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Cover Page Footnote
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AGE-SPECIFIC POSTING: TAILORING SOCIAL MEDIA POST TO AUDIENCE AGE

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ABSTRACT

With social media becoming the best way to get the word out about something, advertisers have been trying to break the code on how to market their products successfully. The hard part about social media marketing is figuring out what the target audience is for said product. In this study, women’s fashion brands are examined to see if big companies are taking advantage of age targeting through their social media posts. After doing some research, a study like this couldn’t be found. The hypothesis for this study was that each brand would tailor all of their posts towards different social media platform’s target audience that the content was being published on. To conduct this study, 140 posts from seven different businesses were examined on three different platforms. By examining multiple factors, the hypothesis was found to be inaccurate.

INTRODUCTION

A study performed in 2018 showed that the estimated spending on media advertising was 223.7 billion dollars; that is up 18.41 billion dollars from 2017 (Statista, 2018). With roughly 70% of U.S. adults using some sort of social media to connect with others, businesses are using the platforms to advertise their services and products (Pew Research Center, 2019). Although social media is widely popular, each platform has a specific age group associated with it. For example, the majority of Facebook’s users are ages 30-64 (Aslam, 2019). This would lead one to believe that the advertisements on Facebook would typically tailor to the older population while advertisements on Instagram would tailor towards teens and adults in their early twenties (Marketing Charts, 2019). Taking the known facts that each social media platform is used by certain age ranges more than others, businesses should target their advertisements and posts for the platform they are posting on. By creating different marketing material for each social media platform’s target age group, businesses would see more traffic. This research project looks at different women’s fashion brands and examines if they are branding themselves differently across the social media platforms they use.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media has forced business to shift some of their focus from product production to trying to connect with customers through social media platforms (Shen & Bissell, 2013). This has been examined in the beauty industry over the past decade due to the use of technology increasing. Updating social media pages is very important for businesses to do as well (Ashley & Tuten, 2014). Although keeping a social media page up to date is vital; making sure the content is fresh and creative is even more important. The fashion industry has had to become more creative with how they present themselves since the market has been flooded with new high-end fashion brands opening (Kim & Ko, 2010). Many old brands have seen a decrease in sales. Social media has allowed the fashion industry unique ways to express their brands. The hypothesis was that woman
fashion brands would tailor all of their posts towards different social media platforms’ target audience.

**METHOD**

In this research project, seven woman’s brands were looked at across three different social media platforms. The brands studied were Gucci, Prada, Chanel, Dolce & Gabbana, Hermès, Versace, and Louis Vuitton. The social media platforms used for the study were Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Throughout this study, many other categories were investigated. Target age was examined on each post. The variables used were children, teens, adults, combinations, all, or other. The age of the models used in each post were also recorded. The same variables were used for this category as the target age. While investigating the models that were used, the ethnicity was also determined. Some of the ethnicity variables were Caucasian, Latino, African American, Asian, Australian, and other. How the models were positioned or presented was also taken into consideration. Predetermined variables included nudity, body positioning, objectification, sexual referencing, submission to men, wording, professional, and other. The gender of the models in the post were also examined with the variables being male, female, undetermined, combination, other, or none. Finally, the last major category examined was the type of content used in each post. Was the content text, photo, text and photo, text and video, or other combination. The type of content used in posts helps determine if a fashion brand is at least tailoring their posts to each individual social media platform. For example, Instagram is primarily image-based content whereas Facebook emphasizes text-based content. A minor category that was recorded was the type of product being promoted. Some of the variables included skin care, suits, shoes, coats, dresses, or others. All of this data was recorded in a spreadsheet and then examined after all of the information was gathered.

**FINDINGS**

I examined 140 post on 3 social media platforms; Instagram (49, 35%), Facebook (47, 34%) and Twitter (44, 31%). The brands that I examined included Gucci (19, 14%), Prada (20, 14%), Chanel (20, 14%), Dolce & Gabbana (20, 14%), Hermès (20, 14%), Versace (20, 14%), and Louis Vuitton (21, 15%). Posts, for each brand, were examined on the following platforms: Gucci, 19 posts, Instagram, 7 (37%), Twitter, 6 (32%), and Facebook, 6 (32%); Prada, 20 posts, Instagram, 7 (35%), Twitter, 7 (35%), and Facebook, 6 (30%); Chanel, 20 posts, Instagram, 7 (35%), Twitter, 6 (30%), and Facebook = 3 = 7 (35%); Dolce & Gabbana, 20 posts, Instagram, 7 (35%), Twitter, 6 (30%), and Facebook = 3 = 7 (35%); Hermès, 20 posts, Instagram, 7 (35%), Twitter, 6 (30%), and Facebook, 7 (35%); Versace, 20 posts, Instagram, 7 (35%), Twitter, 6 (30%), and Facebook, 7 (35%); Louis Vuitton, 21 posts, Instagram, 7 (33%), Twitter, 7 (33%), and Facebook, 7 (33%).

The most popular target age throughout the study was the all category (82, 59%). Adults were the most popular model to use in posts (59, 42%) and 57 posts didn’t use a model at all (41%). Due to there being 57 posts without a model, the most popular type of presentation was other (74, 53%). Of the posts that did have at least one model in them, 55 (39%) of the posts only contained female models. The most common form of content posted was photos (88, 63%). The other category had 71 (51%) posts for the type of products being advertised.
Starting with the \( N=19 \) Gucci posts, 6 (31%) were text and video, 1 (5%) was text and photo, and the remaining 12 (64%) posts were photo based. The models used were female (8, 42.11%), a combination of genders (2, 10.53%), male (1, 5.26%), undetermined (1, 5.26%), and 7 (36.84%) posts didn’t use a model at all. The ages of the models were primarily adults (6, 31.58%), a combination of ages (3, 15.79%), other (2, 10.53%), 1 (5.26%) undetermined, and 7 (36.84%) didn’t have a model. Their ethnicities were mixed with 3 (15.79%) being Caucasian, 2 (10.53%) African American, one (5.26%) other, multiple ethnicities (5, 26.32%), one (14.29%) undetermined, and multiple in one post (7, 36.84%). The type of presentation used was body positioning (2, 10.53%), sexual referencing (3, 15.79%), professional (2, 10.53%), and other (12, 63.16%). The target age group was split between adults (3, 15.79%), an age combination (3, 15.79%), and all (13, 68.42%).

Moving on to Prada with \( N=20 \), 8 (40%) post were photos, 10 (50%) were video, and 2 (10%) were text and photo. The target age of the post were teens (1, 5%), a combination of ages (1, 5%), all ages (16, 80%), and other (2, 10%). The models used in the posts were mainly female (9, 45%), combination of genders (6, 30%), male (2, 10%), and none (3, 15%). The ages of the models varied with 1 (5%) being a teen, 10 (50%) adults, 6 (30%) a combination, and 3 (15%) none. Because there were so many posts with multiple models in them, there were a lot of opportunities for a blend of ethnicities in each post; 14 (70%) multiple ethnicities. There were 3 (15%) African Americans, 1 (5%) Australian, and 3 (15%) that included no models. The models were presented in multiple ways such as body positioning (7, 35%), objectification (1, 5%), wording (2, 10%), professional (2, 10%), and other (8, 40%).

Next, \( N=20 \) Chanel used photo (11, 55%), video (6, 30%), and text and video (3, 15%). The target age of the posts were adults (6, 30%), all (13, 65%), and other (1, 5%). The models used in their posts were male (1, 5%), female (12, 60%), a combination (2, 10%), and no models (5, 25%). Their ages were adults (12, 60%), combination (1, 5%), other (1, 5%), and none (6, 30%). The ethnicities of the models were Caucasian (4, 20%), other (2, 10%), multiple (7, 35%), none (6, 30%), and 1 (5%) undetermined. They were presented through nudity (1, 5%), body positioning (7, 35%), objectification (1, 5%), sexual referencing (2, 10%), wording (2, 10%), professional (2, 10%), and other (5, 25%).

Dolce & Gabbana \( N=20 \) only used photo for their posts (20, 100%). The age they targeted was other (20, 100%). In addition, they didn’t use any models (20, 100%).

Hermès \( N=20 \) used photo (4, 20%), video (7, 35%), text and photo (1, 5%), text and video (5, 25%), and other combinations (3, 15%). Hermès targeted adults (1, 5%), all ages (18, 90%), and other (1, 5%). Unlike other brands examined, they used a few more men as models (6, 20%), females (5, 25%), and 6 (30%) posts didn’t use a model. Their ages were adults (10, 50%), undetermined (1, 5%), and the remaining posts didn’t have models. Ethnically, 6 (30%) were Caucasian, 1 (5%) was African, 3 (15%) had multiple ethnicities in the posts, 9 (30%) didn’t have any ethnicity in the post, and 1 (5%) post was other. Most of the type of presentation of models used was other (17, 58%), body positioning (2, 10%), and professional (1, 5%).

Versace had \( N=20 \) posts that were examined. Photos made up 100% (20) of their material. Female models were in 13 (65%) of the posts while 2 (10%) were a combination and 5 (25%)
didn’t have any models. The ages of the models were mainly adults (14, 70%). There was 1 (5%) post that was undetermined. Their ethnicities were pretty spread out. Only 4 (20%) post were made up of only Caucasians; 10 (50%) had multiple ethnicities in each post, and 1 (5%) was undetermined. Body positioning was the most popular type of presentation with 9 (45%) post. There was 1 (5%) sexual referencing, 2 (10%) submission to men, and 3 (15%) professional presentation.

Finally, Louis Vuitton N=21 had 13 (62%) photos, 6 (29%) videos, and 2 (9%) text and photo combination. The target audience that Louis Vuitton focused on was children (1, 5%), adults (2, 10%), all ages (14, 67%), and 4 (19%) other. The models used in the post were males (6, 29%), females (8, 38%), and 7 (33%) didn’t have a model. There was 7 (33%) post using adult models, 1 (5%) that was classified as other, and 6 (29%) that were undetermined. Their ethnicity was Caucasian (5, 24%), Latino (2, 10%), Asian (6, 29%), and 1 (5%) other. Body positioning had 10 (48%) post and sexual referencing had 4 (19%).

After conducting the study, the hypothesis that woman fashion brands would tailor all of their posts towards different social media platforms’ target audience was not supported. Although, over half of the brands that were looked at did use some different content for each platform that they posted on, they didn’t specifically target the social media platform’s target age. Most of the content that was examined was designed to cover a broad age range of users and was similar on different social media platforms.

DISCUSSION

With social media platforms taking over people’s daily lives, it is important for fashion brands to utilize platforms that already have a captive audience. For example, a hashtag search on instagram.com shows that Instagram has nearly 800 million posts that utilize the hashtag fashion. With data accessible to the public, fashion brands are able to see the target age of each platform they use. By utilizing all of the information available they can make changes to their content on each platform that targets the platform’s main audience range; an important factor that this study shows that the brands are not doing since their posts on all platforms are similar. If companies were to post content targeted at the appropriate age group for the specific platform, they would likely see an increase in post interaction from their audience. This might lead to more sales while making their marketing on social media more profitable. By changing up the content on each platform, fashion brands are likely to see an increase in followers on each one as well. Their consumers may not follow them on all of the platforms used because they get tired of seeing repeat posts, pictures, or videos. Giving consumers different content on each social media platform gives them more reasons to follow the brands everywhere they can.

Although the research performed shows that the fashion brands examined do not take full advantage of their social media platforms, more studies are needed that examine other brands as well as specific products more closely. Advertisers must understand that each platform has a specific age group associated with it and they should post content that stimulates action from the specific target, no matter the brand or product.
CONCLUSION

None of the data collected lined up with the ages being targeted. For example, Facebook was the only platform that actually saw ads targeting children and teens as shown in graphs 1a, 1b, and 1c. This is the exact opposite of what was expected to be revealed. According to the journal articles, Facebook should appeal to the older age group more than children. Instagram should be children and teen’s dream social media platform. Instagram didn’t actually have any post targeting that age group specifically.

There wasn’t a defined target age that could be found on most of the companies’ posts; most of them targeted many age groups in each post. I believe this is done to make their content easier to recycle across multiple platforms. Also, it is a way for them to make small impressions on a large group of people. I believe that if they were to focus on specific groups more, they would be able to make a larger and more memorable impact on their audience per post. I would like to know what their analytics actually are. Although each social media has an age range that uses their platform more than others, that doesn’t mean that a specific page on that platform can expect to see the same percentages in their views. For example, although Facebook has an age range of 30-64, it doesn’t mean that a page for college party videos would see their audience’s age being primarily 30-64 (Aslam, 2019). If companies were to take advantage of all of the statistics available to the public about social media platforms, they would be able to effectively market their products while saving money.
Figure 1c. Age Targeting on Facebook
REFERENCES


