THE IMPACT OF COSMETICS INDUSTRY SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON BRAND LOYALTY: EVIDENCE FROM CHINESE COLLEGE STUDENTS

Man Qiutong, Wenzhou-Kean University
Md. Jahidur Rahman, Wenzhou-Kean University

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study was to identify the effects of Social Media Marketing on brand loyalty from cosmetics customers. The participants in the study were college student cosmetics customers in China, and the data were collected through Chinese social media platforms such as QQ and WeChat. The hypothesized relationships were tested using stepwise multiple regression analyses. The responses to a structured questionnaire from a sample of 145 college students indicated that advantageous campaigns, relevant content, updated information, popular content, and variety of applications or platforms are all positively related to cosmetic brand loyalty among college students. These results suggest that to survive in today's competitive market, cosmetics companies should prioritize marketing through social media to establish strong relationships with college student customers.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Brand Loyalty, Cosmetics Industry, College Students.

INTRODUCTION

Social Media Marketing is increasingly applied by many companies around the world to communicate their messages and build better customer relationships. The increasing use of private computers, smartphones, the Internet, e-commerce, and social media technologies has brought drastic changes to the methods and strategies of corporate marketing (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). Vast numbers of people have become social media users, for instance, the 1.32 billion people who use Facebook every day (Donnelly, 2018). In this new reality, it has become increasingly important for marketers to influence customer preferences and purchase intentions through social media networks (Kumar & Mirchandani, 2012). Through such networks, companies can communicate with their customers directly, and the customers can talk to other customers on social media platforms (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social Media Marketing has a positive relationship with stronger customer relationships, purchase intentions, and brand loyalty (Erdogmus & Cicek, 2012; Kim & Ko, 2010; Kumar & Mirchandani, 2012).

In the past, cosmetics companies mainly relied on traditional methods for advertising, such as television and magazines, but in recent times they have increasingly sought to contact their customers through social media (Kumar et al., 2006). According to Shen & Bissell (2013), most of the posts on the social media platforms of six representative cosmetic brands (Estee Lauder, MAC Cosmetics, Clinique, L'Oreal, Maybelline, and CoverGirl) concern entertaining, interactive features such as beauty polls, Q&As, surveys, activities that offer rewards, or various applications. Alongside such activities, the cosmetic brands post promotional information and let their customers engage in discussions of their products. The contents generated by the users

often help to improve the brand image, and to inform the development of new cosmetics-related products (Bartl & Ivanovic, 2010; Petty, 2012).

Most companies around the world realize that brand loyalty has an enormously important effect on their sales revenues, market share and profitability (Oliver, 1999; Keller, 2008; Aaker, 1991; Kapferer, 1997). However, it has become increasingly challenging to maintain brand loyalty and many researchers contribute to this area (Chaudhuri & Halbrook, 2001; Bennett & Rundle-Thiele, 2002). Many methods are used to build and maintain brand loyalty, and Social Media Marketing is one of those methods. According to the studies by Balakrishnan et al., (2014) and Erdogmus & Cicek (2012), there is a significant relationship between Social Media Marketing and brand loyalty.

To date, a few types of research have sought to investigate the relationship between Social Media Marketing and brand loyalty in the Chinese cosmetics industry. Some kinds of social media have already gained considerable benefits for the cosmetics industry such as network broadcast platform and WeChat. However, the impact of Social Media Marketing on cosmetic brand loyalty, particularly among college students is notably lacking. This relationship is conceptually intriguing because Chinese college students became more likely to use cosmetics (Liu et al., 2016). The Chinese cosmetics industry is developing now. So it is necessary to investigate more in the Chinese cosmetics industry. Our research seeks to fill this gap by examining the Impact of cosmetics industry Social Media Marketing on brand loyalty. The retail sales of steady cosmetic increase. However, the Chinese did not have a positive attitude towards the national brand (Zhang, 2018). Therefore, to develop the Chinese domestic cosmetics brand and compete with foreign competitors, more research should be done about the Chinese cosmetics industry.

The main aim of this study was to identify the effects of Social Media Marketing on brand loyalty among cosmetics customers. The chosen setting for this research is China, as online purchasing is very prevalent in that country. A recent survey there showed that 69% of female respondents and 65% of male respondents indicated willingness to buy cosmetics online (HKTDC, 2018). The cosmetics industry was chosen for our study because Social Media Marketing is very widely practiced in that industry (Kumar et al., 2006). Also, in a pre-test involving 308 Chinese college students in China, we found that 70.13% of our respondents used cosmetics regularly, and 67.13% of those cosmetics customers had used social media platforms to get information about cosmetic brands. These results suggested that college students are an important segment of the cosmetics market, and that most of them are active social media users. In addition, according to research by Crux Research (2013), college students spent about US$4.9 billion for cosmetics in 2013. Therefore, college students are clearly an essential market for the cosmetics industry.

We collected our data through Chinese social media platforms such as QQ and WeChat. Following the methods proposed by Erdogmus & Cicek (2012), we tested our hypothesized relationships through stepwise multiple regression analyses. Using a structured questionnaire with a sample of 145 people, we found that (1) advantageous campaigns, (2) relevant content, (3) updated contents, (4) popular content, and (5) variety of applications and platforms, are all positively related to cosmetic brand loyalty among college students.

The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature in several ways. First, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to investigate the impact of Social Media Marketing on cosmetic brand loyalty, particularly among college students. Previous studies have found a significant relationship between Social Media Marketing and brand loyalty. However, these

earlier studies did not focus on any specific industry (Balakrishnan, et al., 2014; Erdogmuş & Cicek, 2012). Second, the findings of our study offer implications for the cosmetic industry as a whole. In particular, our results suggest that to survive in today's competitive market, cosmetics companies need to make active use of social media for establishing strong relationships with college student customers. Finally, the findings of our study can prove helpful to all industries that are targeting college students as potential customers.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows. In the next section we review the relevant literature and propose our hypotheses. In section 3 we introduce the methodology used in our research. In section 4 we present the findings and analyses. In section 5 we discuss the findings, and in the last section we offer our conclusions, research limitations and further work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review

Tuten & Solomon (2017) defined Social Media Marketing as:

"*The utilization of social media technologies, channels, and software to create, communicate, deliver and exchange offerings that have value for an organization's stakeholders.*"

Traditional marketing was mainly concerned with the broadcast and paper media, and such marketing focused on "*the 4 Ps,*" namely product, price, promotion, and place (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). However, with the increasingly important role of interactive social media and e-commerce, a "*fifth P,*" namely participation, has been added into the marketing mix. Technology has had an increasingly significant impact on all aspects of business. The growth of private computers, smartphones, the Internet, e-commerce, and social media technologies has transformed marketing strategy, and some big brands such as Dell, IBM, and Burger King have made massive use of social media. Blogs, Twitter, and microblogs are now the most commonly used marketing tools around the world (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). Stelzner (2018) found that visual imagines, videos, blogs, and live videos are the types of contents that marketers most commonly use. According to Ashley & Tuten (2015), the Social Media Marketing channels most often used by brands are social networks, microblogs, and microsites, followed by blogs and video sharing. Both Ashley & Tuten (2015) and Stelzner (2018) found that Facebook is the most popular platform among social media-using companies. According to Mangold & Faulds (2009), social media is a tool that companies can use to communicate with large numbers of their customers, and a means for their customers to interact with other customers.

The social media environment in China is different from western countries. According to Chiu et al., (2012) and Zhou & Wang (2014), several key characteristics of Chinese social media was summarized: (1) China's social media users are more active and most of them have more than one social media accounts. (2) "*Artificial writer*" is essential for a company to support themselves and attack competitors. (3) China's social media is fragmented and local. China does not have Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, but China has its platforms such as Microblog (Weibo), and microblog is the most popular social media platform in China. The direct push technology is used in social media, and some short video platforms and headline news platform become more popular like Tik Tok and Toutiao (Kantar China, 2018).

Social Media Marketing has many implications and effects on how business is done. It costs less and get great value. About half of the Facebook and Twitter became more likely to talk about, recommend or purchase a company's products after engaging in a company's social media platform (Jackson, 2011). Stelzner (2018) showed that Social Media arketing is capable of improving sales, increasing exposure, growing business partnerships, generating leads, increasing traffic, and providing marketplace insight. Marketing through social media can be enhanced by loyal customers and improved through strategic leadership. The study by Erdogmus & Cicek (2012) investigated the relationship between Social Media Marketing and brand loyalty. These researchers found five reasons why customers choose follow a brand's social media. The customers are commonly attracted by (1) advantageous campaigns, (2) relevant content, (3) frequently updated content, (4) contents that are popular among their friends, and (5) the variety of platforms or applications through which brand product information and purchasing options appear on social media. Furthermore, Erdogmus & Cicek (2012) found that these five features (of advantageous campaigns, contents that are relevant, updated, and popular, and presentation through a variety of platforms and applications) are all positively related to brand loyalty. Advantageous campaigns were found to have the most significant influence. According to another study conducted by Balakrishnan et al. (2014), online communities, word-of-mouth, and online advertising are also positively related to brand loyalty. Schivinski & Dabrowski (2016) found that communicating with customers via social media is positively related to consumers' brand attitudes, and that the contents generated by customers on social media positively impact both brand equity and brand attitude.

Technology changes the way customers research and buy cosmetics products. About 51% of customers find information on cosmetics brand websites, and Facebook and blogs with beauty advice or apps for smart phones are also used by cosmetics companies to interact more with customers (Cosmetics Europe, 2017). In the cosmetics industry, e-commerce has also brought massive profits for many companies, and the quest for online sales has increasingly transformed marketing strategies. For example, both Clinique and Origins (the two brands of Estee Lauder) have their own websites. Another example is Revlon, which maintains a range of websites for delivering information about products and promotions to its customers (Kumar et al., 2006). Shen & Bissell (2013) also found a strong relationship between the level of a beauty-products company (high-end vs. department store) and the frequency of its social media post updates. According to a study conducted by Petty (2012), electronic word-of-mouth is often capable of improving the brand images of beauty-product firms. Bartl & Ivanovic (2010) examined the Social Media Marketing strategies applied by Nivea, and showed how this company was able to develop and produce successful new products through analyzing user content on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

College students are valuable customers for the cosmetics industry. The research by Britton (2012) showed that only 3 out of 92 female college student respondents had never used cosmetics before the age of 18. These results suggest that college girls are a significant customer segment for the cosmetics industry. Chen (2015) conducted research in Shenyang, Liaoning province, in China, and found that more than 70% of 500 female college respondents used cosmetics twice a day. In addition, Parikh (2017) showed that many male students have become active consumers of cosmetics, and that although this finding shakes traditional gender roles to their foundations, this development opens another major opportunity for the cosmetics industry. In China, college students have a high capacity for consumption of cosmetics. According to an iResearch (2018), report college students in China purchased RMB381.5 billion worth of

cosmetics in 2018. This iResearch report also indicated that 66% of all female students and 27.3% of all male students are regular customers for the cosmetics industry.

By using social media, a business can promote its products and services, provide immediate support, and build an online brand community (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Weinberg, 2009; Zarrella, 2010). In addition, the firm's customers can share information about its products and services with their peers through social media (Mangold & Foulds, 2009; Stileman, 2009). As a result, social media helps companies to create brand loyalty through networking, conversation, and community building (McKee, 2010).

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Almost all college students use social networking websites (Sponcil & Gitimu, 2013). According to Wang, Chen, & Liang's research (2011), 45% of 50 college students spent six to eight hours per day on social media, and 23% of those students spent more than eight hours per day on social media. In the cosmetics industry, social media have been widely used in marketing, and several cosmetic brands such as Estee Lauder or Revlon maintain websites to communicate with their customers (Kumar et al., 2006). Some companies, including MAC Cosmetics, Clinique, L'Oreal, Maybelline, Cover Girl, and Estee Lauder, also post product information on Facebook (Shen & Bissell, 2013). Some researchers have found a strong positive relationship between social media use and brand loyalty (Erdogmus & Cicek, 2012). Therefore, our study seeks to shed light on college student customers' perspectives regarding how Social Media Marketing can affect cosmetic brand loyalty.

In today's increasingly competitive market, it is challenging for companies to keep their customers' loyal, because the risk is high that customers will be attracted to try other brands (Bennett & Rundel-Thiele, 2005). To deal with this threat, companies need to take advantage of Social Media Marketing. The findings of this study demonstrate that the impact of Social Media Marketing has a significant effect on cosmetic products brand loyalty among college students. Therefore, cosmetics firms have a great opportunity to increase their sales by providing advantageous campaigns for young customers on social media platforms. Customers go to social media for a brand's products and promotional campaigns (Mangold & Foulds, 2009). For instance, Pepsi and Coca Cola conducted a series of activities on social media platforms to let their customers redeem points for prizes such as CDs, DVDs, electronic devices, or MP3 downloads (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). L'Oreal, CoverGirl, and Maybelline have posted coupons or discount codes on social media platforms, which have benefitted their customers and enhanced brand loyalty (Shen & Bissell, 2013). Thus, this paper hypothesize that:

H_1: *Advantageous campaigns on cosmetic brands' social media platforms are positively related to brand loyalty among college students.*

In many cases, too many messages are posted on social media platforms for the viewers to read them all. Therefore, customers seek to filter out the less relevant messages (Brito, 2011). Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) argued that the messages a company delivers should be shaped to address their target market. For example, if a firm's target market is book lovers, then it will share some customer-written reviews of books on social media platforms. Tourism marketers also face serious competition, because their customers may be exposed to a great deal of highly relevant content regarding tourism alternatives on the Internet (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Thus, this paper hypothesize that:

H_2: Relevant contents on cosmetic brands' social media platforms are positively related to brand loyalty among college students.

According to Ashley & Tuten (2015), the brands that post the most twitter messages each week commonly attract the highest numbers of followers. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) indicated that the contents on social media always need to be fresh. For instance, Jonathan Schwartz, the CEO of Sun Microsystems, always announces the firm's new strategies and products via social media platforms. Clearly, it is vital that firm's provide relevant and regularly updated messages on their social media platforms, if they wish to enhance their customers' loyalty. Besides, according to Freidman (2011), Google made a new algorithm update to make sure their customers can see the updated content. In addition to that, customers are more likely to follow a brand on social media if its products and social media platform are popular among their friends (Erdogmus & Cicek, 2012). Word-of-mouth in online environment in marketing is considerable (Gruen et al., 2006). Thus, this paper hypothesize that:

H_3: Frequently updated contents on cosmetic brands' social media platforms are positively related to brand loyalty among college students.

H_4: Contents that are popular among friends on cosmetic brands' social media platforms are positively related to brand loyalty among college students.

In addition, researchers have found a strong relationship between interest in a brand's mobile apps, and intention to purchase and to share information on its products online. Therefore, there is commonly a high ROI for the development of apps (Taylor & Levin, 2014). Sometimes it is convenient for a company to join an existing social media platform, but in other cases firms need to create a new platform. For example, Japan's Fujifilm and the U.S.-based department store firm Sears collaborated with MTV music television to build a new social network (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). A cosmetic brand that offers information on a variety of social media platforms and applications is also more likely to attract loyal customers. Thus, this paper hypothesizes that:

H_5: A cosmetic brand's appearance on various platforms and applications on social media is positively related to brand loyalty among college students.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

Our sample was drawn from the general population of Chinese college students. We sent structured questionnaires to 308 college students through Chinese social media platforms such as QQ and WeChat. These questionnaires had four parts. The first part had two filter questions, to ensure that the respondents were qualified to participate in the research. These filter questions were (1)

"Are you a regular customer for cosmetics products?" and (2) *"Do you use social media frequently and engage with at least one cosmetic brand social media platform?"*

These two filter questions let us check that the respondents were both regular cosmetics customers and regular social media users. We collected 145 valid questionnaires, for which the respondents passed the two filter questions. Therefore, the sample size was 145 students.

The second part of our questionnaire concerned the participants' demographic features. The third part consisted of five questions about the participants' reasons for engaging with cosmetics-related social media which were drawn from previous researches (Mangold & Foulds, 2009; Freidman, 2011; Brito, 2011). These questions were as follows: (1)

"*Do you follow a cosmetics social media platform because it provides some advantageous campaigns to you?*" (2) "*Do you follow a cosmetics social media platform because it provides relevant contents to you?*" (3) "*Do you follow a cosmetics social media platform because it frequently updates its contents?*" (4) "*Do you follow a cosmetics social media platform because its contents are popular among your friends?*" (5) "*Do you follow a cosmetics social media platform because the cosmetic brand appears on various platforms and offers applications on social media?*"

The third part of the questionnaire used a Likert scale to measure customer engagement on social media. The items were answered by choosing from the following options: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. The fourth part presented items designed to measure brand loyalty. Following the method proposed by Erdogmus and Cicek (2012), brand loyalty was measured by (1) intention to interact more with the brand, (2) intention to increase purchases of the brand, (3) trust toward the brand, (4) intention to interact with other brands through social media, and (5) intention to recommend the brand to friends. The fifth part of the questionnaire used a Likert scale to further measure brand loyalty. Items (1) to (4) were measured by the options 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. For item (5), the options were 5=strongly disagree, 4=disagree, 3=neutral, 2=agree, and 1=strongly agree.

RESEARCH MODEL

The main aim of this study was to identify the effects of Social Media Marketing on cosmetic brand loyalty. We used a stepwise multiple regression model to investigate the relationship between Social Media Marketing and cosmetic brand loyalty among the participating college students. The object of the study (the dependent variable) was cosmetic brand loyalty among college students. Following Erdogmus & Cicek (2012), we measured five alternative reasons (or experimental variables) for why the participants might follow a social media platform and maintain brand loyalty. These reasons were (1) advantageous campaigns, (2) relevant social content, (3) frequently updated content, (4) contents that are popular among friends, and (5) the variety of social media platforms or applications on which the cosmetic brand appears. In assessing the relations between these factors and brand loyalty, our stepwise regression model was as follows:

$$Brand\ Loyalty = b_0 + b_1\ Advantageous\ Campaigns + b_2\ Relevant\ Contents + b_3\ Update\ Information + b_4\ Popular\ Contents + b_5\ Various\ Platforms + \varepsilon$$

Where,
1. Brand loyalty is favorable attitude toward a single brand over time, which is consistent with purchasing that brand (Kerin et al., 2015).
2. Advantageous campaigns are campaigns conducted on social media platforms that offer benefits to customers, such as discount codes or cosmetic samples.

3. Relevant contents are contents posted on social media platforms that the customers find relevant to their interests.
4. Updated information is information posted on social media platforms that is frequently updated.
5. Popular contents are social media contents that are popular among the participants' friends.
6. *Variety of platforms and applications* is the variety of social media platforms and applications on which brand-related content appears.

Reliability and Validity of Research

The questionnaires were posted on social media platforms such as WeChat and QQ. Therefore, the respondents could volunteer to answer the questionnaires at any time or place, whenever they were available, and in a private or an open place. The participants were promised that their responses would be kept secret. Overall, our research method avoided the pitfalls of participant errors or participant bias, and enabled the collection of reliable data. Concerning the construct validity, our study was descriptive in its tests for the correlations between Social Media Marketing and brand loyalty. As descriptive analysis generally works well for conducting deductive research (which moves from theory to data), we chose to use a deductive research method. After using questionnaires to collect the data, we assessed the results through regression analysis. This project was therefore a form of quantitative research.

Concerning the internal validity, a number of other researchers have already done investigations to examine the relationship between Social Media Marketing and brand loyalty. Our study, however, is meaningfully different in that we investigated this relationship specifically in relation to the cosmetics industry and the college student market. For this research focus, external validity could be demonstrated by the responses to our pre-test questions regarding whether the students used cosmetics regularly and whether they used social media to gain information about cosmetic brands. Our pre-test of 308 students suggested that in China, most college students are users of both cosmetic products and social media platforms. Therefore, our sample was determined to be representative. This paper uses Cronbach's alpha tests to see if multiple-question Likert-scale surveys are reliable. Results are shown in Table 1. The reliability coefficient of all the factors about Social Media Marketing is 0.995, demonstrating adequate reliability. The Cronbach α of all the items measuring brand loyalty is 0.996 which also shows the reliability.

	Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach α if Item Deleted	Cronbach α
Table 1 **CRONBACH A OF VARIABLES**				
Social Media Marketing	Advantageous Campaigns	0.980	0.994	0.995
	Relevant content	0.990	0.993	
	Frequently Updated Content	0.986	0.993	
	Popular Contents	0.986	0.993	
	Various Platforms	0.982	0.994	
Brand Loyalty	Intention to interact more with the brand	0.986	0.995	0.996
	Intention to increase purchases of the brand	0.990	0.994	
	Trust toward the brand	0.992	0.994	
	Intention to interact with other brands through social media	0.974	0.996	
	Intention to recommend the brand	0.993	0.994	

to friends			

Results and Findings

To ensure that the findings were representative, we needed to collect completed questionnaires from as many college students as possible. We received 308 responses from various universities in China, of which 145 were valid, meaning that the respondents passed the two filter questions.

Figure 1 shows the results of the two filter questions. About 70.13% of the respondents reported using cosmetics regularly, and only 29.87% of them did not. Figure 2 gives further information concerning the respondents who reported using cosmetics. Of these cosmetics users, 67.13% reported visiting a cosmetic brand's social media platform at least once, and 32.87% said they had never done so.
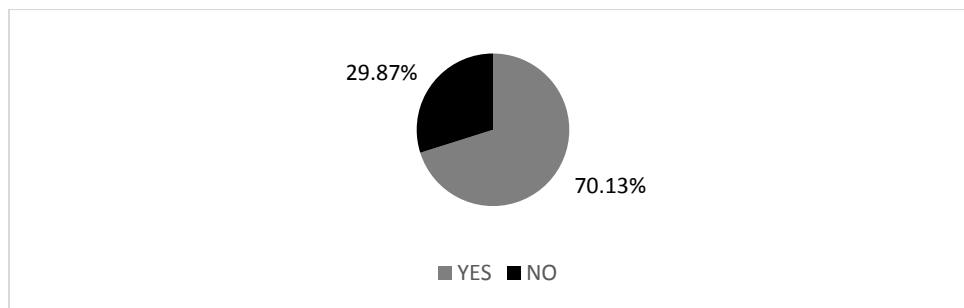

FIGURE 1
THE PROPORTION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO USE COSMETICS (YES) AND THE PROPORTION OF THOSE WHO DO NOT (NO)
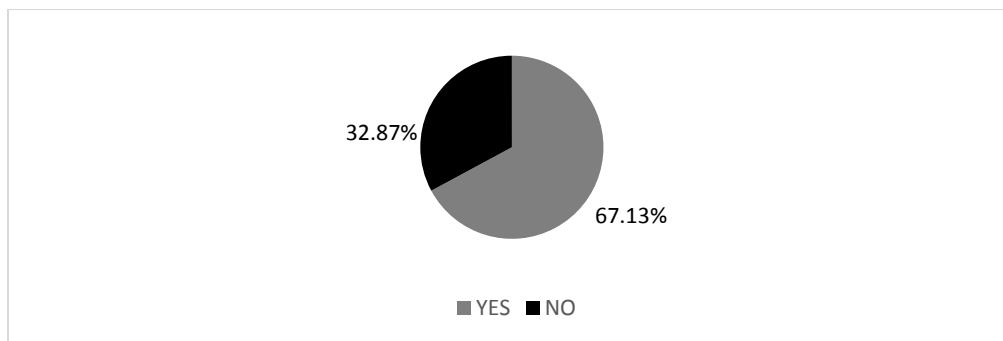

FIGURE 2
THE PIE CHART SHOWS THE PROPORTION OF PARTICIPATING COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO HAD USED COSMETIC BRAND SOCIAL MEDIA SITES (YES) AND THE PROPORTION OF THOSE WHO HAD NOT USED SUCH SITES (NO).

Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of our research sample. The sample size was 145. This sample included student's at all four levels of college training: 31.03% were freshmen, 28.97% sophomores, 23.45% juniors, and 16.55% seniors. The percentage of

freshman participants was the largest. However, the largest imbalance among the participants was in the ratio of male ($n=37$) to female ($n=108$) students.

Table 2		
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERS IN SAMPLE		
Year in university	**Number**	**Proportion**
Freshman	45	31.03%
Sophomore	42	28.97%
Junior	34	23.45%
Senior	24	16.55%
Total	145	100%
Gender		
Male	37	25.52%
Female	108	74.48%
Total	145	100%

Table 3 shows the correlations between our variables were tested by Pearson correlation analysis and stepwise multiple regression analysis. First, the study variables' zero-order correlations were examined to determine the relationships among them. The Pearson correlation results are shown in Table 3. These results indicate the relations between brand loyalty and the factors of advantageous campaigns (r=.976, $p<0.01$), relevant contents (r=.984, $p<.01$), updated information (r=.983, $p<.01$), popularity of contents (r=.979, $p<.01$), and variety of applications and platforms used (r=.978, $p<.01$). All five factors showed highly positive correlations with brand loyalty.

Table 3	
CORRELATION BETWEEN BRAND LOYALTY AND SOCIAL MEDIAL MARKETING	
Pearson correlation	**Brand loyalty**
Advantageous campaigns	.976**
Relevant contents	.984**
Updated information	.983**
Popular contents	.979**
Variety of applications and platforms	.978**
**p<.01	

Table 4 shows the results of the stepwise multiple regression analysis. The R^2 of advantageous campaigns, relevant contents, updated information, popular contents, and variety of applications and platforms was 0.978. Therefore, the five variables were capable of significantly explaining 98% of the variance in brand loyalty. In addition, the model passed the F test ($F=2724.014$, $p<.05$). Advantageous campaigns (standardized regression coefficient / β=.131, $p<.01$) were positively related to brand loyalty, as were relevant contents (β=.326, $p<.01$), updated information (β=.209, $p<.01$), popular contents (β=.123, $p<.05$), and variety of applications and platforms (β=.209, $p<.01$).

Table 4							
EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON BRAND LOYALTY							
	Stepwise multiple regression analysis	**Standardized coefficients**	**t-value**	**p-value**	**VIF**	**R^2**	**Adj. R^2**	**F**

	B	Std. error	Beta						
(Constant)	.050	.029	-	1.738	.083				
Advantageous campaigns	.136	.047	.131	2.904	.004***	28.242			
Relevant contents	.319	.065	.326	4.931	.000***	60.828			
Updated information	.212	.063	.209	3.367	.001***	53.519	0.978	0.978	2724.014**
Popular contents	.123	.058	.123	2.119	.035**	46.540			
Variety in applications and platforms	.213	.053	.209	3.999	.000***	38.130			
**p<.05. ***p<.01									

DISCUSSION

College students are a vital segment of customers for cosmetics firms, and most of these people use social media platforms to gain the information about cosmetic brands. In China, there is no doubt that many more female than male college students like to use cosmetics. In addition, the results of our study suggest that advantageous social media campaigns, relevant content, updated information, popular content, and variety of applications and platforms are all positively related to cosmetic brand loyalty among college students. Many cosmetics companies run advantageous campaigns to benefit their college student customers, and these campaigns help to make these customers more loyal to their brands, as is suggested by H_1.

Brand loyalty is also positively related to relevant contents on social media. Therefore, H_2 is also supported. If a cosmetics company can provide more relevant information for its college student customers via social media, it can be expected that the customers will be more loyal to the brand. Offering frequently updated information on cosmetics via social media is another important way to gain loyal customers. Therefore, H_3 is supported. Among college students, if a brand's social media is popular among their friends, they will often be influenced toward becoming loyal customers of that brand. These results indicate that H_4 is also supported. Finally, brand loyalty is affected positively by increased variety of cosmetics-related social media applications and platforms, which suggests that H_5 should be accepted.

Therefore, the study's findings strongly suggest that all five of the proposed hypotheses are well supported. In that case, cosmetics companies may be advised to prioritize the creation of more relevant, participative, attractive, and engaging content on a variety of social media applications and platforms. Such social media-based marketing can substantially improve the brand loyalty of college student customers in today's competitive market.

Some other researchers also found the positive impact of Social Media Marketing on Brand Loyalty. Social Media based brand communities had a positive effect on the relationship between customer and product, customer and brand, customer and company as well as customer and customer, and these four relationships were positively related to brand trust which positively influenced brand loyalty (Laroche et al., 2013). Also, Luo et al., (2015) found that Social Media Marketing positively affects brand loyalty by positively affecting a customer-customer relationship and customer-brand relationship in China. Ismail (2017) study demonstrated that perceived Social Media Marketing activities would assist marketers in conceiving brand loyalty, brand consciousness, and value consciousness.

According to the study by Erdogmus & Cicek (2012), advantageous campaigns, relevant social media content, popular content, and a variety of applications were all found positively related to brand loyalty. However, the frequency of information updates did not show a significant relationship with brand loyalty. In this study, all of the five variables, including updated information, showed strongly positive relationships with brand loyalty. Other previous research has found that the brands that post the most Tweets per week tend to receive higher numbers of followers (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). According to Thorbjornsen & Supphellen (2004), loyal customers tend to visit a brand's social media platform frequently, and they require more frequently updated information. Therefore, the relationship between the frequency of updating information and brand loyalty seems plausible. The previous study by Thorbjornsen & Supphellen (2004) did not focus on any specific industry, but our study focused particularly on the cosmetics industry. We feel that the cosmetics industry is a kind of fashion industry, and updated information is important in that industry. It may be the case that in studies of all industries in general, updated information does not show a significant relationship with brand loyalty. This relationship may be unusually strong in the specific case of the cosmetics industry, and perhaps this is why our findings differed from those of a similar previous study.

CONCLUSIONS

Research Limitations and Further Work

The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of Social Media Marketing on cosmetic brand loyalty among college students. The research questions and hypotheses were well developed, and the results were obtained through an appropriate process. The study found that Social Media Marketing had a positive effect on cosmetic brand loyalty among college students. Advantageous campaigns, relevant content, updated information, popular content, and variety of applications and platforms all showed strong, positive relationships with cosmetic brand loyalty among college students. These results suggest that cosmetics companies should make Social Media Marketing a priority, and they should use creative, attractive platforms to help build strong relationships with their college student customers. Cosmetic companies should provide advantageous campaigns to benefit their college student customers, such as offering integral activities, discounts, and coupons. Their social media platforms or applications should deliver relevant and updated information on new cosmetics-related fashions or products. Cosmetics companies should also use a variety of social media platforms and applications, such as mobile apps, to better communicate with their college student customers. Then, if the social media platform becomes popular among a group of students, these students will influence others.

It is important to consider the causes of brand loyalty, because in general the market is passing through a phase of declining customer loyalty. In such a phase, it is generally much more difficult to keep loyal customers (Bennett & Rundel-Thiele, 2005). It is also vitally important that business managers learn how to use the non-traditional tools of Social Media Marketing. Social Media Marketing differs from traditional marketing (such as ads on television or in magazines), because this new media allows companies to both communicate and interact with their customers. Social media offers an opportunity for firms to create and build brand loyalty. In the cosmetics industry, many of the most successful brands are successful social media users such as Estee Lauder & MAC Cosmetics. These firms rely heavily on marketing through social media (Shen & Bissell, 2013).

College students are an important target market for the cosmetics industry, and these people are also heavily engaged in social media use. It is a valuable practice to examine the relationship between Social Media Marketing and cosmetic brand loyalty among the college students. Crux Research (2013) reported that college students spent about US$4.9 billion for cosmetics in 2013. Also, according to our pre-test results from 308 Chinese college students, 70.13% of the participants reported using cosmetics regularly, and 67.13% of these cosmetics users reported gaining information about cosmetic brands from social media platforms.

This study contributes to the previous research in this field. Ours is the first study to specifically investigate the relationship between Social Media Marketing of cosmetics and brand loyalty among college students. There was no research talking about the relationship between Social Media Marketing and brand loyalty in cosmetics industry in China. Our study also re-examines the results obtained by Erdogmus & Cicek (2012), and does so specifically in relation to the cosmetics industry. However, due to limitations in the objective conditions of our study, we focus only on Chinese college students, and we acknowledge that the situation in other countries or regions might be different. In addition, the numbers of male students and female students were not balanced. This research cannot reflect the situation in male students very well.

In addition, our study tests the relationship between brand loyalty and various features of Social Media Marketing, such as advantageous campaigns, relevant content, updated information, popular content, and variety in applications and platforms. We realize that there are additional reasons why customers may choose to follow a specific cosmetic brand's social media. For example, people may be influenced by the example set by a famous person. Therefore, further research is clearly needed to examine the relationship between Social Media Marketing and cosmetic brand loyalty among college students in other countries. Additional factors such as the impact of famous people should be considered in future studies. We also strongly recommend that future researchers should conduct similar studies focused on other industries, such as the food or games industries.

REFERENCES

Aaker, D.A. (1991). Managing Brand Equity. New York: The Free Press.

Ashley, C., & Tuten, T. (2015). Creative strategies in social media marketing: An exploratory study of branded social content and consumer engagement. *Psychology & Marketing*, *32*(1), 15-27.

Balakrishnan, B.K., Dahnil, M.I., & Yi, W.J. (2014). The impact of social media marketing medium toward purchase intention and brand loyalty among generation Y. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *148*, 177-185.

Bartl, M., & Ivanovic, I. (2010). Netnography: Finding the right balance between automated and manual research. In P. Brauckmann (Ed.), *Web-Monitoring: Gewinnung und Analyse von Daten uber das Kommunikation sverhalten im Internet* (157-174). Konstanz, UVK-Verl.-Ges.

Bennett, R., & Rundel-Thiele, S. (2005). The brand loyalty life cycle: Implications for marketers. *Journal of Brand Management*, *12*(4), 250-263.

Bennett, R., & Rundle-Thiele, S. (2002). A comparison of attitudinal loyalty measurement approaches. *Journal of Brand Management, 9*(3), 193-209.

Brito, M. (2011). 3 reasons why relevant content matters. *Social Media Explorer*, July 14. Retrieved from http://www.socialmediaexplorer.com/social-mediamarketing/3-reasons-why-relevant-content-matters/.

Britton, A.M. (2012). *The beauty industry's influence on women in society*. (senior honors thesis). University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH.

Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M.B. (2001). The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: the role of brand loyalty. *Journal of Marketing, 65*(2), 81-93.

Chen Y. (2015). A survey of cosmetics consumption of female college students from Simmel fashion perspective. *Market Modernization, 17*, 18-19.

Chiu, C., Ip, C., & Silverman, A. (2012). Understanding social media in China. *McKinsey Quarterly, 2*, 78-81.

Cosmetics Europe. (2017). Consumer Insights 2017. Retrieved from https://www.cosmeticseurope.eu/files/6114/ 9738/2777/CE_Consumer_Insights_2017.pdf (accessed 21 April 2019).

Crux Research Inc. (2013). College student spending power flat this year. Retrieved from https://www.marketingcharts.com/uncategorized-30388.

Donnelly, G. (2018). 75 super-useful Facebook statistics for 2018. Retrieved from, https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2017/11/07/facebook-statistics.

Erdogmus, I.E., & Cicek, M. (2012). The impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *58*, 1353-1360.

Freidman, A. (2011). Freshness Update+Social Media=Happy Users, retrieved from https://searcheng ineland.com/freshness-update-social-media-happy-users-102880 (accessed on 21 April 2019).

Gruen, T.W., Osmonbekov, T., & Czaplewski, A.J. (2006). eWOM: The impact of customer-to-customer online know-how exchange on customer value and loyalty. *Journal of Business Research, 59*(4), 449-456.

HKTDC RESEARCH. (2018). China's cosmetics market. Retrieved from http://china-trade-research.hktdc.com/business-news/article/China-Consumer-Market/China-s-Cosmetics Market/ccm/en/1/1X000000/1X002L09.htm.

http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2011/07/infographic-using-social-media-to-build-brand-loyalty/241701/ (accessed 21 April 2019).

iResearch Inc. (2018). College Students Consumption Insight Report. Retrieved from http://report.iresearch.cn/report_pdf.aspx?id=3262.

Ismail, A.R. (2017). The influence of perceived social media marketing activities on brand loyalty: The mediation effect of brand and value consciousness. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, 29*(1), 129-144.

Jackson, N. (2011) Infographic: Using Social Media to Build Brand Loyalty. Retrieved from:

Kantar China. (2018). China Social Media Landscape 2018. Retrieved from https://www.chinainternetwatch.com/26502/social-media-2018/ (accessed 21 April 2019).

Kapferer, J.N. (1997). Strategic Brand Management: Creating and Sustaining Brand Equity Long Term. UK: Kogan Page.

Kaplan, A.M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons*, *53*(1), 59-68.

Keller, K.L. (2008). Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity. *Third Edition*. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Kerin, R.A., Hartley, S.W., & Rudelius, W. (2015). *Marketing*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

Kim, A.J., & Ko, E. (2010). Impacts of luxury fashion brand's social media marketing on customer relationship and purchase intention. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, *1*(3), 164-171.

Kumar, S., Massie, C., & Dumonceaux, M.D. (2006). Comparative innovative business strategies of major players in cosmetic industry. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, *106*(3), 285-306.

Kumar, V., & Mirchandani, R. (2012). Increasing the ROI of social media marketing. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, *54*(1), 55.

Laroche, M., Habibi, M.R., & Richard, M.O. (2013). To be or not to be in social media: How brand loyalty is affected by social media?. *International Journal of Information Management, 33*(1), 76-82.

Liu, C., Yu, J. & Fan, M. (2016). Research on college students' use of cosmetics. *Intelligence. 22*. 19.

Luo, N., Zhang, M., & Liu, W. (2015). The effects of value co-creation practices on building harmonious brand community and achieving brand loyalty on social media in China. *Computers in Human Behavior, 48*, 492-499.

Mangold, W.G., & Faulds, D.J. (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons*, *52*(4), 357-365.

McKee, S. (2010). *Creative B2b branding (no, really): Building a creative brand in a business world*. Oxford, UK: Goodfellow Publishers Limited.

Oliver, R.L. (1999). Whence consumer loyalty? *The Journal of Marketing*, *63*, 33-44.

Parikh, R. (2017). Male students use cosmetics for expression and concealment. Retrieved from http://thecspn.com/?p=42870.

Petty, R.D. (2012). Using the law to protect the brand on social media sites: A three "M's" framework for marketing managers. *Management Research Review*, *35*(9), 758-769.

Saravanakumar, M., & SuganthaLakshmi, T. (2012). Social media marketing. *Life Science Journal*, *9*(4), 4444-4451.

Schivinski, B., & Dabrowski, D. (2016). The effect of social media communication on consumer perceptions of brands. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *22*(2), 189-214.

Shen, B., & Bissell, K. (2013). Social media, social me: A content analysis of beauty companies' use of Facebook in

marketing and branding. *Journal of Promotion Management*, *19*(5), 629-651.

Sponcil, M., & Gitimu, P. (2013). Use of social media by college students: Relationship to communication and self-concept. *Journal of Technology Research*, *4*, 1.

Stelzner, M. (2018). 2018 social media marketing industry report. *Social Media Examiner*, 1-52.

Stileman, P. (2009). *To what extent has social media changed the relationship between brand and consumer?* (MA dissertation). Bucks New University, High Wycombe, UK.

Taylor, D.G., & Levin, M. (2014). Predicting mobile app usage for purchasing and information-sharing. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, *42*(8), 759-774.

Thorbjornsen, H., & Supphellen, M. (2004). The impact of brand loyalty on website usage. *Journal of Brand Management*, *11*(3), 199-208.

Tuten, T.L., & Solomon, M.R. (2017). *Social Media Marketing*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Wang, Q., Chen, W., & Liang, Y. (2011). *The effects of social media on college students*. (MBA student scholarship paper). Johnson & Wales University, Providence, RI.

Weinberg, T. (2009). *The new community rules: Marketing on the social web*. (1st ed.). Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media.

Xiang, Z., & Gretzel, U. (2010). Role of social media in online travel information search. *Tourism Management*, *31*(2), 179-188.

Zarrella, D. (2010). *The social media marketing book*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media.

Zhang, M. (2018). The sustainable development of domestic cosmetics in the Chinese market. *Modern Business. 35*. 127-128.

Zhou, L., & Wang, T. (2014). Social media: A new vehicle for city marketing in China. Cities, *37*, 27-32.