



Chapter 9

The Role of Social Responsibility on Consumer Engagement Through Fashion Brands' Instagram

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ABSTRACT

At a time when consumers are becoming more aware of social and environmental responsibility, they are increasingly recognising the fashion industry's impact on the world. Based on this growing awareness, the response from fashion brands is to strategically use digital platforms to highlight their commitment to the issue of sustainability. Brands that consciously share this content on online platforms adopt an effective communication strategy, attracting greater engagement with their audience. In particular, the analysis in this study focuses on the Instagram presence of three notable brands: Naz, Isto, and Tentree. The results of this study affirm the positive impact of social responsibility on consumer engagement when it comes to the Instagram accounts of these fashion brands. This underlines the significant role that social responsibility plays in influencing consumer perceptions and interactions in the digital sphere.

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1. INTRODUCTION

With the advance of technology, social networks have become part of consumer's daily lives, where behaviour and lifestyles are undergoing transformations influenced by how brands communicate their content on digital platforms. In response to this change, digital marketing has achieved a paradigm shift, bringing together the values of traditional marketing with the dynamic characteristics of digital. In today's fashion industry, it is necessary to address the current environmental crisis and adopt new sustainable practices, as well as how brands communicate and articulate their commitment to sustainability. Digital platforms have become a prominent medium for showcasing sustainability-related initiatives and establishing a meaningful and authentic connection with consumers. However, although there have been several significant advances in understanding the relationship between social responsibility and digital marketing, the research scenario highlighted by Diez-Martin, Blanco-Gonzalez and Prado-Roman (2019) suggests that there is still a need to explore and investigate this crucial intersection more deeply today.

Furthermore, the observations of Khanal, Akhtaruzzaman and Kularatne (2021) highlight a notable gap in the existing body of information research. The predominant focus is on big brands and companies. This leaves small brands largely unexplored in the context of the impact of social media on social responsibility engagement. Underlining the need to broaden the research to cover a more diverse range of companies, it is necessary to recognise that social responsibility and social media engagement dynamics can vary according to companies' different scales and structures. Thus, this study aims to understand the dynamics of social responsibility as fashion brands share content on Instagram to attract and maintain consumer interest. This underlines a crucial and timely call for expanding research efforts regarding social responsibility and social media engagement, aiming for a comprehensive understanding that considers industry giants and smaller entities in this evolving landscape.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The progression of technologies and the emergence of Web 2.0 have fueled the expansion of online communication and social networks. Digital platforms provide users diverse opportunities, allowing them to create content and share information on various topics, fostering positive relationships and interactions with brands (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011). In order to respond to this changing environment, brands must be prepared to navigate the ever-changing digital landscape. The potent role of social media in forming consumer perceptions and behaviour patterns demands a more proactive brand approach. By joining and adapting to digital, brands can take full advantage of user-generated content and keep in line with their audience's expectations, thus helping their success in the crowded online space. Social networks influence consumers' purchasing behaviour by enabling them to express opinions about products and share their experiences with brands (Mason, Narcum, & Mason, 2021). The research conducted by Majeed, Owusu-Ansah, and Ashmond (2021) indicates a positive correlation between social media marketing strategies and the growing trend of online interaction, stimulating user engagement on digital platforms through brand-related content. In today's digital landscape, where social media has become a permanent part of everyday life, brands increasingly recognise the value of developing a significant online presence.

The fashion industry relies heavily on social and environmental responsibility, underlining the importance of adopting practices and initiatives that guide us towards a more sustainable future. Implementing

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