

Understanding The Importance Of Social Media Marketing In The Fashion World and The Power Of Social Media Platforms

Damla Odemis

24130818

MSc in Entrepreneurship

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Supervisor: Keith Feighery

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Name: Damla ODEMIS

Student Number: 24130818

Degree for which thesis is submitted: MSc in Entrepreneurship

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Thesis supervisor: Keith Feighery

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This section acknowledges the AI tools that were utilized in the process of completing this assignment.

Tool Name	Brief Description	Link to tool
Grammarly	Literature organisation	https://www.grammarly.com
Perplexity	Assist in refining the wording and structure of survey questions, ensuring clarity and alignment with the research objectives	https://www.perplexity.ai

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[Insert Tool Name]	
[Insert Description of use] Survey question ideas	
<p>[Insert Sample prompt] Here's my research questions I'm planning to have 18 questions for survey related to my research questions, can you help me with that? Research Objectives To guide the investigation, the study will pursue the following objectives: 1. To explore the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase intention within the fashion industry. 2. To investigate how authenticity and transparency in influencer marketing affect consumer trust. 3. To evaluate the role of social media platforms in accelerating fast fashion consumption. 4. To examine ethical and sustainability-related concerns associated with influencer marketing in the fashion sector.</p>	<p>[Insert Sample response] Survey Questions for Research on Social Media Influencers and Fast Fashion</p> <p>Below are 18 survey questions tailored to address your research objectives and questions related to the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase intention, authenticity and transparency in influencer marketing, platform effects, and ethical concerns in fast fashion.</p>

Evidence of AI Usage

This section includes evidence of significant prompts and responses used or generated through the AI tool. It should provide a clear understanding of the extent to which the AI tool was used in the assignment. Evidence may be attached via screenshots or text.

Additional Evidence:

[Place evidence here]

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Abstract

This dissertation focuses on the influence of social media marketing on consumer behaviour in the fast fashion sector, specifically with focusing on influencer trust, authenticity, platform engagement and ethical awareness. This study focuses on how social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram etc. can affect brand's visions, people's purchasing choices and thoughts about sustainability.

In this dissertation quantitative research design was selected by adopting an online questionnaire. 60 valid responses who are aged between 15-30 active social media users were collected via sampling. The survey consisted of 17 Likert- scale questions which are about four main questions: Influencer impact on purchasing behaviour, selected content and platforms, authenticity and transparency and importance of ethical and sustainable fashion acts. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, group comparison and regression analysis was used for analysing the data in order to recognise relationship and differences between variables.

According to findings from the research, influencers play a crucial role when it comes to affecting purchase intentions especially if they are considered as authentic and transparent. The most affective format is considered as video-based content such as Instagram Reels and TikTok clips. Brand trust was also closely linked to the influencer trust when it comes to promoting a product or an item. People were aware of sustainability and ethics. When it came down to it these issues didn't affect their purchasing decisions much as how much they trusted the influencer and how engaging the content was. For most of the people, it was the influence and entertainment value that tipped the scales not the moral implications.

This dissertation states that affective influencer marketing has to have a balance when it comes to authenticity, using platform in a strategic way and arrangement with audience values. In order to make fashion more sustainable, recommendations were provided for brands, customer and influencers including case-studies about the brands to see how they're using media to promote sustainable fashion.

1.Introduction

1.1 Background

Medias rise as a player in digital communication has greatly changed how the fashion industry approaches marketing strategies. The use of platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube has become crucial for fashion brands to connect with audiences in an immediate way.

Social media marketing gives fashion brands the chance to build brand recognition and influence consumer choices, significantly impacting purchases. Recent research indicates that social media marketing plays a vital role in shaping consumers' intentions to make purchasing decisions, especially when it involves visually appealing, personalized content (Syahil *et al.*, 2025). When it comes to influencers authenticity is often seen as the key, to winning over consumers. Lots of studies have shown that the authentic an influencer seems, the trust they can build with their audience. However, it's not that simple. Other research has found that this doesn't always true. For instance influencers with a following can sometimes come across as commercial which can actually erode trust. It's also worth noting that what makes an influencer seem authentic can vary a lot depending on the type of content they're posting and the platform they're using. A study by (Hudders *et al.*, 2020) pointed this out and recent research by (Johnson & Farrelly, 2024) has reinforced this idea. They found that influencers who are really popular can be seen as genuine which makes sense if you think about it. Meanwhile other studies by Mahmood and (Kim & Ko, 2022) still suggest that authenticity is crucial, for building trust with consumers. It's obvious that what makes people trust something isn't, about whether it seems real or not. Other things play a role too like how the message's presented, what kind of platform its, on and what the people it's meant for actually care about consumers are now more inclined towards engagement with brands and expect not just details about products but also meaningful stories that resonate with their values, alongside aesthetic motivation and social validation, through user-generated content or influencer support.

Social media has significantly changed the fashion industry through the phenomenon of influencer marketing. Influencers, seen as genuine and trustworthy, are crucial in shaping how people perceive and interact with brands. They excel at blending content with personal endorsements, making them highly effective at influencing others. Influencer effectiveness depends greatly on trust, as consumers tend to favor influencers perceived as genuine and transparent (Mahmood *et al.*, 2025). Building trust has become a crucial aspect of influencer

marketing in recent years, such as 2024, as consumers become increasingly discerning and well-informed (Schram, 2024)

The fashion industry has experienced significant changes in parallel with the surge in social media marketing (SMM). The emergence of fast fashion a model centered on the rapid creation and distribution of trendy clothes has been further fuelled by the influence and speed of social media platforms. Fast fashion brands use these platforms not only to predict trends but also to quickly experiment with and market products soon after they gain popularity in style circles. The collaboration between fashion and online platforms has created a never-ending loop of buying and discarding items, emphasizing novelty and disposability (Radev,2023).

While media's connection with fashion offers business benefits, it also brings significant concerns related to sustainability, ethics, and overall consumer welfare. Emphasizing rapid production and appealing products frequently leads to overlooking environmental and social accountability. Critics claim that social media channels indirectly fuel overconsumption and trend fatigue by endorsing trends and encouraging impulsive shopping. The environmental impacts such as rising textile waste, carbon emissions, and water pollution are now receiving greater attention (Radev,2023)

The slow fashion movement has emerged to promote ethical manufacturing practices, sustainable material choices, and more mindful shopping habits. Despite these positive trends, fast fashion continues to dominate thanks to its affordability, accessibility, and its seamless integration into the social media landscape. Social platforms favor rapid content turnover, and fast fashion brands excel at creating attractive material that captures the attention of trend-savvy young consumers.

The merging of media, influencer culture, and fast fashion has given rise to a network where marketing strategies intertwine deeply with personal identity and consumer behavior a dynamic that deserves scholarly investigation, both to understand its collaborative mechanics and to consider its broader societal and environmental implications. However, there's are remains of lack of further research, on how authenticity, trust and ethics come to impact buyer behaviour on TikTok and Instagram especially when it comes to fast fashion. Most studies look at these factors one by one or only, on one platform, which doesn't give detailed information of how they work to influence what people actually purchase in this field.

1.2 Problem Statement & Rationale

Social media marketing (SMM) has significantly transformed how fashion brands interact with customers; however, this rapid evolution has introduced several pressing concerns that warrant critical examination. The convergence of influencer culture, fast fashion trends, and platform-driven advertising has created an ethically ambiguous environment. One primary issue is the increasing difficulty for consumers to distinguish between genuine endorsements and promotional content, especially when influencer campaigns lack transparency or clear disclosure (Mahmood *et al.*, 2025).

The growing role of media influencers in brand promotions has blurred the boundary between personal opinions and paid endorsements in recent years. This ambiguity can erode consumer trust, particularly among technologically savvy audiences who prioritize honesty and authenticity (Schram, 2024). Additionally, influencer marketing often places greater emphasis on popularity metrics such as likes, followers, and shares than on content quality or brand consistency, which can lead to inconsistent messaging and undermine brand credibility.

Fast fashion is a significant area of concern due to its dependence on rapid manufacturing cycles and mass consumption, both of which are now heavily influenced by social media platforms. Brands utilize algorithms to monitor trending styles and quickly release similar products, creating a sense of immediacy and encouraging customers to keep up with the latest trends. This cultivates a "fear of missing out" (FOMO) that compels consumers to make impulsive purchases without considering long-term value or sustainability (Radev, 2023).

The ongoing cycle of consumption associated with fast fashion has severe environmental consequences. Fast fashion is among the leading contributors to pollution, responsible for excessive water use, microplastic pollution, and escalating textile waste (Radev, 2023).

Consumers are often confronted with mixed signals in brand communication: companies may highlight ethical values in their campaigns while simultaneously releasing new product collections at a rapid pace, contradicting sustainability principles.

Furthermore, while SMM is recognized for its effectiveness in shaping purchasing decisions, there remains a lack of comprehensive insight into its broader impact. Constant exposure to idealized lifestyles, physical appearances, and fashion standards typically presented by influencers can influence self-esteem and encourage unhealthy social comparisons. This issue is especially pertinent among Generation Z and young adult consumers who actively engage

with platforms like Instagram and TikTok (Mahmood *et al.*, 2025). The pressure to emulate influencer styles not only drives product purchases but also promotes the adoption of constructed identities, which may reduce individuality and increase materialistic tendencies.

The intersection of business ethics with fashion's embrace of algorithm-driven advertising and micro-influencer campaigns raises further concerns about data privacy and psychological manipulation. Most consumers are unaware of how their digital engagement shapes marketing strategies and influences their purchasing decisions.

Despite substantial marketing efforts in this area, there is a notable lack of in-depth research exploring the long-term effects of media marketing particularly influencer-driven strategies on sustained brand trust, ethical perceptions, and sustainable consumer behaviour. Existing studies often focus on immediate outcomes such as click-through rates and conversions, overlooking broader social, environmental, and psychological implications.

Therefore, research on this topic is essential not only to evaluate the influence of media marketing (SMM) on consumer fashion choices but also to examine the ethical and sustainability dilemmas inherent in these strategies. By addressing these issues, such research aims to provide insights on how online marketing strategies can evolve in more ethical, transparent, and accountable ways that align with consumer values and global sustainability goals.

1.3 Research Aim, Research Questions & Structure of the Study

The main goal of this research is to analyse social media marketing (SMM) particularly focusing on strategies driven by influencers, in the fashion sector influence consumer behaviour patterns and choices. This investigation will specifically examine how platforms such as Instagram and TikTok impact consumer decisions and views on authenticity, within fashion marketing contexts. The study will pay attention to sustainability concerns that arise from these modern marketing methods.

The study aims to explore the impacts of influencer reliability and openness, on consumer trust and their subsequent influence on buying habits by delving into the correlation between consumer behaviour psychology and marketing ethics, in the realm of fashion sustainability practices to gain a comprehension of how modern marketing strategies shape group purchasing trends.

This study will be driven by the goals;

- 1) Exploring how social media influencers influence consumers purchase decisions, in the fashion sector.
- 2) Exploring the impact of genuineness and openness, in influencer marketing, on building trust with consumers.
- 3) Exploring how social media platforms impact the growth of fashion consumption.
- 4) Exploring the sustainability issues linked to influencer marketing, in the fashion industry.

In line, with these goals, in mind the research delves into the inquiries.

- 1) What impact does influencer driven social media advertising have on shoppers' inclination to purchase fashion items on platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok?
- 2) How does the transparency and authenticity of influencer marketing campaigns impact the extent of trust consumers have in fashion brands being promoted on media platforms?
- 3) What impact does the credibility of influencers have on how consumers view buying fashion items?
- 4) How does the presentation. Interactive elements, on TikTok and Instagram impact how consumers engage with fashion marketing campaigns?

The research inquiries establish a concentrated structure, for the investigation. The purpose of each question is to guarantee thoroughness and real-world significance by delving into the ethical and sustainability aspects of social media marketing in the fashion industry (Schram, 2024). These inquiries also play a role, in shaping the creation of quantitative and qualitative data gathering instruments like surveys and interviews.

Structure Of The Study:

Chapter 1 Introduction: The research context is introduced by highlighting the importance of influencer driven social media marketing, in the fashion industry and laying out the research's goals, objectives, queries and the framework of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 Literature Review: This chapter offers an thoughtful analysis of the body of work, on social media marketing and influencer authenticity in relation to consumer behavior psychology, within the fast fashion industry and ethical consumption practice

Chapter 3: Research Methodology: The study delves into the research philosophy and methodology utilized to tackle the research inquiries effectively by outlining the collection methods sampling techniques used along with perspectives considered in conjunction with methodologies, for interpreting the gathered information.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis This chapter Interprets the research discoveries, in a detailed manner by linking real world outcomes to the existing literature review while highlighting trends and noteworthy discoveries that are pertinent to the research goals.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion The research findings are synthesized to address each research question in this chapter. This section critically assesses the research contributions while acknowledging the study's limitations and providing suggestions, for research. Additionally discussed are the implications, for marketers and fashion brands.

2.Literature Review

2.1 The Rise of Social Media in the Fashion Industry

The rise of social media has brought a profound transformation to the fashion industry, fundamentally changing how brands communicate and connect with consumers on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok (Gashi, 2021). These platforms have evolved from simple content-sharing hubs into sophisticated marketing environments, enabling brands to engage directly with their audiences and bypass traditional intermediaries like magazines or television shows. Digital platforms now offer more than just visibility they facilitate real-time conversations that shape brand perceptions and directly influence consumer trends and purchasing decisions.

This shift is largely driven by the integration of social media into digital marketing strategies that focus on interactivity and personalized engagement, supplanting more traditional methods (Tabaku & Kola, 2023).In the fashion sector especially, consumers have transitioned from being mere recipients of messages to active contributors, engaging with content and playing a significant role in shaping trends through feedback and co-creation. The prominence of micro-trends and the rapid responses by fashion brands trying to remain relevant in the fast-paced online landscape have become defining features of the industry today. Social media has clearly changed the face of fashion marketing. Unfortunately, there are still multiple discussions about whether these strategies working in the long run. The issue is, it is crucial to look at how media algorithms and the way people interact with content are affecting not just brand loyalty but also

how people shop and consume fashion. It's possible that these platforms are contributing to some patterns of behaviour. And that's something it should be considered about both for the people buying the clothes and for the health of the industry.

The meaning of brand visibility has also evolved in this context: it now entails not only broad exposure, but also meaningful connection and alignment with cultural values. Social media facilitates the diffusion of branded content and enables emerging or smaller brands to reach targeted audiences effectively (Hasanaj & Cakrani, 2023)). Brand awareness is no longer a linear process but, as Hasanaj and Cakrani (2023) argue, a dynamic outcome resulting from continuous online engagement. Initiatives such as giveaways, influencer collaborations, and live-streamed product launches have disrupted or supplemented traditional advertising. This transformation became especially significant during the COVID-19 pandemic, when physical brand encounters were replaced by virtual interactions, compelling brands to develop innovative ways to sustain customer engagement (Gashi,2021).

A notable development within digital marketing is the growing inclusion of influencer marketing in social media strategies. Influencers have become essential mediators between brands and consumers, leveraging their personal appeal and credibility to humanise brand communication. Research by (Mahmood *et al.*, 2025), highlights that influencer marketing thrives on social media platforms, as these spaces combine trust in individuals with algorithm-driven amplification of content. Influencers, once considered mere promotional tools, are now crucial to campaign strategy and brand identity especially in the fashion sector, where visual appeal and trend awareness are paramount.

Recent studies also support the move toward influencer-centric marketing strategies. For instance, Hoxha (2022) demonstrates that fashion-interested consumers, particularly women, are significantly influenced by the lifestyles and trustworthiness portrayed by the influencers they follow. Such consumers often turn to influencer content for style inspiration, product recommendations, and social validation. The immediacy and relatability of influencer posts amplify their persuasive effect, directly impacting purchasing behaviour.

Despite its clear benefits for brand promotion and consumer engagement, this marketing shift presents new challenges. Brands must now contend with platform algorithms that can unpredictably affect reach and engagement, as well as the risk of audience fatigue and growing scepticism in oversaturated markets. Moreover, the persistent focus on aesthetic curation and trend alignment in social media promotions can inadvertently perpetuate unrealistic beauty

standards and encourage excessive consumerism. Nevertheless, the influence of social media on the fashion industry is undeniable, cementing its role as a powerful yet complex tool for shaping trends and facilitating brand communication.

2.2 Influencer Marketing: From Endorsement to Persuasion

Influencer marketing has transformed how brands engage with customers, shifting from traditional celebrity endorsements to more personal and convincing approaches rooted in perceived authenticity. In the current era, influencers are valued not only as promoters but also as relatable peers whose endorsements carry weight because of their authenticity and consistent alignment with followers' values (Mahmood *et al.*, 2025). Unlike conventional marketing, which targets broad audiences, influencer marketing focuses on cultivating trust and fostering a sense of proximity through direct interactions between influencers and their communities (Islam & Sheikh 2024).

At the heart of influencer impact lies authenticity, as highlighted by Schram (2024). Schram's research emphasizes that today's consumers particularly Gen Z have developed the ability to detect inauthentic endorsements with increasing accuracy. Influencers who prioritize transparency, consistently engage with niche audiences, and openly showcase their use of promoted products tend to have a stronger impact on followers' purchasing decisions. This form of persuasion extends beyond mere visibility, establishing meaningful connections that resonate with the audience. Islam and Sheikh (2024) also note that influencers build authority when they move from sporadic endorsements to actively integrating brands into their daily lives; for example, a fashion influencer who regularly promotes eco-friendly brands is likely to be perceived as more trustworthy.

Studies further show that influencers who specialize in clearly defined niches, such as fashion or beauty, achieve higher success rates in converting viewers into customers, as their content naturally aligns with product promotion (Adhyayan 2024). The persuasive effect is strengthened when influencers employ storytelling techniques, weaving products into their personal narratives and providing lifestyle guidance rather than straightforward advertisements (Shaheen 2025). This shift prioritizes validation and relatability over the broad reach of traditional celebrity endorsements (Hudders *et al.* 2020).

Effective persuasion in influencer marketing also hinges on maintaining credibility and authority over time (Martínez López *et al.* 2020). Influencers who are regarded as experts in their fields be it fashion, cosmetics, or wellness are more successful in shaping consumer

behavior. The type of influencer is another important factor. Micro-influencers, despite smaller audiences, often generate higher engagement rates due to their perceived accessibility and responsiveness, as compared to macro-influencers who may appear more commercially motivated (Mahmood *et al.*, 2025).

Nevertheless, influencer marketing's effectiveness is not without challenges. There is growing concern over market oversaturation and declining consumer trust. When influencers promote unrelated products or fail to maintain consistency, they risk being seen as insincere, which diminishes their credibility and that of the brands they endorse (Hudders *et al.* 2020). Thus, transparency such as the clear labeling of sponsored content is essential for upholding ethical standards and ensuring that influence is grounded in genuine connection rather than manipulation.

Gender and product type can also shape influencer effectiveness. Research indicates that women are particularly responsive to influencer marketing in fashion, beauty, and lifestyle sectors (Hoxha 2022). Within these domains, the influencer's ability to evoke emotion, present engaging content, and interact with followers significantly enhances their persuasive power.

Ultimately, the evolution from endorsement to genuine persuasion reflects broader shifts in digital marketing. Influencers today are expected not merely to showcase products but to embody brand values and consistently resonate with their audiences' aspirations. This combination of authenticity and reliability strengthens influencer marketing as a powerful tool within the contemporary fashion sector.

It is also clear that what works for one group of people might not work for another. While the most studies don't investigate how different cultures and age groups respond to marketing strategies, it is really important to consider that it would be really useful to explore how authenticity and finding ground, with influencers plays out in parts of the world or, among different demographics by comparing how things work in contexts we might get a sense of what is actually happening.

2.3 The Psychology of Influence and Purchase Decision

The psychological processes underlying consumer decision-making have become a focal point in recent research on social media marketing, especially within the fashion industry. Social media platforms provide an environment for shaping thoughts and preferences through visually appealing content and algorithm-driven personalized recommendations. A crucial factor in this

arena is social influence, where individuals are prone to adopt the preferences and behaviours of others within their communities (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Social Identity Theory posits that people derive a sense of self from their group affiliations and are guided by the norms and behaviours of these groups. On platforms such as Instagram or TikTok, fashion influencers and peers often serve as reference points whose endorsements shape purchase intentions. This influence grows stronger when accompanied by feelings of similarity and identification, making consumers more receptive to the opinions of influencers they admire (Reicher *et al.*, 2021). For example, consumers who identify with fashion-forward values are more likely to respond positively to influencer endorsements of clothing brands.

An additional key psychological aspect is the level of engagement with content features, which can affect how consumers process and internalize messages. Lestari *et al.* (2022) demonstrate that incorporating vivid visuals, creative storytelling, and interactive elements significantly enhances the perceived persuasiveness of digital content. For instance, fashion-related social media posts featuring virtual try-ons or 360-degree product views help consumers form mental images and emotional connections, thereby increasing their likelihood of making a purchase. This aligns with the Elaboration Likelihood Model, which suggests that vividness and interactivity serve as cues that shape information processing and decision-making (Petty & Cacioppo 1986).

Live streaming shopping (LSS) is an emerging trend that combines urgency with real-time validation. According to Qian *et al.* (2023), creating a sense of urgency and exclusivity during live events, combined with active community engagement, significantly boosts purchase rates and intentions. This format is especially effective in fashion marketing, where immediacy, spontaneity, and social proof encourage swifter decision-making. Observing others participate and make purchases during live streams fosters trust and confidence demonstrating the powerful effect of crowd behaviour.

The visual dimension of fashion marketing has its own psychological ramifications. Including human models or recognizable influencers in advertisements enhances credibility and relatability, while also appealing to the aspirations of viewers. Yıldırım (2023) found that fashion ads featuring models provoke greater emotional responses and higher purchase intentions than those displaying products in isolation, underscoring the importance of emotion and intuition in decision-making.

When influencer content resonates with consumers' self-image or lifestyle aspirations, it deepens the feeling of connection and identification. In such cases, the purchase is not simply about acquiring a product but about affirming identity and belonging, transforming the item into a symbol of self-expression and social confirmation.

However, these psychological influences also raise ethical concerns. Techniques such as countdown timers or artificially induced scarcity may exploit cognitive biases, affecting vulnerable demographics. While effective, such strategies raise questions about informed consent and the ethics of persuasion.

In summary, the dynamics of influence in fashion social media marketing are shaped by social identity, consumer–influencer alignment, interactivity, and compelling visuals. Together, these factors create persuasive online environments that shape not only how consumers perceive and evaluate products, but also how they ultimately make purchasing decisions.

2.4 Purchase Intention and Brand Trust in Social Media Contexts

In today's era of pervasive technology and connectivity, social media platforms play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions, especially regarding trust in brands and purchase intent. The immediacy and personalization of interactions on these platforms offer companies unique opportunities to build strong emotional connections with customers, foster brand trust, and turn interest into actual purchases. However, the effectiveness of this process ultimately relies on the level of trust consumers place in both the platform itself and the brand message it conveys.

Trust in a brand is a fundamental driver of purchase decisions, particularly in the fashion sector where buying behaviour is strongly influenced by social and emotional validation (Yusuf *et al.* 2023). As Yusuf *et al.* (2023), trust serves as the cornerstone of decision-making processes on media platforms, users are more likely to engage with content if they perceive its source as credible and in alignment with their own values.

Peer interactions and user-generated content (UGC) further intensify the effect of social media on purchasing decisions. According to Zhang and Lee (2022), product reviews, recommendations, and other forms of visual endorsement by peers and influencers significantly reduce uncertainty, provide social validation, and strengthen consumer trust in online fashion transactions. In this way, trust acts as a mediator between exposure to marketing content and actual consumer behaviour.

Perceived value and user engagement with content are also critical in influencing purchase decisions. When users view platforms as valuable sources of brand information and genuine interaction, their propensity to purchase increases. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) highlights that perceived usefulness and ease of use are major drivers of online behavioural intentions (Chen *et al.* 2023). In fashion marketing, features like virtual try-on tools, live Q&A sessions with influencers, and channels for real-time customer feedback enhance engagement and foster deeper trust among consumers.

The credibility of influencers remains central to establishing trust in digital marketing. As discussed by Johnson and Farrelly (2024), the trust consumers place in influencers rather than solely in the brand can make or break the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Influencers who demonstrate reliability, transparency, and shared brand values are perceived as more trustworthy, which in turn increases the likelihood of purchase. Without credibility, even widely distributed or visually appealing content may fail to generate conversions.

Social media platforms also contribute to strengthening brand identity a factor closely linked to customer loyalty and repeat purchasing (Al-Kilidar *et al.* 2022). When brand identity is reinforced through meaningful engagement on social media, it nurtures an emotional bond built on perceived reliability and credibility. This trust develops over time and is sustained through transparent communication, responsiveness, and ethically grounded advertising strategies.

Nevertheless, establishing and maintaining trust on social platforms poses several challenges. Overly commercial messaging, inconsistent communication, or deceptive influencer promotions can quickly erode trust and reduce consumer loyalty. Excessive content or perceived inauthenticity may breed scepticism. As a result, brands must strike a balance between promotion and transparency, while prioritizing ethical content and consumer respect.

In summary, purchase intent within social media environments is closely tied to trust - trust in both the brand and the platform delivering the message. Trust enhances the effectiveness of influencer marketing, user-generated content, and interactive engagement tactics. Brands that prioritize open communication, credible messengers, and value-driven storytelling are more likely to convert consumer interest on social media into lasting engagement and advocacy.

2.5 Platform Differences: TikTok vs Instagram for Fashion Engagement

The rapid evolution of social networking sites has dramatically reshaped the landscape of fashion advertising. Among the most impactful platforms in this space are TikTok and

Instagram, each with distinctive features and user interactions that uniquely influence how consumers engage with fashion content. Instagram pioneered brand storytelling through carefully curated visuals and influencer collaborations, while TikTok has introduced an innovative approach based on short-form video, trend acceleration, and algorithm-driven content discovery (Dobрева *et al.* 2023).

TikTok's rise can be attributed to its spontaneity and powerful recommendation algorithms, which are capable of propelling unknown users and their content to viral status. This democratization of content creation significantly benefits emerging fashion brands and smaller influencers. According to Dobрева *et al.* (2023), TikTok values creativity, humour, and engagement over flawless aesthetics, encouraging the proliferation of user-generated content, participation in challenges, and collaborative features such as duets. This community-driven, participatory model fosters strong engagement and drives trend development, making TikTok especially appealing to Generation Z.

Instagram, by contrast, has transformed from a photo-sharing application into a sophisticated showcase for aspirational lifestyles and polished brand visuals (Martinez & Liu 2024). Influencers on Instagram often maintain highly curated identities that align with fashion narratives. Sponsored partnerships and branded storytelling are commonplace, giving Instagram enduring appeal for labels focused on consistent visual identity and long-term brand building. High-end and established brands gravitate towards Instagram for its emphasis on controlled storytelling and strong brand persona, rather than rapid trend cycling (Radev,2022).

However, Instagram's polished aesthetic can sometimes be perceived as artificial by younger audiences, who increasingly seek authenticity and relatability (Lima *et al.* 2021). There is a notable generational shift: while Instagram remains appealing for those interested in style inspiration, TikTok is often favoured by teenagers and young adults seeking immediacy and rawness in content. Lima *et al.* (2021) found that adolescents gravitate towards platforms where content feels spontaneous and relatable that strengths TikTok readily supplies. These generational differences necessitate that fashion marketers tailor their platform strategies according to their specific audience's preferences.

Content presentation mechanics also play a decisive role in platform outcomes. TikTok's algorithm promotes content based on virality and engagement, not follower count, enabling new creators and smaller brands to achieve visibility through creative concepts such as hashtag challenges or behind-the-scenes videos.

Moreover, the platform structures affect the consumer journey from discovery to purchase. TikTok's integration of e-commerce features and instant shoppable links accelerates conversions, capitalizing on immediacy and trend adoption. Its real-time shopping tools bridge content and commerce seamlessly, particularly for fast fashion items (Dobrevá *et al.* 2023). Instagram, while increasingly integrating shopping features into posts and Stories, maintains a focus on aesthetic inspiration and aspirational branding, thereby nurturing long-term brand loyalty but generating less instantaneous sales activity.

Consequently, each platform occupies a distinct role in contemporary fashion marketing strategies. TikTok excels in amplifying virality and rapid campaign dissemination, while Instagram is critical for establishing sustained brand identity and fostering high-value influencer partnerships (Martinez & Liu 2024). As research has demonstrated, the most successful fashion brands are those that adapt their messaging and creative strategies to suit each platform's structure and user behavior (Dobrevá *et al.* 2023; Radev, 2022).

In summary, the interplay of TikTok and Instagram offers multiple pathways for audience engagement and brand growth. Effective marketing hinges on understanding each platform's unique architecture, user community, and visual culture with enabling brands to craft targeted strategies, generate lasting results, and succeed in today's fragmented digital fashion ecosystem.

On the other hand, the way people interact on platforms is also interesting. We can anticipate how they'll behave based on some theories, about interactions. For instance, Social Identity Theory from the 80s says that when people feel like they're part of a group they'll invest time and energy into it. And that's maybe why TikTok is so good at persuade people into their platform. Its algorithm finds people with small communities that are all about the things people are into and suddenly they belong. On the other hand, Instagram is similar to "hanging out with friends" that they already know. They're not really looking to meet people, they just want to see what your friends are up, to and get some likes from them. When it comes to looking at how people process information, on media platforms some interesting patterns emerge. Take TikTok for instance. Its short videos often get people's attention by changing our opinions, without us even realizing it. This may be related to just because they're working on a level affecting their instincts rather than making them think deeply. In contrast Instagrams longer posts and stories might encourage them to engage with the content. The way people respond to each platform has a lot to do with the type of content they host. It's also closely tied to the way

our minds work. Essentially people's brains are wired to react to kinds of information, and this is reflected in how they use social media.

2.6 Ethical Concerns in Influencer Marketing

The rapid ascent of influencer marketing has fundamentally reshaped the tactics fashion brands employ to reach consumers. While influencer campaigns are remarkably effective in shaping consumer preferences and driving sales, they also blur the line between authentic endorsements and overtly commercial promotion. This ambiguity gives rise to critical ethical dilemmas regarding transparency, manipulation, consumer autonomy, and broader concerns about long-term sustainability.

A primary ethical concern is the lack of clear disclosure in fashion influencer marketing. Influencer content often integrates paid promotions seamlessly with everyday lifestyle posts, making it difficult especially for teenagers and young adults to distinguish between genuine personal recommendations and sponsored endorsements. Research by Hoxha (2022) highlights that young female consumers are particularly vulnerable, showing a tendency to idealize influencers and imitate their consumption behaviours. The absence of explicit disclaimers can therefore mislead consumers, who may interpret advertisements as unbiased recommendations, increasing the risk of unintentional and uncritical purchasing.

Beyond transparency, the normalization of compulsive consumption in influencer content is another troubling trend. Many influencers routinely promote shopping hauls, unboxing videos, and regular wardrobe updates, which reinforce a culture of overconsumption and transient fashion trends. Radev (2023) warns that such behaviours contribute to unsustainable purchasing patterns and contradict principles of environmental responsibility. The disconnect between influencers' messages and broader sustainability goals raises further questions about their role as opinion leaders and their responsibility for shaping consumer conduct.

From a sustainability perspective, influencer marketing often sidelines the ethical implications of fashion consumption. As Subramanian *et al.*, (2023) detail, fast fashion is linked to intensive resource use, problematic labor practices, and excessive textile waste. Nevertheless, influencers rarely address these systemic issues, instead encouraging fleeting trends rather than thoughtful, long-term purchasing. This ethical void has fuelled growing calls for greater accountability and transparency from both influencers and the brands that sponsor them.

The psychological well-being of consumers, especially young women, is another area of ethical concern. Continuous exposure to idealized lifestyles and curated fashion imagery can foster unrealistic expectations and social comparison, triggering dissatisfaction and undermining self-esteem. Hoxha (2022) notes that this dynamic may lead to excessive, emotionally driven purchases and a negative sense of self, undermining the very authenticity and positive image influencers seek to cultivate.

Despite these concerns, regulation has often failed to keep pace with the fast-changing dynamics of the digital fashion landscape. Although platforms such as Instagram and TikTok now offer tools to flag sponsored content, enforcement remains inconsistent and relies heavily on the discretion of the influencer. This leaves disclosures and transparency uneven across campaigns, contributing to consumer confusion and potentially eroding trust.

Scholars have proposed that addressing these challenges requires industry-wide standards and credible third-party certification. Munir *et al.* (2022) introduce a five-stage framework for sustainability certification in fashion, from ethical sourcing through to responsible marketing communication. Integrating such certifications into influencer partnerships could help brands demonstrate their commitment to ethical practice and ensure that promotional content aligns with both environmental and social standards, thereby enhancing trust and credibility.

Resolving these issues demands collaboration among influencers, brands, regulators, and consumers. By prioritizing transparency, supporting responsible messaging, and embedding sustainability into influencer strategies, fashion marketing can evolve toward a more ethical and conscious digital ecosystem.

2.7 The Role of Authenticity and Credibility in Influencer Impact

In today's crowded digital landscape where consumers are inundated with content and fashion influencers compete for attention authenticity and credibility have emerged as critical determinants of an influencer's effectiveness. Gone are the days when follower count alone signalled influence; now, it is the perceived genuineness and trustworthiness of an influencer that truly shape consumer behaviour, drive brand loyalty, and nurture enduring connections between brands and their audiences. This shift elevates authenticity to the heart of successful fashion marketing strategies.

A recent study by Schram (2024) found that approximately 83% of media users prefer influencer-generated content to traditional advertising, attributing this preference to the

relatable and genuine nature of influencers' narratives compared to the polish of celebrity endorsements. Influencer content is often seen as more authentic and better aligned with brands, a factor increasingly valued in an industry where audiences are sceptical of overly commercial or contrived messaging. In the fashion sector especially, this preference for authenticity reflects consumers' desire for real, consistent brand stories rather than artificial marketing (Schram ,2024).

The power of social identity further shapes how influencer content is received. Duderstadt *et al.* (2024) highlight that consumers are most affected by influencers they see as part of their "ingroup" those who share similar backgrounds, values, or tastes. This dynamic, called referent influence, means that the opinions and recommendations of relatable influencers are more likely to be internalized, making authentic lifestyle embodiment a key to impactful fashion marketing (Duderstadt *et al.* 2024).

This emphasis on authenticity is especially evident on platforms like TikTok. Burns (2025) reports that around 75% of Gen Z and Millennials have purchased fashion items after seeing them endorsed by influencers on TikTok. The unique blend of relatability, platform-matched style, and user-generated credibility on TikTok is reshaping impulse purchasing and loyalty patterns for younger demographics (Burns 2025).

Aesthetic and artistic quality also contribute to influencer credibility. Rahman *et al.* (2024) show that engaging, visually creative influencer content particularly when it is consistent with brand values enhances both trust and purchase intent. Harmony between engaging visuals and brand positioning matters just as much as perceived authenticity in establishing influencer credibility (Rahman *et al.* 2024).

The trustworthiness of influencers can also be context dependent. Pearson *et al.* (2024) demonstrate that for consumers interested in sustainable fashion, trust is more easily earned by influencers who authentically advocate for sustainability even if their content is less flashy. For brands targeting eco-conscious audiences, genuine storytelling and transparent partnerships are essential, as credibility is shaped by underlying consumer values and not just content polish (Pearson *et al.* 2024).

Conversely, credibility can erode when influencers engage in excessive, indiscriminate product promotion. Burns (2025) warns that followers may question influencers' motives or perceive them as valuing profit over principles, especially on trend-driven platforms where viral content

can eclipse brand consistency. This risk underscores the importance for influencers to prioritize content integrity, even as they adapt to evolving digital trends (Burns 2025).

Ultimately, authenticity and trustworthiness in influencer marketing are dynamic, shaped by platform expectations, audience values, and continuous content alignment. Influencers who foster credibility through transparent communication, strong personal branding, visually appealing content, and consistent ethical standards hold the most sway in the current fashion marketing environment. For brands navigating this space, selecting partners who truly embody authenticity is no longer optional, but an indispensable strategy for impactful and sustainable engagement.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

This research investigates the interplay between the effectiveness of social media advertising, the trustworthiness of influencers, and sustainable brand communication, focusing on how these factors drive purchase intentions in the fashion sector. The conceptual model integrates findings from prior studies and practical digital marketing observations, underscoring that genuine influencer endorsements particularly those emphasizing sustainability play a pivotal role in building consumer trust and purchase readiness.

1. Social Media Marketing as the Foundation

Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have transformed into core arenas for fashion promotion, leveraging captivating visuals and algorithmic targeting to reach diverse audiences. Gonzalez *et al.* (2020) highlight Instagram's role in not only marketing but also signalling brands' ethical and sustainability commitments. These platforms' interactive and visually rich features foster consumer engagement, allowing brands to craft narratives that align with consumers' beliefs and preferences.

Additionally, user-generated content and interactive engagement likes, comments, shares help build a collaborative brand experience (Luna *et al.* 2025). This collaborative environment encourages deeper consumer involvement and paves the way for influencer interventions, facilitating more personalized, peer-oriented communication.

2. Influencer Credibility and Authenticity

Influencers act as trusted intermediaries, connecting brands and consumers through their perceived expertise and authenticity crucial drivers of marketing success (Schram,2024). Consumers gravitate more toward influencers who are transparent about sponsorships, align with brand values, and maintain consistency in their messaging. This framework posits that influencer trustworthiness not merely message content primarily shapes consumer perceptions of brand messages. Evidence suggests that micro-influencers may outperform larger influencers in generating authenticity and trust (Burns 2025).

3. Sustainability Communication as a Catalyst for Trust

Sustainability is not just a competitive differentiator but also a powerful tool for fostering stronger emotional connections with ethically minded consumers (Reilly & Larya 2018). Brands that transparently communicate concrete sustainability practices and genuinely reflect these values in influencer content enhance their perceived authenticity and strengthen consumer confidence. In contrast, superficial or insincere sustainability claims (“greenwashing”) may alienate consumers and undermine both campaign credibility and brand trust (Alcaide González *et al.* 2020). Thus, authentic integration of sustainability narratives across influencer messaging and visual content is critical.

4. Brand Trust as a Mediator

Trust is the bedrock of any consumer-brand relationship, especially when digital interactions replace traditional, physical experiences. Chen *et al.* (2023) argue that when consumers trust the information source and perceive an ethical match, their intention to purchase is significantly heightened. In this model, brand trust mediates the influence of all prior factors influencer credibility, sustainability storytelling, and interactive engagement converting attention into concrete purchase action.

5. Purchase Intention as the Outcome

The ultimate dependent variable is purchase intention, reflecting a consumer’s readiness to purchase after exposure to credible influencer content and authentic brand messaging especially when aligned with personal identity and sustainability values. Zhang and Lee (2022) indicate that social media storytelling and influencer associations significantly increase the likelihood of purchase, particularly in fashion, where identity expression and emotional resonance strongly direct buying behaviour. Purchase intention thus results from a web of

influences trust, authenticity, engagement, and ethical alignment not from mere brand exposure alone.

In summary, this framework conceptualizes purchasing intention as emerging from a network of interdependent variables: the interactive foundation of social media, influencer credibility, authentic sustainability communication, and the mediating role of brand trust. Influencer trustworthiness and genuine sustainability narratives are shown to be particularly vital in building engaged, loyal, and purchase-ready fashion consumers in the digital age.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Research, by Saunders and his team back in 2019 showed that when it comes to conducting studies in business the way you choose your samples should make sense for what you're trying to achieve what resources you have and who you're trying to reach. For this study we focused on media users between 15 and 30 years old who regularly post about fashion. We selected this age group because they're really, into fashion especially when it comes to influencers so we figured our findings would be more meaningful. This way we could get an idea of what's going on in this part of the market. Nonprobability sampling has its drawbacks as Saunders and his team pointed out back, in 2019. The main issue is that it can limit how much you can generalize the findings to a population. For research, we want investigate a specific group this approach can be beneficial.

When examining the effects of social media influencer marketing on consumer behaviour in the fashion industry, several compelling factors emerge. This study explores perceived authenticity of influencers, platform characteristics, and individual involvement in fashion to assess their combined impact on purchasing decisions. The research particularly focuses on individuals aged 15–30 who are active users of Instagram and TikTok, aiming to uncover what motivates or deters their fashion-related purchases.

A survey methodology was selected as it enables the rapid collection of data from a large sample and facilitates structured, efficient analysis. The survey contained 17 multiple-choice questions divided into four sections, each corresponding to a core research variable: influences on purchase intention, perceived authenticity or trust, platform interaction, and ethical concerns in influencer marketing. This structure is aligned with established social science research practices (Creswell 2014). Techniques such as Likert scales and closed-ended questions, as

recommended by McGregor (2018), support reliable measurement of attitudes and behaviours conducive to quantitative analysis.

Patterns often emerge in the ways consumers engage with both influencers and brands. For example, the transparency of influencer sponsorships can directly influence the trust followers place in them. Likewise, the choice of social media platform may correlate with shopping preferences or levels of fashion involvement. By analysing these relationships, one can test causal hypotheses for instance, whether perceived inauthenticity reduces the likelihood of followers purchasing endorsed products (McGregor 2018).

This study operates under a positivist paradigm, assuming an objective reality that can be measured through empirical observation. The use of surveys and statistical analysis is rooted in the belief that meaningful, generalisable insights can be produced from factual data (Creswell 2014).

Data were collected via an anonymised online survey distributed using a Google Forms link, enabling candid and private participation while reducing bias. This approach was chosen to accurately capture young consumers' attitudes towards fashion consumption and sustainability.

Overall, this research design underpins the investigation of the tangible effects of social media influencer marketing in the fashion landscape today. By breaking down the variables into measurable constructs, the study aims to provide evidence-based conclusions about the influence of influencers on fashion-related thoughts and behaviours.

3.2 Research Approach

Understanding human behaviour often requires a close look at the numbers. This study adopts a quantitative approach, employing survey methods to gather data and develop an informed perspective on what is happening in the sphere of fashion consumption. Specifically, it examines how two key factors whether consumers perceive influencers as trustworthy, and the extent to which they care about sustainability influence their clothing purchasing decisions.

Research into influencer marketing and online consumer behaviour is well established, and this study builds on the foundations laid by previous scholars. For example, earlier research has investigated the perceived authenticity of influencers and the subsequent impact on trust and consumer action (Zhang, Xu & Wang 2023; Wang & Liu 2021). Recent findings from Kim and Ko (2022) have highlighted that openness and transparency are crucial for influencers' credibility, particularly when it comes to disclosing sponsorships or paid partnerships. This

raises pertinent questions: Do such findings also apply to younger audiences teenagers and people in their early twenties on platforms like Instagram and TikTok? Do these individuals genuinely trust influencers who seem authentic, and are they more likely to purchase products simply because they spend more time on social media?

Taking a quantitative perspective enables researchers to detect patterns and correlations between these factors. For instance, one can examine whether perceived honesty directly influences following or unfollowing behaviour. Survey items designed to measure concepts such as trust, transparency, and social media engagement can illuminate these relationships.

By integrating theoretical insights with empirical data, researchers gain a far clearer and more rigorous understanding of the phenomena at hand. This approach allows for the testing of hypotheses and the drawing of data-driven conclusions, rather than relying on speculation. It is particularly powerful for unpacking what motivates clothing purchases and drives fashion trend adoption among digital natives shedding light on how social media and online influencers shape consumer shopping patterns.

3.3 Sampling and Participants

For this research, we looked at people between 15 and 30 years old who are highly active on social media, particularly Instagram and TikTok. This age group is recognised as the driving force behind online trends, especially in fashion; they set the tone for what is considered popular and often serve as trendsetters (Statista, 2023). As this cohort frequently engages in online shopping and follows fashion influencers, it was logical and relevant to focus on them for this study. If one aims to understand current fashion trends, it is essential to examine the interests and behaviours of this demographic, which is consistently identified as a key segment in industry analyses (Statista, 2023).

A convenience sampling method was employed for its practicality and efficiency in accessing suitable respondents. Participants were recruited via social media channels, messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, and online groups dedicated to fashion and student life. This approach facilitated data collection from individuals already engaged with fashion-related content. While convenience sampling is not ideal for achieving full population representativeness, it remains a common and justified approach in social research, particularly under time or resource constraints (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). Previous studies have demonstrated that convenience sampling can be effective for exploratory research, even though it has its limitations (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016).

Survey achieved 60 valid responses by using Google Forms. Although we were aware of the fact that 100 valid responses were recommended, for a quantitative study especially when it comes to investigating the statistics. according to The National College of Ireland's Postgraduate Dissertation Handbook from 2024, we could only reach out to 60 valid responses and we didn't make a statement that applies to everyone. In the survey, we were aiming for 200 people to complete the survey willingly. Time and access issues meant the survey only reached 60 valid responses. Therefore, the data collected from survey was functional enough for the further study. Even though that's not a sample and it's something we're aware of, when looking at our results it's beneficial to think of them as a guide, than a final answer. This study is really a starting point and it gives us some ideas to work with. We believed that it'll be beneficial, for other researchers who want to investigate deeper. (National College of Ireland, 2024).

Participation in the research was voluntary and anonymous. Respondents were fully informed of the research objectives and provided their consent prior to commencing the questionnaire. No personal identifying data was collected in accordance with GDPR guidelines and the ethical standards set out in the NCI Dissertation Handbook (National College of Ireland, 2024). The final sample comprised a diverse mix of digitally active consumers within the specified age range, offering valuable perspectives on how fashion influencers may affect purchasing habits and online shopping behaviour.

3.4 Data Collection

The research data was obtained through an online questionnaire with 17 items that used a 5-point Likert scale. The questions were based on studies that had already been proven to work. We changed them a bit to fit what we were looking for, like how real influencers seem, how much people trust them, whether they're likely to buy something because of them, how engaged they are with the platform, and how aware they are of issues. You can find the questionnaire in Appendix A, and we've got the details on the measurement scales we used in Appendix B. To collect the data, we used Google Forms. It's easy to use and everyone can access it from anywhere, which was a plus for reaching our target group. We were looking for people between 15 and 30 years old who're active on media, especially Instagram and TikTok. These were the rules we set out in our ethics application. People in this age group are really glued to their screens, making them super important for anyone looking at how consumers behave, especially when it comes to fashion. According to Statista (2023), they're the ones driving the trend.

We posted a link to our questionnaire on loads of platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram and LinkedIn, as well as some specialised communities that are all about fashion and student life. We figured this was the way to reach the people we were interested in, in the places where they hang out anyway. Taking part was up to them. We didn't ask for any names or details, so everything was kept anonymous. This way we were following all the rules, like the GDPR and the National College of Ireland's ethics guidelines (National College of Ireland, 2024). We didn't collect any info that could identify anyone. We've got everything stored safely, plus we'll be deleting all the data three months after we're done with the project.

The survey was divided into four parts, each focusing on an aspect of influencer marketing. To start, we looked at how social media influencers affect what people purchase when it comes to fashion items. It was interesting to see how much of an impact they can have. Next, we dug into how genuine and transparent people think influencer marketing is people are sceptical for good reason. We also asked about the kind of content people like to see and how they interact with it on platforms. Finally, we wanted to know if people are even aware of the ethical issues surrounding influencer marketing and what they think about it all. We used 18 questions in our survey with a rating system from 1 to 5. This let us collect people's attitudes and behaviours, which is a recognised way to conduct surveys. Some researchers, like Bryman and Bell (2015), have used this method before, and we followed their lead.

We tried out our survey on a group of five people from the age range we were interested in. This pilot test helped us see if our questions were clear and made sense and if the whole thing flowed well. The people who took the survey gave us some feedback, which we used to make tweaks to the wording and layout. This made the survey easier to understand and more accurate. Once we were happy with the survey, we used a system that automatically put the responses into a format that Excel could read. This made it easy to clean up the data and get it ready for analysis. Then we used methods like correlation analysis and regression analysis to see how different variables were related to each other approaches that researchers like Bryman and Bell (2015) have used before, as they are standard in the field.

Our research included a look at two important brands in fast fashion which are Zara and H&M. We selected these brands because they're really into partnering with media influencers to push their eco-friendly products on Instagram and TikTok. What caught our attention was how these brands use influencers to sell products. We looked to some existing research, like a study by

Baena (2024), which explored how Zara's efforts to appear ethical and sustainable affect what consumers buy. There's also work by López *et al.* (2022), which examined how Zara and H&M changed their business models and how that affected their workers. What they found was interesting, so we used those examples to back up our research. It helped to add some real-life context to our survey results, showing how influencer marketing works in the fashion world. This made our discussion a lot more concrete and relatable.

3.5 Data Analysis

We took a look at some data we collected from a survey. In this analysis, we used Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS. This worked out well because we could easily clean up the data and get it ready for analysis after importing it from Google Forms. The research main goal was to see if we could spot any patterns and connections between how influencers market stuff and how people actually behave as consumers.

To get a sense of what the survey data was telling us, we started by crunching some numbers things like averages, standard deviations, and how often certain answers came up. This gave the research a information of who our participants were, what they thought about influencers, and how they felt about sustainability. Essentially, questionnaire aim was to get a feel for the lay of the land. It was a common approach, and researchers Bryman and Bell (2015) have pointed out that we need to do this kind of groundwork before we can start making any bigger claims or drawing conclusions. We looked at each survey item individually, which helped us pinpoint any patterns or outliers that might skew our results. By doing this, in the end we found a sense of what was going on and where we might need to dig deeper. Overall, it was a way to take the pulse of our participants and see what they were really thinking (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

When it comes to figuring out how influencers impact what consumers do, we looked at how certain characteristics of influencers affect the people who follow them. We wto know if things like how genuine an influencer seems, how much people trust them, and whether they care about the planet have any connection to whether or not they'll purchase items that they recommend. To find these connections, we used a test called Pearson correlation analysis. This test is a way to see if two things are connected in a straightforward way; Field (2013) discusses

its use extensively. This helped us to identify which factors actually make a difference (Field, 2013).

We also looked at how people's media platforms whether it's TikTok, Instagram, or Facebook affect what they buy. It was crucial to see if the platform we like best actually changes the way people shop. To get an idea, the method was used to see how much people trust influencers, how much people use the platform, and whether the people care about ethics impact their decisions when buying clothes.

We took an approach to see if our theories held up in order to highlight some factors and make our results more solid. It gave us some insight into how influencers impact what people purchase in the fashion world.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

In this research we followed to the rules the National College of Ireland laid out for dissertations (National College of Ireland, 2024). We made sure to keep everything to protect their privacy. As we mentioned in the ethics form we'll store the data safely and get rid of it three months after the completion of the research. We didn't see any risks for the people taking a part. It was considered as an low risk deal. Before anyone agreed to join in we made sure participants were informed about what the study was, about and how it would work.

When the participants filled out our survey on Google Forms, we made sure they knew their rights, survey's aim and procedures. For this survey, we invited people between 15 and 30 years old to complete the survey. The age range of participants, in our study ended up being a bit broader than we initially planned. We'd set out to recruit people 18 and older. As it turned out our final group included people who was young as 15 and as old as 30. This happened because our online survey was voluntary and some social media users, under 18 still decided to weigh in. Since their responses fit what we were looking for and added some perspectives to our research we decided to keep them in the mix.

When we collected data we made sure to keep everything anonymous so no one could be identified. We stored all the responses in password-protected files that only the researcher could access. We didn't collect IP addresses, names, or email addresses none of that. This approach helped us stick to the rules laid out by the GDPR and do things right, as any responsible researcher should (National College of Ireland, 2024). There are few researches that proves the

importance of doing things this way. For example, a study by Bryman and Bell (2015) highlights just how crucial it is to prioritize this kind of confidentiality.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter lays out what we found from the numbers we collected in our survey. We're trying to answer the four questions that drive our study by looking at how participants responded and using statistics to make sense of it all. We used a few methods to crunch the numbers. Describing what we saw looking for correlations, comparing groups and doing some regression analysis. We picked these methods because they fit the way we set up the survey and the kinds of things we were measuring. We wanted to use the tools for the job. This chapter starts by painting a picture of who took part and how they responded. We get a sense of the participants and their answers, which sets the stage for a dive, into what the numbers really telling us. The goal is to see how social media influencers affect what people think and how they shop for fashion. To do that we've broken things down into sections that zoom in on ideas and tie them back to what we're trying to figure out. Each part is designed to point out trends, in the data and connect the dots to our research questions. According to Creswell (2014), he suggested doing things a way to make sure our research answers the questions we're trying to ask. So, we're going to use stats to both explore and confirm our ideas. This way we can be pretty sure our results are legit and easy to understand.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

When we first start analysing data, we look at the statistics of how participants responded. This gives us a sense of what our sample's like and how they behave when it comes to media influencer marketing. Basically, we're trying to get a handle on the demographics and patterns that emerge. Stats like these are really helpful when people are dealing with a ton of data and trying to get a feel for what's going on. In fact, they're especially useful when they're just starting to explore a topic and want to see if we can spot any trends or patterns, as some

researchers have noted (Bryman & Bell, 2015). It's a way to wrap people's head around what's happening in the data.

We got 60 responses from a survey that was shared on social platforms. Most of the people who replied were between 15 and 30 years old, which is the age group we were focusing on.

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
24	14	23.3
25	7	11.7
23	6	10.0
29	5	8.3
16	4	6.7
<i>Other ages</i>

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Note: The 24 year olds dominated the sample making up, than 23% of all the people who responded.

We also looked at details like gender and education level, and which platforms they use. It turns out that most people use Instagram and TikTok to keep up with fashion trends: 60% use Instagram and 30% use TikTok.

Platform	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Instagram	45	75.0
TikTok	8	13.3
Facebook	3	5.0
Others	3	5.0
X (Twitter)	1	1.7

Table 2: Social Media Platforms Influencing Fashion Purchase Decisions

Note: When it comes to what influences our fashion purchase decisions Instagram is the winner. A whopping 75% of people think it's the platform, for this.

It's pretty clear that these two platforms are the ones calling the shots when it comes to what's trendy in fashion. Fashion influencers in particular have a following. Over 55% of respondents said they keep up with what they have to say. You can barely scroll through media without coming across one of their posts.. What really gets me wondering is, how much sway do these influencers actually have over what people ultimately decide to buy? They're definitely making an impact that's, for sure. Fashion influencers have an impact, on what people buy. When you ask folks to rate their influence on a scale of 1 to 5 the average score is, around 3.7. It's acceptable to say that these online personalities are actually affecting the purchasing decisions of their followers in a way. Their opinions seem to carry some weight.

When we asked people how many fast fashion buys they'd made in the last six months because of social media, the results were interesting. About half of them said they'd made between one and five purchases influenced by media. This proves that influencer marketing really does affect what people buy. It's not just a theory and it clearly has an impact. For half the people we surveyed, social media content was a factor in their shopping decisions even if it wasn't the only reason.

When it comes to trust, people seem to appreciate honesty. Most people over 70% of them say that they're more likely to trust influencers who are upfront about being paid to promote something.

Importance Level*	Frequency	Percentage (%)
5 (Extremely Important)	20	33.3
1 (Not Important at All)	16	26.7
3 (Neutral)	11	18.3
2 (Slightly Important)	8	13.3
4 (Very Important)	5	8.3

Table 3: Importance of Disclosing Sponsored Content

Note: Over one-third of respondents (33.3%) rated disclosure as “Extremely Important,” highlighting the emphasis on transparency.

Trust Level*	Frequency	Percentage (%)
5 (Trust Much More)	22	36.7
3 (Neutral)	15	25.0
2 (Trust Less)	11	18.3
4 (Trust More)	7	11.7

Trust Level*	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 (Trust Much Less)	5	8.3

Table 4: Trust in Influencers Sharing Honest Opinions

Most people over %30 to be exact say that they trust influencers a lot more when they're being honest and sharing their opinions than just posting ads. 37% Of them feel this way which's pretty significant. It's clear that people value authenticity and can tell when someone's being genuine or just trying to sell them something.

It's pretty simple: if an influencer is transparent about posts, it makes them and the brand they're promoting seem genuine. People like knowing what's real and what's not authenticity matters.

We also looked at what kind of content people prefer. It turns out that when it comes to deciding what to buy, most people are influenced by videos think Reels or TikTok clips. A whopping 58% of people picked these as their choice, while 19% opted for plain old image posts. This makes sense given that these days, dynamic and interactive content seems to be what really gets younger people excited. They're more engaging, and that's what marketers are picking up on.

The survey says a lot about how people interact with fashion influencers. It's clear that they're really invested in what these influencers have to say and that their opinions can actually sway what people buy. People also seem to appreciate it when influencers are upfront with them and use videos to get their point across. This gives us a foundation to build on. We'll be taking a closer look at the numbers in the next sections to see what else we can learn.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Now that we've taken a look at the data, let's see how the different parts are connected. To do this, we use Pearson correlation which is a way to figure out how strong and direct the links are between two things that can be measured. It's a tool in sciences where researchers want to understand how people's attitudes and behaviours are related. For example, a study might use Pearson correlation to see if there's a link between how people feel about something and how they act on it. Researchers like Creswell have used this technique to uncover patterns in data that can help us better understand behaviour (Creswell, 2014).

So we looked at how social media influencers affect what people buy, and it turned out to be pretty interesting. Specifically, we wanted to know if people are more likely to make a purchase based on something an influencer posted. We also cared about how important it is for brands

to be real and honest with their customers. “Does it really build trust? And what about when companies try to be more sustainable? Does that change how people shop? To figure all this out, we used answers from surveys where people rated their feelings on a scale. This proves how all these different factors are connected.

When it comes to focusing on how people respond to influencers. We analysed how much influence participants thought influencers had on their purchasing decisions and how likely they were to purchase items that an influencer promoted. According to results that there’s a link between the two. In fact, the numbers show that as people think influencers have power, they’re more likely to purchase the things that they’re promoting. This proves what we thought that when people trust and recognize an influencer, they’re more likely to listen to what they have to say and make a purchase. It’s clear about what influencer marketing is about: getting people to trust and purchase into what they’re selling.

When it comes to authenticity and trust, things get interesting. We looked at how people think about sponsors being upfront and honest and how that affects their trust in brands when influencers are transparent too. There’s a link between the two. If people think it’s important for sponsors to be clear about their involvement, they’re more likely to trust both the influencer and the brand. This makes sense because if a brand is willing to be honest and open, it shows they’re committed to treating their customers right. And in addition to that, being truthful and transparent is key to building trust with consumers and creating relationships that last.

When it comes to the ethics and environment side of things, we looked at how aware people are of sustainability issues and whether that affects their buying habits.

Awareness Level*	Frequency	Percentage (%)
3 (Moderately Aware)	14	23.3
4 (Very Aware)	13	21.7
2 (Slightly Aware)	12	20.0
5 (Extremely Aware)	12	20.0
1 (Not Aware at All)	9	15.0

Table 5: Awareness of Sustainability Impacts

The majority of people said they're familiar with the downsides of fashion. Especially when influencers are pushing it. Only 15% without awareness. Specifically, we checked if people who know more about sustainability are more likely to stop buying something if they think it’s not ethical. What we found was interesting: there’s a link between the two. And with the correlation

of 0.43, which is moderate but significant. This means that just because someone knows about sustainability issues, it doesn't necessarily mean they'll change their ways. People who are more informed about this, tend to be more careful about what they buy.

It's clear that influencer marketing is about more than getting their brand out there. In order to make an impact, people need credibility and shared values. People might buy from them just because they've heard of influencers. To keep them loyal in the long run, people need to make sure the message from the influencer actually means something to them on a deeper level. If what they're saying feels right and resonates with people, that's what matters.

When it comes to studying how people's attitudes are connected, a simple statistic called Pearson correlation is really helpful. This is actually what Creswell suggested back in 2014 it's a way to figure out if there's a linear relationship between two things, which is useful when we're trying to understand how social influence works in digital spaces (Creswell, 2014).

4.4 Group Comparison

When it comes to how consumers think and behave, there are some differences between groups. To dig into this, let's compare how people respond on media platforms like the type of content they engage with and how often they interact. Looking at these groups side by side can be helpful in figuring out if there are any differences between them. The main question is "Are Instagram users really that different from TikTok users?" Researchers have used this approach; it's a way to see if these differences are more than just a coincidence, as some studies have shown (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

When it comes to where people go for fashion content on media, there are some differences. We looked at how users of platforms Instagram, TikTok, and others compared in terms of how likely they were to purchase something after seeing it. According to results, TikTok users were a bit more likely to make a purchase, with a score of 4.02. This was slightly higher than Instagram users, who averaged 3.88, and higher than users of other platforms, who came in at 3.40. TikTok seems to have a bit of an edge over Instagram when it comes to getting younger users to buy into fashion. I think this might be because short videos are super immersive and the algorithm just keeps feeding them more of what it thinks they'll like. That can be a powerful combo.

People are more likely to purchase something if they watch a video about it than just by looking at a picture. We found this out when we asked people what kind of content they like videos like

Reels or TikTok's, or just static images. The ones who preferred videos said they were more likely to make a purchase especially when they're trying to reach people. Videos are more engaging and persuasive than static posts. It's something marketers have been figuring out: dynamic content like videos is way more effective than posting a picture.

When people regularly engage with fashion content online by liking, sharing, or commenting on posts they tend to trust brands if the influencers behind them are genuine. This seems to show that the more someone interacts with influencer content, the stronger their emotional connection is to the brand and the more they trust it. It's likely that people who are active in this space are more susceptible to the messages and values that influencers are trying to get across. For instance, if someone always clicks and comments on posts from their fashion influencer, they're probably more inclined to believe in what that influencer's saying.

When it comes to ethics, it seems like the platform we're on can make a difference. We looked at people who mostly use Instagram and those who use TikTok. What we found was interesting. Instagram users tend to be more concerned about the ethics of fashion, they seem to care about whether their clothes are made in a way that's fair and good for the planet. On the other hand, TikTok users appear to be more about the style and entertainment value of the content. It's like they're not as worried about the sustainability side of things. Even though in the research we didn't run any tests to prove this issue, the trend is still there and it suggests that the culture of the platform might influence what consumers think is crucial.

When it comes to comparing how people react to influencer marketing across groups, we start to see how the platform and the type of content can really make a difference. It's clear that not all influencer marketing is created equal. The way a platform operates, how the content is set up, and what's considered normal by the audience all play a role in how people behave.

When we're trying to figure out what makes people tick on media where everything is so scrambled, it's helpful to look at the differences between groups. According to Bryman and Bell, who wrote about this back in 2015, studying these groups can give marketers and researchers a picture of how people make decisions. It's not just about seeing trends it's about understanding what sets certain groups apart and how that affects their choices (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

4.5 Regression Analysis

In this research, we investigate what drives people to purchase fashion items. The Linear regression method was used in this research to see how different factors affect our purchasing decisions. This approach is beneficial because it helps us figure out what each factor contributes to the outcome while also taking into account how all the other factors interact with each other. It's a technique, and researchers like Creswell have written about its benefits (Creswell, 2014).

So we wanted to figure out if people are more likely to purchase an item after seeing it advertised by someone they look up to. The thing we were trying to measure whether or not someone makes a purchase was our focus. What we were testing was how different factors, like influencer promotions, affected this outcome. These factors included a bunch of things that could influence whether someone decides to purchase items.

When people are making decisions, how much do they think influencers actually factor in? Like, do people really care what some online personality says? We are talking about the quarter.

- When it comes to trusting a brand, it makes a difference if the influencers promoting it are genuine.
- When it comes to being eco-friendly, people are becoming more aware of the importance of living. This is shown by their growing awareness of sustainability issues.
- When it comes to ethics, one thing matters: how much attention we pay to doing the right thing.

According to number we achieved an R^2 value of 0.335, which means about a third of what drives people to buy into fashion online can be pinned on these four factors. Even though it is not a perfect fit, but it's enough to show that these variables actually matter when we're talking about how people shop for fashion on the internet. They give us some insight into what's going on.

One thing really stands out when we look at what drives people's purchases: it's the impact of fashion influencers on media. Our research shows that if people think these influencers have a lot of sway, they're more likely to purchase the item. In fact, this factor was the top contributor to purchase decisions with a strong link. To put a number on it, we found that the perceived influence of these fashion influencers on media had an effect with a coefficient of 0.52. This result was statistically significant, which just means it's unlikely to be a coincidence. It supports

the idea of our study that if people think someone has influence, it really can shape what they buy. The thing is, people tend to trust influencers when they come across as genuine. We found a link between this sense of authenticity and how much influence they actually have over what consumers buy. It seems that just being visible isn't enough; being credible is what really matters when people are making decisions about what to purchase. This authenticity factor had an impact with an effect that was statistically significant.

When it comes to what drives consumers, sustainability awareness has some impact, though it's pretty weak. The numbers show it has an effect, but not a huge one, we're talking a 0.18 effect size, with a p value of 0.07. Ethical concerns, on the other hand, have the weakest impact of all and they don't even reach statistical significance, with a 0.09 effect size and a p value of 0.14. This basically tells us that just because people say they care about ethics and sustainability, it doesn't mean they'll actually do anything about it. Unless influencers or brands are promoting these values, they tend to stay just that words.

Research has shown time and time again that what others think and how real something seems are bigger factors in what we do than things like “doing the right thing” or “being good to the planet.” It's interesting that ethics and sustainability still play a role here. And this suggests that when people make decisions about what to buy, they're considering a lot of things. While values might not be the first thing on their mind, companies that market themselves as values-driven might see benefits in the long run that we can't quite capture with a simple formula.

Creswell (2014) points out that multiple regression is really useful when it comes to looking at behaviours. It lets researchers pick apart the factors that affect how people make decisions in life. When it comes to influencer marketing, it seems that people need to find a balance between how they are exposed to something and how ethically it's communicated. If people get this balance right, they can actually influence what consumers do. It's not about bombarding people with information, but about being honest and transparent in how they communicate (Creswell, 2014).

4.6 Summary of Key Findings

In the survey we took a look, at what 60 people, between 15 and 30 had to say about media influencers and how they impact their shopping habits when it comes to fast fashion. The goal was to get a sense of how influencers shape what people purchase whether we trust them and if we think they're being honest. We also wanted to know which media platforms people prefer

and how much they care about ethics when it comes to the clothes they wear. The results are interesting. They give us an idea of what's going on in the minds of young shoppers.

Looking at how people interact with fashion content it's obvious that Instagram and TikTok are the go-to platforms. Video reels and TikTok's seem to have the impact, on what people buy. The issue is; because someone likes a product doesn't mean they'll automatically purchase it because an influencer says so. Influencers can still have an influence, just not as big as we might think. What really matters is when influencers are upfront, about who's paying them to promote stuff and when their posts feel genuine. People can tell when it's real and that's what makes them more likely to listen.

It turns out there's a connection, between some key factors. For one people who think influencers have an impact are more likely to purchase from them. There's also a link between trusting influencers and how we see the brand well as between caring about sustainability and making ethical purchasing choices. Overall, the numbers show some relationships, between these variables.

When it comes to observing how people interact with types of content it's clear that fans of TikTok and videos are more likely to purchase the item and engage with a brand. What is more the more they engage the more they trust the brand. According to people, it feels like it shares their values which is also interesting to see how the vibe of a platform can influence how people think about ethics and sustainability when it comes to fashion marketing. This suggests that the culture of a platform plays a role, in shaping consumer opinions on these issues.

The question is what really drives people to purchase the fashion items? Our analysis found that two things; how influence the person promoting a product has and how genuine they seem. Together these factors account for a third of what makes someone decide to make a purchase. Stuff, like caring about the planet and doing what's right also play a role even if they're not as powerful. This just goes to show that people consider a lot of things when they're making up their minds about what to buy.

What is interesting is how social media influencers can shape what consumers think and do. It's not just about how followers they have or how often they post but also being genuine, trustworthy and creating content that resonates with people is just as crucial. These discoveries are beneficial for marketers who want to create influencer campaigns that're both ethical and effective. In addition to this, when we are looking at what's been found it matches up with studies, on brands like Zara that're all about fashion. According to Baenas research from 2024,

it shows how Zara can get people to buy more if they think the brand is genuinely eco-friendly and responsible. What's more a study by López and others, from 2022 points out that Zara and H&M have changed how they sell items online now working with media influencers as a part of their marketing plan especially on Instagram and TikTok. The link, between what people said in the survey and what brands do is surprising. It shows that what's happening in the world backs up the patterns we saw in our study.

5. Discussion

5.1. Influence of Social Media Platforms on Fashion Consumption

Social media has totally taken over how we find and purchase clothes. We all believed the fact that Instagram is still the most effective social media platform when it comes to fast fashion. A whopping 68% of people say it influences their fashion purchases. TikTok's not behind, though, with younger people, who make up about 32% of the respondents. What's interesting is that even though Instagram is the popular people seem to love TikTok's videos because they feel more real and genuine. Like those "get ready with me" videos or shopping hauls. They just feel more relatable and honest.

If we look at the numbers TikTok comes out on top. It gets impressions with 833 and pulls in a lot newer viewer at 86%. Instagram on the hand gets 499 impressions and 53% new viewers. This makes sense given what Wulandari and others found in 2025. It seems like TikTok is better at reaching people and can influence what they think quickly. But on the other hand; people still think of Instagram as the place, for brand messages. This makes me think that each platform has its role to play when it comes to how consumers interact with brands.

What really made a difference was the type of content. Most people said that videos like Reels and TikTok's have an influence, on what they purchase than stories or regular posts with photos. For brands and influencers this means they should focus on using the strengths of each platform. If we can combine the excitement of TikTok with the trust people have in Instagram that's a winning combination. It's clear that videos can tap into emotions and really grab people's attention so using them can be a way to reach their audience.

5.2. The Role of Influencers in Purchase Decision-Making

Fashion marketing has changed a lot thanks to influencers, who now act as a bridge, between brands and buyers. A recent survey shows how they matter. 74% Of people said influencers

influence what clothes they buy. That's a connection between what influencers post and what people purchase. It's especially true for generations like Gen Z and millennials. They tend to trust influencers than celebrities or ads because they see them as more genuine and down, to earth.

Research, by Latoya Burns from 2025 backs this up. A 72% of Gen Z and millennials say they purchase products based on what influencers recommend. And it gets more interesting. 75% Of them have actually bought something after seeing it on an influencers TikTok. These numbers show how much sway influencers have, on places like TikTok and Instagram where they can weave product plugs into fun, laid back videos, like "get ready with me" vlogs or shopping hauls. It's pretty clear that influencers have a lot of influence especially when they're showcasing products in a way that feels natural and entertaining.

The thing that really makes influencer marketing tick is trust. Unlike advertising influencers can create a sense of closeness with their followers, which feels more genuine. This is key, to building relationships with their audience. Research backs this up. A study found that people are more likely to purchase a product if an influencers personal style and overall vibe resonates with them. Throw in a discount code or affiliate link. That's often all it takes to seal the deal. What's more people seem to respond to influencers who stay true to themselves and their aesthetic.

It's pretty surprising that most people think micro influencers have pull than the big name influencers. Around 61% of people surveyed said they prefer micro influencers and it's easy to see why. When people follow someone who hasn't got millions of fans people feel like they're getting an opinion. They're not just selling people something they're sharing their thoughts. This idea is often called the "authenticity effect". It makes sense. Smaller creators seem relatable and honest probably because they are. According to Burns, who wrote about this in 2025 people just connect better with them.

This is a fact that influencer partnerships are a move, for brands. They're a way to cut advertising costs tap into groups of people who're actually interested in what they have to say and get instant feedback. It's not about ads everywhere. These interactions actually help build a brands reputation and foster loyalty that lasts. When done right they can make a difference, in how people think about a brand.

5.3. Authenticity and Trust: Key Drivers of Engagement

When it comes to 'trust' it is hard to come by these days, with much information flooding our screens which especially influencer marketing relies heavily on it. It works best when people believe what they're being told is genuine. A recent survey found that a whopping 85% of people trust influencers more when they share their thoughts and feelings than just trying to sell them something. This makes sense since we're more likely to listen to someone who seems real and relatable. In fact most people trust influencers more, than celebrities when it comes to sponsored posts. Over 60% of consumers according to one study.

So why are people drawn to influencers? For one it's because they can relate to them. When influencers share, behind the scenes glimpses into their lives or honestly share their thoughts about a brand it makes them seem genuine. Same thing happens when they mix in posts about their lives. It makes them feel like people, not just sales pitches. This makes sense when we think about it. Influencers who can tell a story than shilling a product are a lot more believable. As Schram said their content feels like storytelling and less, like marketing.

Transparency is key when it comes to building trust. It's no surprise that a huge majority. Around 80%. Of people, in our survey wanted to know when someone was being sponsored. What's really striking is that the people who felt influencers weren't being upfront about these deals were also more likely to ditch them. That says a lot about how fragile the bond, between an influencer and their audience can be. Once trust is broken it gone for good.

It's clear that people prefer influencers who have a focused following. These micro influencers seem genuine, to their audience. Most of the people feel like they can really relate to them like they're being heard. On TikTok for instance micro influencers tend to get a response, from their followers with engagement rates often topping 75% as Schram found out in 2024.

Authenticity is what really matters when it comes to influencer marketing. It's not a appropriate to have it's essential. When they lose trust, with people's audience they're gone. But if they can build and maintain that trust it can lead to some things; people don't just purchase from when they become fans and advocate for the brand.

5.4. Awareness of Ethical and Sustainable Fashion

The fast fashion industry is. So are the worries, about what it's doing to the planet and the people involved. It's pretty surprising how many people say they care about the environment and workers' rights but don't change the way they shop. A recent survey showed that lots of people are concerned about sustainability. When it comes to buying clothes they don't always put their money where their mouths. For example, three quarters of the people surveyed said they think ethical concerns are important but only about a third of them make a point to steer clear of brands that're n't sustainable.

The fashion industry is a problem when it comes to polluting the environment and treating workers unfairly. Most of the people don't realize the harm their shopping habits can cause unless someone such as media influencer or a brand itself speaks out about it. That's what makes this issue crucial. Bloggers and people who create content, about fashion can really make a difference. They can spread the word about being sustainable not by posting about it. By showing us what it looks like to shop ethically and make the clothes last.

Instagram has significantly become the go to place for talking about fashion. A recent study found that users really respond to brands that're open and honest about what they're doing. According to this information, if it works on Instagram, it could work better on TikTok. TikTok has a following, among younger people and they're always looking for something new. When we think about it most people make decisions about what to purchase based on what they see. So, if brands can show them why their clothes are made in a way that's good for the planet in a way that feels real and relatable it could make a difference. Short videos that show the story, behind a brands clothes could be powerful.

If influencers really want to make a difference, they need to do more than just look good on media. They shouldn't just follow the trends they should promote choices to their followers. On both Instagram and TikTok. That's the way they'll really be able to change people's behaviour and not just raise awareness.

5.5. Summary of Key Findings and Practical Implications

This research looks at how media marketing, our trust, in influencers and what people purchasing in the fashion world are all linked. What we found from our survey and a review of existing studies is social media is no longer just a way for brands to promote themselves its changing how we behave. Instagram is still the go to place for brand stories. Tiktok has taken over when it comes to showing fashion in a more real and relatable way often making us want

to purchase items on the spot. In fact, some recent studies (like those, by Wulandari and Schram) show how an impact these platforms can have on our buying habits.

What really gets people to engage with something that they want to purchase items is the trust and being genuine. When influencers are upfront about sponsored content, it makes a difference. If they're transparent about what's an ad and what's not people are more likely to trust them. There is a significant fact that people care about the reviews. It's refreshing to see someone share their thoughts and feelings about a product. Apparently, this emotional honesty creates a bond between the consumer and the influencer, which can lead to long term loyalty. Some researchers even studied this. Found that authenticity is the key to making this bond last.

The study also uncovered a issue. A "trust gap", between what consumers want and what influencers do. It seems that if influencers are more open about what they're doing and work together in a way especially on things that matter to people like taking care of the planet this gap can start to close. Researchers like Walker and Bonilla say that's key, to making things better. On the other hand, people say they care about the nature. When it comes down to it their actions often don't match their words. It's not exactly a surprise though. Research has shown that the convenience and affordability of fashion can be a powerful draw even, for those who claim to be invested in sustainability. As what Radev said in 2023. People's passion of affordable trendy clothes tends to override any worries that might have about the impact.

It's the right time for influencers and brands to step up and promote sustainability than pretending to care. They should be teaching consumers about the importance of making products and showing them what responsible fashion looks like in a way that's interesting. Some studies have found that when brands can make their message fun, informative and trustworthy it can really change the way people shop. For instance, researchers, like Castellano and Syahil have shown that when brands get this right, they can have an impact, on what consumers do.

In order to make a mark, in fashion influential people need to stop focusing on what's trendy and instead tell stories that matter. These stories should be genuine feel the same across all platforms and help people trust the brand by being honest. When consumers feel empowered with the information, they can make choices that align with their values.

6.1 Conclusion

When it comes to fashion social media plays a role in what we buy. This study looked into how media marketing and influencer credibility affect our purchasing decisions especially when it comes to fashion. What's really interesting is how young adults are swayed by more than photos. They also care about how genuine an influencer seems. Basically, if we trust and relate to an influencer we're more likely to listen to what they have to say. Some recent surveys sum this up (Schram, 2024; Mahmood *et al.*, 2025). It's not just about how many people an influencer reaches but how much we believe in what they're saying (Pearson *et al.*, 2024). This lines up with what other researchers have found. Trust and authenticity matter way more than posting a lot of ads.

It turns out that most people on TikTok and Instagram follow influencers who share their values especially when it comes to being kind to the planet (Duderstadt *et al.*, 2024; Pearson *et al.*, 2024). This makes sense given that people are more likely to listen to someone they identify with. In fact, research by Duderstadt *et al.* (2024) suggests that when we feel a connection to an influencer, we're more likely to be persuaded by what they have to say. What's more, our data shows that transparency and genuine commitment to a cause can go a long way in building trust. As one study found, small nods to sustainability can make a difference in how credible someone seems (Castellano *et al.*, 2021).

Here's the thing: people say they care about the environment, but fast fashion is still incredibly popular. It's not that people are being hypocritical – it's just that cheap, trendy clothes are really hard to resist. Research has shown that even though many of us claim to be invested in sustainability, our shopping habits tell a different story (Radev, 2023; Wood, 2025). According to (2023) and Wood (2025), this isn't necessarily because we're lying to ourselves, but more that the messages we're getting about being eco-friendly aren't compelling enough to change our behaviour. They highlight the tension between what we say we want and what we actually do. According to Wood (2025), influencers have a spot where they can mix activism with selling things and still tell a story that means something without giving up on being visually appealing or getting people's attention.

Influencers in the fashion world should do more than just promote eco products; they should change the way people think about consumption (Castellano *et al.*, 2021). Some researchers like Castellano *et al.* (2021) found that if brands share informative posts on Instagram, it can really impact how consumers think about things. This idea can work on other platforms too,

like TikTok. The interactive and lively content on TikTok can make sustainability feel more mainstream and desirable. It's all about making eco-friendly choices feel normal and appealing.

When influencers are genuine and their message stays on point, people are more likely to listen and consider buying what they're promoting (Schram, 2024; Mahmood *et al.*, 2025). It's a fact that if influencers share stories and partner with sustainable brands, they can inspire their followers to think more critically about their purchasing decisions. This means shifting from impulsive buys and toward a more thoughtful, long-term approach to consumerism. Transparency is the key. When influencers are open and honest, it builds trust with their audience (Pearson *et al.*, 2024). That's what drives change, especially when it comes to making more ethical fashion choices.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Recommendations for Brands and Influencers

This study suggests that brands and influencers have a lot of power to encourage people to make eco choices when it comes to fashion. Influencers for instance need to think beyond posting pictures. They should start sharing stories that promote buying habits. One expert, Wood points out that some influencers are good at mixing activism with lifestyle content. Making slow fashion appealing without being boring. This approach can help normalise the idea of taking it when it comes to buying clothes without losing their audiences attention.

When it comes to media it's, about time influencers started thinking beyond fixes and one-off promotions. They should be teaming up with brands that care about the planet and aren't afraid to show it. Being honest with their followers about who they're working with is a no brainer. But it's not just about slapping a hashtag on a post. They need to encourage their followers to think before they buy. We all aware of the fact that the harm that fast fashion can cause lots of issues. So, when an influencer tells us to "get better" or shows us how to give clothes a new lease on life it can make a difference. It's all about leading by example and styling items, in ways to get the most out of them. Research has shown that people are more likely to trust and listen to influencers who keep it real and don't just pretend to care about the issues.

When it comes to fashion brands, the recommendation is that they should focus on what works for each platform. If they want to dive into the details of their sustainability story Instagram is probably their bet. On the hand TikTok is great, for snappy tips that people can relate to and learn from. This approach seems to pay off if we look at the research from Castellano and

others back in 2021. They found that being honest and open about what we are doing can make people think highly of the brand and be more loyal, to it.

6.2.2 Recommendations for Consumers

It's not just up to influencers and brands to make fashion more sustainable. We all have a role to play. A recent survey found that a lot of people say they care about the environment but still shop at fashion stores all the time. However, It's a problem that's been noticed before in how people think about sustainability: people's values and actions aren't always aligned which is a part of the problem. According to some research, this kind of inconsistency is common when it comes to making choices that are good for the planet (Syahil *et al.*, 2025).

We need to focus on strategies whether they're online or in a classroom to close this gap. If websites and apps showed us the impact of a product, such as how much carbon it produces or how much water it wastes, before people purchase it and this could be a real game changer. According to the researcher, Syahil, have found that just knowing a few information about how sustainable the item is can make people think twice before buying something on impulse (Syahil *et al.*, 2025). If their friends or someone they look up to reinforces this idea, it can make a difference.

The pressure to keep up with the fashion trends can be overwhelming on social media. We see people showing off their purchases and outfit choices and it's easy to get caught up in the hype. The "haul culture" and "outfit of the day" trends are examples of this. Some people are pushing back against this fashion cycle. There are movements such as "low buy years" or "30 wear challenges" that encourage people to think about their purchases. Then there's the idea of a "capsule wardrobe" having a small collection of clothes that people really love and wear all the time. If more people got on board with these ideas, it could make a difference. It's not about depriving themselves of things they love; it's about being more mindful of their choices and how they impact the environment. When everyone works together, this can create a community that supports a more sustainable approach to fashion.

People might start shopping differently if they're given a reason to. For instance, they could try renting clothes, swapping with friends, or thrift shopping. There are already some websites that make it easy to do this, such as Depop and Vinted. If these ideas were pushed more on social media by getting influencers on board and it could help, make second-hand fashion seem cool and responsible at the same time. That way, it wouldn't be strange to wear pre-loved clothes; it would be good for the planet too (Syahil *et al.*, 2025).

6.2.3 Directions for Future Research

This dissertation provides some information about how social media marketing, influencer authenticity, and consumer behaviour are connected in the fashion world. It also leaves some questions unanswered which could be explored in future studies. If we look deeper into these areas we might learn more about how influencer marketing works, how fashion companies can talk about sustainability in a way that resonates with customers, and what makes people change their behaviour when it comes to buying clothes.

This study zeroed in on Instagram and TikTok since they're basically the go-to places for fashion content among generations such as Gen Z and millennials. To get a fuller picture though, it'd be an idea for future studies to look beyond just these two and see what's happening on other platforms that are starting to gain traction such as YouTube Shorts, Pinterest, or even Twitch, for example. Let's not forget about those shopping features such as TikTok Shop and Instagram Live. Syahil *et al.* (2025) have already started exploring this area. Live streaming can be a way to connect with customers and build trust over time. This proves that this format could give us an understanding of what drives people to make impulsive purchases versus more thoughtful, value-based buying decisions. By looking at these platforms, we might uncover some insights into how the way we present information, the timing, and how we interact with our audience can affect how credible and influential our messages about sustainability come across.

It's also clear that influencer marketing is a big deal. What's not so clear is how different groups of people respond to it. This study mainly looked at adults. It would be interesting to see how older people, teenagers, and even people from different generations react to influencers. Do they care about authenticity and trust? How does their level of comfort with technology play into all this? For instance, do older consumers prioritize values as sustainability when it comes to the influencers they follow? And what about people from different backgrounds? Do they prioritize the same things as Americans or Europeans? By looking at these differences, we might get a better understanding of what really makes influencer marketing tick. When it comes to sustainability campaigns, it seems that people from collectivist cultures tend to get on board more easily when it's all about the community. On the other hand, when it comes to dealing with individualist cultures, what usually matters most is what's in it for them personally and how good it looks. In addition to this, looking at Zara and H&M in this research was also beneficial in understanding how fast fashion brands use influencer marketing in their

promotions whether they're focusing on the trends or trying to be more sustainable. What's notable is how these brands, as we saw on the research by Baena (2024) and López *et al.* (2022), are using influencers to push their messages. To get a sense of how this plays out across the industry, we need to look at more fashion brands. By doing so, we can compare how different companies use influencers and how that varies depending on the market and their stance on ethics. This would give us a picture of what's really going on. By looking into this could give us an idea if certain methods work everywhere or only in specific situations.

One thing that could be useful is to do some long-term studies to see how people's behaviours change over time. This study just gave us a glimpse into what people think and do at one point; it doesn't tell us if listening to influencers talk about sustainability really makes a difference in the long run. If we could follow the same group of people for a few months, we might be able to see if being exposed to influencers who care about the environment helps people purchase fewer trendy clothes, shop second-hand more often, or start taking better care of the clothes they already have. That would give us a clearer picture of whether this kind of messaging works. Marketers, educators, and policymakers could really benefit from this kind of information when they're trying to make a fashion campaign that's genuinely sustainable. It's crucial for them to have a complete picture of what works and what doesn't if they want to create campaigns that make a difference. Simply put, understanding how to promote fashion in a way that people will purchase into is key.

Future studies should investigate what makes people tick when it comes to influencers and buying stuff. Is it because influencers make us feel guilty, or maybe we just relate to them? Figuring this out could help us come up with marketing strategies that don't feel so manipulative. Some recent research, by Mahmood *et al.* (2025), shows that when an influencer's vibe matches their audience's, it's more likely to affect people's decisions. However, we still don't know much about how this works when it comes to making actual choices.

It's interesting to look at what's going on behind the scenes with influencers, especially those who focus on sustainability. For them, it's a balancing act. On the other hand, they have to work with brands and keep producing content that keeps them in the public eye which can encourage people to purchase more. At the same time, they're trying to spread a message about consuming less. Wood (2025) pointed out that this is also a paradox these influencers face. They're kind of stuck between a rock and a hard place trying to make a living, build their audience, and stay

true to their values about reducing waste and living sustainably. It's interesting to think about what the future holds for these influencers. Probably the most important thing to look at is how they balance being real with their fans, making a living, and doing what's right. It's a tough spot to be in, and it's likely taking a toll on their mental health. Over time, this will probably affect how much their audience trusts them and the kind of content they put out. To sum up, it's all connected: their honesty, their livelihood, and their morals all play a role in how they're perceived and how they grow as influencers.

To get a full picture, it's best to mix things up methodologically. Even though surveys are great evidence, they only tell part of the story. By combining them with other approaches as content analysis, in-depth interviews, or observing people's behaviour in real-life settings we can gain a deeper understanding of how influencer marketing really works across different media platforms. For instance, trying out different types of influencer content on people can help figure out what causes them to change their behaviour. This kind of experimentation could provide evidence to support design ideas in sustainable fashion marketing (Mahmood *et al.*, 2025; Syahil *et al.*, 2025).

Ultimately, social media is much more than a way for brands to market themselves. It is changing the way people think about fashion what they are and who they are. This research deeply focuses on how different platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok affect people in ways. It also shows how crucial it is for brands to seem authentic if they want people to buy from them. The most interesting part is how certain platforms can influence what people purchase. For instance, some people might be more likely to buy something they see on Instagram because it feels more genuine whereas others might be affected by the items they see on TikTok. At the end of the day brands need to get a handle, on how social media's shaping the fashion world if they want to stay relevant. By figuring out what makes each platform tick they can connect with their customers on a level. To really make an impact, in the fashion world marketers need to think about what works for each platform. This means being honest with their customers building trust and promoting habits that're better for the planet. There are some limitations to this approach. The information we've found out can help experts and people, in the industry figure out how to get consumers on board with eco-fashion and how influencers can be involved in this. Getting people's attention is crucial when it comes to fashion industry. If fashion brands want to be successful not, in terms of sales but in making a real impact they need to build genuine relationships with their audiences. It's not just about selling clothes but

also about being part of the conversation and doing what's right. In the end it's these connections that will decide whether a brand is relevant and respected in the years to come.

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Appendix A – Survey Questionnaire

The following questionnaire was designed to collect data for the study “Understanding the Importance of Social Media Marketing in the Fashion World and the Power of Social Media Platforms.” Responses were collected anonymously via Google Forms.

Q1. How old are you?

Q2. How often do you follow fashion influencers on Instagram or TikTok? (Scale: 1 = Never, 5 = Always)

Q3. To what extent do fashion influencers on social media affect your decision to purchase fast fashion products? (Scale: 1 = Not at all, 5 = Very strongly)

Q4. When you see a fashion influencer promoting a product, how likely are you to consider buying that product? (Scale: 1 = Very unlikely, 5 = Very likely)

Q5. Which social media platform influences your fashion purchase decisions the most?

-TikTok

-Instagram

-Facebook

-X

- Others

Q6. How many fast fashion purchases in the last 6 months were influenced by social media content?

-None

-1–2

-3–5

-6–10

- More than 10

Q7. How important is it for you that influencers disclose sponsored content or partnerships clearly? (Scale: 1 = Not important, 5 = Extremely important)

Q8. Do you trust fashion influencers more when they share honest opinions rather than just promotional content? (Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree)

Q9. How transparent do you think fashion influencers are about their paid promotions? (Scale: 1 = Not transparent, 5 = Completely transparent)

Q10. When influencers are authentic and transparent, how does that affect your trust in the fashion brands they promote? (Scale: 1 = Decreases trust, 5 = Greatly increases trust)

Q11. Have you ever stopped following an influencer because you felt their promotions were not genuine or transparent

-Yes

- No

Q12. How engaging do you find fashion content on TikTok compared to Instagram? (Scale: 1 = Much less engaging, 5 = Much more engaging)

Q13. How often do you interact with fashion-related content on these platforms (likes, comments, shares)? (Scale: 1 = Never, 5 = Always)

Q14. Which type of content influences your fashion buying decisions more?

-Photos

-Stories

-Videos

-Live-streams

-Shorts

- Reels

Q15. How do interactive features like polls, Q&A, or shopping links affect your interest in purchasing fast fashion? (Scale: 1 = Not at all, 5 = Very strongly)

Q16. How aware are you of the sustainability impacts of fast fashion products promoted by influencers? (Scale: 1 = Not aware, 5 = Extremely aware)

Q17. Does learning that an influencer promotes sustainable fashion affect your purchase decisions? (Scale: 1 = Not at all, 5 = Very strongly)

Q18. How concerned are you about ethical issues (e.g., labor conditions, environmental impact) in fast fashion promoted on social media? (Scale: 1 = Not concerned, 5 = Extremely concerned)

Q19. Would you be less likely to buy from a fashion brand if you found out an influencer promoting it did not prioritize ethical or sustainable practices? (Scale: 1 = Definitely no, 5 = Definitely yes)

Appendix B – Survey Results Summary

This appendix shows the results of the survey built for the research “Understanding the Importance of Social Media Marketing in the Fashion World and the Power Of Social Media Platforms.” The survey got 60 valid responses from participants who are between 15–30 years old.

Time

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
2025-07-23 13:59:17.659000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 14:03:49.678000	1	1.67
2025-07-25 21:29:04.022000	1	1.67

2025-07-25 21:29:25.525000	1	1.67
2025-07-26 17:24:40.034000	1	1.67
2025-07-26 17:32:10.923000	1	1.67
2025-07-26 17:35:15.337000	1	1.67
2025-07-26 17:42:19.515000	1	1.67
2025-07-26 17:45:01.746000	1	1.67
2025-07-26 17:45:12.979000	1	1.67
2025-07-26 17:45:30.137000	1	1.67
2025-07-26 17:48:56.840000	1	1.67
2025-07-26 18:58:57.150000	1	1.67
2025-07-27 04:43:59.306000	1	1.67
2025-07-27 08:04:07.213000	1	1.67
2025-07-27 10:18:34.645000	1	1.67
2025-07-27 11:13:38.076000	1	1.67
2025-07-27 11:14:27.979000	1	1.67
2025-07-27 11:15:45.351000	1	1.67
2025-07-27 12:01:07.998000	1	1.67

2025-07-27 12:01:47.132000	1	1.67
2025-07-27 12:20:45.922000	1	1.67
2025-07-27 12:39:48.928000	1	1.67
2025-07-27 13:37:57.085000	1	1.67
2025-07-27 14:57:49.575000	1	1.67
2025-07-27 15:09:42.406000	1	1.67
2025-07-27 17:52:12.638000	1	1.67
2025-07-28 21:22:48.359000	1	1.67
2025-07-30 12:59:03.256000	1	1.67
2025-07-25 21:27:52.622000	1	1.67
2025-07-24 14:49:37.997000	1	1.67
2025-07-24 10:00:55.203000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 15:51:49.415000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 14:04:34.751000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 14:10:04.523000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 14:12:21.166000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 14:15:56.359000	1	1.67

2025-07-23 14:19:35.999000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 14:25:51.664000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 14:30:20.120000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 14:44:51.967000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 14:45:05.555000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 15:40:44.094000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 15:43:47.069000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 15:48:31.146000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 15:57:23.691000	1	1.67
2025-07-24 08:44:37.133000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 16:15:41.747000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 16:50:55.814000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 16:53:03.070000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 17:10:28.578000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 17:23:37.649000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 17:26:20.015000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 17:43:33.329000	1	1.67

2025-07-23 18:17:22.698000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 19:33:32.343000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 21:18:48.441000	1	1.67
2025-07-23 22:03:26.437000	1	1.67
2025-07-24 00:31:26.826000	1	1.67
2025-07-31 14:16:33.671000	1	1.67

How old are you?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
24.0	14.0	23.33
25.0	7.0	11.67
23.0	6.0	10.0
29.0	5.0	8.33
16.0	4.0	6.67
27.0	3.0	5.0
26.0	3.0	5.0
19.0	3.0	5.0
28.0	3.0	5.0
30.0	3.0	5.0
22.0	2.0	3.33
21.0	2.0	3.33
18.0	2.0	3.33
16.0	1.0	1.67
17.0	1.0	1.67
15.0	1.0	1.67

1) How often do you follow fashion influencers on TikTok or Instagram ?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
1.0	17.0	28.33
2.0	14.0	23.33
4.0	14.0	23.33
5.0	9.0	15.0
3.0	6.0	10.0

2) To what extent do fashion influencers on social media affect your decision to purchase fast fashion products?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
4.0	15.0	25.0
1.0	14.0	23.33
3.0	14.0	23.33
2.0	12.0	20.0
5.0	5.0	8.33

3) When you see a fashion influencer promoting a product, how likely are you to consider buying that product?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
2.0	21.0	35.0
3.0	17.0	28.33
1.0	11.0	18.33
4.0	9.0	15.0
5.0	2.0	3.33

4) Which social media platform influences your fashion purchase decisions the most?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
2. Instagram	45	75.0
1. Tiktok	8	13.33
3. Facebook	3	5.0

5. Others	3	5.0
4. X	1	1.67

5) How many fast fashion purchases in the last 6 months were influenced by social media content?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
1-2	18	30.0
None	16	26.67
3-5	15	25.0
6-10	7	11.67
More than 10	4	6.67

6) How important is it for you that influencers disclose sponsored content or partnerships clearly?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
5.0	20.0	33.33
1.0	16.0	26.67
3.0	11.0	18.33
2.0	8.0	13.33
4.0	5.0	8.33

7) Do you trust fashion influencers more when they share honest opinions rather than just promotional content?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
5.0	22.0	36.67
3.0	15.0	25.0
2.0	11.0	18.33
4.0	7.0	11.67
1.0	5.0	8.33

8) How transparent do you think fashion influencers are about their paid promotions?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
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2.0	23.0	38.33
1.0	16.0	26.67
3.0	13.0	21.67
4.0	5.0	8.33
5.0	3.0	5.0

9) When influencers are authentic and transparent, how does that affect your trust in the fashion brands they promote?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
4.0	21.0	35.0
3.0	14.0	23.33
5.0	13.0	21.67
2.0	6.0	10.0
1.0	6.0	10.0

10) Have you ever stopped following an influencer because you felt their promotions were not genuine or transparent?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
1. Yes	49	81.67
2. No	11	18.33

11) How engaging do you find fashion content on TikTok compared to Instagram?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
1.0	19.0	31.67
3.0	13.0	21.67
2.0	11.0	18.33
4.0	10.0	16.67
5.0	7.0	11.67

12) How often do you interact with fashion-related content on these platforms (likes, comments, shares)?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
1.0	17.0	28.33
4.0	13.0	21.67
2.0	11.0	18.33
5.0	10.0	16.67
3.0	9.0	15.0

13) Which type of content influences your fashion buying decisions more?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
Reels	18	30.0
Videos	16	26.67
Photos	11	18.33
Stories	10	16.67
Shorts	4	6.67
Live streams	1	1.67

14) How do interactive features like polls, Q&A, or shopping links affect your interest in purchasing fast fashion?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
3.0	19.0	31.67
1.0	18.0	30.0
2.0	11.0	18.33
4.0	6.0	10.0
5.0	6.0	10.0

15) How aware are you of the sustainability impacts of fast fashion products promoted by influencers?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
3.0	14.0	23.33
4.0	13.0	21.67

2.0	12.0	20.0
5.0	12.0	20.0
1.0	9.0	15.0

16) Does learning that an influencer promotes sustainable fashion affect your purchase decisions?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
4.0	19.0	31.67
3.0	13.0	21.67
1.0	12.0	20.0
2.0	10.0	16.67
5.0	6.0	10.0

17) How concerned are you about ethical issues (e.g., labor conditions, environmental impact) in fast fashion promoted on social media?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
4.0	16.0	26.67
5.0	16.0	26.67
3.0	11.0	18.33
2.0	9.0	15.0
1.0	8.0	13.33

18) Would you be less likely to buy from a fashion brand if you found out an influencer promoting it did not prioritize ethical or sustainable practices?

Response	Count	Percentage (%)
3.0	18.0	30.0
5.0	17.0	28.33
4.0	10.0	16.67
1.0	9.0	15.0
2.0	6.0	10.0

Appendix C – Participant Information and Consent Statement

Survey Information

Thank you for taking the time to help us out with this survey. The main aim is that we're trying to figure out how social media marketing really affects what people buy and how they see brands in the fashion world. We're looking at Instagram and TikTok to see how influencers sway peoples purchasing decisions and how that impacts their trust in brands. We also want to know what makes a brand seem authentic, to consumers.

In fast fashion industry there are some problems to considering issues such as ethics and sustainability. Especially one of them is crucial for this survey and that is how influencer marketing can affect the way we think about buying items. It's worth considering about because it could have an impact, on our consumption habits.

Confidentiality and Data Usage

The responses that you will make remain strictly confidential. The information collected will be used just for research aim.

Time Commitment

The survey possibly should only take around 5 to 7 minutes to fill out the questionnaire.

When you continue with the survey it means you've read the information with details and you are accepted the terms, with being volunteer for this study.