 2007** define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. **Carton, 2009** in his article opined that throughout much of human history, technologies have been developed that make it easier for us to communicate with each other. So the author defined Social media as technologies that facilitate interactions between humans using information or data: or Social media can simply be defined as just *technologies that facilitate conversations*. **Mangold and Faulds (2009)**, argues that social media is a hybrid element of the promotion mix because in a traditional sense it enables companies to talk to their customers, while in a non-traditional sense it enables customers to talk directly to one another. **Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010** defined Social media as “a group of internet based applications that builds on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and it allows **the creation and exchange of user-generated content**. **Lang, (2010)** observed that advent of Smart phones and laptops are making people spend more than one third of their waking day consuming social media. Facebook alone, the hallmark of social media, has over 1.4 billion active users. **Chi (2011)** defines social media marketing as a “**connection between brands and consumers, offering a personal channel and currency for user centered networking and social interaction**. **Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011** reiterate that interactive digital media has catapulted company and consumers contact from a Web 1.0 passive model, to a Web 2.0 interactive model.

Rehmani and Ishfaq (2011) found that social media marketing activities characterised by Electronic word of mouth and Seller generated information effect customer’s perception of quality and Information acquisition which in turn influence customer purchase intention. **Maoyan (2014) et al** show that social media marketing stimulate external factors such as placement, marketing activities, experiential marketing and interaction and then influence the consumer's inner perception factors such as perceived value and perceived risk and ,at last, it will affect consumers' purchase intention. **Bamini et al (2014)** suggest that the online marketing communications, specifically, E-WOM, Online Communities and Online Advertisement are effective in promoting brand loyalty and product purchase intention through company website and social media platforms.

3. Methodology

The present study investigates Company’s Face book pages. Many Face book pages for Company have incorporated unique features (e.g., promotions) in order to encourage member participation. Among the numerous fan pages on the site, four Company’s face book pages were chosen one from fashion retail showroom, one from Jewellery, one from Mobile phones and one from mutual funds. In advance of the final development of survey questionnaires, a preliminary test was conducted among fifteen students majoring in MBA marketing in order to draw a sample of Company face book pages for this study, Participants were asked to list three most popular fashion retail showrooms, three most popular Mobile Phone brands, Three Jewellery showrooms and three mutual funds. After a frequency test using SPSS 20.0, the fashion retail showroom mentioned most often was Westside, The most popular mobile brand was Samsung Mobiles, the most mentioned Jewellery showroom was Kalyan Jewellers and the most mentioned mutual fund Company was Reliance mutual fund. The pages were tested in face book for the number of likes. Westside face book page had 327,704 number of likes Samsung mobiles had 42,220,325 likes , Kalyan Jewellers had 423,871 likes and Reliance mutual fund face book page had 1,258,370 likes as on January 15th 2014. Further they were one among the top 20 face book pages in their respective categories as listed by <http://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/facebook/pages/> So these companies were chosen to represent their categories.

3.1 Sample

Data were collected from a convenience sample in the Chennai Metropolitan area. Self-administrated questionnaires were distributed to around 800 people of which 629 responded and, after excluding incomplete answers, 517 questionnaires were finally employed for statistical analysis.

3.2 Survey Instrument and Measurements

The questionnaires consisted of two parts, with the first part measuring the brand’s SMM activities. In order to do this, a visual stimulus of the Company face book pages on the most commonly used social media, Face book was developed. Screenshots of face book pages of Westside (Figure 1), Kalyan Jewellers (Figure 2), Samsung mobiles (Figure 3) and Reliance mutual funds (Figure 4) and were used to visually stimulate the participants. Participants were asked to review the proposed visual stimulus and answer 18 measurement items, which were developed from previous literature related to brand’s social media marketing (i.e., Kim, 2010).



Figure 2



Figure 3

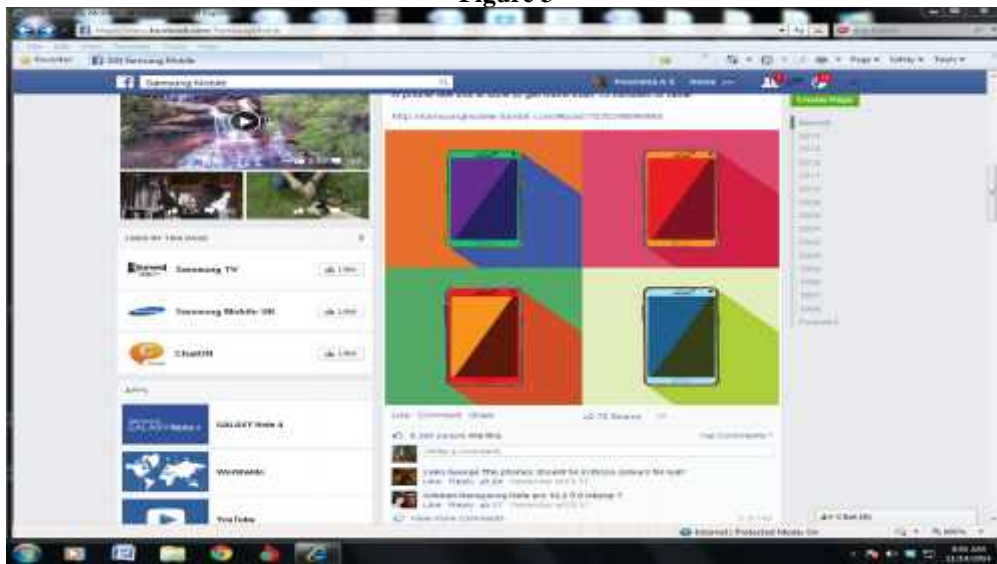


Figure 4





Figure 5



Purchase intention from **Dodd's, Monroe, and Grewal (1991)**. Loyalty intention from **Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996**.

Table 1: Measurement Items of Variables under Study

Construct	Measurement items	Scale by	Cronbach
SMM factor 1 Entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The contents found on Company's facebook page seem to be interesting It is exciting to use Company's facebook page It is fun to collect information on Jewellery using Company's facebook page It is easy to kill time using Company's facebook page 	Kim 2010	0.724
SMM factor 2 Customizatio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is possible to get customized(information relevant to you)on Company's facebook page Company's facebook page provide customized services Company's facebook page provide lively feed information, that I am interested in. It is easy to use Company's facebook page Company's facebook page can be used anytime anywhere 	Kim 2010	0.722
Smm factor 3 Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is easy to convey my opinion through Company'sfacebook page. It is possible to exchange opinions with others using Company's facebook page. It is possible to do two way interactions through. Company's facebook page It is possible to share information with other users through Company's facebook page 	Kim 2010	0.780
Smm factor 4 Word of mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would like to pass information on Jewellery from Company's facebook page I would like to upload contents from Company's facebook page on my blog or microblog I would like to share opinions on Jewellery or services acquired from Company's facebook page with my acquaintances 	Kim 2010	0.715
Smm factor 5 trend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is leading fashion to use Company's facebook page Contents found on Company's facebook page are up to date 	Kim 2010	0.762



Purchase intention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I intend to purchase .I will purchase from the company • Company’s facebook page induces me to go to the nearest store • Company’s facebook page makes me visit their website and order online • If I were shopping for ----- ,The likelihood that I purchase from Company is high • I am willing to buy from the Company <p>The probability that I would consider buying from Company is high</p>	Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991)	0.790
Loyalty intention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will seldom consider buying products from other Companies • As long as the standard and design of product are maintained I doubt that I would buy from other stores • I will always consult information on Company’s facebook page before making a purchase • When I need to make a purchase this Company would be my first choice • I like to use products purchased from Company • I believe that the Company is my favourite • To use the company’s product is the best possible thing to do 	Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996 and Gremler 1995	0.768

4. Data Analysis - Cluster Analysis

Grouping of Respondents Based on their Adaptation to the Social Media Pages on Facebook

“Cluster analysis” is the statistical tool used to reduce large sized samples with different characteristics into manageable groups that are considered sampling units and that have similar characteristics. This tool has been applied to know the natural grouping of respondents based on their perception differences. It classifies the sample units into heterogeneous groups and their nature of heterogeneity is anatomically analysed. Highest values in final cluster centres denote strong agreeableness, the moderate values represent the moderate agreeableness and the least values denote disagreeableness.

In the present study, cluster analysis has been used to group respondents based on their adaptation to their social media pages. This study uses K – means cluster analysis (MacQueen, J., 1967) to classify the sample into heterogeneous groups that are homogeneous within themselves. K – means cluster analysis is also called as centre based clustering where the cluster places objects into groups so that objects within the groups are similar to each other. At the same time, objects in any particular group are different from objects in all other groups (Hair, 2010).

In this study, confirmatory factor analysis ascertained the existence of 5 predominant factors of social media pages namely – Entertainment, Customisation, Interaction, word of mouth and trend. The total average scores of these factors classify the sample unit in the following way:

Table No 2: Distribution of the Respondents among the Three Clusters Based on the Adaptation of Social Media Marketing Pages

Number of Cases in each Cluster			
Cluster	1	182.000	35.2%
	2	249.000	48.2%
	3	86.000	16.6%
	Total	517	100%

Source: Computed data

From table 2 it is observed that 35.2% of the sample is distributed in cluster 1,48.2% of the sample is in cluster 2 and 16.6% of the sample is in cluster 3.

4.1 Grouping of respondents based on their Social media influence

Table 3 presents the final respondents cluster centres for factors of social media marketing pages.This reveals the characteristics traits of the respondents with respect to their adaptation to social media pages.



Table No 3: Final Respondent’s Cluster Centres for Factors of the Adaptation to Social Media Pages

Final Cluster Centres			
	Cluster		
	1	2	3
Entertainment	3.37	4.15	2.59
Customisation	3.44	4.07	2.63
Interaction	3.53	3.89	2.82
Wom	3.17	3.93	2.29
Trend	3.21	4.17	2.33

The characteristics of each cluster in terms of their agreeableness and disagreeableness to the various factors of adaptation to social media pages can be understood by a close examination of the scores as shown in table 3. The clusters have been appropriately named based on their characteristics and have been outlined as follows:

Cluster 1: From table 3, it is found that the first cluster comprises of 182 respondents (35.2%) who are moderately influenced by social media pages. They generally tend to browse through social media pages just to pass time. But this cluster group gets influenced by social media pages moderately. Hence they are called “**Moderately influenced consumers**”.

Cluster 2: From table 3.9, it is found that the second cluster comprises of 249 respondents (48.2%) who exhibit high levels of agreeableness to the factors of social media pages? This cluster seems to have adapted to the social media pages and is enjoying the new media. They visit various company facebook pages to get the best of both information and entertainment and are active participants in all social media events. Therefore this cluster is called the “**Strongly influenced customer**”.

Cluster 3 – From table 3.9, it is found that the third cluster comprises of 86 respondents (16.6%) who are highly disagreeable. Their attitude towards social media pages is negative and is not influenced by social media. So this group can be called “**Negatively influenced customer**”.

Summary of Cluster Analysis

The application of cluster analysis has resulted in the formation of three clusters of the respondents. They have been appropriately named based on the respondent’s adaptation to the social media as follows **moderately influenced customer, strongly influenced customer and weakly influenced customer**.

4.2 Grouping of Respondents Based on their Purchase and Loyalty Intentions

Cluster analysis has also been used to segregate the respondents based on their intention to purchase and be loyal to the company whose facebook page they just viewed. Previous Studies have shown that intention to purchase and be loyal (repurchase) is the major determinants of the customer lifetime value.

Table No 4: Distribution of the Respondents among the Three Clusters Based on the Adaptation of Social Media Marketing Pages

Number of Cases in each Cluster			
Cluster	1	72.000	13.9%
	2	189.000	36.6%
	3	256.000	49.5%
Valid	517.000		100.0%

Source: Computed data

From table 4 it is observed that 13.9% of the sample is distributed in cluster 36.6 % of the sample is in cluster 2 and 49.5% of the sample is in cluster 3.

Table No 5: Final Respondent’s Cluster Centres for Purchase and Loyalty Intention

Final Cluster Centres			
	Cluster		
	1	2	3
PI	2.19	3.11	3.97
LI	2.19	3.01	3.96

The characteristics of each cluster in terms of their agreeableness and disagreeableness to the intention to purchase and be loyal can be understood by a close examination of the scores as shown in table 5. The clusters have been appropriately named based on their characteristics and have been outlined as follows:



Cluster 1 – From table 5, it is found that the first cluster comprises of 72 respondents (13.9%) who have very low intention to purchase and be loyal They are respondents with “**Low intention**” to purchase and be loyal.

Cluster 2 –From table 5, it is found that the second cluster comprises of 189 respondents (36.6%) who exhibit moderate levels of agreeableness to the dimensions of Purchase and loyalty intention. They are respondents with “**moderate intention**” to purchase and be loyal.

Cluster 3 – From table 5, it is found that the third cluster comprises of 256 respondents (49.5%) who are highly agreeable. They are respondents with “**high intention**” to purchase and be loyal.

Summary of Cluster Analysis

The application of cluster analysis has resulted in the formation of three clusters of the respondents. They have been appropriately named based on the respondent’s intention to purchase and be loyal as **low intention, moderate intention and high intention** to purchase and be loyal.

Relationship among adaptation to social media and purchase and loyalty intention by respondents using Chi – square test (2 test)

The application of cluster analysis systematically transformed the respondents into heterogeneous groups and the groups were named appropriately... Therefore non – parametric Chi – square analysis of variation is applied among all the clusters of social media influence and purchase and loyalty intentions to empirically test their relationship. Chi – Square (2 test) test developed by Pearson (1990) is the most commonly used statistical tool to assess the probability of association or independence of facts. The results of the Chi – square analysis are as follows:

4.3 Association between Social Media Adaptation and Purchase and Loyalty Intentions

The association among the three clusters of social media adaptation and purchase and loyalty intentions - are distributed under the cross tabs in the following manner.

Table 6: Social Media Influence *Purchase and Loyalty Cross Tabulation

			Purchase And Loyalty			Total
			Low Intention	Moderate Intention	High Intention	
social media influence	moderately influenced customer	Count	27	108	47	182
		% within social media influence	14.8%	59.3%	25.8%	100.0%
	strongly influenced customer	Count	7	35	207	249
		% within social media influence	2.8%	14.1%	83.1%	100.0%
	weakly influenced customer	Count	38	46	2	86
		% within social media influence	44.2%	53.5%	2.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	72	189	256	517
		% within social media influence	13.9%	36.6%	49.5%	100.0%

Chi square test was conducted with the following Hypothesis,

Null Hypothesis: Social media influence does not have any significant association with purchase and loyalty intention of respondents.

Alternate Hypothesis: Social media influence has a significant association with purchase and loyalty intention of respondents.

The chi square test was conducted with bootstrapping at 1000 samples and the Pearson’s chi square value was significant ($p=0.000<0.05$) Hence the null hypothesis was rejected and alternate hypothesis. “**Social media influence has significant association with purchase and loyalty intention of respondents** “was accepted.

On closer examination of cross tab table 6 it is found that the maximum frequency loading is present at the cell (strongly influenced respondents, high intention to purchase and be loyal). The cross tab table indicates that a majority of 83.1% of respondents who are strongly influenced by social media pages reported high intention to purchase and be loyal. The frequency loading at the cell (moderately influenced respondents, moderate intention to purchase) indicates that 59.3% of respondents who were moderately influenced by social media reported moderate intention to purchase and be loyal. 53.5% of respondents who were weakly influenced by social media reported moderate intention to purchase and be loyal where as



44.2% of the respondents reported low intention to purchase and be loyal. This indicates that hosting a face book page with content that entertains, provide customised information, give sufficient opportunity to interact and advocate will induce purchase and loyalty intentions in the respondents which are determinants of the customer lifetime value.

5. Conclusion

Social media provide a technology infrastructure that firms can embrace with suitable planning and guidelines for consumer engagement. The present study found several important features of social marketing activities such as entertainment, customisation, interaction, word of mouth and trend which induce purchase and loyalty intentions in customer's minds. This study compared the difference and similarities between four industries visa vis Clothing, Jewellery, Mobile phones and mutual fund. Marketers are advised to develop strategies and provide the relevant content according to the type of industry to their fans.

Such strategies include:

- Enhancing opportunities for interaction and engagement among like-minded members of a brand's Facebook page to foster sharing of interests and carrying out similar purposes for joining.
- Incorporating various features into a brand's Facebook page that provide positive experiences (e.g., entertainment, pleasure, enjoyment, interaction, word of mouth and trend) with the brand.
- Monitoring members'communications to identify new market segments and provide customized services based on common interests about products/services, visiting purposes, and other factors.

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