

DOES SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AFFECT THE KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION AND BRAND AWARENESS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF FEMALE USERS?

Sana Abbas Kaimkhani
sanakaimkhani@gmail.com
Iqra University, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Presently there has been less substantial research done on knowledge and Brand awareness of Female social media users for fashion brands in Pakistan. The study aimed at finding out how Pakistani Female consumer's knowledge and awareness is affected by marketing on social media platforms such as FACEBOOK, TWITTER, INSTAGRAM and Other Online Brand Communities. The results of my empirical findings based on questionnaires from 250 Female respondents and secondary sources were analyzed by using the SPSS on self-developed research model. The study stresses the benefits of using social media platforms and brand awareness strategies that can be utilized through the online social media systems and fills a existing research gap, about the female users and in how frequent businesses should engage with social media to boost knowledge acquisition and brand awareness.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Female Users, Knowledge, Online Learning, Brand Awareness.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing is one of the most standard ways for any company or brand to satisfy consumer needs and build long-term relations with their customers and to reach out to a newer market. Before the existence of social media platforms or the wide availability of the internet, advertising through television, magazines, newspapers, radio and other medium was norm. However, with the rapid influx of social media marketing (SMM) and online communities, most apparel and fashion brands have smartly invested more time and energy towards marketing their products on these platforms. Majority of the buying power population have Social media accounts like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

SMM has become most widely accepted media of the world because of wide exposure of information disseminations shared through social media. The modern-day consumers especially female millennials are increasingly using online tools, for example, Vlogs, "Facebook," and YouTube channels to share their opinions about products and services they consume. The rise in Internet accessibility and availability of smartphones has led to the new form of what is known as electronic word of mouth (EWOM) which in this research will be referred to as social media (Chivandi, Samuel, and Muchie, 2019).

Social Media platforms provides apparel brands an easy access to their target market, a chance to launch and promote their offering while receiving customer feedback and a way to build relationships with their consumers. Through this interaction, organizations can keep a record of their growing popularity as well as the awareness and perceived image of their brand. While most apparel brands, successful and emerging, consider it important to connect with their customers on this level so that not only they promote their products but also remain front and centre on the consumers brand, few brands still consider social media advertising unorthodox and prefer the traditional means of advertising. It is their argument

that a brand already established with loyal customers and a renowned name, doesn't need to market itself on social media extensively.

Many past studies involving brand elements, learning aspect, consumer-buying behavior have been conducted to check gender differential effect (Zeng, Bhutto, and Soomro, 2019). Very few studies can be found where brand awareness and knowledge acquisition through Social media platforms is being checked with only female gender, Findings of this research will add value to existing literature.

Problem Statement

The goal is to find the impact of online marketing through social media and web communities on how females user acquire knowledge and get awareness regarding apparel brands. The study aims at finding the importance of marketing and e-tailing done by successful and established apparel brands online and how it females learn about new brands and perceive brand image.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fashion Apparel Brands in Pakistan

The fashion industry in Pakistan has vastly developed from 1980s into the 21st century. The generic tailor culture is slowly transforming to designer retailers and fashion design houses. The fashion market in Pakistan is on the rise and in its growing stage prone to updates and alteration as more and more designers flood the market and influence consumers with new fashion styles and trends. It is just not due to the fashion designing professionals but also the consumers who are becoming more fashion conscious and their demand for more stylish apparels and luxury wear. Noted fashion designers like HSY, Maria B., Maheen Khan and Deepak Perwani are just few of the designers who have helped the fashion apparel industry to grow and expand.

This globalization has led to a change in the society's lifestyle and attitude. Due to the higher demand now, Pakistan is becoming an attractive prospective apparel market for various brands. Foreign brands like Monsoon, Next, Mothercare, Mango among others have found a successful niche clientele and quite firmly established themselves in the female clothing sector. The incredible surge in electronic media and the wide availability of social media access to consumers and public has led to a greater awareness of fashion and trends among the consumers as fashion is trickling down towards the masses. With greater demand and awareness, there is a higher demand for more retails brands and the ability to purchase these in greater comfort and time reduced ways (Hamid, 2014).

The Influx of Online Social Network

The rise of electronic commerce has propelled many brand marketers to have both off-line and on-line presence. The development of brands in the digital age has made brand strategists recognize the newer consumer roles and the need to go beyond the classical model in order to reach the changed set of minds of the consumer. Successful brands are those that recognize the need to connect with their consumers not only through their web pages but through different social media outlets as well. While many successful brands chose to stand back when other brand marketers joined the world of cyber space, eventually it was due to the need to further analyze the characteristics of their target market, fierce competition and the allure of cost cutting that they joined the online community (Chernatony, 2000).

Besides the classic system of corporate publicity like advertisements on radio, televisions and newspapers, marketers need to use innovative marketing practices like buzz marketing

or social media marketing. In the latter's case, marketing strategists exploit social media mediums like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Within these online mediums, there is a vast word of mouth phenomenon. This online promotion is amplified by social media users passing news, information and entertainment towards each other and thus increasing the brands awareness with suggestions and recommendations in this online viral cycle (Brogi et al., 2013).

Promotion on social media is quite different from the traditional ways of marketing in terms of research, quality and how often one uses this medium. In U.S., the total time people spent on social media increased by a 37% from July 2011 to July 2012. For marketers and distributors, besides being a part of the social network, they get the added benefit of building their reputations and pulling in more and monetary income (Gul, Shahzad and Khan, 2014).

According to researches done, almost 100,000 tweets are posted on Twitter, 3600 pictures are uploaded on Instagram, 684,478 posts are shared on Facebook and 2 million different searches are made on Google, all in a single day (Lee, 2013).

Online Marketing on Social Media

With the rapid growth of the number of customers of luxury apparels, this market has reached new levels of maturity. There has been a sudden high demand of luxury and quality products in the Middle East's emerging markets, which is leading to vast expansion of the fashion business. Due to the high competition in this field, brands alone cannot rely only on their company's image. This is bringing a change in the fashion market industry (Kim and Ko, 2011).

Due to the fall in the global economics, the sales of the apparel brand had also been affected. They can no longer depend only on their brands image, quality, popularity and their brands awareness amongst the consumers in order to succeed. The brand has to provide an added value to their customers in all ways possible. For this social media networks like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter has largely helped these companies to communicate with their consumers. Marketing through these social mediums has given brands new businesses tools to promote their products. Now days even traditional designers like Louis Vuitton broadcast their fashion shows live on their official websites or on various blogs. Luxury designer houses like Chanel, Gucci and DKNY have even come up with android or iPhone applications. Social media networks like Facebook and Twitter has made both brands and customers accessible to each other. They can communicate irrespective of time, place and medium restrictions. This communication has led to the production of new business models, products and services. This also increases their brand awareness and strengthens consumer brand relationship. Not only through social media can you target your chosen demographic but also the higher age groups, as the two way communication creates a familiarity between the two. Brands can also resolve customer problems directly, clear up misunderstanding, lower prejudice towards them and increase their brand value by exchanging ideas with people online (Kim and Ko, 2011).

Social Media outlets like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram focus on building relationships, shared interests and brand identification (Nguyen, 2010). These communities help to establish a multi-way communication between the brand and consumer. Established brands, like Coca-Cola, Starbucks, Armani and Vogue that are in little need of spreading brand awareness are never the less active social media users as part of consumer engagement and to maintain and further flourish their brand image. These social media platforms help in building an emotionally based consumer-brand relationship thus increasing a brand's equity. With this interaction, the brand achieves an intimacy with the

consumer by exchanging their views, ideas, information, and creating brand loyalty with their customers (Turri, Smith and Kemp, 2013).

Many luxury apparel brands were reluctant to first join the social media pool. It first began in 2009 by Gucci being one of the first leading luxury brand to actively start updating on social media sites. Gucci developed a site www.guccieyeweb.com. It was a multicultural social networking site, which launched its new collection of sunglasses. Through this site they targeted their digital generation consumers. Besides this, Gucci posts at least three times on Facebook daily and also actively tweets on Twitter. Besides Gucci, in November 2009 British luxury brand Burberry developed the site www.artofthetranch.com. The purpose of the site was to attract customers and their admiration for their design of trench coats. The site was noncommercial. The purpose was for the Burberry fans to communicate with one another and with the brand itself. This helped in increasing their online sales. Burberry also gained insight to customer wants and needs. Designers Dolce and Gabbana use social media to interact with their customers and gain their feedback directly. Dolce and Gabbana invite famous fashion bloggers to their fashion shows, who post their feedback on Facebook and Twitter. As a result, customers can see their preferred brand directly modeled without outside influences from fashion merchandisers and editors (Kim and Ko, 2011).

Similarly, many other brands even though were slow to expand online, they are now actively using social media like Instagram and Facebook to promote their products, connect with their consumers and hold contests and events to attract more audience as well as to remain afloat in the competitive waters. While some fashion brands held the exclusive title, due to social media, they have become less reserved for the elite and more approachable resulting in a bigger consumer market for fashion brands. Luxury brands like Chanel and Gucci are now as available to consumers as high street fashion brands like Mango H&M and Zara. Even though the considerate target market of these two classes of brands maybe different, Facebook and Twitter allow these brands to be less reserved and set something akin to a goal status for the consumers who when following these brands online, strive to own these luxury products (Li and Mousseaux, 2013).

Through research, it was determined that demographic profile is linked to online shopping. According to studies, the demographic profile of a consumer tells about the consumer's attitude towards shopping online. Other influential factors include gender, living environment, socioeconomic status, knowledge and awareness. According to Bellman, consumers who buy online, have a wired lifestyle routine and have been using the internet for many years. Such consumers online shopping can be spontaneous and routine driven too. More and more consumers now find online shopping less of a risk and so this increases their online shopping habit. Whether through social media mediums like Facebook or the brands official website, online shopping is widely available to the consumers now. The main riding factor of motivation for people to buy online is convenience. Li describes the five convenience factors associated with online shopping such as time flexibility, time saving, energy saving due to reduced physical effort, more variety readily available at one point and ease of impulse buying and readily responding to an advertisement (Qureshi, Fatima & Sarwar, 2014).

Learning from Social Media

The consumer first look for information internally to ease the decision making process. However, when the required information is not available or inadequate, they search for information from external sources. Now Normally, Consumers rely on Social media platforms for information about which product to buy (Chivandi, Samuel, and Muchie, 2019).

Social media mediums are a way of receiving, giving out and exchanging information without restrictions and boundary limitations. The flow of information is two way. This flow of information companies can use to access their target group and influences the customers buying behavior as well as post buying behavior. Marketing through social media gives rise to company's fears as they consider it giving up control over the content and the rate of information. Marketing through the traditional means that is print ads, television and radio ads etc. are a one way street; the company gives out information, the target group receives it. Diane Hessian, who is the president of Communispace described the change social media brought by stating that the consumers are fighting to get more involved with the brands they consume and that affect their lives. Philip Kotler, a marketing guru is of the opinion that bad news travels faster than good news. So it is hard not to imagine the speed with which today people would spread their opinion and messages through different social media sites. If the negative publicity gets very bad or wide spread, consumers can very well turn to the competitor's products. This shows how much communication between the company and its consumer has become dimensional rather than just the company giving out their information. Concerning any particular brand or product, there is always information and feedbacks available online in different social media channels. Word of mouth online is much quicker compare to offline. The business world has re-centered around catering to and pleasing their consumers. Social media influences a company's sales and brands sales and loyalty and hence the company's forecasts and predictions are impacted as well. As per the social media marketing report, this new influx is not just a fad as 83% of the marketers now place high value on social media and how it influences their business.

According to Vollmer and Precourt (2008), consumers take to social media to develop their own researches. Reviews and other public created content are personal and subjective to users and are more often trusted by consumers than brands marketed content (Lee, 2013). The purchase decisions are not just influenced by traditional marketing channels but also through online platforms. People's preferences and decisions are dependent on the information and input provided by online reviews, blogs, social media entries, reviews and other public formed content.

Social media has not only empowered the consumers by bringing in information they were not privy to before, but has allowed marketers to better target their target audience and consumers, build relationships with them and also influence their purchase decisions more effectively (Lee, 2013).

Learning through Online Brand Community (OBC)

Besides social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, most popular apparel brands have their own official websites along with active OBC (online brand community) pages. These communities allow fashion brands and their customers to communicate with one another regardless of time and location. This two-way direct communication allows the brand a better understanding of their consumer's interests and information to analyze their purchasing decisions. The interaction between the consumers allows the brand to find out their strengths and weaknesses and consumer expectations (Brogi et al., 2013).

In an online brand community, members who share similar interests get together and receive benefits through their online participation. These communities can have both group and individual participation in online social interaction on a virtual level that is developed through the integration of communication with contents created by community members. Therefore, people who gather on this virtual space are looked upon as a socio cultural phenomenon. An online brand community's main asset is the brand itself. The community can be grouped in two major categories; one is a consumer initiated community meaning it is built by the members of the community itself, the other is company initiated community

which is built by the company of ownership in order to reach out to its consumers and gain their feedback and effectively communicate with them. OBC's main features include membership interaction, inflow of quality of information, service quality and reward (Jang, Ko and Koh, 2007).

H₁: Consumers Knowledge acquisition is significantly more when brand is marketed through Twitter.

H₂: Consumers Knowledge acquisition is significantly more when brand is marketed through Facebook.

H₃: Consumers Knowledge acquisition is significantly more when brand is marketed through Instagram.

H₄: Online Brand Communities have a significant impact on knowledge acquisition.

Brand Awareness:

Aaker described brand equity as a brand's asset and liability, the brand name which either adds value or subtracts it from a product or service provided to the consumer by the firm. According to Keller, brand equity should be understood in relation to brand awareness and the strength, differentiation and favourability the consumer holds in their memory when it comes to the brand (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2013).

Brand awareness is the accessibility of the brand in memory and whether the consumers recognize it or not. Brand Image is how the consumers connect with the brand and what the brand represents to them. The perception of the brand held by the consumer, either builds a brand's image or destroys it. Brand awareness and image are two components of brand equity, and signifies how the consumer responds to the brand's marketing and promotion (Chandon, 2003).

A customer brings value to the brand, which is not only limited to the profit but also is the total profit the consumer provides to the brand over the duration of the entire relationship with the respected brand. Thus, a company should always maintain and maximize their relationship with the customers and treat them as a financial asset. It is important for the company to have a strong brand equity by maintaining their brand image and expanding their brand's awareness. The company should also focus on building customer equity. Through special recognition and programmes, companies can increase relationship equity by building strong customer bond. The brand should have a USP, something the consumer can identify as a specialty from the brand. Brand equity's two keys are brand awareness and image and how it is perceived by the customers. As social media acts like a joined marketing medium, social media marketing drives customer equity. Marketing on social media increases the value of the brand by providing added value to customers that cannot be provided through traditional means. Facebook and Twitter like social platforms make it possible for customers to communicate sincerely with the brand and other users. The brand's actions on these social platforms positively affect their relationship as well as brand equity. Due to the intense and increased competition in the luxury fashion apparel industry, customer loyalty towards a specific brand has been impacted. It is hence important to treat the customers as an important part of the brand by affectively and actively communicating with them through social media to maintain brand equity (Kim and Ko, 2011).

A regular communication between the brand and its consumers, strengthens a brand's image and product messages, increases brand awareness and fortifies brand recall. The consumer-brand relationship can be strengthened by developing significant brand encounters. Consumers who receive extra value and benefit from a brand are more likely

to commit and stay loyal to them, regardless of the competition. Brand association can be created by interacting with the customers that leads to a positive attitude (Jain, 2014).

According to the research conducted by Zeb, Rashid & Javeed, it was found that brand name has a significant importance with consumers including other factors like quality and the trending fashion. It is up to the marketers to take note of these attributes when promoting their products and advertising their brand. It is important for the marketing managers to promote their brand and its products in a way that would attract the female extrovert consumers. This can be done by promoting the brand based on trust and on self-image, being approachable, friendly, promising, and delivering on reliability (Zeb, Rashid & Javeed, 2011).

OBC's are necessary for a brand as they have a great influence on brand value. Brand value and brand equity are usually related to one another. According to Feldwick (1996), one of brand equity meaning is its brand value. Through research it is found that online brand communities help built a brand's equity thus increasing the value of the brand. Many research works have found that community members have a higher brand loyalty than non-members. It is also confirmed that online community membership leads to benefactor behavior like continuation of membership, recommendation of brand, brand loyalty and participation. According to Wood (2000) brand loyalty is the foundation of brand equity and a brand's value is determined by the rate of brand loyalty which ensures of future cash cows (Dubois and Westerhausen, 2011).

The attachment one has to a certain brand or set of brands, can be explained as brand loyalty. Brands that have a strong and loyal customer base enjoy competitive advantages like decreased transactional and corporate marketing cost, wide spread word of mouth action, increased cross selling rate and a lower cost of failure. Brand loyalty in a way promotes satisfaction rate, willingness of consumer to repurchase, price premium, commitment to brand and preference to brand. According to Oliver (1999), brand loyalty is a result of high level of commitment from the consumer's part, which leads them to return to the brand repeatedly (Jang, Ko and Koh, 2007).

Hypothesis for Perceived Brand Awareness:

H₅: Marketing through Twitter has a significant impact on brand awareness.

H₆: Marketing through Facebook has a significant impact on brand awareness.

H₇: Marketing through Instagram has a significant impact on brand awareness.

H₈: Marketing through Online Brand Communities have a significant impact on brand awareness.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling Technique and Size:

For this research, primary data collection method was performed. A questionnaire was administered among sample population. Convenience sampling has been used for identifying sample respondents for this research. The carefully established questionnaire examined the impact of online marketing on females brand awareness and knowledge acquisition. The areas taken into consideration for the research are the metropolitan cities of Pakistan like Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, Females buy from various popular apparel

brands online and offline. To get the information required for the project, 251 females were selected as respondents to fill the questionnaire.

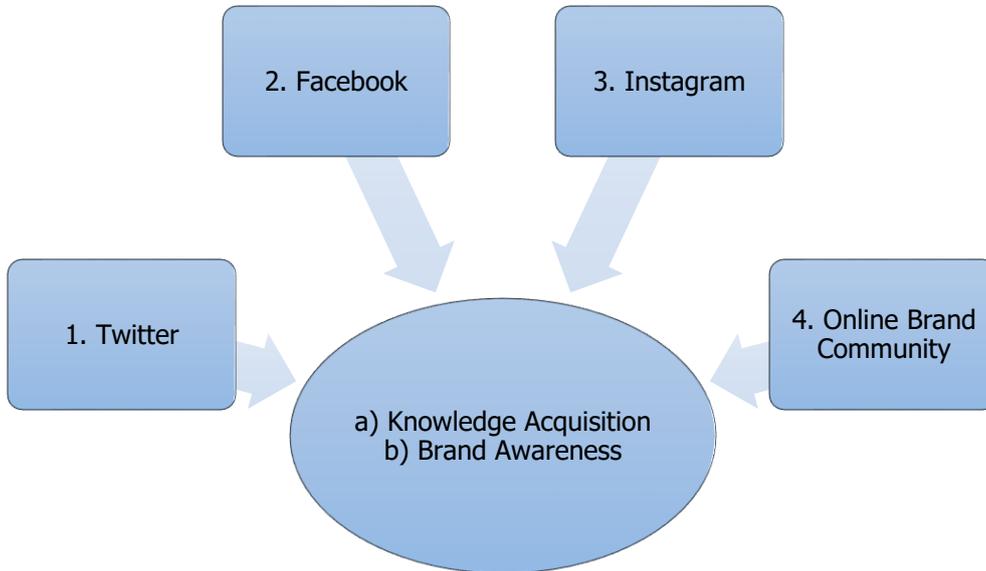


Figure 1:
Self-Developed Research Model

Statistical Technique

In this research, One Sample T Test is used as the statistical technique. One Sample T Test is applied to determine whether online marketing mediums have an impact on brand knowledge acquisition and brand awareness. This technique is used to examine the correlation among dependent and independent variables.

Hypothesis Testing and Interpretations of the Results

H₁: Consumers Knowledge acquisition is significantly more when brand is marketed through Twitter.

Table 1:
One Sample Statistics

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--|-----|-------|----------------|-----------------|
| Twitter has a significant impact on Knowledge Acquisition. | 251 | 2.848 | 0.90453 | 0.05721 |

**Table 2:
One-Sample Test**

| | Test Value = 3 | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|---------|
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Twitter has a significant impact on Knowledge Acquisition. | -2.657 | 249 | 0.008 | -0.152 | -0.2647 | -0.0393 |

The above table shows that the mean of the model is 2.8480 and Sig. (p value) of the model is 0.008, which is less than 0.05 so hereby we accept the hypothesis.

H₂: Consumers Knowledge acquisition is significantly more when brand is marketed through Facebook.

**Table 3:
One-Sample Statistics**

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|-----|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| Facebook has a significant impact on Knowledge Acquisition. | 250 | 2.5053 | 0.71023 | 0.04492 |

**Table 4:
One-Sample Test**

| | Test Value = 3 | | | | | |
|---|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|---------|
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Facebook has a significant impact on Knowledge Acquisition. | -11.012 | 249 | 0 | -0.4947 | -5831 | -0.4062 |

The above table shows that the mean of the model is 2.5053 and Sig. (p value) of the model is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 so hereby we accept the hypothesis.

H₃: Consumers Knowledge acquisition is significantly more when brand is marketed through Instagram.

**Table 5:
One Sample Statistics**

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--|-----|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| Instagram has a significant impact on Knowledge Acquisition. | 248 | 2.9516 | 0.96585 | 0.06133 |

**Table 6:
One-Sample Test**

| | Test Value = 3 | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|--------|
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Instagram has a significant impact on brand awareness of apparel brands. | -0.789 | 247 | 0.431 | -0.0484 | -0.1692 | -0.724 |

The above table shows that the mean of the model is 2.9516 and Sig. (p value) of the model is 0.431, which is more than 0.05 so hereby we reject the hypothesis.

H4: Online Brand Communities have a significant impact on knowledge acquisition.

**Table 7:
One Sample Statistics**

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--|-----|-------|----------------|-----------------|
| Online Brand Communities have a significant impact on Knowledge Acquisition. | 250 | 2.732 | 0.98695 | 0.06242 |

**Table 8:
One-Sample Test**

| | Test Value = 3 | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|--------|
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Online Brand Communities have a significant impact on Knowledge Acquisition. | -0.789 | 247 | 0 | -0.0484 | -0.1642 | -0.824 |

The above table shows that the mean of the model is 2.7320 and Sig. (p value) of the model is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 so hereby we accept the hypothesis.

H5: Marketing through Twitter has a significant impact on brand awareness.

**Table 9:
One-Sample Statistics**

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--|-----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Twitter has a significant impact on brand awareness of apparel brands. | 250 | 2.23 | 1.369 | 0.086 |

**Table 10:
One-Sample Test**

| | Test Value = 3 | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Twitter has a significant impact on brand awareness of apparel brands. | -8.898 | 250 | 0 | -0.769 | -0.94 | -0.60 |

The above table shows that the mean of the model is 2.23 and Sig. (p value) of the model is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 so hereby we accept the hypothesis.

H6: Marketing through Facebook has a significant impact on brand awareness.

**Table 11:
One-Sample Statistics**

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|-----|-------|----------------|-----------------|
| Facebook has a significant impact on brand awareness of apparel brands. | 250 | 3.716 | 0.94068 | 0.05959 |

**Table 12:
One-Sample Test**

| | Test Value = 3 | | | | | |
|---|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Facebook has a significant impact on brand awareness of apparel brands. | -12.035 | 249 | 0 | -0.716 | -0.5988 | 0.882 |

The above table shows that the mean of the model is 3.7160 and Sig. (p value) of the model is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 so hereby we accept the hypothesis.

H7: Marketing through Instagram has a significant impact on brand awareness.

**Table 13:
One-Sample Test**

| | Test Value = 3 | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Instagram has a significant impact on brand awareness of apparel brands. | 5.734 | 248 | 0 | 0.518 | 0.34 | 0.7 |

The the mean of the model for Instagram was 4.3246 and Sig. (p value) of the model is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 so hereby we accept the hypothesis.

H8: Marketing through Online Brand Communities have a significant impact on brand awareness.

**Table 14:
One-Sample Test**

| | Test Value = 3 | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Online Brand Communities have a significant impact on brand awareness of apparel brands. | 6.734 | 248 | 0 | 0.428 | 0.31 | 0.72 |

The the mean of the model for Instagram was 4.3246 and Sig. (p value) of the model is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 so hereby we accept the hypothesis.

**Table 15:
Hypothesis Assessment Summary**

| S.NO. | Hypotheses | Sig. Value | Results |
|----------------|---|------------|---------------|
| H ₁ | Consumers Knowledge acquisition is significantly more when brand is marketed through Twitter. | 0.008 | Supported |
| H ₂ | Consumers Knowledge acquisition is significantly more when brand is marketed through Facebook. | 0.000 | Supported |
| H ₃ | Consumers Knowledge acquisition is significantly more when brand is marketed through Instagram. | 0.431 | Not Supported |
| H ₄ | Online Brand Communities have a significant impact on knowledge acquisition. | 0.000 | Supported |
| H ₅ | Marketing through Twitter has a significant impact on brand awareness. | 0.000 | Supported |
| H ₆ | Marketing through Facebook has a significant impact on brand awareness. | 0.000 | Supported |
| H ₇ | Marketing through Instagram has a significant impact on brand awareness. | 0.000 | Supported |
| H ₈ | Marketing through Online Brand Communities have a significant impact on brand awareness. | 0.000 | Supported |

CONCLUSIONS

After carrying out this research and interpreting the research findings through primary and secondary data, it can be concluded that Females acquire knowledge and get awareness about the product usage and benefit more today through online mediums of marketing like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and their own official website. Due to the viral nature of these networks, all publicity, whether bad or good have an impact on a company's brand image and how the consumers perceive it.

When it comes to Knowledge acquisition of females, Instagram has negligent impact on it as compare to Facebook, Twitter and online communities. The latter three however play a key role in boosting learning about the product attribute and usage among female consumers, the key role being always being at the customers mind by active online presence. A successful apparel brand, despite having a strong foothold in the market, needs an extensive online marketing team to stay relatable to its specific gender based consumers.

DISCUSSION

Awareness and knowledge about the brand are two major factors of any company's business. How they learn and get aware, what the consumers expect the brand to deliver and how aware they are of the brand; all increases a brand's equity. The high competition in the market is just one of the reasons why even a successful brand has to come up with unique strategies in order to stay ahead in the race and having an online presence and marketing their products on the web in today's time is a necessity. The results of the research indicate the importance of Facebook, Twitter and online communities and how they help in increasing a brand's awareness among consumers and public. Online pages have become in a way source of information and consumers voice. Reviews, whether good or bad, ideas whether helpful or negligent are shared by consumers with the apparel brands team. These online networks have allowed consumers to not only voice their opinions but their ideas and in a way stay connected to a brand they are loyal to. These consumers similarly expect these companies to respond to them and to interact with them to exchange ideas. This in turn benefits both the company as well as the consumer.

Similarly, a brands image is how the consumers perceive the brand in their mind. Despite an apparel brands successful status, the consumer would be more attracted to a brand that has an attractive and very active online presence. These days success is somehow related to how well a brand's retail outlet would look, how much money has been spent on the interior of their stores and who is modeling and doing the makeup or fashion photography of the apparel brands catalogue shoot. The more famous people involved and more extravagant the setup, and more active, colorful and high fashion a brand's online page is, the more it radiates success and a positive brand image.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The research has high implications for digital media agencies and companies dealing with Female fashion apparels. Except Instagram, the rest of the mediums play a vital factor in increasing knowledge and creating awareness of an apparel brand. Only Instagram has a low implication on Knowledge acquisition when researching female consumers. Keeping in mind the results and conclusion of this research on Female only consumers, Future research may be conducted by comparing the awareness creation and image building process of both the genders. Moreover, how important are marketing mediums like billboards, newspaper and magazine advertisements and TVC's in today's time, when more and more companies are opting for online and social media advertising as its more wide spread and more economical. Furthermore, future research can incorporate individual level collectivist values (Soomro, 2019) of females and how it moderates the relationship between Mediums and Brand awareness. Besides apparel, future researches can also focus on cosmetics and FMCG categories.

REFERENCES

- Brogi, S., Calabrese, A., Campisi, D., Capece, G., Costa, R., & Di Pillo, F. (2013). The effects of online brand communities on brand equity in the luxury fashion industry. *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*, 5, 5-32.
- Chandon, P. (2003). *Note on measuring brand awareness, brand image, brand equity and brand value* (pp. 1-12). Fontainebleau: Insead.
- Chivandi, A., Samuel, M. O., & Muchie, M. (2019). Social Media, Consumer Behavior, and Service Marketing. In *Consumer Behavior and Marketing*. IntechOpen.
- De Chernatony, L. (2001). Succeeding with brands on the Internet. *Journal of Brand Management*, 8(3), 186-195.
- Dubois, T., & Westerhausen, U. (2011). Brand loyalty creation within online brand communities. *Marketing Communications Management, Thesis of Copenhagen Business School, Department of Marketing, Characters*, 234.
- Gul, M. S., Shahzad, H., & Khan, M. I. (2014). The relationship of social media with fashion consciousness and consumer buying behavior. *Journal of Management Info*, 2(1), 24-45.
- Hamid, S. (2014). *Investigating Pakistan consumer's buying behavior for international luxury fashion brands* (Doctoral dissertation, Savannah College of Art and Design).
- Jain, N. (2014). E Marketing and the consumer decision making process.
- Jang, H., Olfman, L., Ko, I., Koh, J., & Kim, K. (2008). The influence of on-line brand community characteristics on community commitment and brand loyalty. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 12(3), 57-80.
- Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. *Journal of Business research*, 65(10), 1480-1486.
- Lee, E. (2013). Impacts of social media on consumer behavior: decision-making process.
- Li, Y., & Mousseaux, S. (2013). Luxury fashion brands on social media: a study of young consumers' perception.
- Nguyen, H. (2011). Facebook marketing for fashion industry.
- Qureshi, H. A., Fatima, R., & Sarwar, A. (2014). BARRIERS TO ADOPTION OF ONLINE SHOPPING IN PAKISTAN. *Science International*, 26(3).
- Schivinski, B., & Dabrowski, D. (2016). The effect of social media communication on consumer perceptions of brands. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 22(2), 189-214.
- Soomro, Y. A. (2019). Antecedents of brand loyalty in the fashion industry of Pakistan: Moderating effect of Individual-level collectivist values.
- Turri, A. M., Smith, K. H., & Kemp, E. (2013). Developing affective brand commitment through social media. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 14(3).

Zeb, H., Rashid, K., & Javeed, M. B. (2011). Influence of Brands on Female Consumer's Buying Behavior in Pakistan. *International Journal of Trade, Economics and Finance*, 2(3), 225.

Zeng, F., Bhutto, M. Y., & Soomro, Y. A. (2019). Chinese Smartphone Brands: Gender, Consumers Behavioural and Attitudinal Loyalty.

BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of the AUTHOR



SANA ABBAS KAIMKHANI

Currently a research scholar at Department of Management Science, Iqra University Karachi, Pakistan. She has remained visiting faculty at the Iqra University and taught many introductory Marketing and management courses to undergraduate students.

She holds a M.Phil in Marketing and Bachelor of Commerce degree.

Sana Abbas Kaimkhani (Visiting Faculty and Research Scholar)

Department of Management Sciences, Main Campus, Iqra University, Karachi, Pakistan

E-mail: sanakaimkhani@gmail.com