

Emerging Online Marketing and Buying of Luxury Goods through Social Media

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ABSTRACT

Marketing has shifted its approach owing to the internet age that has resulted in the world being a global village, that is, connected by social network sites and various social media platforms. Social media marketing has come as an additional and complementing marketing approach. Online marketing cannot out rightly downplay and erase the traditional marketing mix, but a critical direction all business has to take to have a competitive urge. Luxury local fashion needs to be made visible on the online marketing being augmented by appropriate online based marketing strategies that combine factors of brand equity, social influence and social media marketing efforts. A quantitative study was conducted and a survey conducted through structured questionnaires. The study established online shopping perceptions as playing a major mediating role for final shopping decisions. Hence the study concluded that brand equity, social influence had to be part of the strategies guiding social media marketing efforts and online shoppers' perception being relevant to maintain and build the brand

Keywords: Online shopping, social media marketing, Brand equity, social influence, perceptions, luxury local fashion.

INTRODUCTION

World studies have reflected an increase in South African internet user ship from around 5 million in 2010 to just below 25 million in 2015, internet spending rising from R20million in 2014 to R59 million in 2017. The increase in internet usage has also been coupled by access changes with the desktops and laptops slowly losing popularity rendering mobile phones the most used gadgets for internet access taking a share of 61% by 2015 (The Space Station, 2018) Increase in usage of the internet is coupled with increased internet marketing and its sophisticated dynamics (Arora & Sivakumar, 2017)

Firms therefore have to take advantage of the internet usability which ascertains wider reach and ease of communication for brand marketing by enforcing the identity of the brand through campaigns on social media. Manufacturing and business operations have been integrated through digitalisation of systems and marketing strategies have to follow suit in being digital. The study by Arora and Sivakumar (2017) took interest in the marketing local luxury Fashion brands in South Africa through the emerging

online marketing, by considering the dynamics of buying luxury brands using social media.

The study objective is to evaluate the emerging online marketing and buying of luxury goods through social media. The study also uses South Africa as the study area since it is one of the largest countries in Africa and hence the findings may be generalized to other African countries and other trade partners of South Africa such as the BRIC, that is, Brazil, Russia, India and China. The Research variables are aimed at explaining Buying Luxury Goods Online in South Africa (local luxury fashion). We state the hypothesis of this study as follows: if Social Media Marketing Efforts, Online shopping Behaviour, Brand Equity and Social Influence are enhanced then the buying of luxury local fashion will increase. The research study is done by employing a questionnaire-based survey and a quantitative based approach is pursued.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media Marketing Efforts

The intentions of social media marketing efforts are to achieve brand loyalty, price premium and

brand preference (Godey, Manthio, Pederzoli, Rokka, Aiello, Donvito & Singh, 2016) and such efforts include four activities; interaction, trendiness, entertainment, customisation and word of mouth. According to Arora and Sanni (2019) interactions of a firm with social media come in 2 facets: (i) *Firm Utilisation of social media and Social Networking Sites* and (ii) *Marketing Public Relations (MPR) (Papasomou & Melanthiou, 2012)*

Social media has created a best and more outreaching opportunity for public relations. Public relations are critical for strengthening brands, people connections and dialogue, which aid in firms building relationships, increased awareness of the brand and product, and utilisation of various concepts for marketing. Firm customer/dialogue increases brand loyalty and facilitates product improvement.

An exponential increase of social networking sites (SNS) led to their utilisation by firms seeking recognition, prominence and business online including for stakeholder communications. These comprise social media platforms such as Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter and so on and Blogs for two-way communications that ensure direct contact with customers which are utilised for brand awareness, reputation building, brand loyalty, consumer engagement through creative means. However, despite it being a major business tool, a vast number of challenges exist in utilising SNS for sales and stakeholder access (Arora & Sivakumar, 2017). For optimal utilisation of SNS / social media, factors of interest are, follower population, firm active response rate, time spent by customers on the site, firm size and attitudes towards (Becker & Nobre, 2014). A significant Theory essential for utilising social media for marketing is then Market Public Relations (MPR) which suggests that it is of paramount importance for marketing managers and bloggers to build credibility and be innovative in online presence skill to optimise utilisation of social media in marketing over time (Arora & Sanni, 2019).

Companies Social Media Metrics and Measurement

As Social media platforms and technologies keep revolving and advancing Arora and Sanni (2019) developed a mathematical evaluation model to handle the need for continuous evaluation of a firm's online performance for assured continuous significant market presence, in line with trends and against the industry

benchmark. The dimensions of performance evaluation examined in Social Media Metrics and Measurement (SMMM), were social, economic, ethical and technological. The metrics "Social Media Composite Index" measures a firm's commitment to social media through factors of speed of response, speed of information update, ease of use or understanding of messages and sites all facets of engagement, and seeking leverage on SNS (Becker & Nobre, 2014). These measurement factors thus form the critical basis for marketing strategy for firms.

Brand Equity

Brand equity is a critical component for measuring marketing performance and a critical source of competitive advantage as a built brand derives trust from consumers. Branding is thus an essential part of online marketing and hence the need for building online brand equity (Wiedmann, Hennings & Siebels, 2017) According to the Luxury Concept - Prestige Seeking Consumer Behaviour (PSCB) Theory (Vigneron and Johnson, 1999, 2004) the marketing manager has to ensure brand equity through both interpersonal aspects of snobbery and conspicuousness and the personal hedonistic and perfectionist tastes, further social, political and societal factors have to be incorporated. These are presented into four dimensions (Monkhouse, Barnes & Stephan, 2012; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004)

The luxury concept is emphasised as broad as it pertains to a wide spectrum of factors; a certain lifestyle, human involvement, scarcity, value portrayed to others, beauty, pleasure and flatter, indulgence; class and convenience Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels (2017); Vigneron and Johnson (1999). A definition of luxury offered by Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels (2017) while explaining the Luxury Concept is that it is the satisfaction of psychological and functional needs through display or use of particular brands that invoke esteem to the consumer. Luxury goods/brands can therefore be identified as those that are; exclusive and rare, bearing highest market price and quality ratios despite possibility of low price to functionality ratio. Luxury brands hence must bring, brand: exclusivity; awareness; identity and perceived quality (Wiedmann, Hennings & Siebels, 2017).

This explains that luxury brands should maintain their identity by marketing themselves as such hence competing with the aforementioned integrated concepts. Brand marketing management however, has to balance

cost and value as the egoistic motivations of luxury have two dimensions, the other, socially oriented luxury for prestige and the other based on personal orientation of value. To effectively market, prestige (luxury) brands, marketing managers have to establish the key values of which have to be maintained to support a lasting brand prestige. Marketers hence have to cluster the market according to their perceived prestige values, managing weakening prestige value and thus gaining competitive advantage. Reference is made to the five types of prestige seekers as identified by Leibentain (1950) in the Snob Effect Theory, which have to be identified for utilisation of their values and self-consciousness and balancing their orientation in marketing strategy (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999, 2004). Yang and Mattila (2016) however, emphasised varying contests that the marketer has to consider, for example, market/industry, intangible or tangible goods, which have to be viewed differently in terms of luxury perceptions and gave the example of a luxury restaurant compared to a luxury hospital. Propositions and implications by Amatulli and Gianluigi (2012) to the luxury retail marketers go hand in hand with the consumer objectives and these are summarised below:

- **Ostentation:** For goods purchased as a show of wealth, the marketer has to charge a high price for exclusivity to emphasise on their status symbol values, similar responses following
- **Materialism:** For Identity material luxury objects marketing emphasis has to be on the consumer purchasing and owning more of the product
- **Superfluous:** For symbolic luxuries, not necessities, the luxury marketer has to emphasise additional benefits beyond the product function
- **Individual Lifestyle:** For products that match the consumer lifestyle, the retail marketer has to brand their shop to completely represent personalities of that brand lifestyle
- **Emotions/hedonism:** For products that invoke pleasure and emotion to the consumer, the marketer emphasis should provide an emotional and pleasant shopping experience.
- **Culture:** There is usually a strong connection between luxury and culture hence the brand marketer has to emphasis on culture for the brand value.

Social Influence

The suggestion by Uzgoren and Guney (2012) is that purchase of highly priced products is usually done to impress others. As the Veblen Effect purports, however the Snob effect incorporates social and personal influences to the prestigious purposes of luxury goods consumption. This snob effect affects consumer behaviour of individuals over and above their personal and social factors. In luxury goods consumption, there is great importance placed on a price being high or being low.

The Veblen effect, the consumer takes importance in the price being high but is not worried about it being owned by other consumers. However, in the Snob effects while the same importance is placed in the price being high, there is more motivation in the prestige of being the only owner of the products (Leibentain, 1950). As the product price decreases and as product awareness increases, motivation of snob consumers decreases.

- Bandwagon Consumers (Social) are worried about the effect they make on others rather than the price, they are interested in prestige.
- Veblen Consumers (Conspicuous) mainly seek to impress others and are attracted to products as the price increases for prestigious reason, the higher the price the higher the demand.
- Snob Consumers (Unique), take privileged in high prices with the aim of being the only product consumer and avoid popular brands for personal prestige.
- Hedonic Consumers (Emotional) do not place value in price as a prestige indicator but are rather worried about their personal feelings and satisfaction.
- Perfectionist Consumers (Quality) use personal judgement to purchase luxury goods and the importance of price serves just as quality proof.

Matsibekker (2009) concluded that the first three consumers are driven by social values and the later influenced by personal values. These consumer characteristics hence influence the selling style to make the product more appealing to the customer, e.g., a seller adopting a rude attitude for psychological influence to the buyer, insistent marketing. Snob consumers seek self-actualisation, personal freedom, status, compensatory consumption. A snob consumer

may not necessarily be rich and want to fill that deficiency through prestigious tastes or to fit into prestigious circles. Scarce goods increase in price and raise their desirability, Dodoo (2017).

Online Shopping Perceptions

Dholakia and Bagozzi through the Mind Set Formation Influence Model Dodoo (2017) indicated that what influences a consumers' searches / behaviour online is website selection, propensity to browse a website longer and the kind/ quality of information obtained from the website. The mind-set therefore influences greatly, cognitive, behavioural and effective aspects of online consumer shopping activities (Distaso, McCorkindale & Agugliaro, 2015)

Consumers or individuals have a different mind-set that affects their emotions, thoughts and reactions to issues/matters and hence process the same information differently. The choice or push to shop or purchase a product is hence influenced by the mind-set of the consumer (Wiedmann, Hennings & Siebels, 2017). Wind (2001) states that consumer mind-set is either goal oriented or experimental, however online shopping consumers are more goal oriented than experimental oriented shopping behaviour when they opt to shop online. Marketing Managers have to get insight in that it is the mind-set that influences cognitive orientation, either experimental or goal oriented. Mind-set formation has an influence on online shopping.

Internet Marketing Global Trends

The internet is a virtual platform attracting all age groups for socialising, sharing, cooperation and entertainment. The internet platform has people banking, shopping, in web communities which led to a shift in the way of life has bearing a huge impact on marketing and advertising as the traditional newspapers were overtaken by the internet in readership (Dodoo, 2017). The trends in Internet marketing as given by Trengove, Malczyk and Neneke (2020) are as follows:

- **Social Media Marketing:** This marketing approach rides on peer influence, building personality brand, sharing and taking into account the heterogeneous nature of the market or group.
- **Viral Marketing:** It is used on social media platforms by exponentially spreading a marketing message. The method is used to create online awareness by taking advantage of the social media sharing capability to

persuade interface by online word of mouth (WoM).

- **Brand as Product:** More advantage is derived from the selling the company brand or name more than the products being sold. Through Webpages and blogs, consumers get direct contact with brands as personalities.
- **Ad Fatigue:** More enticing strategies have to be sought by marketers as consumers or internet users are making use of Ad blocking software because of over familiarity with advertisements online.
- **Targeting:** This observes the homogenous nature of the market and seeks to implement a targeted market reach by using personal data available online and automatically reaching the individuals.
- **Golden Oldies:** These are the pioneer tools which still remain effective in the form of emails, websites, however they now incorporate tools such as customer generated content, social networks, advanced customer tracking.

The marketing approaches keep changing and getting outdated because of the changing environment and marketing strategies should keep being revised for effectiveness (Arora and Sivakumar, 2017).

The Online Marketing Landscape in South Africa

South Africa as an emerging market economy, just like other emerging economies such as Mexico, Brazil, China, India, Turkey, Indonesia and Russia, is still behind as far as online marketing is concerned in terms of global trends and therefore is in dire need to adopt a faster based development to allow for a competitive age without losing the local market to global online giant brands (The Space Station, 2018). Realities and risks about the South African market were suggested by (Trengove, Malczyk & Neneke, 2020) and these include:

- Expensive data and slow connections hinder adequate internet accessibility
- Marketing online presence should be compatible with mobile phones as most people access the internet on their cell phones
- Electronic communications are severely legislated and carry ethical codes of conduct which a brand has to uphold to avoid harm and sanctions

Emerging Online Marketing and Buying of Luxury Goods through Social Media

- Ease of use and simplicity of language is essential for a wide reach of people with varying literacy capabilities
- Online marketing efforts need to also be complemented by offline marketing efforts
- Internet users are worried about their online privacy and are sceptical about giving correct personal data; firms have to provide secure interaction platforms for their clients.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

Research Design

Luxury is defined as the “*indulgence of senses regardless of cost*” (Monkhouse, Barnes & Stephan, 2012). This definition will be upheld for the study with luxury goods being identified as products or services that consumers purchase for the indulgence of their senses regardless of cost. Uzgoren and Guney (2012) highlighted the ever-increasing importance of luxury goods despite the worldwide crisis; which gives perspective on the need for marketers to tap into the luxury goods market. The marketing of luxury goods has to evolve with the digital revolution of the emerging online markets and social media platforms (The Space Station, 2018)

The rules of the marketing game have changed because of the digital business dynamics of the internet world as firms have to understand the behaviour of consumers online as well as applying an appropriate marketing strategy of the interlinked social media platforms. Survival is critical and it is inevitable for firms to create strong competitive positions on social media through social Media Marketing (Arora & Sanni, 2019). Social media therefore presented opportunities for marketing public relations which importance cannot be ignored by companies in building brand and organisational credibility (Papasomou & Melanthiou, 2012). The influence of social media marketing efforts on the purchase of luxury brands depended on brand maturity level according to (Godey, Manthio, Pederzoli, Rokka, Aiello, Donvito & Singh, 2016).

H1: Social Media Marketing Efforts have a positive impact on luxury local fashion

Cultural and social influences have a great influence on perceptions on luxury brands and hence in seeking to penetrate different social markets values are critical positioning (Monkhouse, Barnes & Stephan, 2012). Social

pressures factors of face saving and group orientation, have pervasive influence on luxury goods consumption (Arora & Sivakumar, 2017).

H2: Social Influence has a positive impact on luxury local fashion

Product enhancement can be consumers’ interactive behaviour and Arora and Sanni (2019) opined that consumer attitudes, perceptions and purchase decisions were influenced by the time they spent on the internet. The suggestion by Becker and Nobre (2014) was that the more time consumers spent on the internet decreased their support for a brand hence the need for marketers to counter these influences through good customer service, friendly contact and one on one relationships with consumers on SNS perceptions were therefore critical in marketing strategy. As far as luxury goods are concerned. Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels (2017) suggested that since the online market had expanded the luxury market and availability of luxury goods, there was now changed consumer understanding had on luxury and why its bought. Consumer perceptions on value affected their behaviour towards purchasing luxury goods

H3: Social Media Marketing Efforts have a positive impact on luxury local fashion through the mediating effect of f Online Shopping Perception

The Internet makes consumers part of the creators of a firm’s brand and the importance of brand equity makes it important to consider this role of consumers (Amatulli & Gianluigi, 2012). Brand equity has to do with brand performance which is measured by consumer purchase of in this case luxury goods, with emphasis on long term rather than short-termism in marketing success. Dodoo (2017) claims that branding is increasingly becoming a critical factor in e-marketing. According to Christodoulides, Chernatony, Furrer, Shiu and Abimbola (2010) brand equity bore a positive effect on consumer preference and intention to purchase. This effect is conceptualised in line with online purchases as stated in H4.

H4: Brand Equity Online has a positive impact on luxury local fashion through the mediating effect of Online Shopping Perception

Social influence is actually a critical form of online shopping behaviour as preferences on the brand to purchase or on brand popularity among a segment of the market is usually driven by peers and friends. Fashion trends of preference

Emerging Online Marketing and Buying of Luxury Goods through Social Media

are influenced by social groups from which consumers seek approval (Dadoo, 2017). Social media platforms provide seamless channels for consumers to pay when buying products and this creates cease of direct payments and ready influence from the cemented online customers' relationships. This shopping behaviour of seeking approval from other peers was direct social influence on online platforms that cement brand loyalty, premium and brand preference (Arora & Sivakumar, 2017).

H5: Social Influence has a positive impact on buying luxury local fashion through the mediating effect of Online Shopping Perception

H6: Online Shopping Perception has a mediating impact on buying luxury local fashion.

Conceptual Framework

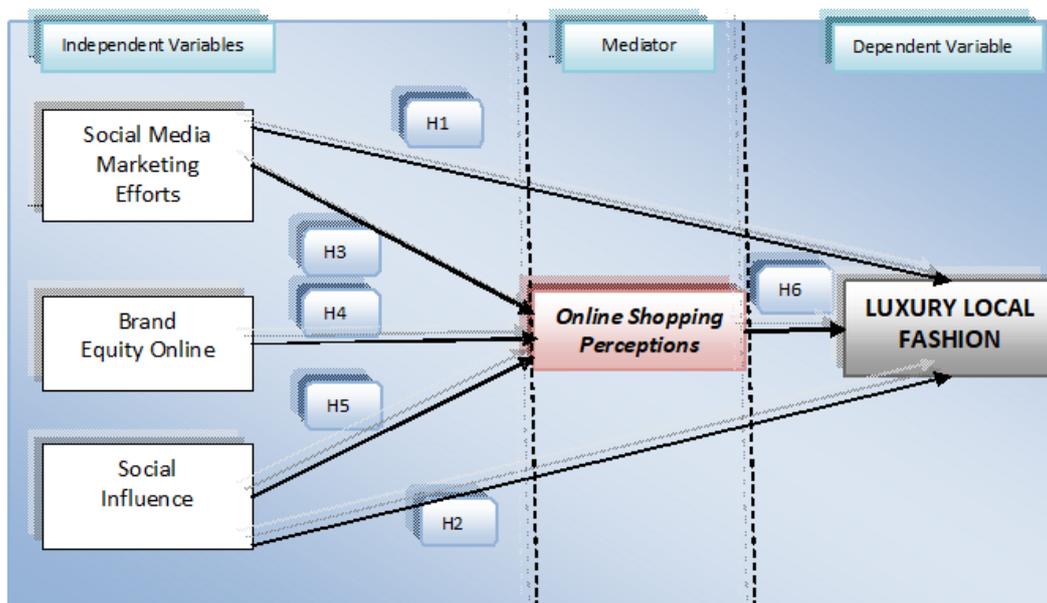


Figure1. Source: *Researcher's own Elaboration*

H1: Social Media Marketing Efforts have a positive impact on luxury local fashion

H2: Social Influence has a positive impact on luxury local fashion

H3: Social Media Marketing Efforts have a positive impact on luxury local fashion through the mediating effect of Online Shopping Perception

H4: Brand Equity Online has a positive impact on luxury local fashion through the mediating effect of Online Shopping Perception

H5: Social Influence has a positive impact on luxury local fashion through the mediating effect of Online Shopping Perception

H6: Online Shopping Perception has a mediating impact on luxury local fashion.

Online shopping perceptions are affected by many other factors besides the ones usually considered; enjoyment, ease of use and usefulness. Trust in online shopping, personal traits, online shopping previous experiences, the situation and product characteristics are perception factors that affect online shopping of luxury brands (Shanthi & Kannaiah, 2015). These critical factors of perception are the critical basic aspects that encourage or hinder online shopping decisions hence their mediating role on buying luxury local fashion (Haq, 2019). Awareness of these perceptions is critical for the marketer so that they are able to attract potential customers by appropriately responding to the perceptions to influence purchase decision.

METHOD AND SAMPLE

In order to capture consumer attitudes and perspectives on buying luxury goods online and social media marketing, a survey-based approach was used for the study (Saunders & Lewis, 2007). A questionnaire was distributed bearing a 5-point Likert scale to capture the participant's responses. The questionnaire posed statements of attitude in relation to the seven study variables. Since the study purpose is to measure the emerging online marketing in South Africa, quantitative research was more ideal hence the application of attitude testing methods to measure the state of the emerging online marketing in South Africa

A sample of 300 participants was selected through non probabilistic sampling method for

Emerging Online Marketing and Buying of Luxury Goods through Social Media

an online survey (Taherdoost, 2016). Despite the disadvantages that are related to questionnaire, they were preferred for their structured format and time saving and anonymity it presented for participants. There was no platform for the researcher influencing the responses except for the biases based on specific questions asked (Saunders & Lewis, 2007). However, the questionnaire construction was guided by the research conceptual framework and other researchers featuring the different research variables selected. Ordinal data was presented based on statistical results derived from the responses using graphical and tabular presentation

Validity and reliability are a critical aspect for consideration in research. To ensure validity, a systematic method was used to arrive at the research questions through guidance from previous studies on the same variables. The questionnaires were reviewed by peer marketing colleagues to improve presentation and content and to ensure relevance on the questions asked. Further the questionnaire was reviewed by my research supervisor for clarity and certainty as well as ability to extract the data required to answer the research questions (Farooqi & Islamia, 2019).

Findings

Likert 5-point Scale (Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Indifferent = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1)

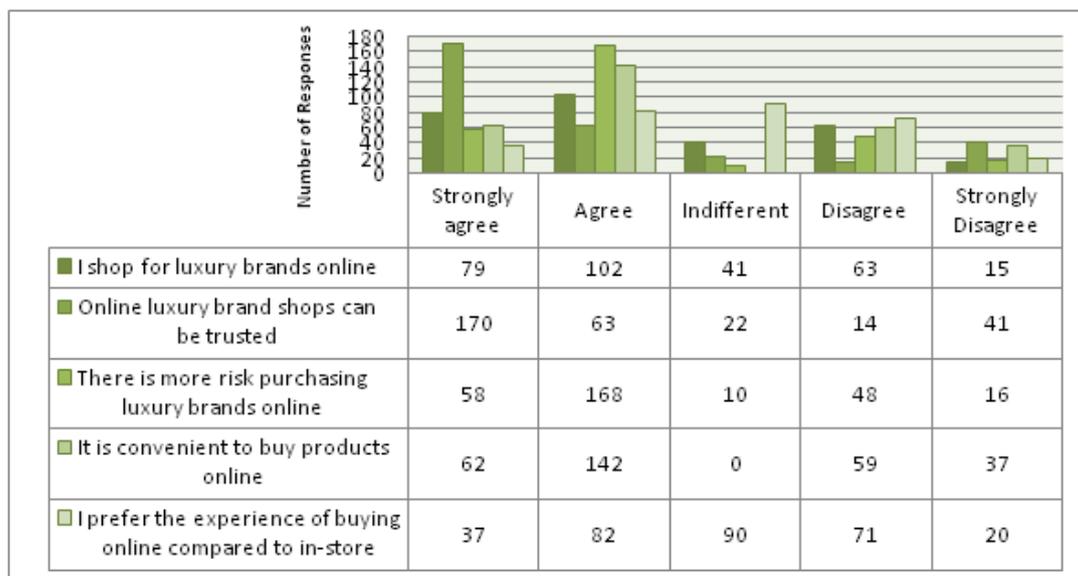
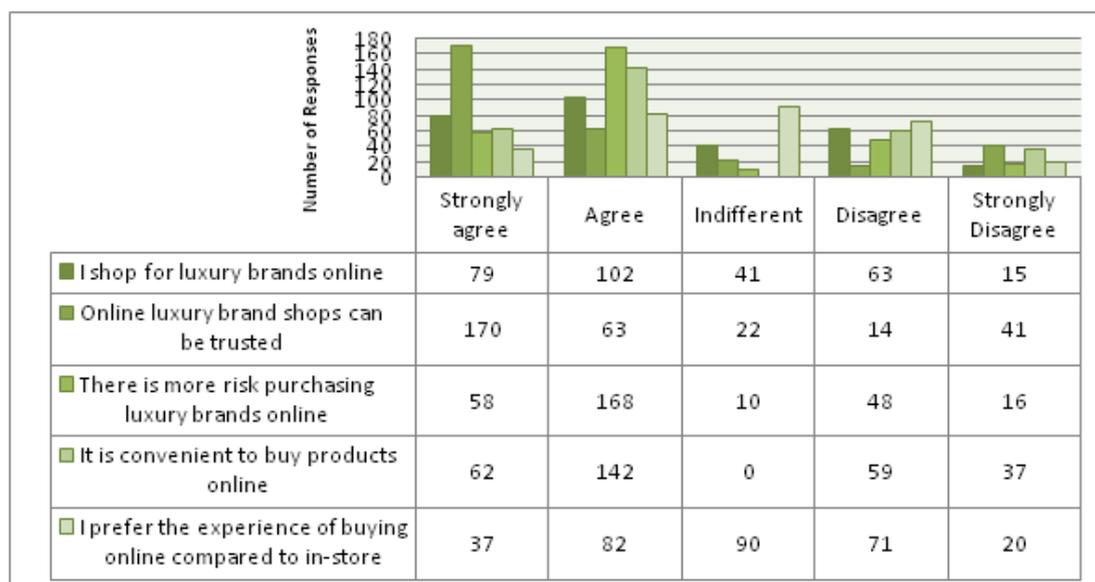


Table1: Buying luxury local Fashion online



Emerging Online Marketing and Buying of Luxury Goods through Social Media

The analysis of the results reflects a positive perception to shopping of luxury fashion brands online, however the portion of the participants that was not keen on shopping online was significant, see Table 1. However, a significant number of participants showed indifference on their preferred experience when online and in-store shopping was compared. The majority of

Table2. Online Shopping Perceptions

Online Shopping Perceptions	5	%	4	%	3	%	2	%	1	%
I buy luxury goods for prestige	103	34	129	43	0	0	36	12	32	11
I stick to the same brand of luxury products	129	43	35	12	12	4	93	31	31	10
Online brand reviews can be trusted	134	45	52	17	41	14	29	10	44	15
I have trust in financial security when using my credit/debit card online	88	29	36	12	57	19	55	18	64	21
I have trusted the personal privacy and security online	62	21	46	15	59	20	81	27	52	17
Total	516	34	298	20	169	11	294	20	223	15
Score (total/1500) x300	103.2	34	59.6	20	33.8	11	58.8	20	44.6	15

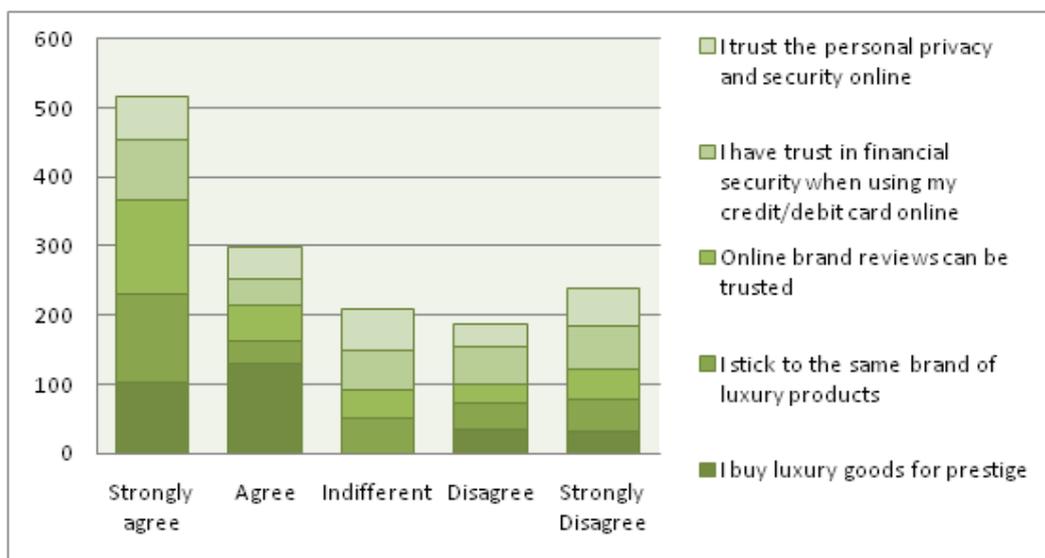


Figure2. Online Shopping Perceptions

The participants indicated trust in online shopping platforms, which was further supported by trust built on familiarity as most users purchased luxury fashion items from the same suppliers. While 54% (34+20) reflected confidence in online security and trust factors,

Table3. Brand Equity

Essential attractive brand equity factors	5	4	3	2	1
The website search paths are easy to follow through	98	68	33	53	48
	33%	23%	11%	18%	15%
Information on the company and its products is easy to find	107	54	28	54	54
	37%	18%	9%	18%	18%
The company fulfils its delivery and product performance declarations	120	80	64	26	10
	40%	27%	22%	8%	3%

The majority of participants agreed with high regards for the essential factors for brand equity, easy to follow search paths of websites (98+68) 56%, Ease of information accessibility,

the participants shopped for their luxury goods online despite the awareness of the larger risks involved in shopping online. The convenience of buying local luxury fashion online outweighed the impact of the risks considered being strengthened by the trust in the brands and shops purchased from.

11% were uncertain an 25% were not confident on the security of online platform as shown by the scores on Table 2. The major area of concern was personal privacy and online security, and financial security.

(107+54) 55% and fulfilling of the company delivery and product performance declarations, (120+80) 67%, see Table 3.

Social Influence

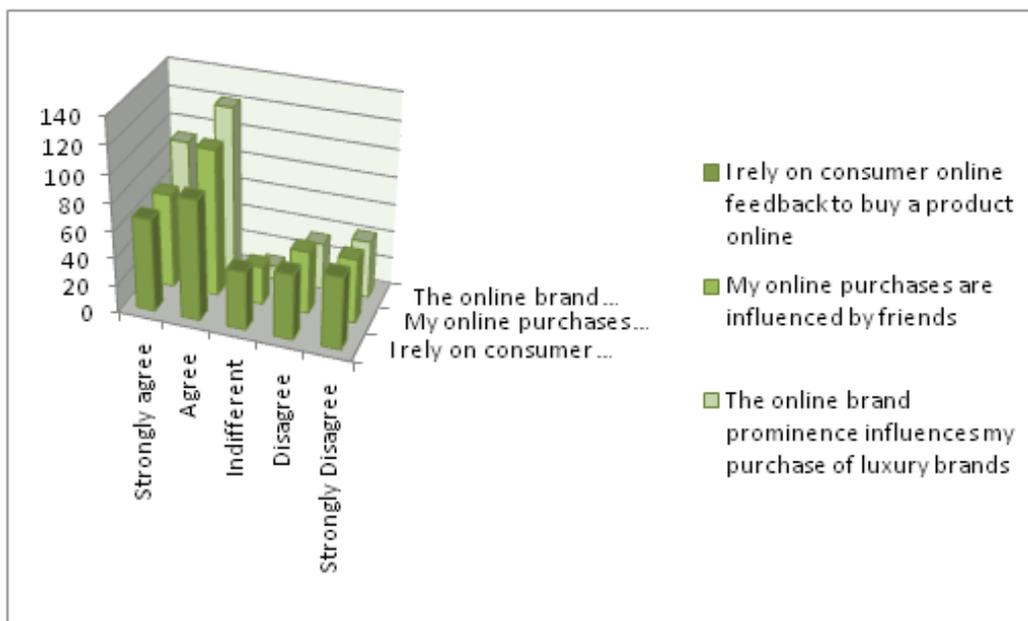


Figure3. Social Influence

Table4. Social Influence

	5	4	3	2	1
I rely on consumer online feedback to buy a product online	68	88	43	48	53
	23%	29%	14%	16%	18%
My online purchases are influenced by friends	69	110	28	46	47
	23%	37%	9%	15%	16%
The online brand prominence influences my purchase of luxury brands	62	122	10	64	42
	21%	41%	3%	21	14%

Social influence proved to be a high driver of buying decisions though a considerable number of participants did not view social influence highly. The Social influence factors were agreed on by the majority of participants over 50%, see

Table 4. The diagram on Figure 3 clearly demonstrates this bias of social influence as a driver of the purchase decision for online fashion luxury goods.

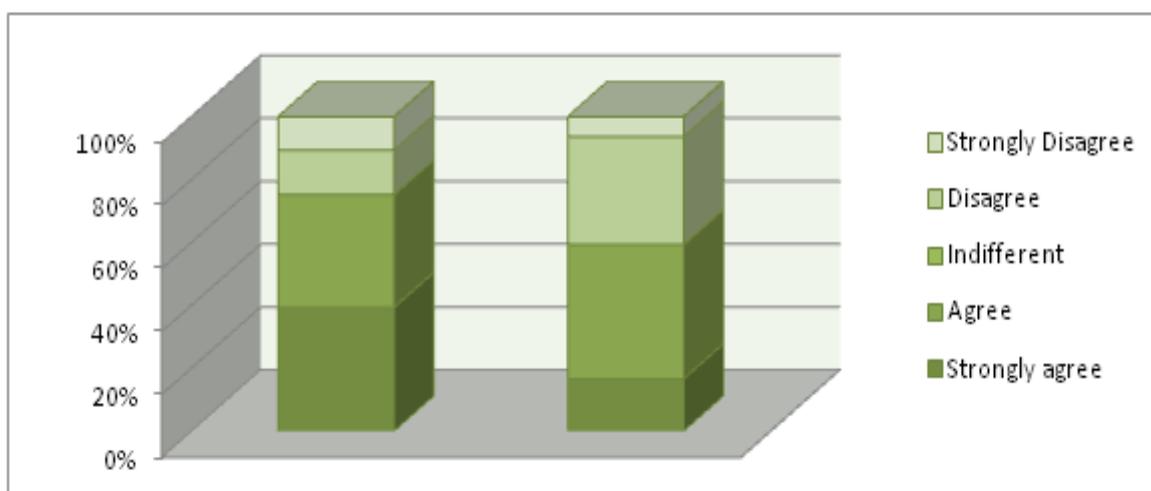


Figure4. Social Media Marketing Efforts

Facebook, WhatsApp Instagram and Twitter were the social media platforms used for most online interactions among the participants, see Figure 4. Product marketing information sharing

and following was done through social media platform by the majority of participants, see Figure 5.

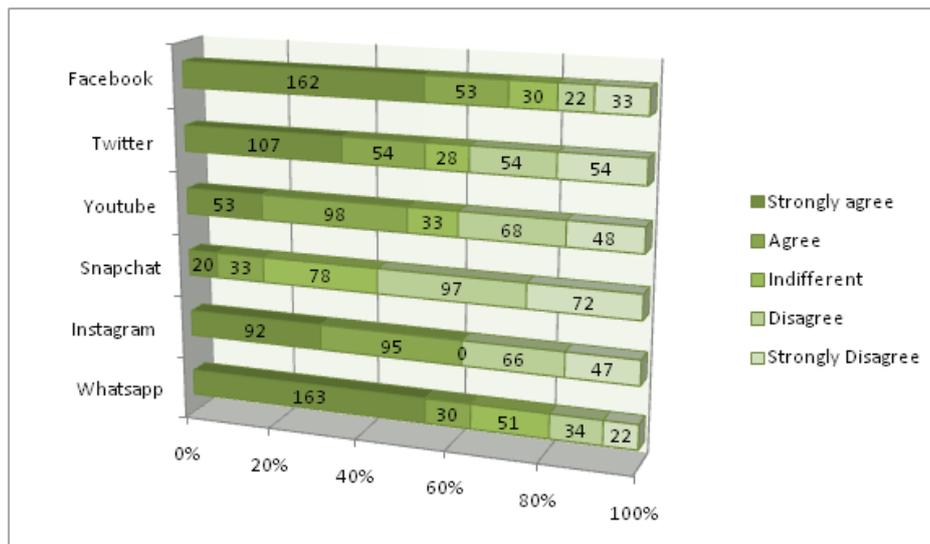


Figure 5. Social Media Platforms used for brand interactions

DISCUSSION

H1: Social Media Marketing Efforts have a positive impact on luxury local fashion

The study showed that online presence in South Africa was advancing and shoppers wanting to buy luxury fashion items were keen on searching for them online. There was high usage of interactive social network sites mainly Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. Social media marketing efforts had to be spread on these platforms and positively bore an impact on buying of luxury local fashion. There was greater preference for shopping for luxury fashion online and surfing the internet across various networks for searching for best brands. As Arora & Sanni (2019) alluded that the rules of the marketing game had changed because of the digital business dynamics of the internet world, firms have to understand the behaviour of consumers online as well as apply an appropriate mix marketing strategy on the interlinked social media platforms.

H2: Social Influence has a positive impact on buying luxury local fashion

With the finding that prestige was the major motivation for buying luxury fashion items, the study showed that affirmation from peers and other online product/brand reviews was critical for the shopping of luxury fashion brands. Social and cultural pressures as factors of face saving and group orientation, had pervasive impact on luxury goods consumption and these different social markets values are critical positioning (Arora & Sanni, 2019; Monkhouse,

Barnes & Stephan, 2012). This positive impact of social influence on buying of local luxury fashion online brand is prominent as the major persuasion factor for purchasing.

H3: Social Media Marketing Efforts have a positive impact on luxury local fashion through the mediating effect of Online Shopping Perception

Marketing online presence should be compatible with mobile phones as most people access the internet on their cell phones. Internet users are worried about their online privacy and are sceptical about giving correct personal data hence firms have to provide secure interaction platforms for their clients. The mediating effect of online shopping perception showed that the South African Online market had yet to be fully penetrated to disregard use of offline marketing efforts. A considerable number of participants were not keen to shop online because of negative perceptions to do with trust, personal privacy, financial security and legitimacy. The suggestion by Becker and Nobre (2014) concerning online shopping perception was that the more time consumers spent on the internet decreased their support for a brand hence the need for marketers to counter these influences through good customer service, friendly contact and one on one relationships with consumers on SNS. Consideration of Online shopping perceptions were therefore critical mediating factor for consideration in marketing strategy. These perceptions had to be allayed by marketers by promoting ease of use and simplicity of language for a wide reach of

people with varying literacy capabilities. However, the higher number of participants which purchase more online did not have negative perceptions on online purchasing which encouraged them to be confident on the platform.

H4: Brand Equity Online has a positive impact on buying luxury local fashion through the mediating effect of Online Shopping Perception

While still applying the suggestion by Becker and Nobre (2014) concerning online shopping perception that the more time consumers spent on the internet decreased their support for a brand, Brand equity was critical because of the need for marketers to counter these influences through good customer service, friendly contact and one on one relationships with consumers on SNS. The study findings affirmed the mediating effect of online shopping perception on the positive impact of brand equity on the shopping of local luxury fashion in South Africa. Online shopping perceptions on brand equity factors of whether the website search paths were easy to follow through, information on the company and its products were easy to find and that the company fulfilled its delivery and product performance declarations; were key positive drivers for buying local fashion brands

H5: Social Influence has a positive impact on buying luxury local fashion through the mediating effect of Online Shopping Perception

The Online shopping behaviour of seeking approval from other peers was direct social influence on online platforms that cement brand loyalty, premium and brand preference (Arora & Sivakumar, 2017). This aspect cemented also the mediating role of the individual online shopping perceptions which could be influenced on other shoppers through peer sharing on SNS (Dodoo, 2017).

H6: Online Shopping Perception has a mediating impact on luxury local fashion.

The study established that over and above issues of prestige and brand size, perceptions on brand trust, online financial security and privacy were a critical driver of online shopping decisions though those with experience did not consider much doubtless because of familiarity and loyalty to their known brands. People shopped online or not through the encouraging or discouraging effect of their perceptions on online shopping hence the mediating role of online shopping perception on buying luxury

local fashion (Haq, 2019; Shanthi & Kannaiah, 2015).

CONCLUSION

The factors that drive the emerging online Marketing of luxury goods are intertwined. One could not be strategized on, in isolation. Social media marketing efforts had to wholly consider issues of brand equity, social influence, and online shopping perceptions of trust and security and legitimacy as a mediating factor that is critical in all marketing strategies. Online shopping was emerging in South Africa and luxury fashion brands needed to be appropriately positioned and compete on the internationally covering online market. The current study is only limited to the case of South Africa; thus, its findings may not be applicable in other nations with people that have different tastes and preferences to those of South Africa. Therefore, future research has to be done to examine this topic in various nations with different rates and preferences. However, this study gives vital ideas that may be used by marketing managers in South Africa.

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