

Impacts of Luxury Fashion Brand's Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention in Turkey: a Comparative Study on Louis Vuitton and Chanel

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the importance of social media marketing in the Turkish fashion industry. There are different theories related to how social media influences customers' thinking and buying decisions. Traditional strategies for promoting fashion goods have lost their potential to attract and convince customers. So, the need for social media to convince customers of products' excellence has been explained here. The concept of marketing is a quite useful illustration to manifest the area of the research. The models, theories of social marketing and customers' perceptions of fashion products have been discussed on this study. The ways customers' decisions are influenced are explained in the literature review of this study. The blow of luxury fashion branding in the relationship between the customers and the market has been analysed here at great length. The interest of the customers to buy products from the Turkish market has been discussed here. Brand equity and loyal model are also discussed. A quantitative data collection method has been used here to verify and understand the reality of the research subject.

Keywords: social media marketing, brand loyalty, fashion market Turkey

ÖZ

Çalışma, Türkiye’deki moda pazarında sosyal medyanın önemini tartışmıştır. Sosyal medya ve sosyal medyanın müşterilerin düşünme ve satın alma kararı üzerine etkisi ile ilgili birçok farklı teori türleri vardır. Moda mallarının geleneksel promosyon stratejileri, müşterileri çekme ve ikna etme potansiyelini kaybetmiştir. Bu yüzden burada, ürünlerin müşterileri ikna etme konusunda sosyal medyanın ihtiyacı açıklanmıştır. Araştırmanın alan tezahürü için pazarlama kavramı çok yararlı bir örnektir. Sosyal pazarlama teorileri, sosyal pazarlama modelleri ve moda ürünleri konusunda müşterilerin algısı burada açıklanmıştır. Müşterilerin etkilendiği karar verme yolları, araştırma çalışmasının literatürü içinde açıklanmıştır. Lüks moda markalaşması piyasa ve müşteri ilişkisi içerisinde enine boyuna analiz edilmiştir. Müşterilerin, Türkiye pazarına gelen ürünlere olan ilgisine değinildi. Ayrıca, marka değeri ve sadakat modeli de tartışılmıştır. Araştırma konusunun doğruluğunu ve gerçekliğini anlamak için nicel veri toplama yöntemi kullanılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: sosyal medya pazarlaması, marka sadakati, Türkiye’de moda pazarı.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

With the advancement of technology in recent times, the concept and practice of marketing is changing globally. Adcock (2010, p.66) commented that the total market scenario has become much more flexible than in the past . Today, marketers mainly focus on different strategies and techniques for influencing the purchasing decisions of targeted customers in the market. As fashion trends change, the demands of targeted customers increase (Kim and Ko2010, p.11).

Now a day with the increase number of fashion brands in the market, the competition level has also immensely increased between different brands. Especially the few fashion brands are Louis Vuitton and channel in Turkey. Hence, it has become much difficult for the marketers to influence the purchasing decision of the customers, as now a day, the customers has become much brand conscious. For influencing the purchasing decisions of the customers, the marketers have mainly focused on the social media.

Anderson and Vincze (2008, p.90) argued that social media is integral for business organisation. Targeted customers are very much inclined towards social media. Therefore, to influence customers' purchasing decisions, fashion brands like Louis Vuitton and Chanel are now primarily focused on social media marketing. The main social media sites are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Google plus.

Through these various social media sites, luxury fashion brands can easily reach many targeted customers in the market. Moreover, business organisations can use these sites to deliver actual information and creative content to the targeted customer. Through this marketing approach, fashion brands can easily grab the attention of several customers in the Turkish market and in the world.

This dissertation considers the impacts of luxury fashion brands' social media marketing on purchase intentions among customers in Turkey. Through social media marketing, businesses aim to enhance awareness of their products and services among the targeted customers. In this study, the social media marketing techniques of Louis Vuitton and Chanel, two long-standing and valuable luxury fashion brands in the Turkish market, are examined.

1.1 Research background

Over time, the consumption of luxurious products and services has increased immensely in the global market. However, the advancement of technology has completely changed marketing techniques. Michaelidou et al. (2011, p.88) explained that with the rise in competition among several luxury fashion brands, businesses are unable to track the exact way or process to attract customers or influence their purchasing decisions.

Almost every global fashion brand like Louis Vuitton and Chanel are using the same types of market strategies, albeit in different patterns. Therefore, it is difficult to detect uniqueness in the marketing processes of these global fashion brands. Accordingly, to influence targeted customers' purchasing intentions, businesses in the fashion industry have mainly used social media as a marketing tool. Through this

process, the luxury fashion brands can easily reach a huge targeted mass in the market within a short span of time.

In the last two decades, the fashion industry has been one of the biggest industries in the world, and the same is true in Turkey. As per the report, it was found that luxury fashion brands in Turkey primarily use social media as a marketing technique. It has also been observed that this marketing approach has helped global fashion brands in Turkey like Louis Vuitton and Chanel to gain more customer attention and has made Turkey one of the top clothing exporters in the world. These brands provide targeted customers with luxurious products and services. Louis Vuitton's and Chanel's ready-to-wear clothes are popular in the Turkish market. Moreover, the Turkish fashion industry creates products that reflect the multicultural trends within the country.

From the report in 2014, it was also found that Turkey's fashion brand has almost 407 stores across the country and 106 stores around the globe. Turkey's fashion brands are mainly known for the high-street fashion. It has been found that products from the leading, luxurious fashion brands can now be found in several malls. Several reputed fashion designers design the brand's clothing. Turkey's fashion industry is tying up with famous fashion designers to grow and develop the industry in the market.

1.2 Rationale of the study

In the current market, competition among luxurious fashion brands has increased significantly with changes in customers' choices and preferences. Trusov et al. (2009, p.110) noted that it has become difficult for luxurious fashion brands to attract

customers or influence their purchasing intentions , which has become an alarming issue for these fashion businesses. However, it has also been found that traditional methods of marketing have almost entirely faded with time, as fashion brands now primarily use social media as a marketing method to influence customers' purchasing intentions.

Aaker (2010, p.77) found that with the advancement of technology and other developments, the entire marketing process is rapidly changing. Thus, it has become difficult for fashion brands to implement the appropriate marketing tools and techniques for influencing customers' buying decisions. To enhance the sales, the fashion companies like Louis Vuitton and Chanel have adopted and heavily emphasised social media marketing.

Adair (2011, p.102) found that almost all fashion brands are using the same methods and techniques to influence customers' buying intentions. However, nowadays customers are inclined towards the Internet and social media. Now, fashion businesses are unsure of how they are going to use social media marketing to influence customers' purchasing intentions.

This dissertation mainly highlights the impacts of luxury fashion brands' social media marketing on purchase intentions in Turkey. This analysis, identifies how fashion brands are using social media marketing (SMM) to influence the purchasing intentions of targeted customers in the market.

1.3 Research Aim

The aim of this study is to analyse the impacts of luxury fashion brands', specifically Louis Vuitton and Chanel, social media marketing on purchase intentions in Turkey.

1.4 Research Objective

1. To assess the impact of luxurious fashion brands' social media marketing on consumers' purchasing intentions in Turkey
2. To develop effective strategies for influencing the purchase decisions of the targeted customers through social media marketing
3. To identify the challenges that the fashion brands are facing to implement social media marketing within the industry
4. To recommend avenues for further growth and development of luxury fashion brands in Turkey

1.5 Research questions

What is the impact of social media marketing on the luxurious fashion brands in Turkey?

What are the effective strategies for influencing the purchasing decisions of the targeted customers through social media marketing?

What are the challenges that the fashion brands are facing to implement social media marketing within the industry?

What are the suggested recommendations for the fashion brands or the fashion industry in general?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

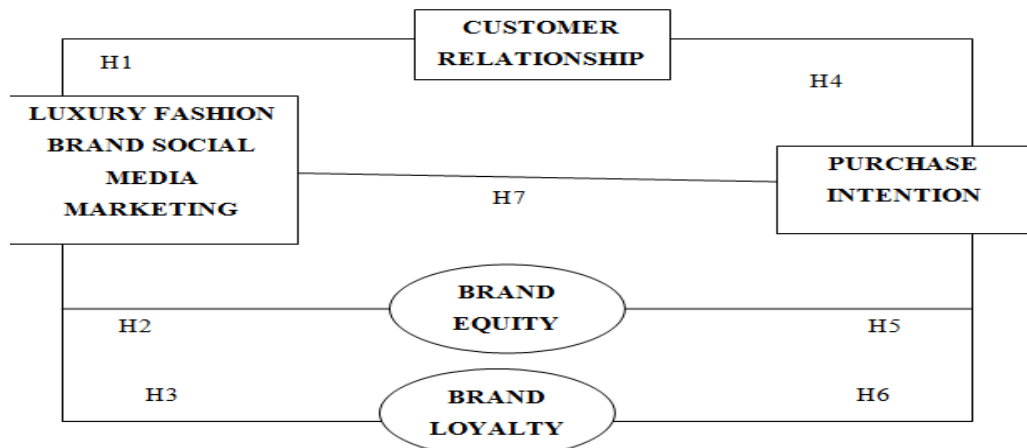


Figure 1: Research Model

H0 : Social media marketing of luxury fashion brands has affected purchasing intentions of customers by influencing brand equity and brand loyalty and enhancing the customer relationship

H1: Social media marketing has not influenced the purchasing behaviour of customers and has not influenced brand equity and brand loyalty.

1.7 Significance of the study

Social media has completely enhanced the process of marketing. Thus, this study aimed to analyse the impacts of luxury fashion brands' social media marketing on purchase intentions and decisions among targeted customers in Turkey

1.8 Structure of the Dissertation

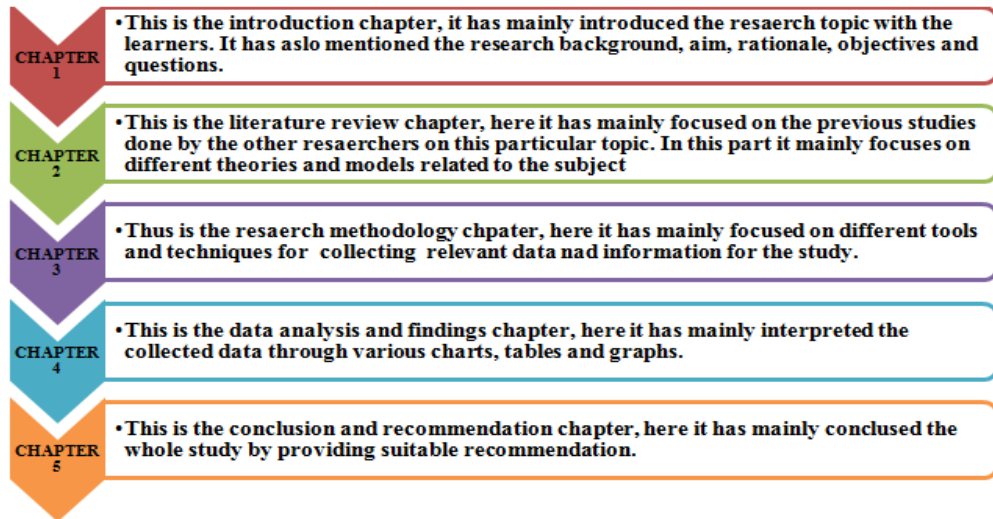


Figure 2: Structure of the dissertation

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review consists of evidence and theories regarding the impacts of social media marketing on customers' purchase intentions to provide a detailed analysis of the topic. This section provides a brief description of the effects of online marketing on a company's brand image. Without effective marketing quality products, and excellent customer service, a company's brand image cannot improve

2.1 Concept of social marketing

Due to new technology, companies can connect with their potential customers directly, which helps in enhancing the company's brand image and consequently increasing its customer base. Evans (2010, pp. 163) opined that social media marketing has helped companies extend their reach to potential customers and increase profitability. However, Evans (2012, pp. 256) argued that the rapid increase in social media use can negatively influence profitability and by reducing the company's customer base.

To expand and increase their customer base, companies use social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. These sites allow companies to keep in touch with their customers and, in turn, increase customer satisfaction. In addition, some companies use mobile applications mobile to connect with their customers, which enhances the customer-brand relationship. Kerpen (2011, pp. 363) explained that companies use mobile applications to register complaints and connect to their

customers, which facilitates the customer-brand relationship. However, Qualman (2010, pp. 452) argued that the increased use of social media could help competitors find loopholes and thus reduce a company's customer base.

2.2 Theory on social marketing

Social media marketing has helped many companies to increase their customer base and generate more revenue. The five properties of social media that facilitate those positive effects are as follows:

2.2.1 Entertainment

With the help of social media, Entertainment Companies can advertise their products online using sites like YouTube and Facebook. These entertainment sites help the company to increase its product advertisements and raise customers' knowledge of the company's products. Sterne (2010, pp. 166) opined that online marketing is an effective measure from which companies can increase demand of their products. However, Sigala *et al.* (2012, pp. 256) argued that increased advertisement on social media sites could increase the cost of advertisement and in turn increase the company's expenditures

2.2.2 Customization

With the help of social media, companies can directly connect with their potential customers and customise their products according to their customers' needs. These customisations help in increasing the customer base and improve brand image. Akar and Topcu (2011, pp. 121) opined that customisations of products according to customers' needs increase a company's sales and profitability. However, Chan and Guillet (2011, pp. 214) argued that customisations of products could increase cost associated with production and thus hamper a company's profitability and working capital.

2.2.3 Interaction

By effectively using social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook and other blogs, companies can interact directly with their customers and listen to customer grievances. Chu and Kim (2011, pp. 48) opined that interaction with customers could help a company in customising their products according to the demands and needs of their customers, which in turn could increase sales and customer satisfaction. However, Colliander and Dahlen (2011, pp. 317) argued that because social media interactions are publicly available, competitors can use customers' suggestions against the company.

2.2.4 Word of mouth and Trend

Social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook are used by companies to gain following and establish their products as popular trends. De et al. (2012, pp. 84) opined that word of mouth marketing helps companies to attract loyal customers and in turn increase profitability. However, Erdogmus and Cicek (2012, pp. 1354) argued that to increase customer base, companies will need to increase the quality of their products, which will require an increase in expenditure and result in reduced profitability.

2.3 Models on social marketing

Social media marketing models help companies in effectively using the model for increasing customer satisfaction. In addition, these models help companies to effectively communicate with their customers and thus increase their brand loyalty. Hennig et al. (2010, pp. 312) opined that marketing models provide companies with a theoretical explanation for what can be done to increase customer base and profitability. However, Kim and Ko (2012, pp. 1481) argued that marketing theories and models do not accommodate the external factors that could hinder the company's

profitability and increase its expenditure. Figure 1 shows the Social Media-Integration Model that is used by companies to effectively communicate with their potential customers. Michaelidou et al. (2011, pp. 1154) explained that the Social Media-Integration Model helps companies to understand the impact of social media marketing on the company's brand image. However, Miller and Lammas (2010, pp. 2) argued that Social Media-Integration Model does not accommodate the competitive factors that could hinder the company's social media marketing strategy and increase its expenditure. This model only provides assumptions of the effects the social marketing strategy will have on the company's brand image.

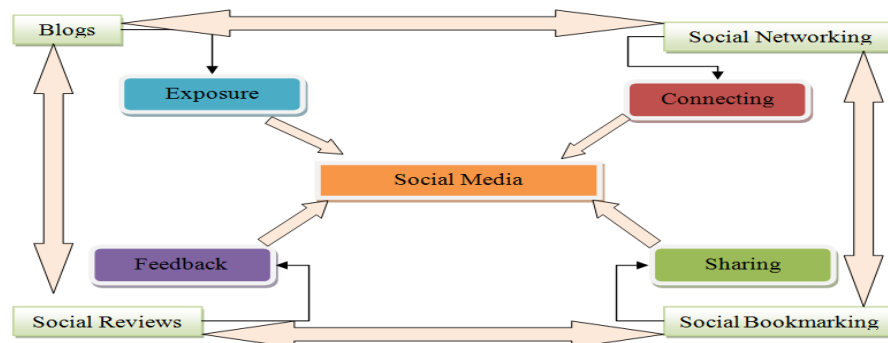


Figure 3: Showing the Social Media-Integration Model

2.4 Concept of customer relationship

The customer relationship is the key to improving brand image and company profitability. Without a customer relationship, companies are not able to increase brand loyalty, which negatively affects the company's profitability. Stephen and Galak (2012, pp. 625) opined that the customer-brand relationship is integral to increasing a company's customer base and profitability. However, Wang et al. (2012, pp. 199) argued that an enhanced customer relationship increases a company's expenditure and can thus negatively affect profitability

Trust

Trust is one of the most essential parts of the customer relationship and is earned by the company by providing products as promised. Kim and Ko (2010, pp. 165) explained that building trust helps companies to increase their brand loyalty and thus increase profitability. However, Xiang and Gretzel (2010, pp. 180) argued that years of trust building can be shattered if the company engages in even a single unethical activity.

Intimacy

Intimacy is one of the factors that help companies to provide feelings of bondedness, closeness and connectedness to their customers. Kim and Ko (2010, pp. 165) opined that with the help of intimacy factors companies can forge an emotional relationship with their customers. However, Evans (2010, pp. 184) argued that intimacy can only be cultivated with appropriate knowledge impletion on the customers without which it is not useful to the company.

2.5 Theories on customer purchase intention

Customer purchase intention helps companies increase their reach to potential customers and thus increase profitability. Theories of customer purchasing intentions are as follows:

2.5.1 Customer perception theory

Customer Perception Theory helps companies to evaluate the effectiveness of their marketing and advertisement practices. Customer Perception Theory can be further classified as follows:

Self-Perception

Self-perception explains the ways in which customers are motivated by their own buying behaviour. Evans (2010, pp. 366) argued that self-perception can sometimes

limit the company's reach towards its potential customers and in turn affect its customer base. However, Kerpen (2011, pp. 467) opined that self-perception can be useful in creating demand for environmental friendly products and reducing negative impacts on the environment.

Price Perception

Consumers' price perception only helps those companies whose prices are low but whose product quality is high. Qualman (2010, pp. 359) argued that when companies follow consumers' price perception, profitability can be negatively affected and working capital may be reduced.

Benefit Perception

Benefit perception is essential for companies to increase the customer-brand relationship and in turn increase their profitability. Sigala *et al.* (2012, pp. 299) argued that not delivering the promised products to the consumer can negatively affect a company's brand image and thus reduce the company's customer base.

2.5.2 Consumer Decision making process

Consumer Decision making process can be described as follows:

Problem Recognition

This stage involves an analysis of consumer needs. In addition, without need for a product there is no demand for any product or services provided by companies. Sterne (2010, pp. 669) argued that companies create the needs for a product by effective advertisements and brand promotion.

Information Search

In this stage, consumers search for quality products that can satisfy their needs and wants. Chan and Guillet (2011, pp. 348) argued that some companies use low quality products, which in turn can negatively affect their customer base and profitability.

Evaluation of Alternatives

The consumer evaluates different options available for a certain product and decides which products are the best quality. Chu and Kim (2011, pp. 57) argued that sometimes customers opt for low quality products to fulfil their basic needs and wants.

Purchase

Lastly, the consumers buy products according to their needs and wants, which can support the consumer's purchasing power.

Post purchase Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction

Quality products increase consumers' post purchase satisfaction and in turn positively affect the company's brand image (Rawal, 2013, pp. 43). In addition, companies use effective after sales services to increase customer satisfaction.

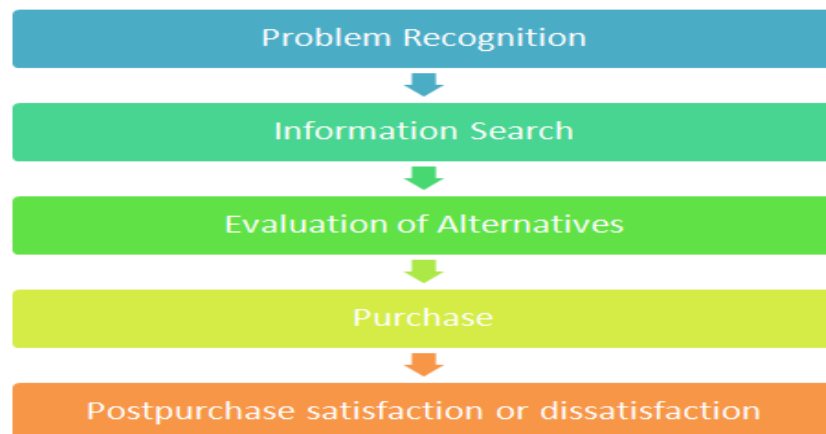


Figure 4: Showing Consumer Decision Making Process

2.6 Models on customer purchase intention

The AIDA Model helps companies to increase their customer base and improve their brand image. The AIDA Model helps in generating Awareness, Interest, Desire, and

Action among potential customers and converts them into loyal customers. Erdogmus and Cicek (2012, pp. 1358) explained that the AIDA model helps companies increase brand awareness among consumers and thus increase profitability. The AIDA Model is effective for companies to raise their product awareness and increase their customer base. This model specifies the ways in which a company can maximise its reach to potential customers and increase its profitability. Stephen and Galak (2012, pp. 631) stated that with the help of the AIDA model, companies can enhance their customer-brand relationship and increase their profitability. However, Miller and Lammas (2010, pp. 5) argued that the AIDA model does not accommodate the external factors that can affect a company's brand image and negatively affect its profitability.

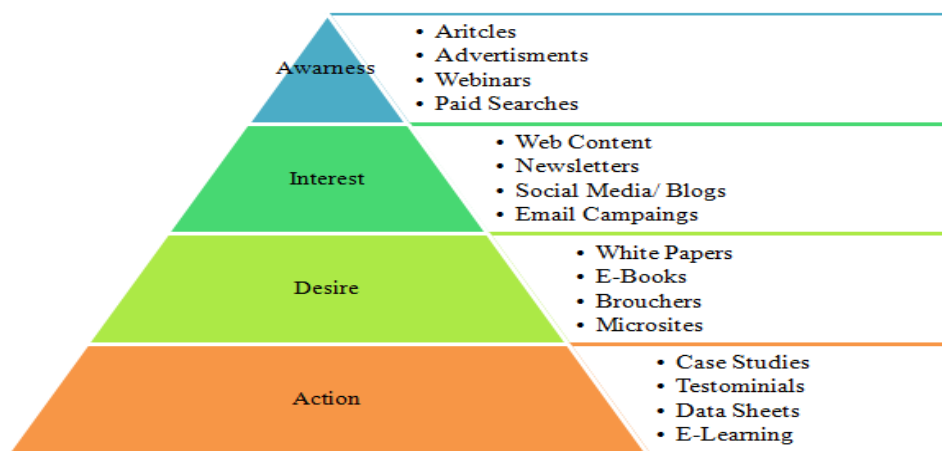


Figure 5: Showing the AIDA Model

The Purchase Intention Model described in Figure 4 can help a company effectively use social media marketing to increase its customer base and enhance its brand image. Kim and Ko (2010, pp. 166) opined that with the help of the Purchase Intention Model, companies can increase their customer reach and in turn improve the company's brand image. However, Erdogmus and Cicek (2012, pp. 1355) argued

that companies' increasing exposure to social media marketing can increase their expenditure, which in turn can negatively affect the company's profitability. However, this model only helps in increasing the customer satisfaction of online consumers and does not accommodate the consumers using social media as their medium of interaction.

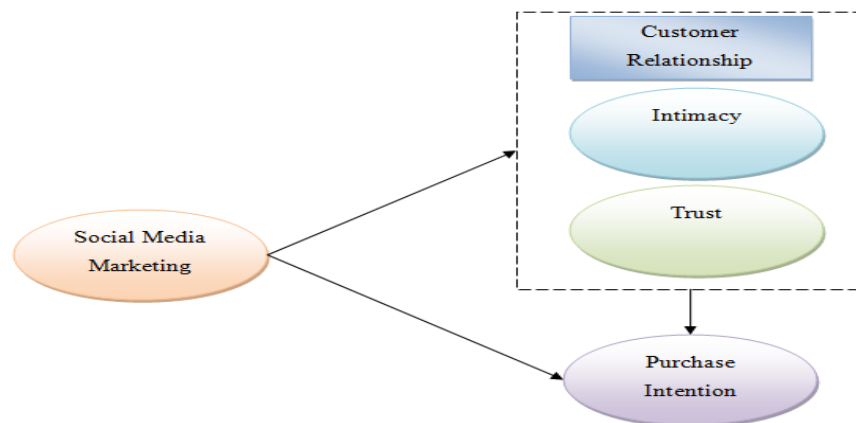


Figure 6: Showing the Purchase Intention Model

2.7 Impacts of Luxury Fashion Brand's Social Media Marketing on Customer Relationship and Purchase Intention

Luxury fashion brands' social media marketing creates a significant impact on the customer brand relationship. In addition, these brands also create purchase intention among potential customers. Luxury fashion brands use social media websites like Facebook and Twitter to promote their products, which helps in increasing purchase intentions of potential consumers. Miller and Lammas (2010, pp.3) opined that luxury fashion brands only target high class people and in turn use effective online social media to promote their products. However, Stephen and Galak (2012, pp. 633) argued that not targeting the general masses could limit a company's customer base and thus negatively affect the company's growth and profitability.

Luxury fashion brands' use social media marketing to promote their products among their target customers. These companies do not use traditional methods of advertisement, as their products are not intended for people in medium and low financial classes. Wang et al. (2012, pp. 201) argued that marketing products public use could help in increasing the customer base of the company and in turn increase profitability. However, Chu and Kim (2011, pp. 73) opined that a specified customer base helps companies increase their profitability by minimising the cost of production.

2.8 Social media marketing tools of Louis Vuitton and Chanel

Social media marketing is one of the basic tools for inflecting customer purchase intentions and decisions. In the fashion and design industry, business organisations use social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube for advertisement and promotional activities (Sigala et al. 2012, pp- 68). Facebook is often used by most business entities to promote events that display their new products and services. In the case of Louis Vuitton, the company has used the social marketing platforms of Facebook and YouTube for enhancing and promoting its products and services. With the engagement of Facebook, the company has been able to generate more effective interaction with its customers (BBC News, 2016). Moreover, Facebook's systems of "like" and "comment" have helped the company to evaluate and upgrade their products as per the customers' needs and desires.

The French-based fashion and luxury goods and services company Chanel S.A. With the use of YouTube videos, the company has been able to increase its marketing of the goods and services it provides (CHANEL, 2016). As per the assessment, the company uses social media marketing tools to generate awareness of the company

and its promotional activities. In addition to Facebook, Chanel also uses mobile marketing to cultivate communication with customers (CHANEL, 2016).

2.9 Customer purchase intention on fashion goods and services in Turkey

The fashion industry in Turkey has been developing more potential in the last few years (Chu and Kim, 2011, pp- 98). The country has become a key player in the international fashion industry in terms of developing global fashion and shaping the market . As per the revaluation, Turkey has experienced a 6.8% growth in GDP due to its increased involvement in the fashion industry (BBC News, 2016).

In Turkey, the fashion industry gained its popularity due to creative and more innovative designs as well as standardised pricing of the goods in the market. Turkey has gained TUR 1.2 billion in profits in the past year from the fashion industry alone. This is one reason why customers in Turkey are influenced to purchase fashion and luxury products. Designing and pricing has also increased customers' interests for making purchase decisions (CHANEL 2016).

As per the purchase intention in the Turkish fashion industry, the engagement of international and local players in the market has increased options for the customers and has also driven their purchase intention towards fashion products and services. Kim and Ko (2012, pp- 1486) noted that 62% of the customers in the Turkish market prefer online marketing and use online marketing tools such as social networks, which influence their purchase intentions

2.10 Brand Equity Model

The Aaker Model is an effective tool for evaluating a company's brand equity. Moreover, the model helps in evaluating the brand as a product, which could be helpful in identifying the products' strengths. In addition, the model also presents the brand as a symbol, which makes the brand more trustworthy and thus increases the number of brand loyal customers. Chu and Kim (2011, pp- 99) cited that the Aaker Model provides scopes for an organisation to maximise its customer reach and capacity for revenue generation.

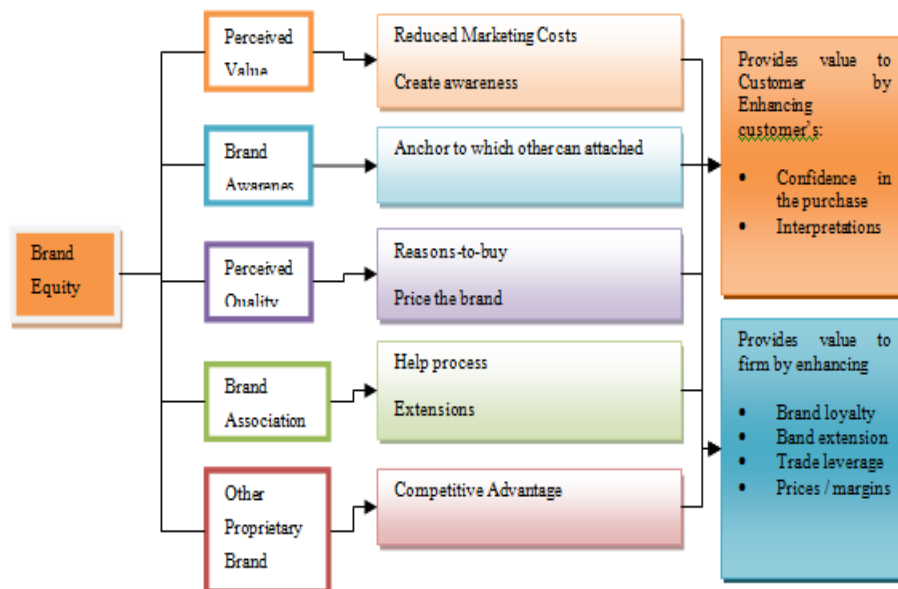


Figure 7: Aaker Model

2.11 Brand Loyalty Model

Tricks and Triumphs of Brand Loyalty is an effective method that helps an organisation measure its level of customer loyalty. In addition, this model helps in evaluating customer satisfaction level and the risk of customers switching to competitive products (see Appendix 1). This evaluation helps an organisation gather data from dissatisfied customers. Moreover, the model helps the organisation in

effectively identifying the risk of losing the customers to its peers. Kim and Ko (2012, pp- 1485) argued that brand loyalty models only indicate a brand's negative factors, which hamper the organisation's customer retention programme.

2.12 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is framed using dependent and independent variables of the research study conducted by Rouquerol *et al.* (2013, pp- 44. In this study, the independent variable is social media marketing, while the dependent variable is customers' purchase intention. As per the nature of the topic, the conceptual framework has been framed as the following:

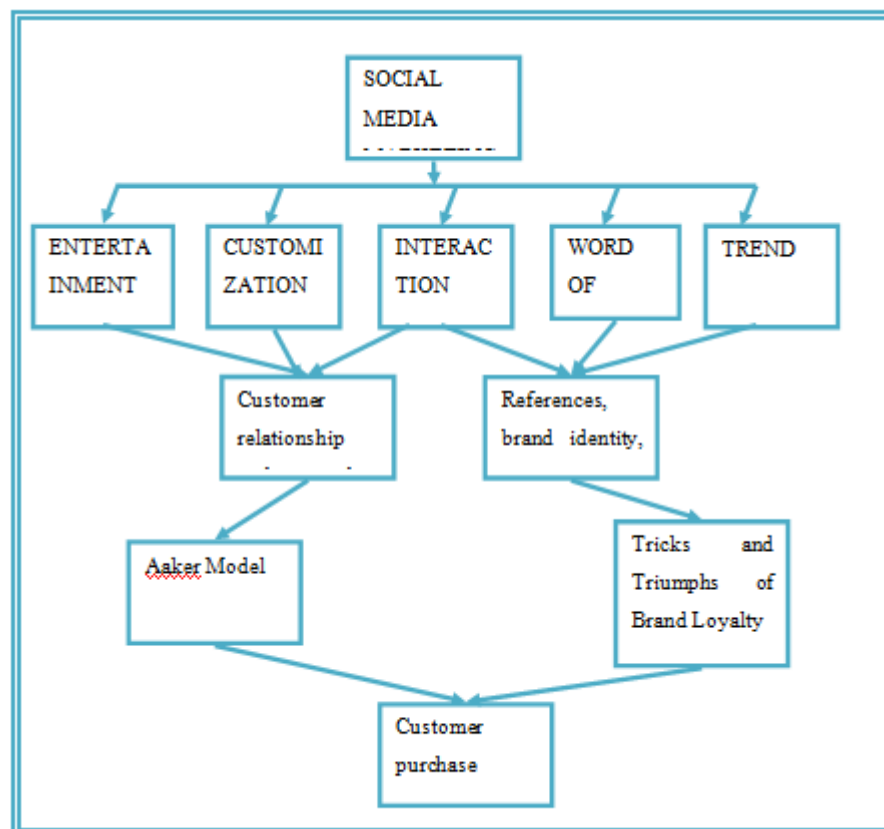


Figure 8: Conceptual framework

2.13 Gap of literature

2.13.1 Existing literature

The literature chapter has highlighted different roles, theories, and conceptions of social media marketing and customers' purchase intentions for luxurious goods and services. However, the models and theories of social media marketing are unable to properly highlight the research topic. The use of funnel mode would provide more basic information on the customer purchase intention, which has not been implemented in the research literature.

2.13.2 Gap in the literature

The literature review section discussed theories of customer behaviour and brand equity, which provided a clear conception of the impact of advertisement and marketing on customers' purchase intention. On the other hand, the communication theory may provide more detailed information regarding how social media tools influences customers' purchase decisions. The social international marketing model has highlighted basic information regarding the elements of social media marketing. However, the social media metrics model provides a step-by-step explanation of the impact of social media on customer purchase decision making.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The use of tools, techniques, approaches, methods and design of research helps to create a more effective research study on a specific research topic (Kazdin, 2011, pp- 59). This chapter discusses relevant techniques and strategic tools for effectively commencing the research study. Based on the research criteria, aims and objectives, this chapter describes the basic data collection methods and elements that can be used to determine information regarding social media marketing and its impact on customer purchase intentions.

3.1 Research onion

The research onion is a model that provides steps and strategies that researchers can follow to conduct their studies in a systematic manner (Saunders *et al.* 2009, pp- 52). The research onion includes six different segments in which a series of approaches, strategies, and data collection approaches are provided; from these options the researcher must select the most appropriate option to conduct an effective research study.

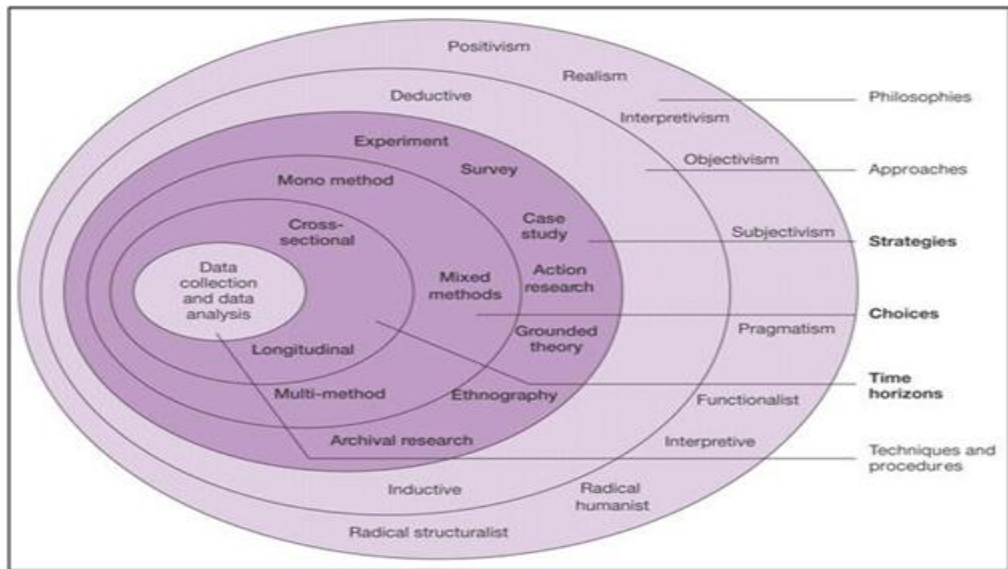


Figure 9: Research Onion

3.2 Research philosophy

In the research onion, the research philosophy is the first segment that provides approaches to extract practical and logical information on the research topic. In the research philosophy, there are three major categories: interpretivism, positivism and realism (Zhou et al. 2011, pp- 26). As per interpretivism, certain collective information is extracted for research completion based on the research criteria. On the other hand, the positivism philosophy helps the researcher to engage the external and internal factors that are affecting the research topic. The realism research philosophy incorporates the elements of both the interpretivism and positivism research philosophies that help to conduct the research in a more practical manner (Noshad et al. 2012, pp- 2110).

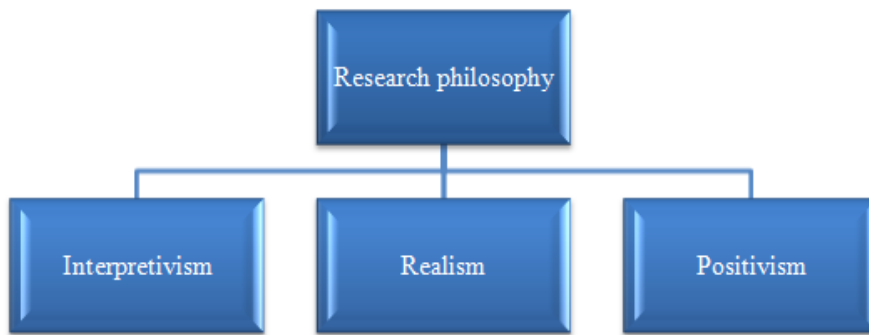


Figure 10: Research philosophy

3.2.1 Justification for chosen philosophy

According to the nature of the topic, positivism has been selected as the research philosophy of this study. In relation to increasing basic information regarding the factors of social media marketing that influence customer purchase intention, positivism helped to extract more relevant information on the topic (Sun *et al* 2010, pp- 953). Moreover, by using the positivism philosophy, this study was able to evaluate and relate the social media marketing strategies of Louis Vuitton and Chanel that influence customers in Turkey to make purchase decisions regarding luxurious goods

3.3 Research design

The research design provides a layout of the research, which allows for proper selection of data collection tools and techniques. As per Rouquerol *et al.* (2009, pp- 38), the use of a specific design helps the research to be conducted in a systematic and reliable manner so that quality information can be gathered

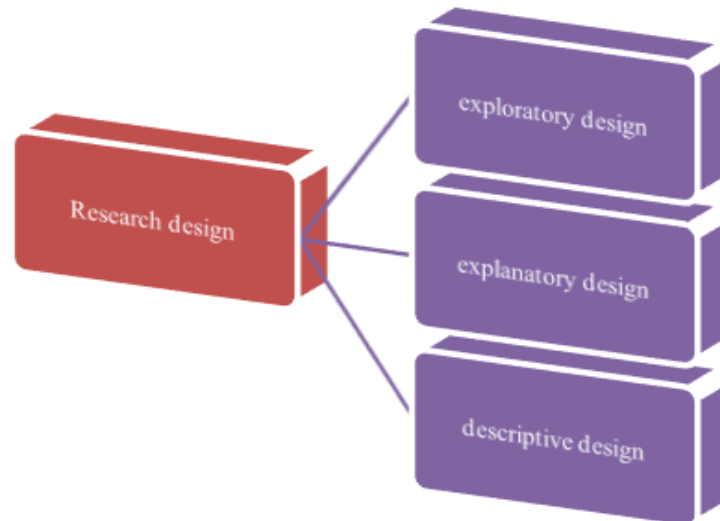


Figure 11: Research design

The exploratory design is used for when the study produces uncertain results or when the research topic has not been clarified. On the other hand, the explanatory research design is used when existing theories and conceptions are needed to be explained for the research. In the descriptive research design, the layout is made based on the occurrence of certain events (Zhu et al. 2010, pp- 110). These research designs help studies to extract influence, relationships or affectivity of certain elements.

.3.3.1 Justification for chosen design

This study has employed the descriptive research design, as this specific design helps the researcher explain the impact and affectivity of social media marketing on customers' purchase decisions (Corrado, 2011, pp-15). In this study, the explanatory and exploratory research designs were not implemented, as the nature and conception of the study are clear.

3.4 Research approach

The research approach provides information on the best possible way to select the study's data collection process, including inductive and deductive research approaches (Zhong and Wang, 2010, pp- 106). With the inductive research approach, data collection can evaluate small conception in diversified explanation related to different elements and research variables. On the other hand, the deductive research approach helps to evaluate the larger conception into a more compressed and understandable order (Noshad et al. 2012, pp- 2110).

3.4.1 Justification for chosen approach

Given the nature of the topic, this study employed the deductive research approach. This is because social media marketing and customer purchase intentions are broad concepts that can be synchronised and explained in a more structured manner with the help of the deductive research approach. Moreover, the deductive approach helps the researcher to evaluate and analyse theories and concepts as per their occurrences and extract relevant information regarding the research topic (Kazdin, 2011, pp- 23). The use of the inductive research approach is not applicable for this study, as the study has a limited time period. The inductive research approach is used for longitudinal studies in which conducting the research requires diversified learning and knowledge.

3.5 Research strategy

To collect quality information for an in-depth analysis and interpretation, of how social media marketing impacts customer purchase intentions, this study used both open-and closed-ended survey questionnaires distributed to customers and employees of Louis Vuitton and Chanel (Sun et al. 2010, pp- 950). The study engaged both primary and secondary data collection sources to define the

relationship between social media marketing strategies and customer purchase intentions.

.3.6 Data collection method

This study used a quantitative data collection method (Currie and Pandher, 2011, pp-16). Primary data collection was used for gathering information from the customers and employees regarding the impact of social media on customer purchase intentions. The secondary data collection sources included journals, newspapers and online sources for gathering more supportive information regarding social media marketing.

3.7 Population and sample size

The survey was distributed to 120 customers of Louis Vuitton and Chanel in Turkey. However, only 75 customers (45 customers of Louis Vuitton and 30 customers of Chanel) responded to the questionnaire.

3.8 Ethical issues

Information collected from the respondents was used for the research only and was not shared with any third party unrelated to the research. As per the Data Protection Act of 1998, it is prohibited for researchers to publicly publish respondents' private and/or personal information (Kazdin, 2011, pp- 98). To conduct the close-ended questionnaire with employees, proper authorisation was obtained from the companies.

3.9 Accessibility issues

Accessibility issues occurred in gathering information from online sources where the information is stated congenial. For example, information on how social media influences companies' pricing is not accessible (Rouquerol et al 2013, pp- 41). Moreover, direct interaction with employees is sometimes not possible due to some

recitations and their work schedules. In these cases, communication with employees must occur by telephone.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Customers of Louis Vuitton and Chanel were selected as the subjects of this study. Because the research project was conducted from the Giresun Province and the customers of these brands live across Turkey, it was impossible researcher to conduct the interviews face-to-face. Thus, customers were contacted through popular social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and other apps. The quantitative method of the data was selected here. Specific data have been analysed to produce useful statistics, graphs and appropriate calculations to clarify evaluation of the data analysis.

4.1 Descriptive analysis

This part of the thesis will examine the descriptive statistics of the participants involved in the study, including gender distribution, age distribution, shopping frequency, attitude towards social media, utilisation of social media services, social interaction, word of mouth influence, social media marketing, information about new trends and preference of brands.

4.1.1 Gender Distribution

Of the Louis Vuitton customers interviewed in this study, 56 % of the participants were male and 44% were female. Of the Chanel customers interviewed for this study, 57% of the participants were male and 43 % were female. These descriptive statistics were obtained by asking the participants the following question: “To which gender group do you belong?”

Table 1: Gender group of customers of Louis Vuitton and Chanel

Options	Frequency	Frequency %	Total number of respondents
Louis Vuitton			
Male	25	56	45
Female	20	44	45
Chanel			
Male	17	57	30
Female	13	43	30

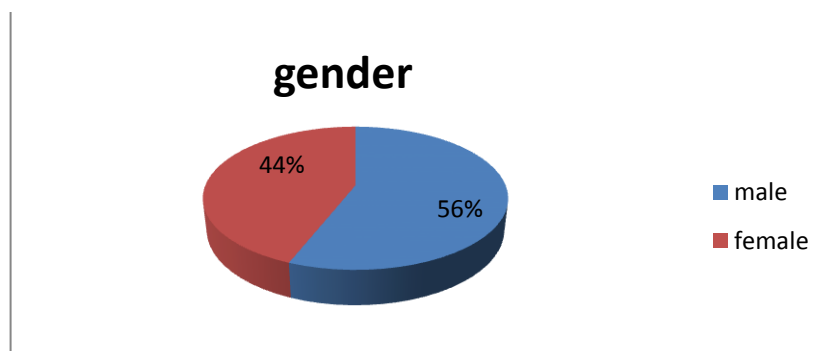


Figure 12 : Gender group of Louis Vuitton

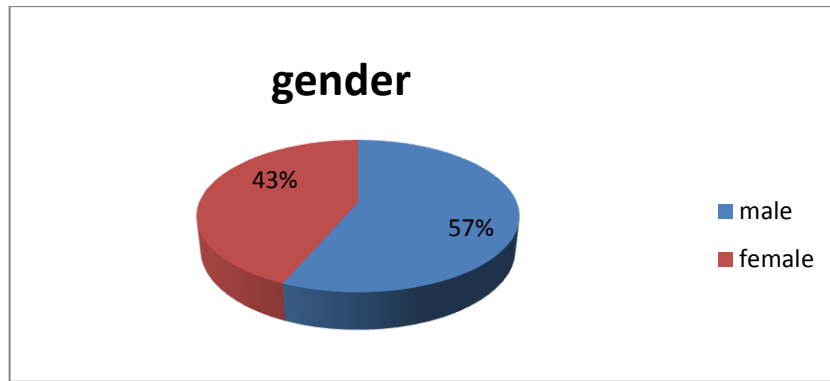


Figure 13: Gender group of Chanel

4.1.2 Age Distribution

The below table shows that customers in the age group of 22-24 are the most interested in fashion branding and clothing from Louis Vuitton. Customers from the age group of 31-34 have the least interest in fashion and clothing. In the case of Chanel, the customers from the 22-24 age group showed the most interest in fashion and branding. Customers from the age group of above 34 had the least knowledge and interest in fashion branding. Descriptive statistics regarding participants age were determined with the following question: “Which age group do you belong to?”

Table 2: Age group of customers of Louis Vuitton and Chanel

Options	Frequency	Frequency %	Total number of respondents
Louis Vuitton			
18-21	7	16	45
22-24	17	38	45
27-30	10	22	45
31-34	5	11	45

Above 34	6	13	45
Chanel			
18-21	6	20	30
22-24	9	30	30
27-30	7	23	30
31-34	5	17	30
Above 34	3	10	30

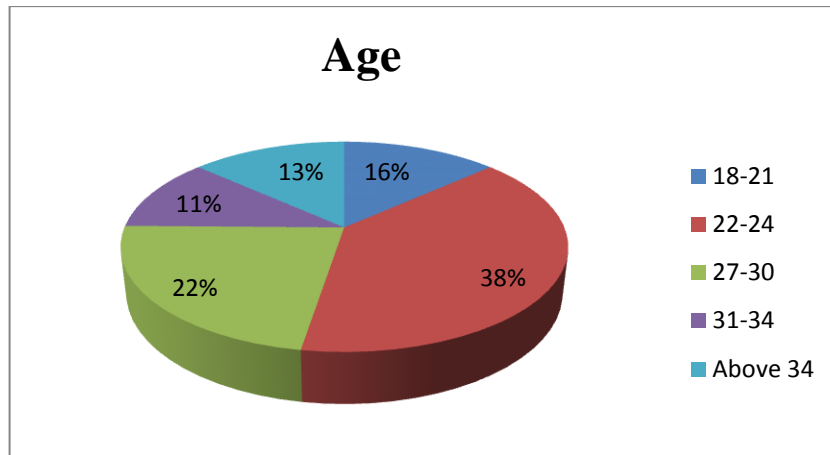


Figure 14: Age group of customers of Louis Vuitton

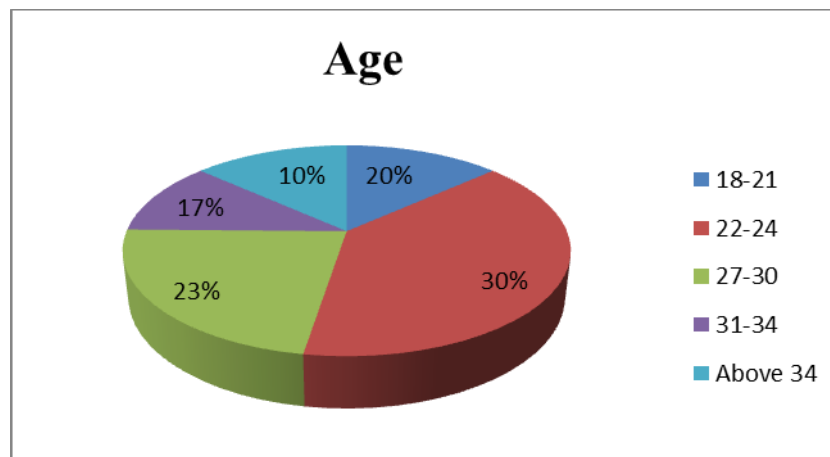


Figure 15: Age group of customers of Chanel

4.1.3 Shopping Frequency

Most of the customers of Louis Vuitton were recent users of the company's fashion products, as 40% of the customers had only a 6-month relationship with the brand. Very few customers were connected to the company for three years.

In the case of Chanel, the customers attached to the brand comprised 30% of the total number of customers. Only 10% of the customers were related to the brand for two years, and only 17% of the customers were related to the company for three years.

Thus, most of the Chanel customers were new users of the brand. This might be because Turkey’s population is increasing, and people are becoming more fashion conscious. These statistics were obtained by asking the participants the following question: “For how many months have you been buying products from the specified brand?”

Table 3: Years of attachment with Louis Vuitton and Chanel

Options	Frequency	Frequency %	Total number of respondents
Louis Vuitton			
6 months	18	40	45
1 year	5	11	45
2 years	8	18	45
3 years	5	11	45
Above 3 years	9	20	45
Chanel			
6 months	9	30	30
1 year	7	23	30
2 years	3	10	30
3 years	5	17	30

Above 3 years	3	6	20	30
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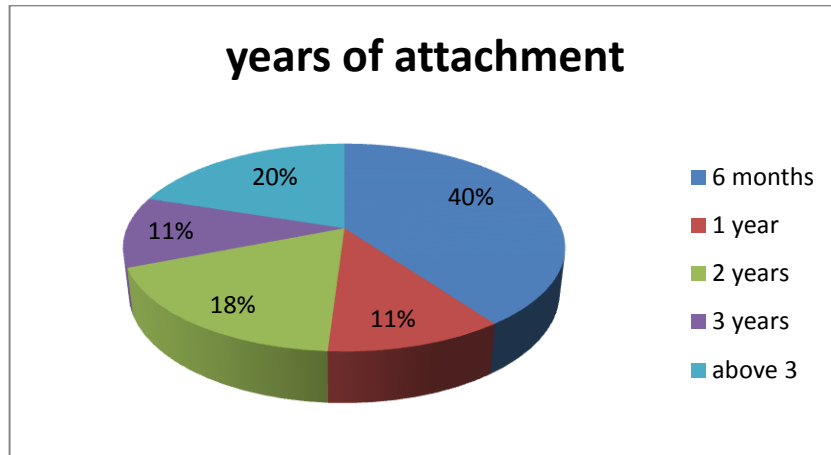


Figure 16 :Years of attachment with Louis Vuitton

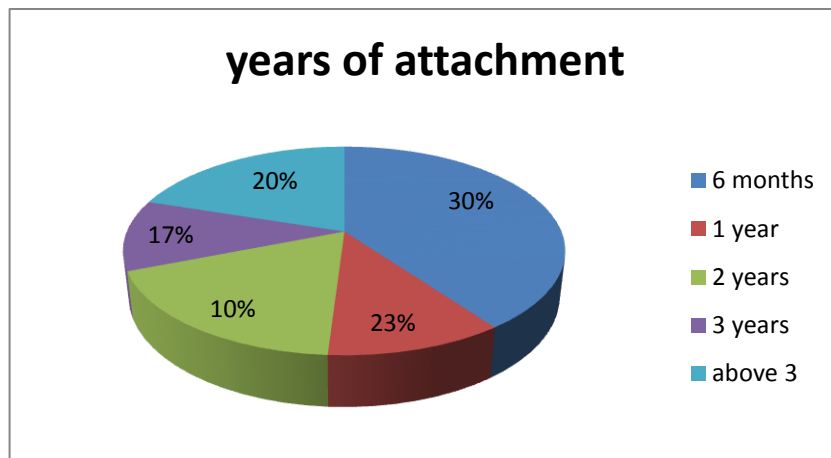


Figure 17: Years of attachment with Chanel

4.1.4 Attitude for Social Media

Very few customers of Louis Vuitton agreed that they are influenced by fashion brands' promotions to spread awareness. Most of the customers did not provide comments regarding the influence of social media on their purchasing of goods.

In the case of Chanel, the majority of customers strongly disagreed that social media promotion can influence customers' thinking. The models of social media marketing in the literature and the consumers' decision-making process are related to the data collected in this table. The customers' views towards social media and its ability to influence consumer behaviour varied. This information was obtained by asking the participants the following question: "To what extent do you agree that social media is able to attract you towards the specified brand"?

Table 4: Social media is able to attract specified brand

Options	Frequency	Frequency %	Total number of respondents
Louis Vuitton			
Strongly agree	15	33	45
Agree	5	11	45
Neutral	20	44	45
Disagree	3	7	45
Strongly disagree	2	5	45
Chanel			
Strongly agree	4	13	30

Agree	5	17	30
Neutral	6	20	30
Disagree	4	13	30
Strongly disagree	11	37	30

Table 5: Statistical analysis of Louis Vuitton

Louis Vuitton			
mean	Median	mode	SD.
2.35	3	3	1.15

Table 6: Statistical analysis of Chanel

Chanel			
mean	Median	mode	SD.
3.43	3.5	5	1.47

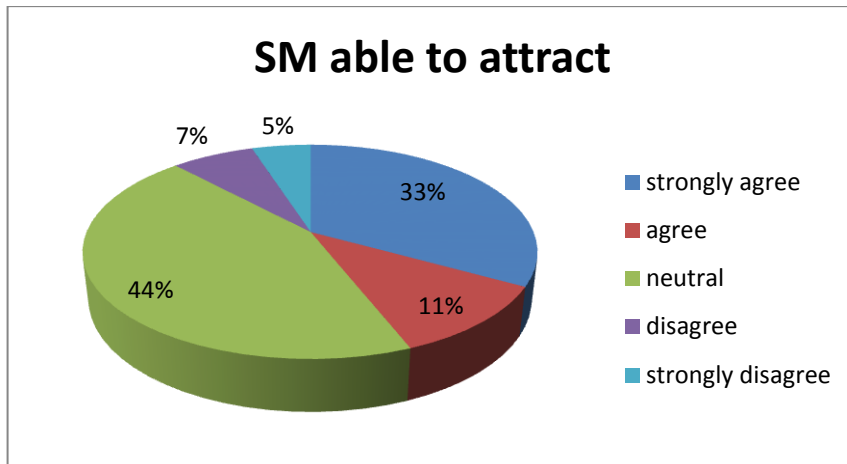


Figure 18: Social media is able to attract specified brand (Louis Vuitton)

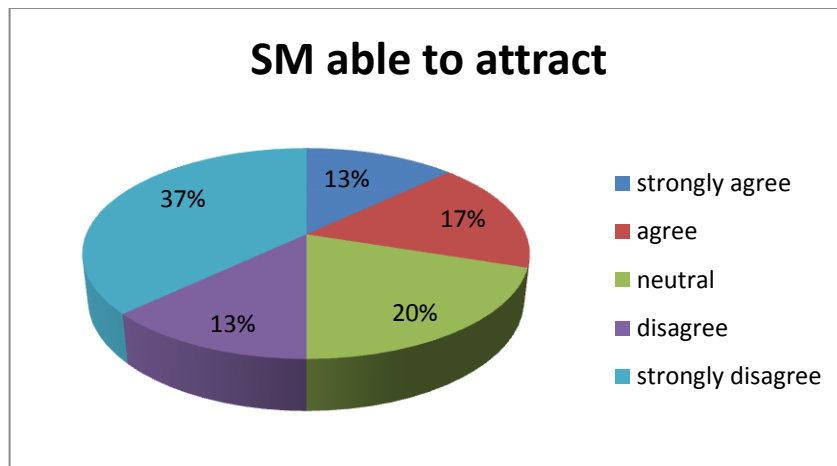


Figure 19: Social media is able to attract specified brand (Chanel)

4.1.5 Utilisation of Social Media Services

The statistical data revealed that Louis Vuitton has favourable and positive control of their targeted customers. The median and mode values showed that most Louis Vuitton customers agreed that the company has utilised social media services in a way that helps to promote their brand among customers.

Similarly, Chanel customers agreed that the company effectively utilises social media strategies to promote their products. Moreover, these customers expressed satisfaction with Chanel's social media services. Comparatively, Chanel's market position is better than that of Louis Vuitton based on the number of responses. Information regarding the companies' utilisation of social media services was

obtained by asking the following question: “To what extent do you agree that you can connect with the specified brand through social media?”

Table 7 : Connection with the specified brand through social media

Options	Frequency	Frequency %	Total number of respondents
Louis Vuitton			
Strongly agree	10	22	45
Agree	5	11	45
Neutral	16	36	45
Disagree	10	22	45
Strongly disagree	4	9	45
Chanel			
Strongly agree	5	17	30
Agree	9	30	30
Neutral	11	36	30
Disagree	3	10	30

Strongly disagree	2	7	30
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Table 8: Statistical analysis of Louis Vuitton

Louis Vuitton			
mean	Median	mode	SD.
2.84	3	3	1.26

Table 9: Statistical analysis of Chanel

Chanel			
mean	Median	mode	SD.
2.6	3	3	1.10

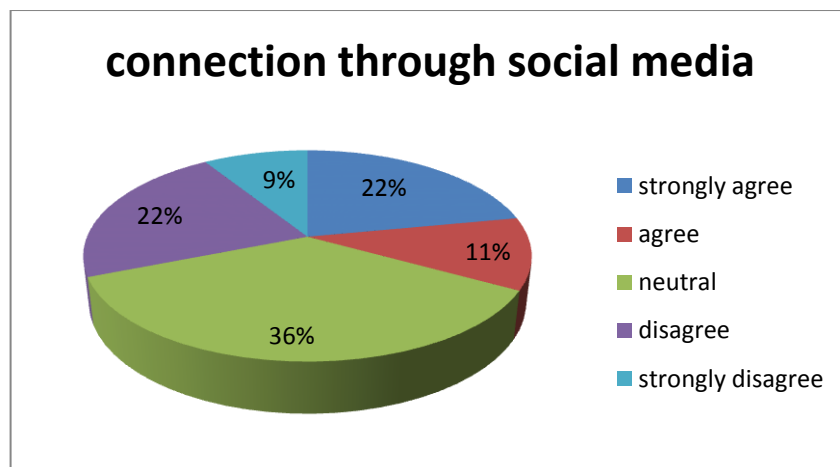


Figure 20: Connection with the specified brand through social media (Louis Vuitton)

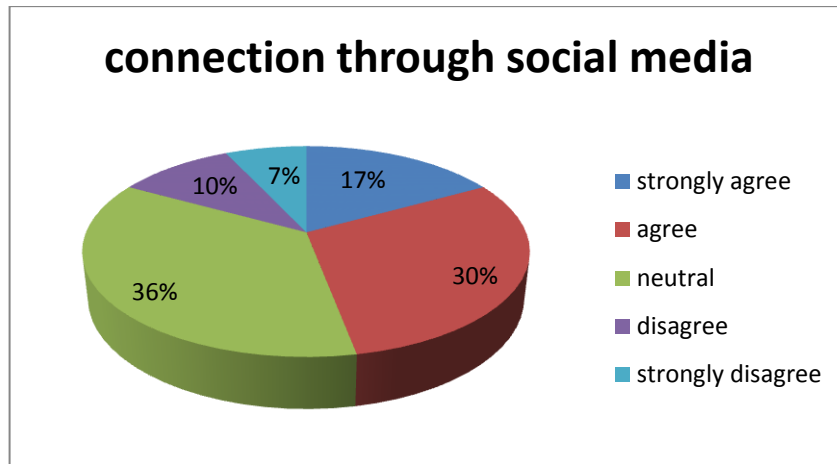


Figure 21: Connection with the specified brand through social media (Chanel)

4.1.6 Social Interaction

While the Louis Vuitton customers expressed satisfaction with the previously implemented plans regarding use of social media, Chanel customers suggested that the company improve their social media services. The data showed that Louis Vuitton has more positive outcome as compared to Chanel, as most of the customers selected a neutral option, and customers of Chanel strongly agreed with improving the company’s use of social media for promoting the brand. Based on the comparative study, the risk factors of both companies are perceived as alarming factor, because it has values of 1.09 and 1.29, respectively. These statistics were obtained by asking the participants the following question: “Do you agree that luxurious fashion brands must give priority to customisation and social interaction while promoting their products”?

Table 10: Luxurious fashion brands need to give priority to customization and social interaction

Options	Frequency	Frequency %	Total number of respondents
Louis Vuitton			
Strongly	10	22	45

agree			
Agree	8	18	45
Neutral	20	44	45
Disagree	5	11	45
Strongly disagree	2	5	45
Chanel			
Strongly agree	10	33	30
Agree	8	27	30
Neutral	5	17	30
Disagree	5	17	30
Strongly disagree	2	6	30

Table 11: Statistical analysis of Louis Vuitton

Louis Vuitton			
mean	Median	mode	SD.
2.57	3	3	1.09

Table 12: Statistical analysis of Chanel

Chanel			
mean	Median	mode	SD.
2.36	2	1	1.29

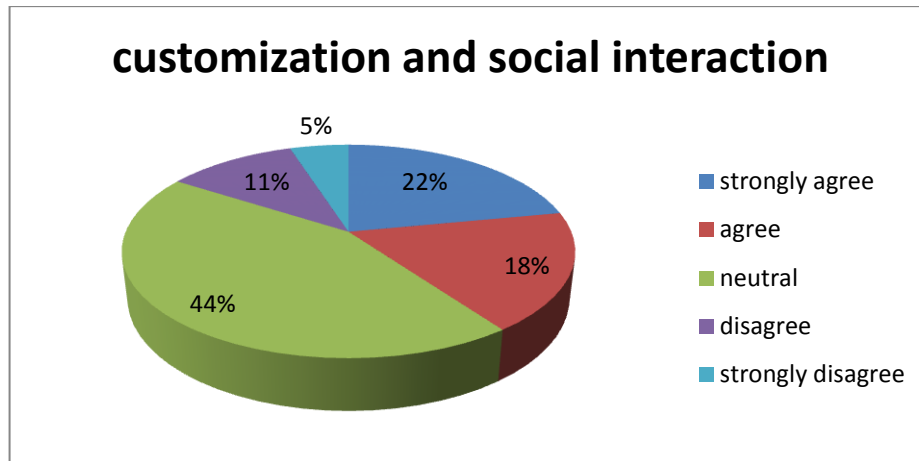


Figure 22: Luxurious fashion brands need to give priority to customization and social interaction (Louis Vuitton)

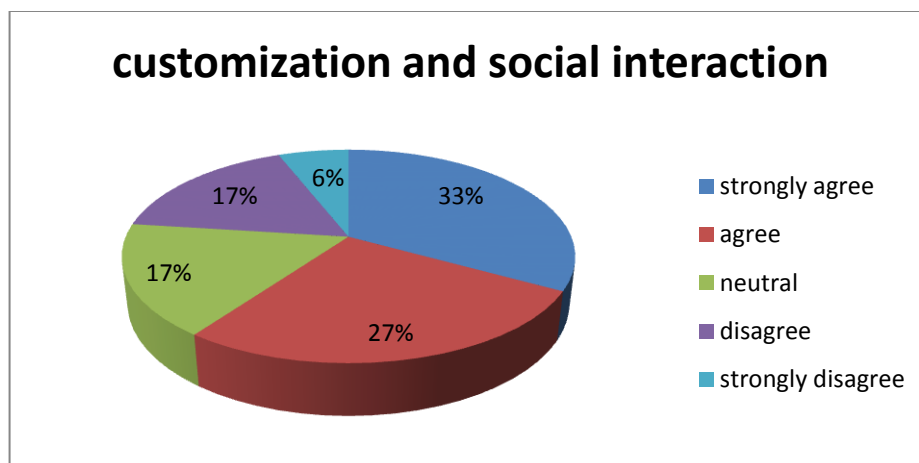


Figure 23: Luxurious fashion brands need to give priority to customization and social interaction (Chanel)

4.1.7 Word of Mouth Influence

The study found that customers of both Louis Vuitton and Chanel have recommended the brands' products to their relatives and friends. Customers of Louis Vuitton have revealed that the brand is suitable for them, as it denotes their status and so they recommend this brand to their relatives to maintain that status. On the other hand, customers of Chanel revealed that the brand's products do not symbolise their status but provides the best products, and this is why they suggest the brand to

their relatives. As per the statistical data, Louis Vuitton appears to have more loyal customers as compared to Chanel. Information regarding word of mouth and its relationship to promoting Louis Vuitton and Chanel was gathered by asking the participants the following question: “Have you ever recommended a specific brand to your relatives after being influenced by the brand’s social media marketing approach?”

Table 13: Recommending specific brand

Options	Frequency	Frequency %	Total number of respondents
Louis Vuitton			
Yes, to high extent	15	34	45
Yes, to some extent	14	31	45
Neutral	6	13	45
No	6	13	45
Not at all	4	9	45
Chanel			
Yes, to high extent	7	23	30
Yes, to some extent	5	17	30
Neutral	10	33	30
No	3	10	30
Not at all	5	17	30

Table 14: Statistical analysis of Louis Vuitton

Mean	Median	Mode	SD
2.333333	2	1	1.314257

Table 15: Statistical analysis of Chanel

Mean	Median	Mode	SD
2.8	3	3	1.374647

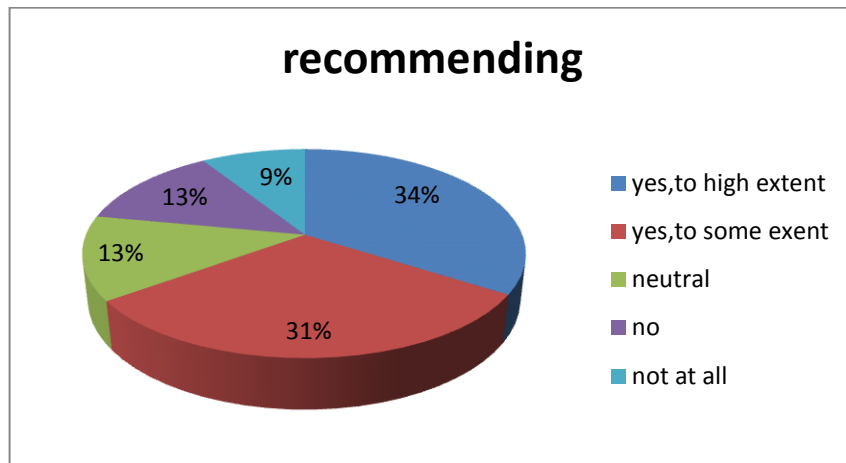


Figure 24: Recommending specific brand (Louis Vuitton)

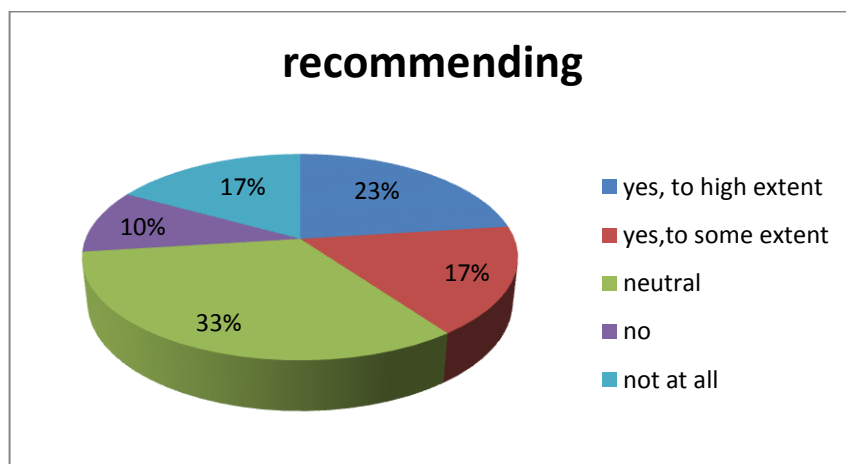


Figure 25 : Recommending specific brand (Chanel)

4.1.8 Social Media Marketing

Most of the Louis Vuitton customers remained neutral about the question that the use of social media helps to centralise customers' opinions. However, most of the customers disagreed with the opinion.

In the case of Chanel, the minority of customers disagreed with the opinion that customers centralise their opinion because of social media. Customers views regarding this notion vary. The literature review supports the collected data regarding the impacts of luxury fashion brands' social media marketing on customer relationship and purchase intention point. To obtain information regarding the cluster effect of the brands' social media marketing approaches, the participants were asked the following question: "Do you agree that luxury fashion brands' social media marketing approaches create clusters?"

Table 16: Social media marketing approach of luxury fashion brands create cluster

Options	Frequency	Frequency %	Total number of respondents
Louis Vuitton			
Strongly agree	5	11	45
Agree	10	22	45
Neutral	18	40	45
Disagree	10	22	45
Strongly disagree	2	5	45
Chanel			
Strongly agree	5	17	30
Agree	10	33	30
Neutral	8	27	30

Disagree	5	17	30
Strongly disagree	2	6	30

Table 17: Statistical analysis of Louis Vuitton

Mean	Median	Mode	SD
2.866667	3	3	1.035725

Table 18: Statistical analysis of Chanel

Mean	Median	Mode	SD
2.633333	2.5	2	1.159171

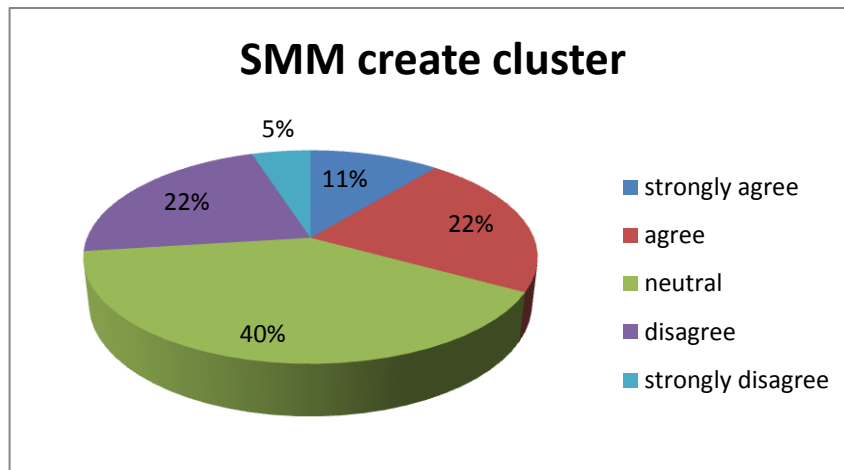


Figure 26: Social media marketing approach of luxury fashion brands create cluster (Louis Vuitton)

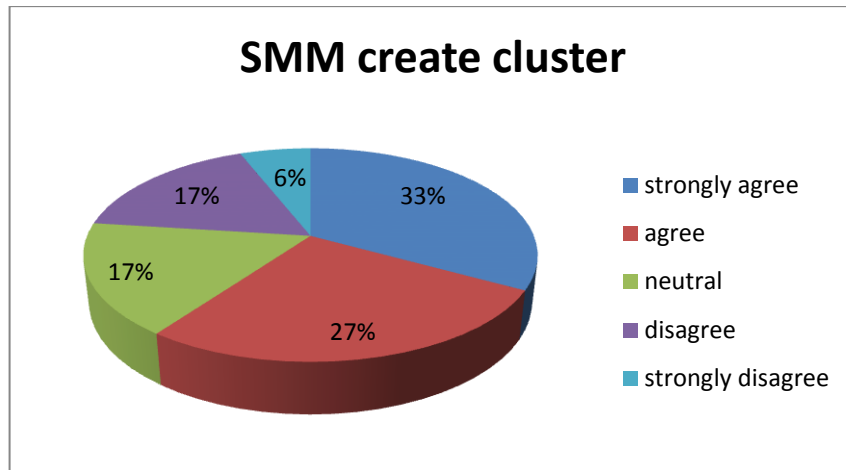


Figure 27: Social media marketing approach of luxury fashion brands create cluster (Chanel)

4.1.9 Information about New Trends

This metric reported the percentage and the frequency of the customers that have proper knowledge of the new trends in the fashion market. The tables of the collected data show that 31% of the Louis Vuitton customers strongly agree that they have the proper knowledge of the latest fashion news. Of the Louis Vuitton customers, 22% customers agreed that they are aware of the latest fashion news. A very minimum percentage of the customers remained silent, and only 11% of the Louis Vuitton customers strongly disagreed that they know about the latest news in fashion branding.

In the case of Chanel, very few customers expressed extreme opinions regarding their awareness of new fashion trends. Of the Chanel customers, 37% of agreed and 30% disagreed. The customers' views varied.

Perception and knowledge of fashion branding are important to influence customers' decisions. The theory of consumer perception includes customers' perceptions of

self, price and benefit. To obtain information regarding customers' knowledge of fashion trends, participants were asked the following question: "To what extent do you agree that you keep up with new trends in fashion through social media?"

Table 19: New trends in fashion clothing through social media tools

Options	Frequency	Frequency %	Total number of respondents
Louis Vuitton			
Strongly agree	14	31	45
Agree	10	22	45
Neutral	6	14	45
Disagree	10	22	45
Strongly disagree	5	11	45
Chanel			
Strongly agree	3	10	30
Agree	11	37	30
Neutral	4	13	30

Disagree	9	30	30
Strongly disagree	3	10	30

Table 20: Statistical analysis of Louis Vuitton

Mean	Median	Mode	SD
2.6	2	1	1.420627

Table 21: Statistical analysis of Chanel

Mean	Median	Mode	SD
2.933333	3	2	1.229896

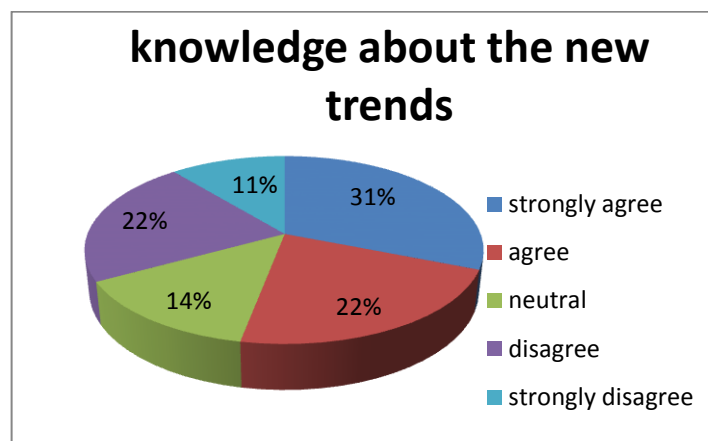


Figure 28 : New trends in fashion clothing through social media tools (Louis Vuitton)

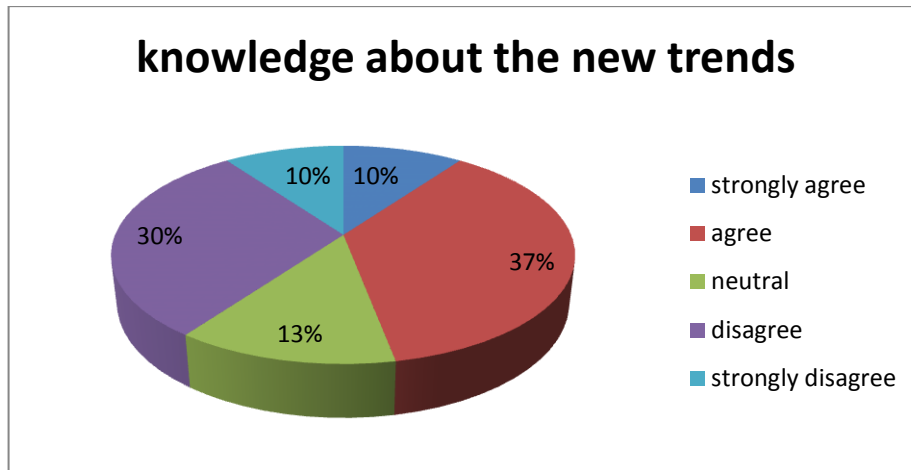


Figure 29 : New trends in fashion clothing through social media tools (Chanel)

4.1.10 Preference of Brands

Most of the Louis Vuitton customers believe that the use of the social media should be increased among luxury fashion brands. Only 11% of the customers disagreed that the use of the social media should be increased to promote brands like these.

In the case of Chanel, only 10% of the customers agreed that brands should increasingly use social media to promote their products . Most of the customers believed that the use of social media at a high rate would increase their knowledge of the latest fashion products.

The use of the AIDI model has shown how customers' interest, awareness and actions are more influenced by promotional strategies used by social media. To obtain information regarding luxury brands' social media marketing approaches, participants were asked the following question: "Do you agree that luxurious brands' social marketing brands need to be enhanced?"

Table 22: Social media marketing approach of luxurious brand need to be enhanced

Options	Frequency	Frequency %	Total number of respondents
Louis Vuitton			
Yes, to high extent	10	22	45
Yes, to some extent	15	34	45
Neutral	9	20	45
No	6	30	45
Not at all	5	11	45
Chanel			
Yes, to high extent	6	20	30
Yes, to some extent	11	37	30
Neutral	4	13	30

No	6	20	30
Not at all	3	10	30

Table 23: Statistical analysis of Louis Vuitton

Mean	Median	Mode	SD
2.577778	2	2	1.287861

Table 24: Statistical analysis of Chanel

Mean	Median	Mode	SD
2.709677	2	2	1.346441

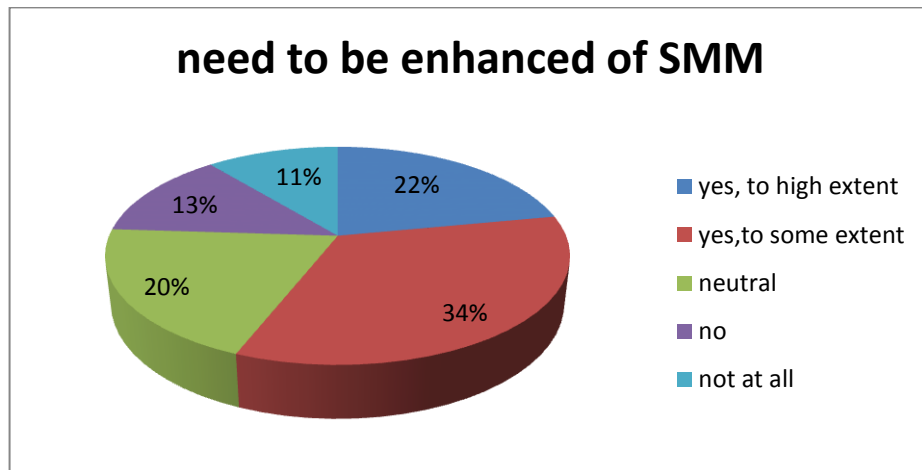


Figure 30: Social media marketing approach of luxurious brand need to be enhanced (Louis Vuitton)

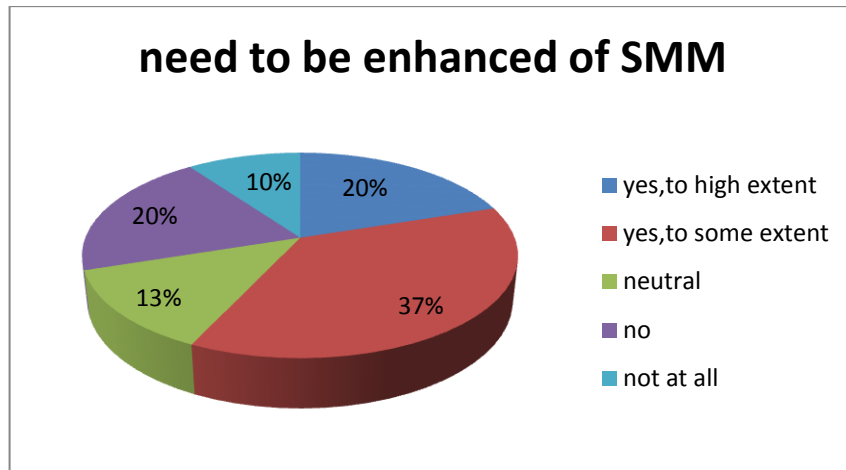


Figure 31 : Social media marketing approach of luxurious brand need to be enhanced (Chanel)

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

Traditional means of fashion branding and promotion have become less effective, rapidly increasing the need to use social media as a marketing strategy in several sectors. This study has discussed the way social media is useful to spread brand awareness among customers as well as the obstacles brands face in promoting themselves and the support of social media to overcome these obstacles. This section discusses the main points of the literature review and the related data collected. Moreover, the usefulness and the validity of the data collected are discussed here. The objective linking part of this section presents an analysis of the justification of choosing the data.

This section also presents the way the objectives of the research have been fulfilled with the help of the collected data from different sectors. This section also links the practical data and with the study's research goals, thus clarifying the validity and importance of the data. Moreover, recommendations for businesses are provided.

5.2 Objective linking

Answering the question of to what extent social media can attract customers to buy products from a specific brand fulfils the study's objective of assessing the impact of social media marketing on luxurious fashion brands in Turkey. Most of the Louis Vuitton customers brand remained silent, and a large amount of the customers agreed

that different fashion products' advertisements through social media attract customers. Candid assertions regarding the potentiality of social media to influence customers' thinking have been essential to understand the real effectiveness social media on enhancing a brand's image. In the case of Chanel, most of the customers disagreed that social media can mould customer thinking to purchase a product. According to the customers, belief in the brand's product and the quality of the product influence the buying of the product from one brand, and mere promotion can simply make the consumers aware but not attracted to buy products from a specific brand.

Regarding the question of whether fashion brands need to interact through the social media, this study found that because customers receive information about a brand from social media promotion, customers' opinions determine the need for social media to influence customer thinking.

Regarding the research objective of developing effective strategies for influencing the purchase decisions of the targeted customers through social media marketing, the study questioned the extent to which customers can connect with the specified brand through the promotion and endorsement of the brand. An equal number of customers agreed and disagreed with the notion that social media is important for linking customers to a specific brand. The customers have the potentiality to influence the company the most. So, the marketing and promotion strategies of one brand should be based on customers' opinions regarding the importance of social media to link them to the brand. If social media is deemed important for connecting customers to the brand, social media marketing strategies should be employed.

In the case of Chanel many customers agreed with the role of social media to connect the customers to brands. This suggests that companies should apply social media techniques to develop their marketing strategies.

To determine the challenges that fashion brands are facing to implement social media marketing processes within the industry, this study asked participants the following question: “Do you agree that luxury fashion brands’ social media marketing approaches create clusters?” Answers to this question show the challenges that companies face in using social media. Most of the customers did not comment and many disagreed. According to these customers, social media promotion influences customers’ decision to some extent, but is not very effective in centralise the opinions and thinking of customers. In the case of Chanel, brand the least number of customers disagreed with the opinion that customers centralise their opinions because of social media. This type of thinking would help to mitigate the challenges associated with using social media.

Different customers have different expectations and thinking, and the promotion of one media highlights the features that one type of customer expects. If social media is not able to create a uniform decision among customers, the sale of the brand will not increase at a large rate, and neither will company profit. Thus, it is a challenge to uniformly convince customers and attract them to a specific brand.

The above ten questions have helped to analyse the different factors related to the importance of social media on customers’ purchasing decisions, which have helped to generate recommendations in terms of social media use. Some questions have helped in cultivating understanding of the importance of social media, while other

questions have helped for understanding the way customers accept the role of social media for promoting a brand. The answers collected from the customers in this study have also shown the difficulty of applying social media to create a unanimous decision regarding the purchase of a brand's product. Therefore, the collected data generate certain recommendations.

5.3 Recommendations

The use of social media to increase the awareness of customers about fashion and branding: Fashion brands should use promotional strategies through social media to increase awareness among customers regarding the brand's different products. Sometimes interested customers do not buy the product because they are not familiar with the product's launch. The traditional method of promotion is not very fast nor widespread. This is the reason the traditional system of promotion cannot make all customers aware of a product. Because of its speed and wide-reach, social media techniques should be employed by all companies to make the presence of the new product known to customers.

The use of the online social media to affect the thinking of the new generation and lower the cost of promotion: The new generation customers are more attached to online social media; thus, promotion of a brand through online social media is more effective for garnering new customers. The second benefit of fashion brands using social media is that promotion of the product is cost effective. High promotional costs increase the price of the new product, and this decreases the brand's market position. However, the use of social media can decrease the promotional cost and thus avoid a potential reduction in market position

5.4 Research limitations

This study was limited in that it was difficult to collect adequate data from different sources, as the research was conducted from Giresun, the northern part of Turkey. Moreover, Giresun is too small. and luxury fashion brand demanders are inadequate. Therefore, the study could not engage customers of the larger fashion market of Turkey. The study relied on online media to conduct interviews. As customers could not be interviewed directly, this was one limitation of the data to continue the research project.

5.5 Future scope of research

There is a huge scope for future study regarding this topic, as the condition of the fashion market is constantly changing. Future studies would also be able to use the data obtained in this study.

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