

# Consumer Engagement with Social Media, Brand Equity and Intention to Purchase

Sangeeth Ekanayake  
Nalin Abeysekera

## Abstract

This paper is grounded on the conflicting views raised on the utility of social media. It has been claimed that social media marketing does not sway consumer purchase behaviour, and that its return is problematic to measure. Yet, social media has been attributed to outcomes such as consumer engagement. Therefore, this research attempted to identify if consumer engagement with social media could result in purchase intent. Further, it has been investigated whether such an outcome can be explained through brand equity. Based on two theories – consumer relationship theory and social identity theory – the researchers identified two forms of engagement and a conceptual framework was developed. A sample of 383 responses were obtained through a structured questionnaire. Direct and indirect effects were analysed through structural equation modelling. Their findings indicated both brand engagement and brand community engagement as significant predictors of brand equity and intention to purchase. Further, brand equity was found to fully mediate the relationship between brand engagement and intention to purchase, while it partially mediated the relationship between brand community engagement and intention to purchase. These findings serve to advance the understanding and explanation of the concept of consumer engagement and its outcomes. Additionally, it offers the new insight that purchase intentions occur as a result of the indirect effect of brand equity.

**Keywords:** Consumer engagement, Social media, Brand equity, Intention to purchase, Sri Lankan fashion retailing.

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**Ms. Sangeeth Ekanayake** works for SriLankan Airlines. She holds a BBA (Hons.) from the University of Staffordshire and MCIM (UK). E-mail: cs.ekanayake@gmail.com

**Dr. Nalin Abeysekera** is a Senior Lecturer at the Open University of Sri Lanka. He holds a PhD from the University of Colombo, a BSc. Mkt. (Special) from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, an MBA from the University of Colombo, MCIM (UK), and is a Chartered Marketer (UK). E-mail: nalinabeysekera@gmail.com