INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGIES IN NICHE START UP MODELS: A CONSUMER STUDY ON FASHION BRANDS

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ABSTRACT

Over the time, social media has begun to influence and develop a variety of different industries in the modern world, with accessibility to large no of people, of all ages, at one time. Social media has had a large influence on 3trillion – dollar fashion industry helping to promote products and boost their sales. Most recently, the fashion industry is seeing a major shift in its inspiration for marketing strategies, all thanks to social media and blogging sites like Face book, Twitter, Tumblr and Instagram. The study is to understand the influence of social media in Net- a-Porter preferences. The study analyzed 111 data samples from different age groups through convenient sampling technique. The samples were derived from responses to 20 questions in a survey. The data analysis included univariate and bivariate statistical analysis including Percentage and Anova.

KEYWORDS: Social Media, Marketing Strategies & Fashion Brands

Original Article

INTRODUCTION

The social media has become a universal technology that has accelerated way for a more sophisticated way of living convenient life. In the last decade, social media has grown tremendously at an unexpectedly fast rate and has captured millions of users around the world, and received a great boost with an advent of many social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, YouTube and many more. This enhanced and metamorphosed how social media become part of our globally connected day today life in several ways individuals interacted and shared common interests in friendship, sports, music and education.

According to Global Social Media research summary 2019, marketer estimates 3.484 billion people login to social media sites through different electronic devices, with an increase of 9.1% year on year. Also, as reported by lyfemarketing.com/Blog 2019 social media statistics, currently there are 3.2 billion social media users around the globe, which is about 42% of our total present population. Active social media users are composed of 48.2% Baby Boomers, 77.5% Generation X and 90.4% Millennial. An interesting research shows that a user spends an average of 2 hours and 22 minutes in his social media account every day, including messaging.

One industry that is perfectly suited and naturally fit in social media is Fashion industry. Before it was considered to Mass brands, but recent interesting trend are Luxury Fashion brands that prefer social media marketing strategies as part of branding. Due to the impact of social media, the relationship between brands and consumers has changed to a great deal. Nowadays, companies plan strategies after they analyze and understand the

target consumer's demands, likes and dislikes through Social Media. Social media has had a major effect on the world and business, starting from an MNC or small start-ups; everyone is adopting Social Media Marketing to make their brand or services noticeable.

In the fashion Industry, social media platforms can be used for interact with the consumer, as a means of networking with team in the industry, is building a way for an online presence. Therefore, the power and influence of social media on fashion industry is undeniable. The designers and brands who realize the true worth of social media are the ones who have massive fan, following which, definitely convert to future real client.

Fashion industry is now becoming more and easily accessible to common people due to the massive growth of social media, thus it becomes important runway for the fashion industry. This study contributes by providing better understanding on how women consumers online fashion purchase preferences may influences by social media advertising strategies and what determinants affect them the most. This paper also investigate how the consumer preferences is changing between online and brick and motor fashion start-up.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyse women's preferences towards social media
- To study the overall influence of social media advertising strategies of Fashion start-ups on women's preferences
- To identify factors motivating women to prefer online fashion start-ups
- To find out the impact of online Fashion Start-ups on Traditional brick & motor stores

Hypothesis

H1: Women's preferences towards social media significantly vary among demographic factors

H2: Social media marketing has significant association towards online Fashion start-up preferences

H3: Online Fashion brands purchase frequency preferences in social media may vary with demographic factors

LITERATURE REVIEW

A comparative study conducted by Margherio (1998) stated that Internet has made business easier, simpler and cheaper in terms of customer interaction as well as commercial transaction than traditional approach. For the survival and success of any business, appropriate marketing is a crucial activity, and today online marketing opportunities are more Eppler and Bresciani, (2010). Online trends shows that Social media's attention and acceptance among marketing segments is growing in the last several years with easy accessibility Parlstein (2010).

To further understand this study, Yogesh and Yesha (2014) explored that very high percentage of consumers search their information on internet regarding their purchase, also word of mouth in social media always influence the sales. Amitsaha (2015) found that customers become more comfortable with the experience of online purchasing, with the convenience and product range as major deciding factors for online shopping. Loan as and Stoica (2014) conducted a Quantitative survey among 114 respondents and explained about the impact of social media on consumer. The major social media customers are females and Payment transaction modes and door delivery provisions are the two major reasons for their on line preferences. Based on the study conducted by Kanupriya (2015), the major motivation factors are why consumers shop online over the internet are convenience, saving time, product comparison and superior selection. Electronics is the most preferred items among online shoppers and majority prefers (COD) Cash on delivery as mode of payment.

An Empirical study on Srilankan apparel fashion brand customers stated that the performance of business in a social media has a linear relationship towards Awareness, attitude, Motivation and customer perceived value towards Social media Samarasinghe (2016). A recent study by Voramantri and Klieb (2013) explored a new model with five stages among social media and non-social media users, to analyse the influence of Social media in Complex buying behaviours, as per their studies. For social media users, decision making process seemed to be easier and enjoyable with overall greater satisfaction level.

Hajli(2013) proposed a structural model, which explains social media trust, perceived usefulness and intention to buy is related. Furthermore, the author also highlighted consumer trust encouraged by social media has a major role in online buying intension. Manneh (2017) studied about four e-commerce fast fashion companies, employed social media as a marketing strategy. Study says social media improves brand awareness, which leads to more sales and profits. According to McCarthy (2013), qualitative study among College - age demographic found that social media positively affects fashion consumption. Also, added that social media presence helps to connect with prime demographic segments. Social media marketing helps the brands to build effective relationships through better understanding of needs Man gold & Faulds (2009). Findings suggest that social media helps brand to monitor and respond to customer conversation directly, both positive and negative.

Researchers widely agree that start-up marketing is not as well developed as large firms, and this may be due to limited resources in terms of finance, time, talent or limited marketing knowledge. In this connection, studies conducted by Wuorio (2009) highlighted that Social media could be one of the solution for the marketing challenges faced by start-ups, relatedly cheaper and easily accessible to larger crowd. Recent study by Cox (2012) concluded with the possible marketing opportunities through social media, to reach consumer market and create more profitable relationships.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The used methodology in this study is quantitative, with focus on age group 20–45 years. From a sample size 105, the primary data was gathered through off-line survey administrated to young social media followers, covering 32 respondents and the rest through online survey, administered by web link, distributed via e-mail. In the present study, random sample was selected from frequent social media followers. The information was collected with respondent's knowledge and willingness. Secondary data was collected from different articles, journals, books and internet sites. Data was analysed using univariate and bivariate statistical tools, with the help of Microsoft Excel 2007.

Data Analysis

The opening question in the questionnaire aims if the respondents have a social network account. From 111 women respondents, 111(100%) confirmed that they have such an account.
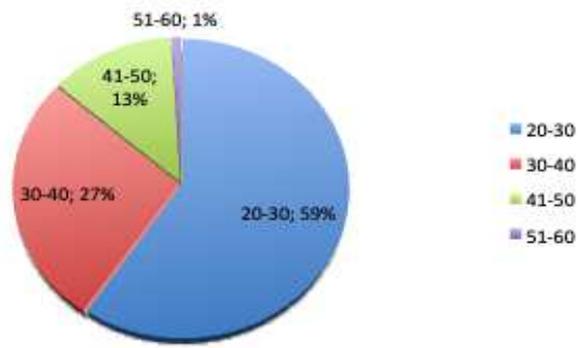
Figure 4 (a): Respondents Age Distribution.

Figure 4 (a): Out of 111 respondents, majority belongs to 20-30 years(59%), followed by 30-40 years(27%), 13% response received from 40–50 years and least from 51–60 years (1%).
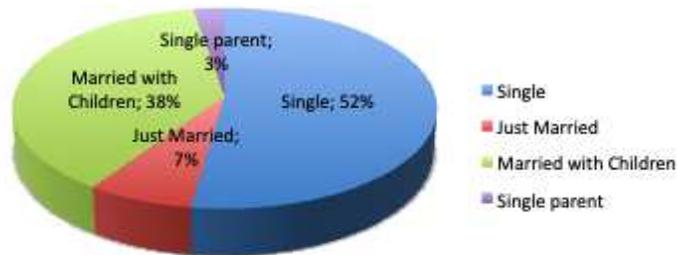

Figure 4 (b): Family Structure Wise Distribution of Respondents.

Figure 4 (b): Among the respondents, 52% of them were single, 38% were married with children,7% were just married and balance 3% represents single parents.
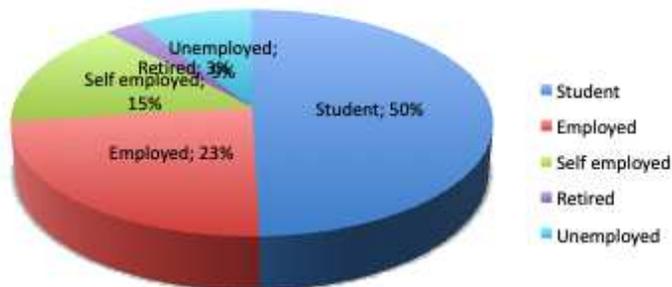

Figure 4 (c): Respondents Distribution based on Occupation.

Figure 4 (c): Among the respondents, there was 50% representation from students, 23% from employed, 15% from self-employed, 3% from unemployed and below 1% from Retired groups.
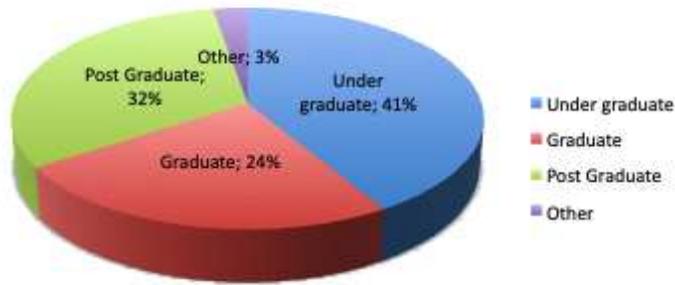
Figure 4 (d): Distribution of Respondents Based on Education.

Figure 4 (d): Out of all, the undergraduate and post graduate representation is followed by graduate and others 41%, 32%, 24% and 3%, respectively.

Figure 4 (e): Income Wise Respondents Category.

Figure 4 (e): Nearly 41 % of the majority belongs to less than 1 lakh annual income category, whereas 31% represents 1 lakh to 5 lakh, followed by 5 lakh to 10 lakh 22% and the least is 6%, above -10 lakh.
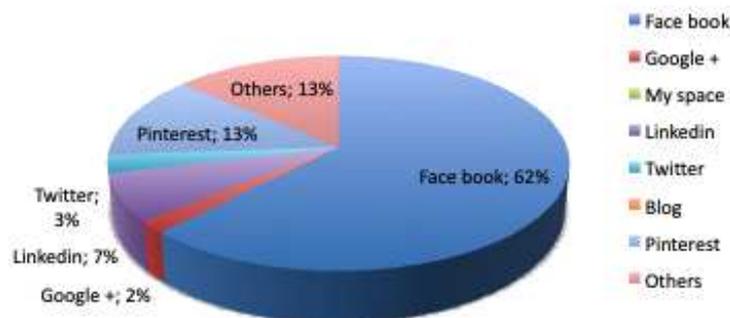

Figure 4 (f): Respondent Distribution Based on Geographical Location.

Figure 4 (f): Out of 111 respondents, more representation were found from urban 45% than semi urban (37%) and rural (18%).
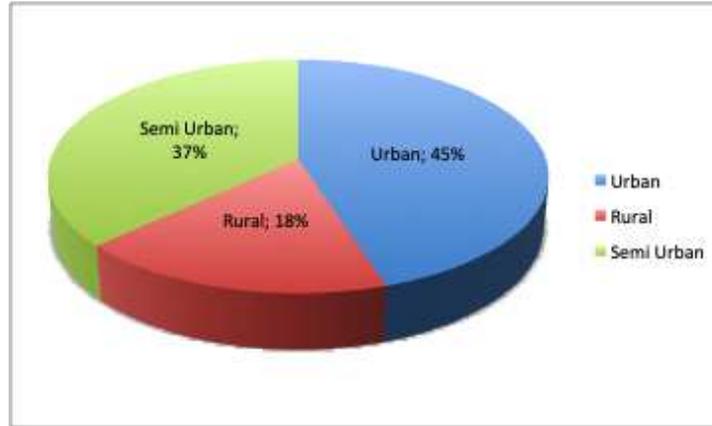
Figure 4 (g): Respondents 'Preferences Towards Social Media Site.

Figure 4 (g): When the respondents were asked to indicate which social media networks of the given list they have an account, 62% of them said they have Facebook, Pinterest 13% and 7% LinkedIn account, 3% access Google +, and only 3% have an account in Twitter.
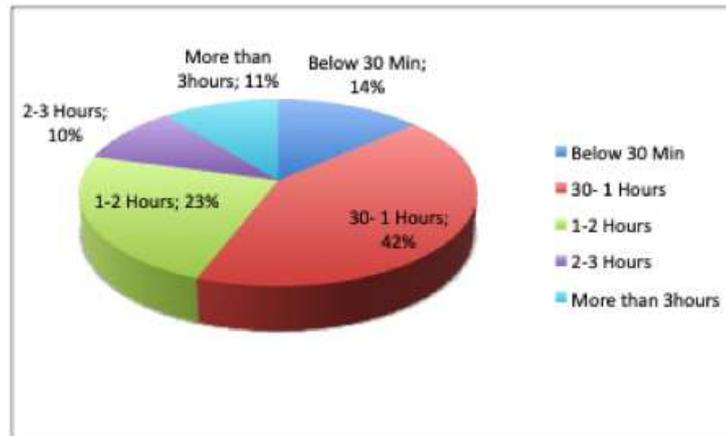

Figure 4 (h): Respondents Spending Time Frequency.

Figure 4 (h): Regarding the spending time in social media, 42% of them spent 30 minutes – 1 hour, 23% spent in-between 1–2 hours, while 14% are spending not even 30 minutes, 11% 2–3 hours and more than 3 hours is only10%.
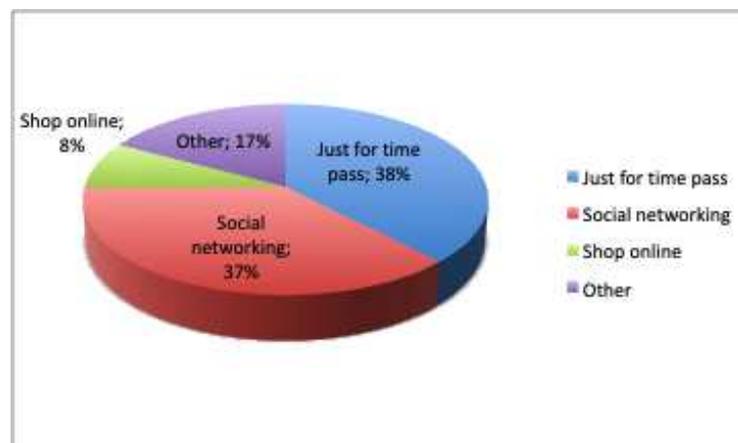

Figure 4 (i): Respondents Reason for Social Media Login.

Figure 4 (i): Among all respondents, 38% login social media just for time pass, closely followed by the 37%, reasoned social networking, however 8% suggested shopping online and 17% expressed other reasons.
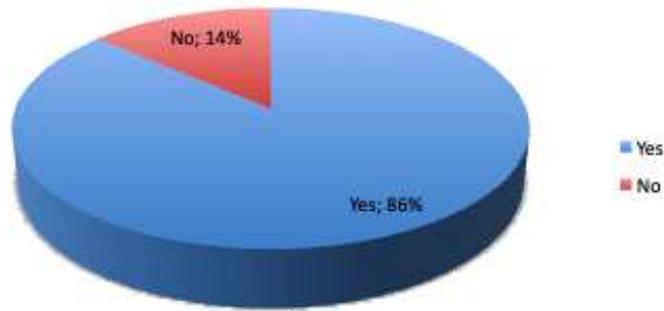
**Figure 4 (j): Distribution of Respondents based Social Media Fashion Brand
Products Purchase Experience.**

Figure 4 (j): Out of all the respondents, 86% purchase Fashion start up brand products through social media and 14% never tried that.
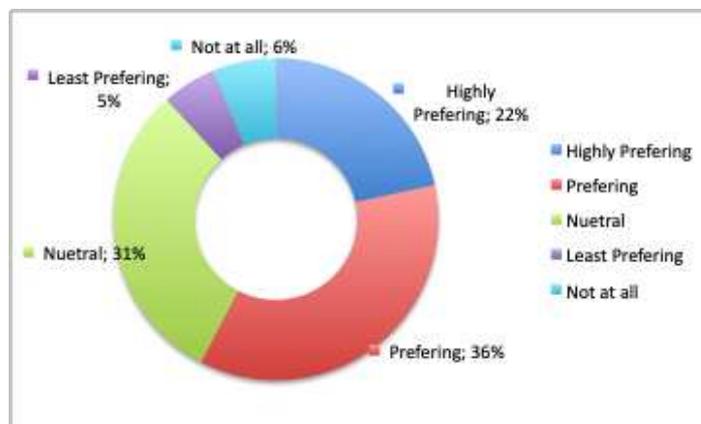
Figure 4 (k): Respondent's Social Media Purchase Preference.

Figure 4 (k): For 36% of the respondents, social media is a preferable option for fashion purchases, while for 31% neutral is the preference. However, it is highly preferred by 22%. Among those who deem less preferring and not at all preferring is 5% and 6%, respectively.

Figure 4 (l): Respondents Distribution Based on Occasion and Amount Spends.

Figure 4 (l): When respondents were asked about fashion brand purchase occasion through social media, almost equal distribution purchase on off season and festival that is 37% and 35%, respectively, followed by 28% regularly.
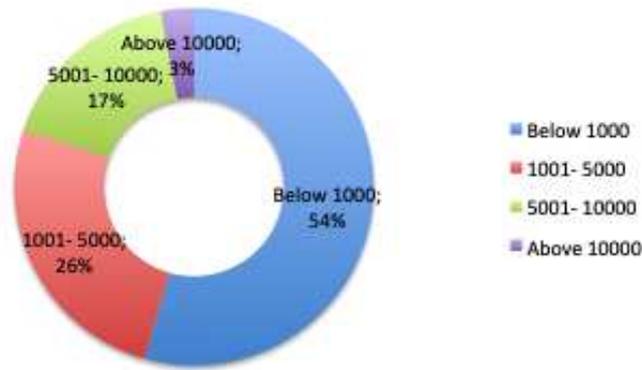
Figure 4 (m): Respondent's Willingness to Pay for Social Media Brands.

Figure 4 (m): When we look at spending amount on social media fashion shopping, we can easily see that 54% is only ready to sp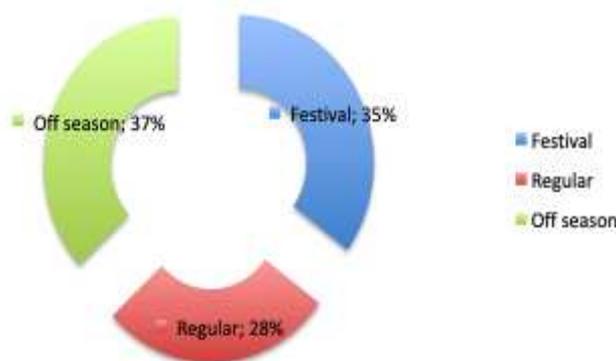ent below 1000 Rs in each purchase, followed by 26% (Rs.1000–5000),17% (Rs.5000–10,000) and only 3% spent above 10,000 Rs.
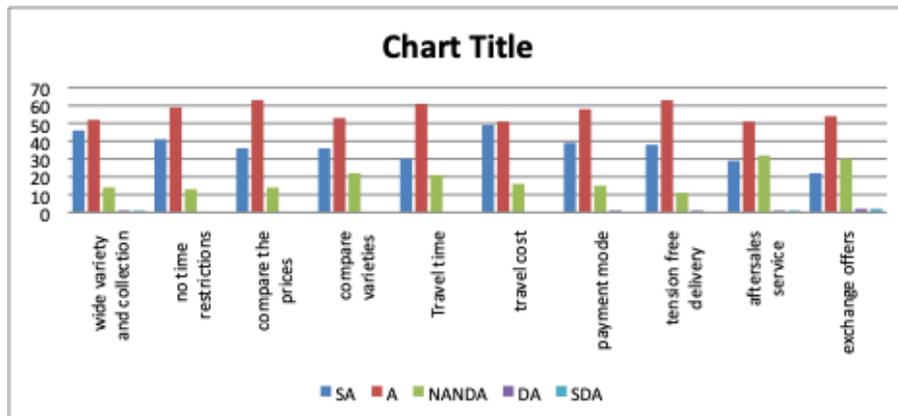
Chart: Respondent's Rating of Social Media Fashion Brands.

The factors of Social media fashion brands, which affected the consumer's preference, were identified, rating them from Strongly Agree to the Strongly Disagree. The factors were the following:

- Variety and collection
- No time restriction
- Easy price comparison
- Item Comparison
- Travel time
- Travel cost
- Payment mode
- Delivery services
- After sales response
- Exchange Offers

Out of 111 respondents, the most preferred factor was tension free delivery &price comparison, and with the least agreeing factor was concern for product exchange and after sales service.
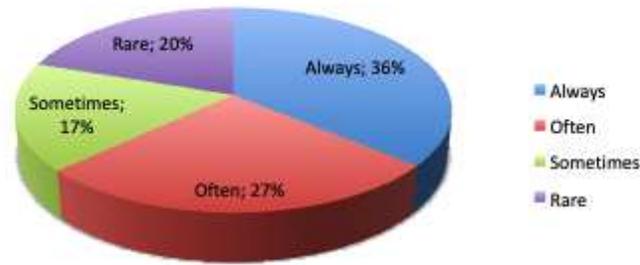
**Figure 4 (n): Respondent's Frequency of Online Visit Through Social
Media Page.**

Figure 4 (n): Among respondents for 36%, social media page is a link towards brand websites, 27% often visit through the social media, 20% rarely visit, closely followed by 17 %, occasionally visiting minority.
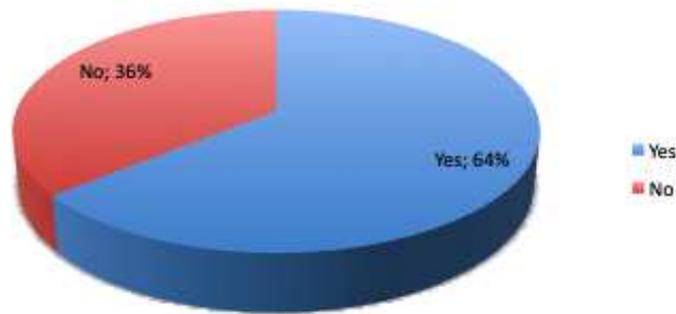
Figure 4 (o): Respondent's Online Influence Over Offline Fashion Store.

Figure 4(o); Out of 111 respondents, for majority i.e. 64% of women online store had a great influence over offline, and it was not influencing for the balance 36%.

Figure 4 (p): Further Preference.

Figure 4(p): In continuation to the above question, 66% prefer more to offline shops, 31% of which moving towards physical stores.

Result of Hypothesis Test (One Way Anova)

H1: Women's Preferences towards Social Media Significantly vary among Demographic Factors

Table 1

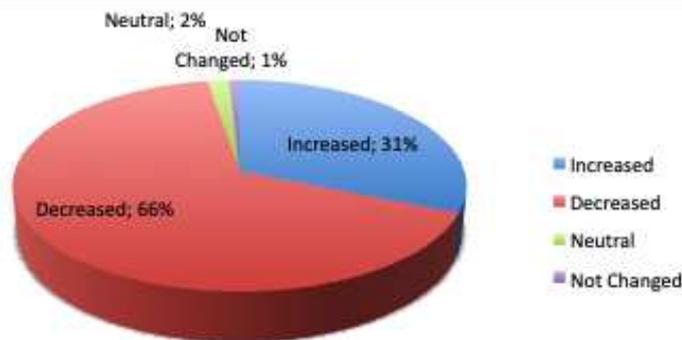|	Anova (One Way) (Women's Preference Towards Social Media Vs Demographic Factors)							Result
Age	ANOVA							Accepted
	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	
	Between Groups	424.545	1	424.545	18.9243	7.7E-74	3.884075	
	Within Groups	121.1532	220	0.550696				
	Total	545.6982	221					
Family Structure	ANOVA							Accepted
	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	
	Between Groups	318.7207	1	318.7207	16.4007	1.66E-51	3.401452	
	Within Groups	174.6847	220	0.794021				
	Total	493.4054	221					
Location	ANOVA							Accepted
	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	
	Between Groups	316.3288	1	316.3288	16.3217	2.81E-55	3.724075	
	Within Groups	153.8559	220	0.699345				
	Total	470.1847	221					

As per the Anova(One way test)> F critical value, demographic factors like age and family structure and location are showing difference in their preferences towards social media.

H2: Social Media Marketing has Significant Association towards Online Fashion Start up Purchases

Table 2

	Anova (One Way) (Fashion Brands Social Media Marketing Strtegies and Women's Fashion Product Preference towards Social Media)							Result
Online Marketing Strategies are more informative	ANOVA							Accepted
	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	
	Between Groups	526.8649	1	526.8649	2077.849	4.7E-114	3.884075	
	Within Groups	55.78378	220	0.253563				
	Total	582.6486	221					
Online Marketing strategies are more attractive	ANOVA							Accepted
	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	
	Between Groups	452.6532	1	452.6532	1186.029	1.43E-90	3.884075	
	Within Groups	83.96396	220	0.381654				
	Total	536.6171	221					

Table 2: Contd.,								
It connects me more to the brand	ANOVA							Accepted
	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	
	Between Groups	449.8018	1	449.8018	1738	2.1E-106	3.884075	
	Within Groups	56.93694	220	0.258804				
	Total	506.7387	221					

There was evidence to state that the suggested Social media marketing strategy influences significantly differ with consumer's online purchases through social media.

H3: Online Fashion Brands Purchase Frequency Preferences in Social Media May vary with Demographic Factors

Table 3

	Anova (One Way) (Women's Purchase Frequency in Social Media Vs Demographic Factors)							Result
Annual Income	ANOVA							Accepted
	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	
	Between Groups	13.62613	1	13.62613	19.47501	1.6E-05	3.884075	
	Within Groups	153.9279	220	0.699672				
	Total	167.5541	221					
Education	ANOVA							Accepted
	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	
	Between Groups	14.63514	1	14.63514	21.44426	6.23E-06	3.884075	
	Within Groups	150.1441	220	0.682473				
	Total	164.7793	221					
Age	ANOVA							Rejected
	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	
	Between Groups	0.545045	1	0.545045	1.043267	0.308185	3.884075	
	Within Groups	114.9369	220	0.522441				
	Total	115.482	221					

As per the Anova (One way test) > F critical value, demographic factors like annual income and education are showing difference in their preferences towards social media fashion product purchases.

FINDINGS

This paper outlines the findings of the study from univariate analysis. Based on the analysis of the collected information from 111 women respondents, we can conclude the fact that 59% of our women consumers who prefer social media for

fashion product purchases are between 20–40years; which clearly states that youngsters are more inclined towards buying fashion brands through online, as half of the sample size was students. From this research, we could arrive at a consumer profile of women, who buy from social media fashion brand pages. According to this, we can assume that the consumers usually buy from social media web pages covers a majority of 20 to 40 years, with the family status ranging from single to married with children, mostly undergraduate to post graduate, and so on.

The majority of the respondents agreed the fact that they frequently visit social media. Demographic factors like age and family structure and location are showing difference in their preferences towards social media. It has been also observed that almost 65% of the respondents spend below 2 hours on social media website, which clearly depicts the popularity of social media. They were opting Face book as the most preferable social media site and reason behind the preference was just for time pass as well as social networking. Social media purchases is more accepted among the women respondents due to the Wide Variety comparison possibilities, Tension free delivery and payment mode option. And, respondents were uniquely suggesting that social media is very much preferable for online purchases. They also highlighted that majority prefer to buy online for all occasions, including Festival, Offseason as well as Regular time with the preferable price range, starting from Rs 0.00–1000.00 mostly. Majority of 65% also expressed that brand presence in social media is influencing there, visit to offline stores were more than half i.e. 66% percentage who said that their offline shop visit got reduced because of online presences.

Regarding the first hypothesis, the consumers' preference towards Social media is changing with the Demographic factors like age, family structure as well as location, i.e. these factors are highly relevant with the women's social media preferences, It do influence the importance of what they give for social media. In the second Hypothesis, it was analysed how social media marketing strategies influence the customers preferences towards online social media purchases. The results show that the advertisements strategies used by fashion brands in social media influences the customers. Purchasing preferences and its influence is significantly varying with women's purchasing preferences in social media. The last hypothesis tracked the variation among consumers frequency of purchase with demographic factors. The frequency of online purchases is varying with factors like annual income and education, whereas in case of age, the Frequency of purchase is not at all deferring with the groups. To conclude, we can say that Social media have a role in influencing the buying behaviour towards fashion brands.

CONCLUSIONS

The overarching research aim of this paper was to find out the long-term impact of Social media in fashion brand purchase preferences. Social media has evolved in the past decade immensely. Once what was seen as a communications channel between friends is now accounted for of multi-billion dollar platforms that have incredible impact on mankind. The survey shows the clear evidence of how social media is influencing the women's Preferences and how a new Fashion start-ups brand has to build the strategies in social media, for the survival of the fittest.

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A Post Graduate in Textile Management (Production & Marketing) from Sardar Vallabhai Patel Institute for Textile Management (SVPITM) Coimbatore and Graduate in Costume & Fashion Designing from Calicut University, Mukthy Sumangala has a rich industry experience of over 7 years. A major part of her career has been with some of the best-known export houses for international retailers such as Gap , Old navy , Target, Li & Fung and Gerber.

She joined NIFT in 2014 as Assistant Professor in the FMS department and has been the SDAC since 2015. she now has 5 years of work experience, in academic, administrative, training, consultancy and research. External assignments include Government Funded projects in charge, Subject Matter Expert of corporate interview boards, university Question Paper Setter, motivational and soft skills trainer and resource person to various government departments and private institutions.

Her areas of academic interest include Retailing Buying & Merchandising, Export Merchandising and Documentation, Research Methodology Fashion Marketing Management, Fashion Consumer Behavior, Entrepreneurship Management, Intellectual Property Rights, Advanced Professional Practices, Organization Behavior & Pattern Making & Appreciation,

She is an excellent coordinator, people manager and trainer. She is associated with other universities as consultant to their fashion courses.

I am **Shangrella Rajesh** Assistant Professor at NIFT Kannur I have around 18 years of experience in academia in fashion and textiles for under graduate and post graduate courses. My forte lies in Pattern Making, Garment Construction, Draping, Surface Design Techniques and other fashion related areas. I have been associated with NIFT-TEA Knitwear Fashion Institute, University Of University and various other Fashion institutes in the present and past. In my career I have worked for Kudubasree units, Malayalam Manorama, KITCO and various NGOs across Kerala.

Education Details: I have two post-graduation and two under graduation and a diploma in Fashion Design.

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Achievements: Award for the best Historical Costume Exhibition

Award for the best Element of Design Exhibition

Award for the best collection for annual Fashion Show