BRAND EXPERIENCE OF FASHION APPAREL BRANDS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

The fashion industry is one of the biggest industries in India and is growing rapidly wherein social media has replaced the traditional way of marketing. Almost every company tries to incorporate social media marketing into their organizational strategy. Past literature emphasizes the impact of social media marketing on customer-based brand equity and purchase intention but limited studies have been found that has examined its impact on brand experience, especially in the fashion industry. Therefore, this study intends to examine the impact of social media marketing i.e. word of mouth, interaction, entertainment, customization, trendiness on brand experience based on its four dimensions i.e. sensory, behavioral, intellectual and affective. The survey was conducted from 283 respondents, who are following fashion apparel brands on Social media platforms. SEM was used to get the desired results. The results revealed that there exists a positive significant relation between customer-based brand equity and brand experience. Research outcomes will provide insights to the managers for giving a good brand experience to the customers for creating a competitive advantage in the market.

Key words: Social Media Marketing, Brand Experience, Customers, Marketers

1.INTRODUCTION

Majority of people spend a lot of time on social media for getting the product or brand related information. Companies are attempting to take full advantage of the shift in conventional media usage to social media and the change in customer buying behaviour by focusing more on social media marketing. On social media, customers share their experience with other customers (Stephen, 2016). Digital marketing has become popular now a days because of inclusion of technology in every field (Ananda et al., 2019). On social media marketers can create their brand page. They can provide Customer support service to the customers. They can also share information about the brands and the products (Breitsohl et al., 2017).

Fashion has attracted the attention of researchers around the globe and become the trendiest around the globe (Handa & Khare, 2013). Textile and apparel industry is the biggest industry in India and CAGR of Textile and apparel industry is expected to reach US $ 141 billion in this year (Indian Brand Equity Foundation Report, 2015). Fashion industry is highly competitive because apparel brands need to change its strategies according to the changing preference of

customers. As most of the people are on social media now a days that's why apparel brands need to shift their traditional marketing strategies to social media marketing (Loureriro et al., 2018). Social media marketing requires special efforts unlike traditional marketing. Social media marketing make different strategies for the marketing and attention to have presence over different social media platforms (Karamian et al., 2015).

Customers are spending so much time online so companies are making every possible step to be in contact with customers through social media marketing (Gordhamer, 2009). Social media gives the platform to customers for giving awareness. They also share information with the Customers. They also platform to marketers to advertise their product online (Filo et al. 2015). Through social media marketing marketers build a strong relationship with customers by interacting with them (Chi, 2011).

According to Digital 2020 Global overview report more than 4.5 billion people are using Internet and more than 3.8 billion people are using social media. Social media has become one of the most important technology across the globe. Billions of people are using social media in the whole world. Social media users will grow to 3.29 billion in 2022 globally (eMarketer, 2018).

Fashion industry has accepted Social media platforms as most valuable social media tool to connect with the customers. Social media platforms has huge role in promoting the Brands that's why they play an important role for Fashion Brands (Jin & Ryu, 2020).). Through Social media platforms marketers are communicate and interact with customers. Fashion Apparel Brand promote themselves on Social media platforms as they know it is widely used for fashion Industry (Carah & Shaul, 2016; Djafarova & Bowes, 2021; Bonilla & Andreu, 2019). In literature very few studies have been done on this topic (Sand, 2019; Agam, 2017; Suh, 2020; Testa et al., 2021).

Through Social media marketing, companies have reached to the customers successfully and instantaneously (Nadaraja & Yazdanifard, 2013). Brands are very important for every company to make profit and survive in the competition. Brand consists of brand attitude, brand experience, brand personality, brand attachment. Brand experience is one of the most important aspect of brand (Brakus et al. 2009). Various studies have been done solely on brand experience by many researchers (Brakus et al., 2009; Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014; Shamim & Butt, 2013; Schmitt et al.,2014) but there is dearth of studies which focuses on brand experience in context of social media marketing especially in the context of Social media Platforms. So the purpose of the study is to examine Customers brands experience for fashion apparel industry through Social media marketing in the context of Social media Platforms.

2.REVIEW OF LITERATURE
2.1Social Media Marketing
Social media has become the burning trend for the fashion industry. Social media nowadays is not only for communication and interaction but is used for promotion and advertising the brands also. Social media marketing activities has five dimensions namely Word of mouth, Interaction, Trendiness, Customization and Entertainment (Kim & Ko, 2012). Apart from these, Content sharing dimension has also been considered in this study (Beig & Khan, 2018). In a virtual consumer environment, social media brand communities have prime importance.

Social media brand communities not only give the platforms to advertise their product but also provides a platform to build a relationship with customers (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

Through social media companies are getting better understanding of their customers due to the customer company interactions and customer-customer interaction (Felix et al. 2017). Social media has huge impact on customers thought process and decision-making process. Social media helps customers to build an opinion towards a brand because social media is giving information, awareness about products, brands (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social media marketing is important to promotional mix in new digital world to influence brand image (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).Social media can have a huge impact on reputation and image of a brand (Kim & Ko, 2010a).

2.2Brand Experience

The concept of brand experience was started by Ortmeyer & Huber in 1991 but it was specified, determined and quantify by Brakus et al. in 2009 (Khan & Rahman, 2014). Now a day's researchers are giving so much importance to brand experience because through brand experience marketers want the brand to be memorized by the customers in a good way (Rogers & Vrotos, 2003). Brand experience has so much power that it alone can lead to the satisfaction of customers and make the customers loyal to brands (Phillips and Mcquarrie, 2010). The study happened in the last decade focus on the creation of different brand experience than other brands and they try to make unique so that customers can have a remembrance of the brand and by doing so they want to make strong brands (Keller and Lehmann, 2006).

Basically, when a consumer experienced a different experience for a brand that is called by brand experience. Every customer has different and personal brand experience with a brand (Zarantonello & Schimtt, 2010). Consumers internal and behavioral response towards a brand is Brand experience due to brand related stimuli (Meyer & Schvager ,2007). Brand experience has four dimensions namely affective, sensory, behavioral, intellectual. Affective brand experience is response to emotional, feeling, sentiment in relation to a brand. Intellectual Brand experience arises when a brand impact on remembrance, memory and curiosity (Brakus at el. 2009). Sensory brand experience has huge impact on senses of customers and it can give huge impression consumers perception of a brand (Gao & Lan, 2020). Behavioral brand experience makes the customers to repurchase and to give feedback about the brand to other customers (Zarantonello & Schimtt, 2010).

Building good brand experience for the customers is one the major factor that contribute to the success of any company because experience hold on to the customers mind for a long time so is the experience is good than it will lead to the high sales and success of the company (Turgul, 2014). Some studies have showed that brand experience is associated with brand equity, brand attitude and brand choice (Sheng & Teo, 2012). Brand experience can occur at any time of the whole process of starting from information search to after sales service of the brand (Verhoef at el., 2009). Brand experience is formed by direct and indirect communication with the brand (Sahin et al., 2011). Brand experience can affect positively the brand loyalty, brand trust and satisfaction (Xie et al., 2017).

2.3 Social Media Marketing and Brand Experience

Several studies are there solely on social media marketing and brand experience but in this paper impact of social media marketing on brand experience will be studied. Understanding consumer experience through social media is very important because consumer experience has huge role in making the consumer perception towards the brands (Gao & Feng, 2016). Through social media marketers communicate with the customers now a days and they try to make every possible way to feel good brand experience (Tuten and Solomon, 2015). It is also noted from the previous studies that social media marketing increases Customer based brand equity if the customers have good and positive experience with the brand. Social media has great impact on millennials because social media gives brand experience to millennials (Stewart et al., 2017). Content sharing dimension of social media marketing activities on social media platforms has huge impact on every dimension of brand experience but content sharing has maximum impact on intellectual brand experience. It can be due to the information shared about the brand on the Facebook. Interaction dimension of social media marketing activities also has huge impact on all the dimensions of the brand experience but it has maximum impact on sensory brand experience (Beig & Khan, 2018). Social media can be contemplated as co creation of the brand experience because companies and customers both help in co creating the brand experience (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Brand experience work as mediator between social media marketing activities and brand love (Chen & Qasim, 2020).

Only work on social media is not sufficient for the company but effective use of social media for creating brand experience for the customers is important because it will create positive impact in the mind of the customers about the brand (Turgul, 2014). Brand experience by social media can be treated as the marketing tool for the companies because by giving good brand experience marketers can attract and retain customers (Yu et al., 2020). Social media sites are giving platforms to the customers for giving feedback of their brand experience and social media sites are also keeps engaging the customers (Chu et al., 2019). Brand experience is created by direct and indirect contact with a brand and social media are competent enough to memorize the brand in customers mind and inculcate positive feelings about the brand (Sahin et al., 2011; Brakul et al., 2009).

Social media marketing activities positively enhance the brand experience of the customers and brand experience of the customers enhance the Customer based brand equity (Koay & Yoeh, 2020). Actively using social media and by engaging them on social media brand page makes customers to create positive perception of the brands and brand experience (Pham & Gammoh, 2015). People share their brand experience stories on the social media sites and by doing so they are sharing their views, ideas about the brand and as a result people who are looking at their stories of brand experience created a memory about the brands in long run (Wang et al., 2017). Every information available on the social media does not create the brand experience. Information which is relevant to the customers makes or creates the brand experience (Weick et al., 2005).

Based on the literature review, model is proposed as depicted in Figure 1. The given model states that social media marketing activities are positively related to Brand Experience, means Social media marketing enhances the Brand Experience of the Customers.
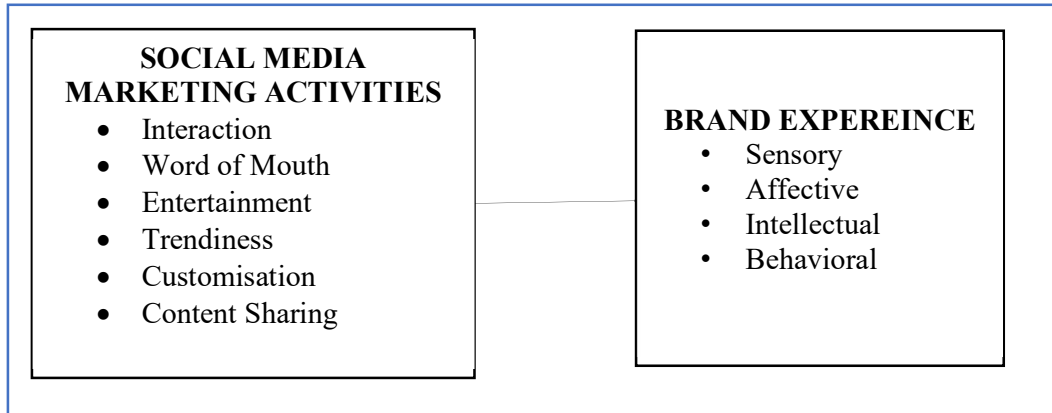
FIGURE I THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive study was conducted using a survey. A structured questionnaire has been distributed among target respondents through a google form. A five-point Likert Scale Questionnaire was used in the study to find the relationship between the variables on the point from Strongly disagree to Strongly Agree. 17 item scale was used to measure social media marketing (Kim & Ko, 2012; Beig & Khan, 2018) whereas 11 item scale was used to measure the Brand Experience (Brakus, 2009). A total of 283 responses were collected from the people who are following the fashion apparel brands on Social media platforms. Purposive sampling was used to collect the data for the study. The data was analyzed through SEM in Smart PLS.

4.DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section shows the data analysis. For measurement model, basic assumptions need to be met like Convergent validity, Composite reliability, Discriminant validity etc. Indicator reliability is measured using outer loading, Table 1 depicts that the outer loading values of all the items are greater than threshold value i.e. 0.7. Moreover, AVE values should be greater than 0.5 and all the AVE values are above 0.5, hence convergent validity is achieved. Also, VIF values under 5 is acceptable and calculated value of VIF is under the threshold limit. For internal consistency, the values of all the Cronbach alpha and Rho_A should be greater than 0.7, the values met this criteria as well. Composite reliability is beyond threshold value that is greater than 0.7. Lastly, discriminant validity is measured using HTMT which should be under 0.9, therefore the proposed model has fulfilled the criteria to run the model.

TABLE 1 RESULT SUMMARY OF PROPOSED MODEL

Variables	Statements	Outer Loadings	VIF	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Affective	AFFECT 1	0.859	1.884	0.831	0.832	0.899	0.747
	AFFECT 2	0.873	1.941				
	AFFECT3	0.861	1.896				
Behavioral	BEH1	0.846	1.879	0.783	0.783	0.874	0.699

	BEH 2	0.874	2.048				
	BEH3	0.785	1.398				
Intellectual	INTEL1	0.77	2	0.829	0.829	0.898	0.745
	INTEL2	0.737	1.726				
	INTEL3	0.74	2.04				
Sensory	SENSE1	0.743	1.841	0.807	0.807	0.912	0.838
	SENSE2	0.729	1.841				
Customisation	C1	0.884	1.545	0.745	0.748	0.887	0.797
	C2	0.901	1.545				
Content Sharing	CON1	0.875	2.017	0.818	0.821	0.892	0.734
	CON2	0.814	1.581				
	CON3	0.879	2.144				
Entertainment	E1	0.925	1.958	0.823	0.824	0.919	0.85
	E2	0.919	1.958				
Interaction	I1	0.785	1.889	0.886	0.886	0.913	0.637
	I2	0.798	2.071				
	I3	0.813	2.231				
	I4	0.802	1.994				
	I5	0.776	1.944				
	I6	0.815	2.189				
Trendiness	T1	0.747	1.568	0.751	0.752	0.889	0.801
	T2	0.715	1.568				
Word Of Mouth	W1	0.774	1.911	0.817	0.817	0.916	0.845
	W2	0.759	1.911				
Brand Experience	AFFECT1	0.742	2.108	0.921	0.921	0.933	0.559
	AFFECT2	0.784	2.737				
	AFFECT3	0.748	2.167				
	BEH1	0.74	2.409				
	BEH2	0.744	2.272				
	BEH3	0.745	2.233				
	INTEL1	0.875	2.428				
	INTEL2	0.841	2.049				
	INTEL3	0.873	2.244				
Social Media Marketing	SENSE1	0.917	2.298	0.948	0.948	0.953	0.545
	SENSE2	0.914	2.176				
	C1	0.725	2.219				
	C2	0.782	2.705				
	CON1	0.875	3.2				
	CON2	0.814	1.956				
	CON3	0.879	Q12.4 17				
	E1	0.76	2.606				

E2	0.734	2.397					
I1	0.721	2.109					
I2	0.745	2.359					
I3	0.731	2.46					
I4	0.742	2.245					
I5	0.709	2.174					
I6	0.719	2.6					
T1	0.9	2.357					
T2	0.89	2.055					
W1	0.921	3.106					
W2	0.918	2.895					

Figure 2 shows that the relationship between social media marketing and brand experience is found significantly positive (ß=0.472, p value <0.05). Individually, Behavioral dimension is contributing maximum to the Brand Experience (ß=0.890, p value <0.05), followed by Affective (ß=0.877, p value <0.05), Intellectual (ß=0.868, p value <0.05), Sensory (ß=0.804, p value <0.05).

The result shows that the Behavioral dimension is the most important dimension of Brand Experience because the behavioral dimension induces various types of behaviour in a person like changes in lifestyle, behaviour and habits. This is the reason why the behavioral dimension contributes maximum to the brand experience, an affective dimension of the brand experience appeal to emotions, deepest feelings, sentiments and feelings of the customers. This dimension can induce good or bad feelings about the brand according to the sentiments and emotions aroused by the brand. Intellectual Brand Experience arouses the thinking process of the customers intending to produce problem-solving and cognitive experience. Customers five senses (Smell, Taste, Touch, Sight, Sound) are involved in Sensory Experience and by these senses, Customers feel the product and make their decision whether the Brand is Good or Bad. For social media marketing, Interaction dimension is contributing maximum (ß=0.912, p value <0.05), followed by content sharing (ß=0.850, p value <0.05), Customization (ß=0.845, p value <0.05), Word of mouth (ß=0.833, p value <0.05), Trendiness (ß=0.818, p value <0.05) and Entertainment (ß=0.811, p value <0.05).

The result shows that Fashion Apparel Brand's Social media marketing activities make a strong bond of Interaction with the customers as Customers can interact with the marketers and others on these platforms. They share their reviews about the brand which will lead to word of mouth and through word-of-mouth other people get to know about the Brand. Word of mouth can be positive or negative as customers share their feedback about the brand on Social media platforms. Social media platforms give the information of the Fashion Apparel Brands by sharing the content on the Social media pages of the Brands. So, content sharing on Social media is very much important for giving the details and specifications about the Brand. Customisation is also one of the important aspects of Social media activities as it gives customers a chance to customise and refine their research on the Social media page of the Brands. Social media platforms offer Trends as these platforms give all trendy fashion on the

fashion apparel Brand pages and Customers get attracted to the trendiness of the brand pages on Social media platforms. Marketers do every effort for making their Fashion Apparel Brand page entertaining on social media platforms as everyone knows it keeps the people engage on the Fashion Apparel Brand pages through social media platforms.
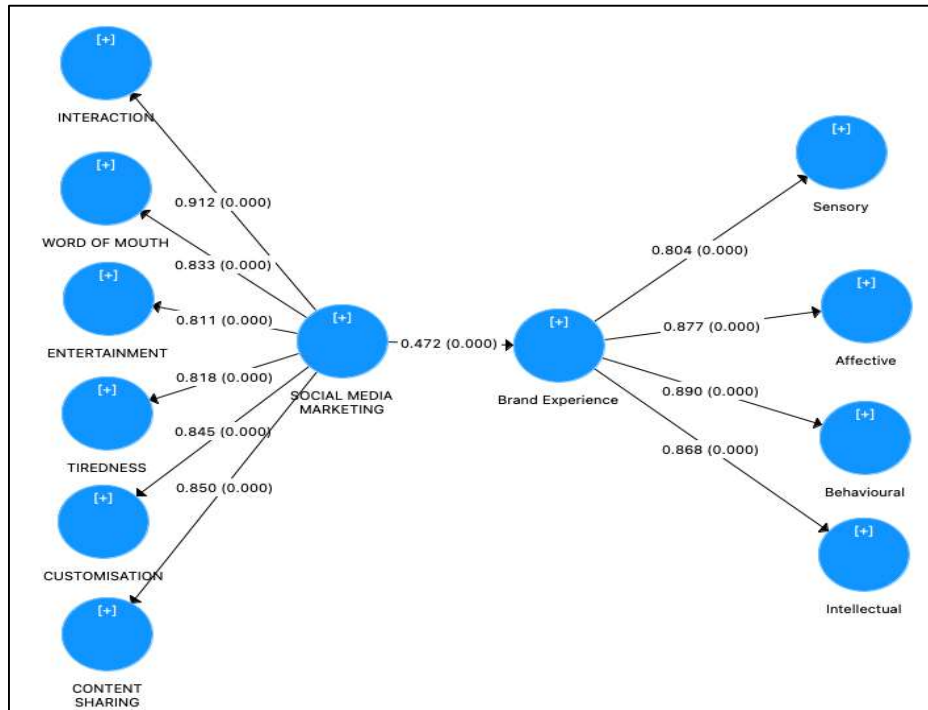

FIGURE II MEASUREMENT MODEL

5.CONCLUSION

With the digital wave of marketing through social media, the way of doing marketing has been changed. Now whole marketing revolves around social media marketing. Through social media marketing, marketers are giving their full effort for creating good brand experience for the customers because they know if they will create good brand experience for them then of course customers will feel more satisfied and become more brand loyal towards their products and brands. Brand experience is not only one term, it consists of some dimensions namely affective, sensory, intellectual and behavioral brand experience. So, marketers are trying to trigger each and every dimension of Brand experience through social media marketing. From conceptual outlook the study examines the brand experience in context of social media which had not been examined in the past. From practical outlook this study gives new understanding to the brand experience through social media marketing.

6.MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

This study proposes managerial implications for establishing positive Brand Experience for Customers through Social media marketing with reference to Fashion Apparel Brands. Managers can create competitive advantage in the market by giving good brand experience to the customers. It is highly required for Marketing managers to share the interactive and entertaining information on the Social media Page of fashion apparel brands for providing customers a memorable and unique experience through social media. Fashion apparel brands page on Social media Platforms should be trendy and customised in order to engage customers

engagement so that they can positively influence the Brand Experience (Intellectual, Behavioral, Affective and Sensory). A relevant information posted on Social media Platforms related to the Fashion apparel brand can directly trigger customers affective, sensory, intellectual, behavioral aspect of brand experience. Each and every post on social media that is being posted is the only one thing which will give customers pleasant and non-pleasant experience so it should be the top priority of the marketing managers. Hence, brand page of fashion apparel brands on social media should be updated regularly and must share all the information about the brands. It will increase more followers of the brand page of fashion apparel brands on Social media Platforms. Marketers will get to know about the experience of the customers by keeping a track on the feedback of the customers given on social media. Resolving customers queries on in time creates a positive experience among the customers. Thus by effective use social media brand experience of the customers can be enhanced. Hence, this research has reinvented Social media marketing as an action approach in context of Brand Experience.

7. LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is only limited to fashion apparel brand, hence future studies can be executed on luxury fashion apparel brands also. The study can also replicate for all other industries like electronics, automobile for future studies. This study can be extended to different demographic population is present on these social media platforms. Larger sample size could also be considered for the future studies. Future studies can also have comparison of different industries which could see the influence of social media platforms on brand experience.

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