

Creating a Romantic and Loyal Brand Environment using Social Media: Predictive Analysis on four Phases of Customer Loyalty

MUHAMMAD ADNAN BASHIR¹, UMMI NAIEMAH BINTI SARAIH^{2,3},
RAGHAVA GUNDALA⁴, JUNAID ANSARI⁵, MUHAMMAD AZEEM QURESHI⁵,
MUHAMMAD YASIR⁶

¹Faculty of Business and Communication,
Universiti Malaysia Perlis,
MALAYSIA

²Faculty of Business and Communication,
Universiti Malaysia Perlis,
MALAYSIA

³Department of Business Administration,
Daffodil International University (DIU),
Dhaka,
BANGLADESH

⁴Business Department,
University of Wisconsin Parkside,
USA

⁵Department of Management and HRM,
Institute of Business Management,
Karachi,
PAKISTAN

⁶SBB Dewan University,
Karachi,
PAKISTAN

Abstract: - The impact of social media completely changed the dynamics between brands and consumers in today's marketing environment. This study applies the predictive analysis on four phases of customer loyalty using the factors, i.e. social media marketing and brand romance. Data was collected from 331 customers of fashion brands that they follow on social media. PLS-SEM was used for predictive analysis. Results of the empirical analyses show the significant contribution of social media marketing towards brand romance that further predicts different forms of customer loyalty (i.e. affective, cognitive, conative, and action). This study is helpful for marketers to develop strategies targeting customer loyalty on social media particularly in the context of brand romance.

Key-Words: - Social Media Marketing; Brand Romance; Brand Loyalty; Cognitive Loyalty, Action Loyalty, Conative Loyalty, Affective, PLS SEM; Predictive Analysis.

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1 Introduction

The digital environment has completely transformed companies' communication with their customers in an era where technology development is at its peak, [1], [2]. The development and usage of social

platforms have unquestionably changed the dynamics of marketing and customer behavior, [3], [4]. As a result, businesses all over the world have realized the enormous potential of social media marketing (SMM) as a crucial tool to grab the

attention of customers, influencing their emotions, and encouraging different types of brand loyalty, [5].

Concurrently, there has been a significant change in consumer behavior. Consumers not only consume marketing messages passively; but they actively participate in online conversations, express their ideas, and most importantly share their feelings, [6]. These feelings can have a significant influence on how consumers make decisions [7], and vary from joy and contentment to rage and frustration, [8].

Although social media marketing's significance in modern company tactics is well acknowledged [9], [10], there is a significant knowledge gap in how it affects customer emotions and the ensuing growth of brand loyalty, [11]. Businesses put a lot of effort on social media activities, but the results in terms of customer emotions and loyalty are still unpredictable and difficult to measure, [12]. There is a critical need for empirical study between SMM, consumer emotions, and diverse manifestations of brand loyalty, [11]. Previous studies extensively studied social media and brand equity, [13], [14], brand love [15], [16] brand experience [17], customer reengagement [18], and brand loyalty [19], [20]. Customer loyalty is a multidimensional concept [21], [22]. The majority of the previous studies focused the loyalty as a single construct and a holistic view is missing. There is also a need to see the loyalty with respect to its sub-dimensions. Little research has been done on SMM and brand romance [11]. By considering this theoretical and knowledge gap, the association between SMM, brand romance, and different forms of customer loyalty was investigated.

This study looks into luxury brands in the fashion industry that are using SMM to promote their products. The luxury fashion brand industry growing faster and has a good followership on social media in Pakistan. The study begins with an introduction, which is followed by a discussion of the literature on SMM, brand romanticism, and brand loyalty. The goals and justification for the investigation come next. Following this are the debates, the theoretical framework, and subsequently, the outcomes, consequences, and path for additional study are deliberated.

2 Literature Review

2.1 SMM-Social Media Marketing Activity

The practice of SMM involves companies creating, communicating, and sharing offers from online

marketing through social platforms in an effort to preserve relationships with stakeholders and enhance their value through communication, information sharing (including word-of-mouth), and product and service-related purchase recommendations, [23]. Social media is shifting power away from marketers and onto user-generated content on online networks, [24]. Social media use is more significant when it comes to relationships or interactions with users considering their businesses, organizations, or individuals.

A social media marketing strategy is the culmination of an organization's coordinated efforts to convert social media interactions and communication (networks) into strategic tools that can be used to achieve specific marketing objectives, [25]. It is becoming a difficult task for brand managers to effectively use social media marketing intelligence for predicting consumer behavior to gain an edge over competitors, [26].

2.2 Brand Romance

Every customer aspires to love a brand, and every brand hopes to be liked in return. This concept is derived from the romanticism of a brand, which is its allure and attractiveness. Love, excitement, pleasure, enjoyment, and desire belong to the same category of emotions as romance. They make the customer experience a sense of craving for a particular brand and point him in that direction. However, romance is not the same as these emotions, [27]. High degrees of brand romance are produced in situations when wants and perceptions are well-aligned. Low levels of brand romance, on the other hand, signify a mismatch between needs and perceptions. If consumers' stimulation and thrill demands are prominent, perceived novelty creates brand romance. Arousal is positively associated with novelty in stimuli, and excitement is a condition that displays high arousal, [28].

2.3 Brand Loyalty

A person's positively skewed emotional, evaluative, and/or behavioral reaction propensity toward a branded, labeled alternative or choice when acting in their capacity as a user, decision-maker, and/or purchaser is referred to as loyalty, [29]. The definition of brand loyalty which describes a level of customers' commitment to a brand, was pertinent to our investigation. It indicates the likelihood that a customer may switch brands when a brand modifies a product's characteristics or pricing, [30]. Devoted consumers make larger purchases, attract new business, project a positive image, promote the business through word-of-mouth, and are resistant

to being seduced by rival companies' offers, [31]. Similar to this, brand loyalty is a concept that is focused on the future and is a crucial sign of the success of the business in a very cutthroat industry, [32]. Additionally, brand loyalty is associated with the repeatability of the purchase and the individual's attitude, [33].

2.4 Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Brand Romance

SMM has been seen as a useful instrument for fostering relationships between customers and businesses, [16]. Through social media platforms, marketers can develop marketing strategies for their goods or services in order to improve the efficiency of their marketing. Brand loyalty is significantly impacted by SMM, and this link is mediated by brand consciousness and value consciousness, [34]. SMM positively impacts brand romance and brand loyalty. The findings also showed that there is an indirect of SMM on brand loyalty through brand pleasure, and the same is observed for brand arousal and brand dominance, [11]. Based on the literature reviewed, the following hypotheses were proposed.

- H1: SMM positively influences the brand pleasure.
H2: SMM positively influences the brand arousal.
H3: SMM positively influences the brand dominance.

2.5 Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Brand Loyalty

The process of adopting a strategy online to target customers using social platforms in comparison to traditional media is covered under Social Media Marketing (SMM), [35]. However, marketing using social platforms to gain more customers is different from traditional strategy as more planning and care, [36]. Additionally, social media marketing communicates with customers more authentically by attempting to convey the essence of the business rather than trying to manage its perception. Ultimately, since today's consumers are busier and more powerful than ever, businesses need to be accessible through all social media channels, [37]. With SMM gaining attention in marketing, the focus is more on determining how SMM affects customers' brand loyalty.

In order to pique customers' interest, businesses try developing more captivating, interactive, and fascinating social media applications and content, [38]. Considering the literature reviewed, we proposed the following hypotheses.

H4a: SMM positively influences the four dimensions of Brand Loyalty.

2.6 Brand Romance and Brand Loyalty

It was observed that brand loyalty benefited from all three dimensions of brand romance including arousal, pleasure and dominance. It also suggests that gender moderates between brand romanticism and brand loyalty, [39]. Marketers have been advised to foster brand romance between consumers and brands in order to promote brand loyalty. Statistics-significant indicators of brand loyalty are the three core components of brand romance, [40]. Marketers are advised to strengthen brand romance to establish emotional bonds with customers in order to foster brand loyalty. Studies on brand romanticism have been more numerous lately looking into the causes and effects of brand romance. According to the findings, a consumer develops a romantic love for a brand if he is happy with it, has a positive brand experience, and finds it enjoyable. Customers who have a brand romance may be devoted to it, promote it favorably, and be prepared to pay more. Other factors that have a mediating effect on the relationship between brand loyalty and satisfaction include consumer joy and romantic brand love, [41]. Considering the literature reviewed, the hypotheses proposed are discussed as under and Figure 1 depicts the conceptual model:

H5a: Pleasure positively influences four Dimensions of Brand Loyalty.

H6a: Arousal positively influences the four Dimensions of Brand Loyalty.

H7a: Dominance positively influences four Dimensions of Brand Loyalty.

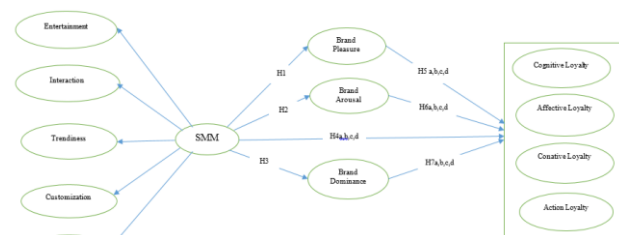


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

3 Methodology

A quantitative approach was used focusing on the social media users following the brands on different platforms. The sample size was 331 justifying the respondent-variable ratio Table 1 shows the sample profile of the respondents. Convenience sampling was used because the sample frame was not

available, [42]. A 7-point liker was used to get the responses. All the constructs were adopted from past studies that were reliable. Constructs included 12-item Brand romance [43], 14-items Brand loyalty was measured through its different dimensions [22].

Table 1. Respondents' Profile

Variable	Frequency	%	Variable	Frequency	%
Gender			Social Media Use		
Male	183	55.3	Instagram	175	55.6
Female	148	44.7	Facebook	99	31.4
Education			Twitter	19	6
Bachelors	294	88.8	Snapchat	13	4.1
Masters	94	38.8	LinkedIn	10	3.0
Doctorate	3	1.0	Social Media use Tenure		
Income			1 – 3 Years	29	8.8
< 50K	66	19.9	4 – 5 Years	84	25.4
50k-100K	70	21.1	5 – 6 Years	128	38.7
100-200K	84	25.4	More than 6 Years	90	27.2
> 200K	111	33.5	Time Spent on Social Media		
			Less than 1 Hour	32	9.7
			1 – 3 Hours	124	37.5
			4 – 6 Hours	106	32.0
			More than 6 Hours	69	20.8

4 Data Analysis

SMART PLS was used to test the hypotheses and theoretical framework, [42], [44]. For testing the theoretical relationships, the use of PLS is justified, [45].

4.1 Measurement Model

The measurement model is used to test loadings of the items, reliability, and validity of the constructs [46], and HTMT ratio [42]. Table 3 shows the results of the measurement model.

Table 2 depicts all the values depicting outer loadings > 0.7, Cronbach's alpha Composite Reliability > 0.7 [47],[48], and AVE > 0.5 [42]. Hence fulfilling the requirements of reliability and validity for conducting predicate analysis using SEM [49].

Discriminant validity was ascertained through two criteria i.e. [46] criteria and HTMT ratio. The first criterion suggests that the square root of the variance explained must be greater than the correlation values [46]. Later one requires the HTMT ratio < 0.90 [49], hence, confirming the requirements of a discriminant validity test. Table 3 shows the correlation and discriminant validity.

Table 2. Summary of Measurement Scale

Variable	Loadings	CR	CA	AVE
Entertainment		0.928	0.845	0.866
EN1	0.93			
EN2	0.928			
Interaction		0.938	0.9	0.834
INT1	0.917			
INT2	0.916			
INT3	0.907			
Trendiness		0.912	0.808	0.838
TR1	0.926			
TR2	0.905			
Customization		0.861	0.677	0.756
CUST1	0.875			
CUST2	0.864			
Word of Mouth		0.904	0.788	0.824
WOM1	0.925			
WOM2	0.89			
Arousal		0.89	0.835	0.67
AR1	0.827			
AR2	0.867			
AR3	0.816			
AR4	0.76			
Pleasure		0.921	0.885	0.743
PL1	0.866			
PL2	0.892			
PL3	0.926			
PL4	0.905			
Cognitive Loyalty		0.906	0.861	0.708
CogL1	0.862			
CogL2	0.913			
CogL3	0.801			
CogL4	0.783			
Affective Loyalty		0.898	0.829	0.746
AffL1	0.867			
AffL2	0.887			
AffL3	0.835			
Conative Loyalty		0.891	0.835	0.672
ConL1	0.754			
ConL2	0.752			
ConL3	0.884			
Action Loyalty		0.931	0.888	0.818
ActL1	0.917			
ActL2	0.939			
ActL3	0.856			
Dominance		0.902	0.855	0.697
DOM1	0.791			
DOM2	0.848			
DOM3	0.85			
DOM4	0.85			

Note: CR = Composite Reliability, α = Cronbach Alpha, AVE = Average Variance Extracted

Table 3. Correlation and Discriminant Validity

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
ActL	.90											
AffL	.69	.86										
AR	.59	.72	.81									
CUST	.54	.49	.50	.86								
CogL	.44	.43	.56	.45	.84							
ConL	.76	.69	.57	.53	.39	.82						
DOM	.64	.71	.52	.46	.37	.70	.83					
ENT	.62	.49	.48	.48	.34	.62	.45	.93				
EWOM	.41	.38	.50	.42	.90	.38	.32	.34	.90			
INT	.62	.54	.46	.33	.27	.56	.52	.44	.24	.91		
PL	.65	.67	.61	.58	.51	.62	.58	.49	.46	.47	.86	
TR	.43	.50	.30	.31	.21	.44	.44	.32	.19	.37	.38	.91

Note: Bold & Italic values are the square root of the AVE.

4.2 Common Method Bias

Harman's single-factor technique was utilized to assess common method bias using factor analysis. Factor analysis revealed that the first factor accounted for 44% which was less than the threshold of 50%, hence condition was fulfilled, [50].

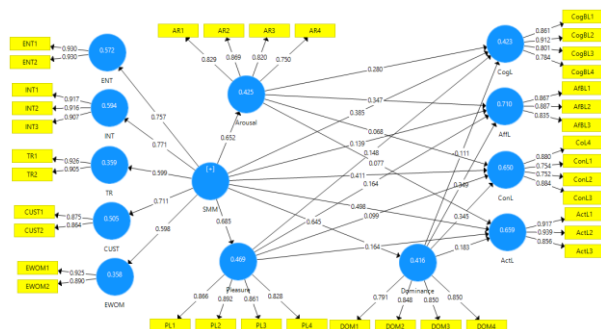


Fig. 2: Structural Equation Modelling

Table 4. PLS results for Structural Model

Relationship	Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1: SMMA → PL	0.685	23.102	0.000	Accepted
H2: SMMA → AR	0.652	20.623	0.000	Accepted
H3: SMMA → DOM	0.645	17.993	0.000	Accepted
H4a: SMMA → CogL	0.385	5.075	0.000	Accepted
H4b: SMMA → AffL	0.139	2.796	0.005	Accepted
H4c: SMMA → ConL	0.411	7.085	0.000	Accepted
H4d: SMMA → ActL	0.498	9.143	0.000	Accepted
H5a: PL → CogL	0.148	0.230	0.022	Accepted
H5b: PL → AffL	0.164	3.358	0.001	Accepted
H5c: PL → ConBL	0.099	1.661	0.097	Rejected
H5d: PL → ActBL	0.164	2.601	0.010	Accepted
H6a: AR → CogL	0.280	4.032	0.000	Accepted
H6b: AR → AffL	0.347	5.826	0.000	Accepted
H6c: AR → ConBL	0.068	1.369	0.172	Rejected
H6d: AR → ActBL	0.077	1.548	0.122	Rejected
H7a: DOM → CogL	-0.111	1.654	0.099	Rejected
H7b: DOM → AffL	0.349	6.419	0.000	Accepted
H7c: DOM → ConBL	0.345	5.515	0.000	Accepted
H7d: DOM → ActBL	0.183	3.340	0.001	Accepted

Note: ActL = Action Loyalty, AffL = Affective Loyalty, AR = Arousal, CUST = Customization, CogL = Cognitive Loyalty, ConL = Conative Loyalty, DM = Dominance, ENT = Entertainment, EWOM = Electronic Word of Mouth, INT = Interaction, PL = Pleasure, TR = Trendiness

4.3 Structural Model

Figure 2 and Table 4 show the structural model based on the causal relationship between variables. Results showed that R^2 values are good considering them greater than 0.20. Bootstrapping was used in Smart PLZ to test the structural model, [42].

Results suggest that SMMA significantly influences the dimensions of brand romance and customer loyalty that include pleasure (H1, $\beta = .68$), arousal (H2, $\beta = .62$), and dominance (H3, $\beta = .64$), cognitive loyalty (H4a, .38), affective loyalty (H4b, .13), conative loyalty (H4c, .41), and action loyalty (H4d, .49).

Considering the effect of Brand Romance on Loyalty, the results suggest that Pleasure

significantly influences cognitive loyalty (H5a, $\beta = .14$), affective loyalty (H5b, $\beta = .16$), and action loyalty (H5d, $\beta = .16$), whereas, pleasure couldn't influence conative loyalty (H5c, $\beta = .09$).

Arousal significantly influences cognitive loyalty (H6a, $\beta = .28$) and affective loyalty (H6b, $\beta = .34$), whereas, arousal couldn't significantly influence conative loyalty (H6c, $\beta = .06$) and action loyalty (H6d, $\beta = .07$). Moreover, the effect of dominance on cognitive loyalty (H7a, $\beta = -.111$) was non-significant. However, dominance significantly influences affective loyalty (H7b, $\beta = .34$), conative loyalty (H7c, $\beta = .34$), and action loyalty (H7d, $\beta = .18$).

5 Discussion and Conclusion

Luxury fashion brands are popular among customers and so are targeted in this study to test the theoretical relationship between different factors such as Brand Loyalty, Brand Romance, and SMMA. The individual dimensions of these constructs were used in this study.

Our findings demonstrated the considerable impact of SMM on a brand romance that is consistent with the previous work available in the literature, [11], [16], [43]. All the constructs used in this study were found to be reliable and valid, [51]. Consumers discuss products, brand, and their features with each other on different social platforms, [52]. This interaction creates a bond b/w consumers and the brands. The effective use of social media inspires consumers to get passionate about the brands they see there and consider making a purchase, [53].

Another dimension of the study was to observe SMM's effect on customer loyalty. Our findings depict that SMM significantly impacts Customer loyalty which is consistent with the literature, [12], [54], [55], [56], [57]. Previous studies either used loyalty as a uni-dimensional measure or considered it a second-order construct. This study tested the effect of SMM on four dimensions of loyalty to analyze the effect on a micro level and that is found significant, [21].

Predictive analysis of brand romance on customer loyalty was analyzed and it revealed that dimensions of brand romance i.e. pleasure, arousal, and dominance significantly predict the dimensions of customer loyalty with some exceptions. The outcomes of this study support the findings suggested in the literature, [11], [43]. The pleasure dimension of Brand Romance significantly affects cognitive, affective, and action loyalty, but not conative loyalty. The arousal dimension

significantly predicts cognitive and affective loyalty but fails to predict conative and action loyalty. Similarly, the dominance dimension significantly predicts affective, conative, and action loyalty, but fails to predict cognitive loyalty. The difference might exist due to the unique nature of each type of loyalty.

5.1 Theoretical Implication

The following are some ways that this research has added to the literature already available on SMM. The first theoretical contribution of the study is the developed and empirically tested conceptual model. The model focuses on SMM affecting the brand romance and different forms of customer loyalty, so this presents a holistic view of the phenomenon. The model in its present form has not been empirically tested in the literature before, hence this added value to the body of knowledge. Past researchers designed many studies attempting to understand different forms of loyalty with respect to social media e.g. in the domain of luxury brands, [58], [59] see the effect of SMM on attitudinal loyalty, but not with other dimensions of loyalty. Similarly, research measured the effect of brand trust on attitudinal loyalty [11] and the missing parts were cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, conative, and action loyalty. The study [60], measured the influence of the SMM on attitudinal and behavioral loyalty, and the other four forms of customer loyalty were not considered. Previously, loyalty was a single construct or measuring it with respect to attitudinal or behavioral perspective. This study is potentially addressing these gaps by incorporating the greatly ignored other forms of loyalty, [22]. The theoretical foundation of the empirically tested model i.e. stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model is extended by testing empirically in the luxury fashion brand category. This study also adds value to the literature contextually. Past researchers measure the effect of social media activities on brand loyalty in different contexts or categories e.g. hotel industry [61], university students [62], travel industry [63], and fast food industry [64]. The present study contributes to the literature by observing the impact of SMM in the luxury fashion brand context.

5.2 Managerial Implication

The study has several insights for managers. This study establishes the relationship between social media marketing, brand romance, and different forms of customer loyalty. Managers must use social media as a communication tool as it has a positive effect on customer loyalty. Customer

relationship building is a key component in brand success. Managers must focus on customer relationship building through the use of social media communication by developing brand romance which ultimately translates into customer loyalty. This customer relationship building is a time-consuming process. Managers must reward the most engaging and loyal customers through different deals and loyalty programs. Managers by involving loyal and engaged customers in different activities may develop a sense of belonging and attachment to the brand, and this idea may ultimately stretch into a brand community.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Direction

The first limitation of the study is the sample representation i.e. we collected responses from a single city although the metropolitan city has a representation of all types of people belonging to different cultures. Future research can include more cities to collect data so cross-cultural perspectives can be observed and understood. The current study is based on cross-sectional data collection design; however, future research can be designed on longitudinal settings. Future studies may incorporate the stimulus-organism-behavior-consequence framework, [65].

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