

# Assessing the use of technology in the fashion industry

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the relationships between the fashion industry and developing technologies in South Africa. The study further determines the advantages and disadvantages of adopting these technologies in the fashion industry. The objective of this study was to assess and analyse the use and impact of developing technologies in the fashion industry. The study design is qualitative in nature and interviews with industry experts were conducted to collect data. The results show that the correct use and implementation of developing technologies are beneficial to organisations within the fashion industry. Specific managerial functions such as communication, advertising and research (such as the availability of data for the fashion industry to analyse to develop new products and trends based on the exact desires and needs of customers) are just a few of the benefits offered by the correct implementation of technology by fashion organisations. Technology also enables a whole new world for its users and is restricted neither by time nor location limits. Fashion organisations using appropriate technology combined in their operations have been found to improve satisfaction levels, and the successful application of technologies resulted in delivering a 90 percent customer satisfaction level. This is complemented by the convenience that customers have to either physically visit the store or to use the online store facilities. The latest use of technology will enable organisations to react to personal customer profiles and deliver the exact requirements accompanied by the profile. The study is of value to fashion industry managers and researchers aiming to improve the product/service offering to their customers. At the same time, the results also empower fashion organisations to strive towards a higher competitive stance.

**Keywords:** Fashion, technology, social media, management, service quality

## **BEDANKINGS**

Hierdie skripsie word opgedra aan my Pa, Wikus. My rots, steunpilaar en inspirasie.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	ii
BEDANKINGS.....	iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 WHAT IS FASHION AND TECHNOLOGY IN FASHION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND THE FASHION INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.4.1 Primary objective .....	4
1.4.2 Secondary objectives .....	4
<b>1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.6.1 Literature study .....	4
1.6.2 Empirical study .....	5
1.6.2.1 <i>Research design</i> .....	5
1.6.2.2 <i>Population/sampling</i> .....	5
1.6.2.3 <i>Data analysis</i> .....	6
<b>1.7 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.8 LIMITATIONS, DELIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.9 IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED STUDY.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.10 SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.2.1 Technology acceptance models .....	9
2.2.2 Applying the model in research .....	10
2.2.3 Model adapted to suit this specific study .....	11

2.2.4	Economic times and the fashion industry .....	11
2.2.5	Developing technology defined and explained .....	11
2.2.6	The use of developing technology .....	12
2.2.7	Benefits of implementing developing technology .....	15
2.2.8	Impact of developing technology .....	16
2.2.9	Social media defined .....	17
2.2.10	Examples of social media .....	17
2.2.11	Benefits of making use of social media .....	18
2.2.12	Fashion defined and explained.....	19
2.2.13	Main tasks of an organisation in the fashion industry .....	20
2.2.14	Opportunities offered by the South African fashion industry .....	20
2.2.15	Purchase decision drivers.....	21
2.2.16	Investigating: online shopping and in-person shopping .....	22
2.2.17	Marketing defined and discussed .....	23
<b>2.3</b>	<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>23</b>
 <b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS .....</b>		<b>25</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>25</b>
3.2.1	Research design.....	25
3.2.2	Population and sampling .....	27
3.2.3	Measuring instrument .....	28
3.2.4	Data analysis .....	28
<b>3.3</b>	<b>RESULTS.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>3.5</b>	<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>37</b>
 <b>CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>		<b>38</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>40</b>

ANNEXURES	
ANNEXURE 1: INTERVIEW STRUCTURE.....	41
ANNEXURE 2: ETHICS CERTIFICATE.....	42
ANNEXURE 3: EDITOR'S LETTER.....	43
REFERENCES.....	44

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

E-learning	Electronic learning
PHP	Personal Home Page
CSS	Cascading Style Sheets
IT	Information Technology
SACsi	South African customer satisfaction index
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
TCI Apparel	Trade Call Investments Apparel
NBC	National Bargaining for the Clothing Manufacturing Industry
CIP	Competitiveness Improvement Programme
PIP	Production Incentive Programme
POS	Point of sale
VFR	Visual Fitting Rooms

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Examples of developing technology .....	14
Table 2: Purchase decision influencers.....	22
Table 3: Qualitative research methods.....	27
Table 4: Specialised fashion category.....	29

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: TAM Technology Acceptance Model .....	9
Figure 2: TAM Adapted To Relevant Study .....	11

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 WHAT IS FASHION AND TECHNOLOGY IN FASHION**

Fashion can be defined as the latest trends with regards to clothes, hairstyles and behaviour. There are two certainties when dealing with fashion as well as technology, and that certainty is change. Those in the fashion and technology industry must keep up with changes. Missions and operations must be adapted almost every day (Macchion et al., 2015).

A person's fashion sense is directly linked to how society experiences one as a person. For a fashion trend to become popular, it has to be accepted by the specific target group; if new trends are accepted and appreciated by customers, it will make headlines and become popular amongst society. Social media became an enormous tool for communication. Individuals all over the world communicate via social media. Until recently, social media was only used for family and friends to communicate, social media matured with time and are now used by organisations and even individuals to communicate and interact. Social media is used for advertising goods and services, and also as a tool for customers and suppliers to communicate. Fashion trends are no longer restricted and limited to a country; people all over the world now share fashion trends and styles with each other. Models have social media profiles where fans and followers who stay up to date with what is seen as the latest fashion and trends and that is how fashion lovers adopt fashion trends. Fashion trends aim to express individuals based on their attitudes and way of living life (Saravanan and Nithyaprakash, 2016).

Fashion communication takes place by what you wear; whatever is worn is the message sent out to those around you. Likewise, the clever use of technology is unavoidable in the competitive strategies of fashion organisations. Future generations are increasingly adopting new technologies. Organisations can no longer operate without incorporating technology into operations. An organisation

will simply not be able to remain competitive without making use of the latest technology when designing and launching new products. Although technology can be challenging to implement at first, once done, it forms part of operations, and everyone is equipped with the needed skills to combine technology into current processes. This strategy unlocks excellent benefits for organisations in the fashion industry.

## **1.2 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND THE FASHION INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Numerous research studies have been done on marketing strategies for the fashion industry. However, limited studies have been done on how to adapt marketing strategies in the fashion industry during tough economic times. During a recession and other hard economic times, all organisations are affected. However, a recession is not only negative; it can be a guide on how to make use of economic as well as social rights in the time of recession (Pillay and Wesson, 2016). Recessions cause consumers to change their purchase behaviour because they feel they must prioritise differently and spend their income “wisely”. The fashion industry consequently undergoes severe pressure during hard economic times as money would instead be spent on essential products. Research shows that organisations make one or more of these changes during tough economic times; sales are held, specials are advertised, some organisations relocate, just to keep customers interested (Jocz, 2009). There will always be economic hard times. All organisations in the fashion industry must make sure they know how to react when recession knocks on the door.

## **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The problem statement of this study was to investigate the use and impact of developing technology on organisations within the fashion industry. Technology develops every day, and it is crucial to implement it in any organisation to ensure growth within the industry. However, not all fashion organisations make use of

technology for advertising and communication between organisation and customer.

Purchasing methods have changed drastically; according to research Gupta (2015), there are two types of customers: those who prefer making online purchases with delivering services, and others who physically want to visit and experience the store. The objective is to find out how important developing technology is for a business to succeed. Online purchases can only be made if developing technology is implemented by a business. A business that does not make use of new technology fails to please that type of customer; it will have negative effects on any business, sooner or later. (Gupta, 2015)

Another problem is that certain large fashion companies must perform, by saying that certain companies have a fixed amount of stock to sell monthly and others yearly. If the set targets are not reached, these companies face challenges potentially losing their agencies. This can mean the end of the firm. A lack of updating technology will consequently affect the growth of a country negatively in the future. Customers' needs evolve, grow and change instantaneously. It is crucial for any supplier to improve strategies to keep up with customer preferences continuously. Certain customers find price changes offensive and will never return to certain purchases after price changes took place, while other customers are not alarmed by any price changes. The problem here is that certain customers feel that they are not protected by suppliers as there are no clear communications where businesses emphasise and prove that the main focus is the regular customer. Customers are more likely to switch to a different supplier where they feel valued, and everything is done to satisfy their need. The only way to prevent this from taking place is to ensure an intuitive communication platform between organisation and customer.

## **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

### **1.4.1 Primary objective**

The research objective was to assess the use of technology in marketing in the fashion industry.

### **1.4.2 Secondary objectives**

- Determine the overall use of technology
- Identify which technology is used in marketing
- The use of technology to interact with customers
- The impact of new technology on operations

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION**

Will the use of the latest technology be beneficial or detrimental to organisations within the fashion industry?

## **1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research system of this study had a foundation of two sections: firstly, literature reviews and secondly an empirical study; the latter was a qualitative design consisting of face-to-face as well as telephone call interviews with fashion industry experts. Thematic coding was used to analyse the information obtained from the interviews.

### **1.6.1 Literature study**

The literature study of this study focused on the impact that developing technology has on organisations functioning in the fashion industry, covering the topics below:

- Developing technology defined: in chapter two, there are a few different definitions for the word “technology”. For this study, technology is defined as: “... an instrument filled with scientific information which enables the instrument to perform certain activities (Ramey, 2013).”
- The use of developing technology
- Benefits of developing technology

- The impact caused by developing technology
- Fashion (industry) defined and explained
- Tasks of businesses within the fashion industry
- Social media defined and explained
- Marketing defined and explained
- Purchase decision drivers
- Online and physical shopping

## **1.6.2 Empirical study**

### *1.6.2.1 Research design*

In total, five of the international companies that were contacted participated in the study. Three international fashion organisations were identified and contacted for a face-to-face interview between the researcher and managers of each organisation. Qualitative data on the use of developing technology in the fashion industry were obtained through structured interviews where the researcher visited the head office of these three independent organisations. Three managers (as industry experts) were interviewed at their offices to ensure that they were comfortable during the interview. The interview questions were sent through to interviewees a week before the actual interview. This was to allow them to prepare for the interview. Another reason was to enable them to remove questions they felt not suitable for publication. Two more companies preferred telephonic interviews. They also received the interviews before the time to prepare. They were contacted telephonically to conduct the interview. The interviewees elaborated on how developing technology is used in their companies to interact with clients, and how the type of technology used impacts the operations of each of the companies.

### *1.6.2.2 Population/sampling*

The whole fashion industry in South Africa served as the population for this study. However, three large (and well-known fashion organisations) were identified as the sample for the study. They were identified based on geographic location, accessibility and willingness to participate in the study. Two organisations were located in Johannesburg and one in Cape Town. These fashion organisations were contacted and requested to participate. They were assured that the results

would be confidential and that the study was ethically approved by the North-West University (Ethics certificate number *NWU-00416-19-A4*) (see Annexure 2).

The researcher asked to conduct face-to-face interviews with the marketing managers of each company, and in preparation for the interview, provided the interview questions to the managers beforehand (See the interview structure as Appendix A). This had an additional benefit because the organisation was able to assign the best-suited marketing manager to answer the interview questions.

#### *1.6.2.3 Data analysis*

Face-to-face interviews were recorded, as soon as organisations agreed on being recorded. Interviews were recorded and later transcribed to enable the researcher to replay interviews as many times as needed, and also check the transcriptions during the data analysis. The telephone interviews were also recorded and transcribed.

### **1.7 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED**

A problem faced by the researcher during this study was the limited amount of specifically applied literature that was available. Throughout this study, it became clear that the amount of research done on the relationship between fashion organisations and developing technology is limited.

### **1.8 LIMITATIONS, DELIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

Limitations of a study include the shortcomings of the study. For this study, the limitation includes the access and availability of literature as existing studies based on the connection between fashion organisations and developing technology does not seem to be a popular topic. Assumptions for this study include:

- Data and information collected during this study were analysed and processed so that a conclusion could be designed and published with solutions on how developing technology should be implemented to be profitable and used to benefit from it.

- Technology used correctly will lead to convenience when making purchases as simplifying communication between customer and organisation.
- If customers feel valued and pleased with the services and products offered, they will become more flexible when price changes are made as a result of economic influences.
- The impact that technology has on businesses within the fashion industry.

### **1.9 IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED STUDY**

The importance and benefits of this specific study are to help organisations in the fashion industry survive during tough economic times, such as recessions, inflation rates and GDP growth rates. This study aims to find a solution that can be implemented, so the impact of adverse economic situations is experienced insignificantly.

This study sheds some light on issues that are often addressed incorrectly, if not avoided completely. Economic statuses, employment and unemployment rates, organisational growth, influencers of the fashion industry, contribution of the fashion industry to South Africa's growth and success rates based on the opportunity granted to interact globally and the probability that brands would withdraw from South Africa if they are not successful, are all focus areas that will be addressed through this study.

The benefits of this study include:

- The core benefit of this study would be to ensure social media (new developing technology) is implemented by organisations to improve advertising and communication between end-user and supplier. Organisations must aim always to please customers and ensure they deliver what customers want.
- It will be beneficial for fashion companies to make use of technology to make shopping more convenient for customers.
- If information gained from questions and interviews done for this study is processed and published correctly. The information will be available on

how to treat customers in a way that they will experience a sense of being as a priority of a supplier and make them remain loyal even during tough times in the economy.

- Another benefit would be to publish to what extent do economic conditions impact trading in South Africa amongst fashion companies so that people who are interested in activities that take place in the fashion industry can learn about it.

### **1.10 SUMMARY**

The impact and use of technology within the fashion industry is defined and explained in detail to react to the research objectives in this chapter. Throughout this chapter, a summary was given on the content of the rest of the study. Chapter two expands on the theoretical content of chapter one. The purpose of this study was to solve the research problem and reach the research objectives presented in chapter one. The information relating to the empirical study, which is presented in chapter three clearly indicates whether the research objectives have been met or not.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines and elaborates on topics relevant to developing technology in the fashion industry. As stated in chapter one, it is crucial to remember that technology changes all the time and fashion organisations must change and adapt all the time to keep up with the ever-expanding role of technology.

It was noticed that the diversity of existing research on this topic is not widespread, which creates excellent future opportunities for research to be conducted on the link between developing technology and the fashion industry. The literature research was used as the basis and guideline to establish the research questions and interview structure.

#### 2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

##### 2.2.1 Technology acceptance models

Two technology acceptance models are presented and discussed below

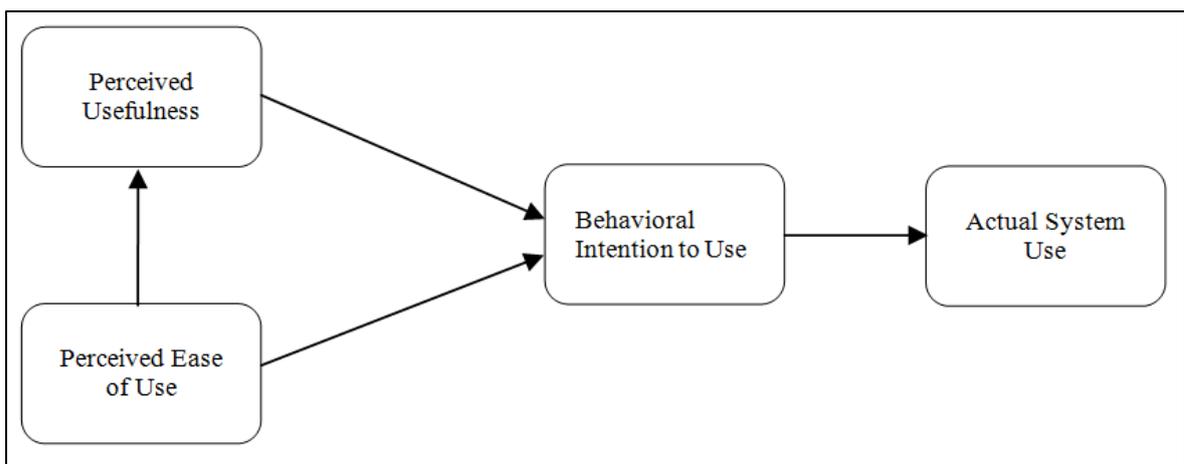


Figure 1: TAM Technology Acceptance Model

In 1968 the TAM was presented by Davis. This model was proposed to provide guidance when dealing with and to predict the actions of those involved with developing technology over the years. TAM is a tool to help understand why technology is either accepted and welcomed or dismissed (Park, 2009).

TAM helps to understand how attitude, experience and the decision to make use of technology exists through the influence of external variables.

Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are two cognitive beliefs proposed in TAM. Perceived value is directly linked to what is experienced through the effects of perceived ease of use like reputation, social recognition and ongoing intention (Wu and Chen, 2017).

If these people are satisfied with the reputation and social recognition linked to the offer, they tend to have a behaviour linked to continual intention to use (Abdullah and Ward, 2016).

External influencers have an impact on actual use through mediated effects on perceived usefulness as well as perceived ease of use.

### *2.2.2 Applying the model in research*

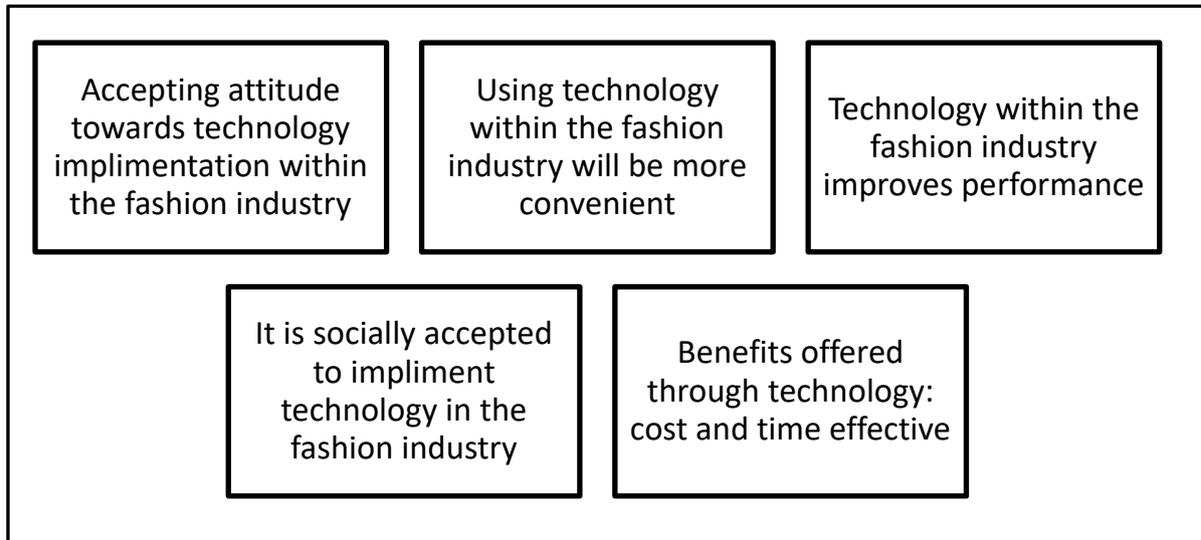
**Perceived usefulness:** the usefulness of implementing developing technology within a business to improve operations and to remain competitive.

**Perceived ease of use:** this explains how the use and implementation can enable a company to operate without too much effort.

**Behavioural intention to use:** this is linked to the attitude of these businesses towards technology. Individual companies will have a welcoming attitude towards technology, and they will then implement technology within their organisation. Other companies will have a not-so-welcoming attitude towards technology, and they will try and avoid applying technology in their business operations for as long as possible.

**Actual system use:** this takes place as soon as the behavioural intention has been put in place. The aim is to initiate a desire in everyone to implement some sort of technology into operations.

### 2.2.3 *Model adapted to suit this specific study*



**Figure 2: TAM Adapted To Relevant Study**

### 2.2.4 **Economic times and the fashion industry**

According to Todeschini (2017), the combined impact of technology and international trading has caused new prospects, trends and problems for organisations within the fashion industry. The influence of social media, improved business models and enhanced processing, contains incredible changes to come for the future of organisations within the fashion industry. (Todeschini et al., 2017)

### 2.2.5 **Developing technology defined and explained**

There are various definitions available for the word technology. A few are presented below.

- Technology can circulate internationally under many guises, in the form of goods, services or scientific and technical information (Madeuf, 1984).

- According to Ramey (2013), technology can be defined as an instrument filled with scientific information which enables the instrument to perform certain activities. For the purpose of this study, the definition of Ramey (2013) will be applied.
- Another study, done by (Mulder et al., 2017) has been postulated in support that technology is the glue that keeps our society together. Developing technology is the constant improvement and growth of this instrument filled with scientific information to simplify life. (Ramey, 2013)

However, there is also a “dark side” to technology. In this case, the “dark side of technology” can be defined as the negative effects of developing technology. For example, swearing online, technology-family disputes, IT addiction, time misrepresentation because of spending too much time on IT, fake profiles on social media, business deviance, and using technology that distracts a persons’ attention while driving (Turel et al., 2018). The use of social media by fashion organisations also has a downside. Unhappy customers can easily post negative comments on external pages (which cannot be removed), while some positive posts can also be misunderstood by potential customers reading it. It is clear that a large number of fashion organisations employ professional people to manage their social media pages. In some cases, these employees will not only log onto social media pages and spend time online doing just what is required and relevant to their job description, they often do much more.

### **2.2.6 The use of developing technology**

Technology is all around us, every second of every day. The technology was developed to make life more convenient for individuals. Big data will evolve even more with time and eventually be in control of operations, with the development of technology and the implementation thereof in organisations, competition between firms will intensify. The development of technology will make it possible for users in any country to make purchases anywhere on earth without any trouble (Makridakis, 2017).

3D printing has evolved extremely in the fashion industry with regards to producing and processing of fashion-related items. The most significant benefit of 3D printing is the time saved that would have been spent on designing, manufacturing and packaging fashion-related items (Vanderploeg et al., 2017).

Virtual fitting rooms (VFR) is a great tool offered by developing technology; fashion items are displayed on a customer without any physical effort of getting dressed. Customers view items by pushing buttons instead of getting dressed and undressed (Lee and Xu, 2018).

When developing technology is implemented correctly, it will make life extremely convenient to users. The technology involves several techniques; the technology used by a country consists of all the techniques mastered. Technology affects every part of our lives; even the manufacturing of clothes is affected, fabric that can stretch and change structure and size according to temperature, and more is now a reality (Saravanan and Nithyaprakash, 2016).

Technology can be used for anything humans require to be done. Below are a few situations where developing technology has been implemented and applied successfully, which led to a tremendous beneficial gain to those affected by the technology:

- **E-learning and electronic exams** refer to learning and studying online. Students do, however, need the following study tools for the E-learning syllabus; question paper, model answer paper, E-books and video oration. The E-learning model was created by using these three technologies; bootstrapping, personal home page (PHP) and cascading style sheets (CSS) (Bitodkar et al., 2019). Product training for employees in the fashion industry can be done using mobile tools or apps. Employees can receive training while being at work or home, as training is no longer limited to all trainee's having to get together at a particular location at a specific time.
- **Bookkeeping techniques** are modernly, a computerised skill. As soon as bookkeepers are competent with the improved technological method, it

opens a door within the organisation with regards to enhanced capabilities which then almost naturally should flow into managerial improvements, like making electronic payments and inventory management (Stewart, 2016).

- **Managers can implement social media** as communication and motivational platform within the business; employees can communicate issues through social media where management can react immediately (Ngai et al., 2016). On the other hand, if social media is not used correctly as a communication platform for the organisation, it becomes a playground, open for internal or external attacks on the organisation.

Technology develops daily, and the primary purpose behind evolving technology is to simplify life for humans. Examples of growing and changing technology, according to Marr (2018) are shown in Table 1 below. (Marr, 2018)

**Table 1: Examples of developing technology**

<b>Technology type</b>	<b>Description</b>
Artificial embryos	This is where new life is made in a lab.
Sensing city	Urban areas are designed to only be operated via technology; circumstances in these areas will now be improved.
Robots	Technology-driven machines will now perform tasks that used to be performed by humans. Robots (technology-driven machines) now perform tasks that used to be completed by humans.
Artificial Intelligence	Google, Amazon, Microsoft, and Baidu all implemented AI in operations; machines are used to perform from manufacturing to deliveries to performing tasks received via voice instructions.
Duelling neural networks	Objectives and faces can be recognised by new technology linked to AI.
Perfect online privacy	Online purchasing is now safer than ever as an instrument is used here where you as internet user

	can indicate that you are an adult without having to provide your date of birth.
Self-driving cars	Cars will no longer physically be controlled by a human; it will be managed through a computer.
Voice recognition	Smartphones, laptops, tablets, all will follow instructions by itself; owners do not have to perform any task anymore manually.

Source: Marr (2018)

### **2.2.7 Benefits of implementing developing technology**

When utilizing E-learning, the study tools will always be available online, unlike when physically sitting in a classroom being educated by a teacher. Once the class session is over, the study material cannot be reviewed/ replayed.

If developing technology is correctly used by an organisation, it could offer multiple benefits such as cost reduction, globalisation, more productive employees, more clear communication within the business, and technology can be used to transport products to customers (Whitaker et al., 2017).

Organisations must see to it that all employees are well equipped with skills when making use of technology in the organisation (Alford & Page, 2015). The connection between marketing and technology guarantees successful communication (marketing) and research shows that growth increased when technology and marketing are combined (Foroudi et al., 2017).

The benefits of implementing developing technology within the fashion industry, according to Suh and Suh (2017), would include, firstly, more personalised products, based on what customers want which will lead to customer satisfaction. Secondly, costs will be cut as technology will package and produce correct products which means less time will be wasted on repairs. Thirdly, time-saving, the proper use of technology will save time for the same reasons as previously mentioned; packaging and processing times will be minimised (Suh and Suh, 2017).

### **2.2.8 Impact of developing technology**

Noteworthy changes have been identified by the society, and these changes will have an enormous impact on the way employees work, the changes currently making their way into the workplace cause innovative structures for employees contemplate when facing work. Developing technology can impact a business in such a way that it immediately leads to a competitive advantage as employees always seek innovative techniques to work, by implementing developing technology. It has been found that employees are less productive in a company where they are watched and monitored constantly. Hence, studies found that employees who experience that they are empowered, through “smart technology” at work transform the negative mental state into a mental state of support and trust. Nevertheless, technological development is not only positive as it can lead to the “dark side of technology”, which may result in demotivation. Developing technology can cause employees to experience a feeling of being investigated all the time, and this will cause uneasiness and lead to demotivation (Holland and Bardoel, 2016).

According to Mulder et al. (2017), the effect of developing technology on society depends on:

- The quantitative use of technology
- How it implicates and changes the context
- The period for investigation
- How technology is experienced and implemented socially
- How technology systems are approached or changed

The use of mobile technology is taking over every aspect of the current world we live in; it has been found that the use of mobile technology is a critical aspect in development and improvement of a country (Crossan et al., 2019). It is, therefore, crucial that organisations within the fashion industry include mobile technology into organisational operations.

### **2.2.9 Social media defined**

All humans are social; people interact with each other, which mean that they are social. Social media is a technology-based tool which enables people to interact socially, even when they are not physically located in the same area (Fuchs, 2017).

Social media became an enormous tool for communication. Individuals all over the world communicate via social media. Until recently, social media was only used for family and friends to communicate, social media matured with time and are now used by organisations and even individuals to communicate and interact. Social media is modernly used for advertising goods and services, as well as a tool for customers and suppliers to communicate with each other. Social media has the potential of becoming the leading communication platform within a business. Social media should be used mainly as a practical and useful communicating platform between organisation and customer (Felix et al., 2017).

It has been found that social media is becoming more popular within the fashion industry as people all over the world want to share and discuss fashion trends and ideas. Social media is the perfect tool for those discussions. Social media has become an incredible tool for innovative marketing communication. Social media has developed into a platform where products can be found, a purchase can be made, and without any delay, a product will be on its way to a customer (Kontu and Vecchi, 2016).

### **2.2.10 Examples of social media**

People all over the world make use of the examples below to interact in some way. Typical social media platforms are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Pinterest, Flipboard, WordPress, Tumblr, and Waze. All of these platforms are well-suited to apply in business applications and technology applications to service customers and manage towards remaining competitive.

Social media has grown into being used by fashion organisations to interact, attract and build relationships with customers. It has been found that organisations that do make use of social media have a higher return than organisations who do not implement social media. According to Parveen (2015), organisations make use

of social media to promote and advertise, build relationships with customers, enable customers to find information on products and to implement a clear communication channel (Parveen et al., 2015).

### **2.2.11 Benefits of making use of social media**

Previously the internet was mainly used to learn about things. It was a tool to access, gather information and close down. That changed drastically over the years. Internet became the number one entertainer of human beings. The internet became a friend, a best friend, who replaced telephone calls, doctor visits, leaving your own home to visit a store, writing letters to friends and family far away, just to name a few. In short, the internet evolved and made life much more convenient for users – personal and company profiles. The internet became so important that according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), it has been found that an organisation's image, sales and even success and sustainability are directly linked to the use of social media and developing technology. (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010)

The use of social media to communicate with customers was found to be extremely successful because social media interaction connects user and supplier on another level. Online advertising is another form of customer and organisational interaction as customers can find adverts online and respond with immediate effect. Global organisations describe social media campaigns as a potential campaign structure to use for advertising (Sajid, 2016). There are more than 3 billion people active on social media, which means people spend 80% of their day on social media pages. Thus, the chance of your customer not seeing your advertisements and posts are almost impossible. Research has shown that, as more people became social media users, it became normal to search for a product/organisation via social media to gain insight before making the actual purchase. Social media should be a two-way communication tool for customers and businesses when customer questions are responded to rapidly by an organisation; the customer will feel secure and important. Organisations could use social media pages to gain insight into their customers. Information shared by customers can be beneficial to an organisation concerning what customers prefer and expect, and according to Rendler-Kaplan (2018). Facebook is arguably the

best tool to be used when advertising online. Companies using Facebook for advertising shows a growth figure of 90 percent per year (Ashley, 2015). (Rendler-Kaplan, 2018).

According to Dizon (2018), Snapchat is the best tool when gathering data and attract the desired target market within the fashion industry. (Dizon, 2018)

Social media is implemented by fashion organisations to launch online magazines, fashion videos and online stores; the main aim is to improve advert campaigns of organisations in the fashion industry. It has also been found that online stores and online advertising is cost-effective for fashion organisations (Zhang, 2018).

### **2.2.12 Fashion defined and explained**

Fashion is defined as:

*“Fashion is all around us: we see it, we buy it, we read it, but most people know little about fashion as a business.”*

(Manlow, 2018).

Manlow (2018) also states that fashion organisations do not solitarily sell fashion accessories; fashion organisations must put together an extraordinary proposal/ advertisement to draw the attention of potential customers – the only way to attract someone’s attention and create a feeling of belonging and immediately a desire appears. A person’s fashion sense is directly linked to how society experiences you as a person. For a fashion trend to become popular, it has to be accepted by a particular target group. If new trends are accepted and appreciated by customers, it will make headlines and become popular amongst society. Fashion trends are no longer restricted and limited to a country; people all over the world now share fashion trends and styles with each other. Models have social media profiles where fans and followers who stay up to date with what is seen as the latest fashion and trends and that is how fashion trends are adopted by fashion lovers. Fashion trends aim to impress individuals based on their attitudes and way of living life (Saravanan and Nithyaprakash, 2016). Fashion communication takes

place by what you wear, whatever is worn is the message sent out to those around you.

### **2.2.13 Main tasks of an organisation in the fashion industry**

According to Manlow (2018), organisations within the fashion industry do not only have the responsibility of buying and selling; the four primary obligations to be performed by fashion organisations include:

- Create an image
- Transform that image into a product
- Presentation of the product
- Selling the product

### **2.2.14 Opportunities offered by the South African fashion industry**

South Africa has 800 clothing industrial units and 372 registered organisations that produce clothes as listed by the National Bargaining for the Clothing Manufacturing Industry (NBC). According to Veight (2017), there are two platforms, CIP and PIP, which focuses on job creation for South-Africans to produce local clothing items. It has been found that international trades of South African goods augmented by three percent yearly and with that, goods purchased by South Africa from other countries also grew by 7.5 percent yearly (June 2019). (Veight, 2017)

South Africa interacts on a global level in the fashion industry. A key player in South Africa's clothing sector is Trade Call Investments Apparel (TCI). Well-known stores like Truworths, Woolworths, Queenspark and Edcon all get their products from TCI. TCI does, however not only provide stock to local stores. They are also in control of international operations by selling and transporting South African products to David Jones stores located in Australia. (Nickson et al., 2017), interestingly, add that skills required in the fashion industry are mostly skills that certain people naturally have; they are born with it.

### **2.2.15 Purchase decision drivers**

Customers face a large number of various options to choose from when making a purchase. Purchasing a product results in an intense and sometimes even stressful situation for customers. The reason for this feeling is the amount supplied and made available in the market. Customers are not always fully educated on products, which makes purchasing difficult sometimes. As soon as customers become unsure of what product to select, they tend to fall back into a comfort zone which then often leads to habitual (repeated) purchasing. Organisations should educate customers on products and do it convincingly to ensure the customer is won over by the information they learn about a product.

The variety of stores and supplies of fashion products are endless in South Africa. Different stores enter the fashion industry for various reasons. Before a store takes its place in the fashion industry, it must be clear who is targeted by the products sold. Products must be sold to customers in the right environment, at the most suitable and acceptable price with the best possible quality.

According to van Aardt (2019), there are different ways to measure living standards within a country, linked directly to that statement is that people's happiness depends on their living standard. The living standard measure (LSM) was found to be the most successful instrument used throughout South Africa to collect data related to marketing. (van Aardt et al., 2019)

Different income bracket citizens have different purchasing and brand preferences. In South Africa, citizens are divided into three different income groups, high income: R1.8 million – R 2.36 million per annum, middle income: R 86 001 – R 1.48 million and low income: R 86 000 per annum (Hunter, 2016).

A purchasing decision is made as soon as a need arises, various products are considered and eventually, one product is chosen and purchased. There are multiple influencers as to why personal purchases are made; these reasons are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2: Purchase decision influencers**

<b>Influencers</b>	<b>Description</b>
Preference	A certain purchase is made based on preferring a certain product over substitutes
Style	A certain purchase is made based on how it fits in with the buyers' actions
Income	A certain purchase is made based on what can be afforded
Need	A certain purchase is made when a problem arises which requires the item to be purchased as soon as possible
Experience	A certain purchase is made to see how purchasing this product will make the buyer feel
Curiosity	This purchase is usually made after interacting with other humans who already used this product took place. Experiences were shared
Status	This purchase is made based on how the buyer would like to be seen by society
Quality	Consumers want to receive value for money

Source: (Francis, 2016)

### **2.2.16 Investigating: online shopping and in-person shopping**

New generations are all technology-based, which means that they prefer doing online shopping, this means that organisations should start focusing on providing online services when catering for future generations to keep customers interested and satisfied, moving forward (Lim et al., 2016).

The unstoppable growing pace of internet use is unavoidable. It has however been found that Generation Y (born between 1980 and 1994) does make use of the internet, but Generation X (born between 1965 and 1979) makes use of the internet for mostly online purchasing. According to Lissita and Kol (2016), it is more effective to focus on marketing campaigns towards Generation X because

this generation spends more money on items found online. This generation tends to have more free time available which enable them to spend more time online shopping (Lissitsa and Kol, 2016).

According to Wang and Qu (2017), it is a fact that the availability of online purchasing makes life much more convenient for people. Still, aside from online shopping, making life easier – some problems cannot be avoided. A significant issue is that products seen online are not physically touched or seen, which makes it challenging to experience the product entirely as it is not physically available to consumers. It has also led to more products being returned when purchased online than the figure of product returns on physical shopped products. (Wang and Qu, 2017)

It has been found that online shopping is more convenient as all time and location boundaries are eliminated. Physical in-store shopping limits consumers in the sense of travelling costs and store operating hours, however, in-store shopping allows the consumer to physically see and touch the product where a more logic decision whether to purchase or not to purchase can be made (Kaur, 2017).

### **2.2.17 Marketing defined and discussed**

Marketing can be defined as how organisations advertise and inform potential and existing customers on products supplied. It is vital to implement technology when promoting and advertising products. No business will be sustainable without technology. When adding technology to operations of an organisation better decisions will be made, opportunities will be identified easier, ideas will become more creative, to name a few benefits of combining marketing with technology (Alford and Page, 2015). As soon as marketing and technology are linked, e-Marketing is created; this is when advertisements and messages are shared via the internet (Trainor, 2011).

## **2.3 SUMMARY**

It has been found in this chapter that very little literature is available to access and intersect with current studies being conducted. Marketing conducted in a manner

where technology is involved, tends to be more profitable for organisations. It has been found in this chapter that developing technology and social media implemented by organisations tend to have numerous benefits for organisations within the fashion industry, the connection between the literature of this chapter and information gathered through interviews will be presented in chapter three.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The literature review in the previous chapter showed the relevance of the fashion industry with technological development. Few studies have been done so on the relationship of technologies and the fashion industry, especially in the South African fashion industry. Chapter three empirically explores the relationship between fashion organisations and technological development. This chapter then presents the findings of the study.

### **3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.2.1 Research design**

The research design used for this study was a qualitative research method. Three well known international fashion organisations were identified, and the researcher interviewed interviews with three managers (general and marketing managers) of each organisation. Criterion sampling was used to conduct these interviews. Ten formal interview questions (questions are presented in the results section of this document) were developed by the researcher on emerging technology, the fashion industry, marketing and communication platforms and factors related to purchases to eventually conclude the role and impact that developing technology has on organisations within the fashion industry.

A qualitative research method was used in this study to gain insight into the role of developing technology within the fashion industry. The interview questions focused on how businesses experience the task performed by developing technology (Foroudi et al., 2017). According to Eve (1998), Gubrium and Holstein (1997), found that there are four traditions for qualitative research: (Eve, 1998)

- **Neutralism:** the focus here is “reality” what is genuinely taking place, analysed and worked with.

- **Ethnomethodology:** the aim here is to make sense out of what is done and said between individuals.
- **Emotionalism:** in contrast, the focus here is to understand the emotional (not physical) experience by someone.
- **Postmodernism:** “method talk” is referred to here, it relates to art and styles during the 20th-century.

Criterion sampling is mostly used when conducting implementation studies. The idea behind criterion sampling is to identify a gap and then to supply a solution after doing some research on what could be done to fill that gap (Palinkas et al., 2015). A fissure was identified where and how developing technology could be implemented by fashion organisations to improve their interaction with customers as well as operations.

Qualitative research is based on how humans feel during humanistic and explanatory approaches (Antwi and Hamza, 2015). Open-ended and developing information were used throughout this research method. This research approach allows participants to reveal selective personal data – the three of organisations that were interviewed (physically or telephonically) chose to remain completely anonymous. Characteristics of qualitative data, according to Campbell (2014) include: (Campbell, 2014)

- Takes place in a natural location
- Interactive and humanistic approaches are used
- Developing data is used instead of prefigured data
- To be primarily interpretative

It was crucial for the purpose of this study that managers were interviewed in their natural environment where each of them works their everyday life. It was extremely important to avoid any form of discomfort for the interviews to take place, avoiding any stumbling blocks that might have occurred.

This study focuses on social experiences, experience sampling and ambulatory assessments. This study took place during a certain period and it emphasised the

actions of the target group (managers) who agreed on participating in a structured face-to-face or telephonic interviews, their experiences and emotions based on a specific situation, this situation being, the use and impact of developing technology in their place of employment (Fraley and Hudson, 2014).

Qualitative research has five methods, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Qualitative research methods**

<b>Research method</b>	<b>Description</b>
Ethnographies	This is where individuals are examined in their own natural environment.
Grounded theory	Based on reactions of a certain group of people over a certain time period; a conclusion can now be made
Case studies	This takes place when a study is done based on specific situations or activities
Phenomenological research	This is when the focus is on lived involvements of individuals.
Narrative research	This is when the researcher recaps what was said by those involved in the study.

Source: Campbell (2014)

Throughout this study, the grounded theory was also combined into the overall research design as managers were interviewed on the organisation's relationship with developing technology. The relationship studied was based on past experiences of developing technology and how it changed up until recent/current experiences thereof.

### **3.2.2 Population and sampling**

The population relevant to this study are all the retailers and managers of organisations in the fashion industry. A convenient sample of the five companies was drawn based on geographic location, accessibility and willingness to participate in the study. Two of the companies were located in Johannesburg, and the researcher travelled to Cape Town to interview the third organisation. These

managers were contacted to ask whether they would agree to participate in the interview – all these managers agreed. The interview questions were sent to participants before the actual interview so that, if managers wanted to, they could do some preparation. Two more people were contacted to conduct telephonic interviews after a short telephone call was made to approach these two managers to get approval that they will participate in a telephonic interview. They too received the interview questions beforehand.

### **3.2.3 Measuring instrument**

The research design used qualitative research where management respondents were interviewed on developing technology and its influence on the fashion industry. An interview was set up and took place with three managers of large fashion companies in Gauteng and Cape Town. The interview was structured around a number of questions (see Annexure 1), and the managers' responses were further investigated as the interview developed. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed to ensure accuracy of the information. The purpose of recording the data was to enable the researcher to have access and replay the recording of the interview as many times necessary when processing the data.

### **3.2.4 Data analysis**

Face-to-face interviews were conducted and recorded. Permission was obtained from the interviewees to record the interviews. These recordings were later transcribed to enable the researcher to replay interviews as many times as needed, and also check the transcriptions during the data analysis. Thematic analysis was used to categorise the information. Two additional people were contacted telephonically to gain more insight on how and which technology impact the operations of their company mostly. The data provided by these interviewees were also recorded on email.

### 3.3 RESULTS

The researcher interviewed managers from five different organisations by asking eight questions. Every interview question will be presented below, followed by each of the organisations' response to it.

*Question 1: In which fashion category does this organisation specialise?*

**Table 4: Specialised fashion category**

<b>Interviewee:</b>	<b>Answer to question 1:</b>
Organisation 1	Premium lifestyle, casual and formal wear apparel and accessories
Organisation 2	Clothing, footwear and accessories
Organisation 3	Distribution licence in SA, which enable this organisation to sell all products produced by this organisation, internationally, apparel, footwear and accessories (watches, perfume, sunglasses)

*Question 2: Is your target market mostly male or female?*

All three organisations' target market is mostly made up out of males. All three organisations do cater to females too, but the majority is male-focused.

*Question 3: What is the age group of your most loyal customers?*

Between the three organisations, the relevant ages vary between 24 to 45.

*Question 4: Which marketing platform is mainly used by this organisation?*

Organisation 1: a multichannel approach is used like:

- Print – in the form of magazines
- Digital – in the form of social media platforms
- OHH – outdoor signage and billboards

Organisation 2:

- Online platform – an online store

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Debating about using Snapchat

Organisation3: season launches, this includes launching new products linked to the current season.

- Print ads out of home billboards – for the older target market
- Social media and digital – as it is required by the E-commerce site. Data can be tracked through this method of marketing
- Vicinity – based on certain criteria; a banner is sent out to customers who fit the criteria
- Waze – adverts pop up as soon as a customer is in the vicinity of a store
- Link the online store with the retail store – deliveries can be made to the customer's doorstep or even delivered to a selected store

*Question 5: Does your organisation make use of developing technology to interact with customers, if so, what form? If not- why not?*

Four of these organisations do make use of developing technology. Only one company interviewed did not make use of technology.

The technologies used by the three different organisations include:

- AI
- Machine learning for advanced digital advertising
- App for the store
- Free WiFi so the App can be downloaded at the store
- Loyalty programs
- No, because we have found that face-to-face interaction with our customers is much more successful
- Mostly email and samples would be shipped to customers if it is required

*Question 6: Are the majority of customers online shoppers or do more customers prefer to visit the store physically?*

Organisation 1: at this stage, most clients physically visit the store; it can, however, not be avoided how fast online shopping is evolving.

Organisation 2: at this stage, the majority of customers physically visit the store, as online shopping only launched last year through intense marketing. It has been found that online stores are not as successful as physical store presentations. Customers mostly visit online stores when the product they are looking for is not available in the store. The future focus is on building an App to make shopping more convenient for customers. People are visual – people need to see it to believe it.

Organisation 3: The online store for this organisation is at its premium, but in SA, it is not used as much as internationally. Online stores and retail stores should be complimentary towards each other; it should be used as a combination, to ensure that customers are satisfied by either the online or then the retail store offered by a brand. Stores will no longer have a point of sale (POS) everything will be done through mobile functions. Virtual mirrors will be used in the future where clothes can be selected on a mirror and displayed on the customer without physically getting dressed in clothes to see what it looks like.

*Question 7: What types of new developing technology mostly impact your operations within the fashion industry?*

Organisation 1: “AI and machine learning, including the soon to be launched mobile App. In retail stores, we are in the testing phase of RFID.”

Organisation 2: “this is not a technology organisation. Our focus is on fashion. We are very mindful about technology in terms of how we are going to engage with future customers and future generations. We are building towards it, that’s why there is an online store and an App. Emails and SMSs can be sent out to customers, informing them of specials, and more. South Africa’s consumer basis is not on an online purchase basis yet as South Africa does not have the technology of America.”

Organisation 3: “Technology available in Europe is too expensive to use and run in South Africa, which is a setback for the South African branches of this brand. What is offered by online stores internationally should be delivered by a good retail store in South Africa to fill that gap between local and international technology availability.”

Organisation 4: “Machine learning as in certain stores, there is no longer such a great need for human staff as machines can perform a large number of activities which humans used to perform previously. As a company we never really made use of technology which led to machine learning impacting us drastically as of late.”

Organisation 5: “Tech packs, this refers to a document where measurements, materials, colors, etc. are included, and this document are used as communication between manufacturer and designers.”

*Question 8: Does your company stay updated with the changes and development of technology?*

All three organisations are very determined to stay updated with all developing technology through different channels like subscribing to international newsletters, subscribing to information sites, constant inspection of customer preferences, podcasts, LinkedIn, Business of fashion.

### **3.4 DISCUSSION**

As stated in the research problem and study objectives, this study aimed to investigate the impact and use of developing technology for organisations within the fashion industry. Results obtained from face-to-face interviews were analysed and presented below:

1. Regardless of the fashion category in which a fashion organisation specialises, whether it is clothing, accessories, footwear or perfume, it is crucial always to deliver precisely what the customer wants.

2. The larger the variety categories covered by an organisation, the larger the responsibilities and customer needs are to satisfy. The organisations that were interviewed by the researcher all trade internationally, which indicated that the branches of each specific brand must be licensed to trade and sell products in South Africa.
3. Different age groups have different demands from organisations. It has been proved in the literature presented in chapter two that it is the responsibility of an organisation to do intense research and understand exactly what the target market desire to supply exactly what is desired. Once an organisation can provide what is demanded by customers, the organisation is on the road to success.
4. Technology has been found to act as a key player in both finding out what customers demand as well as the process of delivering whatever the customer demands. Even in cases where companies do not implement technology to interact with customers, technology is still used to stay updated with trends.
5. Technology plays an unavoidable part in the development of new material for clothes as well as shoes. Bioengineered materials are produced by scientists and then used when manufacturing clothing. Not only is this type of material of a better quality, but it is also environmentally friendly. This type of material used is living organisms which, when not used anymore and dumped can form part of the earth again instead of destroying more of the planet.
6. A large number of organisations within the fashion industry started moving towards involving the bioengineering process when producing fashion-related items as organisations strive to form part of a greener planet.
7. Marketing is vital for any organisation, despite the industry. Marketing is the communication platform between an organisation and its customers.
8. As found in the literature presented in chapter two, marketing informs customers about offers and procedures launched by an organisation, which might have a direct influence on the target and client base of that organisation.

9. The marketing platform selected by any organisation was based on the customer group of that organisation.
10. Organisations, in general, do not make use of only one marketing platform. They use a combination of platforms because their customers form part of numerous segments, and it is crucial to reach every customer when marketing.
11. The research confirmed that the current era is technology-based. A technology-based era means that operations are controlled and involved by some form of technology.
12. Marketing plans cannot avoid combining some form of technology into the marketing technique that has been selected by an organisation. Even when marketing is not done through technology, technology is still somehow used to put together a marketing strategy.
13. Organisations did not entirely move away from the traditional way of hardcopy poster, and magazine printing as organisations do still strive to reach the segment of customers who still do read magazines and posters.
14. According to information obtained through interviews, the main reason behind organisations moving away from hardcopy printing is to minimize pollution and moving towards a greener planet. Hardcopy printing is not environmentally friendly because the printed media is disposed and dumped after it is no longer useful.
15. There is no doubt that the whole fashion-universe has been influenced by technology.
16. Social media is a tool used by individuals for a minimum of five hours during a day. Organisations found that social media tends to be the most successful tool for marketing.
17. Organisations create pages and profiles on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, to only name a few. Customers could follow and join pages which enable customers to stay updated and informed with everything relevant to a particular brand/organisation.
18. Social media pages do not only act as a marketing tool – it is also a great communication platform.

19. Customers can make comments or start conversations through the social media page of an organisation. All five of the organisations do have staff, employed only to manage the organisation's social media page. These employees focus on dealing with any complaints received on social media pages. These employees also manage conversations with customers to ensure correct and speedy responses are given based on enquiries of customers.
20. Advertisements pop up during the use of Waze, a GPS app on a smartphone. As soon as a customer has been located near a certain store, an advert will automatically pop up to inform the customer about the store near them.
21. According to information gathered during one of the interviews, it was confirmed that the advertisements displayed when using the Waze App is extremely successful. Store visits have increased drastically as a result of this marketing platform.
22. Three out of the five interviewed organisations did confirm to making use of the online store as well as Apps for the specific brands.
23. Certain organisations decided on making free WiFi available in stores to enable customers to download the app for free when physically visiting the store.
24. Developing technology must be made part of organisational operations to be successful.
25. Throughout the interviews, however, it has been confirmed by certain companies that they are definitely more successful when developing technology is implemented and made part of operations. One of the interviewed companies stated that they tend to be more successful without the use of technology.
26. Organisations implement different forms of developing technology for the various operations within each organisation.
27. Developing technology is useful for numerous advertising operations. Digital adverts became more popular, which created space for Artificial Intelligence and machine learning to be involved in operations.

28. Developing technology encouraged specific organisations to decide on eliminating the use of a till point. All payments transformed from cash payments to mobile transactions within the store.
29. The majority of literature available in chapter two indicated that more customers are moving towards online shopping as physical store visits do not offer as many benefits and convenience as online shopping.
30. However, throughout the various interviews with different fashion organisations in South Africa, the majority of customers are still physically visiting stores.
31. The fact that online shopping is drastically increasing cannot be avoided, but the statistics prove that more customers visit stores.
32. Customers prefer to visit stores as customers want to touch and try on products. With regards to the fact that customers prefer physically trying on clothes – a vision for the future include visual mirrors, where customers can no longer try on clothes, but by looking into a mirror, they can select certain clothes which will be displayed on the customer's body and purchase decisions will be based on the displayed image.
33. It has been found during the interviews that an online store and a retail store should complement each other. Customers should make use of an online store when products cannot be located within the store they physically visited.
34. Once again, the focus should be on complete customer satisfaction, which indicates that the link between an online store and a physical retail store should be customer satisfaction.
35. As soon as a customer does not seem satisfied with the physical store regardless the reason, it should be the priority of the online store to resolve the issue at hand and deliver exactly what the customer desires to ensure that the customer receives it. As soon as organisations fail to satisfy customers through retail as well as online stores, customers could potentially seek products from substitute organisations and competitors and this will result in a loss of customers.

36. The importance of customer satisfaction is therefore vital and both physical and online stores should focus on service quality to eliminate the smallest chance of customer loss due to customer dissatisfaction.
37. The interviewees of three of the organisations indicated that the Apps they launched are extremely successful and that it opens a whole different world for customers, where they can purchase from literally anywhere in the world at any time they prefer to.
38. Throughout the interviews, it has been confirmed that there are various techniques to use when attempting to stay updated with developing technology. Technology changes and constantly modify which makes it difficult to stay updated.

However, a final observation is that staying updated with technology automatically provides an organisation with a competitive advantage. Staying updated with developing technology enables an organisation to improve offerings based on customer preferences as well as being aware of what competitors offer to ensure customers do not end up switching to another brand as a result of better and improved offerings.

### **3.5 SUMMARY**

The chapter shows that developing technology is implemented by all five organisations to ensure competitive advantage, not all of these companies make use of technology to interact with customers but, with regards to staying updated with new trends as well as keeping up with what customers demand and prefer. Developing technology is not always easy and cost-effective to implement. Still, as soon as it is implemented and used correctly, it will be cost-effective as the correct use of developing technology guarantees success in the long run for any organisation that wants to remain competitive amongst others.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will conclude the whole study. After combining the literature study done in chapter two with the information obtained from interviews in chapter three, conclusion and recommendations will be presented below for areas for future research in the field of the relationship between the fashion industry and technological developments as well as more ideas that the researcher would suggest on how fashion industries should implement developing technology to gain even more benefits from it.

#### **4.2 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The use of technology is beneficial to organisations within the fashion industry. As time evolves, everything is becoming more and more technology-based. This means that organisations must strive to stay updated with developments with regards to technology.

Humans all over the world are affected directly by the changes and improvements of technology, which means that customers of the fashion industry are included in this trend. For fashion organisations to remain sustainable by producing what is in demand and seen as fashion by society, fashion organisations must stay updated through podcasts, organisational profiles, business letters, and more which will inform them about the latest fashion trends in other countries.

Staying updated with developing technology will create competitive advantage opportunities for fashion organisations as communication and marketing platforms will be directly influenced. The use of social media enables customers and organisations to connect and interact at any time and place without any limits.

Organisations can post and launch advertisements at any time, and customers can react by commenting or purchasing whenever they feel like doing so.

Customers can now quickly post what they feel and want without any effort. This enables a clear communication platform for organisations and customers to interact and communicate about anything almost any time. A clear communication platform will enable customers to feel valued and important to organisations which will cause them to remain loyal customers for as long as they can experience the feeling of being valued.

On the other hand – organisations that use technology will have a system that sorts and combines customer information. The correct technology will work through the data to discover the exact needs of customers and inform organisations on what it is. As soon as organisations know what exactly customers want, they can start producing and delivering that exact desire. As soon as organisations can deliver what customers want, success is on the way. Customers will return when they feel that their needs are understood, and they can purchase exactly what they were dreaming of. Studies have found that in the world that we live in; people often do not carry wallets around anymore. When being able to do everything through technology, the last thing customers want is to have to take out a wallet to pay physically. With the use of technology, purchases and payments can be made through the use of a smartphone's technology.

Through online stores, customers can create a personalised profile. Customers tend to be very attracted to this offering as they feel more important as data received by organisations through online profiles will enable organisations to deliver personalised service with the exact requirements of each customer based on their unique profile online.

Fashion organisations should implement developing technology through effective communication and advertising campaigns to ensure that customers stay loyal to a brand during tough economic times. Adverts and offerings should be of such nature that customers feel that they cannot go without specific offerings.

### **4.3 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

It is recommended that the following areas for future research are explored:

- Making use of developing technology to ensure organisations produce environmentally friendly and safe fashion related products.
- Strategies to implement cost-effective standard international technology for fashion organisations in South Africa.
- The effect of eliminating hardcopy advertising, like a magazine and poster printing – what will the impact be on fashion organisations' marketing figures.
- Should employees in the fashion industry fear that technology will eliminate the use of human input in this industry.

### **4.4 SUMMARY**

The use of developing technology delivers great benefits to organisations within the fashion industry if it is applied correctly. Staying up to date with technological developments will unlock the opportunity of attracting future generations to an organisation and that the future of the universe is based on technology. Technology should eventually be used in every operational aspect of fashion organisations. By doing this; organisations will have improved communication, advertising and better products to deliver all with a technological foundation. It became clear that not all organisations implement technology within their operations as they have a great desire for face-to-face interaction with clients, which is understandable. However, the world is moving more and more towards technology and organisations will sooner or later be forced to adopt technology if they desire to remain competitive in their field.

As economic times are unstable and tend to be more harmful than positive, it became clear that fashion organisations should do all they can to implement developing technology internally to ensure these organisations can keep head above water during tough economic times.

## **ANNEXURE 1: INTERVIEW STRUCTURE**

### **Structured interview questions**

1. What type of fashion category does your company specialize in? (for example, clothes, shoes, etc.)
2. Is your target market mostly? Men, women or both? Elaborate please.
3. What is the average age group of your best/loyal customer? Elaborate on their preferences?
4. What market segments do you primarily target?
5. Which marketing platform is mainly used by your organisation to target the different market segments?
6. Does your organisation make use of developing technologies to interact with customers, if so, what form? If not, why not?
7. How successful are these technologies in marketing?
8. Are the majority of customers' online shoppers or do they prefer to physically visit the store?
9. What type of new developing technology mostly affects your operations within the fashion industry?
10. How does your company stay updated with the changes and development of technology?

## ANNEXURE 2: ETHICS CERTIFICATE



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30 August 2019

Prof C Bisschoff  
*Per e-mail*  
Dear Prof Bisschoff,

**EMS-REC FEEDBACK: 30082019**  
**M van der Walt (24301477)(NWU-00416-19-A4)**  
**MBA – Prof C Bisschoff**

Your ethics application on, *Assessing the use of developing technology in the fashion industry*, that served on the EMS-REC meeting of 30 August 2019, refers.

**Outcome:**

Approved as a minimal risk study. A number **NWU-00416-19-A4** is given for three years of ethics clearance.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Linde'.

Prof Bennie Linde  
Chairperson: Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)  
Potchefstroom Campus

## ANNEXURE 3: EDITOR'S LETTER



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Sunday, 24 November 2019

To whom it may concern

**Re: Confirmation of language edit, typography and technical precision**

The MBA dissertation "**Assessing the use of developing technology in the fashion industry**" by **Miranda van der Walt** (24301477) was edited for language, typography and technical precision. The referencing and sources were checked as per NWU guidelines.

Final, last minute corrections remain the responsibility of the author as suggested by the editor in the pre-final copy.



**Antoinette Bisschoff**

**BA Languages (UPE – now NMU); MBA (PU for CHE – now NWU); Translation and Linguistic Studies (NWU)**

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