



Influence of Social Media on Generation Y for Fashion Apparel Shopping Behavior in Delhi City

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ABSTRACT

Consumers in a developing country like India are tech-conscious and have no problem connecting with digital media platforms. The aim of this study is to determine how internet channels influence Indian consumers' decisions about fashion products. A qualitative study was conducted with young Indian consumers, who are the most frequent users of internet platforms and buyers of fashion brands. The study interviewed 25 people in 5 focus groups in Delhi city. We studied a cyclical framework and derived results that show the impact digital media has on Indian consumers at all stages of the purchase process, i.e., pre-purchase is digital and hedonic, shopping while using digital media is pleasurable and experiential, and post-purchase based on lifestyle, aspirations and virtual networks. More importantly, these customers are always connected to digital reference groups, which have a huge impact on their buying behavior and subsequent fashion accessory selection.

Keywords: Virtual Network, Selection, Fashion, Digital India, Impact etc.

1. Introduction

Social media in the fashion industry refers to the use of social media platforms by fashion designers and users to promote and participate in trends. Over the past several decades, the growth of social media has increased along with its use by consumers. The COVID-19 pandemic marked a sharp turning point for the industry and consumers alike in their reliance on the virtual sector. Social media has created new channels of advertising for fashion houses to reach their target markets. [1] Since its rise in 2009, luxury fashion brands have used social media to drive interactions between the brand and its customers in order to increase awareness and engagement. [1] The emergence of influencers on social media has created a new way of advertising and maintaining customer relationships in the fashion industry. Generation Y and Z use several social media platforms to promote fashion trends, with Instagram and TikTok being the most popular. [2] The overall impact of social media on the fashion industry includes the creation of online communities, direct communication between industry leaders and consumers, and criticism of ideals promoted by the industry through social media. In 2003, at the beginning of the development of social media, MySpace was founded as a "social networking service". It allowed people to create a profile, connect with other people, and post videos, pictures, and songs. [3] As MySpace grew in popularity, it attracted interest from companies wishing to promote their brands on the social platform. MySpace is known for highlighting musicians and artists who made it big in the industry, and companies wanted to capitalize on their popularity by signing brand deals. [4] One of MySpace's deals was with Chevrolet, which featured a 'secret show'. They had a 'secret' list of 10 top performers on MySpace, and many of the performers posted about the show on their accounts. Another brand deal came with Gucci promoting their "Gucci Sync Watch", which was very successful as Gucci attracted a younger audience on MySpace and advertised an attractive, simple, trendy unisex watch. [5]

In 2005, Youtube was released and remains one of the most popular social media platforms today. Youtube allows users to upload videos and it is free to anyone with access to the Internet. [6] Its popularity grew while offering a range of videos: vlogs, cooking, health and diet videos, step-by-step tutorials, tutoring assistance, and more. Like MySpace, users create accounts and can build a following, often referring to themselves as 'YouTubers'. Some brand deals were done by advertising at the beginning of each video, and the YouTuber would make a profit from each view they received. Some deals are done by individual YouTubers thanking the brand in videos and promoting the brand's products. [8] Recently, Youtube has delved into fashion. While there have always been Youtube channels for Vogue and other fashion companies, popular YouTubers have been invited to various fashion shows and have filmed experiences there. Brands are able to target individual YouTubers based on their followers and target audience.

Instagram launched in 2010, expanding the scope of fashion advertising. Instagram allows people to post pictures and short videos with the ability to tag different accounts. [9] For brand deals, companies can simply be tagged in a photo, instead of creating ads or lines for the user to say. In each photo, users could tag the brand of clothing they were wearing, making it very easy to promote the brand. [10] Additionally, Instagram can display ads on users' feeds based on other posts users have liked, which is used by fashion companies to target their potential customers. Users also use Instagram to promote fashion

when they are invited to fashion events. For example, they can take a picture at the event and post it on their Instagram and put their location on the venue and tag the company.

During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, companies relied heavily on social media to engage their people virtually. Fashion companies organized virtual fashion shows, creating videos and content about their designs. [11] As social media expands and new platforms come into existence, new forms of advertising are anticipated to emerge.

2. Literature Review

Globally, fashion sales are expected to grow from US\$1.5 trillion in 2020 to approximately US\$2.25 trillion by 2025. The Indian fashion market will grow by about 11% to reach US\$ 85 billion by 2021. The awareness of the fashion industry is 20.6 and 3.48 billion as of 2019. People spend an average of 142 minutes a day on social media. Social media has become an important tool to reach younger generation consumers faster and more efficiently (Balakrishnan, Dahnil, Wong Yi 2014, Bamini KPD Balakrishnan, Mohd Irwan Dahnil, Wong Jiun Yi). Generation is a group of people born over a period of one year and who have similar characteristics, values and preferences over a lifetime (Pew Research Center, Carter McNamara, Center for Generational Kinetics). Generations are influenced by events that occur in a specific period of time (Sean Basel Barkup, 2014). Different historical events have different effects on different generations and this categorises their behavior and characteristics (Sezine Basel Berkup, 2014). There are mainly three generations: Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials or Generation Y.

3. Research Methodology

The objective of this study is to understand the influence of social media on consumer buying fashion appeal. Qualitative methods are used to reveal how consumers engage with social media.

The research methodology consisted of two studies conducted in Delhi with college students at various stages of investigation. Video recordings were made for both qualitative studies, and notes were developed in the discussions by the authors. The results of the study turned out to be very good. Thus the objectives of the study were clearly achieved. Focus group discussion was conducted to identify the views, opinions and perception of the respondents about the specific topic that is being investigated. In this group discussion the respondents freely share their opinion and views regarding the topics. FGDs lasting approximately 60 minutes were conducted by the author in five phases: design, recruitment of respondents, implementation or operation, transcription and analysis and conclusion (Kruger and Casey 2009). In the design phase, the background, framework and structured format or protocol were developed (Tharenau, Donohue and Cooper 2007). The protocol was developed based on the literature and research objectives. It is divided into three phases: pre-procurement, procurement and post-procurement.

4. Result Analysis

Gen Y and social media

They are the first generation who spent their entire life in the digital environment. Information technology deeply affected the way they lived and worked. This generation is not ready to read any user manual, brochures, flyers, newspapers, magazines but they want easy access. You can view all the information anytime, anywhere. This generation usually does not read any material that exists in traditional hard copy format or books. They want everything to be easily accessible on digital platforms. (JCCC June, 2019) This generation introduces in-generation due to environmental and personal factors. Differences in the use of social media by Gen Y. Environmental factors affecting social media use include the economy, technology and culture, and political/legal variables. Individual differences come from relatively stable factors and dynamic factors that can be influenced by challenges during social media use. (Ruth N. Bolton, 2013). The main forming characteristic of Generation Y is early and frequent exposure to technology. There are pros and cons in the emotional and social consequences. For example, they rely heavily on technology to be entertained, interact with others—even regulate emotions. (Ruth Ann Bolton, 2013).

Over 80% of people from every generation use social media at least once a day, making social media a part of the daily routine. Generation Z 77% and Generation Y 79% use social media every day, but Millennials are more likely to allocate their time to a wider platform. (Toby Cox, 2019)

Influence of social media on buying behavior

It is generally accepted that social proof is not a new concept: humans are social animals, and we have been giving suggestions to each other for hundreds of years. The fact is that these suggestions and counter-proposals can now be heard by hundreds of people. It is generally accepted that social proof is not a new concept: humans are social animals, and we have been giving suggestions to each other for hundreds of years. The fact is that these suggestions and counter-proposals can now be heard by hundreds of people. (Aleh Barysevich, 2020)

Generation Y has a great platform thanks to social media. Friends, people and personalities influence them. Advertisements and other content that appears on the website home page of social networking sites.

Ephemeral content is a new movement, but it is still gaining popularity among social media users and brands. While Snapchat was the first to use stories as a format, Instagram was the first to popularize it, with over 500 million daily active users.

Instagram is a great platform for marketers because it allows you to showcase your product in a variety of ways, including photographs, videos, stories, galleries, filters, and more. It currently has a monthly active user base of over one billion people. A company account is followed by 80% of Instagram users. 73 percent of US teens believe Instagram is the easiest way for advertisers to impress them with new items or ads.

Social media and its impact on the apparel segment

Social media provides a platform for consumers to retrieve, share and exchange a wide variety of information. As social media is gaining popularity, marketers use this platform to connect with their potential consumers (Ger & Belk, 1999; Goldberg & Gomm, 1978). Fashion brands can deliver digital innovation, consumer centricity, ingenious profit ideas and seamless experiences through social media. In addition, social media also provides buyers with an opportunity to instantly confirm their apparel purchases with their social circles in a developing country like India.

This is achieved by uploading selfies and sharing information and photos to this platform, which is done quickly and easily (Jain & Schultz, 2019). Brands are able to penetrate the market through liking, ratings and image updates by consumers. Brands engage users on new trends on social media such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp and there is a two-way communication between apparel brands and customers. Shifting to fashion brands

Social media ads have a better chance of being portrayed as an authentic brand based on their online likes and followers (Dr. Smriti Tripathi, 2019).

Fashion Apparel & Pre-Buy

Through a variety of approaches, we found that pre-purchase search is symbolic and hedonic. Style, exclusivity, design, aesthetics, customization, and product characteristics seem to be internal clues. These were the major considerations for him to buy high-end products. One respondent said in FGD, "Whenever I buy fashion apparel I always think about exclusivity in style and quality of the brand and it should be exclusive." (female respondent). As one respondent said in an interview "I want a fashion product to be elegant and stylish because it makes me happy" (male respondent)

I buy fashion apparel that suits my personality and makes me happy (Male respondent) Most discussions in FGDs focus on individuality, uniqueness and quality of fashion products. This appears to be due to the fact that no one has mentioned that their products actually represent the identity and personality of the buyer.

Respondents claimed that they do all pre-buying exercises on digital platforms when searching, comparing, discussing and evaluating fashion products with their friends. Furthermore, as per the comments, they use social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and Skype for these purposes. A respondent said in a FGD, 'I do a lot of surfing on social media to find the best fashion products for me (female respondent)' during the interview, she also expressed her deep feelings. This was shown in an interview when a respondent said that I take the help of my friends to buy fashion appeal 'Because I always get confused in buying fashion apparel, so my friends sort out some products for me through the internet. and they send photos and videos through social media. Media and then we discuss and I buy from it. (female respondent)

These results were reinforced by projective methods, which showed that they use WhatsApp for instant text responses about fashion appeal to their reference groups, Facebook and Instagram for live views and, for the right photos, collages of photos. For any live interaction with their reference groups for Pinterest, WhatsApp and Google Meet.

To conclude, it can be said that the pre-shopping habits of these Gen Y consumers are hedonistic and driven by digital platforms.

Proposition 1 The pre-purchase of luxury consumers is hedonic and digital in nature.

Impressive and enjoyable shopping with digital media

The FGD revealed that respondents chose to buy fashion apparel from retail stores because they enjoy the exclusivity, customizability, comfort and shopping moments of retail stores. One respondent stated in the FGD, 'Before going to a retail store, I search the internet and then I go to buy fashion apparel' (male respondent)

Another respondent said in an FGD, 'I like to buy fashion apparel from retail stores and then I share it with my friends through social media' (female respondent). Another respondent said, 'I want to compare the fashion product across different social media platforms and retail stores, then I decide from where I will buy it.' (Male Respondent). They treat me very well when I go shopping and I like their service, said one respondent. (female respondent). 'I love shopping but mostly I prefer to shop through online platforms' (female respondent).

These findings revealed differences in the buying strategies of the fashion apparel industries. As a result, brands have become out of touch with the desires of the customers.

As a result, it is fair to say that while consumers prefer to buy brands and merchandise from physical stores, digital media enhance the shopping experience. They want a digital in-store experience to ease the buying process. On the other hand, stores and employees may not always be able to meet the demands of consumers due to lack of digitization.

5. Conclusion

The survey also showed that the post-purchase stage has an impact on the preferences, expectations and lifestyle of other customers, and this is often reflected on digital platforms. More importantly, consumers get constant feedback and feedback from their various social groups about their fashion purchases through digital platforms. These components can also be linked to pre-purchase internal signals. Previous research has often addressed the need for external and internal information sources (Shukla 2011). (Jalalkamali and Nikbin 2010). However, no research has looked at the effect of social classes at all levels of the buying process. Some people have also mentioned that it all seems to have happened mainly through interactive channels. Friends, according to this report, fashion in India plays an important role in all stages of shopping. However, a significant amount of this research appears to contradict existing understanding. This is clearly explained by our research, which has established a comprehensive measurement (Figure 1) based on the various methods used in the research. , These aspects have not been previously discussed in the literature. The model makes an important contribution to the literature on branding and customer behavior by offering a simple scheme of phenomena to be investigated.

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