

## Studying of Marketing Communications in the Clothing Industry in Egypt

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**Abstract:** This article presents the role of marketing communication research in the clothing industry in Egypt. The aim of the research was to demonstrate how these clothing companies use a marketing communication mix. The empirical research was performed by studying the marketing communications for three groups of companies. The data were collected through mailings and telephone & personal interviews. The data were analyzed using SPSS program and Microsoft Excel. The research results showed the correlation between the developments of a brand name and the importance of different marketing communications mix. The effect of the marketing communications mix on consume information was studied and the effect of different information on purchasing decisions was presented.

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### Fashion Products: A Concept

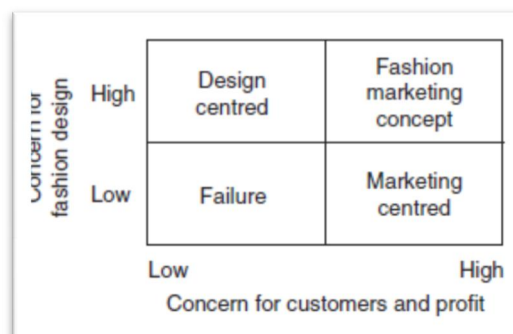
At the end of the 20th century, fashion is no longer a mode<sup>7</sup> and had lost their ability to dictate trends. This total change of the market of fashion products is a consequence of the evolution of society and its new trends which emerged after the 50's.

Currently, the fashion concept is demanding an approach to the brand culture because the consumer looks for the brands that belong to a known universe that guarantees the benefit of identification with a specific group and/or lifestyle<sup>4</sup>.

The fashion products line has a strong presence for the company's image and brand. Prior to discussing image and brand, it is important to have a clear understanding of how a product line evolves and influences marketing efforts.

### The fashion marketing concept

The fashion marketing concept is the relationship between marketing and design. That good fashion design only requires sufficient promotion to succeed is a view applicable to a very limited number of businesses – usually those producing expensive garments for an elite market. The alternative view of fashion design as a function of marketing research fails to recognize either that many people do not know what they will like until presented with choices, or that their preferences change over time. For example, many who profess to hate a design seen on the catwalk may later come to like it when they try the garment themselves or realize that others have signaled acceptance. Good fashion design can challenge conventional views. It should be recognized that consumers vary in the conservatism they have towards fashion styles and also the speed and readiness with which they change their opinions.



**Figure (1) The fashion market concept**

A simple model of the interrelationship of fashion design and marketing can be seen above.

In the matrix in Figure 1 it can be seen that low concern for customers, profit and design leads to failure. This occurs as a consequence of overestimating design ability while disregarding customers' preferences and the need for profit. The fashion marketing concept attempts to embrace the positive aspects of high concern for design, customers and profit by recognizing the interdependence of marketing and design. If designers understand how marketing can enhance the creative process and marketing personnel appreciate that within the fashion industry design can lead as well as respond to customer requirements, progress can be made. Market researchers can establish the sizing information customers want on garments and can also analyze reactions to several provisional illustrations, but they cannot produce detailed styling specifications. Marketing as applied to the fashion industry must

appreciate the role of design. Some major have developed information systems bringing designers, manufacturing teams and retail sales staff much closer together enabling customers to be offered fast fashion at affordable prices and achieving good levels of profit for the company.

This section has discussed a number of approaches to fashion marketing. Many companies have embraced the fashion marketing concept and have demonstrated equal concern for design, customers and profits. In recent years an increasing number of winners of major fashion awards have also achieved success not only in terms of design but also in terms of sales and profit. Thus the fashion marketing concept is not just a theoretical model, it does work in practice<sup>2</sup>.

### Marketing communications in fashion



Figure (2) Communications within marketing mix<sup>5</sup>

### Objectives of marketing communication

Marketing communications normally has three principal aims. The first one is to create a brand awareness for a company, The second one is to define a need the product or service can fulfill, and The third aim is to encourage customers to behave in particular ways that are beneficial for the company.

In overall, marketing communication objectives are long-term goals, where different kind of marketing methods are intended to increase the value of a company over time. Thus, communication goals succeed only when customers are persuaded through constant support that a company can offer all benefits they want or need<sup>9</sup>.

### Elements of marketing communications

Marketing communication mix refers to a set of tools that can be used in various combinations and different degrees of intensity in order to implement the communication's functions<sup>8</sup>. Every marketing decision of a company depends on its utilization of different marketing communication tools. These tools require different amounts of attention from the company, but all of them require long-term commitment<sup>5</sup>.

A company's marketing communication mix consists of the following modes of communication<sup>6</sup>:

- Advertising
- Sales promotion

Nowadays, marketing is much more than developing a good product with an attractive price and making it accessible. Companies must also communicate their value propositions to customers and it is a vital part of a company's marketing.

Marketing communications can be defined as "the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade and remind customers - directly or indirectly - about the brands they market".

Marketing communications is the last element in a company's marketing mix, involving activities used to create, communicate and deliver value to the customer<sup>4</sup>. Figure 2 presents the position of marketing communications within a company's marketing mix. Once a company determines the product, price and distribution, it is ready to plan its marketing communications<sup>1</sup>.

- Personal selling
- Public relations

### Advertising

Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of market offerings by an identified sponsor. The main aims of advertising are to attract attention, increase sales and customer awareness<sup>6</sup>.

Advertising uses different media and the choice of suitable tools of media depends on the effectiveness and efficiency of the solution it provides for achieving marketing objectives. A wide selection of paid advertising media is available.

Some of them are:

- Broadcast ads (TV and radio)
- Print ads (magazines and newspapers)
- Brochures and booklets
- Posters and leaflets
- Billboards
- Packaging
- Motion pictures
- Directories
- Display signs
- Symbols and logos

### Sales promotion

Short-term incentives intended to increase sales of a product or service are called sales promotion.

Sales promotion is usually connected closely with advertising. The basic types of sales promotion are<sup>8</sup>:

- Coupons
- Sampling
- Refunds and rebates
- Premiums and gifts
- Sweepstakes, games, and contests.

The difference between advertising and sales promotion is that whereas advertising offers reason to buy, sales promotion offers reason to buy it now<sup>6</sup>. The primary communication objectives of these tools usually are: stimulation of consumer trials, increase of rebuy rates and reward of loyal customers in order to fasten the selling process. The target group for sales promotion includes dealers, a company's own sales force and customers. Promotion should not be used as an ongoing program, as it is only a short-term tactic. Otherwise, it can easily lower the price of a brand<sup>8</sup>.

#### **Public relations**

public relations refers to "building good relations with the company's various publics by obtaining favorable publicity, building up a good corporate image, and handling or heading off unfavorable rumors, stories and events". These "publics" are a company's stakeholders such as suppliers, employees, customers or governments. As it derives from the definition, the aim of public relations is to develop and maintain the liking of the publics<sup>5</sup>.

Public relations activities can include:

- Press relationships
- Press releases
- Sponsorships
- Product placement
- Events management
- Crisis management

#### **Personal selling**

Personal selling involves face-to-face activities undertaken by the company's sales representatives of a particular brand or product with the aim to inform, persuade or remind a customer to take appropriate action<sup>3</sup>.

The most common examples of personal selling are:

- Sales presentations
- Sales meetings
- Incentive programs
- Samples
- Fairs and trade shows.

The main advantage is the ability of sales personnel to observe a customer's body language, answer questions, tailor message, negotiate terms and present the market offering. Sales representatives tend to influence the target customer. According to research, many purchase decisions are made by

consumers in the retail environment, so the effect of sales staff may contribute either positively or negatively<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Empirical research**

##### **Characteristics of the sample**

The research was conducted in Egypt. The results offered in this paper are related to a sample of 50 respondents. The data were collected through mailings and telephone & personal interviews. We received a total of 42 responses, which represented a response rate of 84%. The data were analyzed using the SPSS program and Microsoft Excel.

The companies in the sample were divided into three groups as follows:

##### **Group (A)**

Companies with their own brand name and their own retail stores.

##### **Group (B)**

Companies without their own brand name, but with their own retail stores.

##### **Group (C)**

Companies without their own brand name and without their own retail stores.

The first group of companies encompassed 59.52% of the total sample, the second and third group of companies represented 40.47% of the companies in the sample.

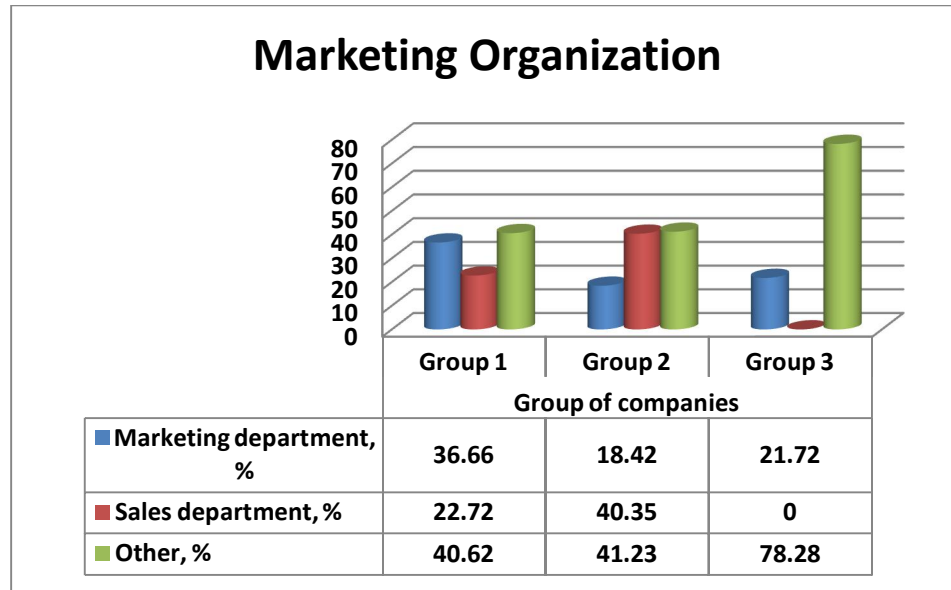
#### **Results of the empirical research**

##### **Organization of the marketing function**

The first aim of our empirical research was to determine the organization of the marketing function in the sample companies. The values presented in figure 3 refer to the marketing organization's proportion of companies in the individual group that responded to the questions.

The value presented increasing in total companies of the first group (36.66%) which had a marketing department, compared with total companies of the second and third group (18.42%), (21.72%). The explanation for this result may be because a marketing department is one of the conditions for the development of a brand name and of retailing. In the other hand the explanation of increasing in total companies had a marketing department in the third group than the second group, to the distribution policy of these companies which depended on marketing activities.

In addition the value presented increasing in total companies of the second group (40.35%) which had a sales department than the other two groups. we can conclude that the second group of companies have well-organized sales departments, which contribute in the development of retailing without their own brand name.



**Figure (3) Marketing Organization's Proportion**

#### **Marketing communications mix in the sample companies**

The respondents were asked to indicate the importance of their different marketing communications mix on a 5-point Likert scale (5 = 'extremely important' to 1 = 'of little importance'). The results are presented in figure 4.

Differences between the groups were obvious, and those differences correlated with the development of a brand name. The first group of companies gave more importance to advertising (45.26%) in their marketing communications mix followed by sales promotion, personal selling, and public relations, while the second group of companies indicated more importance on sales promotion (52.33%), followed by personal selling and advertising. And the third group placed personal selling (41.23%) as their most important marketing communications instrument, followed by sales promotion and advertising.

This result leads to the conclusion that Companies with a more developed brand placed advertising as the most important marketing communications instrument, while companies with non-developed brand name was reported personal selling and sales promotion as being a more important marketing communication instrument compared with others, which conclude that a strong sales orientation existed in these companies.

It was interesting to observe the impact of own retail stores in the importance of marketing communications instrument for companies with non-

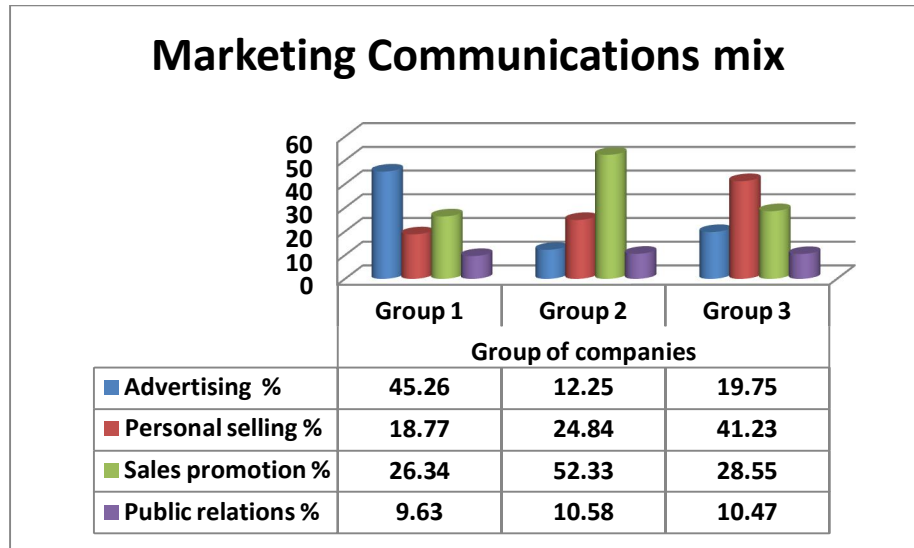
developed brand name, where companies in the second group (with their own retail stores) interested in sales promotion in order to increase sales volume in their own retail stores, whilst companies in the third group (without their own retail stores) interested in personal selling in order to achieve more development in the distribution of their products. It was also interesting that in all three groups, a low importance of public relations was assigned within the marketing communications mix.

#### **The effect of the marketing communications mix on consume information**

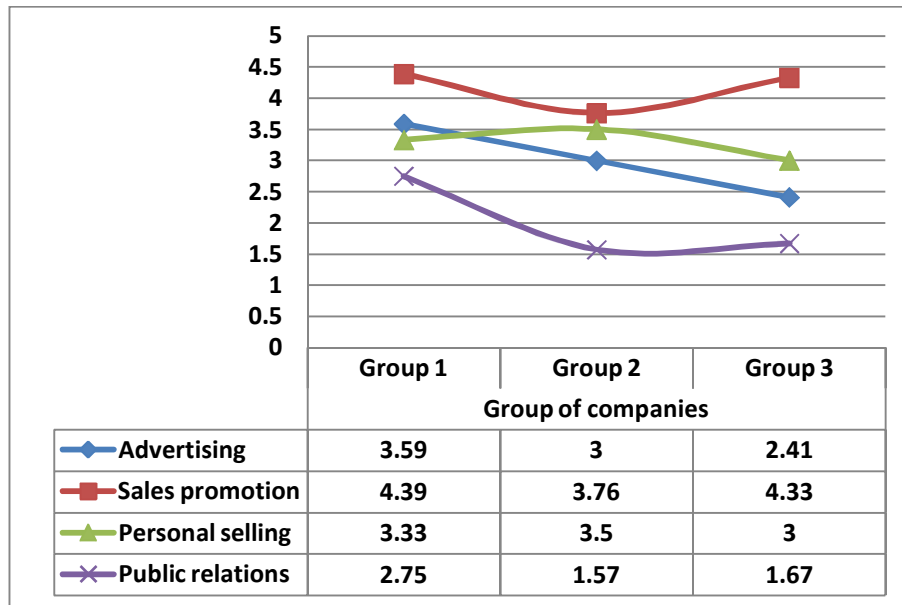
One of the primary aims of our research was to study the effect of the marketing communications mix on consume information. We were interested to identify at which level the different marketing information instruments informed consumers about garment products.

Respondents assessed the effect of different marketing communication instruments on a five-point Likert scale from 5 = 'large effect' to 1 = 'little effect'. The results are presented in figure 5.

The study results show that the respondents determined that all instruments of marketing communication mix have an effect on consumer information. It also showed that sales promotion had the biggest effect on consume information compared with other instruments. At the same time this result showed contradictory in the first and second group whose gave more importance to advertising and personal selling, however, they assessed the effect of sales promotion as being more important.



Figure(4)Importance of the Marketing Communication Mix



Figure(5) The effect of Different marketing communications mix

**The effect of different information on purchase decisions.**

The effect of different information on the purchase decision in the groups is presented in figure 6. Respondents assessed the effect of the importance of information on a five- point Likert scale from 5 = ‘large effect’ to 1 = ‘little effect’.

The results show that personal income and price have the greatest impact on a consumer’s decision-making process therefore we can conclude that Egyptian clothing companies are more aware of the importance of the promotion in a successful sale and gaining customer satisfaction.

Another interesting finding was that the respondent's opinion of service and fashion trends was based least on consumer decisions; these results may mean that companies aren’t aware of the importance of the seller’s role in the development of products and brand names.

It was also interesting that in all three groups, gave a low deal of importance to quality and composition of material, although they produced products with higher quality position in the market. This result is at the same time a contradictory finding, because although the companies group produces high-quality products, the respondents

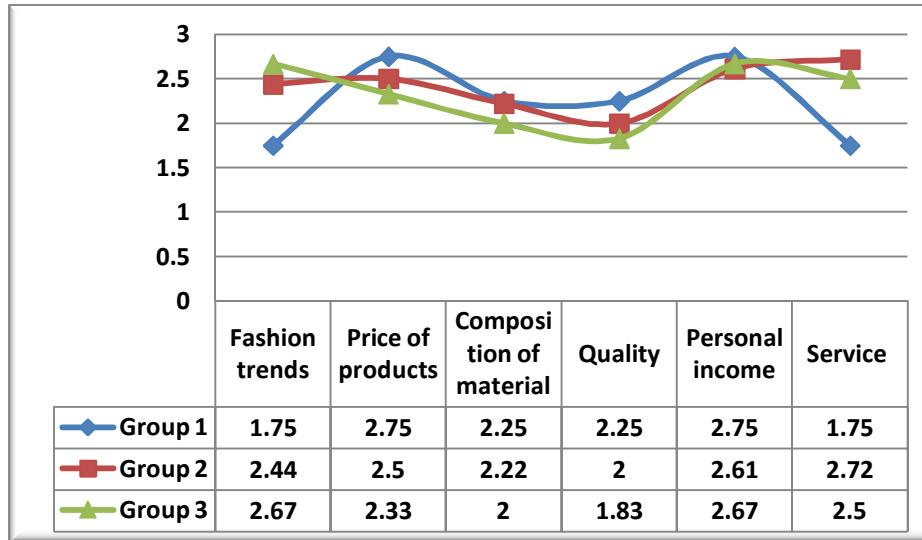
placed the least amount of importance on this factor in terms of a purchase decision.

**Conclusion**

- The research confirmed that the structure of the marketing communications mix in the sample of clothing companies in Egypt did not deviate from the proposed theories around the world.
- The research showed that own retail stores have the biggest impact in the importance of

marketing communications instrument for companies with non-developed brand name.

- The research detected that sales promotion is one of the most important instruments of the marketing communications mix in the clothing industry in Egypt.
- The research emphasized that there was contradictory statement in the first and second group, which mean that successful effective for using instruments of the marketing communications mix related to customers' behavior.



**Figure (6) The Effect of Different Information on Purchase Decision**

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