

The Importance of Social Media Presence For Small Scale Delivery Only Textile Entrepreneurs In Sri Lanka

H.M.S.V. Alahakoon¹, B.S. Galdolage²

*Department of Marketing Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura,
Gangodawila, Sri Lanka*

svawaaw@gmail.com¹, sandamali@sjp.ac.lk²

Abstract

Over the last few decades, the rapid evolution of the Internet has provided many new opportunities for both businesses and consumers. Aside from the obvious uses of searching for information and communicating, online platforms can now be used to conduct an entire business. Small-scale delivery-only textile shops have become one of Sri Lanka's fastest-growing online businesses, with social media serving as the primary platform. Similarly, anyone with an internet connection and a device that allows them to browse the Internet can easily order anything they want online while remaining in their convenient locations. Because of recent technological advancements in Sri Lanka and worldwide, both consumers and sellers are drawn to virtual shopping, where social media plays a vital role in success. In such a backdrop, this study investigates the significance of social media presence for small-scale delivery-only textile entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. To elicit genuine insights from the respondents, a qualitative research approach was used. In-depth interviews were conducted with sixteen entrepreneurs who run small-scale textile shops on social media platforms, and data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach. According to the findings, Facebook and Instagram were recognized as the most popular social media platforms for small-scale delivery-only textile shop owners. Furthermore, the study revealed the importance of paid advertising campaigns and points of differentiation achieved through island-wide free cash on delivery, replacement, refund, and return policies, and ease of access. The importance of having backup plans and the influence of situational factors were also identified as critical in running businesses via social media platforms. These insights will help small-scale entrepreneurs to grow their businesses on social media platforms by maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness.

Keywords: *Social Media, Social Media Marketing, Small Scale businesses, SMEs, Textile Shops, Online Shopping*

Introduction

During the past decade, the evolution of the Internet has presented many opportunities (Krotov, 2017) for consumers as well as business organizations (Viriyasitavat et al., 2019). Besides searching and sharing information (Morris and Ogan, 1996), the Internet has become a rich platform for business organizations (Perera and Galdolage, 2021) to achieve their target markets in an efficient and effective way (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014). Among these online platforms, social media is identified as one of the most influential methods for marketing, promoting, selling, and relationship building (Bartlett, 2010). Practically many small-scale business organizations consider social media as a new marketing tool (Berinato and Clark, 2020) and very few organizations obtain benefits from such media platforms to enhance their business performance (Dong-Hun, 2010a).

Further, lack of resources (Mukhopadhyay and Suryadevara, 2014) and high competition among businesses (Wang and Zhang, 2015) in today's environment have made it difficult for new small-scale organizations to enter the market (Levy and Powell, 2003). It encourages business owners/marketers to differentiate their marketing and communication strategies rather than limiting them to traditional marketing approaches (Mathews and Healy, 2008). Therefore, now small-scale entrepreneurs are trying to use social media platforms (Derham et al., 2011) such as Facebook (Wong,

2012) , Instagram and WhatsApp to reach their target market in a quick, easy and cost-effective way (Virtanen et al., 2017). Jayasuriya et al. (2017) pointed out the impact of social media marketing to build brand equity for Sri Lankan fashion wear businesses, while Farook and Abeysekara (2016) recognized the significance of social media in obtaining customer engagement.

These new marketing and communication strategies help reduce the cost to a greater extent and give massive financial relief for small-scale businesses that are still growing in the market (Stockdale et al., 2012b). Also, other types of costs such as maintaining a physical store, rentals, maintenance costs, and other related costs can be turned to a minimal level through running online businesses (Sarosa, 2012). The considerable cost element for such organizations would be the delivery cost since online businesses need to deliver their products to the customers' doorsteps (Konradt et al., 2003).

Practically, in Sri Lanka, some small-scale textile shops use social media marketing to achieve their business aims. Some shops are not manufacturing textiles; instead, they collect textiles from different manufacturers and engage only in delivering them to the customers. It has been observed that even though small-scale delivery-only textile businesses are moving towards social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, the scholarly attention given to understanding this practical movement is minimum (Jayasuriya et al., 2017). There is a

gap in understanding how and why firms use social media in achieving their business goals (Stockdale et al., 2012a). Thus, this study aims to explore the importance of social media presence for small-scale delivery-only textile shops in Sri Lanka.

Next, the paper presents the conceptual background of the study; subsequently, the methodology of the study is elaborated before providing the finding and discussion. Third, theoretical and practical contributions are discussed, along with the limitations and future research directions

Literature Review

Social Media

Social media is a new phenomenon that has changed how the business environment operates (Ainin et al., 2015). Social media is occasionally termed as social networking and Web 2.0, which collaboratively produced and shared media content and network communities. Therefore, users of social media can share their views and encounters (Berthon et al., 2012). Social media has rendered opportunities for people to interact with many others on online platforms (Mayfield, 2008). Thus, the one-to-one communication, one-to-many communication, and many-to-many communication are geared to a substantial level (Castronovo and Huang, 2012). In such platforms, opportunities received for consumer-to-consumer communications have been significantly

increased (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

Social media offer the chance to link with customers using rich media platforms with a better reach (Thackeray et al., 2008). The interactivity embedded in these new digital media permits marketers to communicate and exchange information with their customers (Russo et al., 2008). Further, it allows two-way communication (Cade, 2018) by permitting customers to share their views and experience with other customers and the organization (Castronovo and Huang, 2012). This interactive nature of social media (Saravanakumar and SuganthaLakshmi, 2012) allows to practice and maintain relationship marketing well (Hlavinka and Sullivan, 2011).

Using social media, organizations can build contacts with existing as well as new customers and form groups of customers who interactively collaborate with the organization in creating value (Siddiqui and Singh, 2016). These interactions change the conventional roles of both seller and customer in exchange relationships (Edosomwan et al., 2011). Customers add value to the company through their interaction, generating the content, and they can influence the purchase decisions of others in peer-to-peer interactions (Sashi, 2012).

Why SMEs Use Social Media

Sri Lanka's economy is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), accounting for 80% of all businesses. These can be found in the

primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors of the economy. Over 90% of companies in the service industry are small and medium-sized enterprises, while an estimated 35% of employment is attributed to SMEs. The SMEs in Sri Lanka play a critical role in fostering entrepreneurship, innovation, and overall economic growth (National Human Resources and Employment Policy, 2021).

SMEs are not a homogeneous group (Gilmore et al., 2001), instead, they differ in several ways such as in their “educational level, their attitude towards the business, their degree of entrepreneurship, market orientation, business goals, degree of preference for face-to-face interaction with customers, strategic focus, level of eBusiness knowledge and skills” etc. (Derham et al., 2011 ,P2). SMEs have often struggled to accept technology due to their lack of skills, resources and technical knowledge compared with large firms (Karimi and Naghibi, 2015). Thus, these small and medium-sized enterprises require an improved business environment.

Social media marketing can be viewed as a new field and a new business practice, particularly for small and medium businesses (Ainin et al., 2015). It is gaining popularity in developed countries and is increasingly used in many companies' regular operations, including start-ups, small, medium-sized, and large organizations (Rugova and Prenaj, 2016). However, in Sri Lanka, still, small businesses are reluctant to incorporate their business practices with improved technologies.

Social media involves marketing goods, services, information, and ideas online, which allow users and groups member sharing, co-creating, discussing, and modifying known as user-generated content (Dahnil et al., 2014). Social media permits organizations to contact many people at once (Aral et al., 2013). Since social media is a place where millions of people gather, the business organization can quickly bring their brands to them and enhance brand awareness (O'Flynn, 2012). Social media helps to enhance sales (Dong-Hun, 2010b) and customer base (Qualman, 2012). When more people visit a company's social media page, it is likely to create traffic for the website and make more online sales (Atanassova and Clark, 2015).

Though people have quickly adopted social media platforms for their personal use (Mayfield, 2008), business organizations have been slower to adopt these technologies (Beier and Wagner, 2016, Meske and Stieglitz, 2013). Among firms, large businesses have primarily increased their presence on social media platforms (Duggan et al., 2015), while SMEs still haven't recognized their potential (Meske and Stieglitz, 2013). Social media adoption by firms has generally increased over time (Greenwood et al., 2016); however, little is known about why small firms do or do not use these digital technologies (Beier and Wagner, 2016)

However, due to the continuous growth of social media platforms and the several applications that they offer, business organizations get a chance to test numerous new

opportunities that arise in social media (Çalli and Clark, 2015). Further, it is a good media to know well about their customers as well as competitors (Hlavinka and Sullivan, 2011).

Online Shopping

Internet usage has increased dramatically in the past decade, offering many chances to people to obtain information, engage in economic and social exchanges, and mainly do online shopping (Lissitsa and Kol, 2016). It should be facilitated by the investment in internet infrastructure (Javadi et al., 2012). In recent years, online internet shopping has increased globally (Park and Kim, 2003). As the Internet develops in scope and popularity, more and more users are becoming familiar with it and adopting it as a medium for shopping online (Lissitsa and Kol, 2016)

Selling online presents unique benefits and challenges to cyber marketers (Goldsmith and Goldsmith, 2002). Using social networks positively relates to purchasing products via online (Limayem et al., 2000). People who are used to staying online and spending time in social media are exposed to more information/advertisements about products (Muralidharan and Men, 2015).

Further, conversations and opinions about recent shopping experiences shared by friends and peers in social media platforms also influence online shopping (Mayzlin and Chevalier, 2003, Moe and Trusov, 2011, Stephen and Galak, 2012). Despite the increasing body of marketing

literature on social networks, researchers have paid little attention to studying the use of social media in enhancing customers' online shopping (Zhang et al., 2017).

Social Media for Textile Businesses

The textile industry has assisted many developing countries in getting rid of their dependence on primary goods (Shiwanthi et al., 2018). Sri Lanka was also initially dependent on its commercial crops such as tea, rubber, and coconut and has changed into apparel (Sivalogathan and Wu, 2015).

Textile Industry offers one of the most fundamental requirements of people and maintains sustained growth for improving quality of life (Ghouri et al., 2011). Demand changes rapidly in the fashion and textile business due to the volatile market situation and evolving nature of the fashion trends (Hilletoft and Hilmola, 2008). The establishment of state-of-the-art communications and transportation brought about significant changes in the production and distribution of textile goods (Gómez-Galvarriato, 2008). The textile sector significantly contributes to the global economy and the economy of Sri Lanka too (Kapuge and Smith, 2007). Additionally, textile agreements are a vital fragment of international business.

Most of the textile companies are using social media as their online platform. It enhanced reach and globally, and wherever the customer is, they can buy matching textiles for them, disregarding the geographical boundaries (Zhang et al., 2017).

Appearance in social media provides massive benefits to the textile business, especially businesses that cannot spend on other modes of communications to reach an immense customer base. Additionally, it helps to reduce cost factors which allows them to practice fair pricing for their customers (O'Flynn, 2012).

Methodology

This study explores the importance of social media presence for small-scale delivery-only textile shops in Sri Lanka. It mainly aims to understand the most commonly used social media platforms by small scale delivery only textile shops and the importance of social media for such entrepreneurs. The literature on the use and importance of social media in such a business context is limited. As a result, an exploratory type of research was conducted using qualitative inquiries (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016, Malhotra and Birks, 2007).

A non-probabilistic purposeful sampling technique was used to recruit participants for the study, with the goal of hiring information-rich cases who run small-scale delivery-only textile businesses in Sri Lanka (Abrams, 2010, Palinkas et al., 2015, Patton, 2002). In qualitative studies, the sample size is rarely predetermined (Robinson, 2014) because qualitative researchers are frequently unaware of the level of theoretical saturation (Silverman, 2010). It is more dependent on the researcher's level of achievement of required information (Palinkas et al., 2015). In this study, sixteen small-scale delivery-only textiles

entrepreneurs who use social media platforms as a mode of delivery were taken to the sample. The sample profile is provided in the table 1.

Table 1: Sample profile

No	Gender	Age	Location
1	Male	24	Colombo
2	Male	23	Kegalle
3	Male	27	Colombo
4	Male	23	Colombo
5	Female	25	Kalutara
6	Male	24	Polonnaruwa
7	Male	26	Kandy
8	Male	26	Colombo
9	Male	35	Colombo
10	Male	23	Kegalle
11	Male	38	Colombo
12	Male	25	Gampaha
13	Male	24	Polonnaruwa
14	Male	35	Colombo
15	Male	22	Kalutara
16	Male	30	Matale

Semi-structured interviews, one of the most common qualitative research methods, were used to collect data. An interview guide was developed to make the interviewing process as easy, seamless, and focused as possible. This is a one-on-one interview with one respondent at a time that is purely conversational and allows for more insights from the respondents. The interviews began with a brief introduction and

description of the research, emphasizing the importance and utility of respondents' feedback. Before the interview, a formal consent sheet was created to obtain the respondent's voluntary participation in the research. A request was made to record the interviews in order to aid transcription. Interviews lasted 30-45 minutes and were repeated until information redundancy was achieved. Interviews were transcribed into word documents and analysed using Thematic analysis following the six steps; transcribing data, organizing data, familiarizing with data, coding, producing themes, and maintaining rigor as Lacey and Luff (2009) recommended.

Findings

This study aims to explore the importance of social media presence for small-scale delivery-only textile shops in Sri Lanka. First, the study attempts to understand common social media platforms where Sri Lankan small-scale delivery-only textile entrepreneurs are actively present.

Social Media Presence

According to the findings, social media presence is vital for a small-scale delivery-only textile business. Throughout the interviews, this has been justified as all the respondents had a very strong presence on social media. Further, their main source of demand also were recognized as the orders through social media.

Instagram Vs Facebook: From the 16 interviews conducted by the

researchers, it is found that Facebook and Instagram are the two major social media platforms that small-scale textile shops engage with. In fact, these two platforms were used by all the participants in the study. However, out of Facebook and Instagram, some respondents said that Facebook is the most beneficial platform for them. In contrast, others backed Instagram to be the most helpful platform for an online textile shop.

One respondent, who is running a small-scale delivery-only textile shop since 2019 and use both Facebook and Instagram, said Facebook to be the platform that has the most impact on their business and as the platform that brings the majority of sales for his business.

“I think Facebook is the most beneficial platform not only for me but also for any small-scale textile business which is in social media. Major reason for that is the user-friendly interface of Facebook when compared with Instagram which most consider to be a posh platform, while Facebook is considered as the platform for “all” irrespective of their age, gender or any other factor. Also, when looking at the number of active users and the audience that we can reach, Facebook outperforms all other platforms, including Instagram. Hence, for me Facebook has been the most beneficial platform so far and Instagram is the second best.”
(Male, 24 years, Colombo)

However, another respondent slightly has a different story as an online seller who uses both Facebook and Instagram platforms and mentioned

that Instagram was the more beneficial platform for small-scale textile shop owners.

“For me Instagram has been the more beneficial out of two since Instagram is basically a photo-sharing platform while Facebook is a multipurpose one. So, it is easy to market and share my products on Instagram, which has a user base almost similar to the one I need as a small-scale online textile retailer. Also, Instagram too have many inbuilt facilities same as Facebook which makes it even easier to reach the exact target market, we need to market our products. Therefore, Instagram is the more beneficial platform for me, and it is the one single platform which I invest most to market my products. (Male, 23 years, Kegalle)

Next, the study focuses on exploring the benefits for small-scale delivery-only shops of using social media platforms. Accordingly, most such entrepreneurs use social media to advertise their products as a low-cost medium that allows interaction between the organization and the customer. Further, they use social media as communication as well as the delivery mode to differentiate themselves from those of other competitors (Points of Differences). According to respondents, social media presence helps them prevent some situational effects, such as the Covid 19 pandemic, since customer online engagement and ordering increased within that period. Further, social media packages given by internet providers became excellent facilitation for them to run their business. Finally, respondents pointed

out a need for a back-up plan, especially for businesses like them who do small-scale delivery-only shops using social media platforms since social media policies and regulations are out of their control.

Paid Advertising Campaigns Targeting Special Markets: All major social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn has paid advertising and target marketing options for their advertisers. A respondent who is also working at a Digital Marketing Agency and has hands-on experience in running paid advertising campaigns and target marketing who is also an owner of a small textile shop, shared his thoughts on paid advertising and target marketing as given below.

“In social media, if we publish good interactive content, often we will get a good reach and engagement even without spending a penny. But that is mainly true only for personal profiles not for business pages and brands as people are not “searching” for our products. Therefore, we must advertise and run paid advertising campaigns on almost all social media platforms in order to secure a good reach, engagement and attain our business objectives.” (Male, 27 years, Colombo)

Customer Interaction: Respondents had different points of view regarding customer interaction. They recognize social media as very interactive, which allows live interactions with customers. One respondent shared her experiences on customer interaction as,

“Customers mainly inbox us their queries or reply to us using the

“Contact Us” option in our posts. Generally, all conversation happens through inbox, but rarely some customers like to call and engage directly with the seller. We also ask them to send a photo of wearing the dress if they are comfortable with it so we can put it in our social media stories and often send us an image. So, the positive word of mouth is a big part for us when it comes to customer post-purchase customer interaction.” (Female, 25 years, Kalutara)

Point of Difference

As respondents mentioned, they are using social media to differentiate their products/ services from those of other competitors. Based on the responses, they have used primarily ‘island-wide free delivery’, ‘free replacement or refund’, ‘ease of access’ as major components to differentiate their businesses from the competition.

Island-wide Free Cash on Delivery:

According to the insights found from many respondents’, most of them involve in island-wide delivery, mostly free, promoting through social media. One respondent shared his thoughts on why he does island-wide free delivery as,

“We are covering all of Sri Lanka and we do free cash on delivery. Since we have not specialized in a geographical area, we carry our promotions for all areas in the island and arrange delivery to their doorstep through local delivery services like Domex and Pronto. We don’t use services like DHL since they are bit high in price. Giving Free Delivery and Island wide

delivery are the major differentiating factors for our shop when compared with other online textile shops. (Male, 24 years, Polonnaruwa)

Replacement, Refund and Return Policies:

According to many textile shops who run their business via social media, replacements and refunding policies play a major role in attracting customers in online platforms. As per one respondent, who is a university passed finalist running an online textile shop, one of major concern was the replacement cost.

“Our utmost priority is customer satisfaction, because if he is not satisfied, then the customer can simply put up a social media post and tarnish our brand page which we can’t afford as a small-scale textile shop. Therefore, we offer replacements, refunds and free returns for any customer who have issues with our products. Replacements need to be arranged for customers, especially since there are no ‘fit-on’ options when purchasing online. Another concern is return cost where we have to bear courier costs.” (Male, 26 years, Colombo)

Ease of Access vs. Lack of Physical Store:

As the respondents point out, the major advantage of having a small-scale delivery-only textile shops run in social media platforms was the ease of access while major disadvantage was lack of a physical store where customers can see and try the products before purchase.

“In my point of view and experience in last year or so, major difference is ease of access to the store. Customers

can access our products from the ease of their fingertips with the use of a mobile, tab or laptop. In a traditional shop you have to physically visit the store, which by the way some customers prefer” . (Male, 23 years, Kegalle)

The effect of Situational Factors

Through the interviews done, the researcher found from respondents that even for an online store with no physical locations, situational factors have a major effect on the performance of their stores in social media.

Crisis situations: Easter Sunday Attacks and Covid-19 pandemic are the two major issues raised by the respondents during interviews. However, according to many respondents, these incidents positively affected social media-based textile shops since customers were not keen on physically visiting the stores.

“I haven't run an online store when Easter Sunday Attacks happened but was preparing to open my online store. However, the Covid-19 pandemic had a larger impact since I originally planned to start my business by March 2020, but had to postpone it till July and even after starting the business. The 2nd wave of Covid-19 pandemic affected me a lot, especially when it comes to getting required textile and arranging delivery services for orders. I had to come to Colombo amidst the pandemic situation to get the required materials for T-shirts. I also managed to partner with a local courier service to deliver my products in Western Province. So, the

difficulties I had earlier sorted out, not entirely, but mainly.” (Male, 25 years, Gampaha)

Social Media Packages by Internet Service Providers: Over the last couple of years, all major Internet Service Providers in Sri Lanka have introduced specially designed packages for Social Media, Learning Sites and Video Sites. A respondent from Nugegoda who works for an advertising company while running an online store shared his thoughts on these special data packages.

“I think it definitely has a positive effect since people tend to spend more time on Social Media. However, I do not think this is ground-breaking as people spend the majority of their time on social media than earlier. So, these latest additions will give a push but not a huge one. But it is important to note that these packages have an effect not only on buyers but also on us, sellers, since we can use more time on Social Media researching competitors and surfing new ideas even from our desktop, which consumer lot of data. In my point of view, introduction of such packages has urged me to spend more time on Social Media as I know my cost is low. There are monthly unlimited social media packages for as low as Rs 107, which we can use on almost all our devices through hotspot. Therefore, these packages definitely had a positive effect for me as a seller who runs a small-scale delivery only textile shop.” (Male, 35 years, Colombo)

Back up plans

The researcher found that many respondents have a back-up plans and

textile shops is not their only or major source of income but a part-time income and business. Therefore, the risks associated with running an online delivery-only textile shops are minimum for most respondents.

Policies of Social Media Platforms:

Rules and regulations of relevant social media platforms play a crucial role. Violation of such policy by members may cause permanent loss of access to the store. One of the respondents mentioned that getting access back is a complex process when something like that occurs since social media platforms do not have any official representatives.

“I was removed from social media and the only thing I received was an email saying that I have violated a policy which Facebook did not disclose. I think it may have something to do with some policy updates Facebook did with the recent ‘Black Lives Matter’ moment and obey the growing public pressure on Racism. But I had never knowingly been involved in any such activities, so it is a mystery to date for me on why my store, which was over 4 years old, got banned from Facebook.” (Male, 22 years, Kalutara)

Future Growth: According to the interviews, many started a small-scale delivery-only textile shop with less capital requirements as a part-time income source. However, when this small-scale shop grows gradually, many respondents plan to expand their delivery-only small-scale textile shops into a traditional physical store. However, this expansion is a long-term plan for all respondents. In the short term, their aim is to operate as

much as possible through online. Respondents believed that moving on to a physical location is inevitable if their stores keep growing.

A respondent from Kandy, who have not only social media stores but also a website as well and moving from small scale to medium-scale, shared his thoughts on future growth potential of online store as,

“I firmly believe that it is indeed inevitable to move into a physical store if my store keep growing the way it grown in last year or so. I have started this business when I was in first year of my university and now, I am at final year and I have partnered with several others in turning this small-scale textile business to a medium scale one. However, moving onto a physical store is not in my short-term goals.. However, when things get back to normal (Covid pandemic is over) and I have a spending capacity to go into a physical store, I wouldn’t say no to that.” (Male, 24 years, Kandy)

Findings

The following table (Table 1) summarizes the findings of this study.

Therefore, interacting with the customers in a friendly manner and satisfying their needs to the fullest was a significant insight brought forward by the respondents (Vollmer and Precourt, 2008). Previous researchers pointed out fundamental changes and improvements in businesses in terms of ease of contact, volume, speed, and nature of these interactions due to the use of social media (Gallaugh and Ransbotham,

2010). Similar to this study, Dahnil et al. (2014) also explained the importance of social media to

accomplish business goals such as expanding the delivery network.

Table 5: Summary of Findings

Key Themes	Sub Themes	Meaning
Social Media Presence	Facebook vs. Instagram	Facebook and Instagram were found to be the leading social media platforms for small textile shop owners.
	Paid Advertising and Target Marketing	The significant aspect highlighted by the respondents was the advertising facilities provided by social media platforms for their sellers. One prominent feature of advertising on Social Media is the 'Target Marketing' option, where the exact audience can be reached and optimized the advertising budget.
	Customer Interaction	The interactivity through social media was found as important especially in pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stages.
Point of Difference	Island wide Free Cash on Delivery	The majority of small-scale shop owners do island-wide free delivery using 'Cash on Delivery' method. However, some sellers targeted a specific geographical area and some sellers offered card payments and bank transfers apart from cash on delivery payments.
	Replacement, Refund and Return Policies	All respondents offer replacements if a customer is not satisfied with the purchase, while only a few offer full refunds. Few sellers arrange free returns by paying local courier services themselves, while one seller charged the customer for return courier service.
	Ease of Access vs. Lack of Physical Store	The main advantage of online delivery only shops highlighted by respondents was the ease of access for customers while the main disadvantage was the lack of physical locations to try out clothes before purchasing.
The effect of Situational Factors	Crisis handling	The researcher found that two major incidents in Sri Lanka last year, Easter Sunday Attacks 2019 and Covid-19 Pandemic 2020/2021 had mainly positive effects on delivery only textile shop owners.
	Social Media Packages by Internet Service Providers	Special data packages introduced by Sri Lankan Internet Service Providers (ISP) were seen as a major factor by the respondents since it allows customers as well as sellers to surf through social media platforms for a minimum monthly data charge.

Back-up Plan	Policies of Social Media Platforms	Few respondents have lost access to their stores due to frequent policy changes done by Facebook and other leading social media platforms. Most of the respondents had back-up plans if something happens for their stores in the future.
	Future Growth	The researcher found that most respondents are interested in expanding their small-scale delivery only textile shops to physical stores based on the success they get online. However, these expansions were not short-term goals of them, and most sellers were happy with continuing their stores online with the help of Social Media.

Source: The authors

Qualman (2012) points out opportunities such as coverage and ease of access as massive in social media platforms. As this study points out, the positive effect of situational factors such as Easter Sunday attacks and Covid-19 pandemic to the businesses who perform on online platforms, Tran (2021) also shows how online companies can be advantaged during the periods of consumer travel restrictions occur. Finally, this study identified the importance of having a back-up plan to deal with the frequent policy changes of social media platforms and the future growth potential of current small-scale delivery-only textile shops and their owners. Similarly, Hormozi et al. (2002) point out the requirement of having back-up plans, especially for small businesses who run their businesses on limited platforms.

Theoretical Contributions

This study investigates a timely issue that has received rare attention, especially in the Sri Lankan context. The study discovered that Facebook and

Instagram are more popular among small-scale delivery-only textile shop owners among many social media platforms. Moreover, the importance of paid advertising campaigns and points of differentiation achieved through island-wide free cash on delivery, replacement, refund, and return policies, and ease of access were recognized. The value of having back-up plans and the influence of situational factors were also identified as critical in using social media as sole communication platforms.

Practical Implications

The study found that the trend of starting small-scale delivery only textile shops from the household basis is increasing and using social media as marketing and communication platforms. Further, most of the businesses were found in Colombo district in Western Province, indicating that online delivery is still mostly limited to the urban areas in the country. Thus, the business organizations in textile can expand their online deliveries to the other areas in Sri Lanka would

provide the first-mover advantage in the market since this small-scale delivery only textile shops are an emerging trend in social media and online shopping. As the study found, businesses can pay attention to how to differentiate their online platforms to get competitive advantages. Further, businesses need to pay attention to how to arrange deliveries, possible payment modes such as whether cash on delivery or online payments, and arrange replacement, refund, and return policies. Because these factors would be highly material for online delivery businesses. Further, suppose the business organization do their businesses only through social media platforms, in that case, the study recommends them to have back-up plans for expanding the delivery network through other modes of delivery.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The study was limited to a set of participants selected from company clients and personal contacts, where the majority of them are in the Colombo district and are in a similar social status with similar

educational levels. Hence, the individuals' diversity was being limited. Instead, selecting a diversified sample varying on their geographical locations, social status, and educational backgrounds could have a chance of having rich and diversified insights to the study.

Future research can be initiated from the buyer perspective instead of the seller perspective in order to explore the conditions, issues, and trends in small-scale delivery-only textile businesses. It would be valuable if future practitioners could get the view of the digital marketing experts, textile industry specialists, advertising agencies, and professionals in the field to understand the way forward for online businesses, particularly SMEs who run businesses via online platforms.

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Competing Interests

The authors declare no competing interests

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