



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Name: Nishit Kumar Dinesh bhai Dalsania

Student id: 2334205

Supervisor name: Dr. Laila Maazouz

Proposal

Leveraging social media marketing for customer engagement and feedback –A study on the fashion industry in the UK

Introduction

Social media marketing is effective for the fashion industry businesses to engage customers to collect feedback and to engage them. Social media platforms are highly popular among contemporary people. The use of social media for promoting fashion products supports collecting feedback from customers regarding the quality, design, trendiness etc that ensures better brand positioning (Yeo et al., 2022). On the other hand, it also assists in collecting feedback in the post-purchase stages on different aspects like price and sales-related services (Sundararaj, 2021). It enables businesses to identify the customers' buying preferences and to make positive adjustments to ensure better customer engagement.

Aims

The study aims to understand the strategies of fashion retailers like Asos and BooHoo in the UK leverage social media marketing to collect customer feedback and ways it has influenced customer engagement.

Objectives

- To understand the role of social media platforms in modern marketing management in the fashion industry in the UK.
- To analyse the ways social media marketing strategies have essential for fashion retailers like Asos and BooHoo to engage customers
- To examining the efficiency of the fashion retailer like Asos and BooHoo to use social media platforms in engaging customers
- To ascertain the effective practices used by fashion industry businesses to collect customer feedback and engage them

Research Questions

- Why social media platforms have become an integrated part of contemporary marketing management?
- How do fashion businesses use social media to take customer feedback and engage them?

- Which British fashion retailers use social media as marketing tools and how it has influenced their business performance to gain competitive advantage?
- What are the most effective practices followed by British fashion retailers to engage customers?

Methodology

Following “Saunders’ research Onion framework” the following methods will be followed in this paper. A detailed discussion of the justification for selecting this paper is presented below.

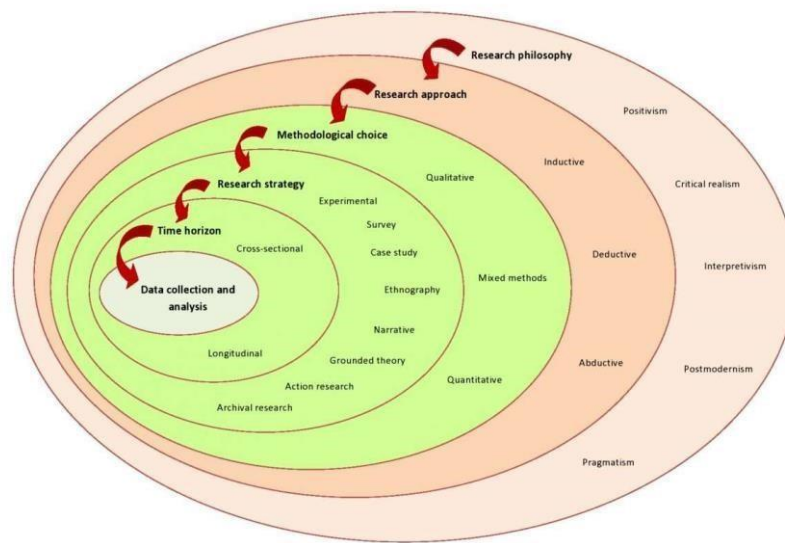


Figure 1: Saunders’ research Onion framework,”Source: (Assadpour, Ghalehnoee and Bahramian, 2022)

Research Philosophy

Research philosophy constitutes the belief carried out during the accumulation of data and analysis so that research objectives are met effectively (Mbanaso, Abrahams and Okafor, 2023). In this research to understand the way social media platforms are leveraged to collect customer feedback and to engage them by fashion brands positivism research philosophy will be selected. This will be justified as this philosophy supports following a scientific method and practical observation to collect measurable data and to avoid any mere assumptions in data collection that strengthen research outcomes and assist in meeting its objectives. This will support collecting quantifiable information from customers regarding their perspective on fashion brands regarding their use of social media platforms and the way the social media marketing concepts used by luxury fashion retailers affect their engagement. Additionally, it

will also assist in measuring their perspective in a scientific way about the way they use social media platforms to present their feedback to their preferred fashion luxury retailers.

Research Approach

The research approach is defined as the method followed to progress in the study by collecting data and analysing theory to present understandable conclusions (Taherdoost, 2022). In this research, the inductive research method will be followed that will ensure the construction of effective theories about the ways social media platforms are used by luxury fashion brands to collect customer feedback and engage them. It will support collecting data and finding the common patterns from the customer's perspectives about ways they find the social media marketing strategies effective in maintaining a positive customer engagement rate. It will support creating themes of the common outcome of the data collected, and to present a detailed and generalised understanding about the effectiveness of the use of social media channels to engage customers in luxury fashion brands.

Methodological Choice – support with a reference

A mixed method will be followed in this study to present a mix of both statistical information and theoretical concepts about the effectiveness of social media marketing in collecting customer feedback and ensuring their loyalty, especially in fashion retail brands. The mixed method strategy will assist in performing a survey with the customers of fashion brands in the UK to collect quantitative information from them about their point of view about ways their loyalty to fashion brands is shaped through social media engagement (Taherdoost, 2022). Additionally, the mixed method will also allow to collection of qualitative information from existing literature about ways existing theories identify the significance of using social media platforms to ensure positive customer engagement. It will support identifying the commonalities between the concepts presented in the existing studies and the point of view of contemporary buyers in the fashion industry. Hence, it will enable us to present a more in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of such platforms to ensure customer loyalty.

Research Strategy

An exploratory research strategy will be followed in the mixed method study, which will enable to exploration of information from sources not explored previously (Dawadi, Shrestha and Giri, 2021). In the existing studies, there is information about ways social media channels are used for customer engagement. However, collecting information for a particular

set of customers in a particular industry from the group of customers through quantitative methods is quite rare. Hence, the research will follow the strategy of gathering information directly from customers following the social media pages of fashion brands and purchasing from particular brands. It might assist in exploring new information and enhance the depth of understanding of this particular subject.

Time Horizon

A cross-sectional time horizon will be followed in data collection, which will be justified to collect data from a single time from a single participant. It will allow us to gather information in a more spontaneous way and to complete research within the scheduled time.

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Week 1</i>	<i>Week 2</i>	<i>Week 3</i>	<i>Week 4</i>	<i>Week 5</i>	<i>Week 6</i>	<i>Week 7</i>
<i>Selection of methods and proposal submission</i>							
<i>Secondary data collection</i>							
Selecting inclusion and exclusion criteria							
Selecting search terms							
Selecting platforms							
Reading abstracts							
Selecting the appropriate articles							

Reviewing papers							
Primary data collection Selecting a sample and approaching							
- Collecting information - Data analysis							
Completing survey							
Data analysis and discussion							
Conclusion and submission							

Research methods

Following the exploratory research design the study will include a mixed method in the data collection process. Following the mixed method strategy the research will include both quantitative and qualitative information. Quantitative information will be collected from a primary data collection process following a survey method. The survey will be conducted with a sample of buyers of British fashion retailers. The survey participants will be identified from the social media pages of the fashion brands who post feedback on the posts of the social media pages of the fashion businesses. Collecting data from them will be justified for accumulating information about their point of view about the social media presence and strategy of such fashion brands and the ways those shape their buying behaviour. 10 close-ended questions will be included in the survey questionnaire including multiple choices for answering and all the questions will be relevant for identifying ways social media strategies of the fashion businesses have contributed to their loyalty.

Google Forms will be used for the data collection process and will be justified for completing the survey online, which will be effective in avoiding any geographic barriers. A snowball sampling method will be followed in the study to collect data from the identified people posting comments on the social media pages of the fashion brands and then gradually increasing the volume of the sample. Following this sampling method will assist in seeking referrals from the respondents who agreed to take part in the survey. Collecting such referrals will support increasing the sample size and to reach to a target sample size of 100. Including 100 participants will be an adequate sample size as representative of the entire customer groups following the social media platforms of the fashion brands.

In addition, qualitative data will be collected from existing literature and that will be supported by established theories related to social media marketing and customer engagement. Authentic journals books and online articles will be selected for review and following inclusion and exclusion criteria like publication within 5 years and written in English will be followed to select the most authentic articles.

Data analysis tools

The qualitative data will be analysed following a thematic analysis. Identification of the common patterns presented in the existing studies certain themes will be developed, based on which a detailed and specific analysis will be presented to understand ways social media marketing in the fashion industry leverages customer engagement. The thematic analysis will be justified for the qualitative data as it supports understanding the common patterns in the findings of different secondary sources and to present a detailed discussion. Additionally, the Google Form pie charts will be analysed with the visual representation of the charts and the differences of opinion presented in each question. It will allow analysing the quantitative data with visual representation of the questions and the differences in responses in each question and to understand the perspectives of the respondents and the most preferred options.

Literature Review

Role of social media marketing in the fashion industry

Social media plays an important role in increasing brand awareness and gaining the attention of customers. As per the statement of Hsiao et al., (2019), social media platforms have allowed fashion brands to reach a large audience and interact with customers, creating opportunities

to build community around the brand. Using this marketing strategy not only helps the fashion brands to promote their products but also identifies their preferences, which is essential to developing the services as per their requirements. However, Fetais et al., (2022), stated that influencers have played a crucial role in fashion marketing as they have allowed the brand to reach niche audiences and use visual storytelling methods on platforms like TikTok and Instagram have showcase their products and create emotional connections with customers. According to social media marketing theory, individuals derive a sense of identity and fashion brands can leverage social media to create this identity and increase brand loyalty among them (Dahl, 2021). Therefore, it has created advantages to streamline the shopping experiences with the services of fashion brands and develop a strong brand image.

Impact of Social media on customer engagement

As per the statement of Lim and Rasul, (2022), customer engagement is highly influenced by using social media networks, developing high-quality content, influencer marketing, social media advertisements and others. These are the important strategies to promote the products or services of the fashion brands. It has provided fashion brands an opportunity to create engaging content and provide personalised customer service, which is required to make a long-term relationship with them and also increase their retention. However, Bilro, Loureiro and Santos (2021), argued that a vast amount of information on social media can create difficulties for fashion brands to differentiate themselves from others and negative reviews and feedback also adversely influence the experiences of the customers. It is essential to prioritise transparency and authenticity while advertising the products on social media to build trust with the customers.

Nanda and Kumar, (2021), mentioned in their study using social media tools like Sprout Social, and Buffer and analytical tools like Twitter Analytics, Google Analytics and others, have helped to identify the engagement rates of the customers with the specific brand. The customer engagement theory is often used by organisations to build a relationship with customers, where the key elements include marketing efforts, brand outcomes and customers' contribution (Santini et al., 2020). In this case, identifying the requirements of the customers and fulfilling them can help to attract them towards the brand, and responding promptly to customer inquiries can satisfy their needs.

Key factors influence customer engagement in the fashion industry.

Various factors are responsible for influencing customer engagement, including brand values, content quality, influencer partnerships, social media advertising and many more. According to Wang and Lee, (2020), a strong brand reputation can foster loyalty and trust among the customer that can increase their engagement and at the same time, a consistent brand aesthetic also retains them. Having high brand values not only helps to increase engagement but also to gain the attention of new customers by sharing their sustainability initiatives or inclusivity. However, Moran, Muzellec and Johnson (2020), stated that high-quality content is also required to capture customers' attention and regular posting on social media sites can also help to maintain their interest. As per the self-determination theory, customer engagement is based on satisfying their psychological needs, where creating personalised content can create a sense of connection among them. Therefore, social media presence and technological factors like immersive experiences can create a sense of encouragement and develop emotional connections, which are required to accelerate their engagement.

Identify effective social media strategies to enhance customer engagement

As per the statement of Shawky et al., (2020), content strategy, having high-quality visuals, user-generated campaigns and influencer collaborations, are some effective ways to gain the attention of the customers by sharing videos of fashion products, showcasing details, partnership with influencers and many more. Respond promptly to customer queries, and hosting the contest on social media will also drive website traffic. In this context, Nasir et al., (2021), stated that targeted social media advertisement is an effective way to reach specific audiences and drive brand awareness.

Influencer marketing has played an important role to make connections with the customers and promote the products of the brand. For instance, Boohoo collaborates with influencers like Zendaya to promote its brand (Boohoo, 2025). On the other hand, Asos also use targeted social media advertisements to reach a specific audience (Asos Plc, 2021). However, Seturi (2024) stated that monitoring the engagement matrix, like comments, shares, and other tools, can help to measure the success of the social media campaign which can provide further opportunities for the fashion brand to improve their strategies and allow the customers to develop a strong relationship.

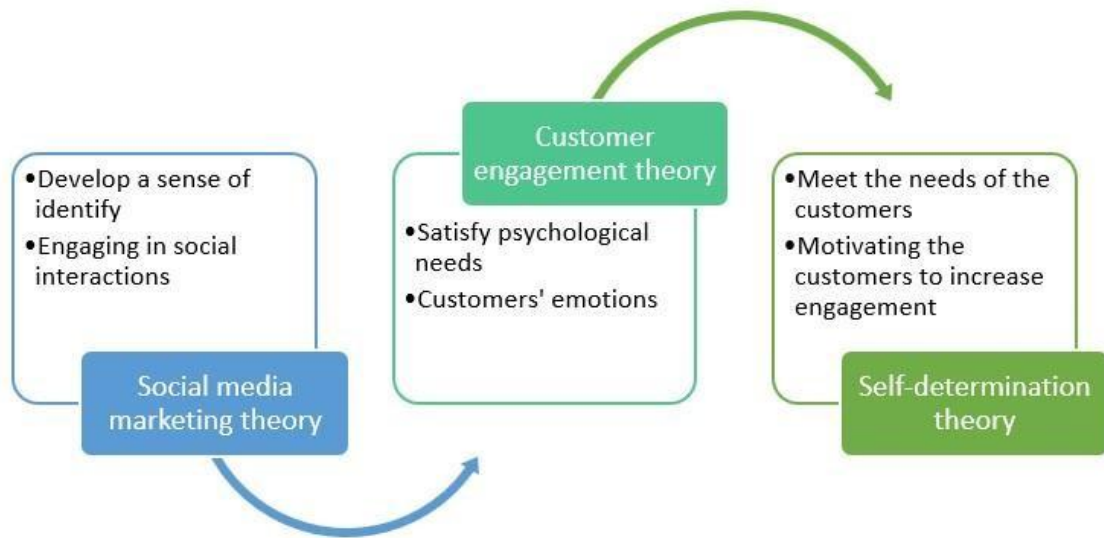


Figure 2: Theoretical Framework, Source: (Self-developed)

It is stated that the development of “social media marketing strategies” is based on various factors, including customers' preferences, their requirements, emotional connection and many more. “Self-determination theory” identified the developing activities that can fulfil the needs of competence and autonomy, which will increase their engagement. On the other hand, it is essential to satisfy the psychological needs of the customers and focus on their emotions which can help to build a strong relationship and enhance their satisfaction.

Limitations

The limitation of this study is mainly contextual factors, where it might not fully account for factors like cultural differences, technological advances and economic conditions that can also influence the customer’s engagement in the fashion industry. Focusing particularly on the specific aspect of social media marketing can overlook the other important aspects, such as brand awareness, prices of the products and many more, which are considered another limitation. It also has limited resources that can restrict the sample size, and data collection method and rely on cooperation from the participants, which could make it difficult to obtain the specific data for achieving the research objectives.

Ethical Considerations

Maintaining research ethics not only helps to enhance quality but also ensures achieving academic integrity. This study will collect the primary data, which will ensure voluntary

participation, and they can withdraw their names from the survey at any time without providing any justification. The informed consent will help to collect consent from the participants, which will be sent along with the questionnaire, and the participants can get the opportunity to know the outcomes of this study and decide whether they want to participate in this survey or not. Anonymity will be maintained, and it has ensured to maintain the confidentiality of the data, which is required to provide safety to the participants. “Data Protection Act 2018” is used to protect the participants' information and access will be provided only to the researchers. The outcomes of this result will not be shared with any other person who is not involved in this study, and it will focus on managing plagiarism and will not use any AI tools.

Conclusion

Developing an effective “social media marketing strategy” and understanding the customers’ characteristics can help the fashion brand choose the appropriate ways to gain their attention. This study will focus on identifying the ways to foster emotional connection and create trust with the customer, which is essential to enhancing brand image.

Following the mixed method will be justified as it might assist the collection of data in both theoretical and statistical form. It will allow us to gather information from both existing studies

and from fashion industry customers that will enable us to present a more in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of using social media channels in retaining customers and seeking feedback.

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