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FACULTY *of* ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY *of the* WESTERN CAPE
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DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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BY

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Student number: (Times New Roman 12)

Masters dissertation proposal

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of **name of degree**

in the **Department name**

Faculty name

at the

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Supervisor: Supervisor name and surname
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT *(TIMES NEW ROMAN 14)*

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EXAMPLE

First, I would like to thank my research supervisors XXXXXXX and XXXXXXX for their great insights, support, and guidance throughout this entire academic journey. I would also like to thank the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of the Western Cape for educating and providing me with the best resources throughout my academic years. Furthermore, I would like to thank all the survey participants who contributed their valuable time and responses for making this research authentic and insightful.

My appreciation extends to my loving parents and partner for their constant motivation. Their unconditional support has made this study possible. Lastly, I would like to thank myself for not giving up, believing in myself, doing all the hard work and never quitting.

DEDICATION *(TIMES NEW ROMAN 14)*

[Text: Times New Roman 12]

EXAMPLE

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved parents, who have been my source of inspiration and gave me the strength when I thought of giving up, who continually provide moral, spiritual, emotional, and financial support. And to our Almighty God who gave me the strength, power of mind, and wisdom to achieve all things possible through Him.

ABSTRACT *(TIMES NEW ROMAN 14)*

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EXAMPLE

Luxury fashion is one of the most rapidly expanding and lucrative industries. Although previously prominent in developed economies, growth within the luxury fashion industry has shifted to emerging markets, such as South Africa. The luxury fashion industry is particularly gaining momentum with the rising popularity among the young modern population belonging to the millennials, increased wealth of the middle class, uptake of new technologies and smartphone usage. The consumer market for these luxury fashion goods is changing, with millennials becoming a key driver within this industry. The COVID-19 pandemic has not only transformed customer behaviour, but has accelerated the adoption of online shopping and millennials are particularly influenced by social media platforms, such as Instagram, and tend to have a higher level of interaction and engagement with luxury fashion brands, thus developing strong customer-brand relationships online. For this reason, luxury fashion retailers need to better anticipate and understand these female millennials' purchase intentions, what makes them brand-conscious, and how they can be managed more successfully through the social media platform, Instagram.

An empirical investigation was conducted to examine the relationship between social media marketing – with specific reference to Instagram – customer-brand relationships, brand awareness, and purchase intentions of South African female millennial costumers of luxury fashion brands. The primary objective of the study was to determine the influence of social media marketing on South African female millennials' purchase intentions towards luxury fashion brands on Instagram. The study's target population consisted of female millennials aged 23 to 38 who use social media (specifically Instagram) and reside within Gauteng. A quantitative non-probability research approach was employed and a two-pronged sampling process was applied to identify and select 300 participants. In the first sampling phase, sampling units were selected via quota sampling, according to the three metropolitan areas within Gauteng – namely the City of Ekurhuleni, the City of Johannesburg, and the City of Tshwane. In the second sampling phase, convenience sampling was used. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire adapted from previously validated scales. Descriptive

analysis, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling were applied to achieve the objectives of the study.

The findings of the structural equation modelling procedure indicated that social media marketing significantly influences purchase intention, customer-brand relationships, and brand awareness. Both customer-brand relationships and brand awareness were found to have a positive significant relationship with purchase intention. In addition, the data analysis of the mediators confirmed that customer-brand relationships and brand awareness mediate the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intentions. From these results, all research hypotheses were accepted. Furthermore, a reliable and valid model was developed to assist South African luxury fashion retailers in improving their customer-brand relationship-building efforts and brand awareness with customers through Instagram to enhance South African female millennials' purchase intentions towards luxury fashion brands on Instagram.

Based on the results obtained for this study, implications, recommendations, and proposed strategies were outlined for luxury fashion retailers. Various recommendations were provided to assist luxury fashion retailers better understand and anticipate the purchasing journey of female millennials within the luxury fashion industry online. The alignment of the recommendations with the proposed strategies will contribute to stronger customer-brand relationships, enhanced brand awareness, and increased intention to purchase luxury fashion brands on Instagram. Consequently, luxury fashion retailers will have the necessary insight into how to operate within the highly competitive and lucrative luxury fashion industry as well as better understand their position relative to other luxury players within the market to effectively plan and position themselves within the future market.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS *(TIMES NEW ROMAN 12)*

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EXAMPLE

AFIs	Absolute fit indices
ASV	Average shared squared variance
AVE	Average variance extracted
BA	Brand awareness
BCCI	Bias-corrected confidence interval
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CBR	Customer-brand relationship
CFA	Confirmatory factor analysis
CFI	Comparative fit index
CRM	Customer relationship management
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
eWOM	Electronic word of mouth
GDP	Gross domestic product
GoF	Goodness of fit
IFIs	Incremental fit indices
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
LLCI	Lower level confidence interval
MSV	Maximum shared variance
NFI	Normed fit index
NNFI	Non-normed fit index
PI	Purchase intention
Q & A	Question and answer
RM	Relationship marketing
RMSEA	Root mean square error of approximation
SCT	Social cognitive theory
SI	Symbolic interaction
SME	Social media engagement
SMM	Social media marketing

TLI	Tucker-Lewis index
UGC	User-generated content
ULCI	Upper level confidence interval
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
WOM	Word of mouth