Research on the Impact of Social Media on the Decision-Making of Young Consumers in the Context of Clothing Choices

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Abstract. To improving markets' responsiveness towards consumers and then optimizing marketing strategy, it is of the essence to analyze how young consumers' intentions are affected by social media and how the fashion industry develops and changes. To make the study more understandable and authoritative, the authors use the case of Zara, a well-known brand of casual wear, to reveal the background of fast fashion expansion and then provide a role model for position and target market, as well as a special marketing strategy. Afterward, a hand-conducted questionnaire by authors was carried out, specifically underlining the effectiveness of closing recommendations and driving purchasing decisions among young consumers. Leveraging influencers and utilizing user-generated content are approved to increase brand engagement and build brand loyalty. On the one hand, the shopping experience has been changed by technological convenience and transparent information. On the other hand, fake information and consumer privacy security are bringing risks currently. Simultaneously, competition on social media is intensifying. To solve these problems, governments and enterprises are responsible for fact-checking, verification, monitoring, reporting misinformation, and encoding data. Also, users are suggested to use private tools and raise security awareness. For companies, they can focus on creating unique consumer experiences and advocating ecologically conscious practices to increase competitiveness. In conclusion, the authors provide an analysis of social media and young consumers' preferences, suggesting improvement and drawing a blueprint for the development of casual clothing.

Keywords: Social Media; Decision-Making; Young Consumers; Clothing Choices.

1. Introduction

People can now readily access a range of fashion information and apparel brands across many nations and regions thanks to the widespread use of the Internet and the quick growth of social media platforms. Customers from various cultural backgrounds are exposed to a wider variety of casual clothing options because of this global information flow, which gives them more inspiration and possibilities. Meanwhile, with the advent of mobile devices, individuals can now readily explore a wide range of fashion information and collocation ideas, as well as use social media applications at any time and from any location. Customers can choose casual apparel more conveniently by sharing their outfits, watching fashion videos, and browsing shopping websites with their mobile phones or tablets.

Through this article, the authors aim to learn more about how social media content influences customers' shopping decisions by examining how it affects young people's casual clothing choices, especially for those aged between 14 and 25. Predicting and comprehending the consumption trends and preferences of consumers can be facilitated by an understanding of their activity and interactions on social media platforms. What's more, understanding the impact of social media on young groups can provide references for clothing brands to develop more effective marketing strategies. By studying consumers' attention, preferences, and interactions with brands on social media, brands can

better utilize social media platforms to enhance brand awareness and market influence. People are also able to understand the changes in current social culture and values and comprehend how social media affects young consumers' intentions. Fashion, as a cultural product, is co-constructed and disseminated by users on social media platforms, reflecting the aesthetic and lifestyle of contemporary young people.

According to a pertinent study on the influence of social media on customers' purchasing decisions when using clothes applications, respondents' purchasing decisions are heavily influenced by privacy and convenient access to product information. The study also showed that when it comes to the purchasing process, social media platforms are more dependable, trustworthy, and consistent. Applications for clothing have a significant impact on consumers by displaying information about different collections, prices, discounts, doorstep delivery, free gifts, and coupons, among other things. Nevertheless, the study was restricted to Coimbatore City alone. As a result, the conclusions and results are restricted to a small field [1]. What's more, there were just 125 respondents in the survey. In another study, Udhayakumar also emphasized the importance of transactional security and privacy. Also, since the web is transparent, everyone can find information online. This accentuated the significance of maintaining consistency in the strategy, execution, and management of online marketing campaigns [2]. From another perspective on how young consumers' decision-making on casual wear is affected, Kwan confirmed five factors, including recreational and hedonistic consciousness, perfectionism consciousness, confusion by over-choice, habitual and brand loyalty, and price and value consciousness, which social media can potentially influence [3].

Most of the articles uncovered the relationship between social media and clothing-buying intentions, as well as the way youngsters choose casual wear. However, few studies linked social media, casual clothing, and the young group together, and hence, the authors go into detail about the relationship between the three components. In addition to that, summaries of previous research, as well as deeper thoughts on fashion influenced by social media, marketing planning, and so forth, are included.

Based on the case of Zara, a well-known casual wear brand, the authors analyze why social media plays such an integral role in casual clothing first. Second, comes a disclosure of current social media marketing strategy, as approaches affecting youngsters' consumption intentions artificially as well, which naturally leads to the next point of how the shopping experience among the young group changes these days before and after being affected.

Ultimately, the article mentions the kinds of risks and challenges that social media brings to the casual clothing market. Throughout the analysis, data resources and specific examples are interspersed to support the standpoints above, which are not only confined to former studies but also to the investigation of real situations around the authors by questionnaire.

2. Case Description

2.1. Background

With the development of the fashion industry and the Internet, more and more people started to look through social media before choosing and buying clothes. In this day and age, Zara, a Spanish fashion brand known worldwide for its fast fashion and fashion-savvy style, integrates clothing and social media together well, established a B2C network marketing platform, and Has made remarkable achievements [4].

2.2. Expansion of Fast Fashion

From 2000 till now, Zara has always followed fast fashion steps. They continuously optimize the supply chain and strengthen close cooperation with designers and suppliers to ensure rapid product delivery and updates. Besides, Zara has also set up several social media accounts to propagate its brand, such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and so on. This further expands the brand influence by

publishing the company's latest products and fashion concepts, attracting consumers' attention and thus promoting purchases.

2.3. Position and Target Market

ZARA is positioned to provide products that respond quickly to fashion, and its target market is primarily young, fashion-conscious consumers who are conscious of quality and price. By paying close attention to fashion trends, Zara is able to accurately meet the needs of this target market and attract them to become loyal customers. In this way, those customers will buy Zara's clothes and advocate for them spontaneously. Thus, Zara can maintain its competitive advantage continuously.

2.4. Special Marketing Strategy

Zara is using the 4C strategy. The Marketing Theory of 4Cs, also known as "4C marketing theory "0, corresponding to the 4P of traditional marketing 4C theory [5]. Guided by consumer needs, it resets the four basic elements of the marketing mix: Customer, Cost, Convenience, and Communication. It emphasizes that enterprises should first put the pursuit of customer satisfaction in the first place, then strive to reduce the purchase cost of customers, and then pay full attention to the convenience of customers in the purchase process instead of deciding the sales channel strategy from the perspective of enterprises, and finally implement effective marketing communication with consumers as the center.

3. Analysis on the Problem based on Survey Results

3.1. Survey Analysis of The Influence of Social Media on Young Generations' Clothing Choices

The survey starts with a multiple-choice question on how much time the participants spend every day on different social media.

Table 1. Time spent viewing social media platforms every day

Time	Subtotal	Proportion
0-2 Hours	25	16.67%
2-4 Hours	50	33.33%
4-6 Hours	42	28%
6 Hours or more	33	22%

From the respondents, the most on-time bucket is 2 to 4 hours per day, while the other time bucket is 2 to 4 hours per day, which is 1/3 of the total (Table 1). The second most selected option is 4-6 Hours. Its figure reaches 42 candidates out of 150, 28%. Moreover, while 22% of the participants spend at least 6 hours on their social media, only 17% (25 out of 150) of them spend less than 2 hours every day. The data indicates that most youths use their social software within two to six hours per day, although some of them might be paid too much attention to engaging in social contact.

Secondly, to gain a deeper insight into respondents' preference for choosing social media, our team posed the question, "What social software do you use in your daily life?", including the six most popular applications among the youth in the options, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Social software use in user's daily life

Application Name	Subtotal	Proportion
WeChat	142	94.67%
QQ	76	50.67%
MicroBlog	69	46%
The Red	108	72%
Zhihu	34	22.67%
Douban	10	6.67%
others	18	12%

It is notable that WeChat is the most used social media platform among respondents, with an overwhelming 94.67% (142 out of 150) utilizing it, indicating it has been a crucial tool with a high level of engagement in social lives. What follows closely behind it is The Red, a Chinese version of Instagram, with 72% of people using it. The usages of QQ and Microblog among youngsters share a similar figure, 50.67% and 46% (76 and 69 people), respectively. However, the number of surveyees who chose Zhihu and Douban is dramatically lower; while 34 of them chose the former, the latter received only 10 responses.

The third question follows this, "Would you make a clothing purchase based on outfit styles or recommendations seen on social media?" (Table 3). and the fourth one, "Do you think that clothing-related content on social media influences your purchasing decisions?" (Table 4). These questions are similar, and both of them aim to investigate the impact of social media on individuals' clothing choices, which are vital to this research.

Table 3. A clothing purchase based on outfit styles or recommendations seen on social media

Options	Subtotal	Proportion
Yes, often	27	18%
Yes, occasionally	96	64%
No	27	18%

Table 4. Clothing-related content on social media influences consumer's purchasing decisions

Options	Subtotal	Proportion
Yes, giant influence	19	12.67%
Yes, influential	106	70,67%
No impact	17	11.33%
Not sure	8	5.33%

According to Table 3, which investigated how youth would make clothes-purchasing decisions based on social media recommendations, most subjects would like to buy clothes when someone advises it on social media. While 96 people selected the option "Yes, occasionally", 27 respondents chose "Yes, often" and "No" respectively.

In the second survey question (Table 4), in terms of the impact of clothing-related content in decision-making, a significant portion of participants (71%, 106 people) affirm that viewing content like personal outfit-sharing and recommendations do influence their choices of purchasing clothes. Although 11% of respondents don't consider the clothing-related content of virtual recommendations, there are still two percent more surveyees who believe they are affecting them in a tremendous amount.

This fact implies that social media doesn't just act as an interactive platform for sharing fashion styles; it also actively shapes consumer behavior, serving as a persuasive force in the clothing decisions of young people.

Furthermore, the question we designed, "What kind of clothing recommendations are you more likely to accept?" (Table 5), refines the medium through which the younger demographic selects apparel on social media by inquiring about their specific acquisition methods.

Table 5. Kind of clothing recommendations consumers likely to accept

Options	Subtotal	Proportion
Clothing brand advertising	64	42.67%
Fashion blogger or celebrity	83	55.33%
User selfies or matches	92	61.33%
Others	6	4%
None of them	14	9.33%

From this investigation, the most well-received online recommendations among the respondents are photographs and videos from user selfies and outfit sharing (61.33%). These bloggers post pictures to share their lives, so few people will doubt the quality of what they are wearing. The second acceptable recommendation is from fashion bloggers and celebrities, with approximately half of the participants choosing it (83 people). There is lower reliance on clothing brand advertisement (42.67%) due to discredit from some inferior brands. However, 9.33% of the respondents trust none of the components above (14 out of 150).

Lastly, the survey assessed individual satisfaction with clothing purchased through social media, providing researchers with a direct gauge of respondents' comments and evaluations of social media clothing recommendations.

Table 6. Level of satisfaction in terms of buying clothes from recommendations online

Options	Subtotal	Proportion
Very satisfied	7	4.67%
Satisfied	107	71.33%
Mostly unsatisfied	13	8.67%
Dissatisfied	4	2.67%
No experience	19	12.67%

According to Table 6, it is very straightforward that the majority of respondents (71.33%) are generally satisfied with clothing purchases made through social media, indicating a positive reception towards these recommendations. A small percentage showed high contentment, with 4.67% being very pleased with the shopping experience. However, there's a segment (8.67%) that remains unsatisfied, alongside a minimal portion (2.67%) expressing very dissatisfaction. However, 12.67% of participants (19 out of 150) did not engage in purchasing. These insights highlight the persuasive impact of social media on consumer behavior, underlining the effectiveness of clothing recommendations in driving purchasing decisions among the 14 to 25 age group.

3.2. Problem Analysis

3.2.1 The importance of social media

Social media is playing an increasingly important role in the fashion industry, reshaping the way consumers shop, brand markets, and trends are formed. With the rise of platforms such as Weibo, TikTok, and Instagram, social media has become the new arena for fashion, where brands can not only showcase their products but also serve as a hub for fashion inspiration, shopping enjoyment, and social interaction.

Research shows that social media has had a profound impact on the fashion industry. Jin and Ryu highlight how social media has become a new platform for setting fashion trends, giving consumers instant access to fashion information and enabling brands to engage directly with their audiences [5]. Furthermore, Hearn points out that the rise of social media influencers and fashion bloggers has

changed the way fashion is disseminated, as they are not only disseminators but also trendsetters able to change the fate of fashion trends within hours of posting [6].

3.2.2 Social Media Marketing Strategy

A key aspect of social media marketing in the fashion industry is leveraging influencers and fashion bloggers. With a large following and engaged audience, these individuals have become a powerful asset for brands seeking to truly promote their products. Research by Kim and Ko) found that social media marketing campaigns for luxury fashion brands significantly increased customer equity, demonstrating the effectiveness of influencer collaboration [7].

Another effective strategy adopted by fashion brands is the use of user-generated content (UGC). By encouraging consumers to share photos of themselves wearing the brand's products and using specific hashtags, the brand not only creates a sense of community but also gains valuable organic exposure. As highlighted by research by Phua, Jin, and Kim, this approach has been shown to increase brand engagement and build brand loyalty among consumers [8].

3.2.3 Changes in shopping experience

Social media has changed the shopping experience for young consumers, giving them new ways to explore, discover, and buy fashionable goods. A major impact of social media on young consumers' purchasing decisions is the ability to create a seamless shopping journey. Features such as the "Shop Now" button on posts allow users to directly access product pages and make purchases without leaving the platform. This convenience has been proven to increase impulse buying and overall shopping satisfaction among younger shoppers.

In addition, user-generated content (UGC) shared by influencers and other users provides an authentic view of the product, making the shopping experience more relevant and believable. Research by Lee and Youn found that younger consumers are more likely to trust product recommendations from social media influencers they follow, leading to higher purchase intentions [9].

3.2.4 Risks and challenges

While social media brings numerous opportunities and advantages to the fashion industry, it also brings potential risks and challenges. One is the risk of misinformation and damage to brand reputation. With the rapid spread and sharing of information on social media, false information, fake brands, and false advertising may appear on the platform. This is not only likely to mislead consumers but also damage the brand's reputation and credibility.

Another challenge is the issue of consumer privacy and data security on social media. As consumer behavior on social media is increasingly tracked and recorded, the risk of personal privacy and data breaches increases accordingly. In addition, frequent data breaches and information thefts in recent years have further highlighted the problem, with consumers increasingly concerned about the improper use of their personal information.

At the same time, competition on social media is intensifying. As more brands and fashion influencers join social media platforms, consumers are faced with information overload. This means brands need to be more innovative and engaging in their content to stand out and attract consumers' attention and engagement. It is not easy for emerging brands and small brands to survive in such a competitive environment.

4. Suggestions

4.1. Misinformation

4.1.1 Fact-checking and verification

In the field of online shopping, the integrity of product information is the cornerstone of consumer trust. To consolidate this foundation, companies can implement rigorous fact-checking and verification mechanisms. For example, third-party certification from a respected organization can

serve as a badge of authenticity, assuring consumers of product quality, sustainability, or authenticity. In addition, a thorough vendor verification process, especially in a busy marketplace platform, is critical. By carefully scrutinizing supplier identities, business practices, and the authenticity of their products, companies can screen out suspicious actors and foster a market environment full of reliability [10].

4.1.2 Monitoring and report misinformation

Backed by the power of artificial intelligence, automated detection systems can be used to support this work strongly. These systems scan product descriptions, customer reviews, and advertising content to flag any misleading information quickly [11]. Moreover, companies can harness the power of online communities to crowdsource fact-checking efforts. By creating a dedicated forum or platform, customers can discuss product information, share experiences, and jointly verify the accuracy of claims. Incentives such as discounts, loyalty points, or exclusives can be offered to customers who actively participate in identifying and reporting misinformation. Companies can also assign community moderators or experts to monitor discussions and verify reported error messages. These initiatives ensure a reliable and trustworthy fact-checking process.

4.2. Protecting Consumer Privacy and Ensure Data Security

4.2.1 Enhance supervision and compliance

Government and monitoring institutions stand for authority. Therefore, they can directly request firms and industries to implement stricter standards and regulations for their social media project in terms of consumer data collection, storage, and usage. For instance, forcing software to comply with existing data protection laws can be a good choice. Legislations such as the European Union's GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and the United States' CCPA (California Consumer Privacy Act) are all practicable.

4.2.2 Data encryption and security measures

The government can choose to invest in firms and industries that delve deep into network data encryption and security measures. A certain extent of government subsidy can play a role in providing incentives to firms to develop R&D in data security. Once it succeeds, the government can force the industry to implement new technology in order to protect users of social media from unauthorized access, hacking, data breaches, and so forth.

4.2.3 Empower users to use private tools

The software platforms should empower users to use app functions and tools to help create room for privacy. Techniques like these can enable users to manage their own preferences more effectively and comfortably. This includes options to anonymize or pseudonymize user data, limit data collection and tracking, and provide users with tools to delete or export their data upon request.

4.2.4 Raising awareness for the users about potential privacy risks

The last way for firms to prevent the issue of consumer data leakage is to educate their users about privacy risks at the beginning. They should raise awareness by, for example, the social media platform producers can design a special page in front of where to sign up an account. Illustrating the potential risks of using their software to users. This includes providing guidance on safe browsing practices, identifying phishing attempts, and understanding privacy Settings.

4.3. Competition

4.3.1 Customer experience

In order to stand out in the crowded online marketplace, companies can blaze a distinctive path through a unique customer experience. By harnessing the power of customer data and AI algorithms, personalized product recommendations can create tailor-made shopping journeys that speak directly to individual preferences. For example, a virtual fitting tool for fashion enthusiasts can take customers

into more than just browsing; it can offer interactive and engaging product exploration. The seamless integration of online and offline channels, such as convenient click-and-collect options and hassle-free in-store returns for online purchases, further enhances the brand's appeal. This commitment to enhancing every touchpoint on the customer journey not only fosters loyalty but also solidifies the brand's position as a customer-centric online retailer [3].

4.3.2 Sustainability

Companies can carve out a unique niche by advocating ecologically conscious practices throughout their operations. Choosing a green supply chain, from procurement to transportation, demonstrates a commitment to reducing environmental impact. By offering customers carbon-neutral transportation options and showcasing efforts to offset their carbon footprint through tree planting programs, the company taps into a growing group of environmentally conscious consumers. In addition, whether through blog posts, social media campaigns, or partnerships with environmental organizations, educational campaigns can not only increase awareness but also engage customers in a brand's sustainability journey.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Key Findings

5.1.1 Key findings about suggestion

First, the article shows that getting companies to implement rigorous verification mechanisms. For example, find a third-party verification authority. In addition to third-party agencies verifying suspicious salespeople, use the power of the community to help customers monitor the presence of bad products. They are second, using the power of government and regulators to collect consumer data and enforce strict confidentiality agreements on these data. Finally, the article mentioned that we can put the customer experience first and create a virtual fitting system for consumers to refer to. This not only enhances the customer experience but also enhances customer loyalty.

5.1.2 Key findings of analysis

According to the survey table in the article, most people are more inclined to share clothes and videos and rarely consider the quality of clothes. And more than half are satisfied with the way they buy clothes through social media. At the same time, the article also talked about the importance of social media. Social media has become an important trend for young people to buy clothes. At the same time, social media can also change the current trend in a short time. In addition, most bloggers on social media have a certain popularity and fan base, and if consumers are encouraged to post that they are wearing the brand's clothes on social media, they can increase their trust. Social media has also changed the shopping experience for young consumers. They can buy products directly by clicking on their mobile phones, which greatly increases consumers' impulse purchasing power and shopping satisfaction. While social media has brought so many benefits, it has also brought many negative effects. As we can see from the article, false information will inevitably appear on social media, thus misleading consumers' judgment. Similarly, social media can also bring security issues, such as data breaches.

5.2. Research Significance

In this article, it provides detailed data explaining consumers' preferences and use of social media. At the same time, the problems that social media may cause, such as information leakage, are put forward, and corresponding solutions are given. And provide a good idea of how social media should evolve.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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