

A STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ONLINE MARKETING STRATEGIES IN INFLUENCING APPAREL PURCHASE DECISIONS AMONG YOUNG WOMEN

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Abstract :

The fast development of online media has greatly revolutionized the buying habits of customers especially in the clothing industry. This paper evaluates how effective online marketing strategies are in determining the decision to buy clothing amongst the young women. The main digital marketing instruments under the study include social media marketing, online reviews, personalization, marketing through influencers, and the visualization on the Web. A descriptive and analytic research design was used and primary data gathered through a structured questionnaire on 200 young females between the ages of 18-30 years. The obtained results show that each of the chosen online marketing practices positively and significantly influences the choice of an apparel, and online reviews and influencer marketing prove to be the most effective. The paper has expressed the significance of trust, social validation and visually appealing content in influencing the online shopping behaviour of young women. The findings offer great information to the apparel marketers in order to develop desired and customer-focused internet marketing strategies.

Keywords : Online Marketing Strategies, Apparel Purchase Decision, Young Women Consumers, Influencer Marketing, Online Reviews, Social Media Marketing

Introduction :

Digital technologies have changed the apparel industry: social media, influencer products, user-created reviews, personal recommendation, and enhanced web experiences no longer define how financial consumers (young women) shop, review and purchase their clothing (Shin and Lee, 2021; Ki et al., 2020). IT strategies help to decrease the information asymmetry and logic risk, generate affective relationships through the use of visual storytelling and parasocial interactions; both cognitive and emotional channels of influence are thus considered valuable to the study of the decisions involved in the purchase of apparel in the digital age (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006; Audrezet et al., 2020). Since the younger women have a high fashion engagement and social media activity, a study of the online marketing strategies that influence purchasing intention to the clothing items is both an academic and a useful practical tool to retail stores and brand managers.

Online decision processes are grounded on eWOM and online reviews. Preliminary observed evidence indicated that review valence and volume have a significant impact on sales



(Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006), which was later altered as other researchers discovered that review quality, consistency and product involvement mediate review effects (Park and Lee, 2018; Eslami and Ghasemaghaei, 2018). The concept of review diagnosticity and review adoption has suggested that consumers are becoming closer to the useful and credible reviews in order to lessen the level of uncertainty to experience and hedonic products like clothing (Filiari and McLeay, 2013; Filiari, 2015). To young women, who tend to rely on non-verbal clues and face-to-face commentary to make their style judgments, eWOM therefore is both a source of information and a social indicator that predicates a potential purchase decision.

Literature Review :

The notion of influencer marketing in social media has become one of the most influential promotional strategies of fashion companies on-line. Influencers are human brands and social channels the perceived authenticity of which, their attractiveness and expertise forecast the reactions of followers (Ki et al., 2020; Lou and Yuan, 2019). Research indicates that when the relevant influence is perceived between the influencer and the product through message credibility and fit, brand engagement, anticipated value and purchase intention escalates because of endorsements (Jimenez et al., 2019; Delbaere, et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the influencer is conditional: the following influence, the perceived popularity, the practice of product divergence and disclosure may either strengthen or weaken the impact on the attitude toward the brand and purchasing choices (De Veirman et al., 2017; Jin et al., 2019). In the context of young women, who tend to be driven by the aspirational and identity cues, Aristotelian processes and imitation and attain a salient position in the translation of the influencer content to purchase behaviour (Shin and Lee, 2021).

The contents of influencers and the influencer mergers and mergers are also important. Tafesse and Wood (2021) demonstrate that the volume of influencer content, the behavior and area of interest of a follower, affect engagement with the events of an influencer; excessive or inadequate domain fit may lead to a decrease in the effects of downstream purchase. The complementary work proves the thesis that the value of the information sent (informational, entertaining) and the credibility of the source in combination influence the consumer trust with the branded content published by the influencer (Lou and Yuan, 2019). In such a way, the convincing strength of online marketing lies not only in the channel (social or marketplace) but also in the results of the message creation and authenticity (Audrezet et al., 2020).

Another essential stream content includes the features of the websites and platforms such as the visual presentation, the level of product information, personalization, and recommendation algorithms. The quality of the perceived products and willingness to purchase depend on visual merchandising and the display of products on clothes websites (Ha et al., 2007). Personalisation and social shopping solutions (e.g. shop the look, user-tagged photos) boost inquisitiveness and imitation, hence elevating purchase intent among fashion-focused customers (Shin and Lee, 2021). Also, with algorithmic suggestions, and customized



offers, the search costs will decrease; conversion rates will grow in case consumers believe they are relevant and non-obtrusive (Ki et al., 2020).

Combined, existing research indicates the online marketing strategies in apparel to be effective due to four concomitant processes, namely provision of information (including reviews and product detail), social influence (eWOM, influencers, peer visuals), aesthetic/visual persuasion (site VMD, influencer visuals), and personalization (targeted recommendations). According to empirical evidence, these mechanisms do not work in the same way based on the consumer involvement, type of product, and the credibility of the message/source (Park et al., 2008; Eslami et al., 2018). In young women, who have a high fashion-involvement, social identity orientation, and social-media-active age group, it is presumed that social influence and visual persuasion may be particularly effective (Shin and Lee, 2021; De Veirman et al., 2017).

Few comparative studies that isolate the relative effect of reviews, influencer endorsement, and platform customization on apparel purchase behavior among young women can be found; few studies consider these variables together in one empirical study. This research fills this gap with the analysis of the impact of the discrete online marketing tactics, including online reviews, influencer promotion, platform personalization, and the visual merchandise on apparel purchase intentions among young women, as well as the effect of these variables on each other.

Objectives :

The paper will seek to address the research question of whether online marketing strategies, namely social media marketing, influencer endorsement, online review, personalization and site presentation affect the purchasing decision of young women and also the research will compare the effect these strategies would have on consumer attitudes, purchase intention and purchase behaviour.

Methodology :

The research design of the study is descriptive as well as analytical with primary data by way of a structured questionnaire conducted on young women aged between 18-30 who online shop. It employs convenience sampling and descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis as methods of analyzing data to determine the effects of online marketing strategies on the process of making purchases of apparel.

Results and Discussion :

The study data were gathered on the basis of 200 young women who are respondents as they buy apparels online and their age range was 18 to 30 years old. The received data were coded, tabulated and analyzed under descriptive statistics to test the success of online marketing strategies as far as the apparel purchase choices are concerned.



Table 1 Awareness and Usage of Online Marketing Strategies

Online Marketing Strategy	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
Social Media Advertisements	4.12	0.68
Influencer Marketing	4.25	0.61
Online Reviews & Ratings	4.38	0.59
Personalized Recommendations	3.96	0.72
Website Visual Presentation	4.05	0.66

The greatest mean score is obtained on online reviews and ratings (4.38), which is on how the respondents highly depend on peer feedback when shopping online. The effectiveness of influencer marketing is also high (mean = 4.25), which proves its importance in making decisions related to fashion among young women.

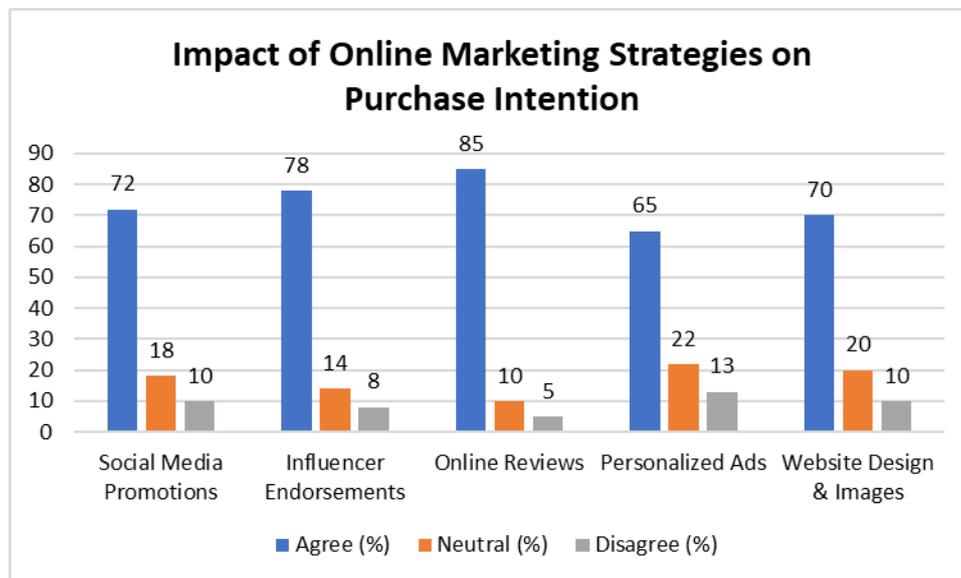


Fig. 1 Online Marketing and Purchase Intention

Most people (85% of the respondents) maintain that online reviews impact their intention of purchasing clothing, and that is, second to influencer endorsements (78%). Personalized advertisements demonstrate a relatively low level of agreement and as such it is possible that relevance and perceived intrusiveness influence effectiveness.

Table 2 Relationship between Online Marketing Strategies and Purchase Decision

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Social Media Marketing	0.61	0.000
Influencer Marketing	0.68	0.000
Online Reviews	0.74	0.000
Personalization	0.57	0.001
Website Presentation	0.63	0.000



The online marketing mentalities are all positively and statistically significant with regard to the apparel purchasing decisions. The r is highest (0.74) with online reviews implying that peer reviews play a big part in influencing customer confidence and ultimate purchases by young women.

Table 3 Impact on Apparel Purchase Decision

Independent Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value
Social Media Marketing	0.212	3.48	0.001
Influencer Marketing	0.287	4.62	0.000
Online Reviews	0.341	5.91	0.000
Personalization	0.168	2.89	0.004
Website Presentation	0.231	3.76	0.000

Model Summary:

$$R^2 = 0.62$$

$$\text{Adjusted } R^2 = 0.60$$

$$F\text{-value} = 63.18 (p < 0.001)$$

The regression model accounts 62% of the total variance in the decisions of buying apparel pointing out that the factors have a high explanatory power. Online reviews turn out to be the strongest predictor ($b = 0.341$) and the next most influential is influencer marketing ($b = 0.287$). The effect of all variables is statistically significant showing that an online marketing strategy has a significant role to play when it comes to the purchasing behaviour of young women on apparel.

As indicated in the analysis, online marketing techniques would be crucial in shaping fashion, as young female customers are concerned in apparel purchases. The biggest influence occurs with online reviews and influencer conversion with an emphasis on the relevance of trust, peer approval, and social evidence in online fashion. Although personalized advertising and presentation of the websites are also useful, their effects are relatively moderate. The results support the importance of apparel companies having an integrated digital approach involving credible influencer marketing, effective review platforms, and appealing platforms.

Conclusions :

It concludes that the online marketing strategies are important and positively influenced in shaping the purchasing decision of young women of apparel. Empirical outcomes prove that online review and rating have the most significant impact, and electronic word-of-mouth is crucial in the perception of a smaller perceived risk and a more significant purchasing confidence. The influencer marketing, as well, shows an impressive effect,



especially in the case of perceived authenticity in the endorsement and the credibility of the activity. Other means of defining consumer attitudes and purchase intentions are through social media advertisements, visual presentation of the site, and personalized recommendations. The regression equation indicates that all these strategies account a significant percentage of variance of apparel purchasing decisions which justifies the merits of combined digital marketing strategies. In general, the effect of the social validation, cues of trust and eye-catching online experiences dominate the apparel buying behaviour of young women.

Recommendations :

On the findings, the apparel marketer needs to focus more on enhancing the online review system; this can be done through posting verified customer reviews and displaying elaborate and credible reviews. To improve on authenticity and reliability, brands must work with those influencers who identify with the brand values and its target market. Social media messages ought to be based on rich, interactive and trendy posts to attract the interest of young ladies. Individual advertising must be applied with discretion so as to be relevant but not too pushy. Also, e-commerce websites have to dedicate resources to creating websites which are easy to use, provide correct descriptions of their products and guarantee smooth navigation to enhance positive user experience and websites conversion rate. A consumer-oriented and integrated digital marketing plan is the key to maintaining the level of competitive advantage in the online clothing market.

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