



Master of Business Administration

Dissertation Proposal Structure

LCMB7035 - Dissertation

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Dissertation Proposal

Title: The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Purchase Intentions: A Study of Zara

1. Introduction

In the digital age, social media has transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers and promote their products. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter have become essential tools for marketing, allowing brands to engage directly with their audiences, create brand awareness, and influence consumer behaviour. As a result, social media marketing has become a critical component of modern business strategies.

The fashion industry has particularly benefited from the rise of social media marketing. Fashion brands rely heavily on visual content, influencer collaborations, and interactive communication to attract customers and promote new collections. One of the most successful companies in the fast-fashion industry is Zara, which is known for its ability to quickly respond to fashion trends and deliver new styles to consumers.

Unlike many traditional retailers, Zara has built a strong brand presence through digital engagement rather than heavy investment in traditional advertising. Its social media platforms showcase product designs, fashion trends, and brand identity in a visually appealing way that attracts millions of followers worldwide. Consumers increasingly rely on social media content, online reviews, and influencer recommendations when making purchasing decisions.

Consumer purchase intention refers to the likelihood that a consumer will purchase a product after evaluating information, marketing communication, and personal preferences. Social media marketing plays a significant role in shaping these intentions by influencing consumer perceptions of brands, products, and trends (Kotler and Keller, 2016).

Despite the increasing importance of social media marketing, there is still a need for more academic research to understand how it influences consumer purchasing behaviour, particularly in the fast-fashion sector. While many studies examine digital marketing in general, fewer focus specifically on how social media marketing strategies impact purchase intentions for fast-fashion brands like Zara.

This study aims to explore the relationship between social media marketing and consumer purchase intentions by focusing on Zara as a case study. The research will

examine how different elements of social media marketing influence consumer perceptions and purchasing behaviour.

Research Aim

The aim of this research is to examine the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase intentions in the fast-fashion retail industry, with particular focus on the marketing practices of Zara.

Research Objectives.

1. To analyse how social media marketing strategies influence consumer purchase intentions in the context of Zara.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of social media marketing activities influencing consumer purchasing decisions in the fast-fashion industry.

Research Questions

3. How does social media marketing influence consumer purchase intentions in the fast-fashion retail industry?
4. What role do Zara's social media marketing strategies play in shaping consumer purchasing decisions?

By addressing these questions, the research aims to contribute to a better understanding of digital marketing strategies in the fast-fashion industry.

2. Literature Review

The literature review provides a critical examination of existing research related to social media marketing, consumer behaviour, and purchase intention. It establishes the theoretical foundation of the study and identifies gaps in the current literature.

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing refers to the use of social media platforms to promote products, communicate with customers, and build brand relationships. According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller, social media has become a key component of integrated marketing communication strategies that allow companies to engage consumers in interactive ways (Kotler and Keller, 2016).

Social media platforms enable businesses to create personalized marketing messages, respond to customer feedback, and build long-term relationships with consumers. Tuten and Solomon (2017) argue that social media marketing helps organizations create brand communities where consumers can share experiences and interact with brands.

Consumer Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is defined as the probability that a consumer will buy a particular product or service after considering various factors such as product quality, brand reputation, price, and marketing communication. According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour developed by Ajzen (1991), consumer intentions are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

In the context of digital marketing, social media platforms significantly influence consumer attitudes and behaviours. Consumers often rely on information shared on social media platforms, including reviews, recommendations, and influencer endorsements, before making purchasing decisions (Hutter et al., 2013).

Social Media Marketing and Consumer Behaviour

Several studies highlight the strong relationship between social media marketing activities and consumer behaviour. Kim and Ko (2012) identified five key dimensions of social media marketing activities: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and electronic word-of-mouth. These factors can positively influence brand equity and consumer purchase intentions.

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is particularly important in the digital environment. It refers to the online sharing of consumer opinions, reviews, and experiences regarding products or brands. Positive eWOM can significantly increase consumer trust and encourage purchasing behaviour (Cheung and Thadani, 2012).

Social Media Marketing in the Fashion Industry

The fashion industry is highly influenced by trends and visual appeal, making social media a powerful marketing tool. Fashion brands frequently use visually engaging content, influencer collaborations, and user-generated content to attract consumers.

Research by Godey et al. (2016) found that social media marketing activities significantly influence consumer perceptions of fashion brands and can increase purchase intentions.

Fashion brands that actively engage with consumers on social media platforms tend to build stronger brand relationships and loyalty.

Zara's digital marketing strategy focuses heavily on visual storytelling and brand aesthetics. Its social media platforms showcase product designs and fashion inspiration, encouraging consumers to engage with the brand and explore new collections.

Research Gap

Although previous research has examined the relationship between social media marketing and consumer behaviour, there is limited research focusing specifically on fast-fashion brands like Zara. Many studies focus on luxury brands or general social media marketing strategies rather than the specific impact of these strategies on consumer purchase intentions within the fast-fashion industry.

This study seeks to address this gap by examining how Zara's social media marketing strategies influence consumer purchase intentions.

3. Methodology

This section explains the research approach and methods that will be used to collect and analyse data in order to answer the research questions.

Research Approach

This research will adopt a quantitative research approach because it allows the researcher to measure consumer attitudes and behaviours using numerical data. A quantitative approach is appropriate for analysing the relationship between social media marketing activities and consumer purchase intentions.

Research Design

A descriptive research design will be used to understand consumer perceptions of Zara's social media marketing activities and their influence on purchasing behaviour.

Data Collection Method

Primary data will be collected using an online questionnaire survey. The survey will include structured questions designed to measure consumer engagement with social media marketing and their purchasing intentions.

The questionnaire will include several sections:

- Demographic information (age, gender, income level)
- Social media usage habits
- Consumer engagement with Zara's social media content
- Perceptions of social media marketing activities
- Consumer purchase intentions

Responses will be measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Sampling Strategy

The study will use convenience sampling to collect responses from individuals who actively use social media and are familiar with fashion brands such as Zara.

The expected sample size will be approximately 100–150 respondents, which is considered appropriate for an MBA-level research project.

Data Analysis

The collected data will be analysed using statistical tools such as SPSS or Microsoft Excel. The analysis will include:

- Descriptive statistics to summarize respondent characteristics
- Correlation analysis to examine relationships between variables
- Regression analysis to determine the influence of social media marketing on purchase intentions

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations will be carefully addressed during the research process.

Participants will be informed about the purpose of the study before participating. Personal information will remain confidential, and the collected data will only be used for academic purposes.

4. Expected Findings

Based on the existing literature, this research expects to find that social media marketing significantly influences consumer purchase intentions. Consumers who actively engage with brand content on social media platforms are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward the brand and its products.

It is anticipated that factors such as visually appealing content, influencer endorsements, and interactive communication will positively affect consumer perceptions of Zara. Additionally, electronic word-of-mouth and user-generated content may play a significant role in encouraging purchasing decisions.

The findings may also suggest that younger consumers who frequently use social media platforms are more influenced by digital marketing strategies compared to older consumers.

Overall, the research is expected to demonstrate that social media marketing plays an essential role in shaping consumer purchasing behaviour in the fast-fashion industry.

5. Limitations

This research may face several potential limitations. One limitation is the relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population.

Another limitation is the use of convenience sampling, which may introduce sampling bias because participants are selected based on accessibility rather than random selection.

Additionally, the research focuses only on Zara, which means the findings may not fully represent the marketing strategies of other fashion brands. Time constraints associated with completing an MBA dissertation may also limit the depth of data collection and analysis.

Despite these limitations, the study will attempt to ensure reliable and meaningful results by carefully designing the research methodology and analysing the data systematically.

6. Timeframe

The research will be completed over a structured timeline to ensure efficient progress.

Research Stage	Duration
Proposal preparation	2 weeks
Literature review	3 weeks
Questionnaire design	1 week
Data collection	3 weeks
Data analysis	2 weeks
Dissertation writing	4 weeks
Editing and final submission	1 week

Total estimated duration: **16 weeks**

7. Conclusion

This dissertation proposal has outlined a research project that seeks to explore the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase intentions, using Zara as a case study. The study aims to analyse how social media platforms influence consumer perceptions and purchasing behaviour within the fast-fashion industry.

By reviewing existing literature, identifying research gaps, and proposing a quantitative research methodology, the proposal demonstrates the relevance and feasibility of the study. The research is expected to provide valuable insights into how digital marketing strategies influence consumer behaviour and how fashion brands can effectively engage their audiences through social media.

The findings of this study may contribute to both academic understanding and practical marketing strategies within the fashion industry.

8. References

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