

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**CHALLENGES OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN FASHION INDUSTRY:
CASE STUDY OF THE BOLGATANGA MUNICIPAL OF UPPER EAST
REGION, GHANA**





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**A Thesis in the Department of FASHION DESIGN AND TEXTILES
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school of graduate studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the Degree of
Master of technology
(Fashion Design and Textiles)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

SEPTEMBER, 2022

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely the result of my own original research work, and that it has not been submitted either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:..... DATE:.....

NAME: MARY YARO

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that, the preparation and presentation of this dissertation was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

SIGNATURE: DATE:

NAME: NINETTE AFI APPIAH (Ph.D)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband Mr. Ibrahim Abdulai Azumah



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I must admit that this work would not have been successful if I were not assisted in diverse ways. My first gratitude goes to the Almighty God for his guidance, protection and good health throughout the period of my study. Honestly, I am indebted to my supervisor Dr. Ninette Appiah for her immense support. God bless you Madam. My next gratitude goes to my family, especially Mumuni, Hajia Fatima, Musah and Hajia Mama Sama Number one, my father Mr. Mbii Patrick and my siblings for their unflinching support, advice and prayers during my stay in this institution. My final appreciation goes to all friends and loved ones for their assistance in diverse ways.



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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry. The descriptive research design was used. This study adopted a quantitative research method. The population for the study was three hundred and sixty nine (369) fashion designers in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana. Stratified sampling techniques was used to select 186 participants for the study. A Questionnaire was administered to the participants to gather primary data. Facebook, Whatsapp, and YouTube were identified to be the first three platforms the respondent used as a marketing tool. Inadequate technological infrastructure to support the integration of ICTs, Insufficient funding for fashion designers to acquire modern ICT, and others were identified to be the challenges faced by fashion designers in Bolgantaga. It was recommended that, financial institutions in the country should provide flexible loans to fashion designers to acquire ICT materials to market their products on-line. And also fashion designers themselves need to be pro-active and confident with the technology.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The fashion industry has emerged over the last two decades with many retailers undertaking global expansion to operate internationally. This predominant trends have developed a changing dynamics in the fashion industry such as demand for lower cost, fading of mass production, modified structural characteristics in the supply chain, and flexibility in logistics, design and distribution (Mo, 2015).

Many fashion retailers identify themselves to be in a state of constant evolution and transformation. In the last past years, the internet have transformed many aspect in the fashion business to how fashion retailers interact with their customers from the way the products are distributed (Sands, Harper & Ferraro, 2011). Currently, the social media have changed the way fashion retailers engage with their customers and vice versa. Social media is becoming a common marketing and communication strategy and was predicted to grow at an annual rate of 34% in 2012, and by 2014 it would have reached to USD\$3.1 billion (Sands, et al., 2011). It have been reported that approximately 70% of customers visited social media sites to gather product information and 49% customers purchase products based on the information gathered through social media (Sands, et al., 2011).

Due to that fashion designers have increasingly benefited in harnessing and utilising the power of social networking websites in order to improve their overall marketing strategy. The social media gives the retailers to benefit to learn about the needs of their customers and then respond proactively. Customers are increasingly using social networks in order to gather information on which to base their purchase decisions (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011). Moreover, digital customers are using

different online formats such as social networks, wikis, blogs, bulletin boards and podcasts to share views about a given brand, service or product (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011).

With the help of social networks, fashion designers use the technology to sell their products or services via the internet, offer additional products and services based on previous purchase, respond to consumer enquiries and lastly to evaluate the satisfactions of their consumers with their offerings, all without having the need to deal with the consumers physically (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011).

Online fashion consumers are enthusiastic by their senses, this means that many online fashion shoppers feel that shopping online is the best way to shop than physical clothing stores (McCormick & Livett, 2018). Online retailers reduce the possibilities of high buying risk of online apparel products by the use of features that permit online buyers to have the feeling that they are interacting with the product (McCormick & Livett, 2012; Konia, 2018). This way has become more progressively crucial to the success of e-commerce. There are many online buyers that analyse a number of factors on how the clothes can be worn with other clothing items, how the cloth would look on themselves and sensory and aesthetic data (McCormick & Livett, 2018).

Additionally, online shopping has become a vital channel or business model for many organisations. Online sellers have shifted their attention to adopt their online channels to motivate buyers to repeatedly buy their products from inducing customers via these channels, as the online retailing market have become increasingly competitive (Chui, Wang, Fang & Huang, 2019). An online store can benefit from their customers, an average customer must shop four times on that online company.

Therefore, it is vital for online sellers to understand the reasons why their

customers constantly shop from their online store (Chui, et. al., 2019). Customers believe that value is the most vital predictor of repeating buying intention. Customers search online for services, products and websites that provide value (Chui, et. al., 2019). It have been indicated that online buyers seek for functional value and that 93% of those online buyers demand for innovation, freshness and discovery to satisfy their intrinsic needs (Chui, et. al., 2019; Zhenxiang & Lijie, 2017).

A fundamental challenge for many fashion brands is that, increasingly, they lag behind consumers' expectations. The role of the consumer has shifted from one of passive observance to enabled dominance. They are no longer content with simply buying fashion products; exponential growth in the use of digital technologies has empowered them. They want to interact, belong, influence and be the brands from which they buy (Chui, et. al., 2019).

Informed, selective, and in charge, they care about how they look in public and on social media, and about the perception of the goods they buy and own. The vast majority of consumers use digital channels before, during or after making their purchases. Therefore, online retailers have become a vital retailing channel and many of these online stores have been established and are experiencing to continuing to increase their sales (Chui, Tzeng & Li, 2018).

The internet has fundamentally changed customers' notion of convenience, product information and service. As a result, the Ghanaian fashion industry face the challenges of increased competition, marketing orientation and highly regulated environment. This has brought a number of challenges in the Ghanaian fashion industry like the inability to utilise technology to enhance the marketing of fashion products online, lack of ICT facilities to market fashion products online and

inadequate ICT expertise to market fashion products online. Therefore, this study would assess the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry using the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region, Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Digital marketing has transformed the way companies manage and communicate with their customers and society worldwide. It is becoming a key and necessary instrument to face the challenges that still exist in the field of marketing. In this high developed world, many companies choose the digital network to establish online shopping market. The Internet has fundamentally changed customers' notion of convenience, product information and service. As a result, the Ghanaian fashion industry face the challenges of increased competition, marketing orientation and highly regulated environment. This has brought a number of challenges in the Ghanaian fashion industry like the inability to utilise technology to enhance the marketing of fashion products online, lack of ICT facilities to market fashion products online and inadequate ICT expertise to market fashion products online (Danso, *et al.*, 2018).

Digital marketing can turn into a key tool to help to mitigate this gap. For example, it has been demonstrated that the union of digital marketing and sustainability reduces risk, uncertainty and distrust in online shopping (Diez-Mart, *et al.*, 2019). However, research in digital marketing is very scarce in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region. Therefore, this study assessed the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry using Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region, Ghana.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry: case study of the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region, Ghana.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To assess the present status of marketing traditional fashion products online in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region.
2. To assess the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana.
3. To recommend ways fashion designers can popularize digital marketing trading and increase the profitability of marketing traditional fashion products online.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the present status of marketing traditional fashion products online in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region?
2. What are the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana?
3. How can fashion designers popularize online marketing trading and increase the profitability of marketing traditional fashion products online?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study would make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge with regard to digital marketing and e-commerce in the Ghanaian fashion industry. Again, the outcome of this study would help fashion designers in the Bolgatanga

Municipal of Upper East Region to redesign their marketing and promotional tools and change from traditional marketing to digital marketing and enjoy international exposure and publicity. To add more, the knowledge gained in this study will serve as a strategic tool for those who want to market fashion products in Ghana.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry using Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana. As a result, the study was delimited in scope to selected fashion designers and customers in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region. Moreover, the study would be conceptually delimited in scope to the research objectives stated above.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

The study used fashion designers in the Bolgatanga Municipal only as the population, it would have been good to use a larger population to enrich the generalization purpose of the study. However, it could be generalize for population with similar characteristics. This study also used only quantitative approach to answer the research question, which did not give the researcher opportunity to the participants natural views about the subject under study. The was the challenge of participant acceptance to be part of the study, this affected the response rate of the questionnaire.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This study would be organized in six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction which would deal with the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the

study, scope of the study and organisation of the rest of the study. In chapter two, a review of related literature would be undertaken. A conceptual study would be developed based on the literature review. Chapter three would discuss the research design, population and sample and sampling procedures. The research instrument for collecting data, method of data collection and data analysis. In chapter four, the data that would be gathered for the study would be analyzed using appropriate statistical tools and findings would be discussed and presented. Chapter five would discuss the findings and chapter six would present the summary, conclusions and recommendation of the study.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed comprehensive literature to cover the concepts of digital marketing, theoretical review, information process theory, exposure, motivation, attention and perceptual encoding, information acquisition and evaluation, decision processes, on-line marketing and the global fashion industries, online marketing and fast fashion in the 21st century, e-commerce and online shopping in the fashion industry, social media marketing, empirical framework of the study, advantages and disadvantages of on-line marketing (e-commerce) in the fashion industry, the profitability of marketing fashion products online, the influence of social media users on on-line fashion marketing, facebook, instagram, promoting fashion business using social media, social media marketing, communication tool, word of mouth, challenges facing on-line marketers in the fashion industry, financial factors, technological factors, human factors, cultural factors, and elements of culture.

2.2 The Concepts of Digital Marketing

The essence of business and marketing activities has been changed by recent advancements in computer science, the Internet-information technology (IT), media, and communications (Akaba, 2015). A increasing number of businesses and organizations rely on the Internet and other electronic resources to connect with manufacturers, company customers, and end-users of their goods and services. Both types of businesses now have the potential to expand in a dramatic and dynamic way thanks to new marketing techniques (Eid & El Gohary, 2013).

Electronic marketing can be described as a modern business activity involving the purchase and sale of products, services, and information via the internet and other

electronic channels (Akaba, 2015). There are several definitions of electronic marketing, and each person defines it differently depending on his or her perspective and context. Digital marketing, according to Strauss and Frost (2011), is the use of electronic data and software to plan and execute the conception, delivery, and pricing of concepts, products, and services in order to establish exchanges that meet individual and organizational goals.

On the other hand, digital marketing includes the use of any electronic data or electronic applications for conducting marketing activities (Akaba, 2015). As a result, digital marketing includes internet marketing, e-mail marketing, intranet marketing, extranet marketing, mobile marketing, telemarketing, electronic data interchange for marketing activities, customer relationship management among others (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, Mayer, & Johnston, 2016; Eid & Trueman, 2014; El-Gohary, Trueman, & Fukukawa, 2018).

The phrases "online marketing," "internet marketing," and "email marketing" are often interchanged with "digital marketing" and are often considered synonymous (Akaba 2015). E-marketing is a wider concept than internet marketing since it incorporates not only the World Wide Web and its related applications, but also the management of customer relationships and other marketing functions using technologies other than the internet (ElGohary, 2012). E-commerce and e-business, on the other hand, have a far wider reach than e-marketing.

E-marketing is doing business electronically across the entire organization or firm, covering all forms of business transactions and information exchange that is executed using information and communication technology. Electronic business is a wider concept that embraces the use of information technology in all aspects of the firm 's

business (Akaba 2015). It includes not only transactions, but also customer service and collaborating with business partners (Rowley, 2011).

The American Marketing Association (2013) describes marketing as the operation, collection of institutions, and processes for designing, communicating, providing, and sharing offers that are useful to consumers, companies, partners, and society. In their book *Principles of Marketing*, Kotler and Armstrong (2010) describe marketing as fulfilling needs and wants through an exchange mechanism. An organization should be able to recognize a customer's needs and desires, and try to offer benefits that will improve or add to the customer's lifestyle, while also ensuring that meeting these needs results in a healthy turnover for the company. The fundamental argument that has been continually made is that the major aim of marketing is to get and keep customers (Levitt, 2016).

Literature and practice are increasingly emphasizing marketing creativity as a key driver of growth, business success, and failure (Isaksen & Tidd, 2016; Bilton & Cummings, 2010). Market changes and major companies' strategic strategies have put more pressure on businesses to concentrate on innovation, skills, and innovation management (Hsu, 2011). Rapid technological and scientific advancements, as well as shorter product lifecycles, have created a unique innovation imperative as well as opportunities for SMEs (Dlodlo & Dhurup, 2013).

Due to the rapid adoption of the internet as a commercial platform, more creative forms of marketing to customers in computer-mediated environments have emerged (Ainscouth, 2016). Many companies have recognized the marketing value of the internet and other associated mobile devices in recent years as a way to expand the number of customers they target at a given time and reach a larger target audience (Akaba, 2015:17). The internet has aided businesses in reaching target markets more

effectively, displacing undifferentiated mass marketing tactics in favor of more personalized approaches (Melewar & Smith, 2013).

Due to the increasing rate of internet use worldwide, academics such as (Novak, Hoffman, & Yung, 2000; Mack, 2000) have projected that the number of customers that the internet will reach at any given time will increase. According to estimates from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), individual internet use increased to around 2,923,000 people in 2014, up from 2,710,000 in 2013. (Akaba 2015). The use of the Internet and other associated information and communication technologies (ICTs) to support the marketing efforts of major business projects is becoming increasingly popular.

2.3 Information Process Theory

Information processing theory in relation to consumer choice has been described as how information is preformed, evaluated, and post-evaluated during the decision process for the purposes of this study. Processing ability, motivation, and attention and perceptual encoding, knowledge acquisition and assessment, decision processes, and effects of consumption and learning are the six major components of the system (Bettman, 2019).

2.3.1 Exposure

In terms of information processing, when consumers are exposed to information via mass media, it is considered a passive process. However, since the information is transmitted at a quicker pace, it appears to confuse customers and cause cognitive elaboration to be interrupted (Moore, Hausknecht, & Thamodaran 2016). On the other hand, in circumstances where consumers pursue information on their own initiative, the

perspective in viewing information is viewed as an active approach (Sternthal & Craig 2012).

According to Sliverman (2011, p.78), "most prospects are reluctant to take in relatively low priority new knowledge." In other words, information overload makes it difficult for companies to gain potential customers' interest and encode messages in their minds (Shapiro & Varian 2018). Often, since purchasing decisions are often made in a rush, consumers are more likely to minimize the measurements they perceive when selecting a brand (Wright 2014, Ratneshwar, Mike & Reitingner 2010). It's important to clear the clutter/noise at this stage.

Individuals' attention must be drawn to the incoming data (Sliverman 2011), with attention serving as an important "tuning" mechanism in the active collection of data for further processing (Bargh & Pietromonaco 2012; Broadbent 2017). The fact that humans have a limited capacity for processing information is a critical concept since it affects many aspects of the decision-making process; for example, motivation, attention, information search and retrieval, and so on are all impacted by the processing capacity constraint (Bettman 2019).

2.3.2 Motivation

Bettman (2019) proposed that decisions are made to achieve certain goals or objectives, making it a central idea in every consumer behavior theory. Motivation affects not just the path (affecting the preference of one action over another) but also the strength of behavior since people make choices all the time (the capacity allocations on a particular activity).

2.3.4 Attention and Perceptual Encoding

Attention and interpretation are important factors in understanding, at least in part, how we choose which knowledge to pay attention to. Once a person has been physically exposed to the presented information, the level of information reception is determined by the recipient's attention to the incoming data (Sternthal & Craig 2012, p.88). The amount of mental activity or cognitive ability allocated by a person to the stimuli environment or task at hand is referred to as attention in psychology (Foxall et al. 2018, 80).

According to Sliverman (2011), the receiver must pay attention to the information in order for it to be processed; similarly to selective information exposure, attention is selective. Individuals are highly selective in what stimuli they pay attention to – they pay attention to focal stimuli and ignore nonfocal stimuli (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010, 51). There are two forms of focused attention: voluntary and involuntary (Kahneman 2013). When people are hungry, they appear to pay attention to signals or seek related information in the environment that signify “food,” for example (Foxall et al. 2018). (Fennis & Stroebe 2010, 51). Since voluntary attention is so selective, advertisers often spend a lot of money and time attempting to reach out to interested customers (Foxall et al. 2018).

Environment sensations, such as salience, vividness, and novelty, on the other hand, draw involuntary attention (Foxall et al. 2018). (Fennis & Stroebe 2010). According to Sternthal and Craig (2012), focus can be increased by using a stronger signal to engage focal attention, such as repeated ads or achieving concentrated distribution in consumer marketing (louder noise being generated). Since interpretations of information are easily built in accordance with concepts in memory,

and interpretation of stimuli necessitates an active study using information stored in memory, people prefer to search for and see what they anticipate (Bettman 2019).

People are attracted to environments in which a disproportionate amount of knowledge supports their initial viewpoint. Individuals usually live in a culture of people who have similar beliefs and experiences, and it caters to their lifestyle; as a result, it is unsurprising that they are unlikely to be aware of knowledge that contradicts their lifestyles.

The subsequent course of focus is often affected by the experience of stimuli – they are constantly communicating. Since customers are more likely to respond to a louder noise, such as a novel stimulus, such events cause current information processing to be disrupted. Bettman (2019) has also suggested two forms of interrupting activities that tend to be most important to attention and perceptual encoding – conflicts and environmental learning. Individuals may react to conflicts in a variety of ways, including ignoring them, shifting their focus to different requirements, seeking new knowledge, and so on.

The second big interruption emphasizes that people often learn about the buying world, even though it is unrelated to their current purchase decision. When a certain external element attracts the consumer's interest, learning about the world is sparked. For example, a “interesting” package can entice a customer (Bettman 2019). Several researchers (Krugman 2015; McLaughlin 2015) have investigated the phenomenon of learning about the environment (Bettman 2019). It can be either with voluntary attention involvement or with little conscious allocation of attention; However, all findings refer to the basic idea that learning about the environment is closely tied to current goal (Bettman, 2019).

2.3.5 Information Acquisition and Evaluation

According to Howard & Ostlund (2013), consumers' media choices of the information source are often determinants of the information to which they will be exposed (Healey 2014); that is, consumers might have preferences on which online communities, blogs, or other sources of information to which they will be exposed as they seek information. Consumers' information exposure is highly selective during the initial stage of information acquisition (Sternthal & Craig, 2012, 83).

When knowledge is sought from outside sources – such as friends, packages, ads, and so on – the external information collected has a substantial effect on the search's future path, which could include adjusting the target and redirecting focus and perceptual encoding. The perceived costs of collecting information (e.g. time costs, effort needed, or financial costs), the availability of information, and the importance of the information in aiding decision-making (e.g. reputation, expert advice) are all factors that will influence whether the information search should be stopped.

As previously mentioned, individuals often learn about their environments, resulting in unintentionally acquired knowledge; in other words, the person is not actively seeking the piece of information. In this case, advertisement is viewed as an intrusion that leads to a target reordering – for example, a customer can buy a product advertised on television. The mixture of the bits of information that the user has obtained is what organizing the acquired information means (Sternthal & Craig 2012, 89).

During this point, the user connects new knowledge to his or her established beliefs and values structure (Bettman 2019). Many studies (Bettman 2019; Sternthal & Craig 2012; Fennis & Stroebe 2010) have indicated that consumers' responses and reactions

to incoming information will influence the information's eventual effect on the current system, such as whether the piece of information is incorporated, ignored, or distorted.

According to Howard (2017), once the preferred alternative has been found, the buyer should check for information on prices and stores where that alternative is available, such as price levels, locations, and service capabilities. Bettman (2019) argues that the relative availability of information within a given option context determines the type of information a customer seeks. For example, he stated that certain alternatives might be available only at specific stores, or vice versa, necessitating a lengthy quest for a dealer.

Bettman's (2019) findings pose a range of concerns, one of which is the power of the source from which information is sought. In his results, he discusses Rogers' discovery of temporal patterns of source use in innovation quest (2012). According to Rogers (2012), mass media outlets are more widely used during the early recognition and interest stages of adoption, whereas word-of-mouth contact is most commonly used during the later evaluation and trial stages (Bettman 2019).

2.3.6 Decision Processes

In general, the decision process occurs during the collection of knowledge and comparison of buying choices. According to Bettman (2019), the decision-making process does not follow a sequential flow, but rather a cycling procedure; that is, if conflict arises, focus and perceptual encoding may be diverted toward the conflict's resolution, ultimately leading to a shift in decision option.

2.4 On-line Marketing and the Global Fashion Industries

The latest organisational changes in the fashion industry started nearly 30 years ago, when the conventional fashion of the luxury industry had long developed a stable structure. This industry faced a variety of challenges in their business operations, including changes in the economy, especially globalisation, changes in their customer base, and the entry of competitors into previously protected markets (Turker & Altunas, 2014). Until then, the fashion industry followed a monthly schedule of trade fairs and shows to present the next season's trends.

As a result, the fashion industry markets were able to predict demand up to a year ahead of time based on previous sales results. This fixed condition has evolved into a new paradigm known as "street fashion," "simple fashion," or "easy fashion" as a result of the effects of specific factors (Turker & Altunas, 2014). Since there is a major polarity among consumers who are more concerned about the brand and/or product and the price in the apparel industry, retailers' competitive strategy is often focused on product and price differentiation. Customers in the clothing industry can be classified into two groups: those who are not fashion conscious and those who are fashion conscious.

Fashion is described as "a broad term that usually encompasses any product or market where there is a style element that is likely to be temporary" (Hayes & Jones, 2006). Accessories and garments that meet the criteria above can also be considered fashion. As a result of this concept, the fashion-conscious consumer segment is more likely to be volatile, fast-changing, and difficult to predict. Fashion retailers used to focus on predicting future patterns rather than real-time data to determine their customers' needs and desires in previous years. This phase can start up to 18 months before the product sells out, according to research (Hayes & Jones, 2006).

Furthermore, the fashion industry is divided into three categories: diffusion, haute couture, bridge, and mass market. This mass market, also known as fast fashion, incorporates an emphasis on fashion with a low price point. For example, despite the previous economic downturn, H&M, Zara, and Gap are well-known fast fashion companies that have entered the market and have maintained global apparel consumption (Arrigo, 2010).

2.5 Online Marketing and Fast Fashion in the 21st Century

In today's economy, the fashion industry has become highly competitive, forcing fashion companies to change their product lines on a regular basis. This means that most fashion retailers will eventually increase the number of clothing seasons to correspond to each season of the year (Christopher, Lawson & Peck, 2014, 368). Consumer product revenues on the internet, for example, rose from \$7.7 billion in 2003 to an estimated 108 billion in 1998 (Brynjolfsson & Smith, 2010, p. 564).

Within the domain of social influence and diffusion, fashion can be defined as a consumer behavioural phenomenon involving both intangible and tangible contexts. Fashion also serves as a marker, helping to distinguish social identity, taste, and cultural capital (Watson & Yan, 2013). In the early days, retailing fashion e-commerce firms were viewed to be unsuccessful, as customers needed to try on and touch the clothes. Nevertheless, the level of footwear and clothes sold through the internet grew steadily whereby since 2000 the online revenues for fashion products grew between 25 percent to 30 percent (Rowley, 2009).

Over the last two decades, the luxury apparel industry has blossomed, with many retailers pursuing international expansion. This prevalent trend has resulted in shifting dynamics in the fashion industry, such as a need for lower costs, the waning of mass

manufacturing, altered supply chain structural characteristics, and versatility in logistics, design, and distribution (Mo, 2015). The transformation of fashionable design into articles that can be bought by the general public is referred to as fast fashion.

The goal of fashion industry companies is to get as many people into stores as possible so that they can increase the frequency at which people purchase trendy styles (Turker & Altunas, 2014). Their target can be achieved by selling low-cost clothing that stays on the shelf for a shorter period of time than the conventional fashion industry. As a result, demand cycles are becoming shorter, there are more seasons, and many organizational buying criteria, such as design capabilities and versatile production, mixing trendy fashion raw materials and suppliers at short lead times, are becoming more important (Turker & Altunas, 2014).

Many fashion retailers claim to be in a continual state of transition and evolution. The internet has changed many aspects of the fashion industry in recent years, including how retailers communicate with consumers and how items are sold (Sands, Harper & Ferraro, 2011). Social networking has changed the way retailers interact with their consumers and the other way around. In 2012, it was forecasted that social media would rise at a 34 percent annual rate, hitting USD\$3.1 billion by 2014 (Sands, Harper & Ferraro, 2011).

According to reports, about 70% of consumers use social media platforms to gather product information, and 49% of customers buy goods based on the information they gather from social media (Sands, Harper & Ferraro, 2011). As a result, retailers are gradually benefiting from the influence of social networking networks in order to boost their overall marketing strategy. Retailers can use social media to learn more about their customers' needs and then react more quickly.

Customers are gradually turning to social media to collect knowledge from which to make purchasing decisions (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011).

Furthermore, online consumers use a variety of online formats to express their opinions about a particular brand, service, or product, including social networks, wikis, blogs, bulletin boards, and podcasts (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011). Retailers use social networks to market their goods or services over the internet, provide additional products and services based on past purchases, respond to consumer inquiries, and finally determine their customers' satisfaction with their offerings, all without having to deal with them physically (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011).

2.6 E-commerce and Online Shopping in the Fashion Industry

The number of companies that have opened online stores has increased as the popularity of online shopping has grown (Ogonowski, Montandon, Botha & Reyneke, 2014). Customers are increasingly purchasing services and goods from online retailers because they offer a convenient and quick shopping experience that saves time and money while still providing high quality products and services (Chui, Tzeng & Li, 2013). As a result, online retailers have emerged as a significant retailing outlet, with many of these stores having developed themselves and continuing to rise in sales (Chui, Tzeng & Li, 2013).

As a result, it is important for online retailing managers to understand how to handle their company and marketing strategies, as the performance of their electronic store is based on management effectiveness and an adequate marketing strategy (Chui, Tzeng & Li, 2013). Furthermore, online shopping has become so important to online retailers that it has become an integral part of their business strategy. As a result, it is

important for online retailers to understand their customers' expectations and how they can be met (Chui, Tzeng & Li, 2013).

Online retailers are well-liked, well-known, and a well-known form of electronic commerce that sells and purchases services and goods over the internet. E-stores, internet shops, and online stores that offer services or goods to customers are all examples of online retailers, which are part of the shopping channel and electronic commerce (Chui, Tzeng & Li, 2013). Consumers of online fashion are enthralled by their senses, which means that many believe that shopping online is preferable to shopping in traditional clothing stores.

The use of features that allow online shoppers to feel as if they are engaging with the product reduces the likelihood of a high purchasing risk for online apparel products (McCormick & Livett, 2012). This method has become increasingly important to the growth of e-commerce. Many online buyers consider a variety of factors, including how the clothes will look with other pieces of clothing, how the fabric will look on themselves, and sensory and aesthetic data (McCormick & Livett, 2012). Furthermore, for many companies, online shopping has become a key medium or business model.

As the online retailing market has become highly competitive, online retailers have shifted their focus to adopting their online platforms to motivate consumers to purchase their goods on a regular basis by inducing customers across these channels (Chui, Wang, Fang & Huang, 2014). An online retailer will profit from its customers; on average, a customer would shop with that company four times. As a result, it is important for online sellers to comprehend the reasons why their customers choose to shop at their website (Chui, Wang, Fang & Huang, 2014).

Customers consider value to be the most important indicator of future purchasing intent. Customers look for useful services, goods, and websites on the internet. It has been stated that online buyers seek practical value, with 93 percent needing creativity, freshness, and exploration to fulfil their intrinsic needs (Chui, Wang, Fang & Huang, 2014). The growing population of internet users has become accustomed to this medium, and practices such as searching the internet for product details have become commonplace. On the other hand, online shopping is not popular.

This is due to the fact that in the year 2000, roughly 70% of internet users browsed, compared items, and searched (Sismeiro & Bucklin, 2004). However, more than 65 percent of those surveyed did not make a purchase using the internet. The reluctance to use the Internet as a retail outlet, combined with the large number of people who use the Internet to search for information, has resulted in low visit to purchase conversion rates. It was discovered that conversion rates are less than 2% for an estimated 70% of commercial Web sites surveyed, and that they usually range from 1% to 4%. (Sismeiro & Bucklin, 2014).

As a result, the low rate of visitor to buyer conversion relates to the managers' ability to anticipate and appreciate online purchasing behavior, which is critical for electronic commerce Web sites. Even a minor change in practice may result in a significant increase in sales revenue (Sismeiro & Bucklin, 2014). Though little is known about the impact of what visitors do on a site and what they are exposed to on their willingness to buy on the internet (Sismeiro & Bucklin, 2014).

To reduce the risks of shopping online, e-retailers provide fashion information or use image interactivity technology (IIT) to provide sensory information to online shoppers. Image interactively technology is especially important in online fashion retailing because it allows for the most up-to-date clothing product presentation,

resulting in a more engaging online experience (McCormick & Livett, 2012). In a nutshell, fashion data is a compilation of details about current fashion trends.

Online shopping websites are more popular than physical stores in offering creative ways to distribute clothing product details to their customers, including up-to-date trends and cutting-edge fashion advice. Online shopping helps retailers to advertise and connect goods to end customers in a more productive manner than any other form, such as styling tips from sales associates in physical stores (McCormick & Livett, 2012). For shoppers, regular fashion details and alerts have become extremely useful and important. Features on fashion retailers' websites such as online magazines, stylish tips, blogs and social networking sites can emphasise their fashion consciousness to the online buyers (McCormick & Livett, 2012).

2.7 Social Media Marketing

In only a few years, the Internet has developed into a global forum that allows people to exchange ideas, messages, and information more quickly and easily than ever. The concept of Social Media arose from this explosion of contact and sharing between people. It is also in the process of expanding. The rapid adoption of these digital media opens up new opportunities. Marketers can develop new communication skills around Social Media by employing marketing strategies in order to impact target consumer segments (Swaminathan et al. 2019). According to conventional marketing models, Social Media Marketing can employ the 4Ps of the Marketing Mix, with a special emphasis on the P for Promotion.

This marketing's goal is focused on five key components. Each of them is a shift in an individual's behavior. People will willingly use new products and follow new lifestyles to suit this new behavior because they are able to improve their behavior.

Marketers, on the other hand, have a part to play in changing consumer behavior. Marketers must examine the audience's profile as well as the various target groups present in order to devise a plan that can effectively reach them (Swaminathan et al. 2019).

To react, it is necessary to comprehend what each customer segment desires, orienting the product's positioning on the market in order to attract and maintain a growing number of customers. Since there are so many different sectors in the industry, businesses must run a variety of promotions. Finding which side of the product would appeal to which Target Group of customers would be the most difficult task. If one of the target groups is more concerned with price, another will be more concerned with the brand itself. Social media ads can be carried out using a range of methods (Swaminathan et al. 2019).

Basically, there are as many Social Media Marketing opportunities as the amount of Social Media sites on the Internet. Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are the most well-known. Those social media have the same goals: to connect individuals between individuals. The type of the message might be different depending on the target audience marketers have to concentrate on, and also the message format. Because Twitter is more about microblogging, with extremely short text (no more than 140 characters), the message cannot be the same as Facebook, which is more about social networking and thus has no size limits on posts (Yuliandre, 2013).

Since users of these social media sites aren't searching for the same stuff in those three key networks, the post can't take the same shape on Instagram. One of the most important benefits of social media marketing is the ability to communicate directly with consumers. The business may also provide some input support mechanisms as a result of its online activities in order to get an idea of what potential consumers think

about the product or the brand, as well as what people expect from this brand. They may have the same impact as a group when they are used to bring people together (Yuliandre, 2013).

In reality, if someone likes a product, he or she can use social media to talk about it, without any assistance or gift from the company, to increase the interest of their "mates" (on Facebook) or followers (on Twitter and Instagram). Apart from the fact that businesses now have access to a wider audience, social media has changed the way consumers buy goods and receive product feedback. It is also important that customers are happy in order to boost brand awareness. The potential customer has the impression that he can talk to the brand, which gives him the impression that he is being heard and that the business and brand care for his needs (Yuliandre, 2013).

Despite all of the benefits that social media provides, businesses should be aware of certain limitations. Indeed, social media may reach a vast audience who may or may not be involved in the company's or brand's offerings. It can be difficult to calculate and boost the profitability of a campaign like this. Marketers who wish to use social media marketing must build strategies that facilitate contact between the brand and potential customers. This type of campaign requires the customer to be active and involved in order to be successful. The measurement with statistic or number is still complicated event though Marketers are sure that Social Media Marketing is now a requirement in Marketing Strategy (Yuliandre, 2013).

2.8 Empirical Review

The relationship between consumer lifestyles and online shopping has been the topic of many studies (Li et al. 2019; Swaminathan et al. 2019). Bhatnagar et al. (2010) was the first to extend the valence concept to an online shopping purchase

model. Consumers' channel preference decisions are based on their comfort and risk perception, according to their model. Person attributes, such as a consumer's lifestyle, must certainly be highlighted as essential determinants of buying decisions (Bellman et al. 2019).

Market lifestyle, according to Mowen (2017), refers to how people live, spend their money, and allocate their time. We categorize responses into three empirical categories for online shoppers' lifestyles based on Mowen's description: price-oriented, net-oriented, and time-oriented design. When it comes to online shopping, price is crucial. The ranking of store formats demonstrates price power. Some shoppers are extremely price sensitive and, as a result, seek out bargains. Such people would actively search for and purchase goods on the Internet in order to achieve lower prices, as lower prices are a major reason why people shop online (Forrester Research 2019). Consumers' perceptions of profit against online shopping increase as they adopt a more price-oriented style, while their perceptions of risk decrease.

People who have been on the Internet for a long time, not just a few months, appear to have a net-oriented personality. They probably receive a large number of e-mail messages every day; they probably work on the Internet in their offices once a week; and they usually accept that the Internet and other advancements in communication technologies have increased their workplace efficiency. Consumers' perceptions of risk decrease as they become more connected to the Internet, while their perceptions of profit increase.

The less time there is to browse for and purchase items in the usual way as the overall amount of hours employed by members of a household rises. Dual-income families, for example, are looking for easier and more efficient ways to obtain information and purchase goods. Consumers' perceptions of risk and benefit shift as

they become more time-oriented; in other words, the less free time they have, the lower their perception of risk and the higher their perception of benefit. We assume that the price-oriented, net-oriented, and time-oriented lifestyles of online shoppers have predictive validity for online shopping behaviour.

2.9 Advantages and Disadvantages of On-line Marketing (E-commerce) in the Fashion Industry

Electronic commerce is sweeping through all walks of life with an irreversible trend, thanks to the advancement of connectivity and information technology, as well as the popularity of the internet. Electronic commerce has many benefits for the business world, such as convenience and quality, but it also has some drawbacks (Zhang, Deng, Wei & Deng, 2012). This electronic commerce improves knowledge flow while lowering transaction inefficiency and costs (Jahanshahi, Zheng & Brem, 2013).

Despite the advantages that an e-commerce business will reap, the introduction of electronic commerce has been hampered by a range of challenges and restrictions. Doubts regarding privacy and protection, the high cost of user service, and higher-than-expected operating and maintenance costs are the key roadblocks (Jahanshahi, Zheng & Brem, 2013). Electronic commerce is a simple and easy way to buy and sell goods on the internet, as well as a convenient way to locate products, and it is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Furthermore, the operating cost is minimal, and the facilities are of higher quality (Niranjanamurthy, Kavyashree, Jagannath & Charhar, 2013).

Firms do not need to be physically present when forming a company, and it is also simple to start and run. Finally, consumers can easily select goods from various

suppliers without having to physically walk around (Niranjanamurthy, Kavyashree, Jagannath & Charhar, 2013). Multinational companies, such as the apparel industry, may benefit from e-commerce in a number of ways. For starters, the business may attract new customers from both the domestic and international markets. Second, by attracting customers and retaining them, it can establish consumer loyalty to a particular product. Third, to lower the cost of generating, distributing, searching, storing, and processing paper-based data (Yuliandre, 2013).

Furthermore, the key benefit of customers shopping online is the cost-free knowledge quest and fast opportunities, as well as the convenience and vast variety of online information about goods and shops. When compared to offline shoppers, online shoppers have the benefit of being able to find more quickly details about a product, an online store, a brand, and a price (Korgaonkar, Petrescu & Becerra, 2014). The online retailer's and customers' relationships can be jeopardized as a result of a series of transactions.

The explanation for this is that customers are more likely to review online purchases and determine whether or not the transaction is convenient for them before deciding whether or not to buy the product (Hjort & Lantz, 2016). Some online retailers' electronic platforms eat up their customers' money because the business does not guarantee the quality of their goods. Furthermore, a mechanical failure may have an unpredictably negative impact on the overall operation (Niranjanamurthy, Kavyashree, Jagannath & Charhar, 2013). As a result, the company has a low risk of having direct contact with its clients, and customer satisfaction is constantly monitored.

Finally, an e-commerce platform, payment gateways, and utilities are still open to attack since many hackers are searching for ways to break into these networks

(Niranjanamurthy, Kavyashree, Jagannath & Charhar, 2013). Furthermore, since online shoppers have less opportunities to inspect goods prior to making a purchase, the company's credibility could become even more important (Bronnenberg & Ellickson, 2015).

2.10 The profitability of marketing fashion products online

According to Mohapatra (2013, p. 155), the internet has altered people's lives and the way they communicate with one another and conduct business. Furthermore, the internet has altered advertising, promotion, and marketing methods. The internet's effect on brand equity has increased slightly. “A series of open-source, collaborative, and user-controlled online applications that expands the experiences, expertise, and market power of users as participants in business and social processes,” according to Constantinides & Foutain (2017).

By enabling the efficient generation, distribution, sharing, and editing / refining of informational content, Web 2.0 applications promote the development of informal user networks, promoting the flow of ideas and knowledge.” Web-based and mobile technologies are used in social media to create highly interactive environments that enable communities and individuals to co-create, debate, share, and change user-generated content. These are the ones that reflect the social phenomena, as well as the ones that have a major effect on a company's revenue, credibility, and survival (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011).

Furthermore, online social networks are websites where people can build their own personal home page on which they can post photographs, share ideas, write posts, and link to other websites that they are interested in (Lai & Turban, 2018). In recent years, there has been a huge increase in user generated content on the internet with the

use of a series of appliances that have been branded as social media, despite the use of other technology concepts such as Web 2.0. (Parra-Lopez, Bulchand-Gidumal, Gutierrez-Tano & Diaz-Armas, 2011).

This field, which includes social sharing views through social photo and video sharing, blogs and microblogs, social bookmarking, social sharing of information, and many other forms of user generated content, is the fastest growing segment on the web. People can use this form of tool to collaboratively organize, browse, annotate, post, and contribute to content (Parra-Lopez, Bulchand-Gidumal, Gutierrez-Tano & Diaz-Armas, 2011). Furthermore, companies may analyze the strategic tools for creating a platform or applications, as well as using them for business marketing. Free social media content may be created by businesses or advertisers (Wienberg & Pehlivan, 2011).

According to Subrahmanyam et al. (2018), social networking sites are the most recent online communication platform that allows users to build social networks and communicate with others in their networks. Online contact forums include apps like email, text messaging, and chat rooms, as well as internet sites like social networking sites, blogs, and photo and video sharing sites like YouTube (Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2011). Small and large businesses alike are jumping on board the social media bandwagon because they recognize its value.

Businesses have used Twitter, built Facebook fan pages, and uploaded videos to YouTube. Today, many business firms understand the significance of social media, recognizing that it will continue to be an important fabric of commerce for their company (Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2011). Furthermore, as customers spend more time online, strategists are using the internet to gain a competitive edge. The internet has

also altered the competitive environment by assisting existing brands across online platforms.

As a result, internet-savvy customers are becoming more interested in e-commerce strategies. “To become important to online customers and take full advantage of digital media, e-commerce strategists must reconsider their brand investments,” Mohapatra (2013, p. 155) added. Their brand strategies must be intelligently balanced between the physical and online worlds. To provide consumers with a rich, engaging experience, they must cleverly combine conventional media with online approaches.” Furthermore, social networking sites are one of the most common social media sharing tools.

People use social networking sites for a variety of purposes, including focusing on a specific goal or interacting with other people in terms of social networking (Bulut & Dogan, 2017). Twitter, for example, is used as a microblogging platform, while Instagram is used as a video and photo sharing platform, and LinkedIn is used as a business networking site. Almost all of the social networking site's features and services are available for free. This may be one of the reasons why social networking sites have become so popular around the world (Bulut & Dogan, 2017).

2.11 The Influence of Social Media Users on On-line Fashion Marketing

The internet has created a unique aspect in social networking interactively as a result of technological advancements, and it has become an irreplaceable part of life's rich pageant. Individuals can share an enormous amount of images, information, news, and data through social networking sites. People from all over the world, representing various cultures, countries, and religions, may use social networking sites to share their views, stories, and news with the rest of the world (Bulut & Dogan, 2017).

According to Statistic Brain, 58 percent of people use one or more of the social media platforms.

LinkedIn is used by 14% of people, Facebook is used by 56%, Google+ is used by 9%, and Twitter is used by 11%. With 1.5 billion users, Facebook is the most popular social media website. Tumblr, Instagram, Google+, Baidu, and Twitter, on the other hand, have more than 200 million users (Bulut & Dogan, 2017). The table below explains how social media can support both customers and companies by assisting consumers with information collection. As seen in the table, 70% of consumers have used social media platforms such as blogs and other social networking sites to collect brand or product knowledge almost as often as enterprises' websites.

Sixty (60) percent of consumers said they use social media to exchange information (Kirtis & Karahan, 2011). Furthermore, according to ztamur and Karakadlar (2014), businesses that have begun to use social media as a marketing strategy are taking advantage of the web's unique qualities and have transferred their business strategy to electronic commerce. The internet has evolved into one of the most profitable platforms for businesses to market their goods and services and retain their target customers. Some of these businesses entered the industry with the goal of becoming an electronic retailer, while others have developed into content providers, transaction brokers, service providers, or market developers.

The development of social networking applications such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and particularly Instagram has resulted in the emergence of a modern electronic commerce paradigm known as social commerce (Kim & Park, 2013). Social commerce is a branch of electronic commerce that makes use of social media and contributions to make online shopping and sale of various goods and services

more convenient (Kim & Park, 2013). In a nutshell, social commerce (s-commerce) is an online firm's fusion of electronic commerce and social media to give consumers regular offers from local businesses (Kim & Park, 2013).

2.11.1 Facebook

With over 4 million active users, Facebook is one of the most well-known social networking sites. Instead of only providing various advertisement programs, businesses can create their own customised and profile page and share vital details in the development of the company's own brand group. Furthermore, businesses have a one-of-a-kind opportunity to reach their audience and establish two-way contact between the company and its customers (Castronovo & Huang, 2012). Facebook is the most widely used social media website, and retailers use it to build more than just electronic commerce within the Facebook framework.

Many retailers have made it possible for customers to search a subset of their selling items on their Facebook pages in the last two years, but these retailers still rely on their electronic commerce platform to complete their transactions (Saravanakumar & Suganthalakshmi, 2012). This is a good step; however, in order for retailers to profit from Facebook, they must make it easier for consumers to communicate with one another regarding deals, items, and feedback, as well as seamlessly purchase products (Saravanakumar & Suganthalakshmi, 2012).

Due to the fact that there are 600 million Facebook users, retailers are using Facebook to connect with their customers. Retailers may reward their fans with Facebook-exclusive discounts and sneak peeks of upcoming items using this form of social media (Saravanakumar & Suganthalakshmi, 2012). Lowes is an example of a successful marketing campaign. This company ran a Facebook advertisement on

Black Friday in which they sold a small range of products at an incredible price to only their Facebook followers. Most of the items at Lowes.com were in the range of 90% and were limited to the first 100 followers to check out with the product (Saravanakumar & Suganthalakshmi, 2012).

2.11.2 Instagram

According to Boy & Uitermark (2016), Instagram was established in 2010 and has rapidly grown to become the most popular social media site since then. It has been estimated that over 200 million Instagram users around the world use the platform, with 70 million photos being posted every day. Its users create data as they go about their daily lives with their smartphones in hand. According to Sheldon & Bryant (2016), Instagram is the world's fastest growing social networking site because it is both an online cell phone for posting pictures and videos and a social networking service that allows Instagram users to take videos and images and then post them on other sites. According to reports, in August 2015, 28 percent of online adults used Instagram, with women outnumbering men. In addition, Instagram helps users to connect with other people on social media.

Hash tagging is one way that people interact with each other on social media. As a result, hashtags are visible to all Instagram users, contributing to the social media culture. According to Sloane (2015), ecommerce companies have begun to increasingly accept Instagram since it was one of the first marketing strategies that could convert views into customers with a single click (Sloane, 2015). As a result, retailers will be able to connect their product pages to their Instagram ads. Instead of a "Order" button, Instagram allows advertisers to connect directly to online checkout pages.

In March 2015, Instagram introduced carousel advertising, which allowed businesses to post slideshows of images that ended with a button to display additional content. The main goal is for retailers to be able to send their customers directly to a store where they can buy anything they saw in an Instagram commercial (Sloane, 2015). According to reports, more than 58 percent of the world's top 50 businesses use Instagram on an average of 5.6 days a week. Nowadays, everybody in the world carries a camera in their pocket, and visual social media will become more common in the future (Oren, 2015).

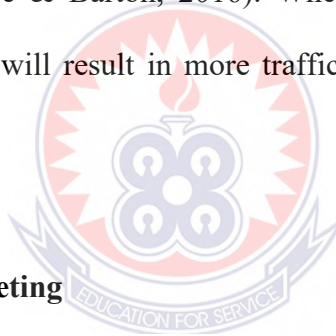
It's no surprise that people are using image-based social media sites like Tumblr, Pinterest, and Instagram to record their lives and, by extension, the services and products they use (Oren, 2015). As a result, customers are responding quickly to social media trends, and businesses are using these channels to market their brands. A large number of customers and businesses have realized that images on social media can be used to tell stories. Retailers may benefit from using Instagram as part of their marketing campaign in a variety of ways (Oren, 2015). Customers sharing pictures of a retailer's product on Instagram, for example, can be a successful form of advertisement for the business so other users can see the photo. Another example is if a company discovers that one of its goods is being used in an odd manner, it may tap into that information and re-distribute it through its own networks (Oren, 2015).

2.12 Promoting Fashion Business Using Social Media

During the past few years, the exponential development of the internet has provided both companies and consumers with a slew of new opportunities. As a result of the rapid acceptance of social media in society, the number of companies that use it for brand building and marketing has risen dramatically (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis,

2014). Brand recognition and reach, customer contact through referrals, purchases, and reputation management are all benefits of using social media for business. Furthermore, businesses can tap into their customers' wisdom by exchanging their expertise and information, as well as engage prospects through market evangelism and the opportunity for customers to support other customers (Neti, 2011). Furthermore, social media can assist companies in promoting their brands, delivering valuable information to their clients, and growing traffic to their websites (Montague, Gazal, Wiedenbeck & Shephard, 2016).

Some companies use social media to improve sales by advertising and showcasing their products on the internet, as well as to raise brand and product awareness (Tchach, Lease & Barton, 2016). When consumers visit the company's page on social media, it will result in more traffic on the website and more online sales.



2.13 Social Media Marketing

Many business organizations' marketing strategies, as well as customer expectations and attitudes, were influenced by the recent global economic crisis. During and after the global economic downturn, marketing roles are important for companies to thrive and stay sustainable and responsive to customers (Kirtis & Karahan, 2011). Firms have been able to lower their costs by using social media as a marketing tool. Using social media to support brands and other marketing practices is free for businesses (Kirtis & Karahan, 2011). Firms have found this to be the most practical method of marketing their goods to their target market.

As one of the most influential techniques in marketing practices, advertisers are heavily using social media for their business campaigns in order to minimize costs

(Kirtis & Karahan, 2011). Organizations use social media because it provides them with relationships, an audience, cost savings, and time. Since the delivery aspect of social media is in a mass media, it may reduce costs. The majority of social media sites, on the other hand, are free to use (Kirtis & Karahan, 2011). The marketing and promotion industry has evolved dramatically over the last few decades.

The use of social media as a marketing strategy has risen dramatically, although physical advertising such as billboards, radio, magazines, and newspapers has declined. The Internet has been dubbed the greatest networking strategy ever devised, resulting in a rapid change in the marketing landscape as a result of technological advancements (Montague, et al, 2016). As a result, companies have had to adapt the way they prepare and deliver marketing messages in order to keep up with the evolving needs of communication technologies.

As a result of the growth of the digital economy, one of the most comprehensive contemporary marketing strategies has been developed: social media (Montague, Gazal, Wiedenbeck & Shephard, 2016). Companies are discovering that social media is one of the most powerful ways to communicate with potential customers. Customers' confidence has been earned as a result of this media innovation's ability to communicate with them on a very personal level. In the early part of 2010, social media marketing became the mantra for a number of businesses (Neti, 2011).

In a nutshell, social media marketing is a business's attempt to convince consumers that their goods and/or services are worthwhile through the use of social media. This is accomplished by the use of social media, online forums, blog marketing, and other methods (Neti, 2011). Today's advertisers see social media as a fantastic way to grow their market share. Furthermore, advertisers see social media as a modern range of platforms for promoting and selling their products or services.

Nowadays, social media has become a very critical issue for many businesses (Saravanakumar & Suganthalakshmi, 2012).

This allows businesses to communicate with their customers, create brand awareness, sell their products, and increase customer loyalty. However, networking sites are a two-way platform that necessitates a great deal of care and effort on the part of businesses to handle this contact (Saravanakumar & Suganthalakshmi, 2012).

2.14 Communication Tools used to Market Fashion Products

Furthermore, using social media for business can be an efficient way to build reputation by offering valuable information and generate revenue through promotions, discounts, and other means. Firms may use videos and pictures to illustrate the quality of their work, highlight exclusive deals, and provide consumers with a direct line to the company's customer service to solve an issue (Mazurkiewics, 2015). Since social media allows businesses to connect directly with their customers and create relationships, it is critical for any company to respond positively to negative feedback.

For example, if a consumer has left a negative review of a company's product or service on social media, the company should turn the negative review into a constructive critique (Minter, 2013). Apart from the obvious advantages of networking and looking for information without constraint, people may also use social media to share their feelings and opinions (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Companies can communicate with their consumers via social media by using richer media with a wider scope.

Because of the interactive nature of these new media, businesses can not only share and exchange information with their customers, but their customers can also share and exchange information with other customers (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

Consumers add value to the relationship by producing content that can affect others' purchase decisions in peer to peer communications. Businesses may use social media to reach out to consumers who have previously been unreachable (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

Furthermore, since social media appliances provide companies with access to millions of people, social media will help them create and increase brand awareness. Since a large number of people use social media, a company's brand name presence across certain networks can help people become more aware of the brand and familiarize themselves with it (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Although social media helps businesses to connect with consumers from all over the world, it also has a wide range of effects on businesses by word of mouth (WOM).

2.14.1 Word of Mouth

Herr, Kardes and Kim (2011) found that word-of-mouth (WOM) contact has a significant influence on consumers' purchase decisions when purchasing goods or services. According to Chen, Fay & Wang (2011), with the advancement of the internet, especially Web 2.0 technologies, social media has created an unprecedented forum for consumers to publish and share their product opinions and experiences through customer feedback or word-of-mouth. There is strong evidence that online word-of-mouth influences consumers' purchasing decisions (Chen, et al, 2011).

Word-of-mouth networking is an important facilitator of learning and can have a significant impact on a customer's purchasing decision. In certain cases, this effect may be astounding, as people choose to disregard private signals in favor of relying solely on the information provided to them by the collective behavior of other consumers (Chen, Fay & Wang, 2011). "Prior to the Internet, a spreader of

word-of-mouth information will mainly affect her immediate circle of friends and family, with eventual dissemination to a larger audience.

Electronic communication, such as online customer review sites, has allowed for a much faster flow of information to a much larger audience, as a single message can impact all site users. The frequency and valence of online user feedback have been shown to have a substantial effect on product sales in recent empirical studies (Chen, Fay & Wang, 2011). Furthermore, the actions and views of other customers have a huge effect on them. As a widely regarded and legitimate source of product knowledge, consumer to consumer contact has the potential to influence a customer's purchasing decision (Castronovo & Huang, 2012).

Customers tend to depend heavily on the advice of other consumers when making a purchase, especially when the purchase is psychologically or financially risky. In the marketing process, knowledge sharing through word-of-mouth is known to be a crucial component of this business process, as customers tend to rely heavily on the advice of other consumers when making a purchase (Castronovo & Huang, 2012). WOM is far more successful than conventional advertising platforms at influencing an individual's purchasing decisions and retaining customers over time (Castronovo & Huang, 2012).

When customers are either disappointed or delighted with a product and are extremely loyal to the product business, they are highly motivated to share knowledge through WOM contact (Castronovo & Huang, 2012). To expand on this theoretical structure, the researcher consulted other notable authors to back up the above-mentioned theoretical model. First of all to continue in this section, social media is served as a tool to facilitate intra and inter organisational activities between consumers, people, organisations and business partners such as collaborative product

development, implementation of corporate dialog at financial institution, creation of knowledge sharing communities, collaborative learning and creativity and marketing strategies for brand management (Ngai, Tao & Moon. 2015). (Ngai, Tao & Moon. 2015). Furthermore, the development of internet-based social media has allowed individuals and organizations to interact with hundreds or even thousands of other people about products and the companies that provide them.

Integrated marketing communications (IMC) is one of the most common ways for companies to communicate with their target audiences (Mangold & Faulds, 2019). Personal selling, advertisement, direct marketing, product promotion, publicity, and public relations are all examples of forms of promotional combination that this form of communication tries to regulate and organize. These elements are used by IMC to create a cohesive customer-focused message and, as a result, to achieve various organizational goals (Mangold & Faulds, 2019).

With the emergence of the phenomenon known as social media, however, the methods and tools for engaging with customers have greatly changed (Mangold & Faulds, 2019). According to McCormick & Livett (2012), online websites (e-commerce) offer better innovation for transmitting clothing product knowledge, promoting, and engaging with customers than physical stores. For online shoppers, daily fashion news and alerts have become useful and important.

Furthermore, McCormick & Livett (2012) stated that features on fashion retailers' websites will help online consumers understand their fashion sense. According to Kirtis & Karahan (2011), 70% of customers use social media to collect knowledge about products or brands. Many e-commerce companies have adopted social media as a marketing strategy because it is one of the most cost-effective ways to advertise their goods and services while still attracting their target customers.

Users will also share and exchange information with their customers (Oztamur & Karakadilar, 2014; Saravanakumar & Suganthalakshmi, 2012; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). For a retailer, using social media may be seen as a competitive advantage since the network is open, resulting in lower costs for the company (Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2012; Kirtis & Karahan, 2011). Since social networking sites are free, they have risen in popularity all over the world (Bulut & Dogan, 2017). Since social networking sites are free, they have risen in popularity all over the world (Bulut & Dogan, 2017).

Since it benefits brands in online networks and customers are becoming more drawn to the internet (Weinberg & Pehlivan), this form of marketing strategy for business organizations has also become a strategic strategy for those companies (2011). Additionally, companies may use social media to raise brand awareness and reach, as well as increase sales (Neti, 2011; Tchach, Lease & Barton, 2016; Montague, Gazalm, Weidenbeck & Shepard, 2016; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis (2014).

With over 200 million Instagram users, Instagram is recognised as the fastest social media site on the planet. People use this form of social media to record videos and upload photos for personal and professional purposes. Instagram is also used as a business tool by my clients so they can market their brands by posting their goods online for customers to see (Boy & Uitermark, 2016; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016; Sloane, 2015; Oren, 2015).

According to Chain Store Age (2012) and Saravanakumar & Suganthalakshmi (2012), Instagram and Facebook are the most popular social media sites in the world, enabling users to share and comment on images. There are nearly 600 million Facebook users, according to reports, and retailers use this social media site to connect with potential customers (Saravanakumar & Suganthalakshmi, 2012).

Furthermore, the use of social media has helped online shoppers to spread the word about their shopping experiences (WOM).

This form of approach has an effect on potential customers' purchasing behavior and decisions (Chen, Fay & Wang, 2011; Castronovo & Huang, 2012). In the marketing process, word of mouth is critical to any business's success, as consumers exchanging knowledge with one another will influence consumer purchasing decisions.

2.15 Challenges facing On-line Marketers in the Fashion Industry

The use of ICT in information provision, especially in libraries in African countries, poses a number of challenges for online marketers, including: Inadequate technical infrastructure to enable ICT incorporation into curricula (Manda, 2016). This refers to problems such as a lack of or insufficient national ICT policy, poor internet access, insufficient energy supply, insufficient PCs, and so on. Policies that de-regulate satellite communication and other telecommunication links, regulate ISPs, and regulate government and cross-border data flows, among other things, are needed.

ICT policies will help counter strict tax regimes that still regard computers, networking devices, and other peripherals as luxury goods, subjecting them to high import duties and making them prohibitively costly. While Internet access is now widely accessible, its productivity is low, as many African libraries experience downtime on a weekly basis (Manda, 2016). Telecommunication networks, in the form of low bandwidth, technological glitches, and other network configuration issues, are the root cause of these outages.

Many external structural factors, such as energy, transportation networks, import duties, and so on, have an effect on the delivery of internet services on the African

continent (Jensen, 2015). In certain organisations, access is restricted not only by the number of Internet service points accessible, but also by the amount of time that access is available or allowed, to say nothing of bandwidth constraints. However, access to the Internet for research purposes is no longer a luxury or privilege reserved for a select few; in academic circles, access to the Internet and thus to the world's stores of information is a requirement.

African libraries must continue to advocate for increased access to Internet services for academic staff and science. As a consequence, improved ICT policies and infrastructure in institutions and countries are important. Several factors, according to Ghuloum and Ahmed (2011), such as financial factors, technical factors, human factors, and cultural factors, may be an obstacle to ICT adoption. Lack of adequate funds to support the purchase of technology, a lack of skilled on-line marketers, a lack of motivation, and a need among fashion on-line marketers to follow ICT in their daily operations are just a few of them (Starr, 2011; Ani, 2015).

2.15.1 Financial Factors

Fashion designers would need ample funds to purchase modern ICT equipment such as computers, servers, printers, photocopiers, and software, as well as to purchase/subscribe to online/offline services such as e-journals, e-books, and digital books, among other things. According to Amutabi (2009), with diminishing financial donor help, things are unlikely to change significantly.

2.15.2 Technological Factors

One of the major challenges that fashion designers face in selling their fashion items on the internet has been cited by several writers as an insufficient technical

infrastructure to enable the incorporation of ICTs in the fashion designing on-line marketing functions. According to Kamba (2011), ICT is not widely used and distributed in African institutions of higher learning, owing to weak communication networks and restricted access to ICT hardware and software. This applies to problems such as a lack of or weak ICT regulation, poor internet access, insufficient power supply, insufficient PCs, and so on (Minishi-Majanja, 2017). A study by Rosenberg (2015) showed that 85 per cent of the fashion designers in Africa do not sell their fashion products on-line.

2.15.3 Human Factors

Several authors (Minishi-Majanja, 2017; Odero-Musakali & Mutual, 2017; Sife, 2008) have described a lack of qualified staff and a negative attitude toward IT among fashion designers as major barriers to successful ICT adoption. Kamba (2011) recognizes the involvement of highly skilled and qualified technical staff in fashion design firms who handle, monitor, and retain available ICT tools. Many fashion design firms, according to Emanuel and Sife (2008), lack trained ICT staff, with most fashion designers having low ICT skills and often having technology phobia.

Lack of qualified staff and a negative attitude toward IT among fashion designers are both significant barriers to successful ICT adoption in the industry (Ani, 2005). The ability to provide reliable information services can be hampered if there is insufficient availability of adequately qualified and professional staff.

2.15.4 Cultural Factors

According to de Mooij (2015), there are different meanings of culture. The most common definitions of culture are found in anthropological literature. According to

Albaum et al. (2012), culture is human-made, so it is learned and is communicated from one generation to another. This definition corresponds with the statement of Keegan (2012) who stated that cultures are ways of living built up by a group of human beings, which are transmitted from one generation to another. One of the most popular definitions was given by Hofstede (2011, p. 9), who stated that, culture is “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another”. In accordance with Hofstede’s (2011) definition, Zhao (2011) stated that a national culture is a set of collective beliefs and values that distinguish people of one nation from those of another.

2.15.4.1 Elements of Culture

Various authors have written about the elements of culture and have tried to explain its influence on the national culture and the value and norm systems of a society. Elements of culture like education, religion and language influence the values and norms of a society (Cateora & Graham, 2017; Samovar et al., 2017; Hill, 2011). “Each of these ingredients plays an equally important role in determining the nature and values of a particular culture” (Lillis & Tian, 2010, p. 100). One of the elements of culture is education which plays a major role in a society. At school, individuals learn the substantial skills which are needed in a modern society. Cultural norms, like respect for others, obedience to authority, honesty, neatness and being on time are taught at school (Hill, 2011).

Another cultural factor, of importance, is religion. Cateora & Graham (2017) stated that the importance of religion on the value systems of a society and the effect of value systems on marketing must not be underestimated. The influence of religion is often quite strong. The issue of time is also treated differently amongst different

cultural groups. Cultural attitudes towards time are reflected by different time orientations. In a monochronic culture, time is seen as having an economic value. Therefore, activities are undertaken at one time and schedules and agendas are respected. Polychronic cultures do multitasking, i.e., doing two or more things at the same time (Gillespie et al., 2007).

“In cultures with this view, people view the ability of being involved with many issues involving other people all at once as more important than completing an individual task by a deadline” (Brodowsky et al., 2018, p. 246). Language is also another cultural element of key interest. Language is part of culture and plays a very important role in it. According to Jiang (2010), without language culture would not be possible, because the former reflects culture and is simultaneously influenced and shaped by it. Facts or ideas or events that are communicable refer to shared knowledge between people as well as beliefs and attitudes which are shared with others.

As stated by Chaney & Martin (2010), there is a need for understanding a common language to communicate successively with people from other cultures. Resultantly, several studies have examined the relationship between language and culture. Boroditsky (2010) summarized different studies which measured how people talk and think and identified people’s understanding of space, time and causality could be constructed by language. According to Boroditsky (2010), several studies have shown causality between the language being spoken and the way people think. If a bilingual person switches from one language to another, he/she starts to think differently.

Hence, by learning a new language, people also learn a new world view. The linkages between language and culture are also evident in non-verbal and verbal

communication. Specific cultural behavioral patterns are learned and culture is shared. Non-verbal communication is not only influenced by factors such as gender and an individual's personal characteristics, but is also affected by culture. People who are culturally, linguistically and racially similar may be able to read the non-verbal behavior of each other more accurately (Gabbott & Hogg, 2010).

Cultural traditions, regional interests, institutional relations, political dynamics, and educational context all affect potential consumer groups' perceptions, and thus have an effect on the technology's acceptance and use (Hagenaars, 2017). According to Amutabi (2009), the absence of machine culture in fashion companies delays the spread of new technologies.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, research approach, the population, sampling and sample procedures, data gathering instruments, data collection measures, data analysis and ethical consideration was also dealt with in this chapter.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is the plan of research that essentially guides the conduct of the whole research (Burns & Bush 2012). The researcher needs to develop a proper research design before conducting data collection and analysis, because research design will guide the logical flow of the research project. It is important to have a clear and systematic research design at the outset of the project for being rigorous throughout the investigation process and for being confident in the outcome of the study.

This process may involve a number of stages and each stage has its own outcomes. Hair et al. (2013) concluded that a vigorous and systematic research design will lead to the type of data, technique of data collection, sampling methodology to be used, that the schedule and compliance with budget. Indeed, it will help to align the planned methodology to the research problems.

Research design essentially addresses two fundamental research inquiries – “what” and “why”. “What” normally refers to the descriptive research and a clear description will lead to the “why” questions or exploratory research. Answering the “why” questions (exploratory research) involved developing a causal explanation. These research processes were identified by Burns & Bush (2012) and Hair et al. (2013), who classified research designs into three parts: exploratory, descriptive and causal.

A choice of research design reflects decisions about the priority given to set of dimensions of the research process. The researcher used descriptive research design for the study. This refers to a research which specifies the nature of a given phenomena. It determines and reports the way things are done. Descriptive research thus involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or answer research questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study (Bryman, 2014).

Descriptive research portrays an accurate profile of persons, events, or situations (Kothari, 2010). Therefore, the descriptive survey was deemed the best strategy to fulfil the objectives of this study. According to Kombo & Tromp (2006) the basic purpose for descriptive research usually is to describe characteristics of the population of interest, make specific predictions and test associational relationships.

3.3 Research Approach

Ulin et al. (2014) defined quantitative research as scientific research that involves an investigation to find a solution, has a proper way to answer the question, gathers evidence and lastly provides an outcome applicable to the study. Furthermore, the finding can be generalized to the population where it is involved. They also added that a quantitative study is one of the methods that can be used to obtain information about culture.

This was supported by Patton (2012) who stated that a qualitative attempt to understand certain phenomena is based on context-specific settings without ignoring the natural surroundings. Denzin & Lincoln (2010) broadly defined qualitative research as a multi-method focus that involves an interpretive naturalistic approach to its subject matter.

This means that such research attempts to investigate things based on a natural setting which brings meaning to them. Quantitative research also involves the studied use and collection of a variety of methods to capture the story, such as interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts. All these methods can describe people's routines and problematic moments which can bring full meaning to them.

Strauss & Corbin (2010) stated that quantitative research is different from qualitative research: the finding of the former method naturally explains without using statistical procedures or other means of quantification. Indeed, the quantitative researcher describes explanation, understanding and prediction to similar situations. In contrast, qualitative researchers seek causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings (Hoepfl, 2017).

In simplified terms, quantitative research does not involve any statistical analysis to interpret the data to make the findings. For instance, if we were asked to explain in quantitative terms a thermal image displayed in multiple colours, we would explain the colour differences rather than the heat's numerical value. In quantitative inquiry, the collection of data is normally measured and expressed numerically and used for statistical data analysis. Quantitative methods allow researchers to test theories and hypothesized relationships. This study adopted a quantitative inquiry.

3.3.1 Justification of the quantitative approach

Researchers should bear in mind that methods used to conduct the research need to align with the research questions (Punch, 2008). In other words, data which need to be collected should be enough in answering the research question. Amaratunga et al. (2012) maintained that quantitative research can help a researcher to gather strong

evidence through statistical analysis on the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

Undoubtedly, results obtained from statistical analysis can provide directions of relationships when mixed with theory and literature. Neuman (2007 p.63) defined the quantitative approach as “an organized method for combining deductive logic with precise empirical observations of individual behavior in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws that can be used to predict general patterns of human activity.”

Thus, this study aimed to measure underlying variables based on Cavana et al. (2011 p.106) who stated, “measurement of the variables in the theoretical framework is an integral part of research and an important aspect of quantitative research design”. Furthermore, the advantages of using a quantitative approach can provide a researcher with in-depth explanations of quantitative enquiry. Cavana et al. (2011) and Amaratunga et al. (2012) emphasized this method can provide strength in reliability and validity for the constructs. Because the objective of this study was to empirically investigate a causal relationship between the underlying constructs, this methodology was deemed to be appropriate (Churcill & Suprenant 2012).

3.4 Population

Mugenda (2008) describes population as the set of all groups of individuals, objects, items, cases, articles or things with common attributes or characteristics. According to Kothari (2014) a population consists of all items in any field of inquiry. The population for the study was three hundred and sixty nine (369) fashion designers in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana.

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Sample is a smaller, manageable version of a larger group. Samples are used in statistical testing when population are too large for the test to include all possible members or observations. A sample should represent the whole population and not reflect bias toward a specific attribute. It has been indicated that the size of the sample and the way in which it is selected definitely had implication for the confidence you can have in your data and the extent to which you can generalize (Saunders *et al* 2007).

A stratified random sampling was used to obtain the sample size. The population was categorized into the management positions. Auka et al. (2013) posit that stratified random sampling ensures that all the groups (categories) are adequately sampled and this facilitates comparison among the groups. According to the Krejcie & Morgan (1970), table for determining sample size, a population of 369 requires a sample size of 186. Therefore, stratified random sampling techniques was used to select 186 participants for the study. The participants were put into stratum and in each strata the participants were randomly selected.

3.6. Data Collection Instruments

To ensure that data collected address the study objectives, the data collection instruments must be selected appropriately to avoid collecting irrelevant information, Odongo (2013). In this study, questionnaire was prepared for purposes of obtaining data from the respondents. The questionnaire items comprised of closed - ended and open -ended items that offered the advantage of collecting both qualitative and quantitative information. The questions were divided into sections that covered the research objectives.

The first section of the questionnaire contained socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and included their age, gender, working experience and level of education. This was primarily to enable the researcher to have background information of respondents.

Section two assessed the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana. Section three assessed the present status of marketing traditional fashion products online in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region and section four recommended ways fashion designers can popularize digital marketing trading and increase the profitability of marketing traditional fashion products online. The analysis of the data was based on the research objectives of the study.

3.6.1 Pre-Testing the Instruments

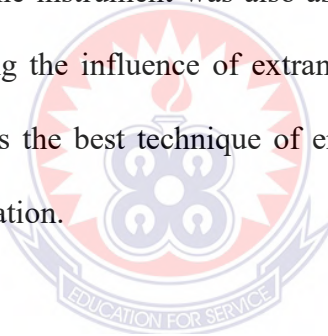
Instruments pre-testing, also known as piloting is a preliminary study conducted on small scale to ascertain the effectiveness of the research instruments, Alila (2011). A pre-test sample should be between 1% and 10% depending on the sample size, (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). In this study the researcher used a pre-test sample size equivalent to 10% of the study sample size, culminating into 18 respondents.

Copies of questionnaire was developed and self administered to the pre-test sample that was similar to the actual study sample in its major characteristics. This was significant as it helped to reveal aspects of ambivalence depicted by the questionnaire items that would be subsequently reframed relative to the responses obtained from the respondents.

3.7 Validity of the Instrument

Validity is a measure of the degree to which differences found with a measuring instrument depict true differences among the items being measured, Kothari (2014). In the perspective of Mugenda & Mugenda (2013), an instrument is validated by providing that its items are representative of the skills and characteristics to be measured. Validity of the research instruments was reinforced by ensuring that the questionnaire items sufficiently covered the research objectives and this was subsequently confirmed by the pilot study.

Other measures put in place to address issues of instrument validity took the form of exposing the questionnaire to the experts and peers for judgment and review, respectively. Validity of the instrument was also assured through randomization that proved helpful in checking the influence of extraneous variables. Randomization is considered crucial for it is the best technique of ensuring the representatives of the sample to the target population.



3.8 Reliability of the Instruments

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2013), reliability is a measure of the degree to which a measuring instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. In Kothari (2015), reliability of a test instrument is a measure of the consistency with which a test instrument produces the same results when administered to the group over time intervals.

In this study, split-half reliability measure was employed by dividing the questionnaire items into two equal parts on the bases of odd and even appearances. The first part of the research instrument having been administered and the result obtained, the second part was subsequently administered and the results noted. Pearson's product

moment coefficient of correlation (r) was then used to compare the two scores obtained and by giving an alpha value of 0.8, indicating that the data collection instrument was reliable.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

According to Kothari (2015), data collection procedures comprises of the steps and actions necessary for conducting the research effectively and the desired sequencing of these steps. The researcher embarked on the process of collecting data from the field upon preparation of a research proposal which was assessed, corrections effected and research permit obtained from the Management of the urban roads department. With the research permit obtained, the researcher started the collections of data collection by presenting the permit to relevant authorities such as the selected fashion designers at Bolgatanga Municipal.

Thereafter, two trained and well motivated research assistants would be engaged in the actual data collection, while closely being supervised by the researcher. The research assistants were informally trained before commencement of data collection process, especially on procedures of administration of data collection instruments to the respondents.

In order to increase the return rate, the researcher adopted the steps proposed by Wiseman & McDonald (2010). These steps involved preparing cover letters attached to each questionnaire disclosing the significant of the study as well as assuring the respondents of the researcher's commitment to confidentiality. In this study, the researcher administered the data collection instruments to the respondents in batches of ten copies each, systematically until all were exhausted.

Given that the researcher was committed to collecting the desired data, the respondent were advised to complete the questionnaire in the presence of the research assistants in order to address cases of misunderstandings that may arise. In the event that the respondents were not prepared to complete the questionnaire due to any other reason, arrangements would be made for the questionnaire to be collected later by the research assistants for purposes of enhancing questionnaire return rate.

3.10 Methods of Data Analysis

Given the fact that the study was descriptive in its major characteristics, descriptive statistics would be used as main method of data analysis. The analysis of the data commenced with editing and inspection of the pieces of data in order to identify simple mistakes, items that were wrongly responded to and any blank space left unfilled by the respondents.

The statistical package for social scientists (SPSS version 20) was used to process all the quantitative responses from the questionnaire. The questionnaire items were sorted, coded and fed into SPSS program to generate frequencies and percentages and data was presented using frequency distribution tables.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

According to Resnik (2011), there are several reasons for the adhering to ethical norms in research. Norms promote the aims of research, such as knowledge, falsifying or misrepresenting research data, promote the truth and avoid error. Moreover, since research often involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different people in different discipline and institutions, ethical standards promote the value that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual

respect and fairness. For instance, many ethical norms in research, such as guidelines for relationships, copyright, and patency policies, data sharing policies and confidentiality and peer reviews are designed to protect intellectual property interest while encouraging collaborations. Many of the ethical norms help to ensure that researcher can be held accountable to the public.

William (2016) lists some of the ethical issues as informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Given the importance of ethical issues in several ways, the researcher would avoid taking any ones work and where someone's work was included, such were acknowledged. In the process of data collection, respondent's identities would be concealed and any information obtained would be handled with utmost confidence. No harm of any nature was meted out on any respondent, aspects of privacy was observed and any cruelty avoided.



CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The study assessed the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry: case study of the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region, Ghana. The study results were based on the following research objectives including to assess the present status of marketing traditional fashion products online in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region. Secondly, to assess the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana and thirdly, to recommend ways fashion designers can popularize digital marketing trading and increase the profitability of marketing traditional fashion products online.

4.2 Questionnaire Response Rate

The researcher administered 186 questionnaires to the respondents, out of which 116 questionnaires were properly answered and returned or received, while 70 questionnaires were not returned. Therefore, the analyses of the questionnaires were based on 62.4% response rate as shown in Figure 4.1.

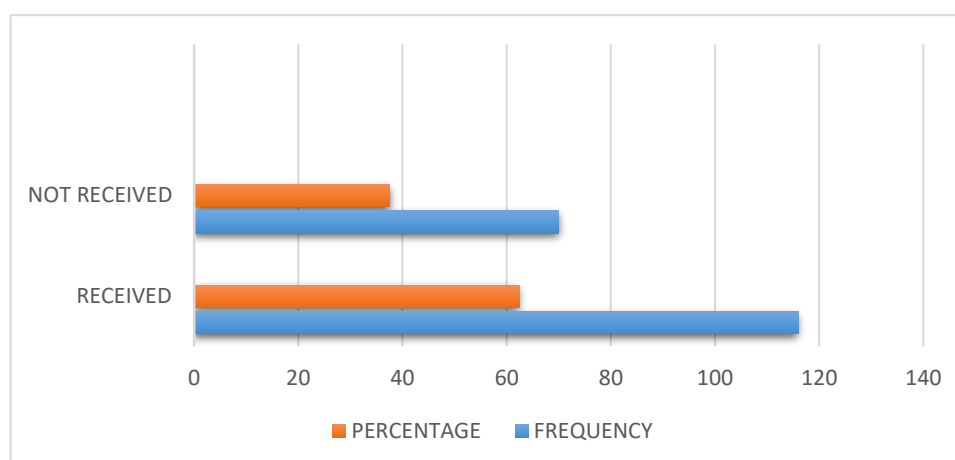


Figure 4. 1: Questionnaire Response Rate

Source: Field survey (2022), n= 116

Table 4. 1: Demographic Information of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
	(n)	(%)
Male	69	59.5
Female	47	40.5
Total	116	100
Age category		
19-25 years	18	15.5
26-30 years	32	27.6
31-35 years	47	40.5
36-40 years	11	9.5
Above 41 years	8	6.9
Total	116	100
Highest level of educational qualification		
Never being to school	8	6.9
BECE/MSLC	12	10.3
Senior High School Certificate/NVTI	21	18.1
Higher National Diploma (HND)	30	25.9
Bachelor's degree	33	28.5
Master's degree	12	10.3
Total	116	100

Source: Field survey (2022), n= 116

Table 4.1 indicates that majority 69(59.5%) of the respondents were males while 47(40.5%) were females. Moreover, 47(40.5%) of the respondents were between the age ranges 31-35 years, 32(27.6%) of the respondents were between 26-30 years, 18(15.5%) of the respondents were between 19-25 years, 11(9.5%) of the respondents were between 36-40 years while 8(6.9%) were above 41 years. Also, 33(28.5%) of the respondents were holding bachelor's degrees as their highest academic qualification, 30(25.9%) of the respondents were possessing Higher National Diploma (HND),

21(18.1%) of the respondents had Senior High School Certificate/NVTI, 12(10.3%) of the respondents possesses BECE/MSLC and Master's degrees while 8(6.9%) had never being to school.

4.2 The present status of marketing traditional fashion products online in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region.

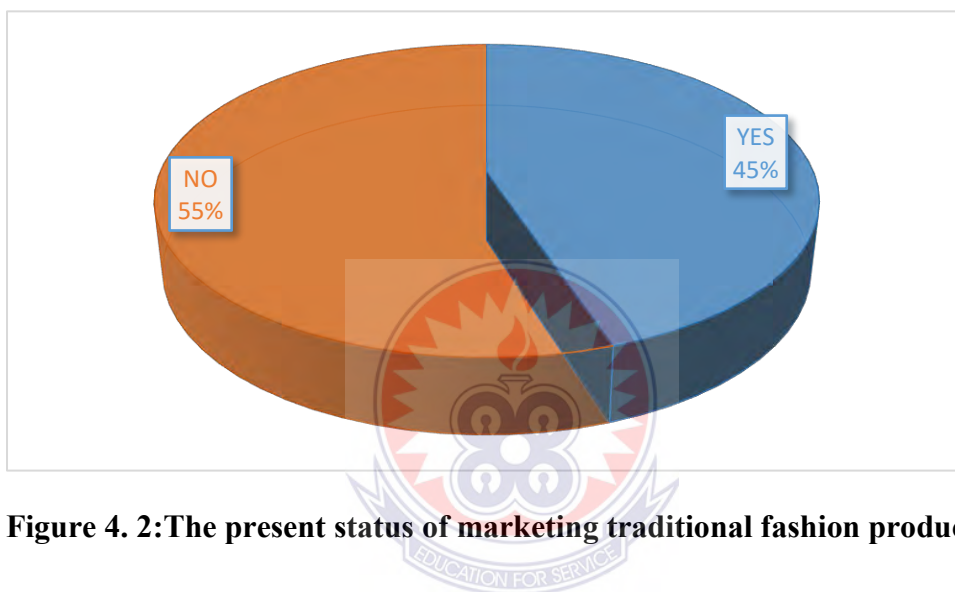


Figure 4. 2: The present status of marketing traditional fashion products online

Figure 4.2 shows the present status of marketing traditional fashion products online, 55% of the respondents said that they do not market their products online while 45% indicated that they market their products online. One of the major challenges that fashion designers face in selling their fashion items on the internet has been cited by several writers as an insufficient technical infrastructure to enable the incorporation of ICTs in the fashion designing on-line marketing functions. According to Kamba (2011), ICT is not widely used and distributed in African institutions of higher learning, owing to weak communication networks and restricted access to ICT hardware and software. This applies to problems such as a lack of or weak ICT regulation, poor internet access, insufficient power supply, insufficient PCs, and so on (Minishi-Majanja, 2017).

Table 4. 2: The present status of marketing traditional fashion products online in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region

Sn	Social networking applications currently used by fashion designers	RII =	
		$\frac{\sum w}{(S * N)}$	Rank
1	Facebook	0.92	1 st
2	Whatsapp	0.88	2 nd
3	YouTube	0.85	3 rd
4	Instagram	0.80	4 th
5	Twitter	0.75	5 th
6	Others	0.72	6 th

Most of the respondents indicated that facebook is the commonest channel of online marketing employed by the fashion designers. According to the respondents, the face-to-face discussion among project team usually takes time and effort but facebook saves time and very quick in information delivery.

Another marketing tool agreed on by the respondents is the WhatsApp. They indicated that whatsapp platform has been an electronic platform where a number of people usually hold important discussion. The respondents' perception concerning communication is not different from Juholin (2008).

The 3rd ranked marketing tool used by the fashion designers to market their products online is the youtube channel. Instagram was the 4th ranked marketing tool while twitter was ranked 5th.

With over 4 million active users, Facebook is one of the most well-known social networking sites. Instead of only providing various advertisement programs, businesses can create their own customised and profile page and share vital details in the development of the company's own brand group. Furthermore, businesses have a one-of-a-kind opportunity to reach their audience and establish two-way contact

between the company and its customers (Castronovo & Huang, 2012). Facebook is the most widely used social media website, and retailers use it to build more than just electronic commerce within the Facebook framework.

Table 4. 3: Descriptive statistics for the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana.

Item	Statement	(M)	(SD)
1	Fashion designers require sufficient funds in order to acquire modern ICT facilities such as computers, servers, scanners, photocopiers, software as well as buy/subscribe to online/offline resources such as e-journals, e-books and digital books among other resources.	4.76	0.77
2	Inadequate technological infrastructure to support the integration of ICTs	4.74	0.79
3	Dwindling financial donor support situation	4.63	1.08
4	Inadequate technological infrastructure to support the integration of ICTs in the on-line marketing functions	4.56	0.85
5	ICT is not very well spread and utilized in institutions of higher learning, mainly because of poor network, limited access to ICT hardware and software.	4.48	0.62
6	Lack of trained personnel and negative attitude of fashion designers on IT are important factors that also militate against effective adoption of ICT in fashion designing companies.	4.46	0.84
7	Issues like poor or lack of ICT policy, low internet connectivity, inadequate supply of electricity, inadequate number of computers.	4.20	0.94
8	Socio-cultural aspects like cultural values, regional priorities, institutional relations, political dynamics, and educational background influence the perception of potential user groups, and therefore have an impact on the adoption and use of the technology	4.08	1.04
9	The existence of crunch trained and experienced technical	4.06	1.03

	personnel who manage, control, and maintains available ICT resources in fashion designing companies.		
10	The lack of computer culture in fashion companies impedes rapid diffusion of the new technologies.	4.03	1.14
11	Without adequate supply of appropriately trained and skilled personnel, the ability to provide quality information services may be inhibited.	4.02	0.89
12	Lack of trained personnel is major factor that impede effective adoption of ICT in fashion designing.	3.81	1.09
13	Many fashion designing companies have inadequate qualified ICT personnel with most fashion designers having low ICT skills and sometimes have technology phobia.	3.79	1.32

Source: field data, 2022, N = 116

The challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana were displayed in Table 4.4. The study results revealed that fashion designers require sufficient funds in order to acquire modern ICT facilities such as computers, servers, scanners, photocopiers, software as well as buy/subscribe to online/offline resources such as e-journals, e-books and digital books among other resources with a mean score of 4.76.

Inadequate technological infrastructure to support the integration of ICTs with a mean score of 4.74. During the past few years, the exponential development of the internet has provided both companies and consumers with a slew of new opportunities. As a result of the rapid acceptance of social media in society, the number of companies that use it for brand building and marketing has risen dramatically (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Brand recognition and reach, customer contact through referrals, purchases, and reputation management are all benefits of using social media for business.

Furthermore, businesses can tap into their customers' wisdom by exchanging their expertise and information, as well as engage prospects through market evangelism and the opportunity for customers to support other customers (Neti, 2011). Furthermore, social media can assist companies in promoting their brands, delivering valuable information to their clients, and growing traffic to their websites (Montague, Gazal, Wiedenbeck & Shephard, 2016).

Dwindling financial donor support situation with a mean score of 4.63. Inadequate technological infrastructure to support the integration of ICTs in the on-line marketing functions with a mean score of 4.56. ICT is not very well spread and utilized in institutions of higher learning, mainly because of poor network, limited access to ICT hardware and software with a mean score of 4.48. According to Mohapatra (2013, p. 155), the internet has altered people's lives and the way they communicate with one another and conduct business. Furthermore, the internet has altered advertising, promotion, and marketing methods. The internet's effect on brand equity has increased slightly. "A series of open-source, collaborative, and user-controlled online applications that expands the experiences, expertise, and market power of users as participants in business and social processes," according to Constantinides & Foutain (2017).

Lack of trained personnel and negative attitude of fashion designers on IT are important factors that also militate against effective adoption of ICT in fashion designing companies with a mean score of 4.46. Issues like poor or lack of ICT policy, low internet connectivity, inadequate supply of electricity, inadequate number of computers with a mean score of 4.20. Some companies use social media to improve sales by advertising and showcasing their products on the internet, as well as to raise brand and product awareness (Tchach, Lease & Barton, 2016). When consumers visit

the company's page on social media, it will result in more traffic on the website and more online sales. For example, in 2012, Sony made an extra million pounds in revenue thanks to Twitter, and Dell made an extra \$3 million thanks to Twitter (Tsiminos & Dimitriadis, 2012).

Socio-cultural aspects like cultural values, regional priorities, institutional relations, political dynamics, and educational background influence the perception of potential user groups, and therefore have an impact on the adoption and use of the technology with a mean score of 4.08. The existence of crunch trained and experienced technical personnel who manage, control, and maintains available ICT resources in fashion designing companies with a mean score of 4.06. The lack of computer culture in fashion companies impedes rapid diffusion of the new technologies with a mean score of 4.03. For example, if a consumer has left a negative review of a company's product or service on social media, the company should turn the negative review into a constructive critique (Minter, 2013). Apart from the obvious advantages of networking and looking for information without constraint, people may also use social media to share their feelings and opinions (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Companies can communicate with their consumers via social media by using richer media with a wider scope.

Without adequate supply of appropriately trained and skilled personnel, the ability to provide quality information services may be inhibited with a mean score of 4.02. Lack of trained personnel is major factor that impede effective adoption of ICT in fashion designing with a mean score of 3.81. Many fashion designing companies have inadequate qualified ICT personnel with most fashion designers having low ICT skills and sometimes have technology phobia with a mean score 3.79. Because of the interactive nature of these new media, businesses can not only share and exchange

information with their customers, but their customers can also share and exchange information with other customers (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Consumers add value to the relationship by producing content that can affect others' purchase decisions in peer to peer communications. Businesses may use social media to reach out to consumers who have previously been unreachable (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).



Table 4. 4:How fashion designers can popularize online marketing trading and increase the profitability of marketing fashion products online

S/N	ITEM(S)	Mean	SD
1	Fashion designers must intelligently balance their brand strategies between the physical and online marketing.	4.77	0.76
2	Fashion designers must cleverly blend traditional media with online approaches to provide customers with a rich, interactive experience.	4.65	0.79
3	The internet has become to be the most profitable tools to for companies to promote their products and services in order to be able to attract their target customers.	4.61	0.83
4	Fashion designers acknowledge the importance of social media as they know it will and be remained vital fabric commerce for their business and increase profitability.	4.55	0.87
5	Social media support the creation of informal users' networks facilitating the flow of ideas and knowledge by allowing the efficient generation, dissemination, sharing and editing / refining of informational content".	4.52	0.96
6	Fashion designers can assess the strategic tools of developing a platform or applications, or to use them for business marketing.	4.48	0.98
7	The internet has changed the lives of people and the way people used to interact with each other and carry out their business operations.	4.32	1.07
8	Social networking sites are the latest digital communication tool which permits online users to create social networks and to interact with other users in their networks.	4.22	1.23
9	Social media employ web based and mobile technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which communities and people co-create, discuss, share information.	4.17	1.28
10	The internet has also changed the competitive playing field whereby it helps established brands in online channels.	4.15	1.31
11	Social media permits people to organise, search, annotate, share and contribute to contents in a cooperative method.	4.13	1.34

12	Fashion designers create a competitive advantage.	4.11	1.38
13	Additionally, the internet has also changed the advertisement, promotional and marketing activities of fashion designers.	4.08	1.42
14	To become relevant to online buyers and take full advantage of new media, e-commerce strategists must rethink their brand investments.	3.96	1.38
15	By using social network sites people from all around the globe with different cultures, nations and religions have the opportunities to share their opinions, stories, news, etc. to the world.	3.94	1.32
16	Due to the advancement of technology, the internet has provided a unique feature of social media interactively whereby it has become an irreplaceable part of life's rich pageant.	3.92	1.27
17	With the social network sites, individuals can share exceptional amount of photos, information, news, data, etc.	3.85	1.23
18	The internet has a great influence on brand equity of fashion designers.	3.79	1.21

Source: Field survey (2022), n= 116

Fashion designers can popularize online marketing trading and increase the profitability of marketing fashion products online as indicated in Table 4.5 above. Fashion designers must intelligently balance their brand strategies between the physical and online marketing with a mean score of 4.77. Fashion designers must cleverly blend traditional media with online approaches to provide customers with a rich, interactive experience with a mean score of 4.65. The internet has become to be the most profitable tools to for companies to promote their products and services in order to be able to attract their target customers with a mean score of 4.61. By enabling the efficient generation, distribution, sharing, and editing/refining of informational content, Web 2.0 applications promote the development of informal user networks, promoting the flow of ideas and knowledge.” Web-based and mobile

technologies are used in social media to create highly interactive environments that enable communities and individuals to co-create, debate, share, and change user-generated content. These are the ones that reflect the social phenomena, as well as the ones that have a major effect on a company's revenue, credibility, and survival (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011).

Fashion designers acknowledge the importance of social media as they know it will and be remained vital fabric commerce for their business and increase profitability with a mean score of 4.55. Social media support the creation of informal users' networks facilitating the flow of ideas and knowledge by allowing the efficient generation, dissemination, sharing and editing / refining of informational content" with a mean score of 4.52. Fashion designers can assess the strategic tools of developing a platform or applications, or to use them for business marketing with a mean score of 4.48. Due to the rapid adoption of the internet as a commercial platform, more creative forms of marketing to customers in computer-mediated environments have emerged (Ainscouth, 2016). Many companies have recognized the marketing value of the internet and other associated mobile devices in recent years as a way to expand the number of customers they target at a given time and reach a larger target audience (Akaba, 2015:17). The internet has aided businesses in reaching target markets more effectively, displacing undifferentiated mass marketing tactics in favor of more personalized approaches (Melewar & Smith, 2013).

The internet has changed the lives of people and the way people used to interact with each other and carry out their business operations with a mean score of 4.32. Social networking sites are the latest digital communication tool which permits online users to create social networks and to interact with other users in their networks with a mean score of 4.22. Social media employ web based and mobile technologies to

create highly interactive platforms through which communities and people co-create, discuss, share information with a mean score of 4.17. The internet has also changed the competitive playing field whereby it helps established brands in online channels with a mean score of 4.15.

Social media permits people to organise, search, annotate, share and contribute to contents in a cooperative method with a mean score of 4.13. Fashion designers create a competitive advantage with a mean score of 4.11. Additionally, the internet has also changed the advertisement, promotional and marketing activities of fashion designers with a mean score of 4.08. Moreover, to become relevant to online buyers and take full advantage of new media, e-commerce strategists must rethink their brand investments.

Furthermore, due to the advancement of technology, the internet has provided a unique feature of social media interactively whereby it has become an irreplaceable part of life's rich pageant with a mean score of 3.92. With the social network sites, individuals can share exceptional amount of photos, information, news, data, etc. The internet has a great influence on brand equity of fashion designers with a mean score of 3.79. Due to the increasing rate of internet use worldwide, academics such as (Novak, Hoffman, & Yung, 2000; Mack, 2000) have projected that the number of customers that the internet will reach at any given time will increase. According to estimates from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), individual internet use increased to around 2,923,000 people in 2014, up from 2,710,000 in 2013. (Akaba 2015). The use of the Internet and other associated information and communication technologies (ICTs) to support the marketing efforts of major business projects is becoming increasingly popular.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This section discussed the study findings based on the following research objectives including to assess the present status of marketing traditional fashion products online in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region. Secondly, to assess the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana and thirdly, to recommend ways fashion designers can popularize digital marketing trading and increase the profitability of marketing traditional fashion products online.

5.2 The present status of marketing traditional fashion products online

The study findings indicate that majority of the respondents said that they do not market their products online while minority indicated that they market their products online. One of the major challenges that fashion designers face in selling their fashion items on the internet has been cited by several writers as an insufficient technical infrastructure to enable the incorporation of ICTs in the fashion designing on-line marketing functions. According to Kamba (2011), ICT is not widely used and distributed in African institutions of higher learning, owing to weak communication networks and restricted access to ICT hardware and software. This applies to problems such as a lack of or weak ICT regulation, poor internet access, insufficient power supply, insufficient PCs, and so on (Minishi-Majanja, 2017).

5.3 The present status of marketing traditional fashion products online in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region

Most of the respondents indicated that facebook is the commonest channel of online marketing employed by the fashion designers. According to the respondents, the face-to-face discussion among project team usually takes time and effort but facebook saves time and very quick in information delivery. The development of social networking applications such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and particularly Instagram has resulted in the emergence of a modern electronic commerce paradigm known as social commerce (Kim & Park, 2013). Social commerce is a branch of electronic commerce that makes use of social media and contributions to make online shopping and sale of various goods and services more convenient (Kim & Park, 2013). In a nutshell, social commerce (s-commerce) is an online firm's fusion of electronic commerce and social media to give consumers regular offers from local businesses (Kim & Park, 2013).

Another marketing tool agreed on by the respondents is the WhatsApp. They indicated that whatsapp platform has been an electronic platform where a number of people usually hold important discussion. The respondents' perception concerning communication is not different from Juholin (2008).

The 3rd ranked marketing tool used by the fashion designers to market their products online is the youtube channel. Instagram was the 4th ranked marketing tool while twitter was ranked 5th. People use social networking sites for a variety of purposes, including focusing on a specific goal or interacting with other people in terms of social networking (Bulut & Dogan, 2017). Twitter, for example, is used as a microblogging platform, while Instagram is used as a video and photo sharing platform, and LinkedIn is used as a business networking site. Almost all of the social

networking site's features and services are available for free. This may be one of the reasons why social networking sites have become so popular around the world (Bulut & Dogan, 2017).

5.4 The challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry in the Bolgatanga

Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana

The challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana were displayed in Table 4.4. The study results revealed that fashion designers require sufficient funds in order to acquire modern ICT facilities such as computers, servers, scanners, photocopiers, software as well as buy/subscribe to online/offline resources such as e-journals, e-books and digital books among other resources with a mean score of 4.76. Inadequate technological infrastructure to support the integration of ICTs with a mean score of 4.74.

This implies that the use of ICT in information provision, especially in libraries in African countries, poses a number of challenges for online marketers, including: Inadequate technical infrastructure to enable ICT incorporation into curricula (Manda, 2016). This refers to problems such as a lack of or insufficient national ICT policy, poor internet access, insufficient energy supply, insufficient PCs, and so on. Policies that de-regulate satellite communication and other telecommunication links, regulate ISPs, and regulate government and cross-border data flows, among other things, are needed.

Dwindling financial donor support situation with a mean score of 4.63. This implies that fashion designers would need ample funds to purchase modern ICT equipment such as computers, servers, printers, photocopiers, and software, as well as to purchase/subscribe to online/offline services such as e-journals, e-books, and digital

books, among other things. According to Amutabi (2009), with diminishing financial donor help, things are unlikely to change significantly.

Inadequate technological infrastructure to support the integration of ICTs in the on-line marketing functions with a mean score of 4.56. ICT is not very well spread and utilized in institutions of higher learning, mainly because of poor network, limited access to ICT hardware and software with a mean score of 4.48. This means that ICT policies will help counter strict tax regimes that still regard computers, networking devices, and other peripherals as luxury goods, subjecting them to high import duties and making them prohibitively costly. While Internet access is now widely accessible, its productivity is low, as many African libraries experience downtime on a weekly basis (Manda, 2016). Telecommunication networks, in the form of low bandwidth, technological glitches, and other network configuration issues, are the root cause of these outages.

Lack of trained personnel and negative attitude of fashion designers on IT are important factors that also militate against effective adoption of ICT in fashion designing companies with a mean score of 4.46. Issues like poor or lack of ICT policy, low internet connectivity, inadequate supply of electricity, inadequate number of computers with a mean score of 4.20. Several authors (Minishi-Majanja, 2017; Odero-Musakali & Mutual, 2017; Sife, 2008) have described a lack of qualified staff and a negative attitude toward IT among fashion designers as major barriers to successful ICT adoption.

Kamba (2011) recognizes the involvement of highly skilled and qualified technical staff in fashion design firms who handle, monitor, and retain available ICT tools. Many fashion design firms, according to Emanuel and Sife (2008), lack trained ICT staff, with most fashion designers having low ICT skills and often having technology phobia.

Lack of qualified staff and a negative attitude toward IT among fashion designers are both significant barriers to successful ICT adoption in the industry (Ani, 2005). The ability to provide reliable information services can be hampered if there is insufficient availability of adequately qualified and professional staff.

Socio-cultural aspects like cultural values, regional priorities, institutional relations, political dynamics, and educational background influence the perception of potential user groups, and therefore have an impact on the adoption and use of the technology with a mean score of 4.08. As stated by Chaney & Martin (2010), there is a need for understanding a common language to communicate successively with people from other cultures. Resultantly, several studies have examined the relationship between language and culture. Boroditsky (2010) summarized different studies which measured how people talk and think and identified people's understanding of space, time and causality could be constructed by language. According to Boroditsky (2010), several studies have shown causality between the language being spoken and the way people think. If a bilingual person switches from one language to another, he/she starts to think differently.

The existence of crunch trained and experienced technical personnel who manage, control, and maintains available ICT resources in fashion designing companies with a mean score of 4.06. The lack of computer culture in fashion companies impedes rapid diffusion of the new technologies with a mean score of 4.03. "In cultures with this view, people view the ability of being involved with many issues involving other people all at once as more important than completing an individual task by a deadline" (Brodowsky et al., 2018, p. 246). Language is also another cultural element of key interest. Language is part of culture and plays a very important role in it. According to Jiang (2010), without language culture would not be possible, because the former

reflects culture and is simultaneously influenced and shaped by it. Facts or ideas or events that are communicable refer to shared knowledge between people as well as beliefs and attitudes which are shared with others.

Without adequate supply of appropriately trained and skilled personnel, the ability to provide quality information services may be inhibited with a mean score of 4.02. Lack of trained personnel is major factor that impede effective adoption of ICT in fashion designing with a mean score of 3.81. Many fashion designing companies have inadequate qualified ICT personnel with most fashion designers having low ICT skills and sometimes have technology phobia with a mean score 3.79.

Many external structural factors, such as energy, transportation networks, import duties, and so on, have an effect on the delivery of internet services on the African continent (Jensen, 2015). In certain organisations, access is restricted not only by the number of Internet service points accessible, but also by the amount of time that access is available or allowed, to say nothing of bandwidth constraints. However, access to the Internet for research purposes is no longer a luxury or privilege reserved for a select few; in academic circles, access to the Internet and thus to the world's stores of information is a requirement.

5.5 How fashion designers can popularize online marketing trading and increase the profitability of marketing fashion products online

Fashion designers must intelligently balance their brand strategies between the physical and online marketing with a mean score of 4.77. Fashion designers must cleverly blend traditional media with online approaches to provide customers with a rich, interactive experience with a mean score of 4.65. The internet has become to be the most profitable tools to for companies to promote their products and services in order to be able to attract their target customers with a mean score of 4.61. This

implies that Sixty (60) percent of consumers said they use social media to exchange information (Kirtis & Karahan, 2011). Furthermore, according to ztamur and Karakadlar (2014), businesses that have begun to use social media as a marketing strategy are taking advantage of the web's unique qualities and have transferred their business strategy to electronic commerce. The internet has evolved into one of the most profitable platforms for businesses to market their goods and services and retain their target customers. Some of these businesses entered the industry with the goal of becoming an electronic retailer, while others have developed into content providers, transaction brokers, service providers, or market developers.

Fashion designers acknowledge the importance of social media as they know it will and be remained vital fabric commerce for their business and increase profitability with a mean score of 4.55. Personal selling, advertisement, direct marketing, product promotion, publicity, and public relations are all examples of forms of promotional combination that this form of communication tries to regulate and organize. These elements are used by IMC to create a cohesive customer-focused message and, as a result, to achieve various organizational goals (Mangold & Faulds, 2019).

With the emergence of the phenomenon known as social media, however, the methods and tools for engaging with customers have greatly changed (Mangold & Faulds, 2019). According to McCormick & Livett (2012), online websites (e-commerce) offer better innovation for transmitting clothing product knowledge, promoting, and engaging with customers than physical stores. For online shoppers, daily fashion news and alerts have become useful and important.

Social media support the creation of informal users' networks facilitating the flow of ideas and knowledge by allowing the efficient generation, dissemination, sharing

and editing / refining of informational content” with a mean score of 4.52. Fashion designers can assess the strategic tools of developing a platform or applications, or to use them for business marketing with a mean score of 4.48. The internet has changed the lives of people and the way people used to interact with each other and carry out their business operations with a mean score of 4.32.

As a result, internet-savvy customers are becoming more interested in e-commerce strategies. “To become important to online customers and take full advantage of digital media, e-commerce strategists must reconsider their brand investments,” Mohapatra (2013, p. 155) added. Their brand strategies must be intelligently balanced between the physical and online worlds. To provide consumers with a rich, engaging experience, they must cleverly combine conventional media with online approaches.” Furthermore, social networking sites are one of the most common social media sharing tools.

Social networking sites are the latest digital communication tool which permits online users to create social networks and to interact with other users in their networks with a mean score of 4.22. Social media employ web based and mobile technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which communities and people co-create, discuss, share information with a mean score of 4.17. The internet has also changed the competitive playing field whereby it helps established brands in online channels with a mean score of 4.15.

The internet has created a unique aspect in social networking interactively as a result of technological advancements, and it has become an irreplaceable part of life's rich pageant. Individuals can share an enormous amount of images, information, news, and data through social networking sites. People from all over the world, representing various cultures, countries, and religions, may use social networking sites to share

their views, stories, and news with the rest of the world (Bulut & Dogan, 2017). According to Statistic Brain, 58 percent of people use one or more of the social media platforms.

Social media permits people to organise, search, annotate, share and contribute to contents in a cooperative method with a mean score of 4.13. According to Subrahmanyam et al. (2018), social networking sites are the most recent online communication platform that allows users to build social networks and communicate with others in their networks. Online contact forums include apps like email, text messaging, and chat rooms, as well as internet sites like social networking sites, blogs, and photo and video sharing sites like YouTube (Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2011). Small and large businesses alike are jumping on board the social media bandwagon because they recognize its value.

Fashion designers create a competitive advantage with a mean score of 4.11. Additionally, the internet has also changed the advertisement, promotional and marketing activities of fashion designers with a mean score of 4.08. Moreover, to become relevant to online buyers and take full advantage of new media, e-commerce strategists must rethink their brand investments. Businesses have used Twitter, built Facebook fan pages, and uploaded videos to YouTube. Today, many business firms understand the significance of social media, recognizing that it will continue to be an important fabric of commerce for their company (Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2011). Furthermore, as customers spend more time online, strategists are using the internet to gain a competitive edge. The internet has also altered the competitive environment by assisting existing brands across online platforms.

Furthermore, due to the advancement of technology, the internet has provided a unique feature of social media interactively whereby it has become an irreplaceable

part of life's rich pageant with a mean score of 3.92. With the social network sites, individuals can share exceptional amount of photos, information, news, data, etc.

The internet has a great influence on brand equity of fashion designers with a mean score of 3.79. Furthermore, online social networks are websites where people can build their own personal home page on which they can post photographs, share ideas, write posts, and link to other websites that they are interested in (Lai & Turban, 2018). In recent years, there has been a huge increase in user generated content on the internet with the use of a series of appliances that have been branded as social media, despite the use of other technology concepts such as Web 2.0. (Parra-Lopez, Bulchand-Gidumal, Gutierrez-Tano & Diaz-Armas, 2011).



CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter dealt with the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

6.2 Summary of Findings

The purpose of the study was to assess the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry: case study of the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region, Ghana. The researcher used descriptive research design for the study. This study adopted a quantitative inquiry. The population for the study was three hundred and sixty-nine (369) fashion designers in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana. Therefore, stratified random sampling techniques was used to select 186 participants for the study. Questionnaire was used to gather primary data. The computer statistical package for social scientists (SPSS version 20) was used to process all the quantitative responses from the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse data.

6.2.1 The present status of marketing traditional fashion products online

The study results indicate that majority of the respondents said that they do not market their products online. Most of the respondents indicated that facebook is the commonest channel of online marketing employed by the fashion designers. Another marketing tool agreed on by the respondents is the WhatsApp. They indicated that whatsapp platform has been an electronic platform where a number of people usually hold important discussion. The 3rd ranked marketing tool used by the fashion

designers to market their products online is the youtube channel. Instagram was the 4th ranked marketing tool while twitter was ranked 5th.

6.2.2 The challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana.

The study results revealed that fashion designers require sufficient funds in order to acquire modern ICT facilities such as computers, servers, scanners, photocopiers, software as well as buy/subscribe to online/offline resources such as e-journals, e-books and digital books among other resources with a mean score of 4.76.

Inadequate technological infrastructure to support the integration of ICTs with a mean score of 4.74. Dwindling financial donor support situation with a mean score of 4.63.

Inadequate technological infrastructure to support the integration of ICTs in the on-line marketing functions with a mean score of 4.56. ICT is not very well spread and utilized in institutions of higher learning, mainly because of poor network, limited access to ICT hardware and software with a mean score of 4.48. Lack of trained personnel and negative attitude of fashion designers on IT are important factors that also militate against effective adoption of ICT in fashion designing companies with a mean score of 4.46.

Issues like poor or lack of ICT policy, low internet connectivity, inadequate supply of electricity, inadequate number of computers with a mean score of 4.20. Socio-cultural aspects like cultural values, regional priorities, institutional relations, political dynamics, and educational background influence the perception of potential user groups, and therefore have an impact on the adoption and use of the technology with a mean score of 4.08. The existence of crunch trained and experienced technical personnel who manage, control, and maintains available ICT resources in fashion

designing companies with a mean score of 4.06. The lack of computer culture in fashion companies impedes rapid diffusion of the new technologies with a mean score of 4.03.

Without adequate supply of appropriately trained and skilled personnel, the ability to provide quality information services may be inhibited with a mean score of 4.02. Lack of trained personnel is major factor that impede effective adoption of ICT in fashion designing with a mean score of 3.81. Many fashion designing companies have inadequate qualified ICT personnel with most fashion designers having low ICT skills and sometimes have technology phobia with a mean score 3.79.

6.2.3 How fashion designers can popularize online marketing trading and increase the profitability of marketing fashion products online.

Fashion designers must intelligently balance their brand strategies between the physical and online marketing with a mean score of 4.77. Fashion designers must cleverly blend traditional media with online approaches to provide customers with a rich, interactive experience with a mean score of 4.65. The internet has become to be the most profitable tools to for companies to promote their products and services in order to be able to attract their target customers with a mean score of 4.61. Fashion designers acknowledge the importance of social media as they know it will and be remained vital fabric commerce for their business and increase profitability with a mean score of 4.55.

Social media support the creation of informal users' networks facilitating the flow of ideas and knowledge by allowing the efficient generation, dissemination, sharing and editing / refining of informational content" with a mean score of 4.52. Fashion designers can assess the strategic tools of developing a platform or

applications, or to use them for business marketing with a mean score of 4.48. The internet has changed the lives of people and the way people used to interact with each other and carry out their business operations with a mean score of 4.32.

Social networking sites are the latest digital communication tool which permits online users to create social networks and to interact with other users in their networks with a mean score of 4.22. Social media employ web based and mobile technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which communities and people co-create, discuss, share information with a mean score of 4.17. The internet has also changed the competitive playing field whereby it helps established brands in online channels with a mean score of 4.15.

Social media permits people to organise, search, annotate, share and contribute to contents in a cooperative method with a mean score of 4.13. Fashion designers create a competitive advantage with a mean score of 4.11. Additionally, the internet has also changed the advertisement, promotional and marketing activities of fashion designers with a mean score of 4.08. Moreover, to become relevant to online buyers and take full advantage of new media, e-commerce strategists must rethink their brand investments.

Furthermore, due to the advancement of technology, the internet has provided a unique feature of social media interactively whereby it has become an irreplaceable part of life's rich pageant with a mean score of 3.92. With the social network sites, individuals can share exceptional amount of photos, information, news, data, etc. The internet has a great influence on brand equity of fashion designers with a mean score of 3.79.

6.3 Conclusion

The study results concluded that the challenges facing fashion companies in marketing their products online in the Bolgatanga Municipal were inadequate technological infrastructure to support the integration of ICTs in the curricula, fashion designers require sufficient funds in order to acquire modern ICT facilities such as computers, servers, scanners, photocopiers, software as well as buy/subscribe to online/offline resources such as e-journals, e-books and digital books among other resources, dwindling financial donor support situation it is unlikely that things will improve much.

To add more, inadequate technological infrastructure to support the integration of ICTs in the fashion designing on-line marketing functions has been cited by several authors as one of the major challenge that fashion designers face in selling their fashion products on-line. Furthermore, issues as poor or lack of ICT policy, low internet connectivity, inadequate supply of electricity, inadequate number of PCs, can affect fashion designers. Moreover, lack of trained personnel and negative attitude of fashion designers on IT as major factors that impede effective adoption of ICT in fashion designing.

Also, the existence of crunch trained and experienced technical personnel who manage, control, and maintains available ICT resources in fashion designing companies can affect fashion designers. Moreover, many fashion designing companies have inadequate qualified ICT personnel with most fashion designers having low ICT skills and sometimes have technology phobia. Furthermore, lack of trained personnel and negative attitude of fashion designers on IT are important factors that also militate against effective adoption of ICT in fashion designing companies. To add more, without adequate supply of appropriately trained and skilled personnel, the ability to

provide quality information services may be inhibited. Moreover, lack of computer culture in fashion companies impedes rapid diffusion of the new technologies.

The study results concluded that the most utilised online marketing tools were whatsapp and facebook to advertise their products online. However, the least used online marketing tools were instagram, twitter, and Youtube.

The study findings concluded that the internet has changed the lives of people and the way how people used to interact with each other and carry out their business operations. Furthermore, the internet has also changed the advertisement, promotional and marketing activities of fashion designers. Also, the internet has a great influence on brand equity of fashion designers. The social media employ web based and mobile technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which communities and people co-create, discuss, share information.

6.4 Recommendations

The study recommended that;

1. To succeed in marketing products online, Fashion designers have to be pro-active and confident with the technology themselves.
2. The fashion designers need to adapt their tools in order to fit into this new channel of communication.
3. The stakeholders in the fashion designing industry should organise periodic seminars, conferences and training programmes to educate the fashion designers regarding the modern methods of advertising their products on-line.
4. The financial institutions in the country should provide flexible loans to fashion designers to acquire ICT materials to market their products on-line.

6.5 Suggestions for Further Research

According to the recommendations of the study, the study suggested that a similar study should be conducted to assess the impact of technological training on fashion designer's expertise.



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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE FASHION DESIGNERS

The researcher is an M.Tech student of **AKENTEN APPIAH-MINKA UNIVERSITY OF SKILLS TRAINING AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT**, Kumasi Campus conducting a piece of research to assess the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry: case study of the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region, Ghana. I respectfully request that you form part of this research by completing the attached questionnaire. You are assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The data you provide will be used only for academic purpose and will not harm in anyway. Thanks for your participation.

Sections A: Demographic Information of the Respondents

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age: Below 18 years 19-25 years 26-30 years 31-35 years 36-40 years Above 41 years
3. Educational qualifications
No formal education BECE/MSLC SSSCE/WASSCE Diploma Bachelor's degree Master's degree Other please specify

Section B: The present status of marketing traditional fashion products online in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region.

Are you currently using digital marketing to market their fashion products online?

Yes No

Please use the following Likert scale to assess the present status of marketing traditional fashion products online in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region.

Scale: 1-Strongly agree, 2-Agree, 3- Neutral, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Disagree.

	1	2	3	4	5
Social networking applications currently used by fashion designers					
Twitter					
Facebook					
YouTube					
Instagram					
Whatsapp					
Others					

Section C: The challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana.

Please use the following Likert scale to assess the challenges of digital marketing in fashion industry in the Bolgatanga Municipal of Upper East Region of Ghana.

Scale: 1-Strongly agree, 2-Agree, 3- Neutral, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Disagree.

Statement(s)	1	2	3	4	5
Inadequate technological infrastructure to support the integration of ICTs					
Financial challenges					
Fashion designers require sufficient funds in order to acquire modern ICT facilities such as computers, servers, scanners, photocopiers, software as well as buy/subscribe to online/offline resources such as e-journals, e-books and digital books among other resources.					
Dwindling financial donor support situation					
Technological challenges					
Inadequate technological infrastructure to support the integration of ICTs in the on-line marketing functions					
ICT is not very well spread and utilized in institutions of higher learning, mainly because of poor network, limited access to ICT hardware and software.					
Issues like poor or lack of ICT policy, low internet connectivity, inadequate supply of electricity, inadequate number of computers.					
Human Factors					
Lack of trained personnel is major factor that impede effective adoption of ICT in fashion designing.					
The existence of crunch trained and experienced technical personnel who manage, control, and maintains available ICT resources in fashion designing companies.					
Many fashion designing companies have inadequate qualified ICT personnel with most fashion designers having low ICT					

skills and sometimes have technology phobia.					
Lack of trained personnel and negative attitude of fashion designers on IT are important factors that also militate against effective adoption of ICT in fashion designing companies.					
Without adequate supply of appropriately trained and skilled personnel, the ability to provide quality information services may be inhibited.					
Cultural challenges					
Socio-cultural aspects like cultural values, regional priorities, institutional relations, political dynamics, and educational background influence the perception of potential user groups, and therefore have an impact on the adoption and use of the technology					
The lack of computer culture in fashion companies impedes rapid diffusion of the new technologies.					

Section D: How fashion designers can popularize online marketing trading and increase the profitability of marketing fashion products online.

Please use the following Likert scale to evaluate how fashion designers popularize online marketing trading and increase the profitability of marketing fashion products online.

Scale: 1-Strongly agree, 2-Agree, 3- Neutral, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly Disagree.

Statement(s)	1	2	3	4	5
Fashion designers must intelligently balance their brand strategies between the physical and online marketing.					
Fashion designers must cleverly blend traditional media with online approaches to provide customers with a rich, interactive experience.					
Due to the advancement of technology, the internet has provided a unique feature of social media interactively whereby it has become an irreplaceable part of life's rich pageant.					
With the social network sites, individuals can share exceptional amount of photos, information, news, data, etc.					
By using social network sites people from all around the globe with different cultures, nations and religions have the opportunities to share their opinions, stories, news, etc. to the world.					
The internet has become to be the most profitable tools to for companies to promote their products and services in order to be able to attract their target customers.					
The internet has changed the lives of people and the way					

people used to interact with each other and carry out their business operations.					
Additionally, the internet has also changed the advertisement, promotional and marketing activities of fashion designers.					
The internet has a great influence on brand equity of fashion designers.					
Social media support the creation of informal users' networks facilitating the flow of ideas and knowledge by allowing the efficient generation, dissemination, sharing and editing / refining of informational content".					
Social media employ web based and mobile technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which communities and people co-create, discuss, share information.					
Social media permits people to organise, search, annotate, share and contribute to contents in a cooperative method.					
Fashion designers can assess the strategic tools of developing a platform or applications, or to use them for business marketing.					
Social networking sites are the latest digital communication tool which permits online users to create social networks and to interact with other users in their networks.					
Fashion designers acknowledge the importance of social media as they know it will and be remained vital fabric commerce for their business and increase profitability.					
Fashion designers create a competitive advantage.					
The internet has also changed the competitive playing field whereby it helps established brands in online channels.					
To become relevant to online buyers and take full advantage of new media, e-commerce strategists must rethink their brand investments.					

Thanks for your participation