

ABSTRACT

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Name of thesis THE EFFECTS OF FASHION MARKETING IN THE BUYING BEHAVIOR OF Z GENERATION. Case study: Ader Error brand		
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<p>Consumer behaviour is a dynamic field of social studies where marketing plays an important role. Consumers who are born during a certain time period share values and behaviour patterns with each other that impact on purchasing decisions. The tweens and teens of today are known as the generation Z. One of the first purchasing decisions that young consumers start making independently are clothing purchases. From the marketer’s point of view, there are different touch points along the way of a customer’s decision making journey, where they can either win or lose.</p> <p>This thesis aimed to point out the critical touch points on a customer journey of generation Z when buying clothes and the effects of modern fashion marketing in their buying behaviour. The information is important for the case company, Ader Error, because generation Z is a main target group for them and the preferences are constantly staying.</p> <p>This thesis utilized a deductive approach and qualitative research method to gain a deeper understanding of the behaviors of gen Z shoppers. The first part of the thesis used data collected from books, published articles, previous research, and internet sources connected to customer buying behavior, marketing in fashion and the core characteristics of Z generation as customers. Using case study of Ader Error is to emphasize the innovative marketing methods which shows the positive results to attract gen Z customers.</p>		
Key words Consumer buying behaviour, fashion industry, fashion marketing, generation Z, social media		

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1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to help the reader to get familiar with the research topic of this thesis. The chapter starts with explaining research background and continues to thesis objectives, research questions and possible limitations.

Generation Z has become more important for fashion industry in recent years. According to a study by MNI Targeted Media Inc, generation Z accounted for 40 percent of global consumption and comprised \$4 billion in spending in 2020. Recently, with the support from social media, there are many ways to reach young buyers because they have never been more articulate about what they demand and their expectation from fashion brands. According to PRZM co-founder, Liz Toney, there are some significant shifts of buying behaviour and cultures are driven by gen Z's spending, that will affect fashion brands next years. Therefore, fashion businesses must understand and implement effective marketing strategies in order to connect with this powerful generation of consumers. The overall purpose of this thesis is to analyse the effective marketing ways for gen Z customers in fashion industry.

This thesis utilizes a deductive approach and qualitative research method to gain a deeper understanding of the behaviors of gen Z shoppers. The first part of the thesis uses data collected from books, published articles, previous research, and internet sources connected to customer buying behaviour, marketing in fashion and the core characteristics of Z generation as customers. Case study of Ader Error is used to emphasize the innovative marketing methods which shows the positive results to attract gen Z customers.

The aim is to find out how to do effective marketing for Z generation who are influenced by social media in fashion industry. Hence, it is important to understand the buying behaviours of gen Z and which channels marketers should focus on to get attentions from Z generation. Additionally, every research has limitations. The limitations of this research have to do with a strong case company focus and a focus to a specific age group.

2 CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIORS IN FASHION

Consumer behaviour is the study of the processes included choosing, purchasing, using or disposing of products, services, ideas or experiences by individuals or groups to fulfill their needs and desires (Solomon 2009). Consumer behaviour, according to Khan & Dhar (2006), can be defined as the process of consumers making decision and actions connected with acquisition, appraisal, consumption and disposal of purchased goods.

However, buying behaviour in fashion is a complex process. Therefore, understanding of consumer buying behaviour is particularly important in fashion marketing. Kotler and Keller (2006) mentioned the importance of the ways how the customers choose their products and services can be extremely important for manufacturers as well as service providers as this provides them with competitive advantage over its competitors in several aspects. For example, they may use the knowledge obtained through studying the consumer buying behaviour to set their strategies towards offering the right products and services to the right audience of customers reflecting their needs and wants effectively.

2.1 Factors that influence consumers' buying behaviour in fashion

Many different factors can influence the outcome of buying decisions such as environmental and marketing factors, emotional aspects of buyers, situation and psychological factors. Some influences can be temporary and others are long lasting, which both can affect customer purchasing decisions. In order to have a more complete view into the customers' mind, marketers should understand clearly these factors.

Consumer's buying behaviour is influenced by four driven factors: situational, social, personal and psychological factors. Consumer behavior is a component of human behavior and by studying buying behavior, marketers can have a view in how consumers might behave when making purchasing decisions. (Kotler & Keller 2006.)

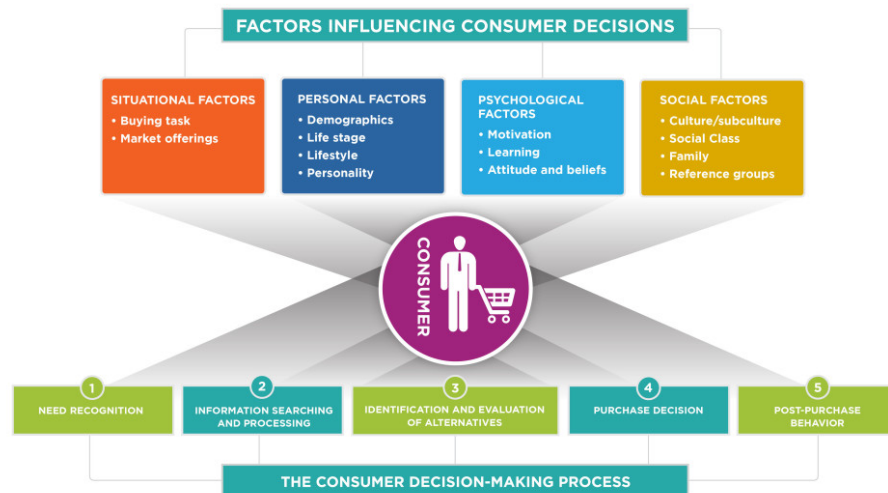


Figure 1. Factors influencing consumer decisions (Burnett 2010)

2.1.1 Situational factors

Situational factors are concerned with physical factors that can influence a buyer's purchase behaviours. There are some physical factors under the control of brands such as layout of store, store location, music played at stores or atmospherics. The majority of businesses are aware that the layout of their stores has a substantial influence on customer behavior. It determines how people act in the store, how long they stay, and what they are most likely to buy when they are there. Take the Hong Kong boutique of Chanel as an example, the store layout is designed as Coco Chanel's Parisian apartment with all of lifestyle elements associated with Coco Chanel's life, which have formed a signature of the brand. With a 32-metre string of pearls hanging down entire three floors and other signatred details of Coco Chanel, it creates a strong connection with the brand founder, Coco Chanel in order to enhance the effectiveness of purchasing behaviours.

Additionally, the sensory influences involved in types of music, volume, beat or noise , which contributes considerably to the ambience and mood of people. For example, in retail departments, catchy and fast tempo music is played during peak shopping hours to stimulate high spending and promote purchases while slow musics like ascoutic on the other hand is utilized during low hours to make shoppers to wander around in the store. The longer customers walk around a store, the more

chances they will spend. Moreover, to implement an effective store design, colour is one of important components to impact shoppers' moods and thereby enhance purchase probability. For instance, the red color can bring an exciting feeling and increase body's metabolism or black is considered as the color of sexy and sophisticated.

In addition, the available market offerings are also relevant to situational influences on consumer purchase decision. For instance, many retailers usually launch sale campaigns or discounted codes to put more traffic during unattractive times. Also, crowding is one of situational factors, which has a positive impact on buying decisions. This is referred to as "herd behaviour". (Gaumer & Leif 2005.)

2.1.2 Personal factors

In addition to situational factors, personal characteristics have a direct impact on an individual's decisions such as age, gender, life-cycle status, occupation, financial situation, lifestyles, personality and self concept. There is a world of difference in the demand and shopping between men and women. The way they do shopping differently and have different views on shopping in general. For example, regard to online shopping, males prefer websites with a lot of product pictures, whereas women like to view things online in a lifestyle context, such as a dress in a wedding party. Women are also twice as likely as males to utilize viewing capabilities like as zoom in and rotate buttons to check the item in details (Ward & Thuhang 2007.)

Besides, the shift in consumer purchasing behaviour in fashion also depends on their age and stages of life, age-related factors lead to the shifts in a person's preferences and tastes as well as purchase behavior as they become older. Therefore, people tend to consume different things at different stages of their lives. For example, the brand of clothing which individual used some years ago might not suit his/her desires and needs in the present moment. Another example of generation categorization like Generation X, Millennials, and the most powerful Generation Z recently, 66 percent of millennials are reported by Nielsen that millennials are willing to pay more for fashion goods than their previous generation. Therefore, preferences in purchasing a product constantly change. (Kotler & Keller 2006.)

Additionally, employment and financial situation are personal related elements influencing long-term buying behavior. The level of income influences what customers can afford and their viewpoint of money (Solomon 2009.)

Also, the individual economic situation has a significant impact on product and brand 's selection as well as customers' perspectives toward fashion. People, who have similar occupational background, tend to have similar taste in clothing and branding.

2.1.3 Psychological factors

Psychological factors have an significant impact on consumer behaviour, which includes motivation, perception, emotion and attitude. Psychology is said to be the first silent in marketing as the consumer has needs and wants that should be responded to (Kumra 2007). The term "motivation" refers to the internal demands of consumers so understanding how to motivate customers is crucial for businesses. Besides, Kumra (2007) describes motivation as being the “propelling energy within an individual that directs him towards action”. The level of motivation has a significant impact on consumers' buying behaviour. A consumer is an individual who tend to have a variety of needs at any given time. Some demands are biogenic such as hunger, thirsty, or discomfort and other needs are psychogenic including the need for recognition, esteem, or belonging. Therefore, people will prioritise the most important need first and then move to the next need. Additionally, there are several factors which motivate customers to purchase products or services.

Regarding of perception, it is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting information that makes a person behave a certain way and make decisions. Experiences, beliefs and personal characteristics can all influence perception. For example, individuals prefer to spend on high-end brands and limited items so that others would look up to them, which can show their status symbol, and people recognize them by their preference for exclusive items. Moreover, the term “belief and attitude” refers to the state of being convinced of something, which plays a vital role in influencing the buying decision of individuals. For instance, some people lean on visualisation. Images of products or services can communicate a thousand words regardless of belief system. This explains why images are important in marketing. External influences, such as family and friends, have an impact on an individual's opinions, and consequently on their purchasing behavior. (Perreau 2013.)

2.1.4 Social factors

Along with situational factors, buying behaviour is affected by social factors such as culture, reference groups, family, and social roles and status.

Firstly, culture is a passed-down way of life that is commonly seen as having the greatest effect on a consumer's behavior. In many countries, culture dictates how people should live and has a significant impact on the items they buy. For example, Asian and Western women can often be seen wearing mini dresses but Afghanistan woman may face a death if they wear mini dresses so they have to cover completely from head to toe by wearing burqas or long black garment. Hence, Arabic woman are not target customer group of international brands which only provides trendy western apparels. Another example of culture's impact on purchasing behaviours, one of popular cultures of Chinese tourists on shopping is related to payment methods like WeChat pay, unionpay or Alipay so nowadays, many brands have to register those platforms to reach Chinese tourists as well as to receive payments.

Secondly, consumer preference in choosing special products or service can be impacted by people or groups with whom a person interacts face to face or even indirect contact such as family members, friends, colleagues, neighbours, opinion leaders and so on. It is called as reference groups. It has been studied that all members of the reference group have similar buying habits and have a considerable influence on each other's product and brand selections. Along with reference group, consumers may also be influenced by celebrities or individuals who inspire them. Those people are called as aspirational group. For example, Nike has been successful at choosing Michael Jordan who pitches the companies' products. As a result, marketers must understand the roles of reference group and aspirational group that influence consumers' attitudes and behavior. (Kotler & Keller 2006.)

In addition, several studies have been conducted to figure out the kind of factors that consumers use to make fashion selections. Firstly, rightness of personal style, the piece of clothing is suitable for consumer's personal branding, well-fit and comfort. Secondly, quality is a key aspect to consider for customers when selecting a product. It is about fabric, patterns, fibers, quality of sewing. Also, branding plays an important role in making fashion selection because brands can reflect the personalities and self-perception of an individual so some people only spend on fashion pieces which are premium or luxury brands. Lastly, country of origin which means before making purchase decisions, it is important for several customers who want know about how and where apparels are

manufactured. To illustration, chinese tourists specially concern about where the fashion items are made in. If it made in China, it does not matter how good and gorgous the peice is , they never buy it. Most of Chinese tourists are interested in products made in Italy or France.

Understanding customer demand and responding with right items are essential components of successful fashion marketing. Marketers utilize sale tracking tools, media coverage, focus groups and other methods of determining customer preferences, which provides feedbacks to designers and manufacturers regarding the sort and amount of items to be produced. Understanding about customer buying behavior in fashion helps marketers to discover and define a fashion producer's target clients, as well as reacting to customers' preferences.

2.2 Consumer decision making process

Consumer decision is a process of choosing and purchasing the products and services by individuals in order to satisfy their needs. Understanding the process of consumer decision can strengthen the marketing campaign of the company. The consumer decision-making process is the journey of five primary steps included and it can be seen in the picture 2.

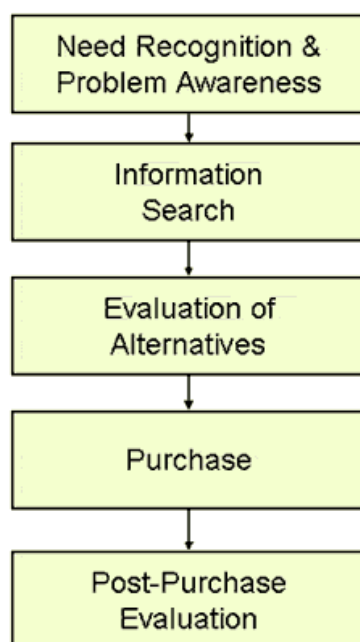


Figure 2. A buyer's decision making process (Rezaee 2008)

To begin with, need recognition means that Customers become aware of their demand for a product or service, which is the first and most important stage of the buying process. Needs come about because of two reasons: internal and external stimuli like sickness, sadness, hungry or advertisement. Besides, there are several sorts of need recognition such as functional need, social need, changing need. For instance, when the winter comes and many customers realise that they need a heavy-duty winter jacket that can get through the snow and low temperatures so this is called functional need recognition.

Next, when the demand is recognized, the customer wants to know what their alternatives are at this point. Kotler & Keller (2006) highlight that when searching information and options, customers can rely on four main groups of information sources including experiential, personal, public and commercial sources. Personal sources, such as family and friends, are regarded as the most effective source. With updating information about brand awareness, consumers can be proactive about choosing or rejecting some brands when making their final selection. However, each information factor has an impact on the purchasing decision and differs depending on the product category and the consumer's attributes.

Evaluation of alternatives is the stage in which a consumer considers available options that match their needs before making the final decision. The alternative evaluation varies among customers and purchases. In addition, customers evaluate a product with different categorization based on their knowledge and belief about the brand and then choosing one of the options. Their evaluation is impacted by two primary factors: objectives and subjective factors such as features, functionality, price. Moreover, the choice can be influenced by the combination of information from various sources, knowledge available at the time of purchase, the awareness about the brands created via advertising. (Solomon 2009.)

Purchasing decision is a significant stage where buying behavior turns into action but the consumer still has to make five sub-decisions: the price point, term of sale, brand, time and payment methods. At this point, nothing is guaranteed and prospects may refuse to make a purchase due to some factors such as high delivery fee. The decision-making process continues after the purchase decision has been made. (Kotler & Keller 2006.)

The final stage in the buyer's decision making process is post-purchase evaluation. After making a decision, it is a time for consumers to reflect on their buying decision. Consumers reflect on their buying decision with a review based on their expectations and experiences. During this stage, the total

consumption process is taken into consideration. Brink and Berndt (2009) highlight the importance of this stage that the customer may either get satisfaction or disappointment with a review based on the appraisal of their expectations and experiences. It has a direct impact on the next decision of the customer to purchase the same product from the same supplier in the future. In particular, the consumer's high level of satisfaction can be translated into brand loyalty.

In sum, it can be stated that consumer purchasing behaviour can decide the success or failure of new products and services. Especially, making a purchase in fashion is a complex process for consumers especially to Gen Z who has a better awareness of fashion industry so the buying behaviour is more complicated than other sectors of customers.

3 CHARACTERISTICS OF GENERATION Z AS CUSTOMERS

Generation Z refers to those individuals who were born in the decade following the widespread emergence of the World Wide Web, roughly from 1995 to the early 2000's, who are named as the iGeneration, Centennials or Zoomers. Beside that, Generation Z is also known as "digital natives" since they are grown up immersed in a digital world that has seen serve changes in economic, environmental and political circumstances. This generation is also claimed to be the first to have grown up with access to the Internet, as well as digital and electronic equipment. It is easier for Gen Zers to adopt with new technology since they have been growing in the period of technological advancements such as smart phone, tablets, social networks and apps. For this generation, the virtual world has always existed. Information technology, advertising, and electronic applications are all part of Gen Z's maturation. According to a new report from Snapchat, 95 percent of Z generation own smartphones and they spend an average of 4 hours and 15 minutes per day on phone. The majority of Gen Z smartphone users (64 percent) believe they are always connected online, and 57 percent say they feel distress when keep away from their smartphone. These technological advances have had both positive and negative consequences for Generation Z. On the positive side, Gen Zers have access to an abundance of information, allowing them to enhance their knowledge and open mind. On the other side, spending too much time on screen can lead to feelings of isolation and a lack of social skills development. Besides, 81 percent of generation Z spend their free time on social media and 70 percent watch more than an hour of videos on YouTube everyday, which make YouTube as the most visited website by this age group. (Hulyk 2015.) They are creative, bold, and the creators of many trends on TikTok, Instagram Reels, and other platforms.

One of core characteristics of Gen Z is that they are concerned about what their money is spent on in addition to the product itself. As consumers, Generation Z has more choices in the marketplace than their prior generations, therefore Gen Z marketing entails more than simply selling a product. According to Accenture, 37 percent of generation Z customers have to make a social media research before making a purchase. Furthermore, gen Z buyers prefer to make a purchase directly through social media. This generation is value-conscious and brands that "keep it real" appeal to them. Marketing to Gen Z requires businesses to be authentic, transparent and trustworthy like using a real person in their advertising and they enthusiastically interact with contents from brands they love and trust. In an interview with Forbes, CEO Matt Voda of software company OptiMine says "Authenticity has been shown in Gen-Z research as a critical element in how they evaluate products and services. Gen-Z

consumers want to be able to trust the brand, understand what it stands for and be confident they aren't being sold a bag of goods". They are the ones who are most easily influenced by online advertising. In the US, fashion retailer American Eagle has partnered with Gen Z social influencers, such as model Xiao Wen Ju and actress Hailee Steinfeld, on the brand's #WeAllCan campaign through a series of videos (Brzezicki 2022.)

In addition, Gen Z, the most diverse generation to date, expects businesses reflect the diversity, as well as the transparency. They can easily interact with individuals of other races, genders or backgrounds online to share ideas and beliefs. They want to be a part of significant conversations, both personally and professionally, and they expect people to listen to what they share, regardless of their age or experience. In particular, they are involved in social, environmental and political concerns so it is critical to be aware of business actions, their ethics, and their implications. According to the 2019 Porter Novelli/Cone Gen Z Purpose Study, nearly 87 percent of Gen Zers are concerned about the environment and the planet. The research, which surveyed 14 to 22-year-olds in the United States, shows this generation's expectations and views on corporate involvement in social and environmental issues, as well as the activities they are prepared to take to positively affect issues they care about. Therefore, Gen Z-ers actively support brands that have a responsibility to address environmental and social problems. There is a significant change about perspectives of generation Z compared to the previous generation of millennials' beliefs and environmental conscious. The shift is reflected in the increased visibility of social issues and campaigns like #metoo, #blacklivesmatter, and #timesup in recent years. (Bellan 2020.)

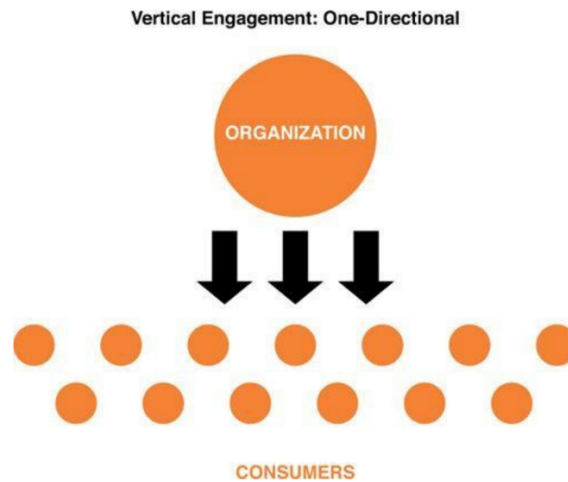
Many brands like Levi Strauss and Nike, which have both taken a strong position on social issues in recent months, with Nike supporting Colin Kaepernick, the face of the NFL's "anthem protests" and Levi's leading a campaign against gun violence. Gucci has also supported that cause, supporting a student-led march calling for more gun control. At the New York Fashion Week, American designer Jeremy Scott wore a t-shirt showing, "Tell your senator no on Kavanaugh," in reference to the then-embattled US Supreme Court justice undergoing confirmation hearings. Some fashion labels have launched collections related to specific issues. Take H&M as a good example, the company has created a Pride collection in 2018 to support the LGBTQ+ community and Balenciaga, who partnered with the World Food Programme under the slogan, "Saving Lives, Changing Lives." Another example is Moschino who used colored models to encourage diversity. (Beltrami 2019.)

Brands need to focus on what issues Generation Z is concerned about. Along with product quality and customer experience, it is more important for the brand to support important causes related to society, culture, and identity.

4 FASHION MARKETING STRATEGIES TO REACH GEN Z CONSUMERS

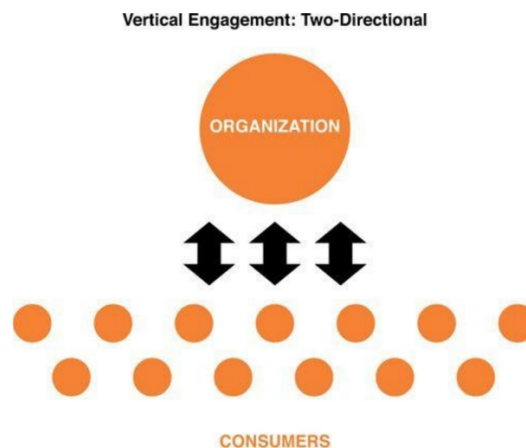
The author will give a definition of social media in order to provide basic to the discussion about various social media sites and their influence on customer buying behaviour. Social media has been defined in various ways but it is difficult to define it accurately since there are some exceptions to every definition. The term ‘social media’ refers to an internet-based form designed for the democratization of contents among individuals via social networks. (Close 2012.) It allows users to have conversations, share information and create contents. Social media is defined as “a collection of websites and web-based technologies that allow for mass engagement, communication, and sharing among members of a network.” In detail, the main purpose of social media is to enhance the communication and sharing by using web-based technologies via the internet. (Hill, Dean & Murphy 2013.)

Nowadays, many companies utilize social media as a tool to promote themselves, introduce new products and to improve the relationships between the enterprise and customers. This occurred due to the increase in the total number of internet users. In the marketplace, social media can be defined as a platform for customers to express their thoughts, to create new network and to share personal experiences or knowledge about a certain product. Unlike traditional media such as newspapers, television, it is not passive in terms of communication and must involve interaction between friends, family, brands and customers. (Evans 2012). Its characteristics include openness, discussion and participation that allow community involvement and connectivity. Also, traditional media advertising has many problems, especially ineffective connections, high costs, and reducing effectiveness due to changes in media behavior and the digital revolution (Karjaluo 2010). Traditional media works on a one to many paradigm. As a one-way communication, the brand message is created and then transmitted to multiple receivers through traditional media channels like television and radio. In compared to social media, this one-way communication is less effective in creating engagement or promoting words of mouth (Hausman 2014).



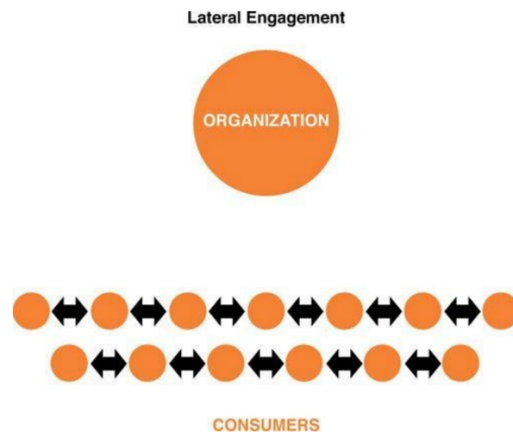
Picture 1. Traditional media - one directional vertical engagement (Blanchard 2011)

As seen in picture 3, Blanchard (2011) refers to this one-way communication type of traditional media as one directional vertical engagement. On the contrary, communication via social media is multidirectional and real-time, allowing the freedom over content creation and in information sharing., Social media is a great platform to engage in direct conversation and word-of-mouth marketing. When Web 2.0 is established, it transformed communication into two directional vertical engagement. This model is shown in picture 4.



Picture 2. Social media- two directional vertical engagement (Blanchard 2011)

Today, social media has become an important part of marketing for businesses in any sizes since it allows individuals to quickly create and share content, opinions, experiences or links to the massive community. This lateral engagement can be seen in picture 5.



Picture 3. Social media- Lateral engagement (Blanchard 2011)

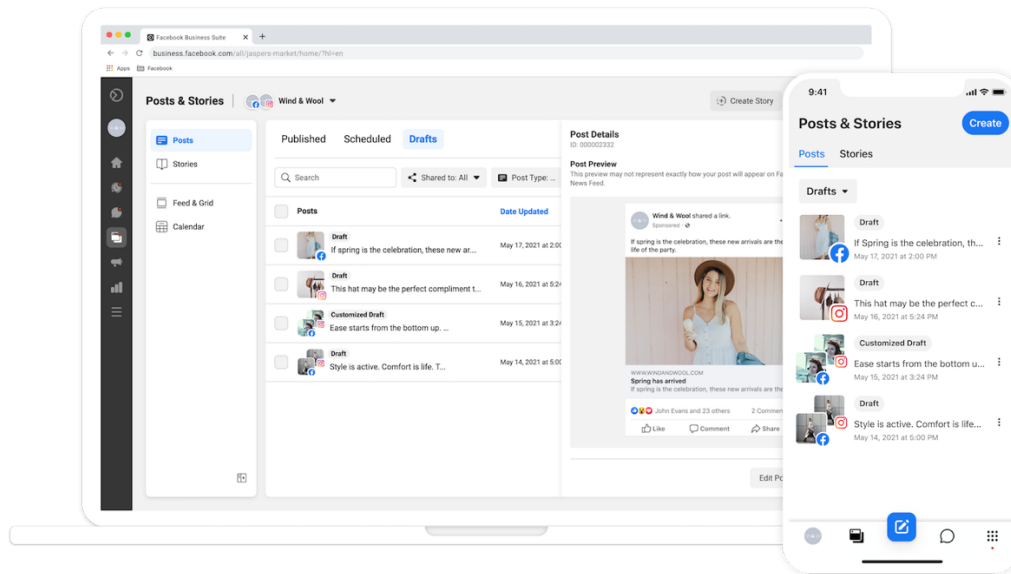
Thus, social media is regarded as one of the most effective methods for companies to reach out to Gen Z consumers.

4.1 Types of social media

As mentioned, social media platforms can create a great opportunity for businesses to interact with potential customers, learn more about their demands and make revenues. There are many forms of social media, including blogs, social networking sites, review network, media-sharing sites, podcasts, instant messaging and others. However, there are two main types of social media which have a significant influence on consumer behaviour by focusing on discussion for the relevance of the thesis. There are including social network sites and media sharing sites.

4.1.1 Social network sites

Social networking sites are designed to connect and exchange thoughts, ideas, and material with other users, which is a platform for communication of individuals sharing with similar tastes and interests. It might be a personal profile or company pages that connect people, encourage dialogue and allows individuals to share information, videos, photos and audio. This network brings benefits to businesses including market research, brand awareness, relationship development, customer service and generate new customer leads. Facebook and Twitter are social networking sites and LinkedIn is a professional network that also functions as a social network platform.



Picture 4. Posting and Stories features on Facebook (Facebook 2021)

Facebook is probably the most well-known and largest social networking site in the world. According to Facebook's recent investor report, Facebook currently has 2.895 billion monthly active users. Facebook provides online marketing tools that make it easier for businesses to reach out target customers and to progress marketing campaigns. Facebook can be considered as a social network version of a business's website, where companies use to announce news or updates through posting or story features. It can be seen in picture 6 (Facebook 2021). Moreover, a company Facebook page allows customers to post their opinions and reviews regarding products and services. Today, many brands create private groups on Facebook, where customers can join, interact, ask questions and have a more personalised experience with the brand.

LinkedIn is a business- oriented social networking platform that is ideal for connecting professionals, building professional relationship, sharing information, finding new jobs and recruiting new candidates. With over 610 million users in over 200 countries, LinkedIn is used to find highly skilled employees. Furthermore, companies can develop contacts with clients and gain mutually useful expertise.

Twitter is initially an online tool to stay in touch with friends, but it has since developed into a business marketing tool. With over 326 million monthly active users, Twitter is used similarly to Facebook, where users can post photos, videos, status updates, links and more. It is a great place to interact with customers and drive more traffics. Additionally, this platform also offers paid advertisements for

businesses to attract targeted customers. However, Twitter allows tweeting only 280 characters for each message that means it must be get to the point content.

4.1.2 Media sharing sites (Instagram & Tiktok)

In contrast to social networks, which specialize in sharing and discussing thoughts and ideas, media networks allow users to upload and share multimedia contents like photos, videos and live videos online. This network helps businesses to increase brand awareness, audience engagement, generate new leads, driving traffic to the website. Instagram and Tiktok are good examples of media sharing sites.

Instagram is a media sharing platform where users may publish and share their personal photos and videos as well as browse the post of other Instagram users. This social media site is designed to motivate its users to share personal photos by expressing their personalities via creative contents in their posts, as well as to discover other users by following their updates. (Moreau 2015.) According to the latest update of Instagram statistics, Instagram has 1 billion monthly active users globally, which shows its potential as a marketing tool. In the fashion industry, Instagram is regarded as the best platform providing fashion lovers with information and updates about fashion brands. There are many different features on Instagram such as hashtags, geotags, stories, IGTV, Reels and tags, which makes the photo sharing process more interesting for the users.

Tiktok is one of media sharing sites targeted at young mobile users, ranked the second most downloaded app worldwide in 2019. It is considered as an app that has captured a generation's imagination. Tiktok allows users to create and share various music contents for not only entertaining distraction but also encourage creativity and helps users express themselves. This video-sharing platform was initially introduced in China in 2016 under the name Douyin and currently reach at more than 500 million monthly active users globally, which is more than 174 million users on Twitter. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, Tiktok has seen the largest increase and today it has become a hub for brand partnership and an essential element of Gen Z culture. Furthermore, TikTok appeals to Gen Z because of the way the platform is designed. It mainly focuses on short-form video contents, which is easier to use and go viral on the app than other social media platforms. Also, It can fulfill Gen Z's desire to prove themselves and express their creativity. According to Fanbytes, 58 percent of gen Z are willing to pay more for products that are tailored to their personalities and Tiktok has become a hub for personalised marketing, which is a great method to reach right audiences.

4.2 Social media as an influence on buying behaviour of Z generation

Social media has had a significant influence on young customers since they have been immersed in an internet-based world. More than 85% of Generation Z will discover about new items through social media, and 69% will visit a store based on a retailer's social media post. Opinions shared by GenZers on social media are incredibly powerful, encouraging 8 out of 10 people to purchase at a store they have never visited before. According to Yes Lifecycle Marketing research, 41% of Gen Zers read online reviews before making buying decision and more than 80% of Gen Z is affected by social media while making purchase. Furthermore, it is reported that 76 percent of Gen Zers want businesses to respond to their comments, and they perceive this as an indication that the company values their consumers. This shows that it's crucial not only to listen to criticism, but also to act on it, particularly if it is negative.

Therefore, engaging with customers through social media is one of the most effective ways for brands to be more authentic and to reach more Z generation as targeted customers. Additionally, having a strong social media presence enables businesses to promote themselves effectively and engage with their audiences as well as to attract potential customers. Instagram is one of the most used social media platforms that fashion brands utilise to drive brand awareness due to its highly visual layout and other creative features for fashion marketing opportunities. In fashion industry, visibility on social media is crucial to not only driving sales but also maintain a leading position of the industry. According to marketer Jeff Bullas, articles with images get 94 percent more views than those without. As the result, visual content is the most effective way to engage with targeted customers and is one of the powerful marketing strategies businesses can use. It is worth noting in figure 1 that the average post engagement rate on Instagram rose slightly from 1.09 percent to 1.16 percent in 2020 while Facebook's engagement rate was mostly remained at 0.27 percent for the same period. (Cucu 2022.)

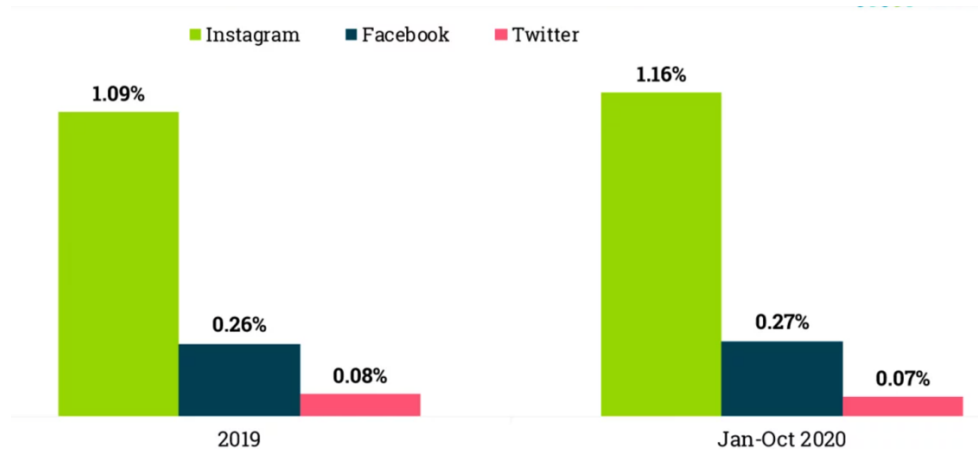
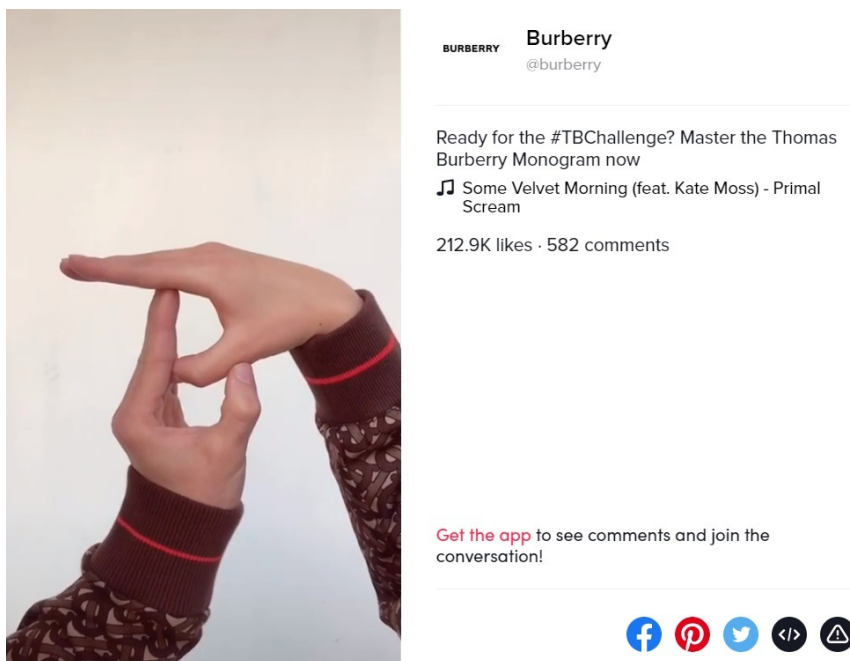


Figure 3. Brand's average social media post engagement rate (Socialinsider 2022)

Instagram offers various advertising options for businesses which can use photos, videos or stories to reach more people and gain more followers and sales. It is critical for business growth nowadays. In compared to other content sharing sites, this social media site has the largest active users. It means that the visitors of the Instagram account are more inclined to interact with the content that is presented by fashion brands, for instance, make a purchase. Moreover, Instagram provides companies with many opportunities to strengthen the brand, especially it is essential for the fashion brands due to the fact that it allows the companies to share visual content, which is vital for the introduction of the clothes and other fashion items. Instagram allows companies to demonstrate the process of creating the clothes, to communicate with the customers via direct messages or comment field under the posted photo or video, to increase the brand recognition by liking the posts of the customers, to provide information regarding new products, to announce the sales and competitions, and so forth. Furthermore, by creating dialogs with the customers the companies can produce direct influence how people perceive the brand and the company. (Kietzmann 2011.) For example, there is a brand named ADAY, it was founded in London in 2015 and it is one of the World's Most Innovative Companies in 2018. Instagram has been an important part of the success of ADAY. Thank to this channel, ADAY team can do a research about how their customer are using ADAY through tagged posts, do R&D for future products and be able to build the connection with customer engagement like storytelling via stories, carousels and give away. In addition, here are some examples of creative Instagram marketing that brands had embraced successfully to engage with gen Z and stand out in the feed. Understanding that Gen Z prefers authentic and approachable marketing, which means they enjoy seeing behind-the-scenes of well-known brands, Everlane is an American clothing retailer, which offered customers with unprecedented transparency into their supply chain methods. As a result, their weekly behind-the-scenes Instagram stories, in which they answer inquiries and preview upcoming items, is a perfect match for their brand strategy.

Nowadays, many brands figure out how to promote their products to Gen Z-ers on TikTok in a smart way that does not affect the brand image, such as how Nike promotes their sneaker by posting sport challenges #MagicBoots. There are many brands joined Tiktok including Prada, Alice+Olivia, Dolce & Gabbana, Tory Burch, Burberry and Missoni and so on. Tiktok, like other social media platforms, allows users to put hashtags into their post, which makes it simple for people to search for information or discover content as well as for businesses to target relevant audiences. The #inmydenim Tiktok challenge, created by GUESS Jeans is a successful example of the Tiktok hashtag feature. The challenge prompted people to show off their favourite ways to style their jeans. Moreover, Burberry has created a challenge for Tiktok viewers to shape their fingertips into the letter "TB" (monogram of Thomas Burberry). In just a week, Burberry received more than 30,000 users-generated videos with 57 million views.



Picture 5. Burberry's challenge to Tiktok users to recreate the new 'TB' Thomas Burberry monogram by using hand gestures (Reed 2019)

Along with hashtag challenge, a user-generated content (UGC) is also an effective marketing approach to gen Z on Tiktok, which goes beyond written reviews. The reason why UGC works well to reach young potential customers is that it is easy for Tiktokers to share their experiences with products and gen Z values authenticity and trust. In an interview with Glossy, Dana Israeli, CMO of clothing brand Edikted says "We reached out to influencers and customers and began asking them to create hauls and

unboxing videos that included our iconic pink packages. After a few weeks, it became a viral trend that was all over TikTok. The customer wanted to be part of the movement and the community, and without even having to ask them, they all joined in.” Also, there are other ways to use Tiktok for marketing such as Duet function, drive engagement using scarcity.

4.3 Other marketing strategies to gen Z

Marketing to the generation of digital experts will be quite different from marketing to previous generations in many ways so marketing to gen Z will undoubtedly be a challenge and a lot of work.

Firstly, brand collaboration is a strategic solution where two or more brands work together to create synergy, which have become more popular as a marketing strategy particularly among fashion and lifestyle brands. It is showed that team-ups between brands can create something new, unexpected and unique, which can get attention from Gen Z. The fundamental feature of brand collaboration is that businesses take advantage of each other's strengths and support each other's weaknesses, resulting in a win-win scenario. It can be a collaboration between brands (co-branding), or with well-known artists, influencers. In the fashion industry, there is a common partnership strategy that luxury brands collaborate with low-cost fashion chains to create a limited collection with famous names at affordable prices, which is called high-low cobranding. Here are some examples of win-win co-branding in the fashion industry, which get fashion brands closer to young customers. The first example is H&M. They have launched collections in collaboration with many well-known designers such as Alexander Wang, Lanvin and Balmain. These collections sold out almost immediately, and Gen Z around the world have been busy showing off their shopping accomplishments on social media. These items are mainly aimed towards for customers who are too young to have enough income to buy Balmain items. This is a good opportunity for those customers to own high-end brands at a fraction of the price. The excitement and joy brought to consumers from this transaction is considered as a stepping stone for them to shop at Balmain in the future as they mature in their careers with higher incomes.

One of the most well-known co-branding is from luxury brand Louis Vuitton collaborating with cult streetwear brand Supreme. In 2017, Louis Vuitton was the first luxury brand to collaborate with a streetwear brand Supreme with a capsule collection endorsing a skater culture icon: New York’s Supreme. All items of this collaborative collection sold out only a single day and the success was such that it accounted for 23 percent of LVMH’s overall income in the half of 2017, reaching 23 million

dollars in revenues. The launch of this collaborative collection has become one of the most prominent campaigns in the fashion industry.



Picture 6. Louis Vuitton x Supreme collaboration in 2017 (Bobila 2017)

Besides, Finnish brand Marimekko's collaboration with sportswear giant Adidas is a great example of a mutually beneficial partnership. Adidas get the benefits of working with the most well-known Finnish brand and respected fashion labels, allowing them to tap into a current trend and the bold vibrant pattern "Unikko" poppy print while limited-edition brand collaborations raise international brand awareness for Marimekko and thus support the company's international growth strategy.

In addition, there are some successful cross-collaborations between brands such as H&M teaming up with Karl Lagerfeld or Jil Sander partnering with Uniqlo, collaborations have become an increasingly popular strategy for both large and small fashion businesses. They can be used to increase brand awareness, attract new followers, generate new sales channels, disrupt traditional thought or buying patterns, and to maintain hype. Collaboration between luxury brands and others are successful in creating a hype around their products, particularly among young customers. According to a 2019 Statista report, 67 percent of gen Z respondents had purchased luxury items from collaborations. Cross- collaboration between brands is a great strategy to revitalize a company's image among gen Z

customers, enhance audience reach, introduce the brand into new markets as well as generate additional revenue. Brand collabs remain a driving force effective marketing for gen Z.

Aside from collaboration with high-end brands which is a good way to acquire more attention from gen Z buyers, influencer marketing is a also powerful tool that connect businesses with digital content creators to promote products or service and enhance brand awareness and engagement. The boom in social media platforms over the last decade has resulted in the rise of individuals with macro or even micro numbers of followers, who have the ability to directly influence the opinions and purchasing behavior of others. Through their posts and videos, influencers can shape consumers' attitudes. (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey & Freberg 2010.) Especially, Instagram has made influencers rise in popularity among fashion brands due to their large and loyal following. As a result, many brands are putting more emphasis and financial backing on influencing these individuals rather than the target market as a whole. The key to this type of marketing is to select the right influencers. Some influencers will still work with labels for free products, but as the demand for influencers has grown, many are increasingly charging to push products in front of their followers. Influencer fees vary greatly depending on the numbers of followers they have, the number of posts expected to make, the country in which they are based and the sort of arrangement. Besides, the generation Z seeks influencers from social media. Platforms such Instagram, Tiktok, Twitter and YouTube all have their own celebrities who have managed to create content on their accounts that attracts also people they do not personally know. People do not only follow these celebrity accounts but also create their own content and interact with the users they admire. The older generations do not have similar chances to communicate with the people they considered influencers or celebrities. (Mastroianni 2016.) Brands build genuine relationships with influencers, which can gain the loyalty of desired audiences. Utilizing influencers to promote branding and content is an effective way to reach Gen Z and increase brand awareness. Influencers have a high level of trust among Gen Z, so when these individuals support a brand, young people are more likely to be interested in it as well. When choosing influencers to work with, fashion companies must consider influencers' style and their connection because gen Zs prefer to be approached by real individuals who have authentic connection to the brands they represent. Furthermore, influencer marketing is especially suitable for small brands to grow their business on a limited budget.

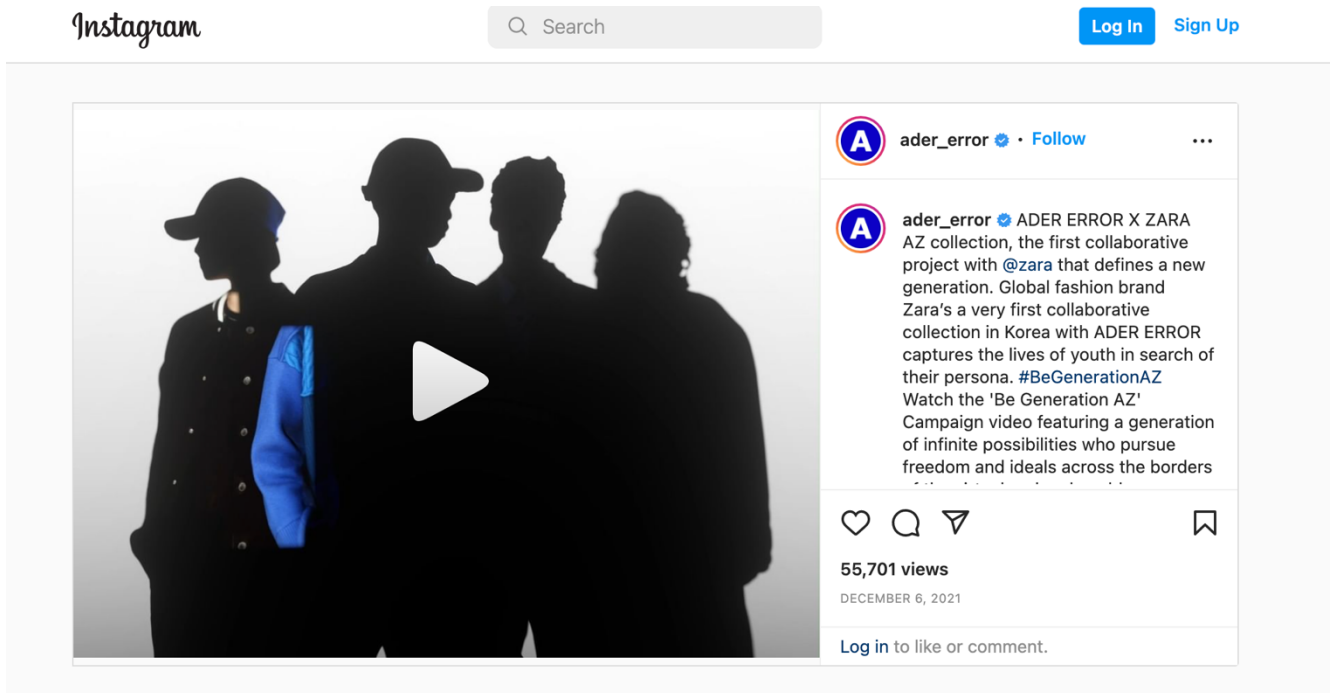
4 CASE STUDY

Ader Error, based in Seoul, South Korea, is unquestionably one of the country's most famous exports, alongside K-pop and kimchi. Rather of relying on celebrities and well-known faces in its marketing campaigns, the company depends only on high-quality products and social media to generate revenue. This marketing's strategy brings success to brand's awareness as well as pushes up sales.

There are no sponsored content or compensated influencer programs. Instead, Ader Error focus on Instagram feeds dedicated to certain campaigns. It has several handles, each of which is dedicated to a specific purpose. One is dedicated to advertising and shop debuts, one to product introductions, and one - our personal favorite – to demonstrating consumers how to dress Error's garments while sharing their outfits. In this part, the brief information about Ader Error will be presented and the collaboration of Ader Error and Zara will be taken as an example to strengthen the success of the brand to international market. (Maoui 2018.)

5.1 Company profile

Ader Error was founded in December 2014 by a group of people from various industries who came together to create something unique and entertaining. They built the brand to interact with customers through their stylish fashion-based current, simple, and accessible content. Because their major inspiration is focused on ordinary, daily items, their brand motto is “But near missed things”. (Maoui 2018.)



Picture 7. New feed of Ader Error about collaboration with Zara posted in Ader Error Instagram. (Instagram 2021)

Ader collaborates with like-minded firms on collaboration products to help them expand and gain reputation. It's not just about collaborating on a product; it's about inventing a whole new way of communicating based on each other's identities.

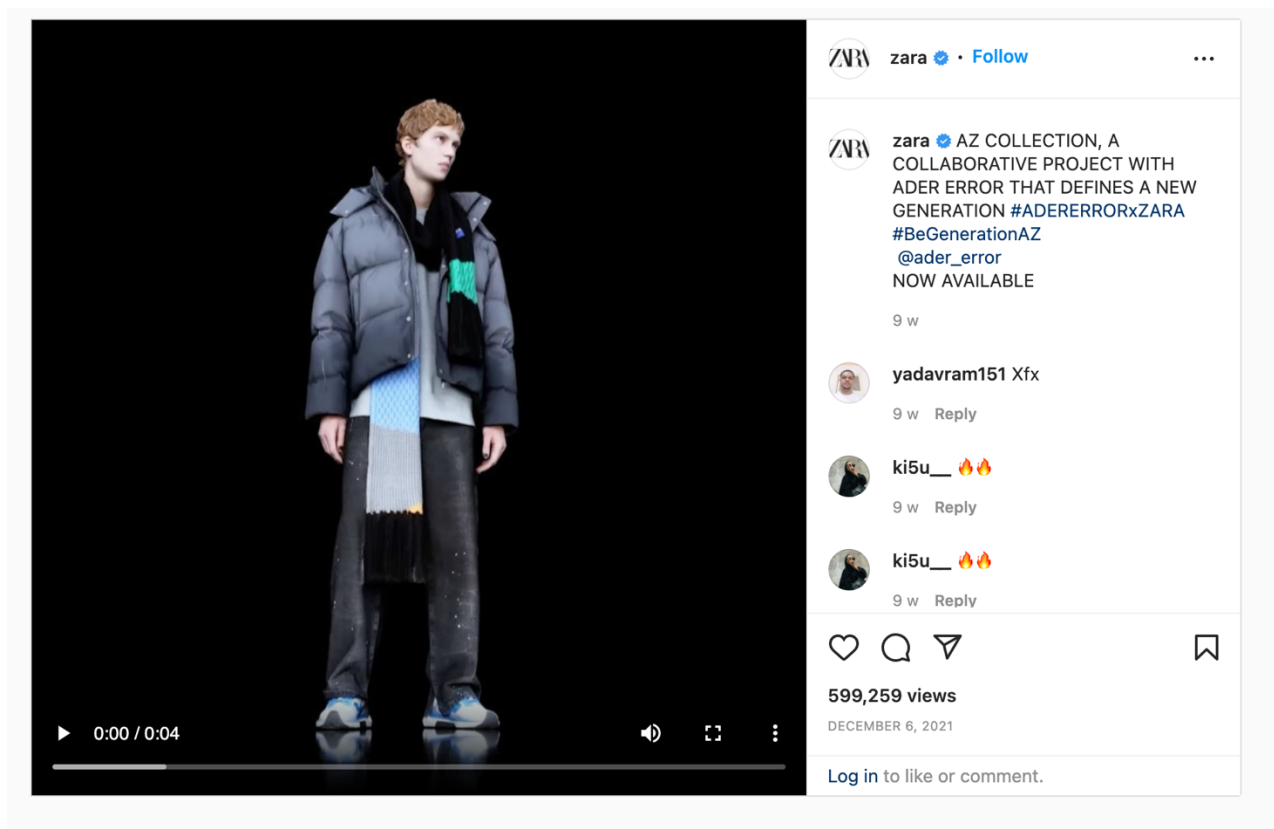
5.2 The AZ collection

The AZ Collection, a fresh and unexpected collaboration between Zara, is the Spanish fast fashion giant's first collection outside of its physical and online stores, in a virtual environment and the South Korean company Ader Error. AZ Collection, which was available on December 2021, was a project that examined the capacity of language to articulate ideas, fostered creative thinking, and moulded future generations based on the importance of each person's uniqueness and originality (Kim 2021.)

The AZ Collection is meant to be a contemplation on language's potential to communicate ideas, generate new ways of thinking, and establish new societies. The AZ Collection uses the letters of the alphabet as an unlimited source of inspiration to build silhouettes that represent the lifestyle of youngsters, from the A of Ader to the Z of Zara, and of the era to whom it is aimed to appeal. The joint

collection aims to establish a new generation built on the distinctiveness of individuals acquired through individual opinions in both the actual and virtual worlds, resulting in "Generation AZ." The term AZ is derived from the letters of the alphabet and correlates to the names of the two partners, according to a press release. The duo is organically bonded to bring new ideas, ideologies, and civilizations to life, according to the press release. These ideas are included into the designs, each of which seeks to merge the two businesses identities (Kim 2021.)

Zara tweeted on its official Instagram account that the designs represent the lifestyle of individuals whose identities are moulded by their contemporaneous experiences in the real and virtual worlds, displaying the new 'persona' conceived up by both businesses.



Picture 8. New feed of Zara about collaboration with Ader Error posted in Zara Instagram. (Instagram 2021)

The notion depicts a belief in the boundlessness of time, which extends from the past to the present and future without regard for beginning and end. After all, the starting and the end are inexhaustible, recurrent, and biological events. This is represented as #InfiniteZigzag, which is used across the board for this collection's product lines.

5.3 The launch into the metaverse

The AZ collection offers in South Korea, Spain, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, France, Italy, the United States, China, and Japan, as well as online and in select locations. The line will, however, be expanded into the virtual world through the social media site Zepeto, in addition to its physical availability. It's Zara's first foray into the new digital world, allowing Zepeto users to shop the Ader Error x Zara store for clothing from the collection.

In conclusion, Ader Error x Zara's platform usage habits have, however, it has been shifted slightly. Gen Z has progressed beyond the e-commerce that millennials like and has embraced social commerce, which is the act of making purchases entirely through a social networking platform. By applying with the use of in-app filters, augmented reality capabilities, and live feeds, the figures may learn their preferences to give appropriate suggestions, provide personalized shopping, minimize the friction between buy intent and checkout, and is more engaging. (Kastenholz 2021.)

6 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Within three years, the fashion sector will expand dramatically. This indicates that fashion businesses must begin looking for new ways to sell themselves. Social networking is becoming increasingly popular among both teenagers and adults. Consumers are increasingly seeking for products to buy on the internet, particularly through social media channels.

Fashion is a very competitive business, especially among Generation Z. Because fashion trends change so often, it is critical to keep consumers informed about current trends and the availability of fashion items. Fashion firms should supply clients with information that is valuable to them in order to be known among individuals. The growth of the Internet has had an impact on the ways that businesses use to give clients with the most up-to-date fashion news. Furthermore, the Internet has made the fashion business a worldwide enterprise. Because a big number of individuals use social media on a daily basis and primarily engage with one another through social media platforms and content sharing sites, fashion firms may utilize these channels to convey information about their brands. Customers may learn about companies from all over the globe, order items at any time of day, and connect directly with the firm to obtain vital information by using social networking sites and content sharing sites.

Common social commerce platforms for Gen Z include Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. #tiktokmademebuyit has garnered over 2.3 billion views on TikTok, while #amazonfinds has received over 6.7 billion views. According to one Gen Z poll, over 30% of this group prioritizes a straightforward checkout process when making a purchase. Brands must consider a more satisfying experience from research to checkout by removing distractions and avoiding pushing users away from the website. It's vital to develop tactics that prioritise making “the funnel” as simple as possible for customers to follow. (Kastenholz 2021.)

Following this, Instagram is one of the most successful applications for presenting a company to GenZ. It lets users post visual information, which is important for the promotion of fashion items. This content sharing platform is currently quite popular with young people, with a large number of registered users. Businesses that have an Instagram profile are allowed to increase their sales if they post material that is useful to Instagram users. The study's findings, which are provided in the thesis,

assist in recognizing the importance of raising brand recognition and determining relevant material for the fashion company's Instagram account.

To summarize, companies apply a variety of social media platforms, but Instagram activity is one of the most important aspects of current marketing for many firms in order to attract new consumers and increase sales. Instagram's campaigns are prepared well in advance, with a KPI projection and strategies for achieving it, in order to produce more successful marketing efforts for Gen Z. The core ingredients of a successful campaign are the same for every business, but there are certain unique factors to the fashion sector that should be acknowledged. These include high-quality material that is suited to the channel and audience and employs the proper language and structure. It must be shared at the appropriate moment, utilizing Instagram capabilities such as Stories, IGTV, in-app purchase, and targeted advertising. The material should reflect the brand, uphold its image, and demonstrate diversity as well as concern for social and environmental issues. When working with influencers, businesses must think about long-term partnerships and co-creation.

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