

UNIVERSIDAD DEL ROSARIO



IMPACT OF FAST FASHION TRENDS ON CONSUMER'S BUYING BEHAVIOR,
PERSPECTIVE FROM DIGITAL MARKETING ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

Trabajo de Grado

Andrea Carolina Caicedo Ibarra

Rennes, France

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Andrea Carolina Caicedo Ibarra

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RESUMEN

El fenómeno de la moda rápida ha cobrado fuerza en los últimos años para satisfacer la acelerada demanda de los consumidores. En Colombia se ha evidenciado que la entrada de las grandes tiendas de moda de consumo masivo ha cambiado los hábitos de los consumidores, ya que incentivan a las personas a comprar con mayor frecuencia debido a los bajos precios y a los diferentes modelos de venta. Este proyecto se centrará en las principales estrategias de marketing digital adoptadas por las empresas de fast fashion, principalmente en la creación de contenidos, el uso de las redes sociales, la promoción y la venta de productos en línea, y cómo esto influye en las preferencias de estilo de los clientes, el comportamiento de consumo y la decisión de compra. Este estudio pretende ayudar a las empresas emergentes colombianas proporcionándoles una guía de buenas prácticas para su crecimiento empresarial a través de estrategias adecuadas de marketing digital, especialmente en las redes sociales.

Palabras clave:

Moda, redes sociales, marketing digital, comportamiento de compra, estrategia, decisión de compra.

ABSTRACT

The fast fashion phenomenon has gained strength in recent years to meet the accelerated demand of consumers. In Colombia, it has become evident that the entry of large mass-consumption fashion stores has changed consumer habits, as they encourage people to buy more frequently due to low prices and different sales models. This project will focus on the leading digital marketing strategies adopted by fast fashion companies, mainly in the creation of content, use of social networks, promotion and sales of products online, and how this influences customers' style preferences, consumer behavior, and purchase decision. This study aims to help emerging Colombian companies by providing them with a guide of good practices for their business growth through appropriate digital marketing strategies, especially on social networks.

Keywords:

Fashion, Social Networks, Digital Marketing, Buying Behavior, Strategy, Purchase Decision.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research project seeks to know how influential social networks are in imposing fashion, identifying the most predominant factors, the most used digital media, and the different techniques currently used by companies. As a first part of the work, research was conducted on international Fast fashion brands with great recognition in Colombia, such as Zara, Bershka, H&M, Adidas, Nike, and Pull & Bear, observing and monitoring their digital platforms, with the purpose analyze the different strategies of promotion, communication, and interaction on their websites and social networks such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, having this information as a basis for research. Secondly, qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews with people from the groups of the population most influenced by digital media, which in this case are the millennials and the Z generation. Finally, a consolidated analysis was developed, both with the digital strategies of the brands and the experiences and opinions of customers about them, in order to identify trends or patterns in the buying behavior and the purchase decision of young people in Colombia.

1.1 Research Topic Statement

Today, more than ever, the world is witnessing how fashion has been increasing its boom and how globalization makes it more and more universal. With the emergence of information technologies and digital media, it was inevitable that they would become part of the daily lives of people, companies, and organizations. The dissemination of information

through social networks has become a strong strategy for companies to promote their products and services, making their brand known and keeping the audience aware of changes in the industry. A particular example is the fast fashion industry, which is constantly gaining strength in this medium and for which marketing is indispensable. In this industry, brands seek to create their own identity with which consumers feel affinity and from this state influence their purchasing decisions (Alonso, 2015). It can be evidenced that one of the media mainly used and of greater acceptance today are social networks, especially Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Pinterest, in which brands make a presence, publicize their products and promote events, fashion shows, new collections, etc., through advertisements, videos, posts, stories, promotions and other tools provided by these platforms, which their users use daily. On the other hand, it is also essential to highlight the work of the so-called "influencers" in disseminating new fashion trends internationally (Sánchez & Giraldo, 2015).

On the other hand, it is crucial to take into account the current situation world is experiencing worldwide after the spread of the pandemic of COVID-19 in 2020. Companies that continued to manage their marketing and advertising mostly traditionally were forced to change their business models, opening their doors to the use of digital media to promote and sell their products online.

1.2 Justification

The main objective is to identify the importance of digital marketing and the influence of the creation of styles and trends in social networks by fast fashion companies on the tastes and preferences of the consumer. It is essential to know this so that small and medium-sized Colombian companies in the sector can grow their business by adapting to the current market's demands. The main problem identified is the need for companies today to reinvent themselves and adapt to the changes that occur in the world; technology has transformed our world at previously unimaginable levels and has opened the doors to opt for new ways to generate business ideas and, therefore a brand that wants to succeed in today's world must have a management and strategies at the forefront, flexible, open and anticipate as best as possible to the changing environment.

It is essential that a future manager knows different strategies to make their brand known, effectively sell his products or services, and achieve market positioning. Likewise, due to the rise of technology and the media, it is evident that entrepreneurs see the need to venture into the digital world, giving a new perspective to traditional marketing. I believe that for the growth of organizations, it is essential to use digital media such as social networks since the mentality of customers is changing to a much more practical form of consumption, in which they demand a greater variety of products, but in turn, lower levels of effort on their part, and are always in search of brands that can meet their needs as much as possible more efficiently and immediately.

Digital marketing has become an indispensable tool for companies because it allows them more outstanding communication and interaction with their customers. In addition, technologies today enable them to collect relevant information from digital media for the growth of organizations in an easier and faster way. For this project, the fast fashion sector was

chosen specifically because it is one of the industries with the most significant influence on consumers worldwide and is also greatly dependent on the marketing area.

With the results obtained from this project, it is expected that Colombian companies take it as a guide for developing successful digital marketing strategies and that they can approach these media in much more successful ways.

1.3 Objectives:

1.3.1 General objective:

Identify digital marketing companies' influence on consumers' styles, preferences, and tastes in the fast fashion sector.

1.3.2 Specific objectives:

- To analyze the digital media marketing strategies successfully carried out in some globally recognized fast fashion companies.
- Identify the preferences of consumers in the fashion sector.
- Serve as a practical guide for companies wishing to venture into digital marketing with strategies that boost their growth.

2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION

Digital Marketing: “It connects buyers with sellers electronically through interactive technologies such as emails, websites, social networks, online forums and newsgroups, interactive television, mobile communications, etc. Depending on the high level of connectivity, digital marketing facilitates communications among many and is typically used to promote products and services in a timely, personally relevant and cost-effective manner.” (Rathnayaka, 2018).

In this dynamic world, people are facing a process of constant evolution and change; new technologies, social networks, consumer demands, and emerging countries are changing the competitive environment of markets and industries. As a result, managing brands to reach their potential is more challenging than ever. In the age of telecommunications and social media, where the consumer is indisputably the right one, brands must know how consumers use multiple devices and platforms to communicate and thus be able to interact with them more directly: "Brands in the fashion and lifestyle sector see the digital environment as a key opportunity to develop their marketing strategy." (Domingo, 2013).

With the new era of technology and the Internet, companies should seek to include digital media in their brand management to support their marketing and communication plans. The idea of traditional advertising is changing radically; now, users are free to share their opinions and experiences, as well brands can communicate more efficiently with their customers through social networks, where they can share a variety of content and interact with a more significant number of people (Del Olmo & Fondevila, 2014).

In a global market where consumers are increasingly demanding and demanding about what they buy, the digital revolution has brought about a change in the way fashion is consumed. Now users are much more informed and aware of events, which forces brands to use all possible resources to maintain their positioning and not succumb to the competition. It is also necessary to bear in mind trends such as fast fashion, in which, due to the continuous demand for more and new products, brands are forced to launch multiple collections per season and to constantly reinvent themselves (Black, 2009).

The first obstacle companies face to succeed in their digital marketing plan lies in aligning their strategies with social media, creating content that is sufficiently influential on users and their purchase decision, or simply on their brand perception. Secondly, facing a more critical and skeptical consumer, who also has thousands of different options in the fashion industry to choose from (González & Plaza, 2017). Thus, the goal of any company would then be to achieve market dominance and implement tools in social networks, use customers as influencers on other users, and create trends.

Brand Image: Because companies today face the challenge of keeping up with rapid technological and innovation changes, the constant positioning and reinvention of the brand have become resources that provide a long-term competitive advantage.

"The image of a brand or company (and of individuals as well) is mainly mediated by two channels: what it says about itself, i.e., the communications it sends through its own media (whether online or offline), as well as the image that it is public and the people who can give

their opinion about it create. This image of brands, institutions or people is their reputation". (Fondevila, Del Olmo, & Nieto, 2012, p. 95).

Undoubtedly, companies need to adapt to changes in the industry and overcome future obstacles that may arise; however, this management is not easy to do; it requires an arduous and continuous study of the market, as well as frequent communication with consumers that allows brands to develop their plans and meet their sales projections. This research seeks to identify methods and tools that well-known companies have successfully implemented and that could serve as a guide for other brands, as well as to recognize errors, problems, and challenges that may arise. Finally, it will offer a perspective from the Colombian customer, their needs, preferences, styles, and ways of interacting and buying online.

Fashion Industry: This project will be focused on the study of digital marketing from the perspective of the fashion sector, taking into account that it is one of the industries in which marketing is fundamental, and also because today is evident that it has a significant influence on the style and identity of people. Fashion is one of the leading industries in the world, and according to statistics from Fashion United magazine and Modaes Latinoamérica, this market is currently valued at more than 3 billion dollars and employs more than 300 million workers in the world (Fashion United, 2016; Modaes Latinoamérica, 2018). As stated by Mark Tungate, "Global spending, on everything related to the fashion world is estimated at one trillion dollars. This huge industry is governed by a number of marketing techniques that are worth dissecting." (Tungate, 2014). The main reason for the great success and positioning of the industry is that it is currently all around us, from clothing and accessories to phones, cars, and even the interior design of our homes and other spaces; and this, in turn, is due to the importance that today's

society gives to presentation, luxury, status and how companies have been able to identify fashion as a personalized expression of consumers; demonstrating with it to society our identity, what people feel, and how they see themselves. Fashion is something that people inevitably have to face in their daily lives. For this reason, it is crucial to establish how companies manage to sell not only products but, beyond that, an identity, a lifestyle.

Fast Fashion: Fast, trendy, and affordable are today's top priorities for modern consumers; fast fashion, therefore, is a business model that is constantly evolving. As a way to attract more customers, brands keep introducing new products to increase consumer interest.

The concept of fast fashion refers to the strategy used by many large international retailers, in which different designs enter and leave the market quickly, provoking in people a constant need to acquire new products. This trend has been highly criticized because creating high volumes of clothes produced increases the negative impact on the environment generated by the companies and also promotes large amounts of waste.

“Remarkably, clothing has gradually become a way to express themselves and manifest themselves; consumers follow the popular indicators to buy new products. According to past studies, the part of fashion that can address personal needs is still insufficient, since consumers' requirements are still not being met concerning product quality, cost, and reliability” (Hui-Yi Chen, 2021).

Social media marketing and fast fashion play a role in our everyday lives, whether people consciously or unconsciously recognize them. Companies carry out these digital strategies to influence people to consume more and more.

Innovation: One of the main objectives of any organization is the creation of efficient and innovative action plans that not only allow them to increase their positioning in the market but also to accredit the image that customers have of the brand in order to improve their relationship with them and achieve referencing. According to Silvia Moschini, this represents a significant challenge for companies since they must not only have the ability to be present on social media but also know how to use them properly and for the benefit of the brand (Moschini, 2012). It is essential to clarify that both the tastes and preferences of consumers are changing and, therefore, so is the market, and it is for this reason that the strategies proposed by brands must, in turn, respond to this dynamism and adapt to changes effectively. For this, it is essential to make correct use of digital marketing tools and understand the different interaction processes with the purpose of having a higher level of competitiveness in the industry.

Social Networks: What companies must constantly do is be aware of trends, the most used interaction processes, the new social networks, the products and services most valued by consumers, who are influencers, and other areas of social media for the development of their marketing strategies (Perez, 2013).

A trend that is positioning itself as a guide for users when purchasing products or services is called "influencers," which are people with a considerable number of followers

(usually celebrities) who share a variety of content. Brands usually make alliances with them to promote their products, making the influencers speak well of the product, give their positive opinion about it, and also recommend it to their followers.

"A context in which Instagrammers, bloggers, or YouTubers maintain a constant link with their followers, to whom they transmit lifestyle, tastes, hobbies, outfits, etc. The studies initiated on the Sociology of Consumption, Communication, and Marketing are subject to constant changes caused by ICT's novelty, actuality, and speed. If the focus is directed to the field of fast fashion and younger urban tribes, discoveries and advances occur at a pace that is difficult to control." (Perez & Luque, 2017, p. 257).

"We are 7.7 billion humans on the planet, and according to the annual report, The Global State of Digital in 2019, created by Hootsuite and We Are Social, 52% of the world's population uses social networks. What does this mean? More than half of the world is already connected to a social network such as Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube, among others." (Adame, 2019).

Elements of value: Thanks to the integration of digital marketing as well as branding, fashion has emerged through the use of technology and innovative service of fashion trends. As technology in the modern world continues to develop, digital media has become very close to people, as they have easy and fast access to the internet. The fashion industry depends totally on changing trends and has a life cycle. Digital media measurement and optimization can

enable marketers to acquire and convert customers through analyzing and forecasting fashion trends before customers switch to competitors.

Customer satisfaction determines whether a business succeeds or fails. The internet age has shifted consumer behavior to one of digital culture, with increased access to information; consequently, consumers are not loyal to brands and focus instead on the information obtained through social networks. Marketers would become trendsetters by analyzing and forecasting fashion trends, and digital media would become the best platform to acquire and convert customers by measuring and optimizing digital media to retain customers for life. (Muniesa & Giménez, 2020).

In this way, digital tools help businesses keep in touch with their customers not only by showing them content but also by addressing any problems they may have with online purchases to offer more brand awareness and provide a better customer experience.

Neuromarketing on digital platforms: The first step toward determining whether intended communication objectives have been achieved is to evaluate the effectiveness of advertising communications. A wide variety of measurement techniques have been used for decades to measure consumers' attention levels, emotions, preferences, and future purchasing behavior based on thousands of persuasive messages they face daily. However, their main limitation is that they require consumers to describe their emotional state, preferences, and future purchasing behavior. (Baños & Baraybar, 2022). Neuromarketing arose from the adaptation of neuroscience techniques to marketing communications, providing new methods

to deepen and advance the knowledge of the mechanisms of persuasion, especially those related to the influence of emotional aspects in cognitive changes.

Social network neuromarketing is about identifying what areas of the brain consumers use in their decision-making processes. It is possible to determine the reactions of acceptance or rejection of the buyer in relation to the brand, product design, online platforms, and much more.

Most customers buy driven by their irrational side, which is driven by emotions and feelings. It is common to find relevant information on social networks but not provocative. Therefore, brands must generate content that provokes feelings in the user, one of the most effective methods is usually the video format since audiovisual content tends to motivate the viewer. Studying and knowing your target audience in detail is essential to deepen the reactions they have at a cerebral level when watching your campaigns. By knowing your audience at this level, brands will be able to offer their customers precisely what they want and learn how to reach them through emotions.

Customer Journey: The customer journey is the process a person goes through to purchase a good or service, and it comprises the set of interactions the consumer has with the company before, during, and after the purchase. A marketer's goal has always been to influence consumers during those moments of openness.

McKinsey & Company (2009) developed a funnel model, which suggests that consumers systematically narrow the consideration phase as they weigh their options, make

decisions, and purchase products. Then, the aftersales becomes a testing period to determine consumer loyalty to brands.

In the current model, consumers make decisions based on a circular path with four stages: consideration, evaluation, purchase and aftersales. Technology allows shoppers to better evaluate products and services, to add and eliminate options and services more vigorously, as well as to add and remove options over time. Additionally, it included a feedback loop that allowed customers to continually evaluate products and services after purchase, urging brands to continually deliver superior experiences. (Gallo, 2017).

In order to gain insight into customer experiences and understand complex customer behavior, the concept of the customer journey has become increasingly important. Companies must understand the customer journey over time and how it changes over time. There are multiple channels and media through which customers interact with firms today, and customer experiences are becoming increasingly social. These changes demand that brands integrate multiple business functions and external partners to deliver positive customer experiences.

Purchasing decision: Rathnayaka, in his article "Role of digital marketing in the retail fashion industry: A synthesis of the theory and the practice," describes consumer behavior as the code of conduct that manifests itself in people searching, acquiring, using, and finally evaluating the product or service they consume to satisfy their different needs (Rathnayaka, 2018). Among the aspects to identify consumer behavior are time, place, money, efforts, and frequency of what they buy or use the products and services purchased. Both consumer behavior and the purchase decision are internal processes in the mind of the consumer, and his

final decision is made based on his criteria according to the impact of different internal and external stimuli; it is here where marketing plays a fundamental role when it comes to inducing people to buy through product, price, place or promotion strategies.

Nowadays, it is almost impossible to think that customers' purchasing decisions are made only thanks to traditional marketing. In such an interconnected world, it is necessary to implement tools that respond to technological changes and the new demands of the markets; digital marketing appears as that instrument that provides a closer interaction with customers, a more excellent, more accessible, and faster communication between people and company. However, this line of marketing is not only based on strategies to attract buyers; it is also important to consider that digital media allow us to obtain and organize information about consumers, allowing brands to have accurate databases in a more immediate, truthful, and economical way. To summarize, digital marketing offers advantages to organizations such as flexibility, dynamism, real-time data measurement, reliability, improved segmentation, greater profitability, increased proximity to users, and brings companies into the digital future.

Online Consumer Behavior: According to EAE Business School (2022), “The online consumer is in regular contact with information of interest about those stores where they buy on a regular or occasional basis. For example, they read this news through the company's social networks or by reading the corporate blog.”

Consumers' purchasing decisions are also influenced by marketing. A portion of the public can consider the recommendations of influencers or micro-influencers. In spite of the

fact that a person might not ultimately wish to buy an item, this promotional method could have helped them learn about it.

Discounts are also an excellent incentive to buy for those who see the relationship between quality and cost in an article's price. The customer is aware of this section of the promotions due to his frequent consultation of the novelties.

Cell phone purchases are also becoming increasingly frequent, and this device has become almost indispensable in people's daily lives. In addition to making calls and being in direct contact, the telephone has become much more than that. Surfing the Internet is an everyday activity on this channel. Customers consult options and make purchases from their computers as well as their cell phones.

Regarding payment methods, customers often choose PayPal as their preferred method for making purchases without entering additional information.

Generational factors play a significant role in how familiar a person is with the Internet purchase process. As a result of growing up in a technological environment, young people are very comfortable with this type of experience. E-commerce is more than a generational issue; it is a present and a future. Therefore, many people of different ages have learned new digital skills and are familiar with this concept.

Colombian culture related to fashion consumption: The characteristics identified in the recent study conducted at the Universidad del Bosque, "Factors influencing the consumer's

purchase decision in the Colombian textile industry” (Bustamante & Ramírez, 2021), show that the main characteristics that consumers maintain when purchasing different brands in the textile industry are the following:

- Colombians prefer a recognized brand in the market compared to national brands or brands that maintain low recognition.
- Purchase decisions are based primarily on the inherent qualities and characteristics of the product, such as quality, design, and price.
- In terms of practicality and trend, there is a relationship that considers the buyers’ ages. Usually, between the ages of 18 and 20 years, young people place great value on the trend and fashion, while between the ages of 22 and 26 years, people place more value on the practicality and comfort of the garment.
- Despite the prevalence of international brands, Colombian products, and national enterprises are increasing, and a particular interest in the tastes of society is necessary to meet the requirements of occasionality, which is mainly influenced by commercialization and marketing strategies used by textile companies in the relationship with customers.

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to address the research topic, it was decided to implement a qualitative study, with the purpose of collecting information about the opinion and perspectives of people about

the influence of digital marketing strategies on their consumer behavior and finally in their purchase decision; as mentioned above, the questions will be focused on fast fashion clothing and accessories brands.

The methodology of this research project will be conducted in several stages, with which it is expected to identify two different perspectives of digital marketing: both on the part of companies and the perception of customers.

Data Collection:

Stage 1: Direct observation of the social networks of the chosen companies (H&M, Zara, Pull and Bear, Nike, Adidas, Bershka). First, each brand's websites and social networks will be analyzed by identifying and classifying the different structures of the posts (organization, type of photographs used, use of hashtags, titles or quotes, and information provided, among others). Subsequently, weekly monitoring will be carried out for a period of 2 months of the publications and stories to know and follow up on the activities in social media, identifying the most used tools to share content, the form of interaction with users, and their marketing strategies.

Stage 2: Development and implementation of interviews on the influence of digital marketing strategies on users, asking questions aimed at the frequency of purchase, if they feel identified with the style or identity that the brand is trying to sell, which brands they use in greater proportion, and the rating they give on the strategies of each brand; it is expected from the participants to share their opinions on the brands' social network management, their

perspectives on the company itself, suggestions for improvement, personal experiences of influence of these brands on their style and identity, among others. This is to get qualitative data and, with the results, create general conclusions about the topic.

The objective is to be able to perform a generalized qualitative analysis of the customer's perspective to complement the analysis of the interviews and to be able to identify other aspects that may have been left out in the previous stage.

The data collection will be carried out through semi-structured interviews that are more flexible since they start with planned questions that can be adjusted to the interviewees' needs. With their flexibility, they can motivate the interlocutor, clarify terms, identify ambiguities and reduce formalities while adapting to the subject matter. Due to the evident distance between Colombia and France, most of the interviews will be conducted virtually through video calls, using platforms such as Teams and Zoom. A guide for the development of the interviews will be established in advance with an introduction to the main topics and the questions to be asked; ideally, the participants will be able to express their opinion in a free and spontaneous way, exposing their points of view and even their own experiences related to the decision of the purchase process in the stores mentioned above, always respecting the structure of the questionnaire.

The interviews began with a brief introduction about the objective of the study; then followed by questions about the participant's personal information in order to know their demographic data and understand the general context of each one; then, the questions focused on the research and the concepts to be addressed in it will be asked. The interviews will be

conducted in Spanish, the official language of Colombia, and may last between 15 and 20 minutes, depending on the information the participant wants to share.

Stage 3: Conduct a joint analysis of the study, taking into account the two perspectives observed and drawing conclusions on the results yielded by the data collection. Accordingly, it will be possible to establish the appropriate strategies for the development of more effective marketing management for consumers.

Social networks: To conduct this research, three main social networks in which consumers interact virtually with companies were studied: Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Sample: For the purpose of developing the interviews, It will use non-random sampling, more specifically purposive sampling, to ensure the information obtained is relevant, accurate, and of high quality. As previously mentioned, this project will focus on generation "Z" and "Millennials," between the ages of 18 and 35, from two of the biggest and most important cities in Colombia, Bogotá D.C and Medellín, who are frequent apparel retailers, have a medium-high purchasing power, and have at least undergraduate education.

As for the sample size, 16 participants will be selected for individual in-depth interviews. Through personalized messages, the participants will be notified precisely what the purpose of the interview is and how long it will last, with the aim of choosing a convenient date for the interviewer and the participant. The main topic will not be mentioned before the

interview for the purpose of preventing participants from researching it in advance to allow them to share their opinions based on their experiences and knowledge.

Expected results: With the development of this project, it is sought to establish the level of influence of digital marketing strategies employed by some recognized companies in the fast fashion sector in the purchase decision of consumers, which, through identification and analysis, are defined and can be used as a reference in the different marketing areas of other companies engaged in the manufacture and production of clothing.

Structure of the interview:

Introduction: This is an interview that will be part of the qualitative data collection for the development of a project that will focus on the leading digital marketing strategies adopted by fast fashion companies, mainly in the creation of content, the use of social networks, the promotion and sale of products online, and how this influences customers' style preferences, consumer behavior, and purchase decision. Your responses will be transcribed for research purposes and serve as the basis for the analysis of the study.

Personal Information

- Name
- Age
- Gender

- Occupation

Questionary

1. How relevant are fashion trends in your life? Why?
2. What are your favorite digital platforms to stay on top of the latest fashion trends (social networks, emails, YouTube, Instagram, etc.)?
3. What digital marketing strategies on social networks do you consider most effective? Why (e.g., short videos, celebrity or influencer collaborations, contests, subscription discounts, innovative content, etc.)?
4. What type of online advertising has led you to make a purchase?
5. When you make a purchase, what process do you follow? Do you buy online or directly in the store? Do you check the brands' websites or social networks beforehand? Why?
6. What aspects do you consider when making your purchase: price, quality, fashion, utility, etc., and why?
7. What type of content or advertising usually catches your attention from fashion brands on digital platforms?
8. What characteristics do you think are essential for a fashion company to be successful in the proper management of its social networks?
9. How often do you buy fashion items such as clothing, accessories, or footwear from Fast Fashion brands such as Zara, H&M, or Bershka? And what are your motivations for preferring these brands?
10. How would you describe the personality or style of the following brands? Zara, Bershka, Pull and Bear, Adidas, Nike, and H&M?

11. Have you visited their websites or social networks? What is your impression of each brand's content?
12. Do you know the digital marketing strategies of these brands? Some examples (e.g., short videos, collaborations with celebrities or influencers, contests, subscription discounts, innovative content, etc.)
13. Have you ever been influenced to buy from these brands by their content or digital advertising on social networks? Why?
14. Do you think the digital activity of these brands, such as their content and online advertising, has influenced your perception of them? In what way? If possible, give an example.

4. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Observation and analysis of the social networks:

ZARA

Website: Zara's website has a simple but sober and elegant design, with shades of black and white; its main page contains headings such as news, beauty, men, women, children, and home; also, each one has subcategories by-product, and there is also an online chat option, and a variety of filters to make it easier for customers to search. People can create their profiles to get benefits and news about the seasons; you can make purchases online and have a wish list to purchase products later if preferred. The photos of the models are very stylish and aesthetic, conveying an exquisite, contemporary, and fresh style.

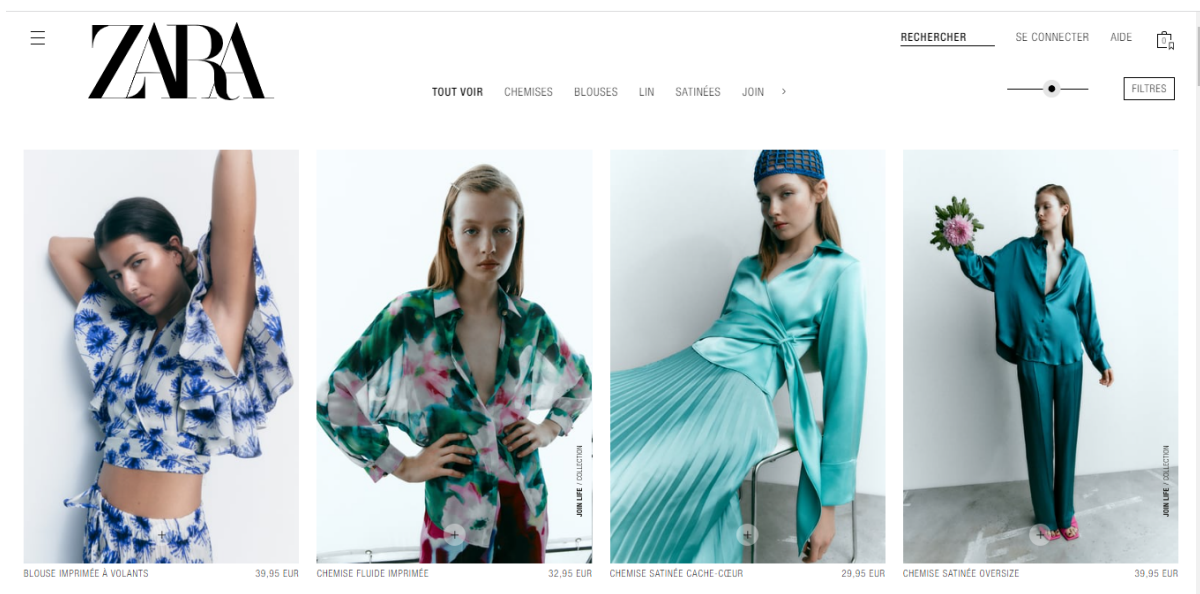


Image 1: Zara Colombia Homepage

Source: Zara Website homepage (2022).

Instagram and Facebook: 52,2 million followers. Both social networks manage a very similar format, share images and videos related to the latest campaign, and there is a direct link to the website. Both on Facebook and Instagram, they have an online boutique where customers can look at the price of the products and purchase them. The captions they use are very simple, and in the vast majority of publications referring to the name of the collection or the campaign, the hashtags only indicate the group or category of products seen in the image or video as #zarawomen or #zarabeuty, also give credits to photographers or makeup artists.

The organization of your Instagram feed is horizontal lines; that is, the content is grouped in groups of 3 publications with similar content such as colors, background, and product categories, and even the same model, but each line has different characteristics from the other.

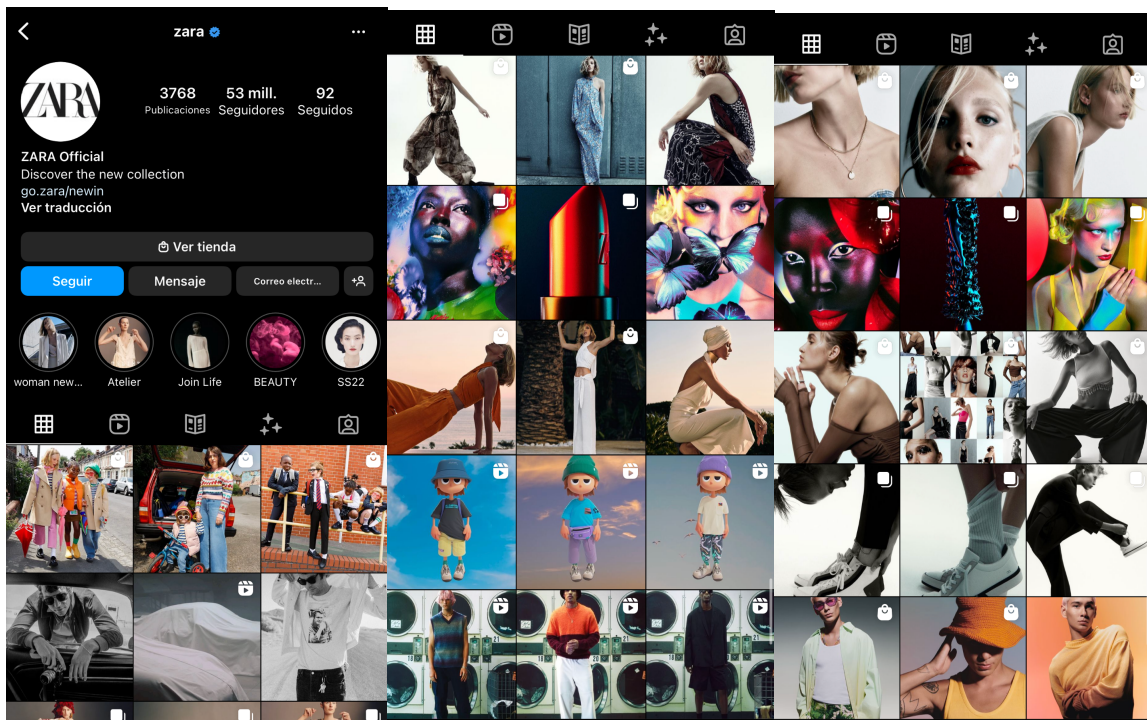
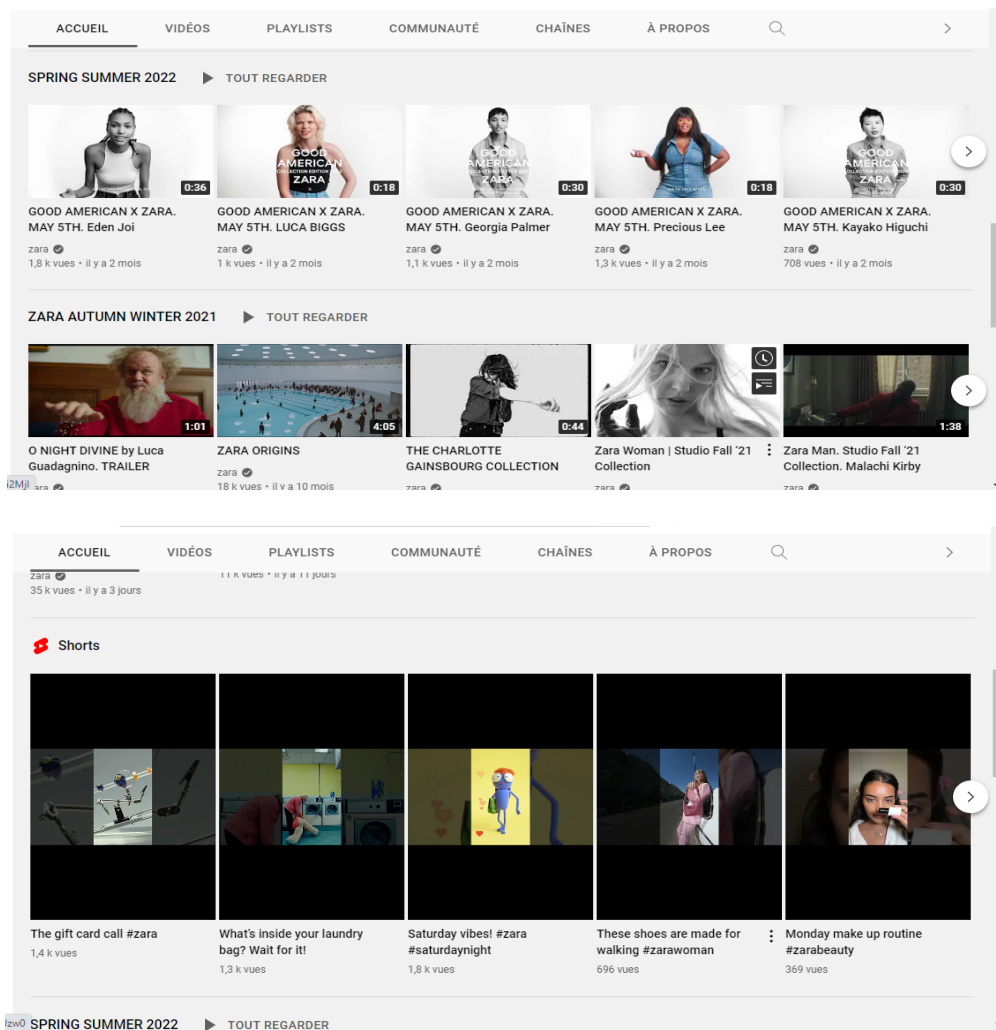


Image 2: Zara Instagram Feed

Source: Zara Instagram Feed (2022).

YouTube: 103.000 subscribers. The brand's YouTube channel is effortless; it contains primarily short videos from 30 seconds to 4 minutes, it is organized by collections such as Autumn-Winter 2021 and Spring-Summer 2022, but it doesn't have much content other than the bells and whistles. They have collaborations to promote Zara Beauty products with different influencers and make-up artists like Freya Tidy. The shorts format has become more prevalent in recent months. There is a boom in video marketing. First, it was launched by its competitor, Instagram Reels, and now, YouTube is joining the trend with YouTube Shorts to grab its market share. As the same Google support page describes, YouTube Shorts allow anyone to connect with a new audience just by using a smartphone and the YouTube app's Shorts camera. YouTube Shorts creation tools make it easy to record content up to 60 seconds long with our multi-segment camera. (Google, n.d.)



Images 3&4: Zara Youtube Channel

Source: Zara Youtube Channel (2022).

Bershka and Pull and Bear:

As both brands belong to the same conglomerate and are aimed at a very similar and younger target group than Zara, it was decided that their social networks would be evaluated together for the analysis.

Website: The organization of the websites is very similar; only certain things change, like the typography of the titles. They have favorites and bags to buy online; there is a pop-in to subscribe to the newsletter and receive 10% off the first virtual purchase.

Bershka has a much more fashionista style; their images are simple and without many filters; on the contrary, Pull and Bear have a more bohemian style.

Bershka has a section called Bershka Creator, in which it collaborates with influencers or artists to promote their products in a more innovative and creative way; the goal is that these people are a source of inspiration for customers of the brand in terms of trends, styles, and looks.

Each brand collaborates with new designs; for example, Pull&Bear partners with Stranger Things, while Bershka with Rock bands like Nirvana, Metallica, or The Rolling Stones.

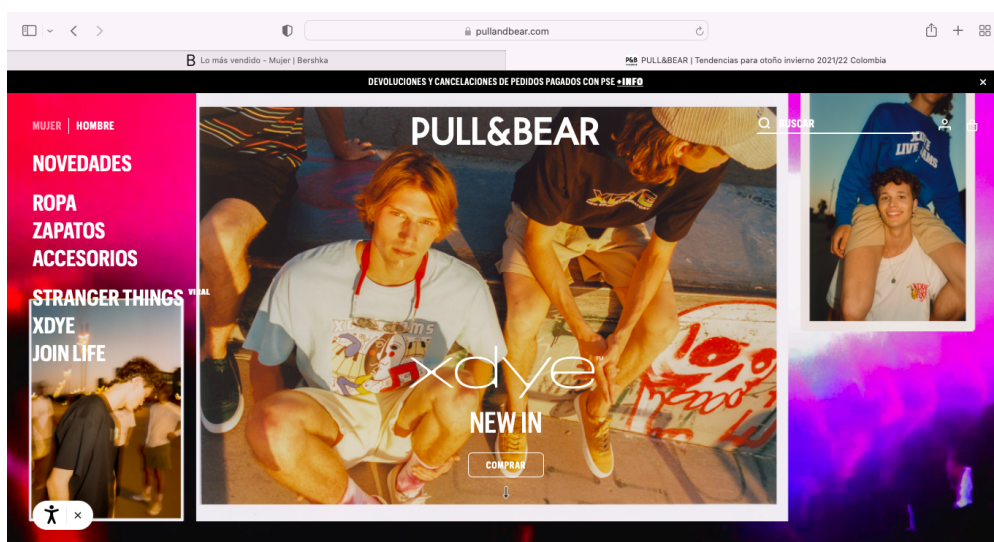


Image 5: Pull&Bear Website homepage

Source: Pull&Bear Website homepage (2022).

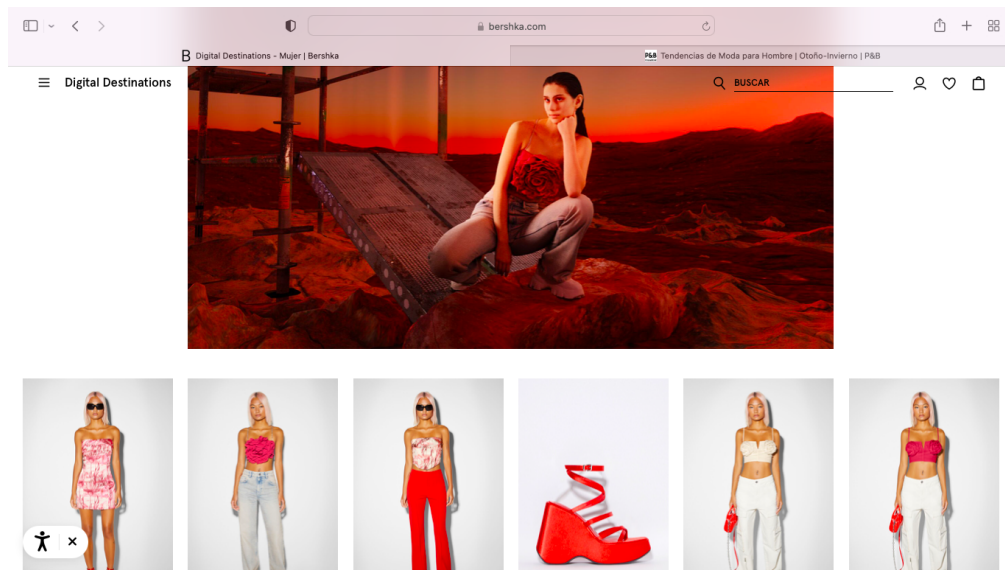


Image 6: Bershka Website homepage

Source: Bershka Website homepage (2022).

Instagram: Bershka: 10.5 million subscribers: They invite the public to tag them in their publications with the hashtag #bershkastyle; they have a boutique to acquire products directly through Instagram. They publish all kinds of content such as photos, Reels, and even effects for Instastories; the format does not have a particular order but a very marked style, modern, fresh, youthful, and fun. Their highlight stories are focused on highlighting collaborations with influencers and artists promoting their latest designs and collections.

Pull&Bear: 7,5 million subscribers: With a very similar dynamic, they invite the public to tag the brand in their publications with the hashtag #pullandbearcommunity. Their feed doesn't have a specific order, but their content is very uniform in terms of backgrounds, colors, and styles. They also have Videos, Reels, effects for Instastories, and an online boutique. Their featured stories refer to their product categories as they are organized on their website.

Facebook: Both brands' content on Facebook is very similar to what is published on Instagram regarding images and videos. They also have an online boutique and categories for reviews, stores, events, and community.

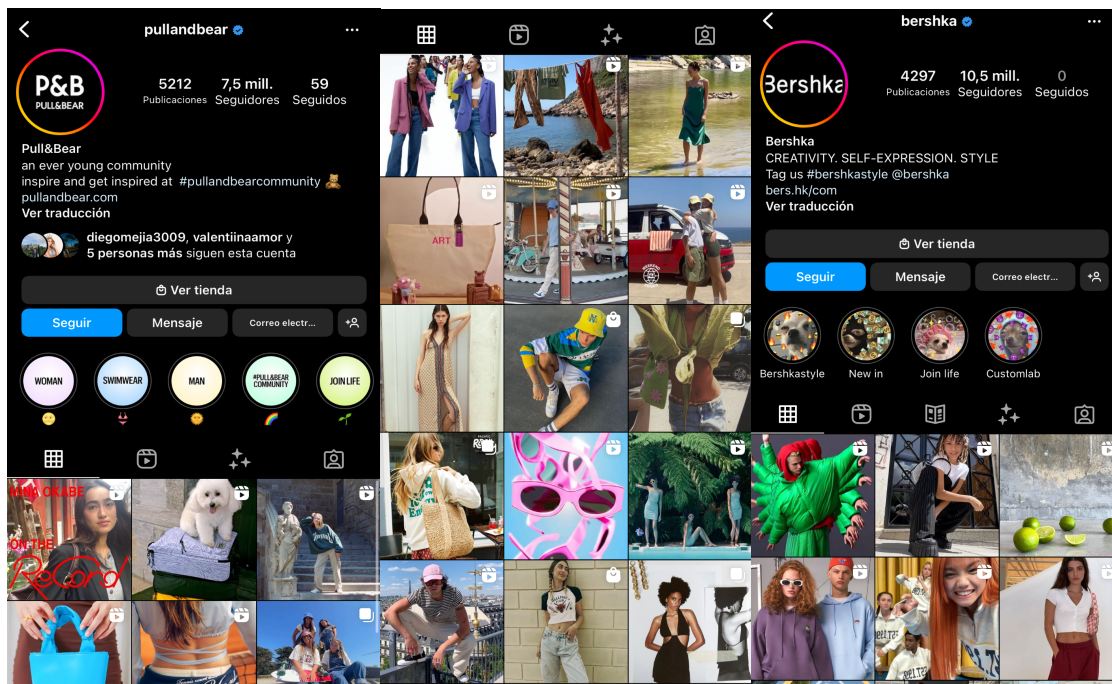


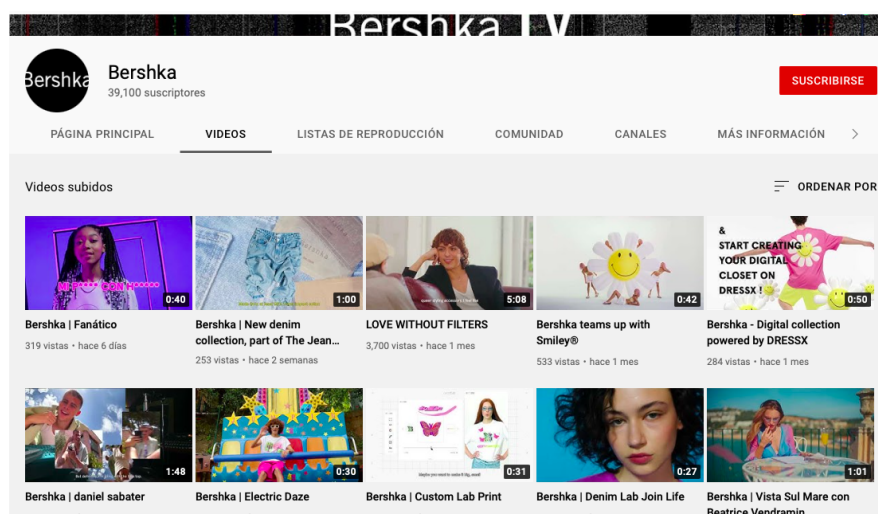
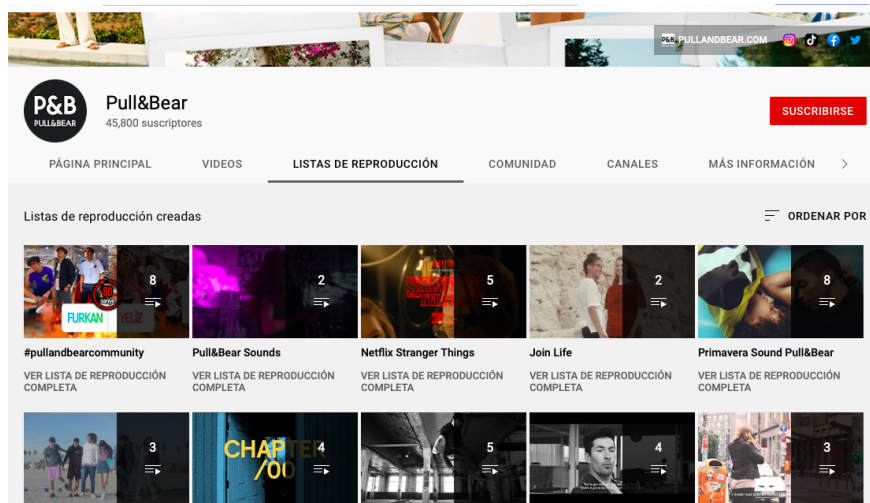
Image 7: Pull&Bear and Bershka Instagram feeds

Source: Pull&Bear and Bershka Instagram feeds (2022).

YouTube: In general, it can be said that this social network is not the strongest for both brands; they are limited to sharing advertising content and not much interaction with the public.

Bershka 39,100 subscribers: The channel contains short videos with collaboration campaigns such as squid game, The Witcher, Smiley, or Lil Kreetts.

Pull & Bear 45,800 subscribers: The playlists refer mainly to the brand's fashion campaigns, events, and collaborations, such as the one mentioned above with Stranger Things.



Images 8&9: Pull&Bear and Bershka YouTube channels

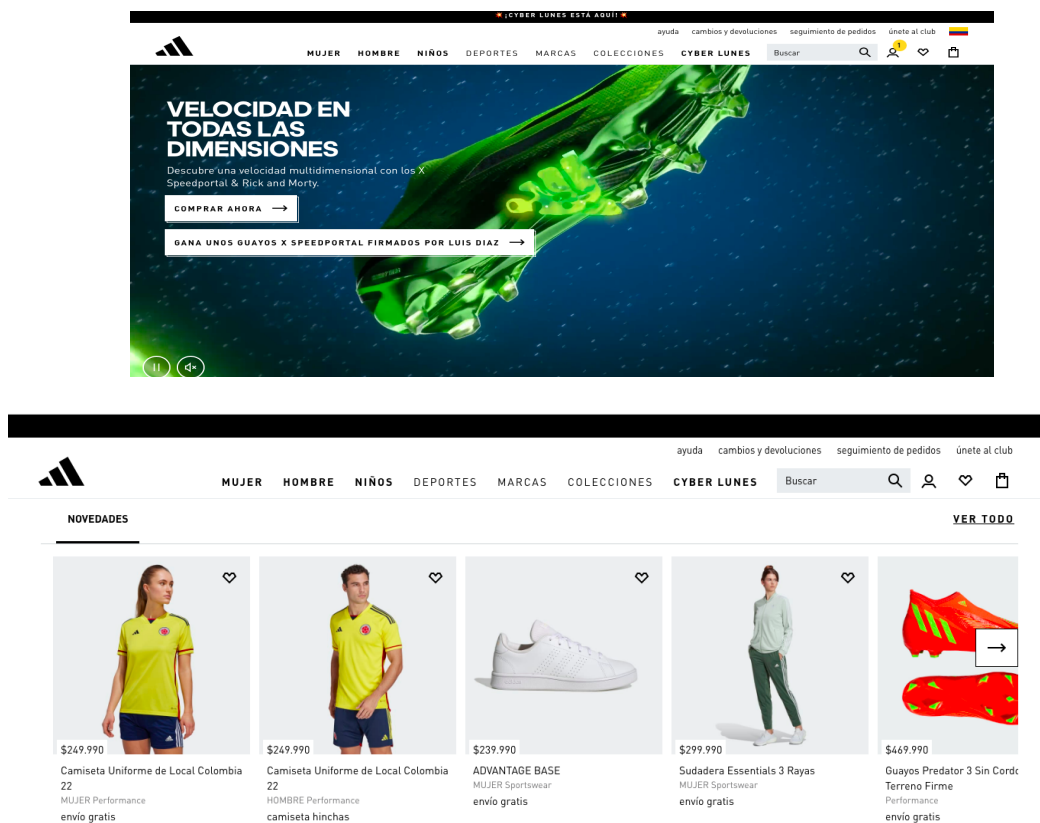
Source: Pull&Bear and Bershka YouTube channels (2022).

Adidas:

Website: When you enter the Adidas Colombia website, the first thing that jumps out is to pop in to subscribe to adiClub. It is divided into categories such as men, women, children, sports, brands, collections, and even outlets where you can find major discounts. There is a section on new trends, such as the Qatar 2022 World Cup; they also show the Colombian soccer teams they are partners in their main window. The short videos they use to show their new product lines are eye-catching.

Like other brands, they have a favorites section and a shopping cart. People who decide to join the adiClub have free shipping, access to exclusive products, and discount coupons.

Despite being a fast fashion brand and having many sustainability and labor rights issues, Adidas has the initiative to care for the oceans called "End plastic waste," in which they show that they are starting to use organic cotton and sustainable dye in their various products.



Images 9&10: Adidas Website homepage

Source: Adidas Website homepage (2022).

Instagram and Facebook: 28,4 million followers. It has 2 Instagram, the official international page and an account dedicated exclusively to Colombia; the contents do not vary

much, only that in the country, they publish more content about exclusive discounts in the region or sports products related to Colombian teams, for example, the official jersey of the Colombian national soccer team for the World Cup 2022.

They do not follow any particular structure but make their content look harmonious by playing with colors and fonts; they have many videos about high-performance athletes and sporting and international events. Besides being visually striking, their content also seeks to generate much empathy with consumers as their captions are mainly about empowerment, positive attitude, self-improvement, and teamwork, among others.

The main hashtags used to refer to their campaigns, for example, the most recent one is #Impossibleisnothing. They have the option to purchase online through any of the two channels.

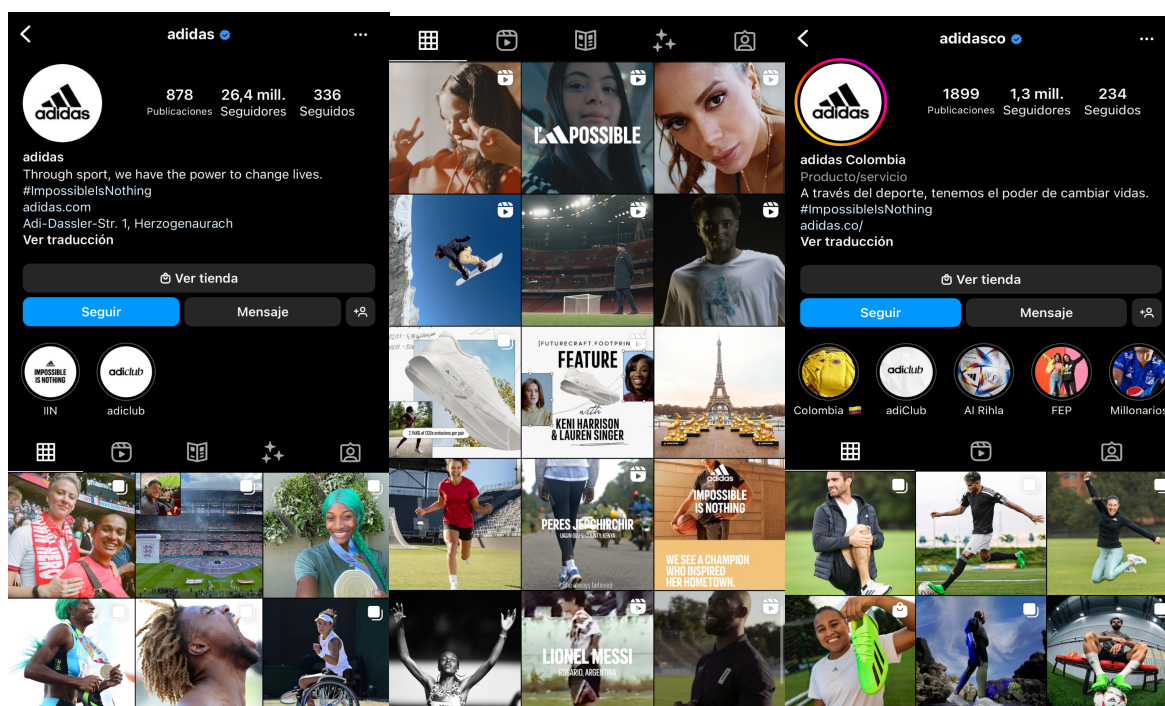


Image 11: Adidas Instagram feed

Source: Adidas Instagram feed (2022).

YouTube: 936.000 subscribers. It has a YouTube channel for the mother brand and its sub-brands such as Adidas Originals or Adidas Running. Also, the Adidas Football channel has 1.42M subscribers.

They have short, interactive videos of 30 sec and up to 2 min, dealing with topics such as the promotion of its new line, support for the LGBTQIA+ community, End Plastic Waste campaign; they also have a space dedicated to sharing with users inspiration and insight from the creators and designers behind the brand; being a sports brand undoubtedly also share videos in the series The Huddle in which recognized international sports personalities tell their stories.

adidas
936,000 suscriptores

IMPOSSIBLE IS NOTHING

adidas.com

SUSCRIBIRSE

PÁGINA PRINCIPAL VIDEOS LISTAS DE REPRODUCCIÓN COMUNIDAD CANALES MÁS INFORMACIÓN >

LGBTQIA+ Visibility in Sport with Tom Daley and Liz Ward | adidas
6,898 vistas · hace 1 mes

In partnership with Stonewall UK, Olympian Tom Daley and Liz Ward discuss the importance of LGBTQIA+ visibility in sport.

Tom Daley
Follow Tom on Instagram (@tomdaley) and Twitter (@TomDaley1994)

MÁS INFORMACIÓN

IMPOSSIBLE ▶ REPRODUCIR TODO

PÁGINA PRINCIPAL VIDEOS LISTAS DE REPRODUCCIÓN COMUNIDAD CANALES MÁS INFORMACIÓN >

IMPOSSIBLE ▶ REPRODUCIR TODO

Video Title	Views	Time
IMPOSSIBLE IMPOSSIBLE IS NOTHING adidas	27 M de vistas · hace 5 meses	0:30
IMPOSSIBLE – Asma Elbadawi adidas	81,728 vistas · hace 5 meses	0:30
IMPOSSIBLE – Ellie Goldstein adidas	91,965 vistas · hace 5 meses	0:30
IMPOSSIBLE – Fatima Ibrahim adidas	21,289 vistas · hace 5 meses	0:30
IMPOSSIBLE – Jessamyn Stanley adidas	82,474 vistas · hace 5 meses	0:30

Impossible Is Nothing ▶ REPRODUCIR TODO

Video Title	Views	Time
adidas IMPOSSIBLE IS NOTHING - Candace Parker	78,868 vistas · hace 10 meses	1:01
adidas IMPOSSIBLE IS NOTHING - Lionel Messi	5.9 M de vistas · hace 9 meses	0:31
adidas Impossible Is Nothing - Trae Young	77,702 vistas · hace 9 meses	1:01
adidas Impossible Is Nothing - Trae Young	8.1 M de vistas · hace 7 meses	0:31
Run For The Oceans Impossible Is Nothing ...	36,285 vistas · hace 2 meses	1:31

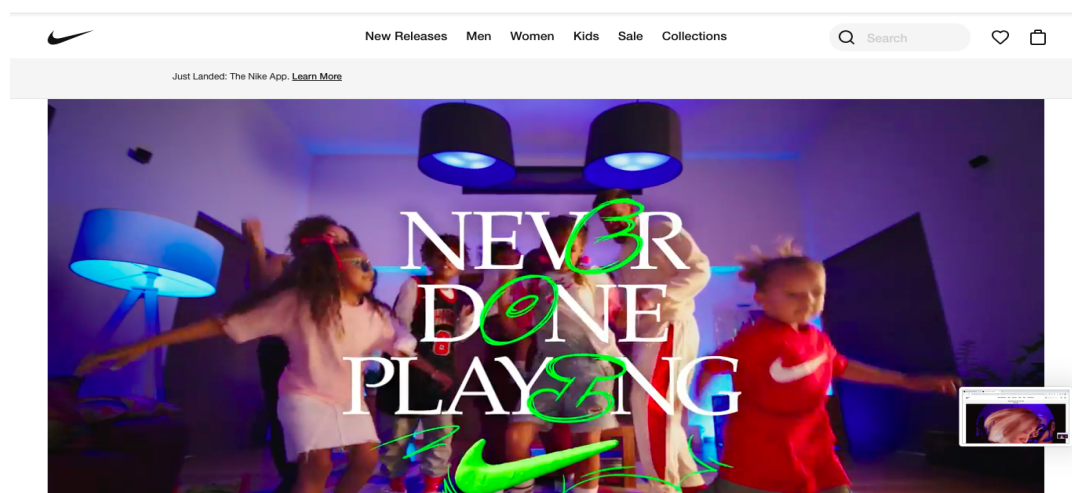
Images 12&13: Adidas YouTube channel

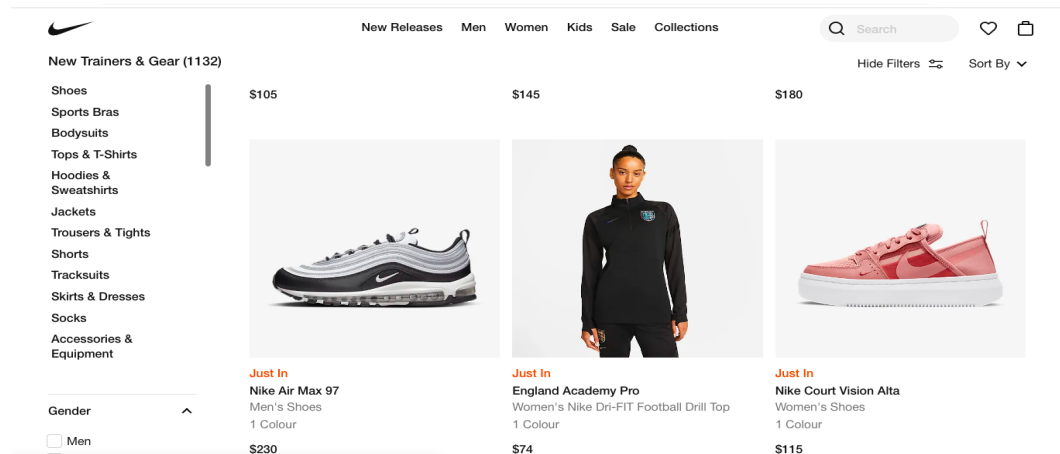
Source: Adidas YouTube channel (2022).

Nike:

Website: With a minimalist black and white style, Nike's website is simple, with an interactive video alluding to their latest campaign; it invites people to download the app and indicates that they have a 10% discount for students. It does not have a favorites section, but it does have a shopping bag. It is divided into categories such as new releases, men, women, children, discounts, and collections. They also have direct links to their sister brands, Jordan and Converse. One of their strategies to attract customers is the Nike membership, which has unique benefits such as exclusive designs, special offers and promotions throughout the year, interactive videos on Nike trainers exercises, and even the ability to create custom shoes.

They have a website dedicated to Latin America but not by country as Adidas does.





Images 14&15: Nike Website homepage

Source: Nike Website homepage (2022).

Instagram y Facebook: 235 million followers. As for Instagram, the content does not have a specific organization, but they make sure that it looks consistent throughout the feed; most of the content is sporty. They collaborate with high-profile athletes such as Rafael Nadal or Tiger Woods, Serena Williams, and even international artists like Megan Thee Stallion.

The brand is not very active on its Facebook page, does not share as much content as on its other social networks, and has simple and basic publications that are a bit outdated. This may be because the brand does not consider this social network as very influential in its target group of customers and prefers to concentrate its digital marketing efforts on Instagram.

The captions are an essential part of their publications because they take the opportunity to interact more with their users, talking about motivation, discipline, commitment, freedom, etc. They don't usually use hashtags, but the most used recently refers to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the brand #Nike50; they also tag the participants of the publication, such as athletes, designers, or photographers.

It is a powerful brand in terms of creating community, undoubtedly the most popular in terms of the number of followers on Instagram.

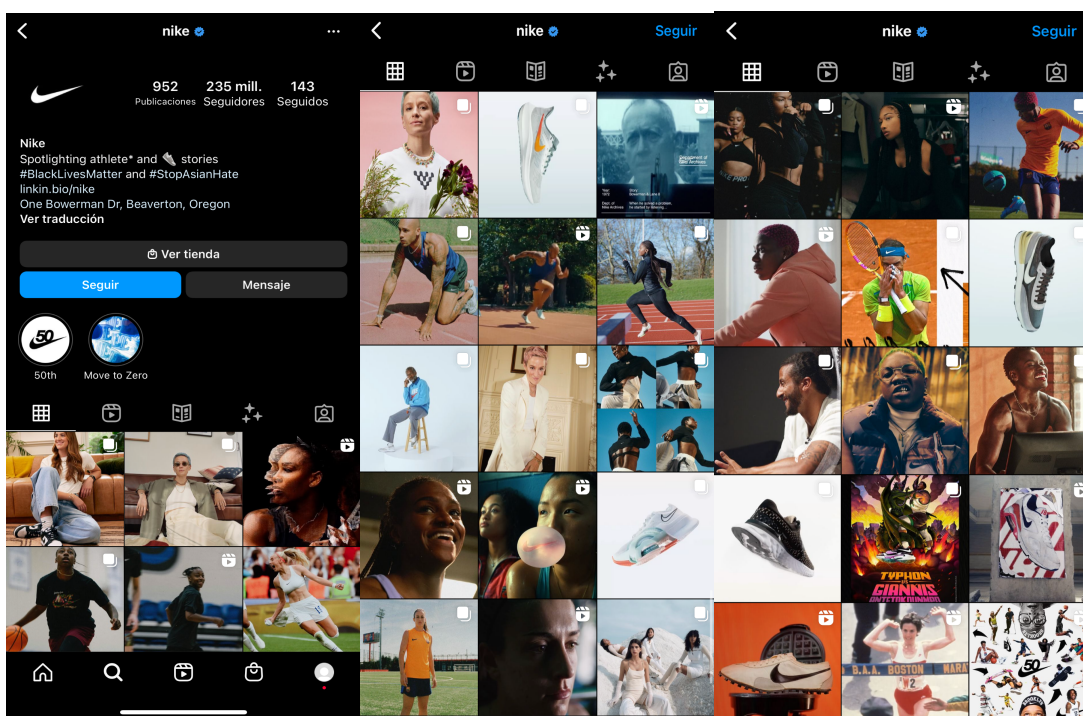


Image 16: Nike Instagram feed

Source: Nike Instagram feed (2022).

YouTube: 1,69 million subscribers. It is one of the most active social networks of the brand, where they take the opportunity to interact more with their customers and share all kinds of content, not only dedicated to promoting their products but also to talk about sports, wellness and innovation. They are also making inroads into the platform's new tool, "shorts." Their content, besides being informative, is very interactive with dance videos, music, playlists, and even comedy; they have sections dedicated to videos for Nike kids and Nike Family, as well as motivational talks with international high-performance athletes.

They have additional channels for their subcategories like NikeFootball or Nike skateboarding.

The image shows two screenshots of the Nike YouTube channel. The top screenshot displays a video player for 'Caster Semanya | What Are You Working On (E20) | Nike' with 9,000 views. The video description highlights Semanya's achievements and her philosophy on overcoming challenges. The bottom screenshot shows a grid of video playlists categorized under 'Athletes*' and 'Innovation'.

Athletes*

Playlist Name	Number of Videos
FM Broadcast - Season 2	3
What Are You Working On?	33
FM Broadcast - Season 1	6
Come Thru	7
Ultra Sound	5

Innovation

Playlist Name	Number of Videos
Hands On - Season 2	10
Hands On - Season 1	3
Talking Trash	1
ACG	16
Behind the Design	9

Images 17&18: Nike YouTube channel

Source: Nike YouTube channel (2022).

H&M

Website: With a simple and minimalist design, the products are divided into sections such as women, men, children, sales, and sustainability. Upon entering the page, the first thing that jumps out is a pop-in ad for the person visiting the site to leave their data and subscribe to acquire information about new collections or promotions. They have a help chat and call to action buttons strategically positioned in the different sections of the page, such as "buy now," "See H&M stores," and "Subscribe now." It is possible to add clothes to favorites or directly to the shopping cart to purchase them online.

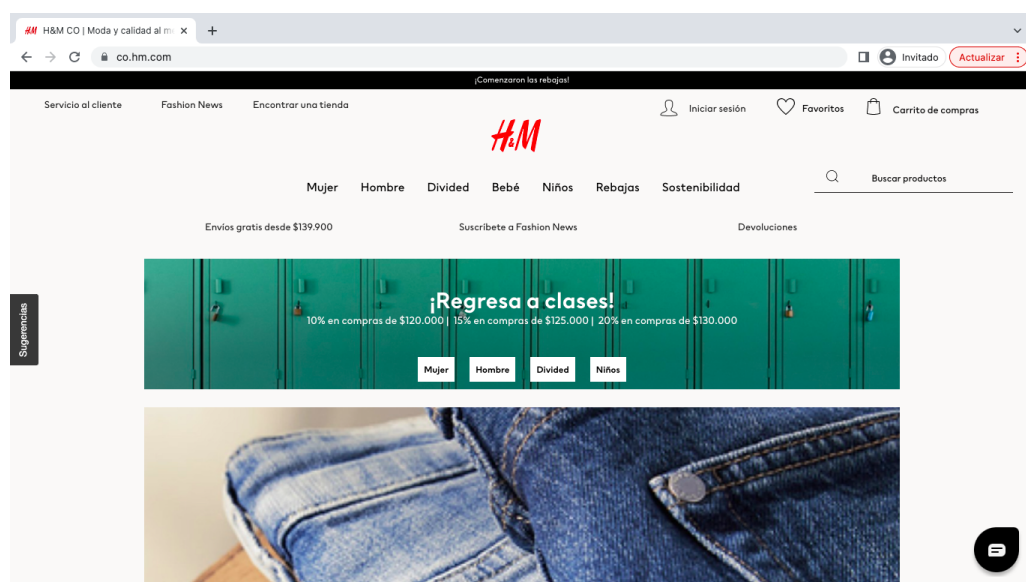


Image 19: H&M Website homepage

Source: H&M Website homepage (2022).

Instagram and Facebook: 38.5 million followers. Their social media content is consistent with the style they project in their clothing and accessories. In their publications, they mainly use minimalist photos and videos of models wearing different garments and accessories or, on some occasions, photographs of the garments with a contrasting background. They know how to play well with colors and try to keep a chronology of their publications organized and pleasing to the eye; for example, on Instagram, you can see a rainbow feed;

additionally, they have in many of their publications the function of “buy on Instagram” which allows people to purchase products directly from the photos or videos shared in the feeds of the companies.

They mainly use the hashtag #HM and try to come up with a catchy quote that always has to do with the photo’s color, background, or energy. They collaborate with international personalities, for example, the most recent for their sports collection with Jane Fonda and Jaquel Knight.

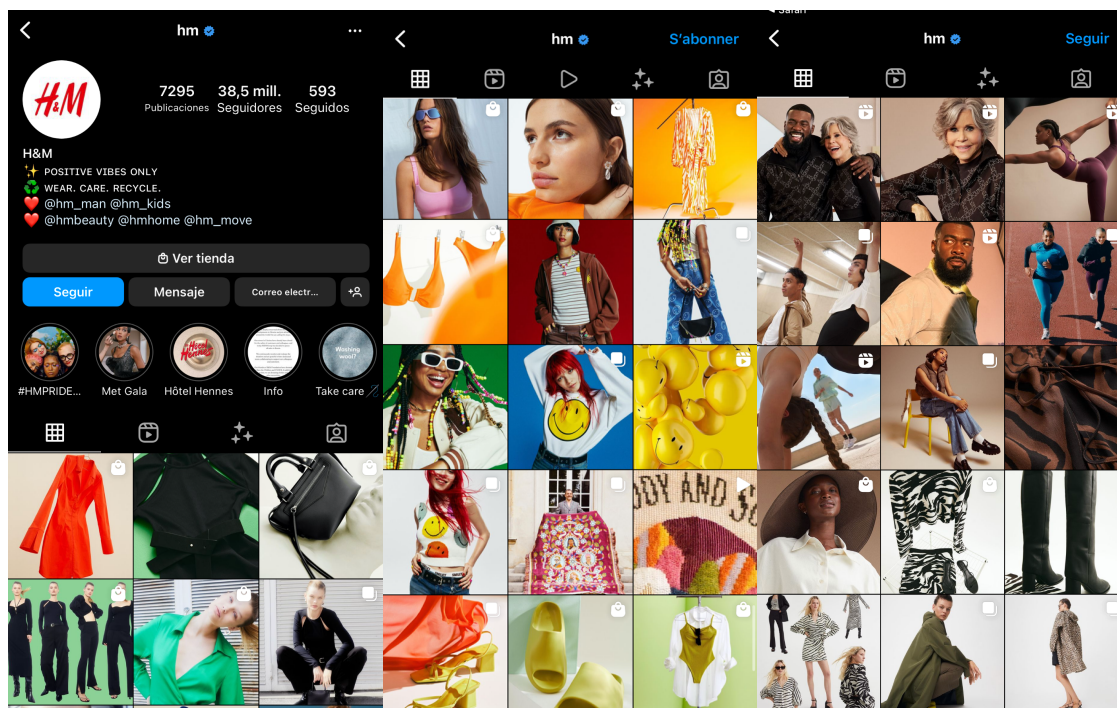


Image 20: H&M Instagram feed

Source: H&M Instagram feed (2022).

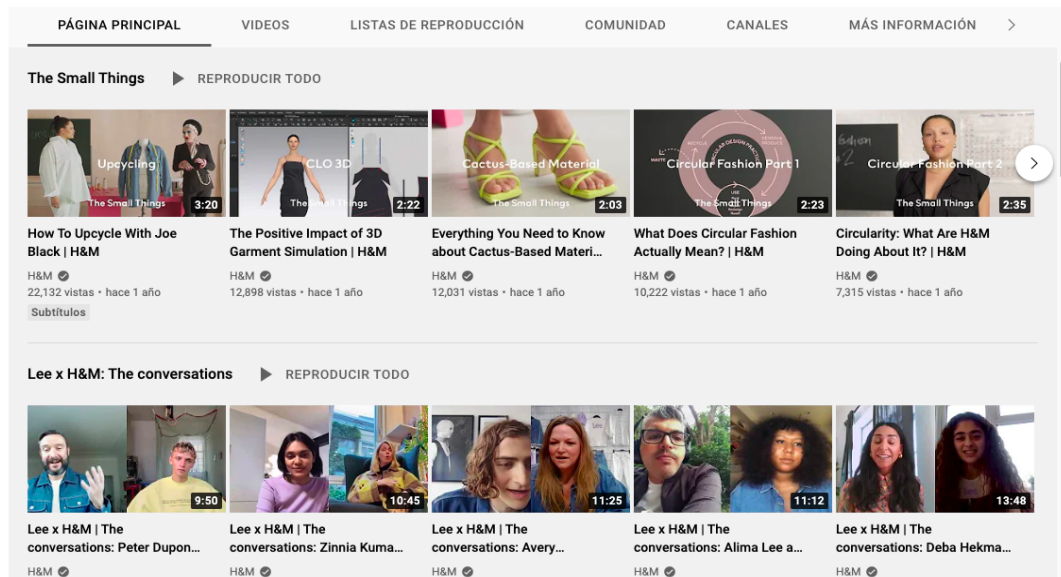
YouTube: 421.000 subscribers. This social network is much more interactive, and the brand manages content such as informative videos in the form of interviews or conversations with senior executives of the brand, such as H&M’s CEO, Helena Helmersson, Global

Sustainability Manager, and Production Manager, among others, in which such issues as the future of fast fashion, the fashion industry and the importance of knowing how everything is made, new collections production, etc. are discussed.

Despite being a company known for being Fast fashion H&M for some years now, has increased its efforts to implement different solutions to waste in the production of clothing and accessories they produce and to find new alternatives concerning materials and raw materials for the manufacture of their products. Their YouTube channel wants to show users more in-depth these sustainability efforts; you can find videos about circular fashion, cactus and fruits-based materials, H&M circularity, and upcycling, among others.

You can also find videos about collaborations with designers, models, and influencers such as Pete Davidson and Gigi Hadid. Her most recent campaign is called “My chosen Family” in support of Pride Month 2022.

The screenshot displays the H&M YouTube channel interface. At the top, there is a banner with four images: a woman in a pink dress, a woman in a pink suit, a man in a blue shirt, and two men in white outfits. Below the banner is the H&M logo, the name 'H&M', and '420,000 suscriptores'. A red 'SUSCRIBIRSE' button is on the right. Navigation tabs include 'PÁGINA PRINCIPAL', 'VIDEOS', 'LISTAS DE REPRODUCCIÓN', 'COMUNIDAD', 'CANALES', and 'MÁS INFORMACIÓN'. The main content area features a video titled '3 Fabrics You Can Find In Your Fruit Bowl | H&M' with 38,616 views. The video thumbnail shows a woman holding a basket of fruit. The video description reads: 'The Small Things is a space created by H&M to help you get technical on the things in fashion that really matter – presented by model Alva Claire. The recent growth of mimic materials in fashion have played a huge role in the pursuit for more sustainable fabrics. Unfortunately, things like traditional leathers are linked to a ...'.



Images 21&22: H&M YouTube channel

Source: H&M YouTube channel (2022).

5. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

After conducting the qualitative research using the in-depth interview technique, the interviews were transcribed and translated to facilitate the analysis and ensure the accuracy of the answers. Finally, the study will be grouped into essential themes for the development of the proposed question taking into account the opinion and experiences of the participants, in order to know the perspective of the participants on the digital marketing strategies adopted by fast fashion companies and the influence of these their style and purchase decision.

As mentioned in the methodology, 50% of the participants are women and 50% men, belonging to generation "Z" and "Millennials," between 18 and 35 years of age and of Colombian origin. All the interviewees have a medium-high or high socioeconomic level, that is, with a high purchasing power; this selection was made to ensure that participants have the

ability to make purchases dedicated to leisure without compromising other basic needs such as housing, food, and education. In addition, all participants have a higher level of education, such as a Bachelor's or Master's degree.

5.1 Purchase Decision

Nowadays, virtuality facilitates many processes, and the case of the purchase decision regarding clothing, accessories, or footwear is no exception; in the past, people had to go to several stores to check the available products, sizes, colors, and materials, but now all this process can be done from the comfort of their homes through the various platforms that brands have either through their website or their social networks, etc. This is why many consumers have changed their buying behavior and now perform a mixed process based on the information they can find instantly online and the experiences gained in physical stores.

Regarding the purchase process, participants showed that the younger generations currently tend to make a mixed purchase decision, i.e., they rely on information collected through both online and offline channels to make their purchase decision. Now more than ever, digital platforms are a powerful medium by which products can be promoted and offer many opportunities for both brands and customers to interact with each other. However, face-to-face shopping is still very strong because it allows them to examine the items, ensure their quality, material, and size, and, most importantly, know if they fit their body type.

An essential factor to highlight is that thanks to the responses of the participants, it is possible to affirm that the process of comparison shopping for fashion items is not only limited

to the information provided by the brands but also different from reviews and advice given by other customers or recommendations shared by celebrities or influencers.

In general, it can be said that generations Z and Millennials, due to the easy access to the internet and social networks, can be informed instantly about the topics of interest. As far as the consumption of products is concerned, they prefer to make an informed purchase decision. Digital platforms not only allow them to learn about the variety of products but also to be aware of quality and origin and even make comparisons between various brands more quickly and effectively. However, as mentioned above, consumers prefer to go to physical stores to verify the materials of the items, but mostly because they want to know if the products fit their body; this may also be a consequence of the rejection of stereotypes established by fashion brands that generally do not relate to Latin American body types.

This mixed purchasing decision phenomenon facilitates the brands' advertising work since, with the specialized algorithms that social networks have, it is now easier to identify their potential customers and reach them with advertising that goes according to their preferences or recent searches. In other words, digital platforms facilitate the interaction between the brand and the users. On the one hand, brands have more tools and ways to communicate and promote not only their collections or products but also to share with their community other factors of value such as sustainability activities, support to social groups or causes, brand values, etc., that can generate competitive advantage in the market.

In the book *Machine, Platform, Crowd: Harnessing Our Digital Future* (2017), MIT research scientists Andrew McAfee and Erik Brynjolfsson point out that a well-implemented digital platform helps a company transform and improve its offering, increase its network of

contacts through networking, optimize its daily processes and tasks, improve the experience of its internal and external users, reach new sales channels, reduce its operating costs, and take advantage of artificial intelligence technologies.

In terms of factors that have the greatest influence on customers when making their purchase decision, it is mainly the price-quality ratio, i.e., young people are willing to invest in fashion products according to their quality. However, it is also important to keep in mind that most participants are still students or young graduates and have a limited budget, which is precisely why they prefer Fast Fashion brands that guarantee acceptable quality at affordable prices. Another factor mentioned many times was utility, since these days it is essential that products are versatile and can be used in different ways and for different occasions. Undoubtedly trends also have a significant influence on young people of generation Z and Millennials as they are exposed daily to constant information about fashion items, not only including digital marketing from brands but also the opinions and experiences of other users with the products, so when making the purchase decision they have different sources of information, and various sources of inspiration about what is in trend and the most suitable styles to use according to the occasion or season.

5.2 Effect of the covid-19 pandemic

As part of the interview, in addition to the questions in the questionnaire, most of the participants who claimed to either have a mixed or mostly online purchasing process were also asked whether the recent health crisis caused by the covid-19 virus had affected the way they shopped, 100% of the participants who were asked answered that the pandemic had been an

essential factor in changing their preferences in the purchasing process since, due to the confinements, consumers not only in Colombia but all over the world had to make a drastic change in the way they carried out their daily activities. The social distancing forced people to increase online transactions due to the closure of most commercial establishments. Although this crisis caused significant losses for the fashion industry, it can be said that these companies will react quickly and efficiently to retain their customers online.

5.3 Fashion trends

Fashion trends have a medium-high relevance in the young adult generations because they influence a lot in the style of consumers and, consequently, their buying behavior. This is mainly due to the large amount of information that young people are exposed to on a daily basis; as previously mentioned, brands now have a greater variety of channels to generate marketing campaigns and reach their target audience, and therefore it is tough not to be influenced in one way or another by the actual trends that are massively disseminated. Based on the answers provided by the participants regarding the relevance of fashion trends in their lives, we can conclude the following:

- Approximately 50% of the participants stated that fashion trends play an important role in their dressing and style choices, i.e., they consciously seek fashion-related information through different channels, including digital platforms, consciously follow fashion experts, celebrities, or influencers for their input on the topic, and consciously shop based on the aggregate of all this information.

- There is also another group of people who are not really interested in fashion or are not very susceptible to marketing campaigns and other content disseminated by the various communication channels; these participants lead much simpler lifestyles and buy fashion items based primarily on their needs and utility, prefer to dress in a very neutral and simple way, and value classic styles.

- Finally, it was identified a group of participants that although at the beginning of the interview they stated that fashion trends were not very relevant in their lives, as they answered the other questions of the questionnaire and upon further investigation, it became evident that in reality, the marketing work of fast fashion brands does influence their purchase decision, only in a subconscious way, it became evident that in fact the marketing work of fast fashion brands does influence their purchase decision only in a subconscious way, explained in another way these people to receive daily information about fashion is susceptible to it, and although they do not directly seek information, indirectly receive it through ads or even through influencers they follow. The influence caused by digital marketing concerning their decision to buy fashion trends is very subconscious because they are constantly exposed and attracted to ads, advertising, and other digital marketing strategies launched by brands. All this information is accumulating subconsciously in their brains, generating memories about products, campaigns, and brands, which in some way influence what will ultimately be their tastes and preferences that consequently affect their consumption behavior and final purchase decision.

Brands become embedded in the consumer's mind and help them make sense of the variety of products and services they are exposed to daily. Some brand memories are explicit

and conscious, allowing them to be easily remembered whenever a consumer recalls a brand or associated product. In contrast, others are implicit and subconscious, so even if the customer is unaware of these memories, they influence their behavior and purchase decision.

“If companies want to remain relevant, they must evolve just as quickly as consumer needs. Oversimplifying segmentation and underestimating the impact of life forces on behavior has led to a growing disconnect between what companies think their customers want and what consumers actually want. To bridge the gap, businesses need to widen their aperture and move from focusing only on customers' consumption to seeing their customers as they see themselves: multifaceted, complex, and doing their best to adapt to unpredictable life circumstances out of their control.” (Accenture, 2022).

5.4 Social Networks

Online platforms allow companies, regardless of their size, to organize their production processes in a single place and run different applications and programs in an automated manner, thanks to machine learning algorithms. Likewise, this interconnection makes it possible to observe, document, analyze and evaluate each business activity in real-time, which undoubtedly helps make monetary, material, and human resources more efficiently.

Brands, increasingly interested in increasing the visibility of their business, are turning to social networks to complete their digital strategy. This medium is becoming key to any

company's digital marketing strategy. Strategies must have specialized functions in which techniques and methods are developed, such as using social networks to promote a company's products, attract potential customers or build customer loyalty.

The digital platforms preferred by participants in general by young people of these generations are undoubtedly Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, social networks booming in the last two years.

Instagram: It is the most used social network by young people nowadays; this platform has plenty of tools and options to share content such as images, videos, stories, music, audio, effects, etc. It is possible to connect with brands easily and quickly and interact with their content through tags or hashtags; most brands, especially fast fashion brands, have online boutiques, where users can learn about the products and their prices and even buy directly on the platform. Most of the participants say that it is their favorite social network because they cannot only stay in touch with their friends and family but also keep up with the latest news and trends, find entertaining content, interact with celebrities or Influencers, and find information of interest in an easy and fast way. It can be said that Instagram is nowadays the social network par excellence because it has many options and a variety of interactions among users.

Additionally, companies are provided with spaces to advertise online through ads. It is important to note that the algorithms used by this platform are very efficient because based on the information with which the user interacts daily generates ads or recommendations of similar content, and this dramatically benefits companies because this way, it is much easier to track and identify their target audience and potential customers.

YouTube: In this platform, brands take the opportunity to share more information about their business, such as their values, processes, social reasoning, activities in which they are involved, and collaborations with personalities or other brands; this social network is more focused on Storytelling and sharing a more significant amount of content not only related to the sale of products, the ultimate goal is to capture users who are interested in learning more about the brand or the company and be part of a community. A large portion of the participants expressed the example of brands such as Adidas and Nike that, being sports brands, include in their marketing strategy not only promotional videos about their products but also motivational content about self-improvement or more interactive videos in which people can learn about topics related to a fitness life or healthy habits, exercises, nutrition, etc.

Furthermore, plays a crucial role of so-called "YouTubers" since they are a source of information and inspiration for their community; that is, people not only see information about the company explicitly entering the YouTube channel of the brand but also base their decisions on the opinions that their influencers or other users of the platform.

Tiktok: This social network has gained much strength in recent years, following the trend of convenience and ease of short videos. On this platform, people can immediately acquire information on the topic of their choice. Without having to invest a lot of time, also influencers play a very important role since they share with their community constantly reviews, tips, views, and criticisms on a variety of topics; This is why in terms of fashion, this platform has become the preferred source of information for young people, especially generation Z, because as stated by the participants not only find out about the latest trends, but they can also watch interactive videos on Fashion topics that are viral as "Hauls" "Get ready with me" "Outfits for summer" among others.

Although young people are still influenced not only by celebrities or fashion experts such as designers or models, they prefer the closeness and empathy generated by influencers or even the opinions of other users or buyers of the brands. Generations Z and Millennials acquire a lot of information about fashion trends through social networks because they are very interactive spaces where all the public can give their opinion and share their experiences with the products, as well as share tips or points of view, which ultimately contribute to users to create a more complete vision about the brand, products, quality, price, utility, which in turn influence consciously or unconsciously in their habits and buying processes.

5.5 Digital Marketing in Social Networks

Communication and Promotion Strategies: Among the strategies that the participants presented as the most effective in attracting audiences and gaining engagement, these were the top 3 tactics:

Short video format: When making a choice, brands provide attractive options for product decisions since the human brain is always looking for shortcuts to avoid deep, deliberate thinking. Due to a large amount of content users receive daily, the best way to capture their attention quickly and convey the desired message is through short but eye-catching videos. Participants stated that these videos caught their attention on many occasions and influenced their buying process. This type of content can be shared in different ways, such as pop-ins in the Facebook feed, an Instagram story, or ads at the beginning, middle, or end of YouTube Videos. The advantage of short videos that are correctly crafted is that they get users'

attention and create brand recall. Users usually go to these fast fashion stores on impulse associated. Therefore, brands that constantly perform this type of digital strategy are generally at the Top Of Mine of young people when they want to purchase fashion products.

Collaborations: This strategy involves partnerships with people or companies outside the brand to promote the products. The most common collaborations are made between Fashion brands, in this case, with influential people such as designers, models, or simply celebrities such as singers, actresses, or athletes; these have a significant impact because the image of these locally or internationally recognized people creates association and greater recall in the public's mind. Another type of collaboration is with other brands, and it is widespread in the Fashion industry collaborations to create designs between 2 fashion brands or other entertainment brands such as music or television; the perfect example is the associations between Pull and Bear and bands like Rolling Stones or Metallica.

But without a doubt, the most influential collaboration strategies in recent years have been with influencers. An influencer is a person who influences a specific group of people, usually a particular niche, such as sports, video games, food, or fashion. The rise of social media has changed how companies communicate with their audiences, and, in the same way, it has changed the consumer journey, habits, preferences, and purchasing decisions. It could be said that influencers are a bridge between brands and consumers. “Companies are facing a more informed and skeptical consumer who does not trust traditional advertising and turns to the opinion of anonymous consumers who share their shopping experience, which has led to the emergence of a new profile of opinion leaders for companies and brands: digital influencers.” (Dueñas, Domínguez,& Coronil, 2020).

These are now key players in the field of digital marketing, as they are responsible for conveying information about brands in a more user-friendly way. The communication strategy of influencers, even if they do not have thousands of followers, is based on high doses of creativity and the content they share to attract a particular audience that comes to identify with them fully.

Discounts: Although this study was done with a group of the population with medium-high purchasing power equally, most of the participants are young students or recent graduates; that is, they have a limited budget for emotional spending, taking into account that Fashion purchases are not always out of necessity. Undoubtedly when talking about Fast Fashion stores, people are looking for products of average quality at very affordable prices. Of course, discounts are one of the marketing strategies this industry has to stimulate sales by attracting new customers and retaining existing ones. This strategy is usually very effective because it creates a need in customers for the benefit of acquiring products at lower prices. In the case of the fashion world, this guarantees that people to be able to buy more items. There are different ways to promote discounts, whether for a limited time or premium customers, such as subscriptions to newsletters; all aim to attract customers to attractive prices that offer them the possibility of saving on the purchase of products, and that can ultimately lead to a considerable increase in demand and thus in the company's profits.

5.6 Tip for a fashion company to be successful in the management of its social networks

The participants were asked from their experience as consumers of Fast Fashion products, what they considered essential strategies for a fashion company to succeed in the proper management of their social networks. They were even asked if they wanted to start a business in this industry how they would manage their social media marketing, so here is the list of the most relevant aspects that we found in the development of this study:

- Define a personality for the brand: Identity, values, style, and how it wants to be perceived by customers.
- Know in depth the target group you want to reach: identify their needs, tastes, preferences, habits, and buying processes.
- Propose innovative and eye-catching content: Avoid being pigeonholed in traditional forms of marketing and propose original and entertaining content.
- Provide exceptional customer service.
- Constantly interact with the public: online chats, comments, hashtags, filters, etc.
- Have organized social networks: make it easy for users to navigate through them and make it a pleasant experience.
- Do not create content exclusively about products: Seek to make the user know more about the brand, and provide added value and entertainment.
- Take advantage of social networks' different content formats: Reels, effects, boutique online, blogs, Shorts, ads, etc.
- The key is dedication: Consistently and quality content is the best way to create an active community.

5.7 Fast Fashion brands impact the young generations

In research from Milenio Diario S.A (2014), the influence of fashion tarnishes the biopsychosocial growth of young people since they are usually aware of how society views them, especially they are concerned about their physical appearance and especially the image they reflect; this causes emotional problems and keeps them in a state of tension. Youth nowadays are looking for an identity; young people are more likely to be influenced by fashion patterns because they are surrounded by various advertisements directed toward them; in effect, this environment impacts them in such a way that they adopt behaviors in order to belong to specific groups of society.

Most of the respondents (13 out of 16) claim to buy fashion products from Zara, Bershka, Pull&Bear, Nike, Adidas, and H&M brands constantly, and that their motivations for preferring them are first because of the low prices, they can find perfect quality items at affordable prices which ensures that they can buy more products. The second aspect is the convenience provided by this type of brand because if they want to go to a physical store to check the quality or size of the products, they can do it easily; the navigation and online shopping through their digital platforms, either website or social networks is also speedy and effective.

As previously discussed in the analysis, fashion trends have a significant impact on the younger generations, whether consciously or unconsciously; so the fact that these brands are

constantly at the forefront of fashion, following trends and innovating in materials, colors, and styles also make them one of the favorites of young buyers in Colombia.

In recent years, with the entry of sizeable mass-produced clothing companies into the Colombian market, a change in the style of the younger generations has become evident. Furthermore, with globalization, these international brands have managed to enter the market, imposing the trends of their country of origin. Consequently, the style of Colombians increasingly resembles American or European fashion. From the interviewees' responses, these brands are highly recognized and strategically located in the best sectors of the two largest cities in Colombia, Bogota, and Medellin. Since they arrived in the market, these brands have been well received by the public thanks to the prestige and brand image they have at an international level, as well as, of course, for offering a wide variety of products at lower prices.

Digital channels play a fundamental role in the visibility and visualization of Fast Fashion trends. Thanks to the latest technologies and the period of the pandemic that the world has recently gone through, the public has more direct access to information through these platforms, facilitating their learning process.

The variety of products that these brands offer provides many options for users to find the products they want. This is one of the factors that leads them to prefer these brands because whenever they want to look for products, they know that they will always be able to find new products in this type of brand. Fast Fashion promotes large production of fashion items and constantly changing collections, contributing to putting millions of garments on the market and encouraging consumers to replace their personal inventory at an accelerated rate; this is why

this model has not only changed the style of dress of young Colombians but also their way and frequency of consumption of fashion items.

5.8 Sustainability

In the last decades, the excessive production and consumption of fashion have not stopped growing. The number of annual collections multiplies, trends go viral, and garments shorten their lifespan in an unprecedented spiral of change. At the beginning of the 21st century, many fashion brands delocalized their factories in search of cheap labor: this was the definitive impulse for the birth of fast fashion, capable of generating low-cost products that make it possible to buy clothes more frequently than in the past.

According to Greenpeace (2021), garments and textiles nowadays represent 5% of global trade in manufactured goods, the fourth most representative industry. "It is only enough to look at the past to understand how the dynamics of fast fashion have changed. Currently, we throw away more than 16,000 tons of clothing, which is 816% more than approximately 50 years ago. In turn, clothing consumption in these last 20 years has increased by 400% globally." In Addition to these problems, global textile production generates enormous amounts of wastewater and emits more greenhouse gases than aviation and shipping combined.

Although Industrial Fast Fashion is linked to social and environmental issues, this seems to influence the purchasing decision of young Colombians because they put factors such as price or convenience above. Only 2 of the 16 participants expressed the importance of the

garments' origin in avoiding companies involved in precarious conditions for their workers or adverse effects on the environment. "I avoid products manufactured in places like China, Bangladesh; I prefer to buy from companies that produce their products in Colombia or Latin America or in places where the culture of exploitation is not so deeply rooted" (Calvo, 2022). "Before I used to buy a lot of things in these brands, about 1 or 2 months per month, but now I have reduced my consumption; I think now I buy every six months. I reduced my consumption because of the economy and because I know that these kinds of brands, although I like them a lot, they generate damage to the environment. Hence, the sustainability aspect influenced me a lot." (Arteaga, 2022).

Despite this, many sustainability trends are beginning to take hold worldwide, and it is foreseeable that in the not-too-distant future corporate social and environmental responsibility will be a must for all industries, especially the textile industry. While this happens, companies should seek to innovate on these issues to reduce their negative impact on the planet, promote a circular economy culture that weakens consumerism and find solutions to the working conditions of their workers, which can nowadays mean a source of added value for their customers.

5.9 Influence of digital marketing on purchase decision making

Today the public is hyperstimulated by advertisements, digital marketing, cookies and algorithms responsible for collecting data and creating advertising as to what individuals need, want or aspire. Digital marketing has become an enabler of processes and an effective tool for

national and international trade, using different technologies, business models and strategies that can be designed to discover opportunities in the market.

According to new research, as part of digital transformation, companies are changing ingrained perceptions about what they are, do, and say in order to increase relevance to consumers. Fashion revenues are still largely driven by offline, physical channels, despite the shift towards omni-channel. “For some fashion brands, it might remain true that geographical location is still the cornerstone for capturing offline retail demand, but a key enabler for success will be to ensure a consistent omni-channel consumer experience that encompasses physical, virtual and emotional aspects, from communication to conversion and beyond.” (Deloitte, 2019).

It can be affirmed that generation Z and Colombian Millennials feel highly influenced by all the communication and online promotion activities of Fast Fashion brands. 14 of the 16 interviewees said that on several occasions, they have been influenced to purchase fashion products such as clothing, shoes, or accessories by the content shared by brands through their social networks or website. The strategies employed by the brands that stood out the most were mainly their collaborations with celebrities such as high-performance athletes and other international and local personalities, as well as the great storytelling they create on their platforms to share their values, identity, and personality with their target audience. Also that they are very innovative in their content, trying to show the products in a much more creative way with colorful, interactive, and modern videos. However, the strategies that participants consider most effective in attracting their attention or even driving them to purchase are the ads created from data collection through the algorithms of social networks such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.

The fashion industry is undergoing large-scale changes as a direct consequence of the rise of technology and its impact on consumer behavior. Fashion companies must take advantage of the benefits brought by new technologies and strategically use the availability of analytics tools through big data to adapt to these changes, respond to new customer needs and optimize their experience throughout the consumer journey.

One of the biggest challenges facing fashion brands today is the speed with which consumer expectations are changing. Customers have gone from being superficial observers to being very active in terms of their opinions and preferences when buying fashion items, thanks in part to the power that technology has given them to share their opinions and generate their own content to interact with the world; they are not only looking to purchase products but also to interact, belong and influence the brands they buy. They are increasingly concerned about their public image and the perception of the products they buy because digital channels allow them to be constantly informed and select from an infinite number of possibilities. Most consumers use digital channels before, during, or after making a purchase. Digital marketing today plays a fundamental role in the purchase decision-making process, especially for young people, because they are the ones who are more exposed to virtual platforms. Combining online and offline marketing strategies creates an integrated experience generating easy and fast access to information through different channels.

5.10 Brand perception

From the interviews conducted with 16 young Colombians, it can be concluded that they have a very good perception of the brands. The vast majority think that the Fast Fashion brands discussed in this study are Trendy, youthful, comfortable, casual, and affordable. Their perception of the brands is mainly based on the style they try to inspire in their community. Therefore, young people perceive the personality of these brands in a positive way in their great majority; they also affirm that they buy from them because of the benefits they offer them, such as variety, fashionable style, and low prices. For an adequate analysis, the brands could be divided into two categories:

Firstly, the brands Zara, Bershka, Pull&Bear, and H&M, are primarily associated with much more Trendy and casual clothing for everyday wear; they have a high number of buyers of the female gender, although they all offer a male range as well. Respondent's perception of these brands is primarily positive, and they describe them as modern, youthful, basic, versatile, casual, versatile, with a high level of variety, fashionable, convenient, and of course, at very affordable prices. The interviewees stated that they considered these brands of low quality because they are usually very rooted in the Fast Fashion model, which is associated with social and environmental problems, in addition to products of inferior quality; However, they also stated that over time they had changed their perception thanks to their interaction and experiences with the brands as well as the high flow of content circulating through social networks; they expressed that they consider that the price-quality ratio is acceptable and that currently thanks to the quality of their digital content and variety of products they are in their top of mind when purchasing fashion products.

On the other hand, the perception of the Nike and Adidas sports brands is much better because the interviewees consider them to be of very high quality and to have a wide range of prices. Respondents strongly preferred these brands, especially males, who expressed a greater

affinity for sports. Although these brands are associated with sports, they are also related to positive adjectives such as motivation, inspiration, good design, high performance, excellent quality, entertainment, and renown. Thanks to their digital campaigns, the public knows that they handle a very wide range of products ranging from Street Style clothing to items for high-performance athletes. It could be said that people's perception of these brands is also due to the communication strategies they use by making associations with well-known athletes and other relevant figures both in Colombia and worldwide. This helps users create associations and feel more comfortable using these products.

It should be noted that these brands are not generally associated with Fast Fashion because their prices are a little higher. Still, even so, they have also been involved in labor exploitation scandals and damage to the planet. It is pertinent to note that the perception of Nike is superimposed over Adidas as people consider it a brand that is not only very motivational but also very inclusive.

“The perception of a brand develops over time and based on experience. One of those experiences is derived from one's brand memories” (Genco, Pohlmann, and Steidel 2013).

Companies increasingly value user experience. After all, the competition is more prepared than ever, and it is necessary to make more than a sale for long-awaited loyalty. Thanks to the digital transformation, consumers are much more informed and become much more critical when evaluating what is essential for them about companies; likewise, criticisms can be quickly viralized, and therefore, the opinion of a customer can affect brands either

positively or negatively. Consequently, it is imperative that nowadays, brands achieve congruence between their actions and strategies and their branding. The consumer's judgment will ultimately affect the purchase decision-making process. That is why brands must establish a relationship of trust with consumers, worrying about their problems and needs, and seek strategies to optimize the relationship with them, making them feel more comfortable buying from the brand, and generate familiarity with them so that they feel part of a community; this level of loyalty will not only retain existing customers but also gain new ones.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the rise of technology and media, it is evident that entrepreneurs need to venture into the digital world, giving a new perspective to traditional marketing. For the growth of organizations is essential to the use of digital media such as social networks since the mentality of customers is changing to a much more practical form of consumption, in which they demand a greater variety of products but, in turn, lower levels of effort on their part, and are always in search of brands that can meet their needs as much as possible more efficiently and immediately.

Digital marketing has become an indispensable tool for companies because it allows them more outstanding communication and interaction with their customers. In addition, technologies today enable them from digital media to collect relevant information for the growth of organizations more easily and quickly.

As far as the purchasing process is concerned, young Colombians handle a hybrid approach; that is, they take into account digital platforms to previously carry out thorough research of the different brands and products available according to what they need or want at the moment; additionally, they can develop a comparison also taking into account their main decision factors, and finally, they can either buy directly online or go to the physical stores to corroborate not only the material quality of the garments but also to check how well they fit their body or if the size is the right one.

Fashion trends play a medium-high role among young adults because they influence consumer style and, accordingly, their purchase behavior. As a result of the enormous amount of information that young people are exposed to every day, brands nowadays have a greater variety of channels to reach their target audiences and generate marketing campaigns. Because of this, it is nearly impossible not to be influenced by the vast amount of information disseminated these days.

Generation Z and Millennials gain much knowledge about fashion trends through social networks. Social networks are interactive spaces where people can share their opinions and experiences with products, tips, or opinions. By creating a comprehensive vision of the brand, products, quality, price, and utility, users can influence their purchasing decisions, whether consciously or unconsciously. Brands become embedded in the consumer's mind and help them make sense of the variety of products and services they are exposed to daily. Some brand memories are explicit and conscious, allowing them to be easily remembered whenever a consumer recalls a brand or associated product.

The communication and promotional strategies with the most significant effect when it comes to influencing the preferences and consumption habits, and purchasing decisions of young Colombians concerning the fashion industry are Short video format, collaborations with influencers, and discounts. These three digital marketing strategies are advisable for companies wishing to undertake or enhance their presence in the fashion market to take into account when attracting attention, creating remembrance, and achieving more significant engagement with their audience.

Among the reasons why users prefer Fast Fashion brands is their wide range of products that provide many options for finding what they are looking for since they know that they can always find new items in these types of brands whenever they want to look for products. The Fast Fashion model promotes the production of large amounts of clothing and the continuous change of collections, which result in the sale of millions of garments and an increase in personal inventory replacement. As a result, this model has affected not just Generation Z's and Millennials' dress style in Colombia but also the way and frequency in which they consume clothing.

Undoubtedly the Fast Fashion business model brings with it great social and environmental crises since the production of textile products is responsible for large amounts of waste and pollution; in addition, they are usually involved in scandals of precarious working conditions. Because of this, a paradigm shift is needed to change the fashion industry and its production model in favor of the environment and the welfare of its workers. Being aligned with sustainability and circular economy issues is becoming increasingly relevant globally; this is why a socially and environmentally responsible brand can create added value for customers.

Compared to the past, when consumers were merely superficial observers when shopping for fashion items, they now have a lot more say in what they think and prefer, partly due to the technological advancements that allow them to share their opinions and create their own content. Most consumers use digital channels before, during, or after making a purchase and are way more active and critical. Digital marketing plays a fundamental role in purchasing decision-making, especially for Generation Z and Millennials. The key to success is combining online and offline marketing strategies creating an integrated experience generating easy and fast access to information through different channels.

Brand perception represents the consumer's feelings after interactions with a company. This judgment will directly affect the moment of making a decision. It is, therefore, imperative that brands succeed in achieving consistency between their marketing strategies and branding. The consumer's judgment will ultimately affect the purchase decision-making process. Therefore, brands need to establish trust with consumers by caring about their needs, desires, and problems, finding strategies to maximize their relationship with them, and making them feel part of a community that will ultimately generate loyalty.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Although the results obtained after the in-depth interviews provide a first glimpse of the objective of this project, further research is needed to learn more about Colombian culture and the main economic and social factors that influence consumer behavior and purchasing decisions of Millennials and Generation Z.

Considering that the number of participants chosen for the qualitative data collection was 16 participants, it can be viewed as a small sample for the complexity and depth of the selected topic, which may limit some variables of the study, or may leave out specific considerations or trends that are also relevant for the development of the project. Because of this, there may be considerable regional or national disparities in terms of purchasing power, lifestyles, media use, and consumption habits, the conclusions of this study may not apply to the entire Colombian youth population. Therefore, this research could be carried out with people of all socioeconomic levels and other generations that also use digital platforms; to contrast the responses by groups and draw conclusions in this regard.

For future studies, it is advisable to conduct a quantitative parallel survey, for example, through questionnaires, to acquire more accurate data on the level of relevance of fashion trends, frequency of purchase in fast fashion brands, monthly or annual spending on fashion products, level of satisfaction with the performance of more brands in their social networks, level of influence of digital marketing strategies in the purchase decision, among others. This would also facilitate information collection and reach a larger sample. Additionally, other data collection tactics could be integrated, such as focus groups, where people can interact and share their opinions on the topic with each other, which can be taken into account in their future analysis and purchase decision processes.

A factor that could be very enriching for the research would be conducting in-depth interviews with experts in marketing topics such as brand management, neuromarketing, Customer Journey, Consumer Behavior, and Social Media Management, among others, or entrepreneurs in the textile industry in Colombia, to gain insight into the digital marketing

perspective of companies. These people could provide a much broader and analytical perspective of the impact of fast fashion trends on consumer buying behavior; it would also facilitate the generation of new hypotheses, enrich different theoretical approaches, and provide helpful information for the study.

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