From the Runway to the Racks: A Comparative Analysis of Gucci and Zara

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ABSTRACT
FROM THE RUNWAY TO THE RACKS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GUCCI AND ZARA
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The fashion industry is constantly evolving. Today, consumers face more choices than ever when it comes to purchasing clothes. The purpose of this study was to examine a high-end luxury brand, Gucci, and a fast fashion brand, Zara, to compare and contrast their marketing strategies, sustainability practices, brand personality, and customer experiences. The research for this study was collected using a case study matrix, developed by the researcher, to evaluate Gucci and Zara’s marketing, sustainability, and customer experience practices. The study resulted in findings indicating the importance of social media and online marketing platforms for the increase of sales and consumer engagement for these two fashion brands. Gucci and Zara both need to improve their sustainability efforts to lead the way for other companies in the fashion industry.

Keywords: fashion, marketing, sustainability, brand personality, luxury brand, fast-fashion brand
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Background of Study

The word “fashion” most likely means something different to everyone. To some, it could mean buying the same tee shirts and pair of jeans over and over from the Old Navy. For others, it may mean waiting up all night to see the latest Prada collection launch. Frances Corner says, “Fashion has the ability to change and shape lives through its personal connection to us all. We all have to wear clothes and every piece of clothing we buy represents a personal choice” (Corner 2021). So, although fashion may manage to have a different meaning or purpose for all, it is a commonality that every person shares in one way or another.

The fashion industry is constantly evolving, with new trends showing up at rapid rates. The hottest styles today can be expected to expire by tomorrow when a new trend emerges (Chang, Joy, Sherri, Venkatesh, Wang, p. 273). The growth and complexity of the fashion market has led to a variety of different business strategies used by fashion organizations. Due to the size of the fashion industry, consumers quickly cue into patterns like price, quality, and environment of the store, to assess the general type of product they are consuming.

When a new trend enters the fashion industry from a leading company, fast fashion brands begin to mimic the style to fit their own products. The never-ending array of popular trends, affordability, and many other factors, force fashion-forward consumers to make a choice between buying these items from the authentic and creative luxury
brands, or purchase the cheaper, faux version that comes from fast fashion brands. A comparative analysis between a luxury brand and a fast fashion brand will provide insight into how two companies who release completely different versions of merchandise compare and contrast to one another. The purpose of this study was to examine a high-end luxury brand, Gucci, and a fast fashion brand, Zara, to compare and contrast their marketing strategies, sustainability practices, brand personality, and customer experiences.

Review of Literature

Research for this review of literature was conducted at Robert E. Kennedy Library on the campus of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. In addition to books and other resources, the following online databases were utilized: Academic OneFile, Academic Search Premier and Google Scholar. This review of literature includes the following subsections: marketing, customer experience & brand personality, sustainability and luxury vs. fast fashion.

Fashion Marketing

The way that a brand chooses to market to their consumers in the fashion industry varies greatly among companies because of the large number of businesses in the industry as well as the inherent flexibility of the fashion industry. Because the fashion industry is so diverse, the way that fashion brands market to their consumers differs greatly from the marketing techniques found in other industries (Easey, 2009). Barnes explains that fashion marketing has to do with grasping the consumer’s complex needs and desires (Barnes, 2016). This may seem similar to marketing in other industries, but the size and complexity of the fashion consumer base leads to many differences; and as
the fashion industry continues to evolve, so do the marketing techniques (Barnes, 2016).

Some of the marketing techniques used in fashion include product positioning and pricing, promotion, distribution, product management, and market research (Easey, 2009). Another style of marketing that has become an effective part of the fashion industry is the use of online marketing. A rise in the consumer’s ability to shop online has been a catalyst for an increase in social media marketing (Ko & Megehee, 2012). Ko and Megehee go on to suggest that the five distinguished social media marketing activities in fashion are “entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and word of mouth” (p. 1397). For example, the way that fashion companies utilize “word of mouth” marketing today can be through the use of influencers. An influencer is someone with a large following on their social media accounts. Having an influencer post a photo on Instagram promoting a product, can make a brand recognizable to a larger target market. Although social media and online advertising play a huge role in fashion marketing, the brands who remain consistent in their marketing messages across multiple channels are the ones who generate long-term brand value with their consumers (Chitrakorn, 2019).

Customer Experience & Brand Personality

To create these long-lasting relationships with consumers, fashion companies must find ways to connect with their consumers not only online, but in-store as well. Fashion companies should go above and beyond to curate memorable and engaging experiences for the customer from the moment they step into the store. One way for a company to do this, is to focus on atmospherics; the ambiance and design of the space. Creating an atmosphere that is enjoyable and enduring for a consumer can have a direct effect on the customer experience (Blázquez, 2014). If a consumer were to walk into a
five-star restaurant, they would expect an entirely different atmosphere than if they were to walk into a fast-food restaurant; the same idea applies to fashion brands. In addition, fashion companies can use “interaction” marketing today through the use of experiential marketing techniques. Experiential marketing differs from traditional marketing techniques, because it focuses directly on the customer experience through the lens of the consumer, and follows the entire customer journey before, during, and after they interact with a brand (Yuan & Wu, 2008). By allowing consumers to experience a brand through things like product samples, pop-up stores, or fashion exhibits, a fashion brand is setting the stage for a long-term relationship with the consumers who choose to engage in these activities because of the feelings that these experiences invoke within the consumer.

Furthermore, another aspect of customer experience is brand personality. Brand personality refers to the array of human characteristics correlated with a brand. When a consumer acknowledges and understands a brand’s personality, they feel as though the brand is expressing themself, or expressing an ideal self of who they want to be (Aaker, 1997). This concept of a brand personality is a powerful tool that companies can use to relate to their consumers, as well as market across cultures. For example, Patagonia is a fashion brand whose personality could be described as outdoorsy, adventurous, and sustainably conscious. So, consumers who feel like these adjectives describe themselves, or their ideal self, may prefer this specific brand over one of their competitors (Patagonia Website). Customer experience and brand personality are two aspects that fashion brands must consider when assessing how their brand may come off to consumers.
Sustainability in Fashion

In recent years, the sustainability efforts and ethical decisions made by fashion companies has come to the forefront of the fashion industry. Due to the always-changing trends emerging in fashion, it has come to the attention of companies and consumers that the sustainability measures in fashion have brought up ethical issues (Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang & Chan, 2012). For many consumers, “fashion” has changed from a physical need for protecting one’s body, to a dispensable want for all things trendy, as a way to express themselves through clothing and accessories (Fletcher, 2012). While fashion brands are the ones held responsible for their own sustainability measures, the way in which consumers consider sustainability in their purchasing habits plays a major role as well. In a study done with male and female participants from Canada and Hong Kong, researchers interviewed them to get information on their thoughts about style and fashion, with regard to their own personal consumer habits (Joy, et al. 2012). They found that although the participants felt like they were people who cared about the environment, this sentiment was not reflected in how they consume fashion. They were people who regularly recycled and purchased products consciously, yet still purchased trendy items from fast-fashion stores that were cheap for them but high in cost for the environment (Joy, et al. 2012). Although these participants are environmentally conscious, when it comes to their fashion consumption choices, the way a company practices sustainability, did not play a major role in their purchasing habits. However, there are many consumers who do factor in sustainability when looking to purchase fashion products, and the companies that make sustainability a priority can stand out from the rest (Choi & Li, 2015). Fashion companies who choose to prioritize sustainability, tend to adopt a
corporate social responsibility proposal to advertise to consumers as a way to boost the company image. The way in which fashion brands make decisions regarding things like materials used, product returns, advocacy for global awareness, and eco-promotion campaigns reflect how they want consumers to perceive their brand as it relates to sustainability (Choi & Li, 2015).

Luxury Brands vs. Fast Fashion Brands

The evolution of the fashion industry into a large and complex trade has led fashion brands to separate into multiple categories. Two of these categories that will be focused on in this paper are luxury brands and fast-fashion brands. A luxury brand is a brand that is noticeably high-quality and expensive. These brands tend to sell products and services that can be described as exclusive, authentic, limited, and renowned (Ko, Costello, & Taylor, 2019). Some examples of luxury fashion brands include Prada, Dolce & Gabbana, Gucci, and Hermes (Swank, 2018). Luxury fashion brands are also known to be symbolic and give off meaningful and valued customer experiences (Ko, Costello, & Taylor, 2019). Many consumers can recognize these luxury fashion brands by their logos or product signatures. For example, a luxury label known mostly for women’s heels, Christian Louboutin, can be identified by the red sole on the bottom of each shoe, a signature that the designer has used since 1993 (Fierberg, 2018). It is clever ideas like this one that add to the aesthetic value and brand legacies among luxury labels. The small sub-market for luxury brands adds to the exclusivity that these companies emit, and forces them to create long-lasting, valuable consumer relationships in order to succeed. This is because of the high-cost pricing for luxury items; not as many consumers can afford these products, so the brands need to focus on keeping their existing customer
base. In addition, regardless of their exceptionally high prices, these high-end, luxury brands continue to grow faster than any other segment of the fashion industry (Fierberg, 2018). Furthermore, luxury brands influence the entire fashion industry by being the creative leaders when it comes to popular trends (Swank, 2018).

Fast-fashion brands, in contrast, are ones whose products can be identified by low-costs and trendy styles, mimicking luxury fashion trends seen on the runway or in magazines being worn by famous celebrities (Rauturier, 2020). Fast-fashion brands aim to stay up to date with the always-changing fashion industry so that they can get the current popular trends on the market as quickly as possible. The problem many people have with this, however, is the waste that these companies create, and the environmental impacts that they have (Joy, et al. 2012). But these fast-fashion companies continue to prosper because many consumers yearn for the creative trends they see in luxury brands, but want the fast-fashion prices, knowing that they will dispose of the items after a couple of wears when the trend fades (Rauturier, 2020). Although most fast-fashion brands embody unsustainable practices, many consumers, predominantly young ones, continue to purchase apparel from them because they want what is stylish at lower prices. It can be said that fast-fashion brands let luxury brands take the lead when it comes to creating styles and trends, and then find ways to replicate those products to be “street ready” for consumers to buy a few weeks later for less than a quarter of the price. One of the main differences between fast-fashion brands and luxury brands is that fast-fashion brands adapt and deliver products quickly to the trends that consumers want, while luxury brands are much more concerned with authenticity and designing everlasting trends (Swank, 2018).
**Research Questions**

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What marketing strategies are Gucci and Zara currently using to advertise their products to consumers?
2. How effective are Gucci and Zara’s sustainability practices?
3. How does the brand personality compare between these two brands?
4. How does the customer experience inside a Gucci store and a Zara store differ from one another?
Chapter 2

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine a high-end luxury brand, Gucci, and a fast fashion brand, Zara, to compare and contrast their marketing strategies, sustainability practices, brand personality, and customer experiences. This chapter includes the following sections: description of organizations, description of instrument, and description of procedures.

Description of Organizations

A comparative analysis was conducted on Gucci and Zara. Gucci was founded in 1921 in Florence, Italy by Guccio Gucci, a local Italian leather goods maker (Silver, 2019). Today, Gucci can be seen as one of the most influential luxury brands in the world (Kering, n.d.). The Gucci brand is well-known for pushing the limits of fashion, always creating an entirely modern approach to the industry (Gucci, n.d.). Since 2015, Gucci has been led by creative director Alessandro Michele, and CEO, Marco Bizzari. The brand is part of the Kering Group, a global luxury group that manages the development of many high-end brands, including Balenciaga, Saint Laurent, Alexander McQueen and many more (Kering n.d.). In 2020, the Gucci brand’s total worth was approximately 17.63 billion U.S. dollars, compared to 10.9 billion in 2019. There are a total of 487 Gucci stores across the world, employing over 17,000 people. Not only is Gucci an iconic brand in the fashion industry, but to everyday consumers as well. In fact, over half of U.S. consumers expressed their desire to want to own a Gucci product in 2018 (Sabanoglu, 2020).
Zara is one of the biggest international fashion companies today. Zara puts the wants and needs of their customers at the forefront of their business model for creation, design, distribution, and sales (Zara, n.d.). Zara was founded in 1975 by Amancio Ortega Gaona in A Coruña, a coastal city in Spain (Inditex, n.d.). It now belongs to Inditex, one of the world’s largest distribution groups (Zara, n.d.). The company’s core values are beauty, clarity, functionality and sustainability. Zara aims to create products that align with the latest and hottest trends in the fashion industry and has an extensive retail network. The company now has collections in women, men, kids, and home products, with over 2,220 stores in 88 countries worldwide (Business of Fashion, n.d.). The Zara brand prides itself on delivering products in the right place at the right time (Inditex, n.d.).

Description of Instrument

The instrument utilized in this study was a comparative analysis matrix developed by the researcher (see Appendix A). The matrix was organized into three separate categories: Customer Experience, Marketing Tactics, and Sustainability Practices. The “customer experience” category analyzed the companies’ atmospheres, communications, brand personalities, and employee training programs. The “marketing tactics” category identified the social media accounts, use of influencers, company websites, experiential marketing tactics, and loyalty programs. Finally, the “sustainability practices” category observed the organizations’ water consumption, carbon footprints, transparency approaches, sourcing of materials, and workers’ rights. Two pilot tests were conducted on Prada and H&M to test the instrument. Following the pilot tests, the researcher altered the instrument by removing communication from the “customer experience” category,
changing the category “marketing tactics” to “marketing notes,” getting rid of water consumption from the “sustainability practices” section because it could be covered under carbon footprint and replacing “sustainability practices” with “sustainability.”

**Description of Procedures**

This study consisted of a comparative analysis between Gucci and Zara’s marketing strategies, sustainability practices, brand personalities, consumer habits, and customer experiences. The research for this study was conducted over a two-week period, from February 10, 2021 to February 24, 2021, where the researcher used the comparative analysis matrix to find, document, and analyze findings from Gucci and Zara’s websites, as well as other websites. The other third-party websites utilized in this comparative analysis included: Good On You, Forbes, Gucci Equilibrium, Inditex, Kering, Elle, Luxiders, Vogue, NPR, Eco-Stylist, Slate, The Guardian, Referral Candy, Huff Post, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Majority of the information gathered was qualitative, although there was some quantitative data found to fully understand and answer the research questions.
Chapter 3
PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine a high-end luxury brand, Gucci, and a fast fashion brand, Zara, to compare and contrast their marketing strategies, sustainability practices, brand personality, and customer experiences. A case study approach was utilized to examine Gucci and Zara. This chapter includes the following sections: Marketing, Sustainability, and Customer Experience.

Marketing

Gucci is one of the most well-known luxury brands in the fashion industry. Although many people cannot afford their products, the celebrities and public figures who can, contribute to Gucci’s overwhelming popularity. The brand is constantly coming out with new products and collaborations. In 2016, Gucci won the most spring magazine covers and appeared on more covers than any other luxury brand, including Chanel, Marc Jacobs, and Louis Vuitton.

The brand has also been worn by many artists during monumental performances. In 2016, during her performance of the National Anthem at the Super Bowl, an event watched by over 5.8 million people, Lady Gaga wore a red Gucci suit and platform heels. In addition, Gucci had another famous collaboration with Beyoncé in her 2016 “Formation” music video. Beyoncé and all of her female backup dancers wore custom made Gucci outfits during the video that has over 238 million views on YouTube. The celebrity appearances in Gucci products, attribute to the desire and intrigue that customers have for the product.
In contrast, Zara, a very well-known fast-fashion brand, also has had its fair share of celebrity appearances. Although Zara is not seen on the cover of a major fashion magazine, some of the models photographed on those covers wear the brand in their everyday lives. For example, models Emily Ratajkowski and Bella Hadid who share a combined 65.9 million followers on Instagram, have both been seen wearing a plethora of Zara products. In addition, Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, has been photographed a number of times wearing clothes from Zara that run for under $200.

Gucci and Zara both have a major presence online. Each brand has a functioning website that results in a large portion of their sales. Gucci’s website focuses on visually rich, high quality, and intentional images that promote content featuring the brand’s latest collections and campaigns. Zara’s website has a seemingly never-ending number of products separated by categories such as: Woman, New, and Collection, that is sometimes confusing to navigate. There has also been a lot of recent attention regarding the odd modeling poses for Zara’s products that make it hard for shoppers to see how the clothes are properly worn. The models are posed in non-practical ways to display their apparel, as seen in the three figures below.
Zara’s website has also been said to not render well to all devices and screen sizes, making it not as user-friendly. Both of these brands are also highly active on social media platforms and use them as a major marketing tool. Table 1 shows the breakdown of followers for Gucci and Zara on various social media outlets. Gucci surpasses Zara followers on every platform apart from Facebook likes. Instagram has by far the most followers for each brand, and Gucci and Zara are about equal in terms of engagement. Both of the brands use Instagram the most out of all of their social media platforms, which can explain the large increase in followers from Facebook and Twitter to Instagram.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Instagram Followers</th>
<th>Twitter Followers</th>
<th>Facebook Likes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gucci</td>
<td>43M</td>
<td>6.1M</td>
<td>19M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zara</td>
<td>42.5M</td>
<td>1.3M</td>
<td>29M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sustainability

Zara and Gucci both take part in programs to do their part in improving the planet. Zara participates in a program called *Closing the Loop*, where people can drop off or mail in their used products to be recycled and have the opportunity for a second life. Gucci launched a program called *Equilibrium* where the company commits to producing positive sustainable efforts for people and the environment. Gucci has also funded and participated in many programs for generating positive change for subjects such as climate change, gender-based violence, police brutality against black folks, elections, diversity, equity and inclusion, and gender expression. Both Gucci and Zara use recycled packaging.
for their products but differ in environmental impacts and animal welfare. Gucci is actively meeting its target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from its operations, while Zara shares these same goals, there is no evidence that they are being met. Gucci uses some eco-friendly materials and participates in a plan to prevent deforestation of endangered habitats in its supply chain. Gucci and Zara both use exotic animal skin for their products, but the difference is that Gucci is transparent about tracking most animal products to the first stages of production, and Zara does not. Neither brand is applauded or known for being a leader in the sustainability efforts of the fashion industry. For example, the clothing brand People Tree is a leader in the fashion industry for sustainability, because they use environmentally friendly materials to make all of their garments and traces all of its supply chains.

Gucci has been certified *A Great Place to Work* for two years running in Italy. The company values its company culture and strives to create a positive work environment where all employees feel heard and appreciated. Gucci uses the “Trust Model” to assess the working conditions for its employees at locations all over the world. This model uses five criteria to measure the work environment: credibility, fairness, respect, camaraderie and pride. With over 3,000 stores in 96 different countries, it is difficult to find consistent information on Zara’s company culture. However, the company is known for believing in hiring young people and creating many opportunities for growth in the company.

**Customer Experience**

One of Gucci’s highest priorities is customer experience. The employees at Gucci are trained to treat every customer as if they were their best, or biggest spending client.
They want every person who enters a Gucci store to feel comfortable and valued. Gucci aims for the customer service to feel personable and unmatched by any competitor. The company wants its employees to stress to customers the authenticity and the influence that the origin of Florence has on its brand. This is meant to explain why Gucci products are expensive; there is no compromise on quality. Gucci is a luxury brand, and it is their priority to make its customers feel luxurious when they enter the store. Zara values customer experience as well, just in a different way.

When a consumer enters a Zara store, they may expect to be greeted by an associate or feel comfortable asking them a question if they need help finding something. A person shopping at Zara knows they have the freedom to search through what may look like an endless amount of merchandise, without an employee walking them through the process. Consumers know that every time they enter a Zara store, they can expect to see new items than they did the week before, and that may be the exact reason they are coming back so often. At Gucci, they will have the same products on the floor for months at a time, because the brand is not in a hurry to come out with new products. In addition, when a person enters a Gucci store, the goal is to make them feel like they are experiencing something they never have before.

The characteristics and brand personality associated with these two brands differ greatly from each other. Gucci is seen as progressive, creative, influential, and timeless whereas Zara is seen as fresh, trendy, efficient, and easy. The different layouts of the stores add to these characteristics as well.
**Chapter 4**

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Gucci and Zara are both leaders in the fashion industry whose branding techniques, marketing strategies, and sustainability efforts differ from one another. This concluding chapter will include the following: a discussion of the findings, limitations, conclusions based on research questions, implications of the findings, and recommendations for future research.

**Discussion**

The research conducted on two major fashion brands, Gucci and Zara, resulted in three major findings examined in this chapter: the marketing and branding strategies used by Gucci and Zara, the importance of customer experience in business operations, and the sustainability efforts used by each company.

Gucci and Zara both utilize social media as a main source of marketing, but the messages that the two brands send to consumers, differ greatly from one another. Gucci’s website, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook remain consistent and emit intentional, progressive, and thoughtful photos and messages that make the brand feel authentic and exclusive. Zara’s social media platforms give off unclear, confusing, or misleading messages to consumers that leave the brand to be perceived as unorganized and cheap. Chitrakorn (2019) expressed that fashion brands who release consistent marketing messages among all of their platforms, are the ones who generate long-lasting, valuable customer relationships. Due to the rise of social media and online marketing, the fashion industry has more opportunities than ever to relate to their consumers by curating
consistent brand personalities. Gucci should continue their purposeful marketing efforts to keep their branding strong and to remain developing long-term relationships with consumers. To improve their brand image, Zara should focus on figuring out what they want their brand to look and feel like and implement that into all of their social media channels. For example, if Zara wants their brand to be efficient and clear, they should change their website interface to be more user-friendly. They should also use photos where the products they are selling are completely visible and practical for the consumer to view.

The customer experience given to customers from Gucci completely surpasses that of Zara. Due to the high prices and exclusivity of Gucci, the company spends a lot more time on employee training and invests much more on the stores’ aesthetics and atmospheres than Zara does. Zara stores exude high energy music and freedom to roam without the guidance of employees but fail to give the customer a memorable and meaningful experience. Blázquez (2014) stated that creating an enjoyable atmosphere in a store can have a direct effect on the customer experience. Gucci and Zara can learn from each other’s techniques when it comes to customer experience. Zara should consider having fewer stores worldwide, so that they can focus more on the atmosphere that each location has and find ways to improve them. In addition, Zara should implement employee training programs that teach their employees the importance of the customer experience. This way, Zara employees will understand that the better the experience is for the customer, the more likely sales will increase for the store. Gucci is doing an excellent job in curating an appealing aesthetic for its consumers and giving them an experience that is memorable and meaningful. However, Gucci should consider training their
employees to read the customers body language to see if they are someone who is seeking full guidance within the store, or someone who prefers to browse the shop alone. By doing this, Gucci will be able to personalize and tailor customer experiences to each individual, so that it is enjoyable for everyone.

The sustainability efforts used by Gucci and Zara are not great. Gucci is rated a little bit better than Zara, but neither brands are even close to being leaders for the industry. When it comes to fashion in relation to social corporate responsibility, sustainability is one of the most important factors for a brand. But, Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang & Chan (2012) argued that in the eyes of the consumer, even people who consider themselves to be environmentally conscious in their everyday lives, do not necessarily contemplate sustainability in their purchasing habits. This may explain the success of both Gucci and Zara, because despite their weak sustainability efforts, they are both wildly popular brands that are continuing to grow. However, recent studies have shown that for the newest generation of shoppers, sustainability does play a major role now more than ever in brand recognition and appreciation. Choi & Li (2015) proclaimed that the decisions made by fashion companies regarding sustainability reflect how young consumers perceive those brands. Gucci and Zara should both commit to using more eco-friendly products and improve working conditions for all of their employees.

There were several limitations that impacted the research and results of this study. First, the researcher may have been influenced by a personal bias in favor of both Gucci and Zara due to past experiences shopping with both brands. Second, the researcher recognizes that for consumers to shop at both Gucci and Zara, but especially Gucci, there is a socioeconomic status needed from an individual, so this study will not relate to
everyone. In addition, the researcher’s personal love for fashion expression may have influenced the study from a personal bias. Lastly, the researcher utilized a lot of information from Gucci and Zara’s websites, which could have produced a biased point of view from the companies themselves, because they would not promote negative information about their company that could hinder the reputation of their brand. Although there were some limitations within the presentation of the research, overall, the study was intended to administer a thorough comparative analysis of Gucci and Zara.

The results of this comparative analysis study exhibit the differences in business operations between two wildly successful fashion brands, Gucci and Zara. Gucci thrives on the originality and authenticity of their products, while Zara is successful from mimicking high fashion trends to be affordable for the average shopper. Both companies are successful through the use of their online marketing platforms, although Gucci’s brand is more consistent. The customer experience created for Gucci shoppers is a factor of the brands success, however Zara seems to be just as successful without these experiences. Avid shoppers know what to expect when they enter a Zara store, so they are never disappointed, while Gucci customers are almost always pleasantly surprised by the amazing service they experience. Both brands need to do a lot more work when it comes to its sustainability efforts, and because the fashion industry is one that will never go out of style, companies have a responsibility to do better for the environment, and consumers should pay attention to these efforts when it comes to their own consumer choices.
Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Gucci and Zara both use social media marketing to strengthen their brand image recognition.
2. Gucci and Zara both have a lot of work to do when it comes to their sustainability efforts, but Gucci is doing better than Zara.
3. The Gucci brand personality is authentic, creative, timeless and exclusive.
4. The Zara brand personality is trendy, inexpensive, fast-paced, and faux.
5. Gucci stores aim to give customers an experience like nothing they have ever had before, while the customer experience in a Zara store is predictable and convenient.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Gucci should continue its consistent branding messages across all social media platforms, to keep its exclusive and authentic image.
2. Zara should have fewer locations so that they can focus on improving the customer experience inside their stores.
3. A research study should be done on the sustainability efforts in the fashion industry, focusing on the transparency of companies when it comes to tracing their steps of production.
4. Zara should implement employee training programs to strengthen the customer experiences inside their stores.
5. Consumers should do more research on fashion brands sustainability efforts before supporting companies who are harming the environment.
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


APPENDIXES
Appendix A

Instrument
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<th>Description of Practice</th>
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<td>Atmosphere</td>
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<td>Brand Personality</td>
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<td>Employee Training</td>
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<td>Store Layout</td>
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