
Impact of social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube on information search stage in luxury retail industry: A case study of luxury retailers in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

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Abstract

Luxury retailers compete for a small group of consumers. This research has focused on investigating the impact that social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube has on information search stage of consumer decision process in luxury retail industry in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The research has used positivism approach, inductive research approach, and descriptive research design and quantitative research method. Data analysis revealed that the independent variables can explain 64.1% of the variability in information search in luxury retail industry in Riyadh. Among the independent variables, target audience, platform selection, follower engagement and publishing schedule had significant positive impact on information search while relevance of content, voice of the content and call to action had positive but insignificant impact on information search stage of consumer purchase decision process in luxury retail industry in Riyadh.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Target Audience, Platform Selection, Facebook, YouTube, Consumer, Retailer

Introduction

In a market for luxury retail products, the retailers compete for a niche consumer group as the products sold by luxury brands are manufactured for high end customer groups (Goodrich and De Mooij, 2014). Therefore luxury brands try to affect the purchase behaviour of the consumers of this niche market in their favour through undertaking different marketing initiatives (Swani et al., 2017). Advancement in technology and availability of technology has shifted focus of luxury brands from using traditional marketing to digital marketing. Among different digital marketing tools, social media marketing has emerged as the most used tool due to benefits provided by this media in increasing customer engagement and customer retention through affecting the purchase behaviour of customers through providing the required information conveniently (Xie and Lee, 2015). Study found that efficient social media marketing can increase sales of a luxury brands by more than 30% as the consumers easily get information using social media to compare and contrast relative benefits provided by brands found (Godey et al, 2016)'s. Keeping these in mind, this research investigates the use of social media marketing by luxury retailers operating in Saudi Arabia to provide efficient information to consumers there. Currently the country has a luxury retail market worth \$13 billion which is expected to grow up to \$21 billion by the end of 2023 and Riyadh the capital of the country, responsible for most of the business.

Rationale of the Research

Due to recent social reform actions in Saudi Arabia under the crown prince Mohammad Bin Salman, the country has witnessed rapid growth in the luxury retail business of the country as people started purchasing luxury retail products such as fashion, electronics, clothing, accessories, and other available products and therefore a major global retail brands in those fields have set up business in the country along with the local retail brands that used to import luxury products from luxury retail brands (Jin et al., 2018). The country has population of 33.25 million and per capita income of \$20796 and very minimum poverty rate, the luxury retail brands are reaping the reward

of that despite the fact that overall economic growth of the country has slowed down in recent years (Tradingeconomics.com, 2018).

The luxury retailers in Saudi Arabia largely depend on digital marketing as the country has internet penetration rate of 90.98% and this rate is 100% if the niche market they serve is considered and therefore using this strategy to communicate with the consumers and affecting their purchase behaviour reaps more reward than traditional methods of marketing. Among the available digital marketing strategies, social media marketing is preferred by them as the data shows that 75% of the internet users have social media account and they are active in nature that eases reaching them (Globalmediainsight.com, 2018).

Research Aim and Objectives

The research aims at finding the impact of social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube on information search stage of purchase decision of consumers in luxury retail industry of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the research has tried to achieve the following research objectives:

- To analyse current use of social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube in marketing strategy by luxury retail brands in Saudi Arabia.
- To reveal the information luxury retailers provide to the consumers of luxury retail industry via Facebook and YouTube in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- To show the impacts social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube has on the information search stage of consumer's purchase decision in luxury retail industry in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- To recommend ways to improve consumers information search experience of using Facebook and YouTube to improve efficiency of social media marketing via these social media platforms.

Literature Review

Social Media Marketing and Its Use in Marketing by Luxury Retail Brands

Social media is defined as internet based communication system where the users create an online community to share their views, feelings, news, photos, videos and any other messages and contents (Phan et al., 2011). Due to increased accessibility to the internet and low cost of communication through social media, it has become a popular interactive media for people and almost everyone in developed countries use social media in one way or another (Řežáb, 2012). When it comes to luxury retail customers, they have access to internet and have presence in different social media platforms and therefore marketers are trying to affect purchase behaviour of the customers through use of social media. This effort by businesses is called social media marketing (Phan and Park, 2014). In social media marketing, marketers use different social media platforms to let the targeted customers know about the products and services and how they can avail the offers of the company with an aim to increase business traffic. Some popular social media platforms for businesses include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+, Tumblr, Snapchat, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Reddit, Foursquare and many more (Park et al., 2018) (Kim and Ko, 2012).

Using social media also increases search engine optimization of the business as the search engines continuously monitor traffic of social media pages and therefore using social media benefits internet based marketing activities of a luxury brand (Kumar and Ghodeswar, 2015). The use of social media by a luxury retail brand helps the company to understand the desire of the customers through making direct interaction with them, monitoring their social media posts, their hobbies, websites they visit and posts they share from other pages within that platform (Heckadon, 2014) (Chen et al., 2016) (Jain, 2018). Besides, social media marketing helps in increasing brand loyalty through ensuring better customer service as social media allows immediate customer interaction where social media pages of luxury retail brands can provide timely customer service. It is also a good addition to public relations activities of luxury brands (Joshi and Rahman, 2015) (De Souza and Ferris, 2015) (Keinanen and Kuivalainan, 2015) (Chang et al., 2015).

Factors Affecting Success of Social Media Marketing Strategy

Target Audience: Selecting appropriate audience to deliver message through social media is the most important factor that affect success of a social media strategy in luxury retail business (Amatulli and Guido, 2012). While selecting target audience it is imperative that the compatibility of the products and services advertised and message delivered to the target audience is kept in mind to serve right target audience (Kumar and Ghodeswar, 2015) (Kwon et al., 2017) (Alalwan et al., 2017).

Platform Selection: Selecting appropriate social media platform for social media marketing is important as all the platforms are not equally popular in all markets. For instance, Facebook is the most popular social media platform around the world but it is not the case in Saudi Arabia where currently YouTube is the most popular social media platform in terms of active users (Jain, 2018). Hence the marketers in Saudi Arabia focuses more on YouTube when it comes to social media marketing. Failure to identify suitable platforms for social media marketing means the business will fail to generate expected customer response and therefore the strategy would incur loss (Park et al., 2018).

Relevance of the Content: The content delivered to users of social media who are also actual and potential consumers of a luxury brand has to be clear and beneficiary to them. The content can be served in the form of text, photo, video or any other audio-visual format but it has to be relevant to the users so that they can evaluate the content and make informed decisions through understanding the content (Godey et al., 2016). Irrelevant content can create user discontent and therefore it is important to know about the interest of the users and a dedicated team needs to work to generate contents those are relevant to the consumers. The contents should also reflect organizational and marketing objectives to ensure consistency of the content (Ko et al., 2016).

Voice of the Content: The voice of the content can either be powerful, humorous, lively, dramatic or sad depending on the situation. In case of luxury products, the voice of the content has to be powerful enough to create a sense of urgency among the consumers to make purchase decision in

favour of the brand (Ngai et al., 2015). Besides, the messages delivered to social media pages of the business has to be prudent in understanding intention of the customers and make interaction according to that (Straker and Wrigley, 2016).

Call to Action: As part of social media marketing strategy, the marketer needs to use call to action strategy to find immediate response of the customers. In that purpose, the marketer can ask them to provide response to certain queries or make a call or an order so that the users can be immediately affected through creating purchase intention in their mind (Ryan, 2016). But this strategy should not be used on a frequent basis by luxury retailers as studies have revealed that frequent use of call to action reduces its effectiveness as luxury retail customers are reluctant to response to such actions on a frequent basis and business should not try to annoy its valuable customers (Straker and Wrigley, 2016).

Follower Engagement: This is one of the major factors that decide the success of social media marketing as the purpose of social media marketing is to convey customers with required information that they can use to make their purchase decision (Kang and Kim, 2017). A dedicated social media team should be in action to interact with the customers (Chen et al., 2016) (Qahri-Saremi et al., 2015).

Publishing Schedule: Appropriate time and date should be selected to publish the content. The purpose and use of the products and services by the customers and the type of target audience should be focused. For example, for working customers, products should not be promoted in working hours as they will be busy working (Chang et al., 2015) (Keinanen and Kuivalainen, 2015).

Sources of Information Search in Consumer Decision Making Process

Successful information search leads to defining the alternatives and selection of alternative in a purchase decision process and therefore it is important from the perspective of a consumer that required information to develop a set of alternative is accurate and meets the expectation of the consumer (Zheng et al., 2015). Sources of information search can be classified in two broader class

namely internal and external information search. In case of internal information search the consumer relies on memory and personal experience (Kuhithau, 2017). The consumer has preference about products and services that grow over time and therefore using the memory and personal experience the consumer tries to remember about the features, price, quality and quantity of the product (Guroy, 2018). While a positive past experience help in making good memory about a certain product or service, a negative past experience forces the consumers to look for better alternatives. This is the reasons why purchase decision vary from person to person (Prajogo et al., 2018) (Savolainen, 2015) (Phau et al., 2015). Marketing sources include different advertisements, sales representatives, websites, social media pages and product displays. In case of experiential source the consumers rely on product trial and inspection (Maiga et al., 2015) (Frost, 2015) (Lopatovaska, 2014) (Prajogo et al., 2018) (Phau et al., 2015) (Maiga et al., 2015) (Gursoy, 2018).

Impact of Social Media Marketing via Facebook and YouTube on Information Search Stage of Consumer Purchase Decision in Luxury Retail Industry

Social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube can affect consumer purchase decision of consumers in luxury retail industry in either direction (Hajli, 2014). A consumer centric and effective social media marketing via these platforms is helpful in increasing consumer interest and purchase decision in favour of the brand while an ineffective strategy can result in loss of consumers (Qahri-Saremi et al., 2015) Facebook and YouTube can be used to provide information to the consumers in the form of image, video or message (Taylor, 2018). The content can be in the form of reviews from the consumers, promotional offering, paid advertisements, instant communication and continuous association with the consumers via Facebook and YouTube (Zhang and Benyoucef, 2016). In case of Facebook text and picture based information has more impact on information search while in case of YouTube video based contents have higher impact on information search of consumers (Chen et al., 2017). Facebook and YouTube can be used to provide information immediately and customer issues can be solved instantly that will create customer satisfaction and loyalty (Ryan, 2016). Besides, call to action activities can create immediate purchase need among the consumers due to the nature of information and response

collected from the consumers. Their active participation also indicates their desire to make purchase decision in favour of the luxury brand (Kwon et al., 2017). Besides follower engagement on a frequent basis help in monitoring and understanding consumer behaviour, information search and from that the business can make suitable offer to the consumer that can positively affect information search by consumers (Goodrich and De Mooij, 2014) (Alalwan et al., 2017). Besides, the social media teams need to be very active and must act according to the expectation of the consumers which is a challenging task considering varied interest and expectation of the consumers from social media page of the luxury brand (Wang and Yu, 2017) (2015). Hence it is important that both internal and external sources of consumer information search criteria is well fulfilled by the Facebook and YouTube platforms (Chang et al., 2015).

Conceptual Framework

The researcher had followed the conceptual framework presented below to find the impact of social media marketing on consumer behaviour of luxury retail industry in Saudi Arabia:

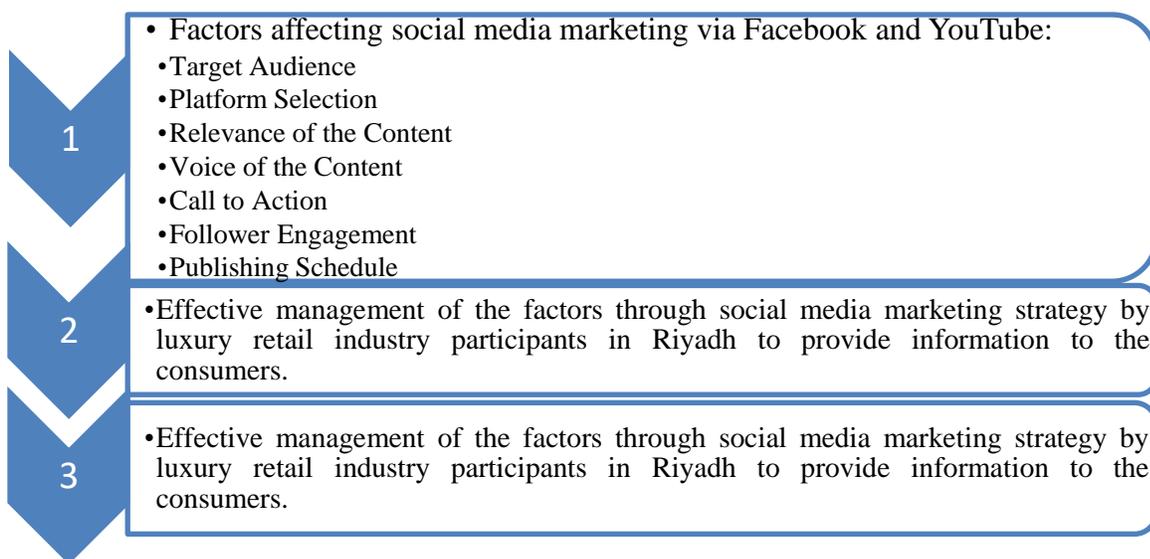


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: (Researchers)

The factors affecting success of social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube is used as independent variables of the research as effective management of these issues would ensure right consumers are getting right information that would have positive impact on information search stage of purchase decision of the consumers in luxury retail industry in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The researcher anticipates a positive and significant impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decision in luxury retail industry of Saudi Arabia.

Research Methodology

In this research, the researcher has used positivism approach of research philosophy as the researcher followed a systematic approach to set up the aim and objectives of the research through providing adequate background information to justify the selection and it is done in case of positivism approach.

As the researcher had set aim and objectives for the research instead of hypothesis, the researcher had used inductive research approach in this study (Moutinho and Hutcheson, 2011).

The research has used theories related to information search by consumers, social media marketing by Facebook and YouTube and keeping the aim and objectives of the research in mind, selected appropriate data collection tools and generated conclusion those provide a general understanding of the situation in the area of the field in luxury retail industry in Riyadh. Using inductive research gave the researcher an opportunity to provide new knowledge in the field of social media marketing by two of the most popular social media platforms in the world and how they fulfilment information search expectation of the consumers in a middle-eastern Asian market (Marcoulides, 2015).

In this research the researcher used descriptive research design as the a number of past research is available in the area of the research and the researcher wanted to explain the relationship between social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube on information search by consumers in a luxury retail market and this is like describing a certain social event. Besides, using descriptive design allowed the research show causal relationship between the variables used in the research

(Sarantinos, 2014). Further, the researcher used quantitative research method as the researcher wanted to collect data according to the aim and objectives of the research that facilitates the use of quantitative data for the research as the data is easy to measure and can be shown according to the objectives set for the research.

Population data include all the members of a particular data set according to Saunders et al (2016). In case of this research, luxury retail consumers in Riyadh formulate population dataset of this research. Currently there are more than 6 million people living in Riyadh and a significant portion of them make purchase from luxury retail brands. Therefore due to limited time and resources, it is not possible for the researcher to collect data from all the members of the population set. Therefore the researcher used sample data instead of population data. Sample data is the representative portion of population data.

Among available sampling techniques, the researcher used convenience sampling method which is a non-probability sampling method. Under this approach the researcher started collecting information from the responses on their availability basis and as soon as the requisite number of sample respondents were found the researcher stopped the data collection process (Pring, 2015). Although this approach did not allow data collection on a random basis but the researcher could collect data from respondents readily available and thus reduced time needed to collect data for the research (Perecman and Curran, 2015). Applying convenience sampling method, the researcher collected data from 80 consumers of luxury retail industry in Riyadh. The researcher sent an email to the respondents containing the survey questionnaire and consent form and were asked to provide their responses.

Data Analysis Techniques

As the research used quantitative data, the researcher used several statistical analysis tools and techniques to present the data, analyse them and interpret them. In order to present quantitative data, the researcher used different tables, charts and graphs as they make it easy for the readers to

understand the responses the researcher got for the queries. To analyse the data, the researcher used different descriptive and inferential statistical analysis tools. Among descriptive statistical analysis tools, this research used frequency, mean and standard deviation to show the response, their average and deviation of the responses from the average of the responses. Among inferential statistical analysis tools, this research used correlation and regression analysis (Moutinho and Hutcheson, 2011). The correlation analysis is prepared to show the extent and direction of relationship between the variable used in the study and multiple regression model is used to show the impacts of social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube on information search by consumers of luxury retail industry in Riyadh in their purchase decision process. The research used statistical analysis software MS Excel and SPSS to generate statistically interpretable data.

Result Analysis and Discussion

This section presents the data collected for the research keeping in mind the aim and objectives of the research, appropriate analysis and interpretation of data and comparison with past research outcomes related to social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube on similar markets and their impact on information search. The was collected from 80 consumers of luxury retail industry Riyadh.

The respondents were asked regarding their frequency of luxury product purchase and responses suggest that there are 39% respondents who purchase luxury product more than once a month and 32% do so once a month and 20% more than once a month. From the responses it is evident that most of the respondents make frequent purchase of luxury products from their preferred luxury retail brands. All the responses are presented below:

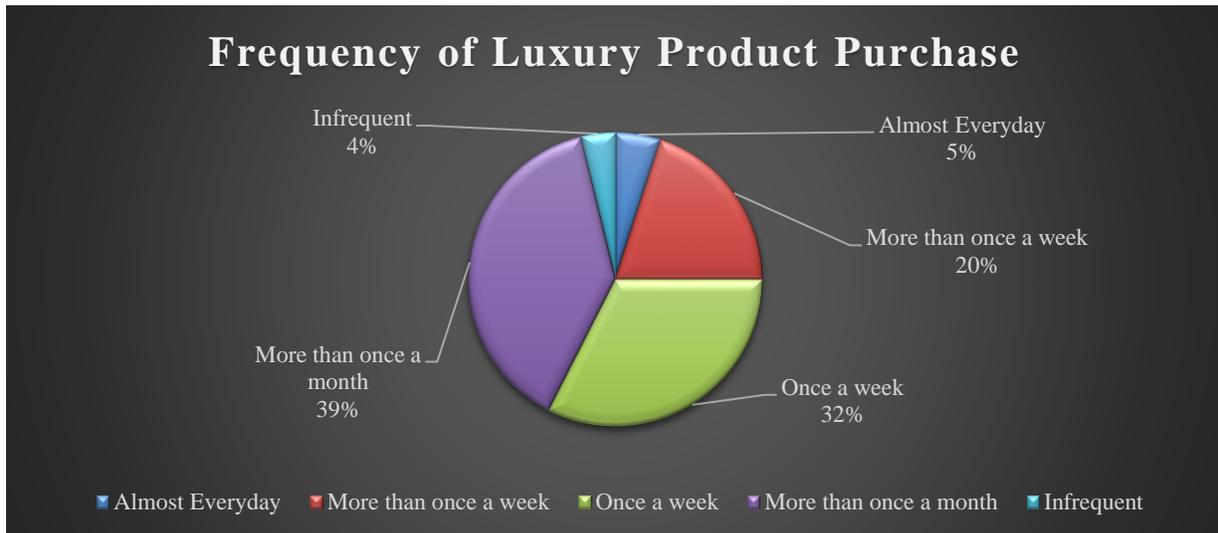


Figure 2: Frequency of luxury product purchase by respondents

Understanding use of social media in luxury retail industry in Riyadh

The respondents were asked about their preferred social media platform and the responses presented below show that 43% of them preferred Facebook and 36% preferred YouTube and 21% had other preferences. This indicates that although in Saudi Arabia YouTube has more users than Facebook, in luxury retail industry in Riyadh, the preference for Facebook is higher in comparison to YouTube among the consumers in this industry.

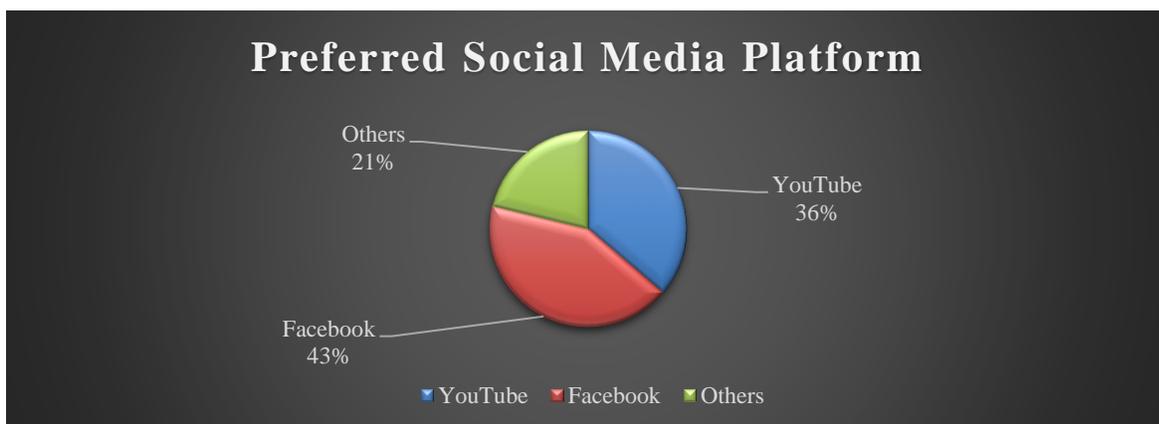


Figure 3: Preferred social media platform among consumers of luxury retail industry in Riyadh

The respondents were asked about the type of information they usually search on a frequent basis on social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube and 32% of the respondents replied that they searched for product information of different brands while 26% searched for local news and 19% searched for global news. This indicates that the consumers have higher interest in product information published on these platforms and therefore it can play a significant role in success of social media marketing in luxury retail industry in Riyadh. All the responses are presented below:

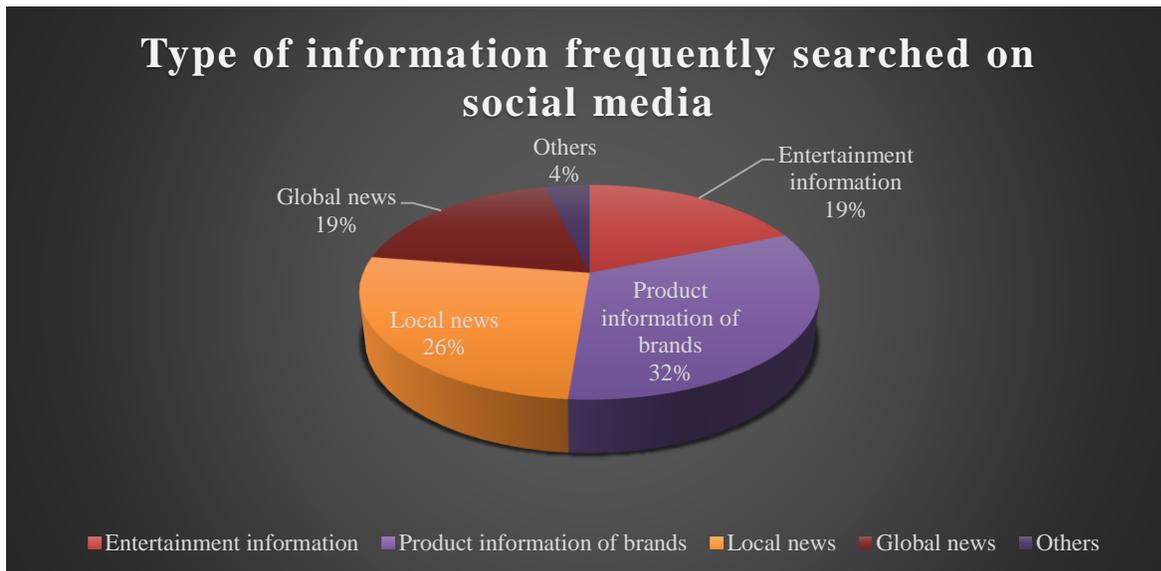


Figure 4: Type of information frequently searched on social media

The researcher asked the respondents about their frequency of visit to social media pages of their preferred brands using Facebook and YouTube and 65% of the respondents replied that they visited on a frequent basis while 20% visited on a highly frequent basis and 14% in infrequent basis and 1% did not visit at all. The information suggest that social media pages of the brands are visited by almost all the consumers in luxury retail industry.

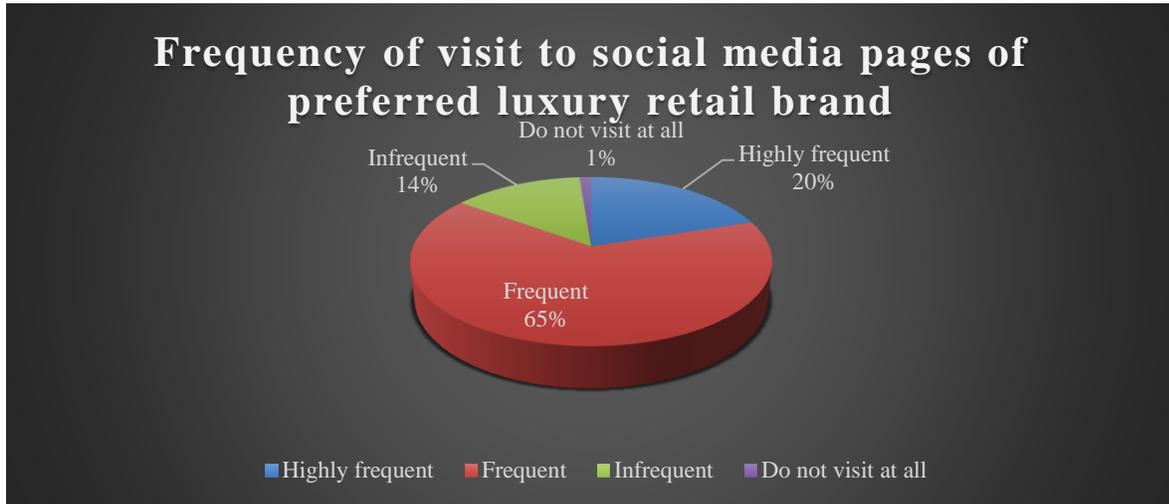


Figure 5: Frequency of visit to social media pages of preferred luxury retail brand

The respondents were queried about the type of information they searched for preferred products from the luxury brands using social media platforms Facebook and YouTube and 40% of the respondents replied that they read the reviews by others, 23% looked at the products and 21% searched recommendations from the friends. All the responses are presented below:



Figure 6: Type of information searched for preferred products of luxury brands using social media

The respondents were asked about the content they preferred and the responses show that 68% of the respondents preferred all types of contents that included stories, photos and videos while 20% preferred stories over other forms of contents. This indicates that luxury retailers need to focus on mixing contents to satisfy the expectations of the consumers. All the responses are presented below:

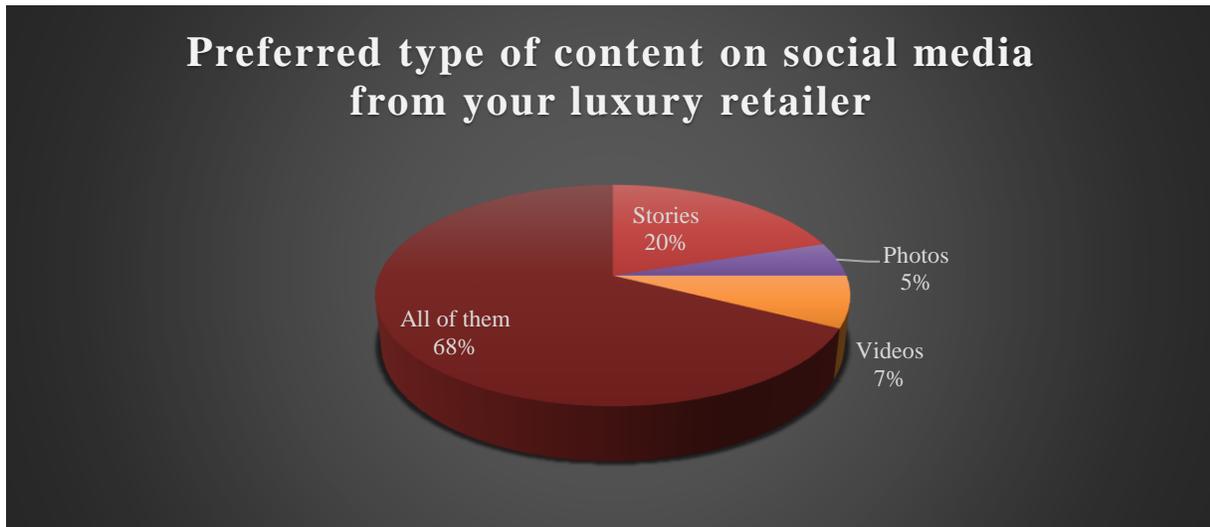


Figure 7: Preferred type of content on social media from your luxury retailer

The respondents were asked regarding the type of information they think the retailers provide them and the responses suggest that 95% of them found product details, 62.5% about special offers, 68.75% about the after sales service and 100% in case of product availability and order and payment procedure. This indicates that the respondents got adequate product information to make a purchase decision using social media platforms Facebook and YouTube.



Figure 8: Types of Information retailers provide via Facebook and YouTube

Responses to factors affecting social media marketing using Facebook and YouTube in luxury retail industry of Saudi Arabia

In order to understand the success of selecting target audience via use of Facebook and YouTube based social media marketing, the respondents were asked to provide response to a number of statements. Among the respondents 97.5% agreed that their preferred luxury brand were prudent in selecting appropriate audience to promote products using Facebook and YouTube. Another 98.8% agreed that they got updates about products and services according to their expectations in the social media platforms they use. Among the respondents 98.8% agreed that Facebook and YouTube was successful in creating adequate customer response. This suggest that luxury retailers in Riyadh were highly successful in identifying the target audience while promoting products using Facebook and YouTube.

The responses collected regarding relevance of the content suggest that 93.8% of the respondent agreed that contents delivered using Facebook and YouTube are rational and meets the expectations of the users. Besides, 83.7% respondents agreed that contents reflect organizational and managerial objectives set by luxury retail brands and another 96.4% agreed that they had no complain about the contents published in social media pages of their preferred luxury brands. This indicates that the consumers have no significant opposite view to the contents published by luxury retail brands. All the responses are presented below:

Responses	Target Audience						Platform Selection						Relevance of the Content					
	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Q5		Q6		Q7		Q8		Q9	
	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)
Strongly Disagree (1)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.20	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	3.8	0	0.0
Disagree(2)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.20	1	1.2	2	2.5	0	0.0	1	1.2
Partially Disagree (3)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.50	3	3.8	1	1.2	4	5.0	1	1.2
Neutral (4)	2	2.5	1	1.2	1	1.2	3	3.8	5	6.20	4	5.0	2	2.5	6	7.5	1	1.2
Partially Agree (5)	30	37.5	25	31.2	20	25.0	29	36.2	7	8.80	9	11.2	4	5.0	9	11.2	6	7.5
Agree(6)	28	35.0	39	48.8	43	53.8	33	41.2	30	37.50	40	50.0	41	51.2	31	38.8	30	37.5
Strongly Agree (7)	20	25.0	15	18.8	16	20.0	15	18.8	34	42.5	23	28.8	30	37.5	27	33.8	41	51.2
Total	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100

Table 1: Frequency of responses related to Target Audience, Platform Selection and Relevance of Content

The mean of the responses related to target audience, platform selection and relevance of content shows that the respondents agreed with the statements on average as the responses have mean above 5.5. The responses with standard deviations less than 1 indicates responses revolve around the mean of the responses and those with more than 1 indicates there is slight deviation in responses from the mean of the responses.

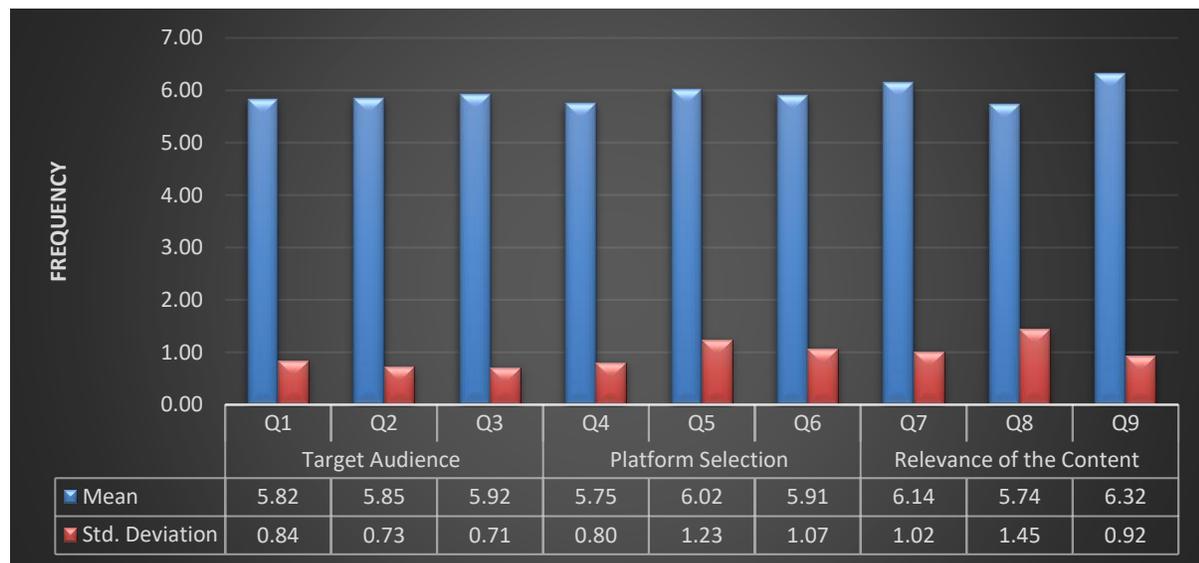


Figure 9: Mean and SD of responses related to Target Audience, Platform Selection and Relevance of Content

The responses related to voice of the content suggest that 96.3% of the respondents found the voice of the content to be powerful enough to create a sense of urgency among the respondents to make purchase decision in favour of the brand.

The responses related to call to action show that 98.8% of the respondents agreed that the respondents are asked to provide responses to queries made by luxury brands via Facebook and YouTube on a regular basis. Another 98.8% agreed that their responses are given importance and 100% of the respondents agreed that this create a greater purchase response. All the responses are presented below:

Responses	Voice of the Content						Call to Action					
	Q10		Q11		Q12		Q13		Q14		Q15	
	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)
Strongly Disagree (1)	0	0.0	2	2.5	0	0.0	1	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
Disagree(2)	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	3.8	0	0.0	1	1.2	0	0.0
Partially Disagree (3)	1	1.2	4	5.0	1	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Neutral (4)	2	2.5	0	0.0	3	3.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Partially Agree (5)	6	7.5	4	5.0	16	20.0	17	21.2	19	23.8	4	5.0
Agree(6)	40	50.0	40	50.0	33	41.2	40	50.0	46	57.5	48	60.0
Strongly Agree (7)	31	38.8	30	37.5	24	30.0	22	27.5	14	17.5	28	35.0
Total	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100

Table 2: Frequency of responses related to Voice of the Content and Call to Action,

The mean of the responses is above 5.5 and this indicates that on average the respondents agreed with the statements. On the other hand the standard deviations are less than 1 in most cases and this indicates that the responses revolve around the mean of the responses in case of relevance of content and call to action.

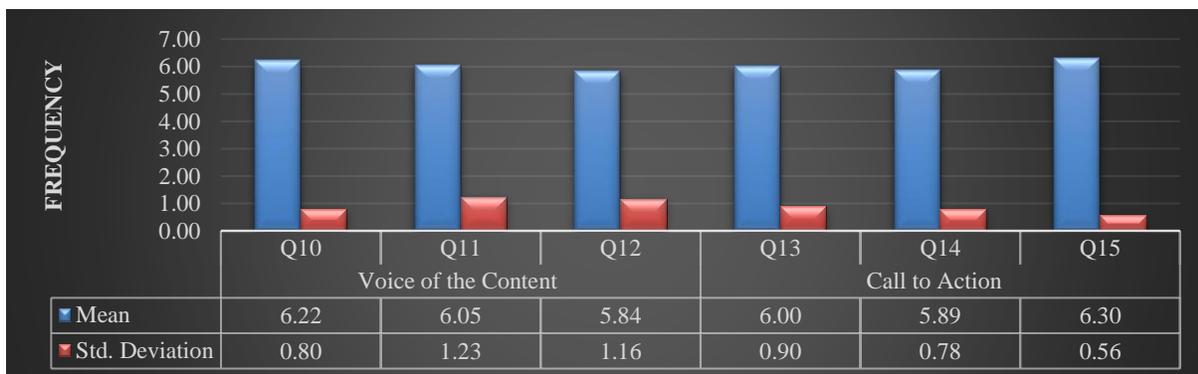


Figure 10: Mean and SD related to Voice of the Content and Call to Action,

The responses collected regarding follower engagement suggest that 100% of the respondents agreed that their preferred brands communicate with them via Facebook and YouTube on a regular basis. Another 96.4% agreed that the interaction had positive impact on their information search decision while another 90% expressed their satisfaction with the level of engagement. This indicates that luxury brands try to establish an interactive relationship with the consumers.

The responses related to publishing schedule suggest that 90% of the respondents agreed that contents are published on time preferred by the customers and another 90% agreed that this gave the customers adequate time to collect required information before making a purchase decision. The responses indicate that more focus should be given on publishing schedule while using Facebook and YouTube to provide information to the consumers. All the responses are presented below:

Responses	Follower Engagement						Publishing Schedule					
	Q16		Q17		Q18		Q19		Q20		Q21	
	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)
Strongly Disagree (1)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Disagree(2)	0	0.0	1	1.2	4	5.0	3	3.8	5	6.2	3	3.8
Partially Disagree (3)	0	0.0	1	1.2	2	2.5	1	1.2	0	0.0	6	7.5
Neutral (4)	0	0.0	1	1.2	2	2.5	5	6.2	2	2.5	9	11.2
Partially Agree (5)	9	11.2	9	11.2	10	12.5	6	7.5	11	13.8	9	11.2
Agree(6)	46	57.5	26	32.5	35	43.8	40	50.0	37	46.2	28	35.0
Strongly Agree (7)	25	31.2	42	52.5	27	33.8	25	31.2	25	31.2	25	31.2
Total	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100

Table 3: Frequency of responses related to Follower Engagement and Publishing Schedule

The mean of the responses suggest that the respondents agreed with the statements on average but the standard deviations suggest that the responses do not revolve around the mean of a responses highly as most of the responses have standard deviation higher than 1.



Figure 11: Mean and SD related to Follower Engagement and Publishing Schedule

Success of Social media in helping customers in searching required information

To understand whether luxury retailers were successful in fulfilling information search excitement of the respondents using Facebook and YouTube, a number of questions were asked. Among the respondents 92.5% agreed that luxury brands preferred by them provided adequate product information in social media platforms Facebook and YouTube while another 98.8% agreed that they could easily get required information from the Facebook and YouTube pages of the retail brands. Besides 83.8% respondents agreed that the information they got satisfied their expectation and 95% agreed that they recommended others to search for information in social media pages of their preferred brand particularly through using Facebook and YouTube. Other responses are presented below:

Responses	Information Search							
	Q22		Q23		Q24		Q25	
	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)
Strongly Disagree (1)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Disagree(2)	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.5	2	2.5
Partially Disagree (3)	0	0.0	1	1.2	5	6.2	0	0.0
Neutral (4)	6	7.5	0	0.0	6	7.5	2	2.5
Partially Agree (5)	11	13.8	9	11.2	12	15.0	11	13.8
Agree(6)	45	56.2	51	63.8	38	47.5	33	41.2
Strongly Agree (7)	18	22.5	19	23.8	17	21.2	32	40.0
Total	80	100	80	100	80	100	80	100

Table 4: Frequency of responses related to Information Search

The mean of the responses suggest that on average the respondents agreed with the statements and the standard deviations indicate that there is no significant deviation in responses from the mean of the responses as they are around or less than 1 in most cases.



Figure 12: Mean and SD related to Information Search

Cronbach’s Alpha

Cronbach’s Alpha is used to measure internal consistency and reliability of the independent variables used in a study and an Alpha value above 0.70 is acceptable to consider a variable consistent and reliable to use that variable as an independent variable to explain the dependent variable of a study.

Variable	Alpha
Target Audience	0.823
Platform Selection	0.716
Relevance of the Content	0.731
Voice of the Content	0.867
Call to Action	0.785
Follower Engagement	0.702
Publishing Schedule	0.851

Table 5: Cronbach’s Alpha

The Alpha values for the independent variables show that they are acceptable as they have values more than 0.70 for all the variables used in the research.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis shows the direction and extent of relationship between the variables used in a study. Correlation between .2 and .5 indicates moderate correlation while correlation between 0.50 and 0.80 indicates strong correlation. In this study for the variables target audience (TA), platform selection (PA), relevance of content (RC), voice of the content (VC), call to action (CTA), follower engagement (FE), publishing schedule (PSc) and information search (IS) are used to conduct correlation analysis. The outcome presented below shows that there is positive correlation among the variables used in the study indicating any positive change in one variable will result in positive change in corresponding variable as target audience. Among the variable target audience (TA) and relevance of content (RC) has the most significant and strong correlation at 0.625. On the other hand, the weakest correlation exist between voice of content (VC) and information search (IS) at 0.127 correlation with other variable shows a moderate correlation. All the correlations among variables are presented in the table below:

	TA	PS	RC	VC	CTA	FE	PSc	IS
TA	1	0.244*	.316**	.239*	0.076	0.171	.336**	.319**
PS	0.244*	1	.625**	.350**	.231*	.390**	.405**	.254*
RC	.316**	.625**	1	.390**	.317**	.520**	.369**	.273*
VC	.239*	.350**	.390**	1	.418**	.418**	.370**	0.127
CTA	0.076	.231*	.317**	.418**	1	.469**	.278*	0.162
FE	0.171	.390**	.520**	.418**	.469**	1	0.201	0.094
PSc	.336**	.405**	.369**	.370**	.278*	0.201	1	.388**
IS	.319**	.254*	.273*	0.127	0.162	0.094	.388**	1
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).								
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).								

Table 6: Correlation Analysis

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis shows the impact of independent variables on dependent variables of a research. In this research information search (IS) is the dependent variable while target audience (TA), platform selection (PS), relevance of the content (RC), voice of the content (VC), follower engagement (FE) and publishing schedule (PSc) as the independent variables for the research. From the model summary presented below it is found that that independent variables can explain 64.1% of the variability of dependent variable as the adjusted R-square found is 0.641 and the explanation is significant in nature as a significant portion of the variation can be explained. Hence it can be stated that factors affecting success of social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube have significant impact on information search stage of a consumer’s purchase decision in Riyadh.

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.876a	0.756	0.641	0.60367		
a. Predictors: (Constant), PSc, FE, TA, CTA, PS, VC, RC						
Coefficients(a)						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	5.909	1.258		4.699	0
	TA	0.259	0.128	0.242	2.03	0.046
	PS	0.144	0.137	0.152	1.051	0.029
	RC	0.052	0.118	0.068	0.441	0.660
	VC	0.092	0.109	0.107	0.848	0.399
	CTA	0.125	0.143	0.109	0.876	0.384
	FE	0.113	0.154	0.099	0.736	0.041
	PSc	0.151	0.076	0.249	1.982	0.050
a. Dependent Variable: IS						

Table 7: Regression Analysis

The individual impact of independent variables on information search presented in the coefficient table above shows that target audience (TA), platform selection (PS), follower engagement (FE) and publishing schedule (PSc) followed by luxury retailers in Riyadh have significant impact information search among consumers of luxury retail industry as they have significance values less than .05 and relevance of content (RC), voice of content (VC) and call to action (CTA) has

insignificant individual impact on information search among consumers of luxury retail industry in Riyadh.

Result Discussion

Analysis on use of social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube in luxury retail industry in Riyadh

From the responses regarding use of Facebook and YouTube as part of social media marketing to provide the consumers of luxury retail industry in Saudi Arabia it was found that these platforms are most preferred social media platforms among the consumers and therefore the platform selection is appropriate as tool for social media marketing. The data also revealed that consumers those make purchase in luxury retail industry looks for product related information in these platforms more than they look for local and global news and entertainment information. This indicates that these platforms are widely popular among the consumers of luxury retail industry in Riyadh to look for required information to make a purchase decision. Besides the responses revealed that the consumers frequently visit social media pages of their preferred luxury brands looking for certain information about the product. The consumers focuses more on reviews and recommendations from their friends and having a look at the product using social media while searching for information about the product using Facebook and YouTube. The customers prefer all forms of contents including stories, photos and videos. All these indicate that use of social media platforms Facebook and YouTube to search information about a product has increased and more emphasis is given by the users of these media. The retailers are also focusing on providing adequate information in Riyadh so that the consumers of the luxury brands can make informed purchase decision. A study conducted by Mirabi, et al (2015) had found that luxury retail industry has found that use of social media platforms to collect required information to make a purchase decision has increased significantly. Often customers create communities to collect information and users share their experience in those communities. In order to ensure that the consumers are capable of making informed decision, the luxury retailers post details of the products in those communities and pages they manage in those social media platforms. Facebook is widely used in

that purpose. In case video based content is delivered, they prefer to use YouTube in most cases. All these initiatives are taken to ensure the social media platforms are used for interactive communication and benefit of both customers and the luxury retailers. Another study conducted by Zheng et al (2015) have revealed that consumers of luxury retail industry around the world use social media on a frequent basis as they want to keep them aware of new arrivals and keeping themselves updated about the products and services. Keeping this in mind, luxury retailers around the world try to satisfy the expectation of this niche customer group and creates an interactive relationship. This research has found that the customers want information and social media platforms Facebook and YouTube play a key role in letting them have those information in Riyadh.

Analysis on factors affecting social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube in luxury retail industry in Riyadh

The responses collected regarding target audience suggest that luxury retailers in Riyadh has been highly successful in identifying target audience for social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube as appropriate customers are getting the information who are supposed to get the information and they are providing positive response towards the information they receive. Besides, selection of appropriate target audience has significant impact on information search stage of consumer purchase process of the consumers of luxury retail stores in Riyadh which was found from the regression outcome. A study conducted by Zhang and Benyoucef (2016) had found that selecting appropriate audience for social media marketing is important and using Facebook and YouTube makes is easy as these two platforms are used frequently by consumers belonging to all classes. This is true in case of this research as the consumers expressed their satisfaction about the appropriateness of the audience selection by luxury brands.

The responses related to platform selection suggest that luxury retail brands in Riyadh were successful in finding appropriate platform to provide the consumers with appropriate information via Facebook and YouTube as the respondents thought that Facebook and YouTube were prioritized as preferred social media platform to provide information via social media. Besides, the consumers also use these platforms to get information and thus they were satisfied with the

platform selection. The regression outcome suggests that platform selection had significant impact on information search and as the consumers had the opportunity to use different social media platform in Riyadh, choosing the appropriate one was important and the responses showed that luxury retailers in Riyadh were successful in doing so.

The information collected about relevance of the content suggest that rational contents are delivered through Facebook and YouTube by luxury retailers in Riyadh that meets the expectation of the consumers and the contents reflect the objectives of the organization and management in most cases. The consumers also have no complain about the contents published. These are supported by the mean and standard deviations of the responses but the regression analysis showed that relevance of the content has insignificant impact on information search in luxury retail industry in Riyadh. This can be due to the nature of information provided through the content that fulfils the expectation of the respondents. A study conducted by Alalwan et al (2017) had shown that relevance of content is important to affect purchase behaviour of the consumers but in case of providing information focus should be more on the information rather than the content to ensure that the consumers are getting enough information as it is not possible to always remain relevant to the expectation of the consumers especially in luxury retail business where fulfilling individual need is more focused that fulfilling expectation in general.

In case of voice of the content, the responses suggest that the voice is powerful enough to create a sense of urgency among the consumers to make purchase decision in favour of the brand according to most of the respondents and the change in voice according to occasion or event is also acceptable among the consumers and that is done keeping in mind the intention of the consumers. The responses are supported by the mean and standard deviations but the regression outcome has shown that in luxury retail industry in Riyadh, voice of the content has insignificant impact on information search among the consumers. A study conducted by Prajogo et al (2018) had found that the voice of the content has to be timely, appropriate and according to the expectation of the consumers so that they can relate themselves with the brand and can remember the name of the

brand whenever they look for certain information about particular product or service that is served by the business.

According to the responses regarding follower engagement it is found that most of the respondents agree that their preferred retail brands communicate with them via Facebook and YouTube on a regular basis and the interaction has positive impact on their information search decision as they are satisfied with the current level of follower engagement conducted by the retailers. The regression outcome shows that follower engagement has significant impact on information search of consumers in luxury retail industry in Riyadh.

The data collected regarding publishing schedule suggest that the respondents are satisfied with the timing of the contents published as they are on preferable time and gives the respondents enough time to evaluate the information and make purchase decision from that. This outcome is supported by the regression outcome that suggests that publishing schedule had significant impact on consumer's information search decision.

Use of Social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube in information search stage of consumer decision process and its impact of information search

The information collected regarding success of social media marketing using Facebook and YouTube suggest that luxury retailers operating in Riyadh has been benefited highly and have been successful in providing required information to the consumers of luxury retail industry in Riyadh as the respondents agreed that they got adequate information via Facebook and YouTube about the products and services of the retail brands and they had easy access to the information and their expectation was fulfilled. The consumers also recommended others to use Facebook and YouTube to get better information about the products and services which positively affected information search experience of the consumers. The research has found that the impact of social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube is significant and it is positive in nature. Among the factors affecting success of social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube, target audience, platform selection, follower engagement and publishing schedule has significant impact on information search stage of consumer purchase decision process among the consumers of luxury

retail stores in Riyadh and the luxury retailers have been successful in selecting appropriate target audience, platform, regular and effective follower engagement and favourable publishing schedule which is evident from the responses collected. Besides, these factors along with relevance of content, voice of the content and call to action has positive relationship with information search which indicates that any positive response to those areas will make information search effort further satisfactory for the consumers in Riyadh as they will be able to make informed purchase decision.

Conclusion

The findings of the research are presented with answers to research objectives below:

Objective 1: To analyse current use of social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube in marketing strategy by luxury retail brands in Saudi Arabia

Currently Facebook and YouTube are highly used in social media marketing by luxury retailers due to the benefits they get from the marketing approach. In this research is found that the retailers to provide product information to appropriate target audiences using appropriate tool of communication as the respondents had presence in Facebook and YouTube. Besides, the respondents could get product information in various forms such as stories, photos and videos that provided them the opportunity to learn better about the products. The consumers could also review the products and help others get informed before making a purchase decision. The retailers also got the opportunity to directly communicate with the consumers, take their feedback, apply those to make the consumers feel valued and prepare strategies reflecting the expectation of the consumers. Therefore this platforms have become an integral part of marketing strategy of retailers due to the benefits they get and the consumers are taking advantage of the presence of luxury brands in their preferred social media platforms.

Objective 2: To find the information luxury retailers provide to the consumers of luxury retail industry via Facebook and YouTube in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Through using social media platforms Facebook and YouTube, the competitors of luxury retail industry in Riyadh provide a number of information to the consumers and these include detailed information about the product, its availability, order and payment procedures, and especial offers and after sales service information. Among these information the consumers find product availability, order and payment information the most important information they seek that is followed by detailed information about the product. A significant portion of the respondents do not look for special offers and after sales service details. Through using Facebook and YouTube the retailers also directly communicate with the consumers and provide them information according to their need in their preferred form so that the consumers can make informed purchase decision in favour of the luxury brand in luxury retail industry in Riyadh.

Objective 3: To show the impacts social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube has on information search stage of consumer's purchase decision in luxury retail industry in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube has significant and positive impact on information search stage of consumer's purchase decision process in luxury retail industry in Riyadh. The research has found that not all the factors related to success of social media marketing via Facebook and YouTube are equally significant and important to affect information search stage of consumer purchase decision. In case of luxury retail consumers in Riyadh the research found that target audience, platform selection, follower engagement and publishing schedule has significant impact on information search while relevance of the content, voice of the content and call to action had insignificant impact on information search decision of the luxury retail industry consumers living in Riyadh.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research and continuously evolving use of social media platforms Facebook and YouTube in social media marketing among the retailers of luxury products in luxury retail industry in Riyadh, the researcher would like to make following recommendations to ease

information search activities of the consumers so that the consumers can make effective and informed purchase decision:

- The responses have shown that some of the respondents are not using Facebook and YouTube to learn more about the products and services in most cases and in order to increase their dependency on Facebook and YouTube the retailers must try to figure out the reason behind that and can use call to action and follower engagement practice to understand the type of information they usually seek and prepare strategies to provide them those information using Facebook and YouTube platforms. Besides making the contents interesting via using different audio-visual effects can increase consumer attention to the product information.
- The study has found that a portion of the respondents do not think that contents published on Facebook and YouTube reflect organizational and managerial objectives of the retail business. To assure them that the contents are prepared keeping in mind the organizational and managerial objectives in mind, the luxury retailers can occasionally post about long term objectives of the business and how the consumers are helping them in achieving those objectives. Making the consumers feel that they are integral part of the business and success of the business largely depends on them and incorporating the expectation of the consumers in organizational strategy can help the consumers find similarity between the contents published on social media platforms and stated in objective statement of the organization.
- Timeliness of publishing the contents was not liked by some of the respondents and to satisfy their needs the business must occasionally ask the consumers about their time preference as in Riyadh and other areas in Middle-East use of social media platforms and information seeking change due to religious and social programs.
- The focus of social media marketing should be fulfilling the expectation of the consumers and as the expectation of the consumers change on a frequent basis, the social media team should act promptly to accommodate changes in existing social media marketing strategy focusing on Facebook and YouTube.

- Last and most important of all, social media platforms are communication channels and therefore the luxury retailers must provide product information in communicative form so that the consumers remain aware of the products and services. Underuse or overuse of the platforms should be checked in that purpose.

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