The Effect of Social Media on Customer Loyalty and Company Performance of Insurance Industry

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ABSTRACT

Due to vast changes in the marketing world, traditional methods are not enough to meet companies' needs. On the other hand, changing customer communication channels and fragmentation of this communication from supplier to consumer has reduced more and more the customers' trust and belief. Social media provides the partners of insurance companies (sale representatives) with an opportunity for creating fast and effective communication with customers. Statistical population of the research consists of distribution channel of Iran and Asia insurance companies in three levels of central offices (supplier), representatives of these companies and customers as consumers. Sampling method is a combination of random cluster sampling for central offices of Iran and Asia insurance companies, using Morgan table for sale representatives and Cochran's formula for unlimited population for customers. Data was gathered using field method and by questionnaires and was analyzed using single-variable hierarchical regression and using SPSS software. Results indicate that social media usage has a chain relation in the supply channel of Iran and Asia insurance companies and creation of this chain relation will make customers loyal to sale representatives of insurance companies and will improve representatives' performance and brand sale of Iran and Asia insurance companies.

Keywords: Social Media, Loyalty, Contagion Theory, Performance, Brand Reputation, Customer Interaction, Insurance Companies
JEL Classifications: L1, L82, M

1. INTRODUCTION

Nature of insurance companies today make it necessary to use suitable strategies and solutions in line with customer orientation and absorbing and preserving customers. Because survival of these companies depends on their customers and more they can preserve their existing customers more they'll be successful in the long term. The main point of preserving customers is that their satisfaction should be met continuously by offering a premier value to them (Kotler, 2001).

During investigations in 1990, Richhol and Saucer stated that reduction of customers for 5%, results in loss of profit for 50% in the insurance companies. Based on the researches, 5% increase in preserving the existing customers, will increase the profit by 25-125%. The point is that loyal customers have many advantages including improving organization's profit, reducing marketing costs, increasing sales, having customers with lower price sensitivity etc. (Kandampully and Suhartano, 2006).

There are outstanding changes happening in the marketing world for which the traditional marketing methods are not sufficient. Electronic communication and specially social media are changing trade's landscape and the ways of communication between distribution channels and customers (Rapp et al., 2013). As companies are looking for stronger communication with their customers in a competitive market, using social media tools can have surprising impact on company performances through customer loyalty and created value through interaction with him/her (Trainor, 2012).

During their short life, social technologies could win their position among people much faster than previous editions of digital technology. Television after 13 years and internet service

providers after 3 years since the start of their activity could make 50 million people to register for their services but Facebook could do it in only 1 year and twitter in only 9 months. Companies have randomly utilized this technology too. But the capacities of these technologies for creating commercial value have still been ignored. Deep analysis of McKinsey Institute of four industries that own 20% of the global sale of commodity and services indicated that these technologies can create between 900 million USD-1.3 billion USD commercial value in different commercial organizations and companies. Two third of this value depends on building better and more effective relation with customers and cooperation of staff inside and between the organizations (Sanat Information Centre, 2013).

Today ignoring the social networks will cost a lot for businesses. Incomplete and insufficient knowledge of using social networks is always an important obstacle for entering the new world of advertisement. Therefore, even the oldest business schools have started to determine and define the strategy of social network usage. Social media is not able to create brand or attract customers alone. Social network is only a messenger but may be the most important tool to enable you to reach millions of users quickly (Pakfar, 2010).

There is no doubt that these media contribute to the development of economy and trade but unfortunately there is no access to the statistics in Iran. Various tools have been made for measuring the involvement of companies in social media and their usage level indicates the development of trade in such media so that it can be said that these media have turned redefining trade and economy to an undeniable necessity. Electronic trade is a reflection of this fact and raise of Facebook's price in the stock market is another reflection. Even the World Bank has specifically dedicated a section in its website to communication and information technologies and puts the related documents of this field in the framework of stable economic development in this section. Dell officials stated that they have derived 17,000 ideas from social media. Therefore national economies boom when companies utilize the social media (Information Center of Online Media).

Marketing is the knowledge of interaction with trade centers, selling method and offering services but one to one marketing is about people i.e., communicating with people and selling or offering services to them by collecting their valuable and unique information and experiences. What is considered today as one of the challenging subjects and endless concern of most small and big business managers is answering the question that will today customers future customers too? Answering this apparently simple question can secure the survival of a manufacturing or service company or organization. What doubles the importance of this issue is its qualitative nature and effects on company policies and strategies (Pakfar, 2010).

Purpose of this research is to investigate the chain impact of social media usage on the distribution channel of Iran and Asia insurance companies i.e., the insurance companies, sale representatives and customers. This research will provide a ground for further investigations in this field.

The research will try to answer this main question: Will the chain social media usage by the headquarters of the insurance companies, sale representatives and customers affect sale? Based on this, researcher study the results of social media usage in the whole distribution channel.

2. A REVIEW ON THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

2.1. Social Media Usage in Companies

To reduce opportunism in the trade world, organizations (suppliers) are seriously and actively trying to build trust and relations by exchanging valuable information (Gulati and Gargiulo 1999). Companies can use social media for building further interpersonal relations with sale representatives. Using the concept of contagion in the supply chain, looks far beyond the aspect of staff or customers toward organizational and inter-organizational fields and the concept refers to propagation of a mutual relation of a part of supply chain to another part i.e., the adjacent mutual relation alongside the supply chain (Rapp et al., 2013).

Development of inter-organizational relations are considered as a strategic capacity which offers the opportunity to access the superior sources; inaccessible in other ways. Studies show that these relations not only distinguish the capabilities of some organizations but will also act as form of stable competitive advantage (Trez and Luce, 2012).

In the present research, the relation between insurance company and sale representative is a bilateral in the chain of supplying insurance services in the country. Based on the contagion theory, social media usage by company will result in usage by sale representative. This mutual relation impacts the adjacent mutual relation of sale representative-customer.

As companies are looking for building and maintaining stronger relations with their customers, social media usage can have an outstanding impact on company's performance through customer loyalty and the value created through customer interactions. Number of companies and customers using social media is growing incrementally. With this high usage rate, investigating if this imitation impacts the performance-related consequences like loyalty and sale -whether on brand level or on store level (sale representative) is important (Rapp et al., 2013).

To investigate the impact of social media usage by insurance companies on sale representatives, definition of Rapp et al. in 2013 was used.

Raising customer relations - Transferring new information to customers about special events and new services – Transferring information of new insurance events to customers - Tool of monitoring insurance industry events - Creating friendly relations with customers in the social media- monitoring rivals - An environment for common advertisement with representatives - Cooperating with customers in advertising in the social media – Tool of customer's seeing the special events and

advertisements of Iran Insurance Company - Tool of comparing "company-customer" relation with customers' online relation with other sellers – following processes and events of insurance industry – cleverness and high accuracy in sending information through social media.

2.2. Social Media Usage by Sale Representatives

The supposed scenario shows that some opportunities or threats that sale representatives face as social media phenomenon cause changing customer behavior (Brin, 2011).

To find best ways of displaying and promotion, sale representatives pay a serious attention to supplier brands which are vital for their identity. Suppliers, spend their effort and energy on developing strategies which promote brand performance alongside the distribution channel. Many of these strategies can consist of innovations in social media usage. The final goal of these strategies is raising brand and improving brand performance which is to the benefit of both companies and sale representatives. Sale representatives may imitate these strategies in the distribution channel to increase their success. Therefore, we believe that in company- representative relations, the contagion happens through reactional imitation (Rapp et al., 2013).

Companies' faults in the past were because of restrictions on receiving feedback from friends and others or low probability of sending a letter to a company representative or a person while people today can participate in Facebook or Twitter and leave comment. They can also complain about the current events through Twitter and this way the possibility of potential loss or fault is exaggerated (Brin, 2012).

Dimensions of social media usage by sale representatives based on definition of Rapp and colleges in 2013, are as following:

Building relation with insurance companies (supplier) – A tool to compare between company-representative relation with representative-customer relation – Tool for monitoring the events – Tool for customer relation - Tool for monitoring rivals - Targeting new customers – Building relations with existing customers - Following and monitoring the industry events – An atmosphere for joint advertisements with suppliers – Cooperating with suppliers in advertisements in the social media.

Sale representatives use social media for attracting customers and interacting with them. Suppliers (insurance companies) can use social media for creating more interpersonal relations with sale representatives. Sale representatives may also use social media for communicating the events, motives, advertisements and industrial events. As we predict the impact of contagion in the supply chain, more the companies use the social media, more sale representatives will use it. Not only the companies promote their own brand but the sale representatives promote the brand too (Rapp et al., 2013).

2.3. Customers Using Social Media

Customers use social media for interacting with friends, watching photos/videos and finding businesses and brands (Rapp et al., 2013). Methodical imitation is provoked through higher levels of socialization and group beliefs. For customers, the groups to which they belong are important origins of pride, self-respect, happiness and identity for them (McAlexander et al., 2002).

Customers which in fact are members of product societies, do often participate in the social events in which their selected products are admired. Also they may consider the brands of sale representatives they frequently refer to as their own personal identity (McAlexander et al., 2002).

Today success of an insurance company is based on the quality of the long term relations created between company and its "partners" i.e., customers, staff, brokers, banks etc. In the insurance industry this new thinking method, indicates the transaction process from exchange marketing to relationship marketing concept.

When a customer is inside this relationship, after a short time repeating purchase even with no discount from the company, is easier than referring to a rival company to which he/she must start communicating his/her expectations (Peyman, 2007).

2.3.1. Contagion theory

Social contagion often happens when people change their behavior due to increase of awareness, social learning or tendency toward supporting the learned methods through perception of the relation process (van den Bulte and Wuyts, 2007). Management researches support the idea that contagion happens through relation networks which expose people to information, views, behaviors and beliefs of other people (Burt, 1987; Contractor and Eisenberg, 1990). More the people are engaged with these networks, higher is the probability of taking similar characteristics (Erickson, 1988).

In insurance companies, insurance sale representatives and insurance companies, reactive and methodical imitation of social media usage increases its usage in other levels. Spiral of silence theory studies the mutual impact between public and personal relation in the public media. German socialist Elisabeth Neumann, designer of this model believes: "Foundation of this model is that most people try to avoid having only one view or belief in an isolated way." Therefore the person looks around to see which viewpoint is dominated and which is fading. If someone believes that his/her personal beliefs are a level behind, he/she will have the least persuasion to express them; only for the fear of isolation. So, social media have extraordinary impact on public opinion and identities (Emam and Mohammad, 2011).

2.4. Relationship Marketing

Marketing methods have changed because the marketing context has changed. By context, things like physical distance, time, economy, customer expectations and modern information technology are aimed. In traditional marketing, the concentration is on exchange and less is emphasis on maintaining business relations (Habibi, 2006).

Rapp et al. (2013) investigated the social media usage by customers with these dimensions:
- Raising customer-brand relations – tool for monitoring society events – tool for following sales and advertisement – tool for

reaching customer - tool for following insurance events – way of building relation with sale representatives and improving it.

More the customer interactions of a sale representative using social media, more is the probability sale representatives are able to create motivation and interest in customers. By receiving positive social signs from sale representative, raises the loyalty of customers to sale representatives (Rapp et al., 2013).

2.5. Loyalty – Sale Representative
Customers-representative loyalty happens when a sale representative can consistently transfer the better value appeared in sale to customer. Really loyal customers are those who have such a strong feeling toward a company that practically do not consider the rivals. Such a real loyalty is a psychological inclination that results in repeated purchases, positive word of mouth communication (WOM) to others and higher probability of future application (Rapp et al., 2013).

In the present critical situation of the world economy, gaining customer trust is a vital element for the insurance industry and even in the short term liquidity is considered as target because it guarantees the organization's survival. In mid and long term, the insurance company's target should be unifying the customers' trust and managers' goals in the form of raising customers' loyalty. Regarding the mission and philosophy of insurance companies, moving from traditional marketing and outlook toward customer to a value-based outlook is necessary.

To define the dimensions of loyalty between customer and sale representative, definition of Rapp et al., 2013 was used:
•   Purchase repeat, increase of size of purchase from sale representatives in the future, recommending others to purchase from sale representatives.

Customer loyalty results in positive WOM advertisement, building obstacles against rivals, empowering the company against competition threats, increasing sale and income and decreasing customers' sensitivity to marketing efforts of rivals (Seyyedin, 2013).

2.6. Sale Performance
There are different views on "What is performance?" It can be considered only as the record of reached results. Individually, performance is the record of one's successes. Keen believes that performance is what the person leaves of himself behind; separate from the goal. Bernardin and colleagues believe that performance should be defined as work results because the results have the strongest relation with organization's strategic goals, customer satisfaction and economic roles (Armstrang, 2006).

Performance can be a result of "marketing ability." Marketing performance can represent terms like sale-growth of market share. While financial performance clearly implies the profit and return of investment (Merrilees et al., 2011).

Organizations usually measure their performance by profitability, growth and market share (Richard, 1971). Performance indicates

the company's activities during a specified period of time which will result in creation of income, profit or increase of wealth of its shareholders (Allen, 2006).

Brand performance is a multi-dimensional structure which can be measured based on financial indexes like rate of return on investment which is influenced by manufacturer's or middleman's market share. Brand performance is considered as the peak of the organizational impact on transactions; like financial tools which controls the operational fields. There is a direct relation between investment and cooperation of parties in one side and profit performance on the other side which causes the offer from the manufacturer to be turned to a key tool in creation of brand value (Amini et al., 2011).

The organization that creates a powerful and successful brand will create more income and will have more stability in its market performance. One of the factors effecting the organization's performance and improvement of its competitiveness is organization's brand performance (Sandvik and Sandvik, 2003).

In practice, not only the companies promote their brands but also the sale representatives do it. Therefore, social media usage of sale representatives should have a positive impact on brand performance and representative's output. Sale representatives can use social media to improve communication and developing interpersonal relations with customers. This active and continuous level of obligation, not only promotes and develops the brand but also raises the performance of sale representatives (Rapp et al., 2013).

2.7. Customer Interaction
In different researches, evaluation of solidarity is carried out using different variables including "customer interaction" (Mittal et al., 2008; Nelson, 1989). Interaction with customer is an evaluation by member of upper-hand channel (sale representatives or companies) about number of contacts with lower-hand partners. It makes sense that relations showing high level of contacts possibly create strong solid relations. Strong links are effective in the process of popularity because they smooth the team work. Interaction with customer and number of contacts with customer (the time spend by channel members with their special customers) imply the high level of socialization and interaction and as a result will ease building relationships between channel partners (Rapp et al., 2013).

E-commerce, internet and web are among elements which have changed the core of trade. However, organizations realized that in front of ever increasing competitions, big markets, high number of customers and creation of correct relationship with present customers are best sources of profit, growth and return on investment (Bagheri et al., 2012).

Innovations can result in improvement of organization's performance and consequently in competition advantages. Here, customer can also be recognized as a key element in trade's success or failure (Bagheri et al., 2012).

This study evaluates the "customer interaction" for companies and sale representatives both based on research model of Rap et al.

(2013) from the viewpoint of "percentage of time spent for direct contact with customer."

Coleman (1990) analyses that people with strong links, have more trust sense in the network. Therefore networks with strong links should experience high circulation of information. Because trust provides a foundation for sharing information, knowledge and also risk-taking. For example, acceptance of social media and its related currents can expose the sale representative or the end customers to privacy risks. When members trust each other in the network, they reduce the risks (Amabile et al., 1996).

Because of the easing and effective role of strong links discussed above and expanding imitative behavior, we believe that repeat of contacts strengthens the relation between social media usage in the channel levels. Strong links should help reducing this risk and enable the channel participants to take part in the group profit of an interactive communication tool (Rapp et al., 2013).

2.8. Brand Reputation
It does refer to understanding of lower hand channel partners and final customers of the brand stored in the memory as a brand image (Keller, 1993). Brand reputation is a kind of remembering and the brand image depends on general evaluations of people of brand which can be provoked by images related or non-related to the product (Rapp et al., 2013).

Brand reputation can raise market share by increasing consumer's awareness of a product and can prepare foreground for repeating purchase by creating the sense of possession and closeness (Elmkhah, 2010). Social media users have a mutual interaction with friends, family members and other users and this way they transfer their purchase experiences to others.

Verhoef et al. (2009) state that customers refer to the sale representative with two type of "reputation." One is the reputation of sale representatives and the other is the brand reputation that shown in Figure 1 (Verhoef et al., 2009).
*   Level 3: Social media usage by supplier – Customer interaction – Brand reputation
*   Level 2: Supplier's brand performance - Retailer's performance- Social media usage by retailer - Customer interaction - Retailer reputation
*   Level 1: Retailer loyalty – Social media usage by consumer.

3. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

* H_1: With increase of social media usage by insurance companies (as suppliers of insurance services), social media usage by sale representatives (retailers) increases
* H_{1a}: Increasing customer interaction, moderates the relations between social media usage by companies and representatives. So when the customer interaction is in high level, this relation is much stronger
* H_{1b}: Brand reputation of companies (interpretation of sale representatives), moderates the relations between social media usage by companies and representatives so that the relation is stronger when brand reputation is more positive

Figure 1: Research model of adopted (Rapp et al., 2013)
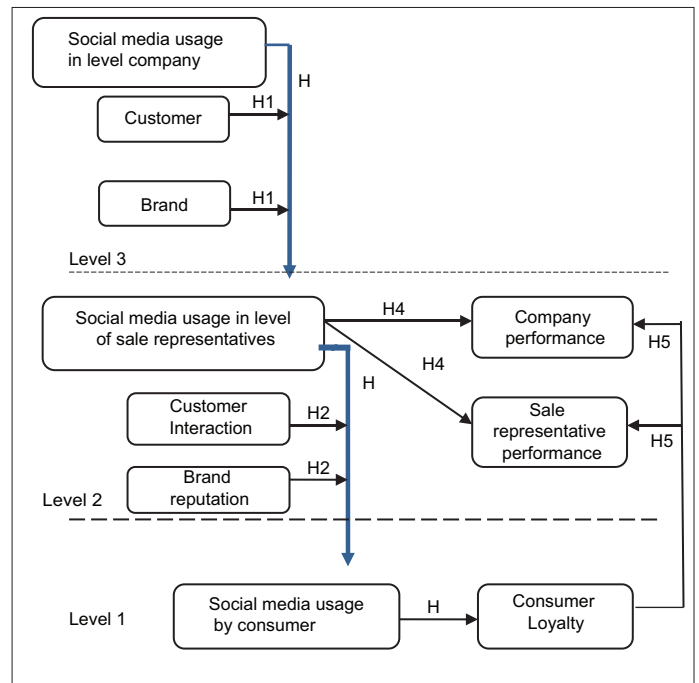
* H_2: Increase of social media usage by sale representatives causes the increase of social media usage by consumer
* H_{2a}: Increasing customer interaction, moderates the relations between social media usage by representatives and customers. So when the customer interaction is in high level, this relation is much stronger
* H_{2b}: Brand reputation of sale representatives (interpretation of customers), moderates the relations between social media usage by sale representatives and customers so that the relation is more significant when brand reputation is more positive
* H_3: As social media usage increases by customers, customer-representative loyalty increases too
* H_{4a}: With increase of social media usage by sale representatives, brand performance of the insurance companies in sale representatives increases
* H_{4b}: With increase of social media usage by sale representatives, sale performance of the sale representatives increases
* H_{5a}: Customer- representative loyalty raises the sale performance of the supplier
* H_{5b}: Customer-representative loyalty increases the sale performance of the representatives.

4. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is an applied research type. As researcher tries to investigate the impact of social media in company interactions, sale representatives and customers of insurance companies in Gilan province, the research is categorized among descriptive surveys.

For collection of data to test the hypotheses, field method has been used. On the other hand, to prepare the literature and theoretical basics of the research, Farsi and English sources available in libraries, articles, expert and related journals, websites of the academic centres and country's scientific centres have been used.

In this research, questionnaires were used of study Rapp et al. in 2013 for investigating the impact of social media usage in the different levels of distribution channel of insurance companies. In the research, as "social media usage" is investigated in three levels of companies, sale representatives and customers, to investigate the situation of each variable, questions were considered in three questionnaires including Questionnaire No. 1 with 24 questions for managers of central branches of Iran and Asia insurance companies, Questionnaire No. 2 with 26 questions for sale representatives and Questionnaire No. 3 with 18 questions for customers. In the beginning of the questionnaire to investigate the structure of research's statistical society, 6 descriptive questions with indexes of sex, age, education, job, history of interaction with insurance company and type of insurance services have been considered. Table 1 shows the combination of questions regarding the variables of the research. The 7 point Likert scale was used for rating the questions.

In this research about the importance of preserving customers in the insurance industry, it's tried to investigate the concept of the social media usage in different levels of distribution channel regarding the moderating impacts of variables of customer interaction and reputation of channel members on loyalty and performance. In other words, we will discuss how social media usage by companies, sale representatives and end customers of the insurance industry can result in better customer loyalty and performance. Thus, statistical society of the research consists of three parts. One level consists of branch and central office managers in Gilan province. Second level is sale representatives of the same region which are sale mediators (retailers) and third level are customers of sale representatives. There is a hierarchical relation between these three levels.

For testing the normality of the data, coefficients of skewness and kurtosis and Kolmogorov–Smirnov statistic were used and single

Table 1: Combination of questions according to research variables

Variable	Question No.	Questionnaire No.
Customer interaction (compared to sale representatives and customers)	1-3	1
Social media-insurance company	4-15	1
Brand performance of the insurance company	16-24	1
Customer loyalty-sale representatives	1-6	2
Social media-customer	7-13	2
Reputation of the sale representative	4-18	2
Customer interaction	1-4	3
Brand reputation of the insurance company	4-8	3
Social media-sale representative	9-17	3
Sale performance of the sale representatives	18-26	3

and multi-variable analysis of regression were used for analyzing the data using SPSS software.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Descriptive Statistic of Managers (Level 1)
Majority of respondents of both groups "in managers level" are men aged between 25 and 35 for Iran Insurance Co. and between 35 and 45 for Asia Insurance Co. Most of the respondents had bachelor degree and above 70% had more than 3 years of engagement with the related companies (Iran, Asia).

5.2. Descriptive Statistic of Sale Representatives (Level 2)
In this level, nearly half of the representatives are men and half are women aged mostly above 45 in both groups. Bachelor degrees are in majority in this level of the study and most of the representatives have been working with their insurance company for more than 3 years.

5.3. Descriptive Statistic of Customers (Level 3)
Among customers, respondents are mostly men in Iran Insurance Co. and are mostly women in Asia Insurance Co. Respondents from Iran Insurance Co. are mostly between 25 and 35 years old but for Asia Insurance Co. dispersion in different age groups are close to each other. About education, those with bachelor degrees have the majority and about job, clerks have the majority.

In the statistics, for testing the normality of the data, coefficients of skewness and kurtosis and Kolmogorov–Smirnov statistic were used and in both companies (Iran and Asia Insurance companies) the skewness of all variables were below 1, so the variables are symmetrical. Also as all coefficients of skewness are negative so variables have skewness to left. Also the level of significance in Kolmogorov test was above 0.05 for all variables which means that the hypothesis of abnormality of data is rejected and normality of data is confirmed.

5.4. Hypotheses Test
H_1: Increase of social media usage by company increases the social media usage by sale representatives.

As shown in Table 2, results of hypothesis A_1 for the state insurance company "Iran" was approved and determination coefficient was estimated as 46%. In other words, 46% of changes in social media usage by sale representatives are determined by social media usage by the insurance companies. The same results were confirmed for private company Asia with determination coefficient of 40% approximately close to that of Iran State Company.

H_{1a}: Increasing customer interaction, moderates the relations between social media usage by companies and representatives.

In Table 3 showing the results of hypothesis A_2, "frequency of customer interaction" is considered as a moderating variable in the relation between company and sale representatives. Results indicate that in high frequency the customer interaction is direct and increasing but in low frequency, the significance level was not reached.

In other words, the results for Iran and Asia insurance companies show that high customer interactions (including percentage of contacts with customers or percentage of time spent for customer interaction) has direct and increasing impact on relation between social media usage by insurance companies and representatives but with lower interactions the impact was not seen. It means that it cannot be claimed that reduction of frequency of customer interactions results in reduction of social media usage by insurance companies-representatives.

H_{1b}: Brand reputation of the supplier (interpretation of the sale representatives), moderates the relations between social media usage by supplier and representative.

In this hypothesis, "brand reputation" is the moderating variable in the relation between social media usage by insurance company and sale representative. In investigating the hypothesis, reputation factor was not approved as moderator in Iran Insurance Company but it was approved for Asia Insurance Company in Table 4.

In Iran Insurance Company the social media usage by insurance company causes its usage by sale representative but reputation was not recognized as moderating factor. For Asia insurance company results show that reputation is an effective factor in the relation between social media usage by company and representative.

H_2: Increase of social media usage by sale representative causes the increase of social media usage by customer.

Based on results of Iran state company and Asia private company shown in Table 5, both companies were approved. So that increase of social media usage by sale representative will cause the increase of social media usage by insurance customers. Determination coefficient of this relation was estimated as 54% for Iran Insurance Company and 62% for Asia Insurance Company.

According to the results, in both insurance companies, representative-customer relations are stronger than company-representative relations and determination coefficient for both companies was estimated above 50%.

H_{2a}: Increasing customer interaction, moderates the relations between social media usage by representatives and customers.

In Table 6 showing the results of hypothesis B_2, "frequency of customer interaction" is considered as a moderating variable in the

Table 2: Results of single-variable regression test (P<0.05)

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Beta	SE	Beta coefficient	Determination coefficient	t	Significance level
Social media-retailer (Iran Insurance)	Constant amount	1.67	0.85	-	-	1.96	0.06
	Social media	0.7	0.13	0.68	0.46	5.1	0
Social media-retailer (Asia Insurance)	Constant amount	1.77	0.74	-	-	2.39	0.024
	Social media	0.65	0.15	0.63	0.4	4.29	0

SE: Standard error

Table 3: Hierarchical regression type hypothesis test

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Total				Low frequency customer interaction				Low frequency customer interaction			
		Estimation	SE	t	Significance level	Estimation	SE	t	Significance level	Estimation	SE	t	Significance level
Social media-retailer	Social media-supplier (Iran)	0.65	0.15	4.29	0.000	0.69	0.15	4.53	0.000	0.38	1.18	0.84	0.45
Social media-retailer	Social media-supplier (Asia)	0.68	0.13	5.10	0.000	0.73	0.14	5.49	0.000	0.49	0.07	0.79	0.51

SE: Standard error

Table 4: Hierarchical regression type hypothesis test

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Total				High brand reputation				Low brand reputation			
		Estimation	SE	t	Significance level	Estimation	SE	t	Significance level	Estimation	SE	t	Significance level
Social media-retailer	Social media-supplier (Iran)	0.68	0.13	5.10	0.000	0.78	0.12	5.71	0.000	0.72	0.19	2.78	0.02
Social media-retailer	Social media-supplier (Asia)	0.65	0.15	4.29	0.000	0.74	0.23	4.03	0.001	0.56	0.22	2.45	0.029

SE: Standard error

relation insurance sale representatives and customers. Results for both companies approve this hypothesis. It means that increasing or decreasing has the same impact on relation of social media usage by representative and customer.

H_{2b}: Brand reputation of sale representatives (interpretation of customers), moderates the relation between social media usage by sale representatives and customers.

As shown in Table 7 the hypothesis B_3 is approved for both companies.

H_3: As social media usage increases by customers, customer-representative loyalty increases too.

This hypothesis was approved for both Asia and Iran insurance companies and regarding Table 8, the relation was emphasized more for Iran Insurance Company than Asia. In other words, 42% of customer loyalty changes in Iran Insurance Company is related to social media usage while it's 37% for Asia Insurance Company.

H_{4a}: With increase of social media usage by sale representatives, brand performance of the supplier (insurance companies) increases.

Results of Table 9 show that the hypothesis is approved for both companies with determination coefficient estimated as 19% for Iran Insurance Company and 23% for Asia Insurance Company. In other words, 23% of the changes in brand performance of Asia Insurance Company are determined by social media usage by insurance representatives.

H_{4b}: With increase of social media usage by sale representatives, sale performance of the sale representatives increases.

According to Table 10, this hypothesis is approved for both Iran and Asia companies with determination coefficient of 53% for Asia Company which is considerably higher than the amount for Iran Insurance Company with 35%.

H_{5a}: Customer-sale representative loyalty raises the sale performance of the company.

As shown in Table 11, this hypothesis is approved for both Iran and Asia companies with determination coefficient of 30%. In other words, 30% of the changes in brand performance of Asia and Iran Insurance Companies are determined by customers' loyalty to sale representatives.

Table 5: Results of single-variable regression test (P<0.05)

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Beta	SE	Beta coefficient	Determination coefficient	t	Significance level
Social media-customers (Iran Insurance)	Constant amount	1.76	0.71	-	-	2.46	0.02
	Social media	0.7	0.12	0.73	0.54	5.92	0
Social media-customers (Asia Insurance)	Constant amount	1.12	0.59	-	-	1.9	0.068
	Social media	0.8	0.12	0.79	0.62	6.83	0

SE: Standard error

Table 6: Hierarchical regression type hypothesis test

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Total				Low frequency customer interaction				Low frequency customer interaction			
		Estimation	SE	t	Significance level	Estimation	SE	t	Significance level	Estimation	SE	t	Significance level
Social media-customers (Iran)	Social media-retailer	0.73	0.12	5.92	0.000	0.80	0.12	5.76	0.000	0.61	0.18	2.31	0.04
Social media-customers (Asia)	Social media-retailer	0.79	0.12	6.83	0.000	0.81	0.18	5.20	0.000	0.76	0.17	4.24	0.001

SE: Standard error

Table 7: Hierarchical regression type hypothesis test

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Total				High brand reputation				Low brand reputation			
		Estimation	SE	t	Significance level	Estimation	SE	t	Significance level	Estimation	SE	t	Significance level
Social media-customer	Social media-retailer	0.73	0.12	5.92	0.000	0.81	0.23	3.68	0.008	0.60	0.19	3.47	0.002
Social media-customer	Social media-retailer	0.79	0.12	6.83	0.000	0.87	0.11	7.87	0.000	0.62	0.28	2.07	0.047

SE: Standard error

H_{5b}: Customer-sale representative loyalty increases the sale performance of the sale representatives.

The hypothesis was approved for both companies and as shown in Table 12, Iran Insurance Company is ahead and approved this relation with determination coefficient of 31% compared to 15% of Asia Insurance Company.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

1. Based on findings of the research, if Iran and Asia Insurance Companies increase social media usage in their central offices and branches, it will increase social media usage by representatives and consequently by customers.

2. As insurance services are included among professional services and invisible depending on their suppliers, it's suggested that central offices and representatives of Iran Insurance Company increase their interaction with customers. Frequency of interaction or in fact spending more time for customer has an increasing impact on their participation and social media usage.

3. Reputation whether for company name or representative is moderating in social media usage of company, sale representatives and customers. It's suggested that representatives of Iran and Asia companies try to be recognized as good-reputed and reliable. In this regard, they can be honest about their claims and promises to customers and avoid promising what they are not able to fulfill.

Table 8: Results of single-variable regression test (P<0.05)

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Beta	SE	Beta coefficient	Determination coefficient	t	Significance level
Loyalty (Iran)	Constant amount	3.58	0.95	-	-	3.76	0.001
	Social media	0.4	0.16	0.42	0.42	2.56	0.016
Loyalty (Asia)	Constant amount	2.63	0.27	-	-	9.86	0
	Social media	0.63	0.05	0.61	0.37	11.43	0

SE: Standard error

Table 9: Results of single-variable regression test (P<0.05)

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Beta	SE	Beta coefficient	Determination coefficient	t	Significance level
Brand performance (Iran)	Constant amount	3.53	0.91	-	-	3.86	0.001
	Social media	0.4	0.15	0.44	0.19	2.67	0.012
Brand performance (Asia)	Constant amount	3.27	0.71	-	-	4.56	0
	Social media	0.41	0.14	0.48	0.23	2.92	0.007

SE: Standard error

Table 10: Results of single-variable regression test (P<0.05)

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Beta	SE	Beta coefficient	Determination coefficient	t	Significance level
Sale performance (Iran)	Constant amount	1.91	0.98	-	-	1.95	0.06
	Social media	0.65	0.16	0.59	0.35	3.98	0
Sale performance (Asia)	Constant amount	0.72	0.74	-	-	0.98	0.335
	Social media	0.83	0.15	0.73	0.53	5.64	0

SE: Standard error

Table 11: Results of single-variable regression test (P<0.05)

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Beta	SE	Beta coefficient	Determination coefficient	t	Significance level
Brand performance (Iran)	Constant amount	2.64	0.93	-	-	2.83	0.008
	Loyalty	0.55	0.15	0.55	0.3	3.59	0.001
Brand performance (Asia)	Constant amount	2.78	0.72	-	-	3.85	0.001
	Loyalty	0.43	0.12	0.55	0.3	3.59	0.001

SE: Standard error

Table 12: Results of single-variable regression test (P<0.05)

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Beta	SE	Beta coefficient	Determination coefficient	t	Significance level
Sale performance (Iran)	Constant amount	1.88	1.05	-	-	1.78	0.08
	Loyalty	0.65	0.17	0.56	0.31	3.74	0.001
Sale performance (Asia)	Constant amount	2.35	1.11	-	-	2.11	0.044
	Loyalty	0.41	0.18	0.39	0.15	2.22	0.034

SE: Standard error

4. Survival of trade companies depend on their customer orientation and preserving customers. In this regard, insurance companies have more difficult job because of complexities of insurance services. In different insurance services, customer cannot touch the quality of services until he/she faces a loss. But social media usage by customer and its mutual capability enables the customers to talk to others who have utilized insurance services. It's suggested that Iran Insurance company and its representatives to persuade their special customers to share their good and positive experiences.

5. It's suggested that insurance representatives to participate actively in social networks like Facebook or any other active network. This way they can have common projects with other representatives or central branches. They can also supervise the events occurred in the society or organized by rival companies.

6. It's suggested that insurance companies specially the representatives to plan for continuation of their long-term relations with customers. Offering services with continuous quality, offering free expert consultancies to customer and accompanying and advising during loss are among activities by which the representative can strengthen the relation with customer.

7. In the insurance industry, customers can create loyalty to company, to product or to the person. Company loyalty is due to the positive experiences caused by purchasing from a specified company. Product related services can increase the loyalty. For example, a loss resolved quickly, can be considered as an added advantage for the product. Loyalty to a person is for a specified insurance representative.

7. SUGGESTIONS TO FUTURE RESEARCHERS

1. As social media has grown faster than other internet technologies like e-mail, website etc. and attracted more audience, it's recommended to research about the impact of this technology in different industries whether manufacturing or service.

2. It's suggested that in the future researches, the negative impacts that dissatisfied customers can have through social media, to be investigated.

3. In the future researches, impact of other variables like "reciprocity of services" i.e. the company's ability in paying simultaneous attention to change and innovation for finding opportunities and on the other hand utilizing the existing authorities can be studied.

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