

Purchase Intention among Generation Z in the Fashion Industry through Social Media Marketing.

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ABSTRACT

Online consumer engagement has become exceptionally noteworthy for businesses to build their relationship with their customers. Fashion industry is an industry where trends are changed frequently and online media is the most advantageous and the least expensive way to communicate. The purpose of this research is to know the effect of social media marketing on purchase intention of Generation Z in the fashion industry in India. Through this paper, researchers were trying to find the relation between brand personality, and brand equity with social media marketing and purchase intention. An online survey in google form was circulated to Indian population containing questions related to four variables – social media marketing, brand personality, brand equity and purchase intention. The data was collected from 274 responses in which 203 respondents were among generation Z. The researchers imported the data into Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS) and used linear regression process to analyse that data. From the survey it was found that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand personality and brand equity. Further, it was revealed that brand personality and brand equity have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. For better understanding of the relationship between the variables, Multiple regression analysis was also conducted to test the impact of brand personality and brand equity on purchase intention. Seeing the result, we can say that the independent variables, i.e., brand equity and brand personality are significant and have positive effect on purchase intention.

KEYWORDS: social media marketing, purchase intention, fashion industry, brand personality, brand equity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

All through the latest decade, the serious advancements have definitely changed the technique of customer's communication with each other, the strategy for finding and trading information about items and the strategy for buying and spending. Internet, now has become a major source of information that encourages purchasers to choose more viably during their shopping (Valerio, 2014). The social networks, for instance, Facebook, Instagram and Google have set the purchasers in a more powerful part as players in the market and have empowered them to reach and be reached by anybody, anywhere and anytime (Henning-Thurau et. al, 2010). Hence, social media has become the primary source of information and multiple businesses are making the most of it by changing their promotion techniques to make the use of their online social media more effective and lift up their

sales. The social media has acquired a transformation data sharing (Solis 2007), because of which the method of communication has turned out to be more helpful and the crowd has expanded too, also firms can target more customers. According to Wolny and Mueller (2013), the brands need to understand the buyer's motivation for web-based activities to have the choice to affect shopper's devotion towards the brand on their web-based media platforms.

One industry which is viewed as entirely fit and well suited for online media is Fashion. At the point when we talk about online media for the styling industry, it indirectly connects to the long-range informal communication sites and the other online stages that helps in growth of the design business and to associate it with its customers by utilizing the most recent social organizing innovation. The industry is grasping online media which has empowered it to develop in the center as a marvel. Globally, every

fashion marketer is figuring out new and innovative ways to become more popular and successful through social media platforms. As said by DiMauro (2011), online media in the styling business has helped in the improvement of social fashion by referring to expert's guidance to help art. It offers better ability to influence their consumers than conventional media (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2014), because of the viral dispersal of data through the Internet (Keller, 2009). "Thus, these brands expect their Social media communication to engage with loyal consumers and people who can influence their products, disseminate information and learn from and about their audience" (Brodie et al, 2013).

Ahmad et al. (2018), stated "the social media platform provides low cost analytics, marketing, automated publishing, customer targeting and conversion tracking." These are the reasons that social media is the best platform to promote products. According to Trainor et al (2014), "the social media platform has become important in the business environment."

With the extending utilization of online media as a method for promoting for design brands, it has gotten essential to examine the impact of social media advertising. Schivinski and Dabrowski (2013) argued "People who are highly involved in the process of creating images related to the brand, reinforces their ties with the brand and therefore their perception of brand equity increments, thus impacting their future buying decisions."

The motive of the paper is to define Social Media Marketing properties and evaluate the impact of fashion brands purchase intention among Generation Z. Fashion brands take part in web-based social networking exercises mostly to manufacture a solid relationship with their customers and make buy expectation to guarantee achievement over the long haul. Hence, the research presented here studies the impact of fashion industries social media marketing and detail its effects. Many studies have been done on social media activities benefiting customer- brand equity and trust, but there are very few studies researched on how social media can affect the purchase intention among Generation Z in India.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Social Media Marketing

Before we start with what exactly Social Media Marketing is, it's important to know what does social media means. Social media is an interactive platform that facilitates sharing information, interest, ideas online. According to Miller, Fabian, and Lin (2009), "The significance of social media lies in the collaboration among the purchasers and its network, and in the assistance of immediate, interactive and low-cost communications." Nowadays, for the

majority of the people, web networks, online journals, blogs and social networks have become a part of their life, with the goal that online networking have become an elective communication method for supporting existing connections and activities in a blissful manner that can enhance the user's experience. Besides, social media is a platform where brands are supported and consumers are influenced for making purchase decision.

With the increasing number of social media users, social media marketing has become one of the most effective way for a business to promote itself and its products. Regardless the size of the company, any business can reach its customers, connect with its existing customers and promote its products to its potential customers. The most popular social media platforms currently are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, and Snapchat. Different social media sites have different approaches. For every online media platform, strategies are required to be tailored accordingly.

2.2. Brand Personality

Brand Personality is a set of attributes of human beings allotted to brands by which a customer relates itself to that particular brand. Keller (1993) stated "Brand personality as brand characteristics that are derived from customer perceptions." In 1997 Aaker applied a BP scale that consists of five dimensions to quantify a brand's personality. Those five dimensions are: - sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. Brand personality's first dimension sincerity basically means a brand which the customers think is honest, original, cheerful, genuine and down-to-earth kind of brand. With so many promoting outlets right now accessible to a brand from conventional to marketing through online media, nowadays people are more skeptical than ever about the true sincerity level of a brand. The second dimension is excitement which is the most appealing to the young generation of today. This dimension contains traits such as playful, daring, up-to-date, spirited and imaginative. The third dimension is competence which means a brand with the personality of being responsible, trustworthy, accomplished and reliable. The fourth dimension is sophistication, a brand with this brand personality means it is elegant, luxurious, charming and poised. The fifth and the last dimension of brand personality is ruggedness. When thinking of the personality in this dimension, traits such as muscular, tough, powerful, athletic and outdoorsy comes to mind. Fuchs and Schreier (2011) and Fuller (2010) stated "customers usually learn about the characteristics of the brand via social media before purchasing it." Before any customer buys any product, it relates itself to that particular brand or the product.

2.3. Brand Equity

Brand Equity is the value of a brand that can be determined by consumers perception and the experience with a brand. If people speak highly about a brand, it means that brand has a positive brand equity in the market. Aaker said “brand associations, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and other proprietary brand assets (e.g., patents) underlie brand equity.” Keller (1993) emphasized “brand awareness and associations as key underpinnings of consumer-based brand equity.” Today the business world has become very competitive and to stay for a long run in the market, companies have to build up positive brand equity. Brand equity can be developed by creating awareness about the brand to its target audience. Once the audience recognize the brand and what it stands for, they intend to buy that brand’s product. And if the audiences have a good experience with that brand and its product, it becomes their preferred brand over its competitors. By making the brand their preference, brand loyalty between that brand and its customers is developed. Also, companies can create brand equity for their products by making them attractive, notable, better quality, easily distinguishable and reliable. Customers agree to pay more for a product if the company has positive brand equity in the market even though the competitor’s product cost is less.

2.4. Purchase Intention

Purchase intent is the probability of a consumer willing to buy a product or service. According to Kim et al (2001), “when the brand personality is presented appropriately, it can affect customer loyalty, satisfaction and emotional connection in the context of purchase intention.” It is an essence for any firm to know their consumers purchasing power and buying behavior in order to gain their attention and retain them (Ko, Kim, and Zhang, 2008). He et al., 2008 said that one of the main hurdles for online business is the absence or the intention of purchasing online. Also, researchers such as Lim et al., 2016 has said that online purchase intention of a consumer is a field which is needed to be explored more. To influence the purchase intention of a product, a brand can create a social image, build trust in that product, and keeping quality and price in mind.

2.5. The relationship between Social media marketing and brand personality

In this web-based era, social media marketing has become an important and effective way of promoting any goods or services to its customers. And today getting aware about a brand has become easy by following the brand on social media. When a brand, having a brand personality advertises itself on social

media, the youth relates itself to that brand and there is a high chance that the individual would buy that product or avail its services. Belk (1998) told that a brand personality is significant as it is representative and customers utilize it to connect themselves with a brand and make a relation with the products. Fuchs and Schreier (2011) and Fuller (2010) stated “Customers usually learn about the characteristics of the brand via social media before purchasing it.” As rightly said by Freling & Forbes, 2005 that a positive brand personality is relied upon to upgrade buyer’s preference, and advance the degree of trust. Kumar et al. (2018) found that social media marketing activities can lead to a positive perception of brand personality.

2.6. The relationship between Social media marketing and Brand Equity

For any business, it is important to know how its customers feel about its products. Customer-based brand equity shows the intensity of a customer’s attitude towards a brand, and how it can lead to the achievement or disappointment of a brand. It underlines establishing a solid framework that can make an uplifting mentality towards a brand. Bello and Holbrook (1995) stated “Brand equity occurs when a customer deliberately spends more due to the fascination of the name that supports the product.” Many studies have demonstrated that shoppers particularly generation Z accept online media to be more legit source of data than traditional marketing done by organizations. Chen and Lin (2019) mentioned “Brand equity is the external factor for purchasers while social media activities are the result of the communication between a purchaser and a business.”

2.7. The relationship between Brand Equity and Purchase Intention

Aaker (1991) said that both item (for example, execution of the item) and non-item related characteristics (for example, price value, packaging) impact the shoppers' perspectives on a brand and that a positive recognition features the brand's character, which is altogether identified with future conduct. Huang et al. (2014) too found that brand value is essentially associated with customers purchase lead. Many researches have been done proving that a positive attitude towards the social media marketing and advertising can increase the awareness of the brand among the social media users and thus can influence the intention of the user to purchase the brand’s product (Chu, Kamal, & Kim, 2013; Muk, Chung, & Kim, 2014; Ng, 2014). Also, Cobb-Walgren et al. C. J., Ruble, C. A. and Donthu, N. (1995) indicated that higher equity brands generate greater purchase intention.

2.8. The relationship between Brand Personality and Purchase Intention

“Brand personality is an important factor for the success of a brand in terms of preference and choice” (Batra et al., 1993). “Brand personality is one of the most significant issues in marketing as purchasers tend to make purchase decisions based on brand images that have already been created in their minds rather than from the original attributes or characteristics of the product itself”, said Dick et al., 1990. Customers can accomplish more constructive confidence through associating brands with human personalities, while consuming their selected brands (Wang and Yang, 2008). Fennis et al. (2005) had found “Brand personality can impact consumers self-perceptions regarding appropriateness, extroversion, conscientiousness, and intellect.”

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to identify the impact of social media marketing on the purchase intention of generation Z. The study also focuses on the impact on purchase intention through brand personality and brand equity. It means when promoting a brand through social media and connecting with the customers through brand personality and brand

equity, by how much does these elements effect the purchase intention of the customers, especially people belonging to generation Z in India.

4. HYPOTHESIS

The above review help leads us to the following research hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Social media marketing activities have a positive and significant effect on brand personality.

Hypothesis 2: Social media marketing activities have a positive and significant effect on brand equity.

Hypothesis 3: Brand equity has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

Hypothesis 4: Brand personality has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Model

The following figure shows the conceptual model of the study. The variables for this research were inspired from AngellaJiyoung Kim & Eunju Ko (2010) study that was conducted on the impacts of social media marketing on customer relationship and purchase intention in the luxury fashion brand.

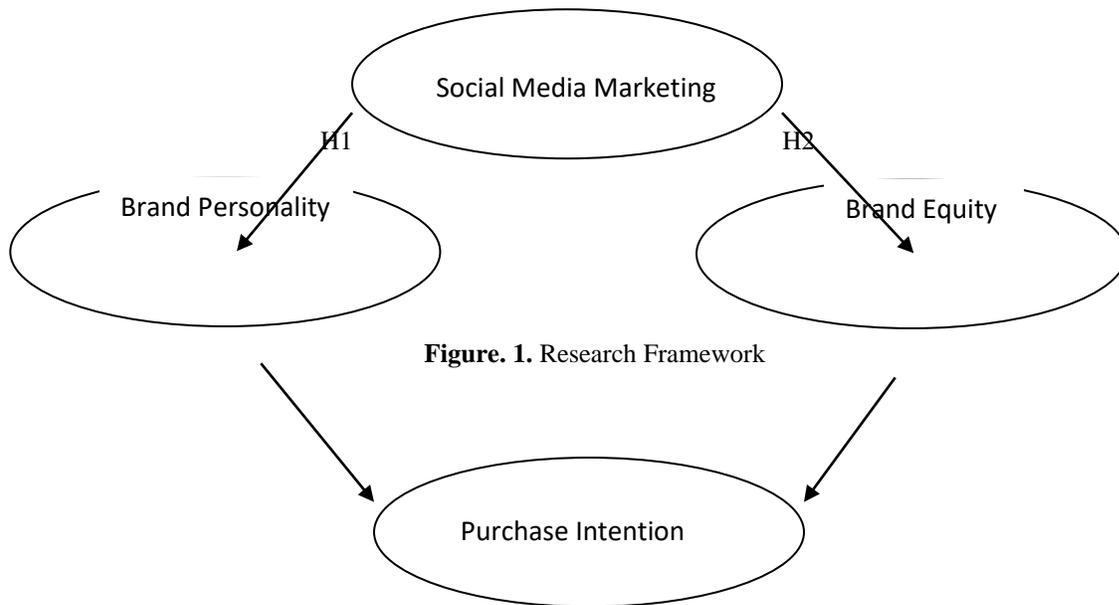


Figure. 1. Research Framework

4.2. Data collection procedure

A simple structured online questionnaire was designed to collect data. Specific questions were selected and each of these questions were modified to match the research objectives. The questionnaire was circulated all over India targeting young population, majorly the people under the age of 25. The study has used five-point Likert’s scale for all variables making

it easy for the respondents to answer. Each of these questions was evaluated using a 5-point Likert Scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The questionnaire was sent via email with an online link survey amongst all social media users in India.

The survey was acknowledged by 274 people where 203 respondents were from people belonging to

Generation Z. Among 274 respondents, 248 have admitted that they follow fashion brands on social media platforms. According to the table, most of the respondents were female. Out of 274, 171 were female with the percentage of 62.4%, male 29.2%

and 8.4% respondents preferred not disclosing their gender. Most of the respondents were from students making it 70.4% in total, also majority of the questionnaire were filled by the age under 16-25 which is 74.1%.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents.

Classification	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Female	171	62.4
Male	80	29.2
Prefer not to say	23	8.4
Age		
16-25	203	74.1
26-35	66	24.1
35 above	5	1.8
Occupation		
Student	193	70.4
Home Maker	18	6.6
Self Employed	32	11.7
Salaried Employee	31	11.4
Follow any fashion brand on social media platforms		
Yes	248	90.5
No	26	9.5

5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1. Regression Analysis

To test every hypothesis, regression analysis has been performed. As the significance value of all the

regression model is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), hence all the models are significant. Table 2 shows the value of regression result.

Table 2. Regression Results

Constructs		β Value	R square	p-value
Social Media Marketing				
Social Media Marketing	Brand Personality	0.803	0.739	0.000*
Social Media Marketing	Brand Equity	0.746	0.668	0.000*

Brand Personality					
Brand Personality	—————▶	Purchase Intention	1.034	0.576	0.000*
Brand Equity					
Brand Equity	—————▶	Purchase Intention	1.053	0.571	0.000*

Notes: *p < 0.05

The result of Regression Analysis of each of the hypotheses are exhibited in Table 2. In the first regression analysis, our first hypothesis was tested. This regression analysis accounted for 73.9 percent of the variances (F = 770.161, p< 0.05), therefore the independent variable i.e. social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand personality. In the second regression analysis, our second hypothesis was tested. This regression analysis accounted for 66.8 percent of the variances (F = 546.788, p< 0.05), therefore the independent variable i.e. social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand equity.

In the third regression analysis, our third hypothesis was tested. This regression analysis accounted for 57.1 percent of the variances (F = 362.197, p< 0.05), therefore the independent variable i.e. brand equity has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

In the fourth and the final regression analysis, our fourth hypothesis was tested. This regression analysis accounted for 57.6 percent of the variances (F = 368.908, p< 0.05), therefore the independent variable i.e. brand personality has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

According to the above analysis, the fourth regression analysis had the highest coefficient making it the most significant dimension. The trail followed making the third regression analysis the second highest, then was the first regression analysis and the least was the second regression analysis.

5.2. Multiple Regression Analysis

After the performance of single regression analyses, multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact of two independent variables on one dependent variable. As the significance value of all the regression model is less than 0.05 (p < 0.05), hence all the models are statistically significant. Table 3 below shows the result of multiple regression.

Table 3. Multiple Regression

Construct		β Value	R square	p- value	
Group Regression					
Brand Equity	—————▶	Purchase Intention	0.564	0.607	0.000*
Brand Personality	—————▶	Purchase Intention	0.540		

Notes: *p < 0.05

In the group regression analysis, we wanted to measure the impact of brand equity and brand personality on purchase intention. This regression analysis accounted for 60.7 percent of the variance (F = 209.523, p< 0.05). As the value of VIF and tolerance is within the accepted limits, we can very well say that there was no multicollinearity between the two independent variables. Hence, we can say that the independent variables, i.e., brand equity and brand personality are significant and has positive effect on purchase intention.

6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to find whether social media marketing done by fashion industry creates a purchase intention among generation Z in India. From the above results, it is evident that social media users specifically people belonging to generation Z get the intention of purchasing by relating themselves with the brand personality and brand equity. Hence this study shows that social media marketing has a significant and positive impact on brand personality and brand equity. The result of this study can help the small and medium ventures in marketing their brands and brand names to gain

potential customers and many ventures can improvise their marketing strategies by focusing on the key factors that a consumer looks for while using social media. Also, as fashion bloggers have become very trendy in social media, companies can take advantage of the fashion bloggers by advertising their products through them. This strategy will not just help in promoting their products but also customers can relate with the brand personality of the product and the blogger, and create a certain brand trust within themselves. The disadvantage of this strategy is that if social media marketing is presented poorly, then it may lead to negative responses and will result in diminishing of the brand value of the company. Furthermore, this study shows that brand equity and brand personality have significant and positive impact on purchase intention. Based on these results, companies should set goals for brand personality and brand equity that can influence customers to purchase their products. It is very important for a company to communicate its brand personality very distinctly and precisely as, the better the communication, the better the customers can connect themselves with that company. Likewise, it will create a better brand value of that company as the customers will think highly of that brand and it will eventually impact the customer's purchase intention.

7. IMPLICATION OF THE RESEARCH

The research observed the impact of social media marketing on the purchase intention of the customers belonging to generation Z. Customers are influenced by companies through their promotions of brands and products on web-based platform and the most influencer technique by which these customers tend to buy online are by relating themselves with the brand personality of the brand and creating a certain brand value also known as brand equity of the brand. There are few strategic implications of this study that are to be followed. To begin with, is it essential for any company to create a proper communication to set up an attractive brand personality. The company should also emphasize on brand personality for a long term in order to not fail. When through brand personalities a relation is made between the customers and the brand, the equity is made. The customers can identify the brand from other brands and while purchasing, the particular brand will appear on customer's mind creating brand value.

8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In this research paper, we have only considered the purchase intention of people belonging to generation Z. Also, this study has focused on the general fashion industry and not on the specific line of products. For future study, specific line of products could be studied such as clothing, cosmetics and accessories. Moreover, the future study can represent people

belonging to other generation or taking the whole population as one.

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