

To What Extent is the Major Marketing Tactics Used in the Fashion Industry?

WenXuan Li^{1,a,*}

¹College Alpin Beau Soleil, Villar-Sur-Ollon, 1884, Switzerland

a. ssylvia8917@gmail.com

*corresponding author

Abstract: This study investigates the marketing tactics used in the fashion industry. This paper includes case studies of two trendy apparel brands: Lululemon and Brandy Melville; interviews with 5 participants; the refined extraction of an eBook; and three dissertations. These have concluded seven primary marketing tactics and speculated possible future trends of marketing strategy. In general, this paper can provide a brief idea about the marketing situation in the fashion industry. The eBook is named as “Branding lessons for fashion retailers” and introduces advice for new start-up fashion retailers, including 34 steps. One of the documents is called “Shop at your own risk? Consumer activities in fashion e-commerce”. This paper argues the 12 activities consumers manage perceived risks while purchasing online. Another document has the title “What marketing tools fashion business uses to market their business.” This document discusses Laura Ashely's marketing tools for her fashion business with quantitative data to conclude the usefulness of 4 marketing tools. The last dissertation contained is called “Brandy Melville's global marketing strategies in China” this evaluates the marketing strategies of Brandy Melville, which provide a background for the case study.

Keywords: fashion industry, marketing strategy, Brandy Melville, Lululemon, social media marketing

1. Introduction

The fashion industry is an indispensable sector of humanity. It is associated with daily life, also known as the apparel or garment industry. The fashion industry involves four aspects. The first is the production of raw materials for clothing, like fabrics or buttons. Secondly, fashion designers, contractors, and manufacturers implement the production of products. Then, retailing offline, online, and promoting [1]. This industry size will reach around 103%~108% of its 2019 in 2022 globally [2]. This illustrates the industry's rapid growth. It is one of the industries that significantly contributed to the world's economy. The industry's labor force is valued at 3 trillion dollars, corresponding to 2% of the world's Gross domestic product (GDP) [3]. The compound annual growth rate of the eCommerce fashion industry will reach 11.45% from 2022-2025; by 2025, the projected market volume will be US\$1.37tn [3]. The competition situation is highly concentrated. Therefore, it is significant for ventures to differentiate from others, and the importance of marketing arises. Marketing is the “connection between consumer identity and the likelihood to subscribe to certain brands” [4].

However, primary marketing tactics used in the fashion industry have rarely been studied directly. Therefore, this research aims to conclude the popular marketing tools utilized in the fashion industry. The first contribution proposed in this field is to provide experiences for new-starting fashion ventures; the second is to avoid failures, and the third is to allow fashion ventures to develop new marketing ideas based on this evaluation to attract more consumers.

2. Definition

This first section will explain the definitions of the marketing strategies that will be stated later in the paper.

- Data-driven marketing is defined as a marketing strategy determined from the data collected by researchers on consumers [5].
- Social media marketing is when companies share information on social media and create web traffic that increases brand popularity [6].
- Community marketing is a company interacting with consumers to create a community; this community expands as the population spreads the information to acquire new consumers [7].
- Scarcity marketing is putting products in limited stock. This can arouse consumers' wants because, psychologically, humans want scarce products [8].
- Electronic media marketing uses technologies such as television [9].
- Emotional marketing is when emotion (happiness, sadness, anger, etc.) is appealed to the target audiences and connects consumers with the brand to persuade them [10].
- Collaboration marketing is when the company collaborates with companies that have similar consumers to share resources and promote the brand [11].

3. Case Studies

This section will introduce two different well-known fashion brands: Brandy Melville and Lululemon. Then, the section will evaluate and determine their adopted marketing strategies. Leading companies can also reflect the trend of the market; in this way, by evaluating them, a range of marketing strategies can be deduced.

3.1. Brandy Melville's Marketing Strategy

Brandy Melville is an Italian fashion venture. It has a style of 'California girls', targeting young consumers, and is currently one of the most prevalent brands for teenagers [12]. Brandy Melville has a clear marketing strategy for its audience. Brandy Melville well understood that being underweight is a trend among teenage girls, especially in China, "creamy white skin, big wide eyes, and stick-thin figures" is the so-called beauty in their minds [12,13]. Brandy Melville seized this and launched their product in a specific 'size'; this allowed young girls to feel satisfied when they fit in and enjoy purchasing. This suggests that Brandy Melville used data-driven marketing as one of its promotion strategies. In this case, Brandy Melville qualitatively knows the wants of its consumers and conveys the 'one size notion.

Next, according to a research paper published about Brandy Melville's marketing strategy, Brandy Melville adopt a rationing strategy [14]. The rationing strategy is to limit products with high demands in short supply [15]. The tag of 'scarce' psychologically affects consumers' purchase process, reducing hesitations and hinting that the product is high quality since it can mean that products are taking a more extended period of production. This has an overall effect on promoting consumers' obsessions with the brand. Lastly, Brandy Melville has official social media pages such as "Instagram" and "Xiao Hong Shu" for people to find fashion trends; their posts contain teenagers

as models and shoot casual photos rather than shooting at a studio; these teenagers have a more striking appearance than the majority but present a sense of commonness [12]. The posts also contain celebrities or KOL, the critical opinion leader known as influencers who have worn their clothes [14].

A study published by the University of Arkansas in collaboration with the Manchester Business School in London discovered that consumers aged between 18-24 tend to dress up like their preferred celebrities. Therefore, consumers will purchase the same products their admired celebrities wear, and this can increase the brand's popularity and credibility [16].

Brandy Melville has associated social media marketing and KOC/KOL marketing.

3.2. Lululemon's Marketing Strategy

Lululemon is a Canadian athletic apparel brand that also sells sports accessories. Its target consumers are the middle class who pursue exercise and have a sky-high revenue of \$3.98 billion. A marketing investigator stated, "Lululemon thrived because of their careful and thorough market research." Lululemon's market research team discovered that consumers are "those," [17]. This allowed Lululemon to verify its identity and understand consumer behavior. It conveyed the notion of providing consumers an 'absolute comfort' while exercising with lightweight + high-quality material and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This supports consumers' concerns which construct an emotional bridge between consumers and the brand's notion; this will evoke consumers' buying emotional resonance [18]. Thus, the strategy adopted is categorized as a mix of emotional and data-driven marketing. Secondly, Lululemon selects athletes and influencers as brand ambassadors; train sales representatives to provide professional recommendations on different products to consumers; sends free apparel to various gyms, and the teachers will be driven by the brand's benefits, endorse to students; regularly operate various fitness events for their brand's members, events such as asking fitness KOLs attend in a store and deliver a yoga or workout lesson, etc. [18]. This minimizes distance between the brand and consumers, creating a strong interaction and credibility which can reach the phenomenon of person-to-person spread, attracting more possible consumers. This is known as community marketing [19]. At the same time, this strategy involved KOL/KOC marketing strategy. Thirdly, while Lululemon established pop-up stores to enhance popularity, it reduced the supply of the product, which rendered a constant limited stock; thus, it can be seen the use of scarcity marketing.

Furthermore, Lululemon paid web traffic and boosted the traffic from 216k users to 653k users between 2020's March and April [20]. This illustrates a digital marketing strategy. Ultimately, Lululemon employees' social media marketing. During the pandemic of 2020, Lululemon's website traffic increased from 23.84% to 37.39% in March and April [20]. Lululemon has seen this pandemic period as a great opportunity; then, it develops the live streams section and yoga tutorial videos by KOLs on social media like Youtube. Moreover, their products have a unique catalog on Pinterest where people share new ideas in life [17]

3.3. Similarities Between Brandy Melville and Lululemon

After the summarization of these two famous magnates' marketing strategies in the apparel industry, there are similarities. They both carried out research in the market to comprehend their target consumers' needs and concerns, then progressed with corresponding plans. This shows that they used data-driven marketing. Moreover, both brands employ social media marketing, have their official social media accounts, and post regular posts or videos; Lululemon even utilizes some partially major social media like Pinterest. Lastly, they adhere to the idea that 'A thing is valued if it is rare.' Therefore, their apparels always have a limited stock, increasing their brand value and

classifying this strategy as scarcity marketing. Hence, as far as now, data-driven marketing, social media marketing, and scarcity marketing are popular marketing strategies.

4. Data

Qualitative data need to be collected to explore the topic more deeply. I held a brief interview with five interviewees of different ages, both genders included. The reason why I've picked these five people is that different marketing strategy aims at different age and gender. A more comprehensive age range allows me to receive various answers and state the marketing used. For each interviewee, I have just asked them 1 question: "Through what ways did you get to know a clothing brand and have the intention to purchase it?" With their permission, I recorded their responses.

Table 1: Interviewees' information, for the sake of privacy, "A, B, C, D, E, F, G" are used instead of the real name.

Interviewee	Age	Gender
A	23	Female
B	14	Male
C	31	Female
D	56	Male
E	64	Female

Table 2: Interviewees' responses.

Interviewee	Responses
A	"My preferred influencers will always post videos or pictures with different clothes, leave the brand's name in the comment, and I tend to purchase when the clothes look pretty."
B	"I usually get to know a brand from my classmates, but I do not purchase a lot by myself. My mom is responsible for purchasing clothes for me."
C	"My friends will recommend me brands, and I have added some buying agents on WeChat that will update brands with me. Live streams on TikTok are also a way I know brands."
D	"I like to read news via my phone, and sometimes there are push articles about the new establishments like collaboration a clothing brand has made."
E	"Television shows have an advertisement for the elderly's wearing, they look super comfortable, and they are what I need while it is controlled by the government, so I trust the quality."

4.1. Data Analysis

From the response of interviewee A, the keyword "influencer" indicate that KOL/KOC marketing strategy has influenced her. The visual demonstration of the influencers has successfully attracted interviewee A. In addition, this usage of KOL/KOC marketing is based on social media, which also shows the effect of social media marketing. For interviewee B, the response can illustrate that the people surrounding him give him the idea of new brands. This is an example of community marketing [19]. Where people spread brands through each other. For interviewee C, marketing strategies that targeted her are social media marketing and community marketing. This is because her awareness of a brand is built through her community's recommendations and social media

transmissions. After this, interviewee D states that he often reads news online and receives information about brands. This shows an example of electronic media marketing.

Moreover, this also reveals the utilization of collaboration marketing as because of collaboration, it can then turn into news that can be pushed into the news. Lastly, interviewee E, is another example of electronic media marketing since the brand is propelled to the public through television. Meanwhile, it is emotional marketing since comfort and quality are the main requirements for elderly, and it perfectly catches their needs. Furthermore, it is data-driven marketing as well because the brand realized that its target audience – the elders watch TV most, the result of a United States survey in January 2020 shows that 55% of those aged 55-64 years old watch TV every day so, the brand display advertisement on television [21].

4.2. Qualitative Data Conclusions + Extensions

To summarize, the marketing strategies mentioned above are social media marketing; electronic media marketing; collaboration marketing; emotional marketing; KOL/KOC marketing, and community marketing.

Now on to 2 strategies that didn't discuss much – collaboration marketing and emotional marketing. Collaboration marketing like "Balmain x H&M" allows a broader range of audiences. Consumers who have a higher ability to consume also get to know fast fashion brand – H&M, while consumers who are in a lower class also get to know luxury brands; when they accumulate money to a certain level and want to satisfy their wants, they can consider Balmain as one of their options. This can enhance sales volume [22]. Solely, H&M has collaborated with luxury brands annually since 2013[23]. With the leading of H&M, the magnate, it will establish a chain reaction, and other brands will start to imitate this collaboration marketing as well. Nike is an example of emotional marketing. Its advertisement takes heroes like disabled athletes' stories to inspire consumers and rarely mentions the product's name. Via this, Nike's share of the American basketball footwear market reaches 96% [24]. Emotional marketing also increases consumers' want to share the brand; the recommendation rate has increased from 45% to 71% [25].

5. Extensions

This section gathers further information from other resources and will introduce future possibilities for marketing strategy.

5.1. The Connection Between the Internet and Marketing

In 2020, the official statistic of Finland showed that 69% of its population had purchased online, and even 49% of 65-74 years old have purchased online [26]. This depicts an image that e-commerce is rapidly developing, so transactions will pay more attention online, and marketing will also be inclined to the internet aspect.

A dissertation named "What marketing tools fashion business uses to market their Business" is about marketing tools Laura Ashley, a Welsh fashion designer, has adopted. It outlined, "Marketing Tools for social media has been the most important and ranked tools which have been in use in this current era." Meanwhile, the analytical hierarchical process test is included in the document; AHP is an approach of using math and psychology to analyze and organize complex decisions [27]. The information is from SPSS (Statistical process for social science), and that social media marketing has the most significant relative weight of 0.344978 among other factors the author has assessed [28]. This illustrates that social media marketing is the most impactful tool for consumers. Besides, integrated PR agency research revealed that 80% of consumers believe that social media is a crucial

factor that affects their buying power [6]. This displays the effectiveness of social media, which ventures consequently intend to choose this practical way.

Bearing the above, electronic media marketing has the second-highest relative weight of 0.285359. The document defines electronic media marketing as including television marketing, E-Paper marketing, email marketing, etc. [28]. In an eBook called “Branding lessons for fashion retailers”, the author outlined personalized email marketing as one of the main strategies. This allows the brand to update content and send product recommendations via email [29]. At the same time, this is a part of electronic media marketing.

5.2. Future Tendency

Fashion ventures can deduce possible future marketing strategies via consumers' perceived risks. Perceived risk is the actions consumers take to avoid risks and is one of the determinants of consumer behavior [26]. Fashion ventures can understand consumers' concerns sideways by recognizing consumers' activities to manage perceived risk. So, ventures can fill gaps, implement risk-mitigating marketing strategies, and achieve more significant revenue. Consumers perceive higher risk and are more likely to switch clothing brands [30]. Maintaining consumer loyalty is key to reducing their perceived risk and delivering the message to them. Consequently, future marketing strategies can be deduced in this way.

The research article "Shop at your own risk? Consumer activities in fashion e-commerce", claims that the perceived risks are distinguished into two categories which are economic and functional risks. Consumers have 12 activities to avoid these risks. To manage economic risks, they'll look through discount codes to reduce the price as much as possible; compare prices between direct competitors; compare delivery fees; wait for the time of sale; calculate the extreme profit that can be made from the product; using an invoice or credit card to purchase and relieve the pain of directly losing money; compare return regulations and ordering alternatives to directly have a suitable one. [26] From that, ventures can formulate corresponding marketing plans such as presenting the product as free delivery but including the fee in the product, initiating installment, etc.

Consumers mitigate operational risk by inquiring about more details about customer service, searching for products on other sites, checking the product physically if possible, and investigating the size chart [26]. Then, fashion ventures can have 24 hours customer service and a size chart with examples of the sizes different body forms wear, etc. Fashion ventures can carry out more marketing plans based on this information.

6. Conclusion

This paper aims to discover common marketing strategies in the fashion industry. Each fashion brand chose a marketing strategy according to its target audience, just social media marketing. Because 20-29 years old takes up 32.2% of global social media users [31]. So, interviewees aged 23 and 31 are around 29 years old, so social media marketing is effective for them. From the summarization of case studies; interviews; an online book, and documents. It can be shown from the case study, interview responses, and the dissertation that social media marketing is one of the significant marketing tactics. Likewise, the major ones are electronic media marketing, scarcity marketing, KOL/KOC marketing, and community marketing. On the other hand, collaboration and emotional marketing are mentioned though case studies and other resources in this paper did not state them. Although this paper only included 2 case studies in the fashion market, there are magnates in the fashion market that did adopt them, and the responses in the interview did state them.

Therefore, there are, in total seven primary marketing tactics in fashion marketing.

Author's Contributions

This paper is accomplished individually. The author takes responsibility for designing the study, researching studies, collecting qualitative data, and interpreting the data.

Acknowledgments

I want to express my sincere gratitude to all the teachers who taught me in this course and helped me to accomplish my first academic writing. I would also appreciate readers who tolerate some insufficiency in the writing.

References

- [1] Steele, V. (2022). Fashion industry. <https://www.britannica.com/art/fashion-industry>
- [2] Radonic, D. (2022). The Most Important Fashion Industry Statistics in 2022. <https://fashiondiscounts.uk/fashion-industry-statistics/>
- [3] FashionUnited. (2022). Global fashion industry statistics - International apparel. <https://fashionunited.com/global-fashion-industry-statistics>.
- [4] BHATTACHARJEE, A., BERGER, J., & MENON, G. (2014). When Identity Marketing Backfires: Consumer Agency in Identity Expression. *Journal Of Consumer Research*, 41(2), 294-309. doi:10.1086/676125.
- [5] Marketing evolution. (2022). What is Data-Driven Marketing? <https://www.marketingevolution.com/marketing-essentials/data-driven-marketing>.
- [6] Time, E. D. (2020). Matter Survey Reveals Consumers Find Influencers More Helpful and Trustworthy than Brands During the Pandemic. <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200526005058/en/Matter-Survey-Reveals-Consumers-Find-Influencers-More-Helpful-and-Trustworthy-than-Brands-During-the-Pandemic>.
- [7] Study. (2016). Community Marketing: Definition, Strategies & Example. <https://study.com/academy/lesson/community-marketing-definition-strategies-example.html>.
- [8] O'Keeffe, C. (2021). Scarcity Marketing: How to Make More by Making Less. <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2018/12/12/scarcity-marketing#:~:text=Scarcity%20marketing%20is%20the%20idea,have%20something%20others%20don't>.
- [9] Indeed Editorial Team. (2021). 11 Cost-Effective E-marketing Types. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/emarketing-types#:~:text=What%20is%20e%2Dmarketing%3F,digital%20marketing%20or%20web%20marketing>.
- [10] Indeed Editorial Team. (2021). Emotional Marketing: Strategies to Make It Work. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/emotional-marketing#:~:text=What%20is%20emotional%20marketing%3F,those%20who%20feel%20the%20same>.
- [11] Holmes, N. (2021). Collaborative Marketing: What It Is and How to Use It. <https://www.widen.com/blog/collaborative-marketing-solutions#:~:text=Collaborative%20marketing%20definition,of%20a%20co%2Dbranded%20product>.
- [12] Fitzgerald, C. (2020, May 23). Brandy Melville's exclusionary appeal. [varsity.co.uk/fashion/19290#:~:text=Interestingly%2C%20their%20marketing%20strategy%20is,mouth%20to%20reach%20new%20customers](https://www.varsity.co.uk/fashion/19290#:~:text=Interestingly%2C%20their%20marketing%20strategy%20is,mouth%20to%20reach%20new%20customers).
- [13] Goodman, L. (2017). An Unattainable Ideal: The Struggle for Beauty in China. <https://medium.com/foreign-accent/an-unattainable-ideal-the-struggle-for-beauty-in-china-3086eb9ba71a>.
- [14] Xinrui Wu, Y. Z. (2021). Brandy Melville's Global Marketing Strategies in China. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353441822_Brandy_Melville%27s_Global_Marketing_Strategies_in_China.
- [15] Kenton, W. (2022). Rationing. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/rationing.asp#:~:text=Key%20Takeaways,a%20dealing%20with%20economic%20challenges>.
- [16] okoli, A. (2022). Impact of Celebrity Endorsement on Consumer Buying Behavior. <https://zoovu.com/blog/impact-of-celebrity-endorsement-on-consumer-buying-behavior/#:~:text=With%20celebrities%20vouching%20for%20or,they%20admire%20or%20relate%20to>.
- [17] Scheplitz, S. (2020). THE SECRET BEHIND LULULEMON'S MARKETING CAMPAIGNS. <https://www.contentspa.com/the-secret-behind-lululemons-marketing-campaigns/>.
- [18] avada blog. (2022). Lululemon Marketing Strategy: How To Thrive In A Saturated Apparel Market. <https://blog.avada.io/resources/lululemon-marketing-strategy.html>.

- [19] Abe, S. (2019). *Community Marketing: Why Building a Community Around a Brand Fuels Growth*. <https://www.adroll.com/blog/community-marketing-fuels-growth#:~:text=What%20Exactly%20is%20Community%20Marketing,way%20that%20puts%20customers%20first>.
- [20] Kurichenko, V. (2020). *How Lululemon Increased Their Brand Value by 40% in 2020*. <https://bettermarketing.pub/how-lululemon-increased-their-brand-value-by-40-in-2020-d767b36e4edb>.
- [21] Stoll, J. (2021). *From Frequency of watching or streaming TV shows among adults in the United States as of January 2020, by age group*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/936167/tv-shows-watching-streaming-frequency-by-age-us/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20results%20of,most%20likely%20to%20do%20so>.
- [22] Solberg, F. (2020). *Why Luxury Designers Collaborate With Fast-Fashion Brands*. <https://medium.com/culturistiq/why-luxury-designers-collaborate-with-fast-fashion-brands-b5844d9e3fbb#:~:text=Both%20parties%20want%20to%20reach,of%20Balmain's%20real%20price%20point>.
- [23] Coleman, A. (2022). *Why there are more fashion brand collaborations than ever right now*. <https://verbbrands.com/news/insight/why-there-are-more-fashion-brand-collaborations-than-ever-right-now/>
- [24] ReferralCandy. (2017). *Nike's Brilliant Marketing Strategy — Why You Should Be (Just) Doing it Too*. <https://medium.com/the-mission/nikes-brilliant-marketing-strategy-why-you-should-be-just-doing-it-too-d3680d9254ba>.
- [25] Genete, A. (2020). *Emotional Marketing: What It Is and How It Works*. <https://www.spiralytics.com/blog/emotional-marketing-what-it-is-and-how-it-works/>
- [26] Ulla-Maija Sutinen, H. S. (2021). *Shop at your own risk? Consumer activities in fashion e-commerce*. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ijcs.12759>.
- [27] Passage technology. (2022). *What Is The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)?* <https://www.passagetechology.com/what-is-the-analytic-hierarchy-process>.
- [28] Sewell, A. (2015). *What Marketing Tools Fashion Business Uses To Market Their Business*. <https://www.scribd.com/document/264583108/What-Marketing-Tools-Fashion-Business-Uses-To-Market-Their-Business>.
- [29] ILoveFashionRetail.com Date uploaded. (2014). *How To Build A Great Online Fashion Brand: 34 Things That Really Amazing Fashion Retailers Do*. <https://www.scribd.com/document/233185878/How-to-Build-a-Great-Online-Fashion-Brand-34-Things-that-Really-Amazing-Fashion-Retailers-Do>.
- [30] Nina Michaelidou, S. D. (2009). *Brand switching in clothing: the role of variety-seeking drive and product category-level characteristics*. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1470-6431.2009.00764.x>.
- [31] Kemp, S. (2022). *DIGITAL 2022: GLOBAL OVERVIEW REPORT*. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-global-overview-report>.