

The impact of social media on fashion industry - A case study on Zara and H & M

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Abstract: This project is titled "The impact of social media on fashion brands". This topic is chosen because of the increased use of social media by businesses especially with a focus on the fashion industry. The fashion industry has been chosen because this industry was a late adopter of social media as their marketing strategy and this is the only industry where there are frequent changes because our lifestyle changes with our style of wearing clothes also and with the emergence of social media, the influencers or fashion designers introduce new trends every day. So these all changes are difficult for the industry to adopt if they don't use social media marketing. So specifically two brands are chosen to understand the impact of social media that are Zara and H&M.

Key Words: 1. Instagram- is an American photo and video sharing social networking service created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger.

2. Facebook- is an American multinational technology company based in Menlo Park California..

3. Posts- a piece of writing, image, or other item of content published online, typically on a blog or social media website or application.

4. Twitter- is an American microblogging and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as 'tweets'

5. YouTube- is an American online video sharing and social media Platform owned by Google.

1. INTRODUCTION:

This project is to understand the impact of social media on luxury fashion brands. Social media is a two-way interactive digitally mediated platform that forms the sharing or exchanging of information, ideas, and other forms of virtual communication and network. Some of the most popular social media platforms are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and etc. Social media marketing was first established by publishing, but now it has branched and become a broader concept with other platforms and it is a well-built way for all types of businesses

Nowadays, it is unquestionable that social media is the major ground for impacting our culture, tradition, economy, and the whole world.

Owing to the current pandemic situation, we became more dependent on technology, especially on all social media platforms. The current (COVID 19) situation has stimulated a huge increase in social media adoption, as it was the main source of information.

The business world has become more and more dependent on these platforms for proliferation and profits. Social media plays a vital role in marketing campaigns for companies. The social media platform is not only for advertisement, but it also helps companies create customer relations and get feedback.

The fashion industry is a deep-rooted retail industry because the fashion of people changes rapidly. This industry was the last to adopt technology as its business strategy because basically, all its work depends on manpower. This manpower helps the business to fulfil their customer's needs by listening to their individual preferences. But now with the increase of social media, they don't only rely on manpower. The marketing of the apparel industry has made a huge success by using social media marketing. The industry uses Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to promote its brand by making creative advertisements and sponsoring celebrities to show their product. As people prefer retail stores rather than online stores for clothing but nowadays big fashion brands create interesting ways of choosing the clothes we want to buy. There are many apps like Myntra, where we get all types of brands products but many of us don't trust them because of qualities. This problem is also solved by luxury brands by creating their apps and promoting them on social media platforms with attractive ideas.

Organization Profile-

ZARA is one of the popular and largest international fashion brands. Zara belongs to Inditex the world's largest fashion group. It was established in Galicia, Spain founded by Amancio Ortega in 1975. The recent tagline of Zara is "Love Your Curves".

The secret behind the huge success of Zara is that it is driven by its ability to keep up with the frequently changing fashion styles and makes its collection according to the changes and showcases its collection with no delay. It became popular among the people who want to keep their fashion trends up to date. The unique selling proposition of Zara is to offer the best combination of chic clothing at premium prices. Zara targets a market in which people from medium to high class and who want to look glamorous always. Zara's main competitive advantage is that they advertise less. The marketing tactics of Zara is that their main focus is customer experience which is nowadays very important for every business. Zara has social media pages on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn, as pictures and videos are important for fashion because Zara constantly posts all their new collections on their pages. As Zara uses minimal advertising strategy they have to remain active on social media platforms. According to recent information, Zara's Facebook has over 7.5 billion fans, on Instagram, they have 50 million followers and on YouTube, they have 84000 subscribers.

H&M stands for Hennes & Mauritz. In 1946 Erling Persson in Swedish created a women's cloth brand Hennes which means "Hers" in the Swedish language. Then after 2 years, he bought a hunting apparel and fishing store named Mauritz. He combined these two brands to sell women's and men's cloth. So after the combination, the store was named Hennes and Mauritz commonly called H&M. Today H&M has 4743 stores in 50 countries. Their all-time tagline or slogan is "Who's next" but they recently changed its tagline based on Gender-Based Violence, so they say "I Love GBV". H&M doesn't manufacture their product in-house, they outsource its production to independent suppliers across the world. The unique selling proposition or the reason for H&M to sell their product is to combine chic, along with stylish clothes at affordable prices. H&M's market is where they target women, men, and teenagers with medium to high income and those who have completely vibrant and rebellious attitudes. The fast-fashion model is used by H&M to adopt the latest fashion styles and provides it to the designer's table. Their key strength is strong online channels, they are very much active on their social media platforms which increase their sales. As social media usage has increased, H&M sells and displays its product on Instagram directly. H&M has its pages on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. On Facebook, they have 32 million fans and they post regularly about their new product and provide information about the events and marketing campaigns. They use popular celebrities to showcase their product on their social media pages. On YouTube, they have posted 650 videos and 3.99 lakh subscribers and on Instagram, they have 36.8 million followers where they allow direct purchases also.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: In this project the literature reviews are related to the topic social media and social media impact on the fashion industry.

1. **The Impact of Social Media on the Fashion Industry: Empirical Investigation from Karachiites(2015)** - By- **Nawaz Ahmad, Atif Salman, Rubab Ashiq**: This project aims to explore the influence of social media on fashion businesses. The project pointed out that the emergence of social media has changed the fashion industry. Based on the project questionnaires responses it concluded that the fashion industry is dynamic in nature so social media is a good promotional tool and cheaper also.(3)
2. **The Impact of Social Media on the Fashion Industry**-By- **Iris Mohr (2013)**: The objective of the project is to suggest social media as a marketing strategy to handle a market loss of luxury fashion brands. It has taken into consideration the financial crisis of 2008, where retailers had to convince consumers for fashion brands. To solve this matter industry has taken social media marketing as its new strategy.(4)
3. **The Effects of Social Media on the Fashion Retail Industry**- By- **Laura Elizabeth (2011)**: This project aims at the usage of social media in the fashion industry. The centre of attention is to understand fashion companies are focused on social media in targeting their audience and making a profit. This project also finds the relationship brands are creating with their consumers with the help of social media.(1)
4. **Style in the Age of Instagram**- By- **Jaehyuk Park, Giovanni Luca Ciampaglia, Emilio Ferrara (2015)**: This research states that to gain popularity the fashion industry needs top models with new faces. New faces or models are often criticized due to a lot of reasons, so they pointed out that in the Instagram generation, people don't criticize their models so much. Therefore it is stated in the project that there is a success for fashion models in the style of Instagram. (2)
5. **Foundations of Social Media Marketing- Procedia- social behavioral science-** By- **Efthymios Constantinides**: According to this study, social media have changed the marketplace. The paper points out the feature, effects of social media. The research paper proposes two types of social media marketing strategy- The passive approach, where social media is used as a customer's voice. The active approach, where social media is used as a direct marketing strategy. (5)

3. METHOD: Research methodology is a road map through which the researchers of the project conduct their research.

The first thing the researcher defines is the research design. The research design can be divided into two categories, first one is Qualitative research design and Quantitative research design.

So in this project primary data is collected by using a questionnaire. Questionnaires are used as a research instrument that is made of a series of questions on the topic that aimed at collecting responses of the questions. The important benefit of using a questionnaire is it is cost-effective. In the project's questionnaire, a series of questions are asked regarding their usage of social media, it also asked the respondents how they think social media impact the fashion industry, it is also asked that how much they are familiar with brands used in the project as an example and the questionnaire also asks the respondents the source of the information of the brands Zara and H&M.

Now the researcher presents data collected with the help of pie charts or bar graphs depends on the pattern of the question. As in this project quantitative data is collected using questionnaires, so the data will be as quantitative data analysis. In quantitative data analysis, the data is being analysed on the responses or data collected by explaining each of the answers respondents given.

This is the research methodology used for preparing this project's analysis and it will also help to draw a conclusion.

4. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS: The analysis of the responses is done because it gives readers an insight into what the findings depict. The data collected from the questionnaire is 105 respondents. In the questionnaire some of the questions were not compulsory to answer, so the responses were less on those questions.

The analysis of each question and with the responses are as follows-

The first five are the basic questions to know the respondents and their social media activity.

The first question is to do the gender analysis. Out of 105 responses, there were a majority of female respondents (56.2%). From this, we can analyse that females are more interested in participating in the questionnaire.

The second question is to do the analysis on the age of the respondents. From the presentation of data of the questionnaire, we can see that the largest part (41.9%) of the respondents are of the age group between 20-24. So we can analyse that this age group uses more social media and they also wanted to take a part in this questionnaire.

The third question is to gain an insight into the occupation of the respondents. Out of 105 responses, the majority of the respondents are students (43.8%) and the other major part is self-employed (21.9%). So we can analyse that the interested respondents are students.

The fourth question is a basic question to know that the respondents are having laptops or mobiles. From the presentation of data, we have noticed that every respondent has laptops and mobiles. So the analysis of the question is nowadays laptops and mobiles are an important part of our daily lives. These devices have become our workplace, our classrooms etc.

The fifth question asks the respondents which social media platform they use the most. In the presentation of data, we can see that there is a bar graph that depicts the most used social media platform by the respondents. And the most used platform the respondents use is Facebook, then the other majority of the respondents are users of Instagram and YouTube. So the analysis is that we are more familiar or attracted to Facebook because it was introduced as a social media platform and every age group of people uses Facebook more and then uses YouTube and teenagers or middle-aged people use Instagram and LinkedIn more.

The next sets of questions are to understand the influence of social media on the fashion industry. These questions were made because this research project is based on the two popular fast-fashion brands Zara and H&M and their social media activities.

The first question of the set is a statement "Social media influences fashion style". This statement was given in the questionnaire to understand the responses' reactions to the statement and how much they agree with the statement. From the result of the questionnaire, we can see that most of the respondents agree with the statement and there are some respondents who are on the neutral side of the statement and the rest of them disagree with the statement. The analysis from the responses gathered is that the style we adopt, the clothes we wear, and the fashion trend we follow are all influenced by social media.

The second of the set or the seventh question of the questionnaire is to understand the positive or negative impact of social media on the fashion industry. In the question, there were given four options which are positive, negative, both, or neither of these impacts the industry. From the result, we have seen that out of 105 responses, the majority of the respondents think that there is both a positive and negative impact of social media on the industry. And half of the respondents say that there is a positive influence (40%). So the analysis is that the society of people thinks that there is both negative and positive influence of social media on our daily fashion style and influence of social media means the influencers, the celebrities and the advertisements of brands.

The third set consists of eight questions. These eight questions are given to know whether the respondents are familiar with the brands Zara and H&M. Some of the questions in this set are not required to attempt compulsory because there are some respondents who are not familiar with the brands. This set also helps us to analyse the social media performance of Zara and H&M.

The first question of the set asks the respondents are they familiar with fashion brands Zara and H&M. So for the analysis, we need to look at the presentation of data. From the presentation of data, the result is that the majority

(91.4%) of the respondents know the brands. The analysis made is that the brands Zara and H&M are popular or known to most people.

The second question of the set is only for those respondents who are familiar with the brands' names. Out of 105 respondents, 103 respondents responded to this question. The question is from where the respondents got to know about the brands. From the bar graph presented in the presentation of data for this question, we can see that the majority of the respondents got to know about the brands from social media platforms, and the other part of the respondents got to know from print and television advertisement. So the analysis is that Zara and H&M are actively promoting on social media and they are more popular on social media platforms for this reason people are getting to know about the brands. The third question of the set is a required question. This question asks the respondents do they like, follow and subscribe to the social media pages of Zara and H&M. The result of this question is in a pie chart, so by observing the pie chart we can say that the option "yes" has more percentage than option "no". The analysis is that the respondents like to follow the pages of the brands on social media. And we can analyse this also that they like to follow the pages because of the brands' active participation.

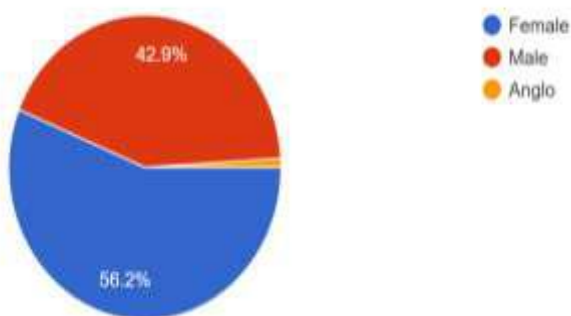
The fourth question of the set is not a compulsory question. This question is only for respondents who responded to the previous question. For this reason, we only got 81 responses to the question. The question is to know on which social media platform the respondents follow the brands. So the largest part of the respondents responded that they follow Zara and H&M on Facebook (72.8%) and then the other majority says that they follow the brands on Instagram (54.3%) then comes YouTube (37%). The results of the question help us to analyse that the brands are more attractive and more liked on Facebook and then the order of the responses continues.

The fifth question of the set is again not a compulsory question. We got only 97 responses to this question out of 105 respondents. This question is to analyse the satisfaction rate of the pictures or videos the brands post on their social media pages. The result is presented in the form pie chart, so after analysis of the pie chart, we can conclude that most of the respondents are satisfied (46.4%) with the brands' post. The other part responded that they are very satisfied (24.7%) and neutral (23.7%). There are few people who responded that they are not satisfied with the posts. So we can analyse that the post of Zara and H&M are attractive and satisfies the needs and preferences of their targeted consumers. The sixth question of the set asks the respondents whether they have purchased products directly from the brands' social media pages. This is a "yes" or "no" question, so the percentage of the option "yes" is more (77.5%) than "no". So from the result, we can analyse that the brands selling strategy from their social media pages are good for this reason the respondents buy their product directly just after seeing their social media posts.

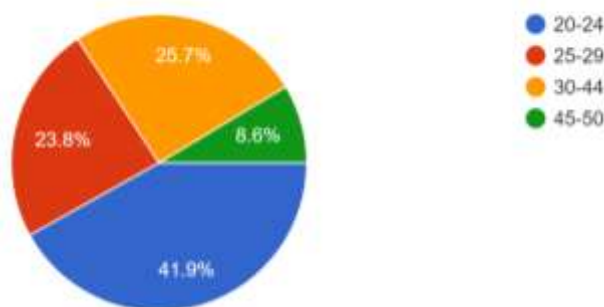
The seventh question of the set is whether the brands are active on their social media platform or not. This is also a question of yes or no. The largest part of respondents responded, "Yes" (86.5%). So the analysis is that the brands are very much active on social media with their unique and attractive post.

The last and the eighth question of the set is to understand the social media marketing activities of Zara and H&M. The question is in the form of a statement with four options of "agree", "disagree", "neutral", "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree". From the result of the statement, we can see that the majority of the respondents agreed to the statement and the other part of the respondents was neutral. So we analyse that the social media marketing activities of the brands are attractive and that is a key point for the brands to make a profit and to gain a good name. So the analysis of the findings is made respective to each and every question.

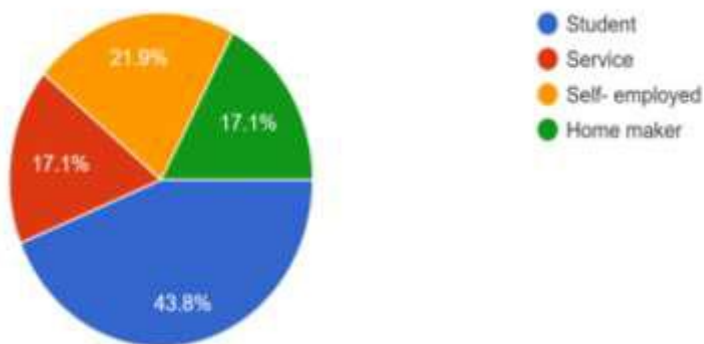
1- Gender



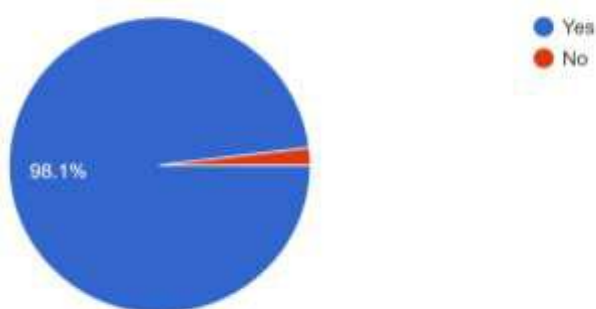
2- Age Group



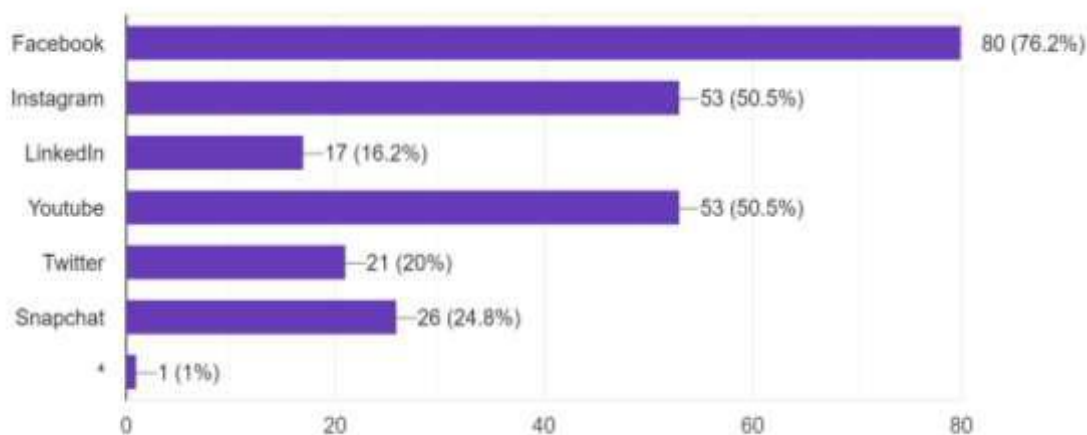
3- Occupation



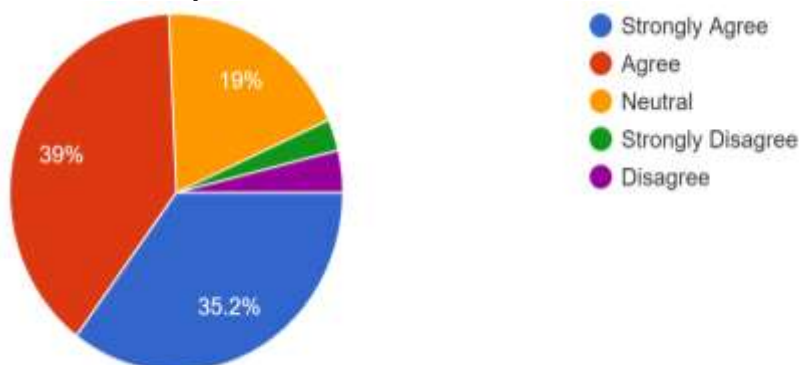
4- Do you have Laptop/Mobile?



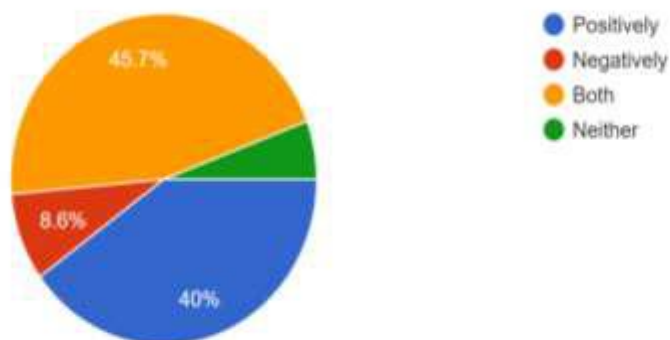
5- Which social media platform do you use the most?



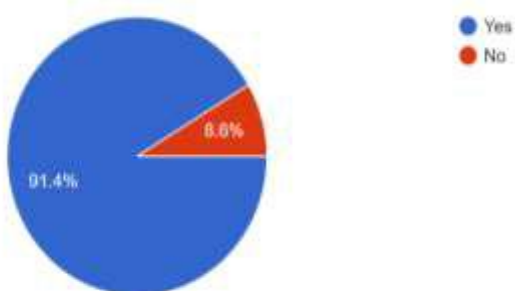
6- Social media influence fashion style.



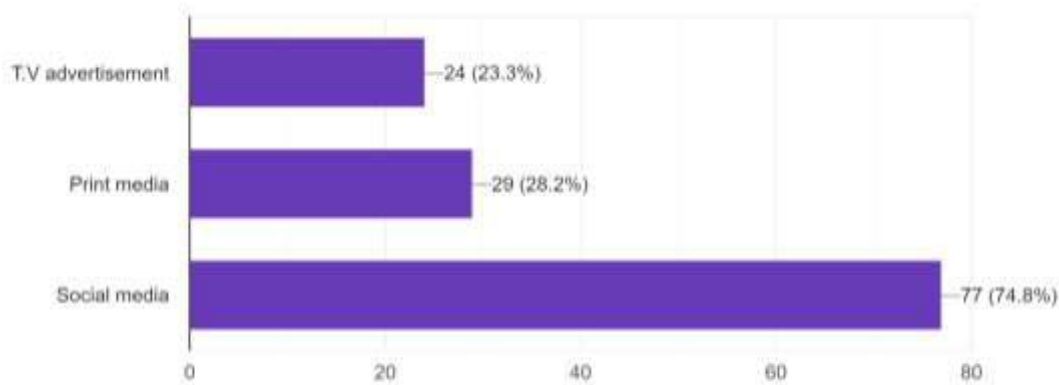
7- How do you think social media influences the fashion industry?



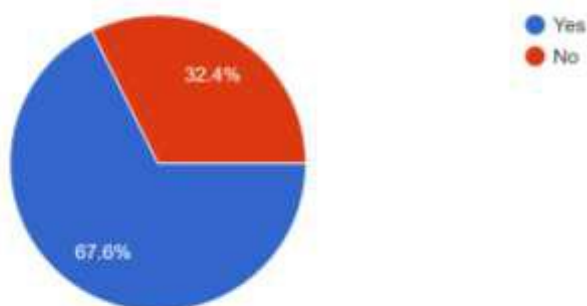
8- Do you know about the cloth brand ZARA and H&M?



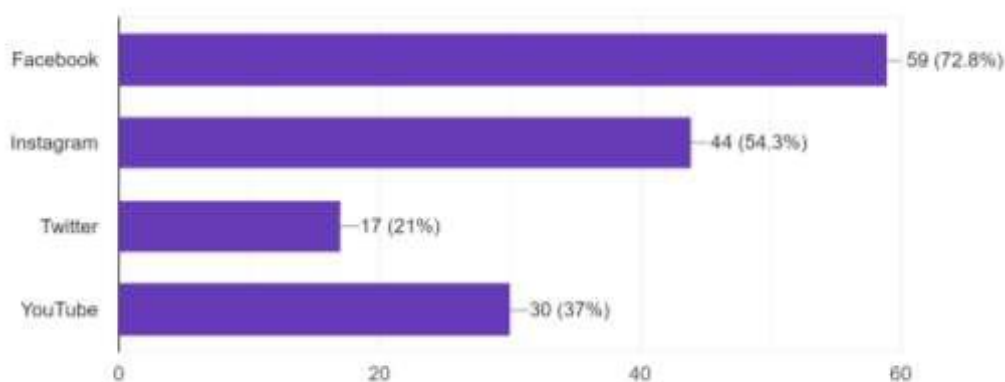
9- From where do you know about the above brands?



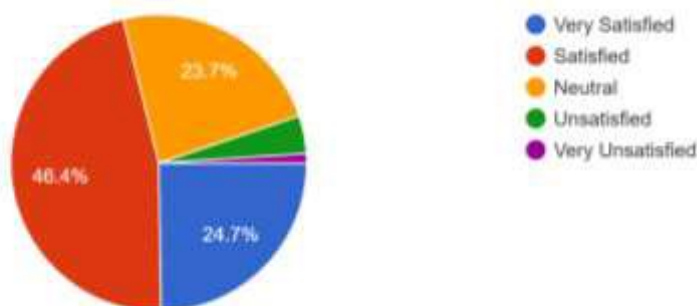
10- Do you follow ZARA and H&M on social media?



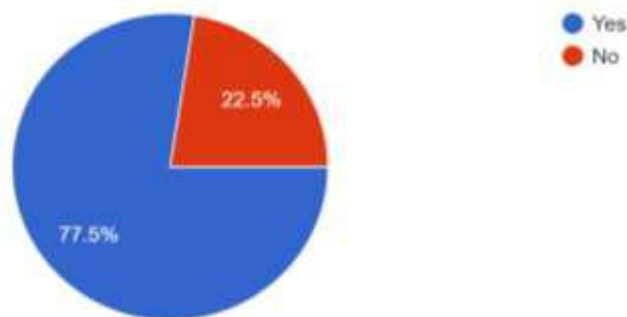
11- If yes, on which social media platform you follow ZARA and H&M?



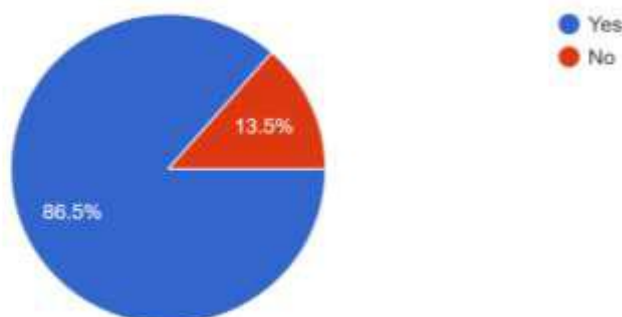
12- How much are you satisfied with posts of ZARA and H&M on their social media pages?



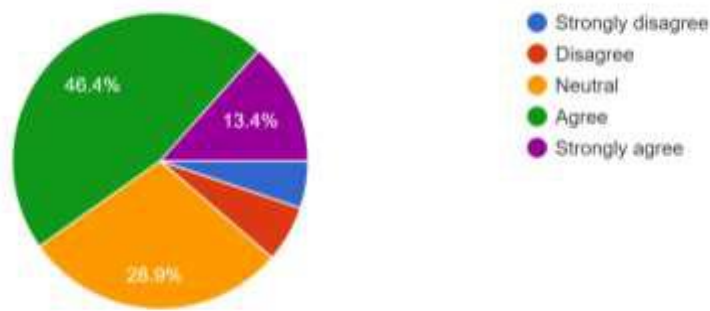
13- Have you ever purchased any product following a social media post from the brands?



14- Is ZARA and H&M is active on social media?



15- The marketing activities of ZARA and H&M are attractive on their social media pages.



5. CONCLUSION:

The paper focused on the impact of social media on the fashion industry with two examples of brands Zara and H&M. The objective of the project was to understand the impact or influence of social media on one of the frequently changing industries the fashion industry.

Based on the analysis and findings we can conclude that social media marketing of the brands Zara and H&M is active and they attract a large target market with the use of social media. From the analysis of each question in the project, it is stated how social media impacts brands. From the findings, in general, we can say that there are both negative and positive impacts of social media on businesses. But when this type of question was asked in the questionnaire people responded that the impact of social media is either neutral or positive but some businesses say that there are also some negative impacts that can be harsh feedback or it can trolls which are the most negative side of using social media. From the project, we know that the fashion industry was the late adopter of digital marketing but when they adopted they understood the benefits of it and uses social media to achieve their objective.

In this project, it is also asked respondents of the questionnaire which social media applications they used the most. So from the answer to this question we got to know that Facebook is the most commonly used social media then it follows by Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, and Twitter. So businesses should make their social media strategy keeping in mind that in which social media pages they have more followers and they should be more active on those platforms if they don't they can lose their existing as well as new customers.

In general, there are some measures that the fashion brands Zara and H&M can take into consideration. Zara has more followers on Instagram than Facebook so they need to continue posting pictures of their new clothes. They need to post more stories on the new products and sometimes they need to reply to the comment they get on their social media pages. In the case of H&M, they have more followers on Facebook than Instagram. H&M is very much active in their social media pages; they post stories and videos and reels also on their pages and they should also more often reply to the comments.

This is the conclusion and some recommendations to brands for improving their social media activities.

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