

Social media and the fashion industry: How firm-created content can shape consumer behaviour and brand image.

Abstract

Purpose - The goal of this article is to try to find out if the firm's generated content on social media influences consumer impulsive buying and purchase intentions through hedonic brand image and functional brand image.

Design/methodology/approach – To analyse the influence of company created communication on purchase intention and impulsive buying across fashion brands which are active on social media, we evaluated 303 data sets generated through a structured questionnaire which was collected online using Qualtrics. In order to analyse the impacts of firm generated content on impulsive buying behaviour and purchase intentions we applied a regression analysis technique.

Findings – The result of our study showed that the firm generated content influenced the purchase intention but did not influence the impulsive buying behaviour. The firm generated communication had a positive effect on the purchase intention and negative effect on the impulsive buying.

Originality/value – This paper explores the impact of firm generated content on purchase intention and impulse buying, a topic of significance in the age of social media for both researchers and marketers.

Keywords - Firm generated social media content, Hedonic Brand Image, Functional Brand Image, Purchase Intention, Fashion, Social Media

Paper Type - Research Paper

Introduction

The fashion industry has undergone a major transformation over the past couple of decades. Through a plethora of opportunities, ideas emerge, which in turn gives room to more social media strategies in the fashion industry. This segmented niche of the industry solely concentrates on identifying new tactics and methods to identify consumers' purchase intentions in luxury fashion brands (Gautam 2017). To practically analyse the weight the fashion industry holds in today's realm, in 2010, the world clothing and textile industry reached almost \$2,560 trillion and the women's wear sector alone is expected to pass \$621 billion by 2014 (Breyer).

Consumers are increasingly turning more towards social media to access brand and product information while moving away from traditional media (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). The emergence of social media has given room to an abundance of opportunities for marketers and consumers. Social media Marketing is the most upfront technique for luxury and fashion brand to avoid shrinkage (Mohr, 2013). Social media has made it possible for an individual to communicate with an international audience about products while connecting buyers to sellers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

At present, opportunity has been accessible for everyone across all social media platforms (Mohr 2013). Although traditional forms of media still play a huge role in influencing consumer behaviour, fashion has appeared to be more flexible and fluid over the past couple of years. Majority of the marketing campaigns and strategies at present revolve around Instagram. The concept of electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) emerged through the digital age, where brands

thrived on studying consumers' motives and their interactions with fashion brands. The role of eWOM in consumer influence and motivation is an area that is still yet to be further researched on. The current WOM frameworks include fashion and brand variables that push consumer influence (Wonly 2013).

The relationship held between the New media and the fashion industry is undeniable. In the 21st Century, designers and brands who realize the true worth of social media are the only ones who hold a fanbase (Ahmad. N, Salman. A, Ashiq. R, 2015). Although the fashion industry and social media have been branches that hold separate research bases, the factors taken into play as middlemen have still not been understood as clearly as the other bases have been mapped out. The use of Social Media Marketing (SMM) through platforms like Twitter, Instagram and Facebook have further boosted the market for luxury brands, but the role of marketing in affecting consumer behaviour is still a ground that hasn't been much focussed on (Kim and Ko 2010). The establishment of materialism because of SMM in users would further boost purchase behaviour by regulated audience specific content (Kamal, Chu and Pedram 2013).

The hypothesis was tested on a sample across various age groups to determine the prevalence of social media influence in purchase behaviour. The paper focuses on four key hypotheses; Firm-created content has a positive effect on Hedonic brand image, Firm-created content positively affects Functional brand image, Hedonic brand image Positively influences Impulsive buying, and Functional brand image Positively influences Impulsive buying.

While there have been previous studies undertaken on these hypotheses, there is a gap in understanding how social media influences the fashion industry directly. It is stated that researchers and brand managers hold a limited understanding of brand influences and consumer perceptions (Schivinski 2014). The research contributes to a larger ongoing study that aims to fill the gap in the industry which is yet to analyse the subjective factors that play a role in consumer behaviour.

The characteristics of online media, fashion trends and tailored content are areas that hold a variety of research across various departments. Although multiple papers seek to understand the role of SMM and tailored content in promoting brands, very few papers centralize the role of hedonic motivation and purchase intentions from the perspective of the consumer. The paper aims to fill the gap that exists between the variables by connecting the dots and forming the loop that leads to consumers buying or investing in a product.

The survey was conducted using Qualtrics and gathered a completed survey of 303 participants. The survey was distributed to a convenience sample over a two-week period. The paper attempts to study the influence and motivation that drives the audience to purchase or do impulsive buying of their respective brands and products.

Literature review

Firm-created content

Firm-created content on social media is defined as the control of the firm and brand managers (Bruhn et al., 2012). There is an increasing trend in social media research, and consumer perceptions of certain sectors and brands that have not yet been explored as to how firm-created and user-generated content plays a role in consumer behavior (Schivinski & Dabrowski 2016). Social media is a tool that enables two-way communication between stakeholders and aids public relations, (Alikilic & Atabek 2012; Skaržauskienė et al., 2013; Alexander & Gentry 2014; Kilgour 2015; Uyar & Boyar 2015). It is also said that social media is a vital element in any marketing communication strategy as well as a major contributing factor to brand activity (Hutter et al. 2013; Monica and Balas 2014).

A corporate page on social media can establish communication with their consumers (Schivinski and Dabrowski 2015). External and internal use of social media is a helpful medium to organisations in deriving value (Alberghini et al. 2014). Social media can also be used to enable employees to inspire, inform, connect, and help the employees to share their knowledge and experiences.

Brand Image

It is said that branding is a system of images and ideas that exist in human consciousness, expressing information about a given brand and the basic attitude towards it (Zhang 2015 and Kotler & Barich 1991). A strong brand image creates a superior brand message for a brand over their rivalry brand (Sallam 2016). The performance of the brand improves with a positive brand image (Chakraborty and Bhat 2018a). A brand image has positive influence on the purchase intention of the consumer (Kala and Chaubey 2018).

When a consumer is developing their understanding of brand image, their own mental representation is determined by both personal and intrinsic elements including beliefs or perceptions of a brand (Soler-Labajos & Jiménez-Zarco 2016). This means that brand image is strongly influenced by the individual and their own unique evaluation (Soler-Labajos & Jiménez-Zarco 2016). It can take years to build a strong brand identity online but only one misstep to ruin a brand's reputation (Bacik et. al 2018). Hence creating a brand on social media is a long game. Nowadays, social media is one of the most powerful tools to market a brand, connect with consumers and market in an effective way (Bacik et. al 2018). A brand image can be explained in terms of hedonic brand image and functional brand image (Chakraborty and Bhat 2018b).

Hedonic brand image

It is possible to understand Hedonic brand image as the impressions, emotions, or meaning that customers created by abstract and imagery-based factors that are not inherently related to brand characteristics, results, or utilitarian (Adetunji, Sabrina, and Sobhi 2017). Hedonic brand images develop a self-concept of connections, emotions, fun, attachment, and symbolism in consumers (Schivinski et al. 2020). Consumers use social media because they provide instant pleasure. It has been found that using social media evokes a psychophysiological high in positive valence and arousal. Participants have been shown to miss a lot the involuntary affective reactions caused by the prime images to their assessments of the ambiguous pictographs shown milliseconds after the prime social images (Adetunji, Sabrina, and Sobhi 2017). Social media users possess strong and spontaneous hedonic reactions to social media cues, which, in turn, makes it difficult to resist

social media temptations. (van Koningsbruggen, Hartmann, Eden & Veling 2017). Measures of attitudinal dimensions provide building blocks for researchers attempting to develop models that explain a greater proportion of the variance in consumer behaviour (Hermanda, A., Sumarwan, U. & Tinaprillia 2019).

Effects on Hedonic brand image

Social media has exploded as an online discourse category, where people can create content, share, bookmark and network at an incredible rate (Asur & Huberman 2010). Marketers seek to present a positive image of their brand and given that social media profiles are completely controlled by the seller, they will always transport positive communication content (Bruhn et al. 2012) i.e. Firm created content. It was found also that humorous, and pleasant messages such as jokes about products and services are considered content with hedonic value in social networks (Chun & Lee 2016). Therefore, the hypothesis is as follows:

H1: firm-created content has a positive effect on Hedonic brand image

Functional Brand Image

Both user-generated and firm-created content, on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, has the potential to influence the brand image. This is because both companies and consumers can produce brand-based information (Bruhn et. al 2012). Brand image or value can be disseminated across four considerations - functional, emotional benefits, life-changing values and social impact (Swaminathan & Keller 2019). The functional associations refer to the brand's utilitarian, economic and rational aspects such as reliability, ability, usefulness and quality (Schivinski et al. 2020). Brand image, more generally, can be defined as the consumer's association linked to a brand. Functional brand image, in particular, takes into consideration the functional benefit of a product or brand to assess the quality (Bruhn et. al 2012). When consumers are assessing the relevance of a brand, a key factor in this decision is differentiating the strength of a functional attribute (Swaminathan & Keller 2019). Contributors to functional brand image include associations with reliability, competence, skilfulness, usefulness, and quality (Keller 2013).

Effects on Functional brand image

Firm-created social media communication has a significant influence over functional brand image (Bruhn et. al 2012). When brands share content online, a variety of possible associations can be forged in the consumer's mind, some being functional or performance related and some being more abstract or conceptual (Swaminathan & Keller 2019). This internal weighing up between functional and emotional attributes influences a consumer's idea of brand equity (Swaminathan & Keller 2019). Earlier studies were aimed to differentiate the impact of traditional media and social media over consumer-based brand equity and brand image. Interestingly, while it was found that firm-generated content had the most influence on functional brand image, user-generated content (i.e. influencers), had a much larger impact on hedonic brand image. Therefore, the hypothesis is as follows -

H2: firm-created content positively affect Functional brand image

Impulsive Buying

Impulsive Buying is defined as the purchase behaviour which is influenced by sudden, unplanned and spontaneous gestures leading to buying a product without emphasizing evaluating it before buying as well as considering the subsequent consequences of the purchase (Paramitha et. al 2014). It focuses more on the appeal of emotions, sentiment and passion which originate from viewing the product or its advertisement which ultimately leads to buying it rather abruptly or unconsciously (Cahyorini and Rusfian 2011). The urge to buy impulsive is often related to an irrational desire to own an item and is said to be the intention to purchase without any previous planning or knowledge (Zafar et. al 2019). Research done for identifying intrinsic factors that could give rise to the impulsive buying tendency showed that the personality of an individual plays a big role in handling this tendency. Conscientious individuals are more planned buyers hence possess low impulsive buying tendencies compared to people who have high extraversion behaviours i.e. affected easily buy the elements of the outside world (Badgaiyan & Verma 2014).

Effects on Impulsive Buying

Impulsive buyers do not make decisions before-hand about buying a particular product, most of their impulsivity caters to how much they get influenced by the perceptions formed about a brand via their advertising. Research conducted into Electronic E-commerce Applications also showed that impulse buying behaviour when tested for several product categories is found to have a strong connection with clothing and other apparel against furniture and other goods amongst candidates. This suggests that impulse buying has a positive link with the variable of the hedonic brand image especially in the fashion industry, and the sensory arousal in this case 'attractiveness' (Drossos and Kokkinaki 2014).

For hedonic shoppers, shopping means not just buying the product for fulfilling their requirement, but it is beyond that. They seem to possess various hedonic motives like fun, enjoyment, fantasy and other sensory arousals along with an urge to satisfy all of them (Farid, Dania and Ali 2018). Since most of the impulsive buyer's ulterior buying tendencies are to satisfy their hedonic desires, H4b Hedonic brand image showed a positive influence on Impulse buying (Czarnecka, Schivinski, and Keles 2020). Therefore, the hypothesis is as follows:

H4b: Hedonic brand image Positively influences Impulsive buying

Research into the consumption of cosmetics based on a brand's image declared that various environmental factors play a significant role in instigating emotions of happiness and joy in a person that ultimately takes control over a consumer's impulsive buying tendencies (Hyun and Kang 2014). Therefore, both hedonic and functional brand image have some sort of a positive influence on impulsive buying, so the hypothesis is as follows:

H3a: Functional brand image Positively influences Impulsive buying

Purchase Intentions

Purchase intention can be defined as the behaviour adaptation of new products or innovativeness towards the new products which have been currently owned by consumers or intend to own shortly (Al-Jundi, Shuhaiber & Augustine 2019). Consumer participation plays a major role in influencing purchase intention (Rungsrisawat & Chankoson 2020). The perceived value of a customer also plays a vital role in purchase intention (Chiu et al. 2014). Trust and gender do not play a significant role in purchase intentions (Lien et al. 2015). The purchase intentions are also influenced by the values like the hedonic, tradition which are considered as values of benevolence and universalism (Stringer, Mortimer & Payne 2020). When it comes to buying the product quality and price are accessed by the consumer, the value is also compared to the product life cycle of the product (Wahjudi et al. 2018). The advertisement on social media and the internet is more trusted and assumed to be more informative compared to traditional media (Tsang, Ho & Liang 2014).

Effects on Purchase Intentions

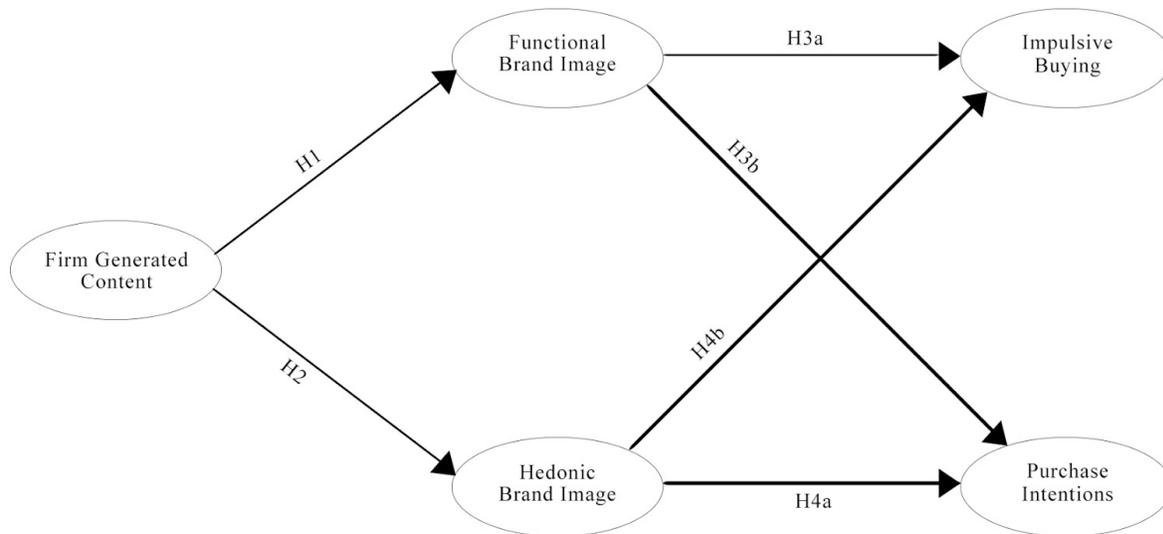
Hedonic consumption is related to the fantasies, feelings and fun (Kuikka & Laukkanen 2012) i.e persons developed perception for a brand image in similar manner. The hedonic purchase intentions are related to pleasure in day to day life (Kim & Kim 2014). The communication to develop the brand image with informative, fun develops positive purchase intention on the consumer (Young, Gillespie & Otto 2019). Brands communication through social media has a positive impact on purchase intentions of the consumers (Godey et al. 2016). Thus, we propose the following:

H3b: Hedonic brand image Positively influences Purchase Intentions

The consumer association with a brand can be seen with the functional brand image (Adetunji, Sabrina & Sobhi 2017). Functional brand images are always used by brands to focus on functional performance like product quality (Han et al. 2019). The social media provides the consumer to interact with the brand and existing customers thus creating a functional brand image and influencing the purchase intentions of consumers (Adetunji, Sabrina & Sobhi 2017). This helps the consumer to imagine if the product is going to solve their problems in the real world (Shareef et. al 2019). Thus, we propose the following:

H4a: Functional brand image Positively influences Purchase Intentions

Therefore, the proposed conceptual framework is as follows: [Fig. 1]



[Fig. 1]

Research Methodology

To determine how firm created content on social media influences consumers’ impulsive buying and purchase intention we allowed participants to select their favoured brand. Brands rely heavily on social media for promoting the products and has become an important part in marketing strategy for a brand (Loureiro, Serra & Guerreiro 2019). We collected data through an online questionnaire designed in Qualtrics using the matrix table and was distributed by the authors on social media channels. The link to the questionnaire was distributed by the author due to their contacts, large private groups with professional focus, student-made groups, and the link was open to all users with a hashtag relating to our survey topic.

. The users were requested to click through our questionnaire after informing them in general terms the topic and purpose of our survey. The link of the questionnaire was open for six days, from 10th October to 15th October.

The questionnaire was pre-tested by 10 people. Pre-testers had the credentials of being former students in the same course, other RMIT students. The internet survey is cost effective and enables access to large and diverse samples in less time (Hays, Liu & Kapteyn 2015). Convenience sampling was used by authors to find the pre testers and respondents for the project so that higher efficiency level can be achieved (Pajo 2017) thus the generalization can’t be done from the results of this research. After opening the link displayed in the social media post, or messages circulated by the authors an introduction page displayed which explained the purpose of the research in more detail with the privacy statement. For the sake of asking some questions for screening the participants we asked some questions like about their age, education, profession, working hours so that we can gain confidence of the participants to further answer the questionnaire. We added some more screening questions like which social media platforms are

actively used and asked to choose from the listed social media platforms were asked. A screening question was asked which social media platforms are actively used and asked to choose from the listed social media platforms like the Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, WhatsApp. The following question asked for the number of hours they spent each day on social media platforms. Further we asked them to mention a fashion brand they like and follow on social media which was linked to the latent variables. Later we asked for framed responses to questions relating to the latent variables with the mentioned brand name. The questionnaire scales used in this research by authors have been adapted from relevant journal articles. The items were measured with five point Likert scale, starting at one, 'strongly disagree', to five for 'strongly agree'. Firm Created content was measured using items adapted from Schivinski & Dabrowski (2014). Functional Brand Image and Hedonic Brand Image was measured using items adapted from Bruhn et al. (2012). The Impulsive Buying measured using items adapted from Ridgway et al. (2008) and Purchase Intention was measured using items adapted from Yoo, Donthu & Lee (2000), Shukla (2011). The full list of items used in the questionnaire are as below in Fig. 2.

The data gathered was analysed using IBM SPSS. The total responses submitted were 407 out of which 90 responses were not considered because of incompleteness and 14 responses of the remaining qualified responses were not considered further as they were considered void due to lack of variance in the answers submitted by the subjects' standard deviation was 0.3 or less. Thus, the count for valid questionnaires is 303. The missing values were replaced by the median of nearby. The skewness and the kurtosis were measured. The correlation was also analysed, and the results were obtained by running regression analysis with valid questionnaires.

According to the collected data the females consisted of 52.3% of the sample and males consisted of 47.7% of the sample. The structure of the respondents' age was as follows: 63.3% were 21-29 years old, 14% were 30-39 years old, 11.4% were 18-20 years old, 4.2% were 50-59 years old, 3.6% were 40-49 years old, 2.3% were 17 or younger and 1.3% were older than 60 years old. In terms of the level of education, 88.3% of respondents have received further education beyond high school, 10.7% have received a high school diploma and 1% listed their education as 'other'. In terms of employment status, 58.8% of respondents were employed and working between one to over 40 hours per week, 24.7% were currently looking for work, 10.4% unemployed and not looking for work and the remaining 1.3% were either retired, disabled or unable to work. We had asked the respondents how often they use social media, most of the survey participants said '2-4 hrs/day' (37.81%). We then moved into their usage habits like how many of them viewed fashion content on social media and we found that most of them selected 'often' (32.07%). Finally, the last question asked them how often do they 'like' a post related to fashion, 43.69% mentioned 'sometimes'. This shows the amount of fashion content is shared on social media by the participants. To conclude we found that the survey respondents in general are moderate to high social media users and are more inclined to liking fashion related content.

Results and Implications

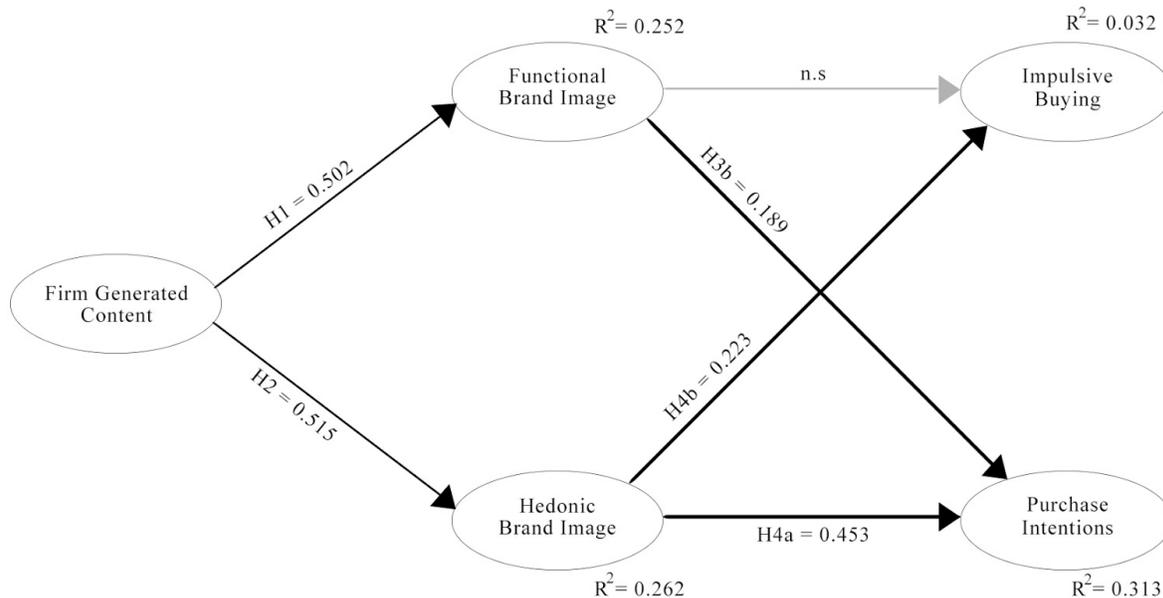
Measurement

We used Cronbach's alpha, which was above 0.7, to check the reliability for each scale. The internal consistency of each scale, the coefficients ranged from 0.702 to 0.83. Afterward, the mean and standard deviations were examined and the correlations for the variables were calculated. The correlation which indicates a moderate and strong correlation between the factors ranged from

0.17 to 2.56. The correlation matrix with the indicators of reliability and validity are mentioned below in Table A2.

Main Effects of the Study

The summary of our test performed as well as our hypothesis is mentioned in the below table (A3). We have proven in our study that firm created content positively influences functional brand image, therefore the results are H1 (t-value=10.14; p-value=0.001). Firm created content also had a positive effect on the Hedonic brand image H2 (t-value=10.52; p-value=0.001). In the study we found that functional brand image did not influence impulsive buying H3a (t-value= -0.2; p-value= -0.767). The hypothesis Functional Brand Image influencing Purchase Intention was positive H3b (t-value=3.91; p-value= 0.001). It was also proven that Hedonic brand image had a positive influence on Purchase intentions H4a (t-value=7.08; p-value=0.001). Finally, The framework mentions that hedonic brand image positively influences impulsive buying H4b (t-value=2.79; p-value=0.006).



Conclusion and Discussions

Upon analysis of the survey, it can be studied that three among the four hypotheses were positive. However, the relation between *Functional brand image and Impulsive buying*, turned negative with the survey's collected.

Theoretical Contributions

As the results from our research point out that both Hedonic Brand Image and Functional Brand image are positively influenced by the firm's created content, it typically proves the relationship between the three to be well-grounded since the association between these three was found positive even in previous research papers (Yuniar and Perbanas 2019).

Further, our research consolidates the relationship between Hedonic Brand Image and Impulsive buying behaviour as endorsed in previous research. Consumers are affected by aspects

like attractiveness, personality and recognition (word of mouth) of the brand and they directly influence their purchase intentions (Dey & Srivastava 2017).

However, our study found that Functional Brand Image doesn't seem to play a role on an impulsive buyer's purchase intentions since our results demonstrated that the driving force for developing purchase decisions in fashion are due to elements like attractiveness and desirability towards the brand rather than its reliability and credibility. Thus, we could conclude that factors of the hedonic brand image variable overtakes the functional brand image when it comes to making impulsive decisions in the fashion industry (Dey & Srivastava 2017).

Contribution to Marketing practice

The results drawn from our research are confined to a specific sample size of 303 participants. Hence, it cannot be applicable universally. The ideal persona to have undertaken the survey to help the manager and marketing professionals happens to be a female participant somewhere between 21-29 years old and has completed a bachelor's degree. She is employed and works full-time over 40 hours per week. She uses Instagram 2-4 hours daily and often comes across content posted by different brands on the platform. It appears that she 'likes' the content posted by these brands but is not a fan of posting brand-related content by herself. She mostly follows the brand - 'Adidas' on Instagram and is satisfied with the brand's social media communications. She finds the brand credible and reliable at the same time considers purchasing its products highly due to attractiveness. Most of her purchase intentions are affected due to impulsiveness and she intends to purchase and recommend the brand's products even in the future.

Therefore, from a marketing perspective, we can say that Firm-Generated Communication plays a major role in framing both the Hedonic and Functional brand image (BF) of the organisation/company on social media. The positive influence that Firm-Generated Content (SMC) has over developing the identity of the brand on social media suggests that brand's should take into account the practise of implementing prolific content on social media in order to capture more audience-appeal and impact their purchase behaviour.

Also, the strong positive effect that (BF) has over Impulsive Buying (IB) and Purchase Intentions (PI) implies that consumers are mainly inclined to the brand and desire to purchase their products because of its attractiveness and bold character. Thus, brands could improvise on aspects like developing newer versions of their products, designing new product-packaging and involve advanced methods at advertising to increase their followership on social media, eventually increasing their consumers.

Similarly the positive link between Functional Brand Image (BT) and PI states that consumers take interest in reading the content created by brands on social media (SMC) which drives forces of reliability and credibility that plays a significant role at formulating their purchase intentions. Therefore, providing detailed information about their products and services while communicating is a good tactic that makes consumers develop trust about the brand.

Thus we can conclude by saying that there are many areas of firm-generated content on social media which brands can focus on developing and essentially improving their social-media communications that will lead to an increase in their prospective customers.

Limitations and Recommendations

The study was limited to the fashion industry and does not pose as an example in context to audience behaviour generally across all social media platforms. The results of this study potentially could be applied to other industries or genres on social media; however this is unclear at this stage.

Another limitation of this study is that it relied heavily on circulating the online survey link to a convenience sample of people, that the researchers could reach out. The rate of responsiveness was dependent on how well the participants were willing they were to complete the survey without incentive. There is also the potential that responses were similar since the demographic of participants contacted were quite similar.

In future, if this study was to be repeated, the sample chosen could be extended to a wider demographic. It would be interesting to understand whether these results could be applied to other cultures outside of Australia and India from where the participants participated.

Psycho-social considerations behind audience and topic study were not accounted for. There is no consideration provided to past behaviour or opinions of the audience in context to why they purchase or prefer a brand. Audiences across certain social platforms tend to display brand loyalty, this could deviate between social causes that the brand supports or quality of the product. The framework used does not give room to understanding customized content and the role they play in context to hedonic motivation or influence.

As the participants conducted the survey based on a fashion brand they choose to follow, it would be interesting to compare the results of our research with a survey based on advertisements seen on the participant's social media feeds, that they don't necessarily choose to see or follow. This could potentially impact the participant's perception of brand image as well as their tendency to impulse buy products from fashion brands they do not already know.

In the future the basis of our research can be used to explore more areas of this study as well as use to replicate our conceptual framework with variables more suited to their area of study. We have proven the various hypotheses which will give scope for researchers by referring to this paper.

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Appendix

TABLE A1. List of constructs and measurements used

Construct and Measurements	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Based on
<i>Firm generated content</i>					
[SMC1] I am satisfied with the company's social media communications for (brand)	4.09	0.82	-1.21	2.47	Schivinski & Dabrowski (2016)
[SMC2] The level of the company's social media communications for (brand)	4.06	0.85	-1.06	1.73	
[SMC3] The company's social media communications for (brand)	4.17	0.86	-1.54	3.39	
<i>Functional Brand Image</i>					
[BT1] (brand) is reliable	4.4	0.74	-1.51	3.53	Bruhn et al. (2012)
[BT2] (brand) is credible	4.31	0.77	-1.55	3.88	
[BT3] I trust (brand)	4.36	0.78	-1.50	3.28	
<i>Hedonic Brand Image</i>					
[BF1] () is attractive	4.5	0.75	-2.06	5.74	Bruhn et al. (2012)
[BF2] () is desirable	4.38	0.78	-1.56	3.23	
[BF3] () is stronger in character	4.3	0.85	1.48	2.61	
<i>Impulsive Buying</i>					
[IB1] I consider myself an impulse purchaser.	3.13	1.32	-0.27	-1.10	Ridgway et al. (2008)
[IB2] I buy things I do not need	3.09	1.39	-0.16	-1.30	
[IB3] I buy things I did not plan to buy	3.31	1.31	-0.33	-1.07	
<i>Purchase Intention</i>					
[IP1] I would buy (brand)	3.64	1.13	-0.61	-0.45	Yoo, Donthu & Lee, (2000), Shukla (2011)
[IP2] I am willing to recommend others buy (brand)	4.17	0.91	-1.43	2.40	
[IP3] I intend to purchase in the future	4.26	0.86	-1.28	1.71	
Note: All items scored between 1 to 5; All figures are rounded to 2.d.p.					

TABLE A2
Correlation and indicators of reliability & validity

	α	Mean	SD	SMC	BT	BF	IB	PI
Firm Generated Content	0.772	4.11	0.70	1.00				
Functional Brand Image	0.795	4.36	0.65	0.50	1.00			
Hedonic Brand Image	0.829	4.39	0.69	0.52	0.56	1.00		
Purchase Intention	0.829	3.18	1.16	0.17	0.09	0.18	1.00	
Impulse Buying	0.702	4.02	0.77	0.44	0.45	0.53	2.56	1.00

Note: n = 303; Control variables: age, gender and social media channels; ** denotes p-value < 0.01

TABLE A3. Standard Structural Results

Hypothesis		β	<i>t</i> -Value	<i>p</i> -Value	Acceptance or Rejection	VIF
H1	Firm Generated Content → Functional Brand Image	0.50	10.15	0	Accepted	1
H2	Firm Generated Content → Hedonic Brand Image	0.52	10.52	0	Accepted	1
H3a	Functional Brand Image → Impulsive Buying	-0.20	-0.30	0.767	Rejected	1.445
H3b	Functional Brand Image → Purchase Intention	0.22	3.91	0	Accepted	1.445
H4a	Hedonic Brand Image → Purchase Intentions	0.45	7.09	0	Accepted	1.445
H4b	Hedonic Brand Image → Impulsive Buying	0.19	2.79	0.006	Accepted	1.445

Note: n = 303; Control variables = age, gender, social media channels

Effects of Firm Created Content on Purchase Intentions

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Introduction SURVEY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FASHION BRANDS SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR. The purpose of this survey is to understand the purchase behaviors of consumers who follow fashion brands on social media. The information to be obtained from this study will not be disclosed to any third party and will be used only for aggregate calculations. Completing the questionnaire will take approximately 3-4 minutes. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY!

Gender Are you male or female?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Age Which category below includes your age?

- 17 or younger (1)
- 18-20 (2)
- 21-29 (3)
- 30-39 (4)
- 40-49 (5)
- 50-59 (6)
- 60 or older (7)

End of Block: Default Question Block

Start of Block: Block 1

Education What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Doctorate (1)
 - Master's degree (2)
 - Bachelor degree (3)
 - Diploma (4)
 - Highschool (5)
 - Other (6) _____
-

Employment Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

- Employed, working 1-39 hours per week (1)
- Employed, working 40 or more hours per week (2)
- Not employed, looking for work (3)
- Not employed, NOT looking for work (4)
- Retired (5)
- Disabled, not able to work (6)
- Other (7) _____

End of Block: Block 1

Start of Block: Block 2



SMP Which social media platforms are you currently using:
(You can select more than one)

- Facebook (1)
 - Instagram (2)
 - Snapchat (3)
 - YouTube (4)
 - Messenger (5)
 - WhatsApp (6)
 - WeChat (7)
 - TikTok (8)
-

SMU Please mention your daily social media usage per day:

- 1-2 hours/day (1)
- 2-4 hours/day (2)
- 4-6 hours/day (3)
- 6-8 hours/day (4)
- 8-10 hours/day (5)

End of Block: Block 2

Start of Block: Block 3



FC How often do you view fashion content on social media?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (4)
- Sometimes (5)
- Often (6)
- Always (7)



Likes Do you often 'like' content posted by fashion brands?

- Never (1)
 - Rarely (4)
 - Sometimes (5)
 - Often (6)
 - Always (7)
-



Posting Do you post content relating to fashion on social media?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (4)
- Sometimes (5)
- Often (6)
- Always (7)

End of Block: Block 3

Start of Block: Block 4

FB Please choose a FASHION BRAND that you follow on social media and would like to give your opinion about: (Please note that you will use the same brand during the whole survey)

End of Block: Block 4

Start of Block: Block 5



SMC The next sentences are about your level of knowledge about the social media communication of $\{FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue\}$
Please check the option that best suits you.

	Strongly DISAGREE (1)	Slightly DISAGREE (2)	Undecided (3)	Slightly AGREE (4)	Strongly AGREE (5)
I am satisfied with the company's social media communications for $\{FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue\}$ (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The level of the company's social media communications for $\{FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue\}$ meets my expectations (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The company's social media communications for $\{FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue\}$ are very attractive (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 5

Start of Block: Block 6



BT The next sentences are about the trust you have towards $\${FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue}$ Please check the option that best suits you.

	Strongly DISAGREE (1)	Slightly DISAGREE (2)	Undecided (3)	Slightly AGREE (4)	Strongly AGREE (5)
$\${FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue}$ is reliable (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
$\${FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue}$ is credible (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I trust $\${FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue}$ (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 6

Start of Block: Block 7



BF The next sentences are about your feelings towards $\{FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue\}$ Please check the option that best suits you

	Strongly DISAGREE (1)	Slightly DISAGREE (2)	Undecided (3)	Slightly AGREE (4)	Strongly AGREE (5)
$\{FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue\}$ is attractive (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
$\{FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue\}$ is desirable (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
$\{FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue\}$ is strong in character (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 7

Start of Block: Block 8



IB The next sentences are about your level of impulsiveness to purchase a product of \$ {FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue} Please check the option that best suits you.

	Strongly DISAGREE (1)	Slightly DISAGREE (2)	Undecided (3)	Slightly AGREE (4)	Strongly AGREE (5)
I consider myself an impulse purchaser. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I buy things I do not need. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I buy things I did not plan to buy. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 8

Start of Block: Block 9



PI The next sentences are about your preferences you have towards $\${FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue}$ Please check the option that best suits you.

	Strongly DISAGREE (1)	Slightly DISAGREE (2)	Undecided (3)	Slightly AGREE (4)	Strongly AGREE (5)
I would buy $\${FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue}$ rather than any other brand available. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am willing to recommend that others buy $\${FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue}$. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I intend to purchase $\${FB/ChoiceTextEntryValue}$ in the future. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 9

Start of Block: Block 10

End Thank You

End of Block: Block 10

Reflective Summaries

Varsha Baiju - s3807838

Qualitative research is a branch that has never stood out to me before due to my phobia of numbers. Although the initial stream of research did not seem to capture my interest, Bruno genuinely made the stream sound much more easier and hassle free throughout the portion.

The Quants group formed initially started out with five students, which later added onto six upon my delayed entry into the group. The initial phase of figuring out our roles and objectives were hazy as there was a lot of confusion amidst our group hence causing a little bit of worry within. However, through Bruno's guidance and support, we were able to pull through as a strong team.

The first week of Quantitative Research proved to be rather difficult for me as I had to find a new house to reside in, while desperately seeking employment as I had run out of funds. Upon mailing Bruno the third week, I was able to gain clarity and mail all the members of group 4 asking if they'd be okay with a new member joining. The group was very empathetic and determined as we were all able to work through each of our schedules and priorities while placing together our final paper. Learning how to use Qualtrics and customizing questionnaires was another interesting element that i had to learn upon the 4th week of Research.

Our group consisted of members who were aware of their core strengths and hence knew which responsibility they should take up. I took up responsibility for the introduction, abstract, limitations and editing as I had much more information to catch up on in regards to the variable content and topic discussion. As a group, we would always make time to communicate through Whatsapp so that we were constantly aware of what was happening. Tasks and changes to me made were always published on the platform for the ease of finding the pointers to work on.

Critical Inquiry is a subject I genuinely enjoyed studying this semester. With the guidance and encouragement by Bruno, my team made it more so easier and interesting to understand and indulge in what the subject was seeking to create.

Caitlin Hughes - s3431917

As someone who has not really delved into the world of statistics before, I found this portion of the course both challenging and interesting. I learnt a whole range of new skills from identifying variables to developing a qualitative survey that can be analysed quantitatively.

Group work can always be difficult to navigate, so I was impressed from the outset by how invested everyone was in this assignment. While it was challenging not being able to collaborate each week in person, we chatted almost daily on WhatsApp and used the weekly class time together to our advantage.

Initially as a team, we struggled with finalising our conceptual model and locking down our research question, as our topic was quite broad. I believe I contributed here with helping to narrow the focus of our research and identifying appropriate variables. In terms of the paper itself, I worked on the literature review section, researching functional brand image and helping with the overall editing. Alongside another team member, I then worked on the methodology section, filling out the participant, procedures and measures portions, detailing how we conducted the survey and selected our sample of participants. I also analysed the descriptive statistics for the results section of the paper.

One of the more interesting elements of this research for me personally, was working on the questionnaire and learning how to use qualtrics. While I will be doing qualitative research for my individual project next year, I think this knowledge could potentially be useful in the future.

Overall, I think we worked really well together as a team and got the job done, regardless of falling behind other groups some weeks. Our research area is quite topical at the moment, particularly with popular documentaries such as 'The Social Dilemma', prompting discussion around the influence of social media on our conscious and subconscious behaviours. I found this assignment interesting to develop a greater understanding into how much of what we interact with on social media influences our spending habits and views of brand worth and identity. Statistics are *slightly* less intimidating to me now!

Souvik Sarkar - s3767603

Overall, this research helped me understand the concepts of developing a quantitative research paper. It was quite a challenging task initially because of being new to the area, but I believe that I acquired a wide range of skills that are practically very important from the industrial viewpoint.

Given the unfortunate time of maintaining social distancing due to Covid-19, we all faced some difficulties at maintaining a rhythm of going about with the assignment but eventually ended up putting together a classic example of a successful quantitative research study that we believe could be used as a beneficial resource by the fashion industry even in the future.

Despite such environmental challenges, each of us played a terrific role at maintaining a strong team-chemistry and showed great determination and commitment at delivering our parts in the report, also, within the stipulated time frame. We used 'WhatsApp messenger' daily to communicate and organise group meetings as we progressed with our work.

For starters, it took us a while to identify the research topic and develop a conceptual framework based on it, but after a series of meetings with our professor and from his advised recommendations, we were finally able to frame a specific research question and build a relevant framework around it by selecting the appropriate variables from past researches.

My main contribution to our team was at devising the conceptual framework and writing about the variable – Impulsive Buying. Next, I designed the data-tables that carry the results (output) of our survey and last but not the least, I articulated the 'Conclusions and Discussions' part of our research.

Besides that, this stream pushed us to learn the process of constructing a survey-questionnaire using Qualtrics as well as analysing the output collected on the SPSS software. These are the two key operations of quantitative research and I feel privileged to have inculcated those methods. I might leverage this skill in future researches to achieve accuracy when deriving results.

At last, like any other group-assignment, it was a memorable experience to work with people from diverse academic as well as cultural backgrounds. The fact that we understood each other's strengths and weaknesses and allocated tasks accordingly was an exceptional tactic at getting fast results. Personally, I wasn't a great 'numbers-guy' as I just managed to pass in statistics during my Bachelor's Degree, but this assignment has instilled a great deal of confidence in me now and I have chosen to undertake another quantitative research for my next semester's course-work.

Jove Costa - s3796523

When this course started I was not the most keen as it included numbers and data, something that I am not the most fond of but through learning this subject, it has definitely been a challenging one right from choosing a topic and designing a conceptual framework along with a team mate. Since I had never done this style of research (quantitative), it was intimidating. As the course went on and I learned more about the structure of the paper, it started intriguing me more day by day. The factor that caught my interest is that we would be analysing real data sets by using scales to measure various factors of human behaviour. Qualtrics was a software that I learned by myself and I found it easy to use once I got the hang of it.

I noticed that this form of research although being intimidating at the beginning started to grow on me, and the biggest take away from this project was that nothing is really difficult if you have understood what to do clearly. Also having a goal is important as that is the end destination of the paper. Along with the help of my teammates, we designed the structure of the paper as well as delegated the work ahead of us. Learning about various factors like mean, standard deviation, coefficients was so interesting to me and I learnt so much about how real-world quantitative research works. It allowed us to learn more about the framework and how variables influence other variables.

Through the pandemic it was a task to gather the group and work simultaneously, but all of us adapted to the situation and had WhatsApp group calls/chats almost every second day. Some of my team members were helpful and performed the tasks allotted to them by me. I ensured that all of us did each variable separately so that the work was spread out evenly.

To conclude I would say that, I appreciate all the work my group has put in as well as the initiative by my lecturer to make sure we are getting the proper feedback as well as being guided properly. The lectures were also detailed and provided accurate explanations for most of the parts. Overall, I can say that I learned a good amount of information through this subject and I am looking forward to my individual quantitative paper in the future.

Chirag Tembhurne - s3804189

I found this assignment to be very fascinating as I am always intrigued by numbers and statistics. Every step of the process from defining variables to creating a qualitative survey which was very challenging and enlightening. I have acquired a whole range of new skills while doing this assignment with a bunch of amazing and talented people.

Group Work can always be a little hard to handle so I was very impressed from the very beginning because everyone in the team was comfortable with each other and were putting lots of effort into getting things done. We used WhatsApp to communicate with each other in the team and we used Google Doc to share all the literature tables but because of covid-19 we had little hurdles like there were times when some of the group members were not available for group calls to discuss the next steps for the assignment.

We were very clear about our research topic, but we had a little difficulty finalizing our conceptual framework for which our professor helped us through. I have done Hedonic brand image and its effects including the referencing part of the paper. I have learnt Qualtrics with the help of a team member and assisted him while writing down survey questions.

I have been always fond of learning new software and skills and while working for this assignment I had the opportunity to learn IBM's SPSS which I learnt with another group member of mine as he had some prior experience with the software he was very helpful. It has been very exciting to learn how to use Qualtrics and SPSS and to be able to appreciate the amazing amount of flexibility it offers. The study of the consequences was one area that I did not do as well. I'm not mathematically inclined, although there's an obstacle I encounter and remember it's a field I might need to explore and make further effort to grasp P values. I learned a lot from talking about latent variables and checking the theory that I intend to take to the next level of this Masters with me. As I lack marketing knowledge, the literature review was a positive experience and helped me to understand the concepts. It has made me understand the principles of brand image by being introduced to a variety of marketing studies.

Our group was under good leadership as everyone in the group was designated with equal amounts of work which made everyone work more effectively and efficiently. In the end I would say that everyone in the team worked through their part and I would especially like to thank our professor as because of his guidance this research would not have been possible.

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I never had experience in studying data and analysing the outcome as I come from an Advertising and Marketing background. In this class, I found the quantitative easy to comprehend as it was well structured. For me, this was a good hand on the basic statistics which I will be using in my next semester for the professional research thesis. The main key takeaway is that I learned to interpret the conceptual models, data analysis of other researchers properly and to formulate a conceptual framework.

Having learnt to construct a conceptual model, I also learnt to identify the scales used to measure the latent variables, as well as the solid report structure. The different facets of a quantitative study that required a lot of secondary research to support the hypothesis we are testing was crucial to learn. Running the data collected from the surveys on SPSS software to gain results and test our hypothesis would be the favorite component.

Working online is really challenging, our group has made sure to catch up twice a week to see how the assigned work is going and we helped each other if it was not upto mark. For sharing the documents our group used Google Docs, for meetings we used WhatsApp. We agreed on the topic unanimously, but for variables in the conceptual framework took some time.

To analyse and ensure good flow within the group, each team member took one latent variable in the literature review. Along with one latent variable I assumed the role of analysing the data collected through SPSS and ran the regression analysis to gain the results.

I also worked on other sections to help my teammates where they were not upto the expectation. It was a pleasure working with them and it has been a phenomenal experience.