

**IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN THE
FASHION INDUSTRY**

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Introduction

Induction and advancement in technology have yield innovative system of businesses. For example, social media has created a great platform of interaction that in turn leads to communication to massive channels. In correspondence, generous access to the internet has enabled people to use social mediums like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. for communicating with a larger group. Subsequently, the need for physical meetings has declined (Zhang and Benyoucef, 2016). The advancement of the internet has been facilitated by Web 2.0 applications that are initiating interconnectivity among people through social mediums (Kong et al., 2016). Consequently, online communities and social networking sites are formed for assisting such interconnections. In association with the fashion industry, the indulgence of social media has intensely influenced consumer behavior. Therefore, this study proposes a framework for tracking the influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior in the fashion industry.

Background of the study

Social media has been referred to as the platform of connectivity through which mass communication takes place. In other words, social media has enhanced the brand popularity due to its large reach, cost efficiency and least time consumption (Hofacker, Malthouse, and Sultan, 2016). The contemporary research agenda on social media marketing is a product of social networking sites and social groups that are empowering the brand images globally (Stephen, 2016). In consideration of the fashion industry, social media is playing a vital role in advancing, promoting and communicating the fashion trends all over the globe. For instance, the constant desire of people to look trendy and share their looks with the public creates a platform for the fashion industries. Also, massive networking through social media leads to the sharing of values

from one region of the world to others. This is the reason western trends are swinging in eastern regions and vice versa.

Problem Statement

Now that the influence of social media has been listed, it is crucial to analyze how it shapes the consumer's behavior. In association with this, the formation of communities, initiation of rate and review system have altered the buying behavior of contemporary consumers. Moreover, social influence assists and enhance brand images as people rank their experiences as satisfactory or non-satisfactory. This behavior gives rise to the intention to buy among potential consumers (Hofacker et al., 2016). Not only review and rating are the factors that influence intention to buy, but there are other factors like financial freedom, personal perception about the product, need and desire, product usefulness, etc. (Zhang and Benyoucef, 2016). However, the most influential factor that leads to buying is still required to be analyzed. Hence, this study is designed to yield a framework for measuring the impact of social media marketing in the fashion industry. The framework rests on three fundamentals; social support leads people to communicate through social media that in turn generate a brand image. Eventually, brand awareness may lead to direct purchase or intention to purchase in the future.

Literature Review

Advertisement

The contemporary world has become a complete advertising platform for almost every brand. Advertisement is referred to as the announcement of market offerings that are available

for assisting its consumers (Kong et al., 2016). Advertisement is a vast term and is composed of various functionalities like; product awareness, promotion, direct sales, push marketing, pull marketing, etc. (Ahuja, 2015). The complex process of the advertisement has enhanced with the advancement in the internet and technology (Stephen, 2016). For example, advancement in the internet has led to social mediums of communication that in turn enable the marketers to advertise their products to a massive audience. Moreover, the initiation of the feedback system is assisting brands in the generation of brand images (McCluskey and Freeman, 2017). Eventually, it has become crucial for marketers to determine factors that alter the consumer buying behavior on social media mode of advertisement.

Social Influence

Individuals are easily influenced by their surroundings differently. The effect of the surrounding that leads to a specific behavior is termed as social influence (McCluskey and Freeman, 2017). With the advancement in the internet and inauguration of social networking sites, social influence has intensified (Rehman et al., 2017). In consideration of the fashion industry, social influence has been observed as a crucial factor for ages (Stephen, 2016). At the contemporary stage, compliances are formed in social networking sites. Compliance is referred to acceptance of a fact due to the collective opinion of groups a person may belong to interacts with (McCluskey and Freeman, 2017). Moreover, internationalization has been represented as the strongest influence on consumer buying patterns in the fashion industry (Kong et al., 2016). Therefore, social influence can be ranked as an intense factor while determining consumer buying behavior in the fashion industry.

Perceived usefulness

Social influence and support contributes to the perceived usefulness among individuals. Ahuja (2015) defines perceived usefulness as a degree of belief that performances increase with the practice of certain systems, people are inclining towards social networking sites. Moreover, this fact has been evident to be true up to some extent as the fashion ideas are enhanced through social mediums (Stephen, 2016). Besides, perceived value is a product of a technology acceptance model or TAM that legitimate individual's choice of using social mediums for multiple purposes (Godey et al., 2016). To sum up, the buying decision takes place as soon as the individual develops perceived usefulness social media advertisement that he/she encounters while using the social medium.

Entertainment

Advertisement rests on different criteria like awareness, announcement, and entertainment. Awareness and announcement let the consumer record information about the product (Ahuja, 2015). However, entertainment is the criteria that persuade consumers for actual purchase decisions (McCluskey and Freeman, 2017). Marketers use entertainment as a tool for standing unique in the minds of consumers and persuading them as well (Godey et al., 2016). Prior to social networking sites, the marketers were forced to induce all the three elements in their advertisement messages; awareness, announcement, and entertainment (Rehman et al., 2017). However, social media has limited this task by automatically creating larger reach and promotional platforms. Eventually, marketers can focus on entertainment as a tool for grabbing the attention of their potential consumers.

Brand Awareness

Individuals possess an innate ability to expect or perceive value about everything they encounter in their routine. Similarly, exposure to an advertisement gives rise to the creation of perceived value about the product that is being advertised (Rehman et al., 2017). For example, the perception of society's standard of beauty and attractiveness has assisted many cosmetic brands in creating their brand image in the market (Godey et al., 2016). Simultaneously, recent fashion brands are using an individual's perceived desires for constructing marketing campaigns and acquiring consumers (Hofacker et al., 2016). In correspondence, the influence of media has increased the pressure of being beautiful (Ahuja, 2015). Ultimately, a constant desire for smart looks has created platforms for fashion brands from where they are eligible to spread their brand awareness.

Social Media Marketing

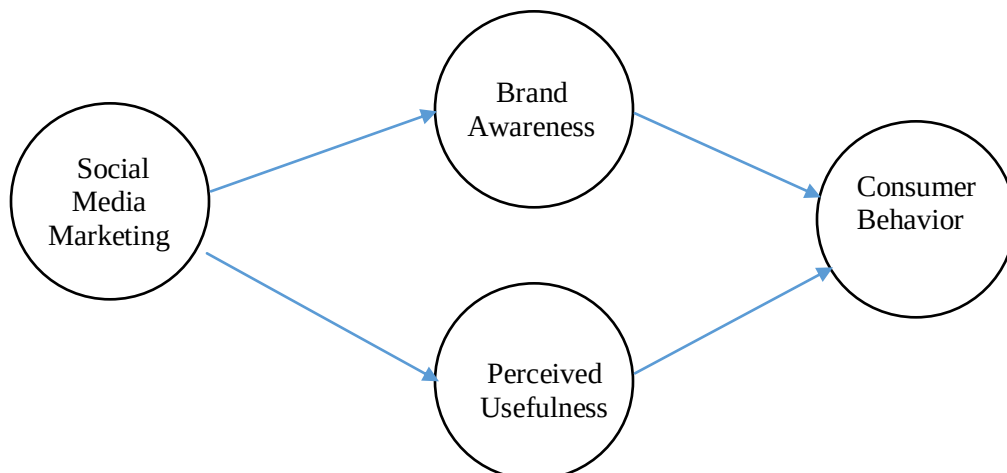
As state above, social media is a product of advanced internet and technology. The most general and comprehensive definition of social media marketing is proposed by Stephen (2016) who writes, uses the social medium for promoting, selling, distributing and creating products. As consumers socialize through social media, it becomes easier for marketers to create awareness, list availability of products and give rise to actual purchases (Hofacker et al., 2016). Moreover, the interaction of individuals through social media enables social support that in turn leads to the creation of perceived value and intention to buy (Godey et al., 2016). Also, positive comments and higher rating leads to creating higher trust levels among the reviewers whilst negative ones would affect negatively (Ahuja, 2015). Eventually, social support and rating system stimulate the buying behavior of consumers significantly.

Consumer Buying Behavior

Behavior is referred to as the attitude of an individual or the way a person expresses his/her actions in routine. Marketers must record the common behavior of their consumers, as it assists them in strategies marketing message and advertisement techniques for effective sales (Ahuja, 2015). In correspondence, consumer buying behavior denominates the methods illustrated by individuals while they decide to purchase or dispose of a product or service (Rehman et al., 2017). The consumer buying behavior is a process that is composed of an individual's strategy to search, value, pay, experience and dispose of a product (Kong et al., 2016). Many factors stimulate the buying behavior of the consumer, but social influence, psychosocial influence, individual psychology, and culture are ranked as the most critical stimulators (Godey et al., 2016). Therefore, marketers are obliged to determine factors that stimulate their consumers so that they can alter their advertisement accordingly.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the reviewed literature about the component of social media marketing and consumer behavior, this study has created the following conceptual framework with reference to the study of Godey et al. (2016);



According to the framework six hypotheses are determined, each of which is directly or indirectly associated with intention to purchase;

H1 = There is a positive relationship between social media marketing and brand awareness

H2 = There is a positive relationship between social media marketing and perceived usefulness

H3 = There is a positive relationship between brand awareness marketing and consumer behaviour

H4 = There is a positive relationship between perceived usefulness marketing and consumer behaviour

Methodology

Research Approach

As the research approach contains steps, it defines a plan for the entire research based on data collection and data reasoning. This study will employ a quantitative approach for collecting the data. As the approach for data is quantitative, the deductive approach of research is obliged to be practiced for analyzing the collected data (Kumar, 2019). The reason for selecting the listed approach rests on the nature of the problem that is being analyzed in the study. For instance, this study has highlighted the influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior in the fashion industry. This is a contemporary problem, so it requires a solution on the basis of the current scenario. Therefore, this study has selected the quantitative approach so that primary data can be collected and analyzed in the context of the UK's fashion industry.

Research Design

Research design denominates the framework that guides the entire research and assists the researcher to track his/her performance. In association with this investigation, the impact of social media marketing is to be explored in the fashion industry of the UK. Therefore, the most comprehensive research design for this study surveys. As this investigation rests on the responses of consumers their responses will be collected through surveys.

Data Collection

The selection of data collection is crucial for determining the effective outcomes of the research. The technique to record responses for testing the proposed hypothesis is termed as data collection (Kumar, 2019). As the research approach for this study is quantitative, the data collection is mandated to be factual as well (Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2017). Therefore, this investigation will employ structured and closed-ended data collection techniques for recording the responses of consumers in the UK. The induction of close-ended data with the help of primary data collection will legitimate the research design as well.

Data Analysis

Once the data has been collected through surveys, the next step is to determine the outcome. For this, the data is obliged to be analyzed through different mediums. Data analysis is the technique to validate, decode and statistically interpret the data into meaningful statements (Kumar, 2019). For investigating consumer behavior through social media, this study has selected descriptive statistics for analyzing the collected data. Particularly, correlation and

regression techniques via SPSS will be employed for statistically validating and analyzing the data.

Ethical Consideration

The presence of ethics is essential for measuring the effectiveness of any research. Ethical consideration determines the degree of right actions of research and highlights the fact that no participant will be harmed during the research (Kumar, 2019). Moreover, the prioritization of dignity and information of participants is also managed under the ethical considerations of this research. Moreover, transparency will be maintained throughout the research to showcase honesty among all sorts of communication.

Limitation of the Study

The limitation of any research demonstrates areas that are not catered to in the study. In association with this investigation, advertisement and consumer behavior are a stimulus to various factors, but this study has highlighted the only influence of social media marketing in the fashion industry. Moreover, the context of the study is limited to the consumers of the UK region only. Therefore it lays room for further investigations in the same field but different contexts or vice versa.

Research Timeline

Target Date	Task Details	Accomplishment Date
1 st Oct 2019	Topic Selection	1 st Oct 2019
3 rd Oct 2019	Information Gathering	5 th Oct 2019
7 th Oct 2019	Develop Problem Statement	8 th Oct 2019
10 th Oct 2019	Draft Research Proposal	15 th Oct 2019
19 th Oct 2019	Get feedback on Proposal	
21 th Oct 2019	Submit Updated Proposal	
25 th Oct 2019	Receive approval on proposal	
28 th Oct 2019	Draft Survey	
4 th Nov 2019	Get approval on Survey	
5-20th Nov 2019	Conduct survey	
20-23 rd Nov 2019	Analyze Data	
28 th Nov 2019	Submit First Draft	
2 nd Dec 2019	Receive Feedback	
8 th Jan 2020	Submit Final Report	

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