



Mindful Marketing: Exploring the Influence of Fashion Marketing Strategies on Mental Health and well-being.

Meher Kohli

Master Student, National institute of fashion technology, (NIFT) New Delhi, India.

Email- meherkohli2@gmail.com

Abstract: *This paper explores the intersection of fashion marketing and mental health in the evolving landscape of the industry. Fuelled by social media and influencer marketing, it delves into challenges and opportunities, emphasizing the need for transformative evolution in marketing strategies. The research methodology, focusing on the period from 2019 to 2023, investigates the impact of fashion marketing strategies on mental health and well-being. Relevant studies were identified through keyword searches on PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar databases, encompassing 'fashion marketing strategies,' 'Mental Health,' 'social media,' and 'India. The study acknowledges the transformative power of platforms like Instagram in shaping consumer behaviour but raises concerns about potential harm to mental well-being due to unattainable beauty standards. The review advocates for a nuanced, responsible approach, urging ongoing research, and collaboration for positive mental health outcomes in the digital fashion landscape.*

1. INTRODUCTION :

In the ever-evolving landscape of the fashion industry, where trends are born and narratives are crafted, the influence of marketing strategies extends far beyond the mere promotion of products. With the increasing prevalence of social media, influencer marketing, and the rapid dissemination of visual content, the intersection of fashion marketing and mental health has become an intriguing and vital area of exploration. As the fashion industry expands into emerging markets, it brings forth a confluence of new challenges and opportunities. In tandem with this growth, marketing strategies, tools, and technologies have undergone a transformative evolution. Recognizing the dynamic nature of this landscape, there is an escalating demand for in-depth research, insights, and recommendations that cater to a diverse audience, ranging from practitioners and entrepreneurs to students and academics. 1,2

In the landscape of the twenty-first century, the utilization of social networking sites (SNS) by fashion and apparel designers has emerged as a pivotal and prioritized trend 3. In this digital era, consumers engage with products on social media platforms as if they were in direct conversation with them. Brands, through the lens of consumers, are scrutinized, reviewed, and accorded fan followings, underscoring the significant impact of social media (SM) in the realm of fashion. Notably, the fashion industry's footprint extends beyond established markets, with the marketing of fashion products managed by Supply Chain (SF) systems that oversee the product journey from design inception to presentation to retailers 4.

In recent times, social media has faced criticism for establishing beauty and fashion standards that are unattainable and fuel a preoccupation with appearance. This societal fixation on unrealistic norms, exacerbated by the fashion industry's presence on these platforms, has raised concerns related to body image and mental health. The symbiotic relationship between social media and influencer marketing in the fashion industry has undeniably reshaped consumer behavior, presenting both opportunities and challenges, particularly in the realm of mental health. 5 While these platforms have provided a creative space for self-expression and information dissemination, they have simultaneously contributed to a societal fixation on unrealistic beauty standards. Recognizing the influential role of social media, particularly in shaping perceptions and fostering consumer engagement, calls for a nuanced approach. Striking a balance between the positive



aspects of online engagement and potential harm to mental well-being is essential for cultivating a responsible and sustainable digital fashion landscape. Ongoing research, ethical considerations, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders are imperative to align the influence of social media and influencer marketing with positive mental health outcomes for consumers. This review paper delves into the realm of "Mindful Marketing," seeking to unravel the complex interplay between fashion marketing strategies and their impact on the mental health and well-being of consumers.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS :

The research methodology employed for the review focused on the period from 2019 to 2023, a time marked by the surge in social media usage and trends. The principal aim of this review was to investigate the impact of fashion marketing strategies on mental health and well-being. Identification of relevant studies for inclusion in the review was accomplished through keyword searches conducted on PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar databases. The search terms encompassed 'fashion marketing strategies,' 'Mental Health,' 'social media,' and 'India.' It is important to note certain limitations encountered during the article search, with the most significant being the restricted size and scope of many of the identified studies.

3. RESULTS & THEMATIC ANALYSIS :

The review has delved into four overarching themes, unravelling the intricacies that shape consumer behaviour. The meticulous analysis of data has brought to light a compelling narrative of the profound impact these platforms wield on the choices and perceptions of a vast audience. Notably, the surge in online engagement, particularly on influential platforms like Instagram, underscores the transformative power of fashion influencers in shaping and steering the purchasing decisions of their considerable following. Within this digital landscape, the influence of social media on marketing strategies, especially in the realm of e-commerce, emerges as a driving force. The data illuminates the role of these platforms as not just promotional tools but dynamic spaces that heighten brand awareness, captivation, and engagement. However, amidst the vibrant tapestry of digital fashion culture, a shadow is cast on mental health. The results shed light on the sobering reality of the potential consequences of pervasive exposure to unattainable beauty standards perpetuated by influencers, raising poignant concerns about body image and mental well-being as shown in figure 1.

Through a thematic evaluation, this study delved into the multifaceted dynamics of Fashion Marketing Strategies on Mental Health and well-being.

Fashionfluence: The impact of Influencer Marketing on Mental Health

In recent years, the meteoric rise of social media influencers (SMIs) has propelled influencer marketing (IM) into the forefront of firm strategies. The widespread adoption of social media has resulted in the omnipresence of user-generated content, fostering new communication dynamics⁶. This organic interaction among peers on social media platforms has contributed to knowledge sharing and the dissemination of crucial information. Concurrently, the surge in social media influencer marketing has garnered scholarly attention and has become a focal point of research interest in business press outlets, particularly within the fashion industry.⁷ The fashion industry, with its significant impact on consumers, has witnessed a surge in online engagement, particularly on social media platforms. While these activities aim to broaden consumers' perspectives and expose them to diverse fashion imagery, they also give rise to appearance concerns. In the era of "fast fashion," fashion influencers or bloggers have emerged on platforms like Instagram, creating content to influence the purchasing decisions of their followers. These influencers, with a substantial social media following, wield the power to impact the decisions of their audience, especially regarding purchases⁸.

Social media (SM) has sparked a paradigm shift in marketing, especially within the e-commerce domain, empowering marketers to amplify product awareness among customers⁹. Operating as a well-established tool, SM has not only strengthened public relations through collaborative methods but has also evolved into a global interactive platform, connecting people worldwide and facilitating the exchange of opinions, reviews, and information^{10 11}. Furthermore, SM's significant impact on the apparel business in India has positioned it as a key player in the marketing arena, ranking



second only to food and groceries 12 . Its influence on the apparel sector goes beyond sheer expansion, fostering systematic engagement with a massive audience. SM plays a pivotal role in consumer communication, contributing to heightened awareness, captivation, and brand engagement, ultimately influencing purchasing behaviours . As an information conduit, SM has become an effective tool for apparel retailers, reaching millions of eyes every minute.

However, this meteoric rise of social media has not been without consequences. In recent times, the societal fixation on unrealistic beauty and fashion standards, exacerbated by the fashion industry's presence on these platforms, has sparked concerns related to body image and mental health. Influencers, often regarded as aspirational figures, hold considerable sway over their followers, shaping perceptions of beauty and fashion ideals. As consumers increasingly seek inspiration and guidance on social media, the industry is confronted with the imperative to address the potential mental health implications of perpetuating unattainable standards.

In conclusion, the interplay between social media and influencer marketing in the fashion industry has undeniably reshaped consumer behaviour, presenting both opportunities and challenges, particularly in the realm of mental health. While these platforms have provided a creative space for self-expression and information dissemination, they have simultaneously contributed to a societal fixation on unrealistic beauty standards. Recognizing the influential role of social media, particularly in shaping perceptions and fostering consumer engagement, calls for a nuanced approach. Striking a balance between the positive aspects of online engagement and potential harm to mental well-being is essential for cultivating a responsible and sustainable digital fashion landscape. Ongoing research, ethical considerations, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders are imperative to align the influence of social media and influencer marketing with positive mental health outcomes for consumers.

Threads of Authenticity: Exploring Fashion's Role in Self-Expression

Delving into the intricate relationship between fashion and self-expression, this exploration seeks to unravel the threads of authenticity intricately woven into the fabric of personal style. Beyond its utilitarian function, fashion emerges as a powerful medium for shaping individual identity and facilitating communication. Throughout the annals of history, clothing choices have not only reflected but also played a pivotal role in shaping individual identities, influenced by cultural movements, societal shifts, and external forces. From the tapestry of ancient civilizations to the avant-garde patterns of modern subcultures, the evolution of fashion stands as a dynamic expression of personal identity.

In the contemporary landscape, the influence of social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter is undeniable. This exploration unveils their potential to shape positive beliefs and attitudes, fostering a profound "sense of belonging" and subtly influencing perceptions of beauty and body image. 13 In this digital era, the prevailing understanding asserts that "what we wear is who we are." Users often aspire to the aesthetic body types showcased on these platforms, and narratives abound of individuals challenging conventional beauty standards through dedication to activities like exercise, healthy eating, and self-esteem building within online support groups.

Fashion has evolved into an accessible "good" in the contemporary era, thanks in part to technological advancements that have broadened its audience reach. Once considered a closed and elusive industry, fashion's transformation is attributed to the speed at which instantaneous ideas are shared globally through cyberspace and the media. This notion is heightened by the understanding that fashion transcends being merely a garment; it is a complex interplay of cultural, social, and personal narratives.

In essence, this exploration underscores the dynamic interplay between fashion and self-expression, weaving a narrative that extends beyond the surface aesthetics to encompass the profound impact of personal style on individual and collective identities in the digital age. 14

Moreover, this theme accentuates the role of social media in promoting inclusivity and dismantling stereotypes. By featuring individuals from diverse backgrounds in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, these platforms actively work towards fostering supportive communities that encourage and uplift one another. In this digitally interconnected realm, the significance of personal style and clothing choices becomes intertwined with the broader narrative of a dynamic expression of authentic self-identity.



Figure 1: Fashion Marketing Strategy on Mental Health and Well-being

Global Threads, Local Ties: Bridging Cultures Through Fashion in the Indian Market

Fashion has long been recognized as a powerful vehicle for cultural expression, and in the Indian market, it plays a unique role in bridging diverse cultures. India, with its rich tapestry of traditions, languages, and customs, presents a fascinating canvas for the convergence of traditional and contemporary fashion elements. In this review we have summarized how fashion serves as a medium to bring together various cultures in the Indian context, fostering a sense of unity and inclusivity. India's diverse cultural landscape is deeply rooted in its history and traditions. Traditional attire like sarees, lehengas, and kurta-pajamas have been passed down through generations, each region boasting its own distinctive styles. Designers often draw inspiration from these traditional garments, incorporating indigenous fabrics, hand-embroidery techniques, and motifs that reflect the cultural richness of different communities.

The Indian fashion industry has witnessed a surge in fusion wear, blending elements from different cultures to create unique and versatile clothing. This fusion not only appeals to the younger generation but also serves as a symbol of cultural harmony. Designers experiment with combining traditional Indian textiles with Western silhouettes, resulting in garments that seamlessly straddle both worlds. ¹⁵ Celebrities, as influencers, play a pivotal role in promoting cross-cultural fashion in India. Their public appearances in outfits that blend traditional and modern elements set trends and encourage people to experiment with their own styles. This, in turn, fosters a sense of cultural exchange and acceptance among different communities. ¹⁶ The Indian fashion industry has increasingly embraced global collaborations, with designers collaborating with international counterparts to create collections that reflect a fusion of diverse aesthetics. Such collaborations not only bring global attention to Indian fashion but also facilitate cultural exchange and understanding. ¹⁷ Fashion shows and events in India are evolving to become more inclusive, featuring models from different ethnic backgrounds, body types, and abilities. This shift towards diversity on the runway promotes a broader representation of cultures, breaking down stereotypes and promoting a more inclusive and accepting society. ¹⁸

All in all, the fashion in the Indian market serves as a dynamic medium for bridging cultures, celebrating diversity, and fostering a sense of unity. By drawing inspiration from traditional roots, embracing fusion styles, leveraging celebrity influence, engaging in global collaborations, and promoting inclusivity in fashion shows, the Indian fashion industry contributes significantly to cultural exchange and understanding. This convergence of cultures through fashion not only enhances the aesthetic landscape but also reflects a broader societal shift towards acceptance and appreciation of diversity.



Threads of Diversity: Fashioning Inclusivity in Cultural Representation

Fashion, as a mirror of society, has the power to shape perceptions and challenge stereotypes. In the realm of cultural representation, the fashion industry plays a crucial role in fostering inclusivity by weaving threads of diversity into the fabric of its designs, campaigns, and runway shows. This essay explores how the fashion industry is embracing inclusivity, weaving a tapestry that reflects the rich diversity of cultures.

Designers are increasingly drawing inspiration from a myriad of cultural sources, incorporating elements from different traditions and backgrounds. This approach not only results in aesthetically diverse collections but also promotes cultural understanding. Designers like Stella Jean and Dapper Dan are known for their commitment to infusing diverse cultural influences into their designs. 19 Fashion shows are becoming more inclusive with the promotion of diverse casting, featuring models of various ethnicities, body sizes, and gender identities. This shift challenges traditional beauty standards and fosters a more representative and relatable portrayal of fashion. The "Savage x Fenty" shows by Rihanna and the "Fashion Without Borders" initiative are noteworthy examples. 20 Brands are recognizing the importance of cultural sensitivity in their marketing campaigns. Campaigns that authentically celebrate cultural diversity resonate with consumers, creating a positive impact and fostering a sense of belonging. Brands like Nike and H&M have been praised for their campaigns that celebrate cultural diversity. 21 Many fashion brands are collaborating with indigenous artisans and communities to integrate traditional craftsmanship into contemporary designs. These collaborations not only provide economic opportunities for marginalized communities but also preserve and promote traditional artistry. The collaboration between fashion label Maiyet and the Nest organization is an illustrative example. 22

Fashion institutions and industry leaders are recognizing the need for education and awareness regarding cultural sensitivity. Workshops, seminars, and initiatives that promote cultural understanding within the fashion community contribute to a more inclusive industry. The Fashion Revolution's educational programs on cultural diversity and sustainability are noteworthy.

4. CONCLUSION :

In the dynamic realm of the fashion industry, where trends unfold and stories are woven, the convergence of marketing strategies and mental health emerges as a crucial exploration. This paper has traversed the evolving landscape of fashion marketing, particularly within the digital era marked by the omnipresence of social media. As the industry extends its influence into emerging markets, the intricate dance between challenges and opportunities unfolds, demanding a nuanced understanding of the interplay between marketing strategies and the mental well-being of consumers.

The twenty-first century witnesses a paradigm shift in the utilization of social networking sites by fashion designers, marking a pivotal trend that reshapes consumer-brand interactions. The scrutiny, reviews, and fan followings accorded to brands on social media underscore the profound impact of these platforms on the fashion landscape. Simultaneously, the global footprint of the fashion industry, managed by Supply Chain (SF) systems, underscores the multifaceted journey of fashion products from design inception to presentation to retailers. However, amidst the innovation and connectivity fostered by digital marketing, a shadow looms over mental health. The pervasive exposure to unattainable beauty standards, exacerbated by the symbiotic relationship between social media and influencer marketing, raises poignant concerns about body image and mental well-being. The four themes explored in this study—Fashionfluence, Threads of Authenticity, Global Threads and Local Ties, and Threads of Diversity—reveal the intricate dynamics that shape consumer behavior and perceptions.

The meteoric rise of social media influencers has not only propelled influencer marketing into the forefront but has also become a focal point of research interest, particularly within the fashion industry. Social media, operating as a global interactive platform, empowers marketers to amplify product awareness and connect with audiences worldwide. However, the study sheds light on the consequences of this meteoric rise, emphasizing the imperative for a responsible approach to mitigate potential harm to mental well-being.

Exploring fashion's role in self-expression unravels the threads of authenticity woven into personal style, highlighting the profound impact of clothing choices on individual and collective identities. Bridging cultures through fashion in the Indian market becomes a powerful narrative of unity and inclusivity, while the theme of fashioning inclusivity in cultural representation underscores the industry's role in challenging stereotypes and promoting diversity.



In conclusion, this review paper introduces the concept of "Mindful Marketing," emphasizing the need for a holistic and ethical approach in navigating the complex interplay between fashion marketing strategies and mental well-being. As the industry continues to evolve, ongoing research, ethical considerations, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders are imperative to align the influence of fashion marketing with positive mental health outcomes for consumers. By fostering a responsible and sustainable digital fashion landscape, the industry can navigate this nexus with mindfulness and empathy, ensuring that the narrative of fashion contributes positively to the well-being of individuals and society at large.

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