

Impact of Social Media on Online Apparel Brands

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Abstract

The usage of social media marketing has been increasing at a great pace. So it is important for organisations to adopt well-planned social media strategies in order to create a lasting relationship with its consumers. Organisations can grow their engagement and create brand awareness among its consumers. The paper aims at studying the impact of Instagram on the marketing of 4 apparel brands that are available online. How the consumer behaves online by engagement and involvement with an organisations page can depict a lot about their behaviour towards the brand. Correlation and T-test is conducted to study the impact of purchase behaviour of consumer and its affect on the brands Instagram page. The results from the study indicate a positive relationship between the most qualified audience and the how Instagram plays a major role.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing; Apparel brands; Consumer relationship; Market conditions; Trending.*

1. Introduction

Clothing is the biggest fragment of the Indian Textile and Apparel Line (IT&C), accounts 60-65% of the aggregate Line. Besides, it is one of the biggest wellsprings of outside trade stream into the nation. According to the information distributed by Ministry of Textiles, in its yearly report 2015-16, India is positioned as the sixth biggest exporter of clothing on the planet after China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Germany, and Italy. In CY15, the worldwide attire exchange really de-developed by about 5% incompletely because of lower acknowledgment of material items on the back of lower fiber costs and mostly because of a powerless request from EU and Japan. Notwithstanding the feeble worldwide attire exchange, the Indian clothing trades developed by 1% in FY16 (in dollar terms; alludes to the period

April 1 to March 31) as contrasted and FY15. Moreover, it is to be seen as per the fall in cotton and polyester yarn Ratings I Indian Apparel Sector: Government strategies drive the development 3 costs alongside the devaluation of Indian rupee opposite USD. The normal cotton and polyester yarn costs declined by almost 6% and 9%, individually, amid FY16 over FY15. Thus, positive development of almost 1% demonstrates volume development in clothing sends out. The development of Indian attire trade is upheld by consistent recuperation in US economy. The Indian rupee deteriorated by about 6-7% amid FY16 over FY15; subsequently, the development in rupee term at 7.7% is significantly higher than the development in USD terms. In spite of increment in the fare of Indian attire in esteem terms, its piece of the overall line has stayed stable because of higher development rates of its contending countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam drove by good government arrangements as far as boosting the division through exchange concurrences with world's biggest clothing bringing in countries like US and EU. (CARE Ratings) The Indian Apparel Line started off in the '70s and it came out to be a phenomenon of the century. It has now turned into a gigantic line spread across the country with high potential for exports. It has been observed that the growth rate of the line has been doubled in the past eight years keeping in mind that the knitted segment has grown swiftly than the woven segment. It has been estimated that the production will be of 8000 million pieces ranging to the market value of US\$ 28 billion. A lot of challenges have been faced by this sector still it has shown tremendous growth and dynamism in last two decades. The apparel sector probable in achieving tremendous growth specifically in the global trade by basing down its market and product mix in order to meet the challenges of trading blocks created by the major US and EU markets. Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks (SITP) was launched in order to provide the line with

world class infrastructure. The National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) was set up in order to provide leadership roles in sensitization to the concept of value addition by recruiting trained professionals to manage the line. The human resource development has put forward needs that are being catered by power loom service centers and AEPC which are run by ATDCs.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the impact of social media (Instagram) in attracting customers of online apparel brands.
- To study the role of ongoing fashion trend on various factors of consumer while purchasing online
- To analyze the impact of demographic factors on values of consumer while purchasing online
- To conduct a comparative analysis of 4 online apparel brands.

Online Brands under consideration

There will be 4 brands under consideration for the study (Satpathy, 2017)

- **Limeroad:** The website offers apparel ranging from ethnic wear to western wear. They were initially only in the women's segments but recently they have added men's apparel as well. Apart from apparel they also indulge in accessories for both men and women.
- **StalkBuyLove:** The website only engages in women's wear but that doesn't stop them from being popular among fashionistas. They are famous for its packaging and the apparel available on the website. Consumers are mostly attracted towards the western wear segment of the website.
- **20Dresses:** The website is engaged in apparels, accessories and shoes. They have an edge over others as they provide recommendations from in-house stylists that help the consumer in deciding the right fit. When purchasing something from the website the consumer will also receive a small gift along with the package, that is another marketing strategy to attract consumers.
- **Koovs:** The website offers international fashion for both men and women. The apparel found on the website is designed in London. Their plus point is that they offer discounts all year round and update the stock quite frequently on the website. They

also have an application for the consumers to purchase more conveniently without any hassle. The brand offers a flexible exchange and return policy to its consumers.

Everyday number of consumers comes across various brand pages on social mediums such as Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and LinkedIn etc. So looking at the increase in consumer attraction on social media, brands should develop superior communication strategies and should also focus on the impact that a brand can create through it. Every brand on social media needs to increase consumer engagement and convert itself into a brand evangelist. (Sharma, Alavi, & Ahuja, 2017) Instagram is a social networking application made for sharing photos and videos from a smartphone to its users, launched in October 2010 with currently over 1 million users on the platform. Business houses have utilized this application for promotion of their brand among the customers. (Moreau, 2018). It has been noted that Instagram usage has doubled in the last few years and the advertisement revenue generated by the social media platform could reach a whopping above \$10 billion in the next two years. It has been seen that from every 100 brands, around 90% of them have an Instagram account and 96% of US fashion brands are on the social media platform. Brands can engage with their audience 10 times higher in collation to Facebook, twitter and Pinterest. (Smith, 2017) A definitive objective for some, design brands are to have their item included by prominent influencers. In the event that this can happen naturally, at that point fabulous, yet most brands value that underwriting from a major name online is justified regardless of whatever it costs. The advantage of Instagram lies here, once more, in its credibility – posts can in any case be excellent and individual, notwithstanding when they highlight an item. It's valid that brands saw a drop in Instagram engagement from 2014 to 2015, yet as an ever-increasing number of individuals join the commercial center and shake for consideration this is not really amazing. What is clear however is that, for the design business, the channel keeps on being slammed against slant. (Middleton, 2015) A more broad investigation couldn't just spotlight on the connection between factors, yet may incorporate an easygoing impact model to comprehend the CSI estimations affect on cell phone garments acquiring. Future examinations could likewise dissect in - store conduct with a cell phone. Web of things innovation is rising as a stage to make "keen stores" and the cell phone can work as an arbiter of new client encounters in an attire store (Eriksson, Rosenbroijer, & Fagerstrom, 2017). *Another study says that consumer decision-making style dimensions influence collation purchasing, that a consumer has a major influence from the peers' collation purchasing which acts a major factor to influence his*

decision. An online survey was conducted utilizing a buyer investigation panel in order to better understand the collation-purchasing influence. (Park & Gretzel, 2010). Consumer's attitude directings Sensory Enabling Technologies (SETs), which consists of 2D larger view and substitute view, 3D rotation view and virtual try on, had an impact on its actual usage. Although the impact created by usage of SETs has also differed. (Kim & Forsythe, 2009)

2. Research Method

2.1 Research Drivers

2.1.1 Approach: Survey Method

2.1.2 Primary Data

Primary data always consists of first hand information. It is usually collected through questionnaire. The questionnaire is for a common interest for collecting primary data. I have collected the data through questionnaire from different people online.

2.1.3 Instrument Used

The research instrument used for collecting primary data was questionnaire. The questionnaire was carefully created and tested before they were circulated to people. I tried that each question contributed to the research objective. The questionnaire had all types of open-ended questions and it also included a likert proportion. The questions are limited in number and they are kept simple as direct technology was adopted.

2.2 Data Source

2.2.1 Quintly.com

Quintly is a social media analytics tool, which helps organizations to track, benchmark and optimize social media performance against their competitors. The data for these five brands is collected using this social media analytics tool. It provides post wise data in terms of number of likes, comments, shares and posts. This tool helps in mapping the effectiveness and reach of a marketing campaign. We have collected post wise data across these five online apparel brands.

2.2.2 Primary Method Used:

The questionnaire consisted of 9 questions was made and then the research was conducted.

2.2.3 Sampling Procedure:

- Sample Unit: Online filling of questionnaire by female apparel brand consumers.
- Sample Size: 206 Respondents
- Sampling Method: Random Sampling Method/ Convenience Sampling

2.3 Data Analysis Techniques

It includes the analysis that we have included in our research process

- Descriptive Statistics: As the name implies, the major objective of descriptive something usually market characteristics or function.
- Cross Tabulation: It is the converging of the recurrence conveyance of at least two factors in a solitary table. It encourages us how one variable identifies with another variable.
- Correlation: Correlation is a statistical technique that measures the degree of association between two or more variables.
- Non-Parametric Test: Non-parametric test are called distribution- free tests as they do not require any assumption regarding the shape of the population distribution from where the sample is drawn.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 To study the impact of social media (Instagram) in attracting customers of online apparel brands.

- T-test
(Information available on Instagram is credible)

| One-Sample Test | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|
| | Test Value = 0 | | | | | |
| | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Information available on the account is credible | 35.447 | 204 | .000 | 2.966 | 2.80 | 3.13 |

Ho: There is no significant relationship between consumers who believe that information available on Instagram is credible.

H1: There is significant relationship between consumers who believe that information available on Instagram is credible.

At 95% level of significance P value is 0.000 & Alpha is equal to 0.05. Thus $p < \alpha$; Null hypothesis is rejected.

3.2 To study the role of ongoing fashion trend on various factors of consumer while purchasing online

- Correlation

| Correlations | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| | | Influence Information available about the product | The brand offers offline patronage |
| Influence Information available about the product | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .381** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 205 | 205 |
| The brand offers offline patronage | Pearson Correlation | .381** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 205 | 205 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation between two factors is 0.381 which shows that they are highly correlated and with increase in information about the product there is a significant increase in the offline patronage of the brand.

3.3 To conduct a comparative analysis of 4 online apparel brands.

- Correlation

| Correlations | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|---|
| | | Based on following factors which apparel brand establishesabe | Based on following factors which apparel brand establishesabe |
| Based on following factors which apparel brand establishesabe | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .599** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 205 | 205 |
| Based on following factors which apparel brand establishesabe | Pearson Correlation | .599** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 205 | 205 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation between two factors is 0.599 which shows that they are highly correlated and there is a direct relationship between the two factors.

3.4 To analyze the impact of demographic factors on values of consumer while purchasing online

Crosstabulation
Count

| Will I purchase from the same apparel brand again | Monthly expenditure on apparel | | | | | Total |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------|-------|
| | 10,000-15,000 | 15,000-20,000 | 20,000-25,000 | 25,000-30,000 | 37653.0 | |
| Yes | 37 | 12 | 14 | 13 | 0 | 76 |
| No | 23 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 40 |
| Maybe | 44 | 20 | 15 | 10 | 0 | 89 |
| Total | 104 | 40 | 32 | 28 | 1 | 205 |

Table 12

Whether a consumer is willing to purchase from the same apparel brand is looked into to categorize how monthly expenditure on apparel shopping has an impact on the same. This will help us to figure out whether a consumer will purchase from the same apparel brand based on his expenditure on that brand.

Findings

- The information available on Instagram is credible for the consumer to establish a purchase decision.
- When an apparel brand offers higher price it does not always mean that the quality will also be better.
- Information available about the apparel on the account helps us to understand the offline patronage about the brand with proper relationship between the two.
- Consumers give major importance to the comments reviews available about a particular brand in order to make a purchase decision as well as keeping in mind the information available about the apparel.
- Friends and family play a major influence on the consumers purchase decision as they consider information available about the apparel to be important.
- Spotting the latest fashion trends based on the influence from fashion bloggers/models influences a consumer's purchase decision and drives her to focus on a particular apparel brand.
- A brands website quality has a major influence in attracting consumers which also showcases the diversity of apparel available on the website, increasing the chances of the apparel brand to be ranked highest.
- There are various types of consumers available in the market, an apparel brand can figure this out by looking at a consumers monthly expenditure on apparel purchasing.

- Various types of consumers available in the market are dependent on which age group they belong to.
- Consumer's decision to purchase from the same apparel brand again is majorly impacted by how much expenditure he is doing on apparel brand purchasing.

4. Conclusion

Among the available four apparel brands Koovs, LimeRoad, 20 Dresses and StalkBuyLove it was found that Koovs attracted the most number of consumers to its website by having a superior website quality and there has been huge amount of users that visit the website everyday. Offline patronage offered by the brand plays a major role in establishing relationships with the consumer and attracting them directly to the brand. Instagram is a major influencer in establishing relationship with the consumer by targeting only the most qualified set of audience and providing the most credible information.

5. Managerial Implication

Managers should use social media to create a direct linkage between the consumer and the brand. To successfully exploit the potential of social media, companies need to design experiences that deliver tangible value in return for customers' time, attention, endorsement and data. In order to enhance social customer relationship management, brands should invite their audiences to take part by interacting, commenting, sharing and creating. Brands get real-time feedback when ideas resonate and audiences help in spreading the message. Instagram can efficiently be used to create trust among its users by engaging them and increasing the number of posts. The focus should be on spreading positive word of mouth among social media users. Social media analysis tools can be used to draw consumer insights from unstructured data so as to better tap the virtual market. As number of active Internet users is increasing, managers should go for competitor's analysis so as to drive consumers towards their brand page by adopting superior and differentiating strategies than their competitors. It is of utmost importance for companies to analyze the volume of brand communication posted on brand pages and the impact of content on the degree of consumer engagement it is able to generate. The success of a brand on online domain depends on how effectively they use social media to increase consumer engagement and converting them into brand evangelists.

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