An Exploratory Study on the Role of Digital Channels in Promoting Sustainability to Increase Brand Awareness and Develop Customer Purchasing Intentions across the Fast-Fashion Sector in the UK

National College of Ireland

Project Submission Sheet

Student Name:	Nimisha Rajesh Bhanushali…………………………………………...
Student ID:	x23415291……………………………………………………………… …………………………………………
Programme:	MSC in Marketing…………………………… **Year:** 2024-2025…………
Module:	Dissertation………………………………………………………………… …………………………………
Supervisor:	Keith Feighery…………………………………………………………………
Submission Due Date:	15th August……………………………………………………………………
Project Title:	An Exploratory Study on the Role of Digital Channels in Promoting Sustainability to Increase Brand Awareness and Develop Customer Purchasing Intentions across the Fast-Fashion Sector in the UK
Word Count:	15570

I hereby certify that the information contained in this (my submission) is information pertaining to research I conducted for this project. All information other than my own contribution will be fully referenced and listed in the relevant bibliography section at the rear of the project.

<u>ALL</u> internet material must be referenced in the references section. Students are encouraged to use the Harvard Referencing Standard supplied by the Library. To use other author's written or electronic work is illegal (plagiarism) and may result in disciplinary action. Students may be required to undergo a viva (oral examination) if there is suspicion about the validity of their submitted work.

Signature:	Nimisha Rajesh Bhanushali………………………………………………………………
Date:	15th Aug 2025…………………………………………………………………...

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Please attach a completed copy of this sheet to each project (including multiple copies).
2. Projects should be submitted to your Programme Coordinator.
3. **You must ensure that you retain a HARD COPY of ALL projects**, both for your own reference and in case a project is lost or mislaid. It is not sufficient to keep a copy on computer. Please do not bind projects or place in covers unless specifically requested.
4. You must ensure that all projects are submitted to your Programme Coordinator on or before the required submission date. **Late submissions will incur penalties.**
5. All projects must be submitted and passed in order to successfully complete the year. **Any project/assignment not submitted will be marked as a fail.**

AI Acknowledgement Supplement

[Insert Module Name]

[Insert Title of your assignment]

Your Name/Student Number	Course	Date

This section is a supplement to the main assignment, to be used if AI was used in any capacity in the creation of your assignment; if you have queries about how to do this, please contact your lecturer. For an example of how to fill these sections out, please click here.

AI Acknowledgment

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

Tool Name	Brief Description	Link to tool

Description of AI Usage

This section provides a more detailed description of how the AI tools were used in the assignment. It includes information about the prompts given to the AI tool, the responses received, and how these responses were utilized or modified in the assignment. **One table should be used for each tool used**.

[Insert Tool Name]	
[Insert Description of use]	
[Insert Sample prompt]	[Insert Sample response]

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]

Additional Evidence:

[Place evidence here]

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland

Research Students Declaration Form

*(Thesis/Author Declaration
Form)*

Name: NIMISHA RAJESH BHANUSHALI

Student Number: x23415291

Degree for which thesis is submitted: MSC in Marketing

Material submitted for award

- ✓ I declare that the work has been composed by myself.

- ✓ I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.

- ✓ My thesis will be included in electronic format in the College Institutional Repository NORMA (thesis reports and projects).

- ✓ *Either* *I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

(State the award and the awarding body and list the material below)

Signature of research student: **NIMISHA RAJESH BHANUSHALI**

Date: 15TH AUGUST

Acknowledgement

I am thankful to my supervisor for guiding me towards completion of research without whom I would not have been able to complete the project.

I would also like to thank the university and the librarian for providing me with appropriate resources to complete this research.

Lastly, I would like to thank my friends and my family for providing me motivation throughout the time of the research.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been copied from anywhere. This research has not been submitted previously, in part or wholly for any purposes. All the information used in research has been duly cited as per university reference conventions.

Abstract

The aim of this research was exploring role of the digital channels to promote sustainability, increase brand awareness, influence consumer purchase intentions in UK fast fashion. The Was conducted using the self-structured quantitative survey of 100 respondents using Google form. The data was analysed using SPSS, descriptive statistics and explained through theme-wise analysis. The findings have indicated that websites influencer marketing and social media have been widely used but the perceived effectiveness to promote sustainability or influence the consumer behaviour are only be limited. Only a minor portion of the respondents have consistently engaged or noticed the sustainability content, trust on claims was also moderate. Inconsistent messages, greenwashing and lack of transparency were identified as major issues with influencers only having a moderate influencer. Credibility and authenticity are the key factors of effectiveness.

The study has concluded that fast fashion should be authentic and transparent. The research has also contributed to existing literature as it highlighted the gap of actual purchase behaviour and sustainability value in saturated markets. The future research should only focus on regulatory oversight, unethical influencer collaboration for closing the gap.

Table of contents

Table of Figures

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the problem

Mintel estimated consumers would continue to buy online products, and continue to rise by 72.5% leading to £32.8 billion in 2023. This increase has also facilitated the rise of social media, which has allowed brands to have a large online presence and communicate important information through creative means, which leads to an increased consumer reach and shopping propensity (Revlon-Chion, Bolat and Liang, 2020, p.1). The fashion industry has an estimated $1.7 trillion, which reflects double the amount in clothing production by 60% and most of it is connected to the rise of fast fashion (McKinsey & Company, 2023); however, due to the increased waste generated because of fast fashion in the UK. Sustainable fashion is a concept that minimises the adverse environment and social impact of the fashion industry (Mizrachi and Tal, 2022, p.1154). The fashion industry has been responsible for approximately 10% of global carbon emissions (Maiti, 2024) and also contributes to environmental degradation by water pollution of 79 trillion gallons of water use, unsustainable manufacturing practices with 92 million tonnes of waste production each year (Niinimäki *et al.*, 2020, p.189).
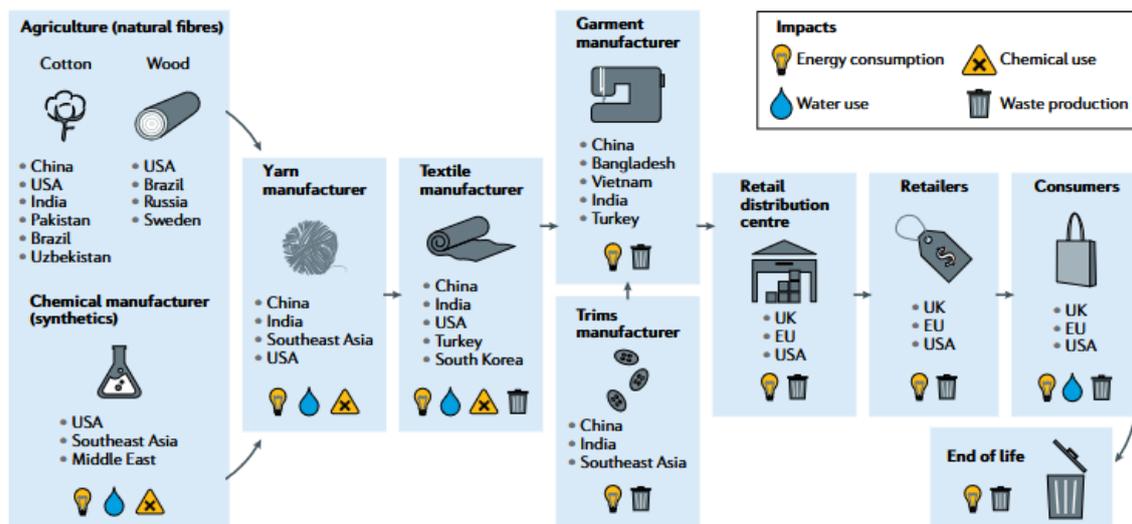
Figure 1: Garment Supply Chain

Source: (Niinimäki et al., 2020 p.191)

As the above figure reflects, there is increased waste production, water use and energy consumption in the retail distribution of garments in the UK.
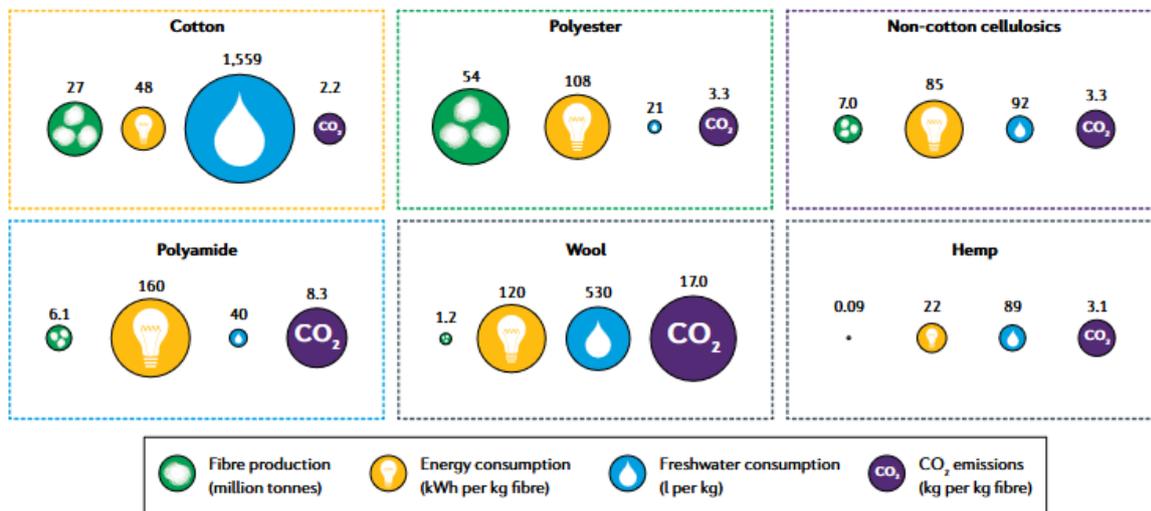
Fig. 4 | **Environmental impacts of six types of fibres.** Approximate fibre production, energy consumption, freshwater consumption and CO₂ emissions for cotton, polyester, non-cotton cellulosics, polyamide, wool and hemp. The environmental impact of production varies between fibre types — natural fibres (cotton, non-cotton cellulosics, wool and hemp) require less energy but more water during production than synthetics (polyester and polyamide). Total annual fibre production is from REF. [102]. Freshwater consumption for cotton, polyester, non-cotton cellulosics and polyamide are estimated using per-kg production data from ecoinvent[80] and thinkstep[38]. Freshwater consumption for wool and hemp are from REF. [40]. Energy-consumption and CO₂-production values are from REF. [40].

Figure 2: Waste according to six types of fibre

Source: (Niinimäki *et al.*, 2020 p.194)

The waste production of the garment can also be witnessed in the above figure, which reflects that fibre production includes energy consumption, fresh water consumption and SEO emissions for polyester, cotton, polyamide, wool and hemp, all of which are mainly used in cloth production.

Currently, consumer awareness about the sustainability issues of fast fashion has been rising in the UK. A Deloitte (2024) survey revealed that approximately 61% of UK consumers have reported that they are considering environmental sustainability while making a clothing purchase, but cost becomes a barrier. Despite this, there has been a disconnect between the consumer's stated preferences for sustainable products and the actual purchasing behaviour, which is also called the "attitude-behaviour gap" as noted in Seock, Shin and Yoon (2024, p.1), Wiederhold and Martinez (2018, p.19)

Different digital channels like digital marketing (Eleftherakis *et al.*, 2018, p.22), influencer marketing social media Hyun and Zhao, 2018, p.1) or e-commerce, websites

(SanMiguel *et al.*, 2021, p.1) have become essential to shaping consumer perception and driving their purchasing decisions. Instagram is not only the platform which has showcased fast fashion trends but also this new sustainability narrative (Zhao *et al.*, 2022, p.12). However, there have been challenges like greenwashing, which includes misleading claims about the environmental commitments of a brand and undermines the consumer trust Lu *et al.*, 2022, p.1). This has made it a challenge for the branch to build a credible sustainability profile in the UK.

Brands are turning to digital strategies to bridge the gap between consumer behaviour and sustainable initiatives, which makes it essential to understand their effectiveness in fast fashion.

1.2 Rationale

It is important to conduct the research because of the sustainability issues of the UK fast fashion industry, and also to leverage the digital channels for fostering consumer trust while driving purchasing intentions. Ge (2024, p.1) and Leenders (2019, p.2) observed that the increased role of influencer collaboration in digital marketing is shaping consumer perception. They stated about a limited role of influence of social media while promoting sustainability. It has reflected an opposite perception of digital channels' effectiveness in shaping the consumer perception. This has led to Present research because of the limited research on how the strategies can specifically address the issues of sustainability in fast fashion.

Customers are demanding transparency and sustainability (Back, 2017, p.2), but issues like greenwashing have made the credibility low. Present research aims to fill this gap through the exploration of the methods through which digital channels can communicate about sustainability. The research was built on the existing literature to address the gap with a quantitative survey providing important insights to align digital strategies.

1.3 Significance of the research

Present research has addressed a pressing issue of the connection between consumer behaviour and sustainability in the fashion industry. It is important because it aims to resolve important gaps in existing knowledge by understanding if, and in what manner, digital channels are influencing consumer perception.

The research is essential as it aims to provide strategies for improving consumer intentions on digital channels. The research has aimed at identifying the issues that the brands face while building consumer trust in the digital platforms, with problems like greenwashing or communication. This research has aimed at exploring digital communication and influencers to improve the communication of sustainability material.

These findings shall contribute to a broader discourse of sustainable fast fashion consumption as they provide practical recommendations for brands and stakeholders.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

Aim: Exploration of the role of digital channels to promote sustainability for increasing brand awareness and development of consumer purchasing intentions, especially in UK fast fashion brands.

Objectives:

To explore the use of digital strategies influencing the perceived sustainability and brand awareness of a fast fashion brand amongst UK consumers.

To identify the challenges fast fashion brands face while building consumers' trust through digital channels to promote sustainable purchase intentions.

To understand how digital influencers and online communication channels benefit fast fashion brands and close the gap between sustainability value and the actual purchasing behaviour of consumers.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How does the use of digital strategies influence the perceived sustainability and brand awareness of a fast fashion brand amongst UK consumers?
2. What challenges do fast fashion brands face while building consumers' trust through digital channels to promote sustainable purchase intentions?
3. How can digital influencers and online communication channels benefit fast fashion brands and close the gap between sustainability value and the actual purchasing behaviour of consumers?

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Fast-Fashion in the UK

Global fashion grew annually at 4.3% from 2000 to 2012. Firms like H&M have been the largest fast-fashion retailers, which have increased in real value after a discounted inflation over 10% rate. This makes it essential to understand the term fast fashion which is often low-cost fashion. Specifically, this business model includes the production of wide garments which can be made quickly and continuously renewed at a low price (Encarnación and Roldán, 2023, p.266).

In this industry, the UK has also been enormously contributing as not only the inventing fast fashion but the fashion consumers have been voracious around the world. UK women have been one in three consumers of this segment, where the garments are only more than once or twice. UK consumers sent 300,000 tonnes of textiles for burning and dumping in the landfill in 2018 (Siegle, 2019). In a single month, the carbon footprint is more than a plane, for consumers buying new clothes as compared to a tourist plane, which has flown around 900 times (Algamal, 2019). Not only this, but the industry is also the second biggest consumer of water (Maiti, 2024). This reflects the lasting environmental impact of fast fashion by UK consumers, and hence, some of the digital channels which promote sustainability have to be discovered.

2.2 Digital Channels and Sustainability Promotion

Search is considered an important factor in the modern consumption of fashion. Many individuals are looking and influenced by searches on social media while shopping. For such a reason, commercial campaigns including digital marketing tools are considered indispensable. When a purchasing decision is made, the consumers rank the product according to the preset criteria while selecting the most desirable product (Zhang, Zhang and Zhou, 2021, p.7). Digital capabilities like digital marketing helped Nike in the improvement of communicating corporate social responsibility while improving visibility (Eleftherakis *et al.*, 2018, p.22). Supporting this, brands like Zara and H&M have also been using social media to interact with their followers (Huang and Zhou, 2024, p.3). Social media as a communication channel has been supported in many studies, like Hyun and Zhao (2018, p.1) and Cheema (2021, p.1)

Other than digital marketing tools, websites are also an important channel where some information about sustainability is provided, which is also supported by Göçer and Tuğrul (2015, p.1). Supporting this, SanMiguel *et al.* (2021, p.6) stated that corporate websites present a corporate statement of sustainability initiatives in a visual and direct manner. It is also furthered by observations of Costantini and Costantini (2022, p.7) who stated that sustainability information is provided by many apparel brands, including fast fashion use websites. However, it is difficult to read the messages considering the ease of reading, which becomes a barrier for consumers to understand. Azhar (2024, p.1) stated that investment in digital marketing with consumers through digital channels majorly impacts brand development on sustainability.

Although their major focus is selling the product, there are different areas on the website where consumers can read some information on sustainability (Hatley, 2021, p.123). A brand website provides a constructive platform for educating consumers about their perception of sustainability, which also improves the brand image as it demonstrates the sustainability performance. It has also been argued that sustainable marketing initiatives for fast fashion brands are based on their websites, which have enabled consumers to be actively involved, and they are usually perceived positively by shoppers (Hesse and Rundau, 2023, p.270). Other findings have also denoted that social media marketers in fashion help to select appealing colours or images for engaging consumers and also an appropriate speech for delivering information that helps them to achieve the sustainability goal, as noted by Zhao *et al.* (2022, p.1), which is also supported by Göçer and Tuğrul (2015 p.1). Another research has also reflected the necessity of continued improvement of terms to communicate sustainability while also demonstrating a deficiency which has existed in E-commerce operations, which mainly involve the web pages visited by consumers (SanMiguel *et al.*, 2021, p.1). Apart from this, the digital age has also witnessed the advent of the metaverse, which is another tool for communicating the sustainability of fast-fashion brands.

Metaverse is also a brand's own space where sustainable messages are communicated to fellow consumers who follow the same code of transparency or appeal (Blazquez, 2024, p.304). App Store, Google Play Store, Social Media Marketing on Facebook, Instagram & Twitter, Blogs & Forums are also essential promotional channels (p. 809). Blazquez (2024, p.305) stated that the metaverse is a space which helps interact and experience the brand in many ways, involving consideration of the main dimensions like immersiveness, environment fidelity and sociability. This is supported by different studies that stated that digital fashion

includes metaverse for providing a better consumer experience (Mesjar *et al.*, 2023, p.2), also supported by Morandi and Tonelli (2023, p.84), where metaverse is key for luxury fashion as well. Further fashion companies are known to invest in the metaverse for collecting user data and communication (Disperati and Cianfanelli, 2024, p.93).

While the aforementioned tools are helpful in the communication of sustainability messages, this also impacts consumer purchasing intention and brand awareness. Sustainability, including corporate social responsibility activities, has a positive impact when consumers are satisfied and the relationship between the company and the consumer is properly communicated by the efforts of company. It is also argued that customer opinions of social responsibility of the forms are essential as it is connected to the general attitude of consumers relating to a brand (Neumann, Martinez and Martinez, 2020, p.6). Similarly, Grazzini, Acuti and Aiello (2021, p.1) denoted that attributes of sustainable products impact the consumer purchase intensive positively, and it is also magnified in fast fashion products where the consumers have reflected a positive implicit attitude if sustainable products are paired with luxury in fast fashion. Hence, it can be stated that sustainability has the ability to activate a high level of perceived warmth, which also impacts the purchasing intentions and brand image.

However, the marketing activity of a brand relating to sustainability is also important for consumers to know about a sustainable step of a brand, and it has been reflected to have a positive impact on the brand image of an already established brand. It reflects that economic activities like upgrading or technological transformation for the creation of a productive environment would lead to positive consumer perception (Neha, Joshi and Kumar, 2024, p.116). Similarly, sustainability purchased intentions have been positively influenced due to brand equity and perceived CSR value (Chang and Jai, 2015, p.863). Hence, it is also argued that businesses have to incentivise expanding their operations where different social activities hold the responses towards the products, which positively impact the consumers, so that they can stay connected with the purchasing decision and intention while emphasising the importance of consuming eco-friendly products (Neha, Joshi and Kumar, 2024, p.6).

2.3 Perceived Sustainability and Brand Awareness

Neumann, Martinez, and Martinez (2020, p.8) argue that perceived consumer effectiveness is essential for influencing consumer behaviour and sustainable consumption. The findings have highlighted the strong correlation between an individual's belief in

addressing environmental issues and sustainable decision practices. Papasolomou, Melanthiou, and Tsamouridis (2022, p.191) uncovered the paradox of consumer sustainability knowledge where it was argued that despite major consumers who have claimed that they're aware of sustainability, there has been a pronounced lack of a detailed understanding of the supply chain sustainability, like materials, reuse or recycling processes. Interestingly, this research has revealed that there is a gender disparity where women have demonstrated improved knowledge of sustainability. Still, men have exhibited a higher widening of pain for fast fashion brands which have aligned with their moral values. This contrast has underscored the differences in customer engagement with perceived sustainability and has also necessitated targeted educational initiatives for bridging any knowledge gaps.

Digital platforms have been reshaping how consumers interact with their brands. Li, Choe, and Gu (2024, p.3) have argued that online interactions have complicated and also enhanced consumer decisions or brand perceptions. Particularly, social media has emerged as a double-edged sword. It is known to have faster advocacy and community, and it has also generated overwhelming information, which has led to decision fatigue in consumers. Cayaban, Borres, and Janice (2023, p.1) have also provided further insights where it is noting that social media has positively influenced purchasing intentions; sustainability advocacy on such platforms could deter consumers from buying any fast fashion. Such findings have revealed the critical insight about a heightened sustainability awareness, which is correlated with reduced consumption of products of fast fashion, and challenged the brands to align their marketing strategies with consumer perception.

Hesse and Rundau (2023, p.1) highlighted the importance of sustainable marketing initiatives which have actively involve consumers and are perceived positively by shoppers, thus promoting brand loyalty and customer retention. This is aligned with the observations of Soboleva and Sánchez (2024, p.1), who have argued that government interventions, which are amplified by social media, can effectively shift consumer behaviour towards sustainability. Both these studies have underscored that there is a need for a collaborative effort between policymakers, consumers and brands to drive sustainable practices. Zhang, Zhang, and Zhou (2021, p.1) have identified effective and cognitive awareness and sustainability as key drivers of behaviour change in UK consumers. They have advocated for policy tools like subsidies and taxes to reinforce the behavioural shifts.

Hur and Faragher-Siddall (2022, p.405) also provided that educational policies like equal labels, will foster sustainable consumption. A high consumer support is observed while improving transparency and eco-literacy. Similarly, Zhao *et al.* (2022, p.12) also argued about the improvement of communication on social media for meeting the consumer demand that aims for sustainability and transparency. Both of the studies have illustrated the role of clear and honest communication in building consumer trust for driving sustainable behaviour.

Social media also has a dual role, which acts as a platform of activism and a marketing tool. Vladimirova *et al.* (2023, p.1) asserted that social media can influence consumers to adopt sustainable fraction practices while leveraging a targeted marketing strategy and advocating a campaign. Similar observations have been made by Ge (2024, p.118), who has explored how influencer marketing impacts Generation Z and has also highlighted that it is important to have expertise, relatability and authenticity, which shape sustainable behaviour and attitudes. Influencers' role is also aligned with Zhao *et al.* (2022, p.12), who suggested that consumers drive a tomato greets sustainability effort from different fashion brands, which is facilitated by social media platforms.

While there has been consensus on the positive role of digital strategies in the promotion of sustainability, there are contrasting perspectives which have emerged relating to consumer priorities. Cayaban, Borres, and Janice (2023, p.1) found that perceived product quality and price have had a minimal influence on purchase intention, whereas it is also suggested that sustainable consumption sees affordability as a barrier. Additionally, Papasolomou, Melanthiou, and Tsamouridis (2022, p.191) also highlighted that the General Dynamics of sustainability or the willingness to pay is a factor which is not extensively explored in different studies. There is one more notable gap, which is longitudinal studies examining the sustained impact of digital strategies. The short-term campaigns might have influenced the purchase intentions, but the long-term efficacy is unclear. Additionally, the intersection of digital activism and policy interventions has warranted a deep exploration, as also highlighted in Soboleva and Sánchez (2024, p.1).

Tőkés (2022, p.136) has highlighted the significance of a digital brand experience by asserting that engaging in an online presence helps boost brand awareness. The research shows that there is a necessity to promote brand communication to align with consumer expectations on digital platforms. This is mainly because a stronger digital brand experience will not only

attract online visitors but will also foster loyalty, reimpose the connection of the digital brand, and improve consumer awareness.

These findings were extended by Iqbal *et al.* (2024, p.134), who have emphasised the role of integrated and personalised digital marketing by demonstrating that a tailored approach in divorce digital channels will influence purchasing decisions and loyalty. Supporting this, Makrides, Vrontis, and Christofi (2020, p.2) also argued that digital platforms enable businesses to connect with the broad market. Hence, this signifies that it can exponentially improve brand visibility and consumer engagement.

However, a nuanced observation was made by Mas, Adyatma, and Prabawa (2023, p.380) who suggested that while social media positively impacts brand awareness, brand awareness does not mediate social media quality or brand image. This finding has introduced a complexity, which suggests that brand awareness alone cannot translate to enhancing brand perception.

2.4 Challenges in Building Trust through Digital Channels

Building consumer trust through digital channels presents many challenges, such as sustainability issues, omnichannel communication, and consumer perceptions of brand authenticity. One of the primary issues is addressing consumers' sustainability concerns. Vassalo *et al.* (2024, p.2) observe that fast fashion brands have to reinvent consumption and production habits by transitioning to sustainable practices such as slow fashion. However, it requires consumer awareness, which is presently insufficient. Ronda (2023, p.1) has corroborated this while arguing that although consumers are willing to pay more for a sustainable product, there are knowledge gaps about the environmental effects of fast fashion. Evans and Peirson-Smith (2018, p.15) provided a different perspective where it is highlighted that the emotional response of a consumer is essential for a sustainability claim. They have identified rising "promise fatigue", which indicates that consumers are frustrated if a brand fails to deliver on its environmental pledge. This scepticism is also exacerbated through greenwashing, which is explained as a false or misleading claim relating to sustainability (Statista Research Department, 2024). There are many high-profile cases in the UK, like Bohoo, Asda and Asos (Jolly and Butler, 2024), which have underscored the reputational risk of greenwashing.
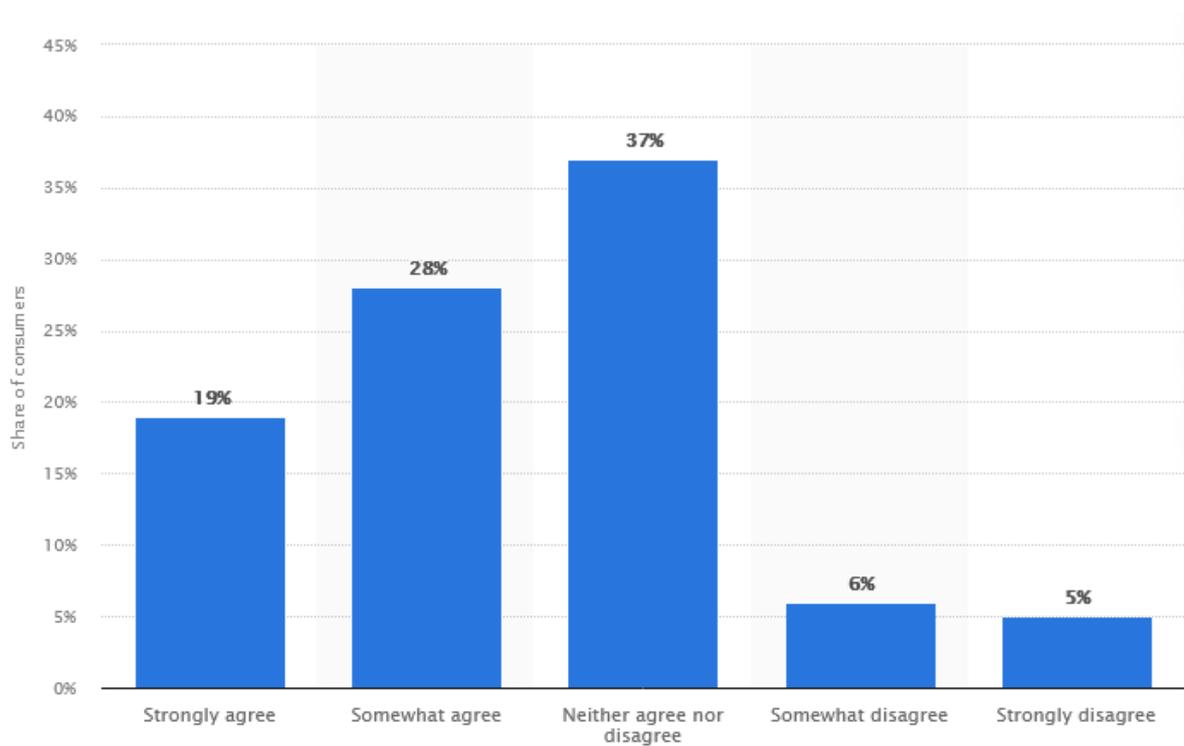
Figure 3: Share of UK consumers who oppose greenwashing

Source: (Statista Research Department, 2024)

In a survey in 2022, 47% of fashion shoppers in the United Kingdom agreed that they would stop buying from a fashion brand if it had a misleading or false claim of sustainability. It has also been expanded by Lu *et al.* (2022, p.1), who examined the negative impact of greenwashing on consumer behaviour and showcased that it also increases perceived environmental and financial risk. The surgery imposed a challenge for fashion brands, indicating that sustainability communication is important, but it should be transparent and credible to avoid any issues of consumer trust.

Apart from the false sustainability claims, another challenge is affected communication, which is considered important in trust building. Fast fashion brands have often faced issues in creating an integrated omnichannel strategy, which could provide a seamless experience in physical and digital touchpoints (Rey-García, Otero, and Mato-Santiso, 2018, p.98-99). Such strategies make it essential to have advanced real-time data management for predicting consumer behaviour while maintaining consistency in platforms.

San Miguel *et al.* (2021, p.2) also emphasised improved sustainability communication in e-commerce, where there are deficiencies which could impact consumer trust. However, it

is also complicated by the confusing language which is often used in branding sustainability claims. Evans and Peirson-Smith (2018, p.15) noted that there are terms like "organic" or "eco" which have often lacked clarity, which leads to misinterpretation by consumers. Adamkiewicz *et al.* (2022, p.3) have also argued about the ambiguity of terms like "double talk", which has widened the gap between expectations and brand communication.

Marko and Kusá (2023, p.86) suggested environmental education which could bridge the above gap and enable the consumer to assess the marketing claims. The neuromarketing research has highlighted the role of informed decision making, which helps in improving loyalty, especially among Millennials or Gen Z. Although their research has provided sufficient information, it is seen that the messaging by the brands is often exaggerated, and hence, it requires a concerted effort from the fast fashion brands to ensure that the messaging is educational and transparent.

Ethical considerations have also influenced trust, like transparency of production and fair labour practices. Vassalo *et al.* (2024, p.2) have advocated collective responsibility for fostering conscious consumption, which signifies good working conditions and fair pay. Back (2017, p.2) has argued this sentiment where it has calling for brands to adopt a transparent business model which includes releasing reports of sustainability for improving their accountability. However, transparency cannot alone solve the issues, as also argued by Hatley (2021a, p.135), that effective communication has to align with behavioural change and societal values. This is especially relevant for addressing the barriers of the consumer culture in fast fashion, which has often prioritised style and affordability over sustainability and ethics (Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group, 2018).

Digital Trust is another challenge which includes privacy and security concerns. Tran (2020, p.68) has highlighted the gate of fast fashion brands for ensuring reliability in the applications by addressing different problems, like data security, to gain consumer confidence. This is especially essential because of an increased reliance on digital platforms for shopping.

Rey-García, Otero, and Mato-Santiso (2018, p.98-99) pointed out the need for harmonious interaction in different channels to reinforce the authenticity of the brand. However, to achieve it, there is a need for increased investment in infrastructure and technology, which could not be feasible for each brand. There are several commonalities in the above literature, and most scholars have agreed upon the importance of consistency and

transparency for building trust. Vassalo *et al.* (2024, p.2) and Back (2017, p.2) have both stressed that brands should only support ethical practices, which include the role of omnichannel strategies as presented by Rey-García, Otero, and Mato-Santiso (2018, p.98-99).

However, Ronda (2023, p.1) has highlighted consumer willingness to pay more for sustainable fashion. Evans and Peirson-Smith (2018, p.15) and Adamkiewicz *et al.* (2022, p.3) have underscored the issues of consumer scepticism and a misinterpretation of the sustainability claim. Similar observations are made in Lu *et al.* (2022, p.1), where trust is eroded because of greenwashing perception and Marko and Kusá (2023, p.86), where environmental education is seen as a challenge.

2.5 Influence of Digital Influencers

There has been a dramatic rise in influencers and online communication, such as social media, in fashion.

Figure 4: Influencers influencing consumers relating to sustainable products

Source: Self-made, inspired by (Israfilzade and Hlushchenko, 2024, p.196), (Cayaban *et al.*, 2023, p.1), (Banytė *et al.*, 2023, p.21).

Leenders (2019, p.2) highlighted that there is limited effectiveness of influences in the encouragement of sustainable fashion on different platforms like Instagram. The study has suggested that sustainable brands have to prioritise being the household name in a broader movement of industry change, as compared to only relying on influencer marketing. However, this observation has contrasted with Ge (2024, p.121), who has emphasised the exponential growth of social media influences focusing on environmental topics. The study's findings have revealed that the influencers have successfully raised information and awareness while encouraging sustainable consumption, like reusing and recycling. It has also been supported by Cayaban, Borres, and Janice (2023, p.1), who found that sustainability advocacy on social media helps in the utilisation of fast fashion. The study underscored the importance of incorporating sustainability communication in their digital marketing strategies because it leads to conscious consumer behaviour. However, they have also noted that a perceived product quality and price might not influence the purchase and tension, suggesting that different factors like brand trust or emotional connection play a large role.

Further, Johnstone and Lindh (2022, p.5) also suggested that influencers have the ability to internalise sustainable behaviours and consumers, especially through the many deals, by forming an online relationship. These findings are also supported by Liu (2022, p.4-5), who has highlighted that there is a positive impact of influencer attractiveness, credibility and trustworthiness upon an impulse purchasing intention. While such traits can drive purchases, their alignment with sustainable communication is significant for a long-term impact.

Different studies have also explored how influencers shape consumer behaviour and purchase intentions, like Banytė, Vaidelinskaitė, and Šalčiuvienė (2023, p.21), who noted that influencers impact the purchasing decisions and clothing brands form a valuable partnership for the promotion of sustainable clothing products with the influencers. This is possible as they educate the followers about the benefits of sustainable fashion, which helps in fostering a shift in consumer behaviour. This might be because of psychological mechanisms as discussed in Rosely, Sakarji, and Thani (2024, p.335), where it was observed that persuasive reviews and messages from influencers trigger utilitarian and hedonic needs in consumers. Such insights have also aligned with Raka and Chankov (2024, p.711), to observe that positive consumer perception of influencers could be leveraged for advocacy of sustainable second-hand shopping.

However, there are challenges as reported by Bailey, Basu, and Sharma (2022, p.8) that 41% of young people have sought fashion advice from influencers, which bridges the gap of sustainability advocacy and an actual purchase intention being difficult. This sentiment is also backed by the Environmental Audit Committee (2019, p.7), which called for strict regulation of online marketing to address the environmental and psychological impact of overconsumption.

The literature has presented contrasting views on the effectiveness of influencers in the promotion of sustainability. Israfilzade and Hlushchenko (2024, p.196) have found a substantial link between influencer stimulation of sustainable fashion and consumer adoption of sustainable practices. The study has indicated that consumers are often inspired to embrace their conscious practice when they encounter similar activities on an influencer's profile. Conversely, it is contended that Instagram influencers might not be the most effective channel for advocacy of sustainable fashion (Leenders, 2019, p.2). This perspective has also aligned with Hageman *et al.* (2023, p.1092), who identified quality and price as an essential factor which influences purchasing behaviour. These findings have highlighted the need for a multifaceted strategy which could integrate influencer marketing and other communication channels.

Johnstone and Lindh (2022, p.5) also emphasised the role of an online interpersonal relationship for fostering green purchase intentions. Unlike the moral argument, such relationships can effectively internalise sustainable behaviour in the consumer. This has also aligned with Yıldırım's (2024, p.124) observation, which stated that sustainable fashion influencers are promoting an environmentally friendly product by sharing their lifestyle, which includes a sustainable consumption pattern.

However, relying only on the online platform has raised concerns about the scalability and authenticity of the initiatives. The Environmental Audit Committee (2019, p.7) also warned about the psychological issues relating to the high consumption level and called for greater regulation to mitigate the issue. Findings have underscored the potential role of influencers relating to sustainable consumption with notable limitations. Effective strategies have to leverage the relatability and authenticity of the influencers while also addressing the priorities of the consumers, like quality and price. Additionally, the integration of sustainability with the broad communication channel could also enhance the impact.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

TPB (By Ajzen, 1988) served as a foundation framework for exploring how digital channels can influence sustainability efficacy and consumer purchasing behaviour in fast fashion (Hidayat and Sananta, 2024, p.4). The theory predicts the intentions of a consumer by examination of three core constructs, namely subjective norms, attitude and perceived behavioural control.

Attitude suggests how a consumer evaluates sustainability-related communication. A positive attitude towards sustainability has influenced the possibility of buying sustainable clothes (Anggriani, Daryanto and Asikin, 2024, p.225). Interestingly, social pressure on norms has also been perceived by the consumer to shape intentions. Hence, influencer advocacy or green marketing is considered effective in fostering such norms even though the subjective standards are not alone responsible for green purchasing (Hidayat and Sananta, 2024, p.13). Perceived difficulty or ease in the adaptation of sustainable behaviour has mediated the relationship between actual purchasing and awareness, where the research has highlighted that there is a role of perceived behavioural control in protecting sustainable fashion purchases. This suggests that low control amplifies the influence of a positive attitude (Magwegwe and Shaik, 2024, p.28868).

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

Petty and Cacioppo's model explain how influencer content can persuade consumers through two routes of persuasion. The first is the central route, which includes a cognitive engagement having detailed sustainability communication. It indicates that high-involvement consumers, like those who are concerned with environmental impact or quality, can process the message critically (Liu, Lee and Lien, 2020, p.105). Meanwhile peripheral route is about superficial cues such as attractiveness or trustworthiness in influencers. This shapes attitude without a cognitive procedure and engages the consumers who are not as motivated (Rosenstein, 2021, p.25).

2.7 Literature Gap

The published literature has provided the importance of corporate websites, technological tools such as the metaverse and social media to promote the brand and its sustainability measures (Blazquez, 2024; Zhang, Zhang, and Zhou, 2021; Göçer and Tuğrul, 2015). These studies have been unable to explore the longer efficacy of the digital strategies to sustain consumer engagement or influence their thoughts about sustainability. Additionally, the interplay of digital activism and policy intervention in Soboleva and Sánchez (2024) to foster sustainable practice has also received limited attention.

Additionally, the existing studies like Papasolomou, Melanthiou, and Tsamouridis (2022) have provided a generalised insight, but they have a targeted focus on regional consumer attitudes or behaviour, like gender disparities or willingness to pay for a sustainable product in the UK. While personalisation and influencer marketing have shown promise (Ge, 2024; Iqbal *et al.*, 2024), the role of shaping the perception of sustainability in fast fashion has been under-researched. The present research aims to address such concerns by examining how digital strategies like social media or corporate websites could influence the UK consumer's perception of brand awareness and system ability by providing insight into long-term engagement strategies.

Also, the literature has identified many challenges in building consumer trust through digital channels, but there is a knowledge deficit concerning the broad environmental effects of fast fashion, as also highlighted in Ronda (2023, p.1). However, the research lacks the strategies which the first fashion brands could leverage for educating or engaging consumers on sustainability. Additionally, there have been highlights about the importance of transparency and sustainable flames, but there is an insufficient focus on how communication strategies like branded content or consumer perception challenge transparency. This warrants the need for future research on how digital strategies influence Consumer trust, especially in combating greenwashing in the online space. Different studies have also highlighted the issues of integrating sustainability communication in digital channels (Rey-García, Otero, and Mato-Santiso, 2018; San Miguel *et al.*, 2021), but there is limited research on how effective an omnichannel strategy could compellingly communicate sustainability. Another gap is limited studies specifically focusing on the UK fast fashion industry on the themes of digital channels and sustainability communication.

2.8 Conceptual Framework/ Hypothesis

H1: The implementation of a targeted digital strategy has a positive influence on the sustainability perceptions of UK consumers and improves brand awareness of fast fashion brands.

H2: Fast Fashion brands have many challenges while establishing consumer trust through digital channels because of various factors.

H3: Engaging with digital influencers bridges the gap between the sustainability values of consumers and the actual purchasing behaviour, which might lead to increased sustainable intention to purchase fast fashion.
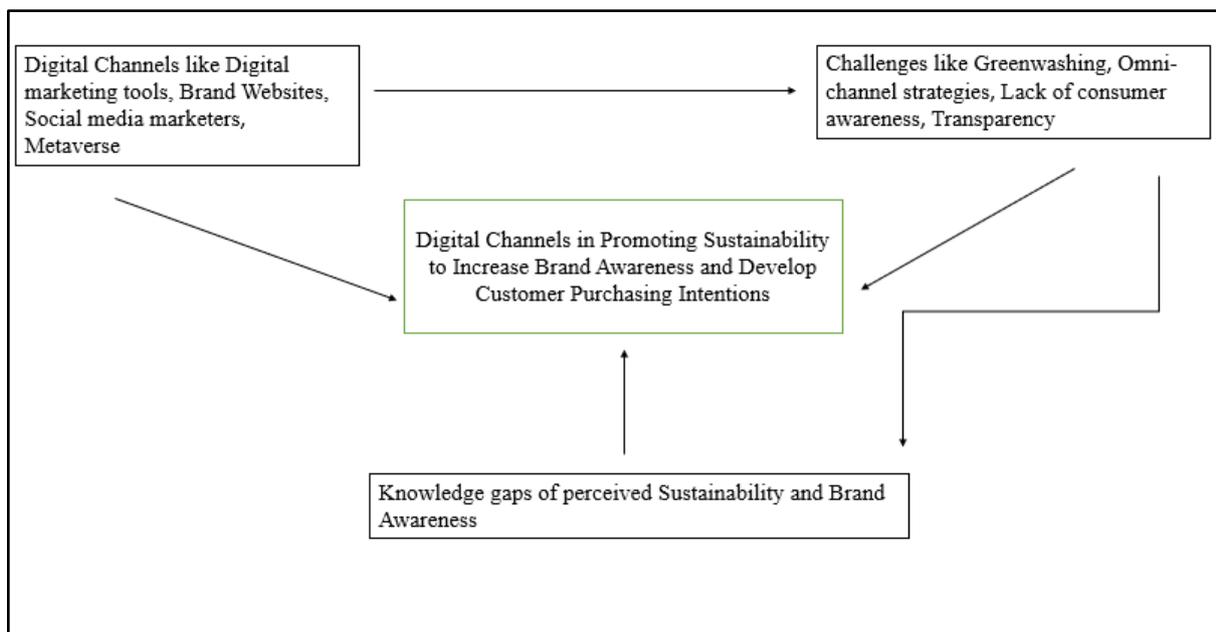
Figure 5: Conceptual Framework

Source: Self-made

As the above figure reflects, there are digital channels like Digital marketing tools, Brand Websites, Social media marketers and Metaverse, but there are issues in brand awareness and perceived sustainability as there are knowledge gaps in consumers. The other challenges in increasing brand awareness and developing consumer purchasing intentions are Greenwashing, Omnichannel strategies, Lack of consumer awareness and Transparency.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Method
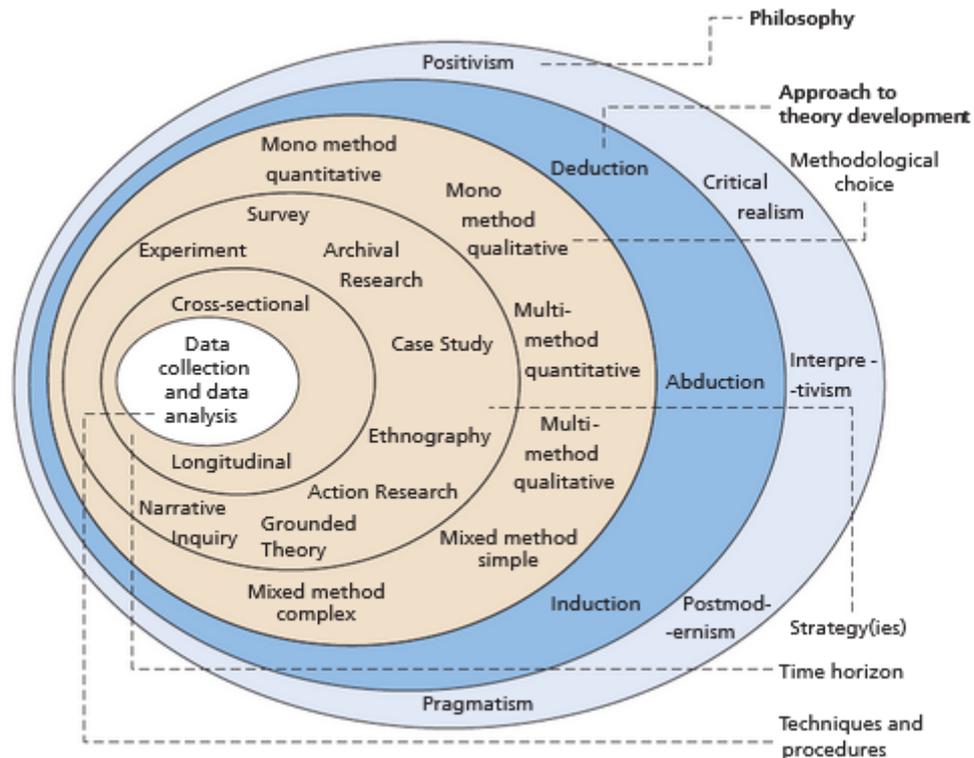
Figure 6: Research Onion

Source: (Saunders *et al.*, 2019)

In social sciences research, a structured approach, as mentioned by the research onion proposed by Saunders *et al.* (2019), is essential. The framework guides the researcher through different layers in decision-making, philosophy, approach, strategy, and data collection techniques. It becomes important to understand and justify the decisions for ensuring rigour and validity, in the context of the research questions developed.

3.1.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is the beliefs about the nature of reality and knowledge, like ontology and methods through which knowledge is acquired (epistemology) (Al-Ababneh, 2020). Generally, there are three philosophies, namely, positivism, which advocates an objective reality which could be measured and generalised by quantitative data (Park, Konge and Artino, 2019). Interpretivism refers to subjective experiences and understanding social

phenomena through qualitative data (Pervin and Mokhtar, 2022). Pragmatism, on the other hand, combines both these perceptions.

In the present research, positivism was chosen for the examination of digital strategies, sustainability perceptions through an objective measurement, taking into consideration the research questions. The study explores the role of digital channels which influence the perceptions of sustainability, brand awareness and consumer purchasing intention. The variables tend to be quantifiable measurements like consumer surveys, digital engagement metrics and purchase data. Hence, positivism was considered as it assumes an objective reality which could be measured. This aligns with the need for evaluation of measurable effects of digital strategies on consumer purchases. As the first research question, measures influence, it requires a quantifiable evidence Amongst digital strategies like social media and dependent variables like perceived sustainability. Positivist philosophy insured an objective measurement That could be free from any research bias. Cross sectional surveys with the Likert-scale captured the perceptions from large sample that enabled a statistic testing of regression and correlation for analysing the use of digital strategies influencing sustainability and brand awareness amongst UK consumers.

Further, the study focused on purchasing international and brand awareness, which includes statistical variables and supports a positivist approach, like the consumer perception, which could be measured through Likert scales. Since it allows for broad generalisation by analysis of large datasets. An objective measurable reality in positivism refers to the perspective which states that an attitude, or phenomenon, can be understood through quantification; it exists without individual perception and can be verified through physical quantities like the percentage of people. This justifies the survey because surveys are a structured tool that aids in quantifiable data collection. Surveys enable the gathering of large-scale data on attitude, behaviour and perception, which could be measured through percentages and numbers as opposed to interviews that only have subjective responses. Surveys were justified because they allow statistical analysis of data that potentially reveals the causal relationships amongst variables, which lead to broad generalisations of human behaviour. However, self-report bias is a limitation because the responses cannot always represent the true behaviour or belief of the respondents.

Although pragmatism supports flexibility (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019), the subjective dimension could have diluted the precision of testing the hypothesis due to which was rejected.

With the structured approach, positivism was better suited, in alignment with the research objectives. Interpretivism was also rejected because it solely focused on subjective interpretations, but it lacked the scalability needed for research. The need to measure brand awareness and purchase intention across a broader audience has necessitated the exclusion of interpretivism.

3.1.2 Research Approach

The research approaches are deductive, inductive and abductive. Deductive refers to testing existing theories or hypotheses with empirical data. Inductive refers to the development of theories based on data collection and analysis (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach, 2018). The abductive approach combines deductive and inductive reasoning for testing theories.

In this research, a deductive approach was considered because the study was grounded in the establishment of theories of sustainability marketing, consumer behaviour and digital communication for answering third research question. As per third research question, digital influencers and online communication channels benefit fast fashion brands and close the gap between sustainability value and the actual purchasing behaviour of consumers, a hypothesis was developed relating to influence of digital channels on consumer choices, which ensured deductive approach was more suitable. By using the approach, a hypothesis was developed relating to how digital channels could influence consumer trust or purchasing behaviour, which was tested by empirical data.

On the other hand, an inductive approach was not chosen as a study aimed at testing theories rather than the development of theories. For example, theories of influencing digital influencers or challenges of sustainability which was to be discussed in second research question already exist, and the objective was to validate or refine the theories in the context of fast fashion.

The hypothesis that guided the present research was:

H1: Use of digital strategies has a positive influence on the perceived sustainability and brand awareness of a fast fashion brand amongst UK consumers.

H2: Fast fashion brands face challenges while building consumers' trust through digital channels to promote sustainable purchase intentions

H3: Digital influencers and online communication channels benefit fast fashion brands and close the gap between sustainability value and the actual purchasing behaviour of consumers.

3.1.3 Research Strategy

The research strategy means an overall plan for answering research questions, like a survey, case study, ethnography or mixed methods (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Surveys are considered suitable when data is collected from a large sample (Ponto, 2015). Surveys were considered appropriate as they enabled the researcher to collect data that reaches a broad audience and ensured that the data collected represented a diverse cross-section of the UK consumers. For answering research question one and two, it was important to understand different trends in fast fashion so that generalisable insights could be gathered. Another reason for choosing surveys was the inclusion of structured questions by using Likert scales for measuring perceptions of trust, sustainability and purchasing intention that leads to research question one and three. The formation of questionnaires was supported by Roopa and Rani (2012), who detailed the formation of closed-ended questions. The quantifiable metrics allowed hypothesis testing and the establishment of correlations between consumer behaviour and digital strategies. Furthermore, surveys are also cost-effective and time-efficient, which makes them practical for the study scope and resource constraints.

While mixed methods could have provided rich insights, it would be time-consuming and irrelevant for the research. The primary aim of this research was to quantitatively analyse the role of digital strategies in shaping perception and behaviour, which could be achieved by surveys.

Experiments were not chosen because they need a controlled environment, which could have failed to replicate the real-world behaviours of digital shoppers, thus limiting validity. While interviews could have provided depth to the insights, they were not chosen because of chances of limited anonymity of respondents, the lack of generalizability, standardisation in self-structured interviews.

Further, a pilot study of 10 respondents was conducted for the ensuing clarity and reliability of the survey questionnaire. The results confirmed that questions were understood properly by participants, and they had no issues in recording the response.

3.2 Participants

The present research incorporated non-probability convenience sampling for leveraging online platforms that would recruit 100 consumers of fast fashion from the UK population. A sample of the UK population from Instagram was sent the study's information and asked to selection initially. Out of 150 samples distributed, 100 respondents submitted the form. This method was chosen as convenience sampling selects the closest and convenient people, like young individuals. This method is chosen when the population is general and can be selected from anywhere (Said, 2021). Since the present research also included the participants as consumers who could be widely available, this method was chosen. However, relying upon a single social media platform like Instagram narrows reach and might introduce a platform virus because Instagram users cannot fully represent a broad consumer demographic in the UK's fast-fashion industry. For example, the behaviour and preferences of non-Instagram users, like the elderly population, might differ and limit generalizability.

Despite the limitation, the 100 respondents remained appropriate for this research because it provided sufficient data for statistical analysis (Sathyanarayana *et al.*, 2024), while aligning with the young adults who are known to consume fast fashion more (Koning *et al.*, 2024). This presents focused research where this demographic is more likely to engage in digital marketing.

The participant's minimum number was chosen as per directions in Kittur (2023), who stated that a minimum number of participants can be analysed using G*Power, which is freely available online and known as a priori power analysis. Recruitment was done by posts on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, which are frequented by consumers who engage with Fast Fashion. Darko, Kleib and Olson (2022) observed that social media helps in accessing a diverse population. The recruitment strategy involved an invitation to participants to complete an online survey, which was hosted on Google Forms. Recruitment messaging emphasised the relevance of the study towards digital marketing and sustainability in the fast fashion industry, which appealed to individuals having a keen interest in fast fashion. The survey link was distributed through digital forums and influencers who promoted ethical consumption practices to reach a demographically diverse participant set.

The participants were drawn from the UK region, being consumers who preferred fast fashion, aged between 18-50. The study also focused on individuals who had prior experience shopping in fast fashion brands or were exposed to different digital marketing strategies, like a brand campaign or influencer promotions. The participants' ages ranged between 18 to 50

years, with a mean of 28.7 years. This age range reflected the core demographic of being digital consumers in fast fashion. A 52.4% female and 38.8% male population was consistent with the fact that women primarily buy fashion products.

Participation was voluntary, and there were no monetary incentives or course credits provided. The motivation for participation was relevant to the research topic and an opportunity to contribute to studies on digital marketing and sustainability in fast fashion. Since the participant population was carefully described, the study ensured that the findings could be generalisable and relevant to the broad UK fast fashion consumer base.

3.3 Design

The research design was correlational and focused on the exploration of the relationship between perceived sustainability, Digital strategies, Brand awareness and purchase behaviour in the UK fast fashion industry.

The independent/predictor variable(s)

Digital strategies were measured through survey items that adjust the participant's exposure and perception of social media marketing, Influencer campaigning and online brand communication.

Challenges while building trust which was evaluated through items which captured participants' concerns about credibility and transparency in sustainability claims.

The dependent/criterion variable(s)

Perceived sustainability was measured by Likert scale items that assessed the views of participants on sustainability practices in fast fashion brands.

Brand awareness is captured by questions which evaluate familiarity with and recognition of fast fashion brands.

Purchasing intentions are measured through self-reported likelihood of participants who are buying from a fast fashion brand which promotes sustainability.

There was no formal control or experimental group which was used in the research since it was not experimental research. The study analysed the responses of the participants as per their perceptions and experiences. The criteria and predictor variables were thoroughly analysed among the subjects, where participants were categorised as per their reported engagement with digital strategies.

Design

A correlational design was chosen as it allowed the study to examine the strength and direction of relationships among digital strategies and the aforementioned dependent variables. Asamoah (2014) also supported this by stating that a correlational study determines similarities or differences between variables. The data was collected using cross-sectional methods, as it was collected at a single point in time. This method is chosen for surveys which involve direct observations, rating scales and demographic information, which leads to data for correlation studies (Asamoah, 2014).

A correlational design was chosen over an experimental design because the study's objective examined the existing relationships as compared to other manipulating variables. It enabled the identification of trends and patterns across the fast fashion consumer base without controlling interventions, which made it practical and aligned with the objective.

3.4 Materials

Primarily, the study used a self-structured closed-ended questionnaire to assess consumer perception, awareness, and behaviour regarding sustainable fashion in UK fast fashion. This questionnaire included different sections on demographics, Perception and awareness of sustainability, digital channel influence, trust, role of influencers and consumer behaviour. These sections allowed the collection of data which aligned with the objective of the research. Close-ended questions have predefined responses which were chosen as they facilitate speedy responses, easy answering and reduction of reliance upon the communication skills of the participants (Hyman and Sierra, 2016). For instance, questions about sustainability awareness required the participants to rate their familiarity with responses such as "somewhat familiar", and "very familiar" while other options involved purchasing behaviour by including "monthly", "weekly" or "rarely".

Survey Constructs

The questionnaire used a Likert scale for perception and attitude-based questions. Joshi *et al.* (2015) stated that the Likert scale is a fundamentally psychometric tool in education and social sciences. The need for identification of the perceived need for quantification is dependent upon the necessity of transformation of an individual's subjectivity to objective reality. Although perception, attitude and opinion are qualitative attributes, they can only be quantitative due to amendment into objectiveness. Joshi *et al.* (2015) presented the effectiveness of the Likert scale as the most frequently used psychometric tool in social science

and education. It is effective because of the ability to transform the subjective response into objective data, especially for qualitative attributes like attitude and opinion. Tanujaya *et al.* (2023) also found it effective to measure attitude by responses to agree or disagree with some statements. The questionnaire has adopted similar wordings of a Likert scale, like "very satisfied". Koo and Yang (2025) stated that by reversing the wording of some items, participants can be encouraged to provide more accurate answers.

Participants were instructed to rate the responses on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated least importance or not important at all; 5 indicated a high agreement and high importance. The format ensured that consistent data was collected.

For instance, *how essential is sustainability when shopping for fast fashion?* Had the responses in the form of 1 meant "Not important at all" and 5 meant "Very important"

Questionnaire Measures

The first section was ***Demographic,*** which assessed the gender, age and shopping preferences.

The example questions included "What is your age?" where response options range from under 18 to 45 to 50

The second section was on ***Perception and Awareness***, which evaluated familiarity with sustainable fashion and the importance of sustainability while making purchasing decisions.

The example question included "How important do you think sustainability is for you when purchasing a fast fashion product?" where responses ranged from "very important" to "not important at all"

The third section was about ***Digital channels influence***, which explored the influence of online platforms like social media, brands and brand websites.

The example question included "Which of the digital platforms influence your purchasing decision?", like online advertisements or social media.

The next section was about ***Trust and issues***, which explored the trust-building factors and the issues while making brand sustainability claims.

Example questions included "What factors contributed most towards trust building in a brand sustainability claim?", like transparency or recommendations from influencers.

The next section included ***the Influencer's role***, which explored the impact of digital influencers while making purchasing decisions and their qualities.

The example question included "How influential have digital influences been in shaping the purchase decisions for sustainable fashion projects?" which ranged responses from "very influential" to "not influential at all"

The next question included ***Consumer behaviour***, which investigated the frequency and drivers of fast fashion purchases.

Example questions included "How often do you make fast fashion purchases?" when options range from weekly or rarely.

Each construct was divided as per subscriber name, wherever applicable, which allowed a granular analysis of the participants' responses. For example, the Awareness or perception subscale was used for capturing familiarity and the perceived importance of sustainability. A high score indicated a great awareness and prioritising of sustainability. The Digital Channel subscale, which measured the influence of different platforms, was completed through the aggregation of individual channels, which calculated the overall influence. The trust subscale was evaluated by using factors that contribute to trust. High scores represent strong trust in the sustainability claims of brands. The influencer subscale included the perceived impact of influencers, where scores indicated levels of credibility and influence as per ratings of the respondents.

The participants responded by using the Likert scale ratings (1-5) or other categories. The possible sports were different as per the number of items in every subscale.

Respondents were instructed to select relevant options for every question, whether responses were captured using the Likert scale for attitude-based questions or category questions.

3.5 Procedure

The participants were recruited via an online platform and were debriefed about the study's purposes for the investigation of consumer perception and behaviour relating to sustainable fashion via a survey link. The survey was redirected to the questions after the participants acknowledged the consent form, whereby a digital questionnaire appeared before respondents. The participants accessed the information sheet, which outlined the objective, duration and confidentiality assurance. The informed consent was digitally obtained by ticking the consent box. The participants were asked to answer the survey questions sequentially, which started with demographic questions and moved to other sections. An estimated time of completion was 15-20 minutes. Written instructions were provided along with questions which

guided participants about selecting their responses (For example, select all that apply). When the survey was completed, participants were directed towards a debrief sheet, which explained the broad objective of the research. Copies of the information sheet, consent form and debrief sheet are pasted in the appendix.

Data Handling

The survey responses in which more than 50% of the questions were unanswered were excluded. The data, which showed a clear pattern of inconsistency, like the selection of the same option across each question with no alignment with the context, was flagged and also excluded after a review. Thirdly, any duplicate response that was identified through participant metadata was also removed to maintain validity.

Data Storage

The data was secured in a password-protected protected with access only to the researcher. The data file was encrypted to prevent any unauthorised access. The hard copies of data were not secured.

Retention

Complying with GDPR, personal data like email addresses during the survey was not collected. The raw data shall be retained for 3 years after completion, or the academic year requirements, after which it shall be deleted.

3.6 Ethics

Ethical considerations ensure participants ' dignity rights and well-being are properly safeguarded during research (Khan, 2024). Initially, the research approval was taken from the Ethical Approval Committee of the university (Appendix). The participants were provided with a detailed information sheet which explained the objectives, Purpose and procedures of the study. The participants were required to provide the signed consent form electronically by taking the acknowledgement box before they began the survey. Additionally, the participants' responses were anonymised to protect their identities. No personal identifiers like contact details or names were collected to ensure confidentiality, as also stated in Kyngäs, Mikkonen and Kääriäinen (2020). The data collected was stored securely in an online encrypted platform, which was only accessible to the researcher.

The participants were also informed withdrawal right, informed consent and the general data protection regulation.

3.7 Data analysis

The data, which was collected through the survey, was quantitatively analysed by using SPSS statistics. This method helped in analysing a large data set through inferential and descriptive tests. Roni and Djajadikerta (2021) also stated that it can be applied by people with no experience in technical analysis.

Descriptive statistics included measuring central tendency and dispersion, which were used for summarising the participants' demographic and overall responses. Frequency distribution and percentages were calculated to understand trends among perceived sustainability, Purchasing intention and brand awareness.

Inferential statistics, including correlation analysis, where Pearson's correlation coefficient was used for examination of the relationship between perceived sustainability and digital strategy, purchasing intention and brand awareness. Regression analysis was incorporated to determine the predictive power of digital strategies on purchasing intentions.

Q1: Pearson school relation coefficient was applied for evaluation of a relationship amongst digital strategies and perceived sustainability; Digital strategy and brand awareness.

Q2: A descriptive statistic, along with frequency analysis, was used for the identification of common patterns of trust building and its barriers for brands.

Q3: Regression analysis was used to determine the predictive power of digital strategies, like influencer marketing, that define purchasing intentions.

This method was chosen for analysis because of the user-friendly interface, as supported by Rahman and Muktadir (2021), which has made it visible for performing a complex statistical analysis without any extensive knowledge of programming. Additionally, this method allows for an efficient handling of survey data and the survey responses were checked for completeness, where any incomplete or invalid entries were not found. The Criterion variable and predictor were numerically coded for the statistical analysis, and the tests were chosen based on the data and research objectives, which ensured that they aligned with the hypothesis.

4.0 Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Q1 What is your age?

- **Under 18**
- **18–24**
- **25–34**
- **35–44**
- **45–50**

Statistics

Age

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		3.0891
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		.86138

Figure 7 Q1 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

56 respondents are of the age 25-34, which means that middle-aged people are interested in sustainable fashion, possibly due to the information about it on social media, and the updated codes of ethics.
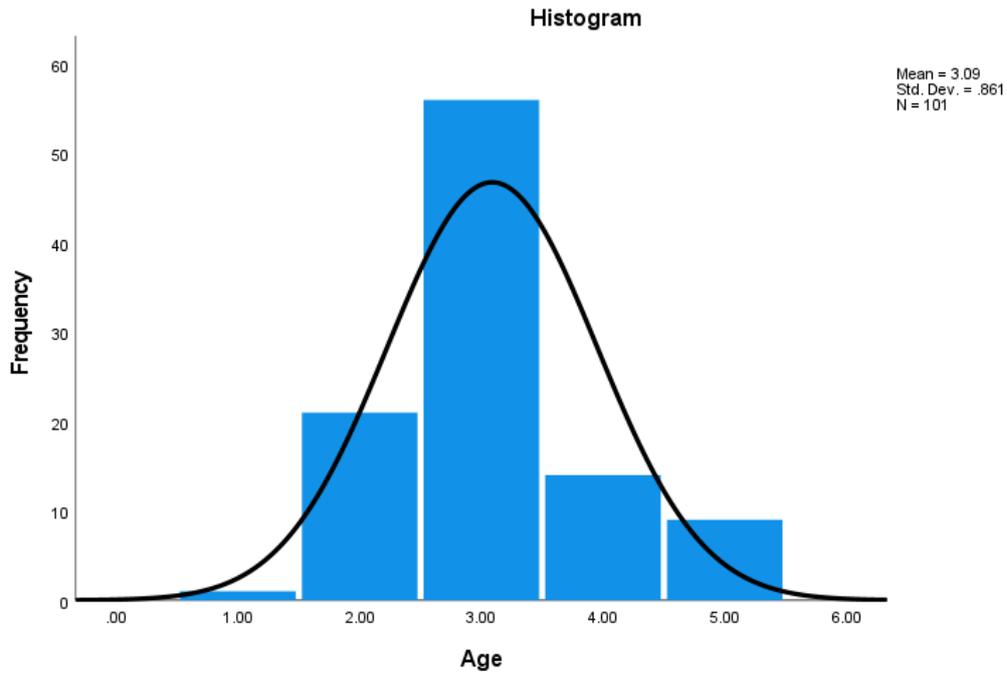
Figure 8 Q1 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q2: What is your gender?

- **Male**
- **Female**
- **Non-binary**
- **Prefer not to say**

Figure 9 Q2 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

The prevalent respondent 52 is female, thus implying that females are more involved in the issues of sustainability in fashion. Gendered division could influence the perception and manner of actions regarding fast fashion ethics.

Histogram

Mean = 1.70
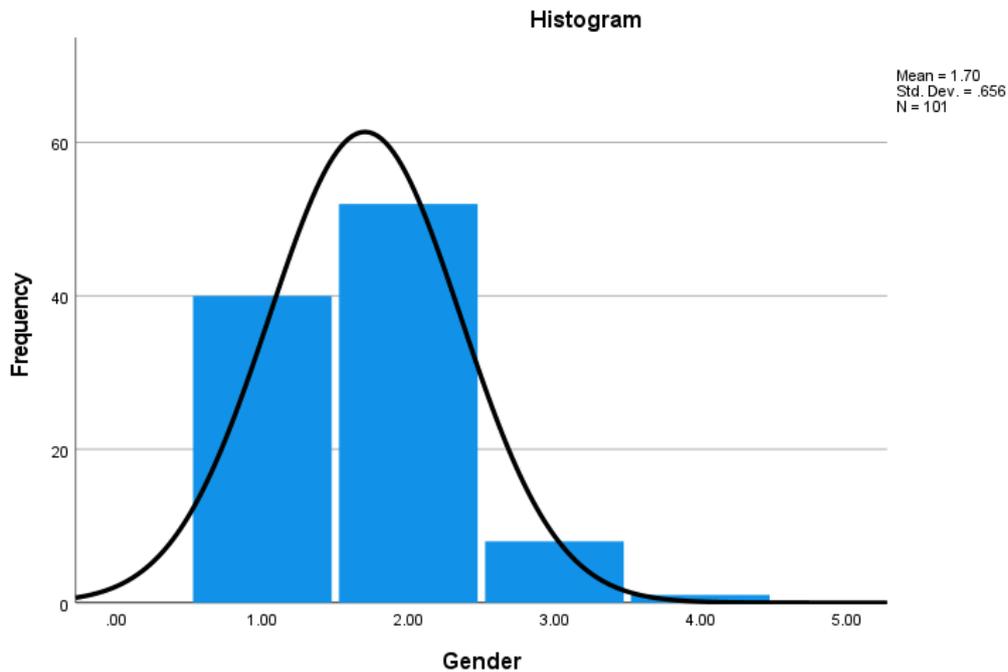Std. Dev. = .656
N = 101

Figure 10 Q2 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q3. How do you usually shop for fashion?

- **Online**
- **In-store**
- **Both Equally**

Statistics

HowUsuallyShopForFashion

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.3366
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		.81581

Figure 11 Q3 Descriptive Statistics

Most respondents (56) purchase online and in-store equally, indicating a two-armed dependence on the Internet (digital) and physical fashion channels to expose themselves to sustainability.
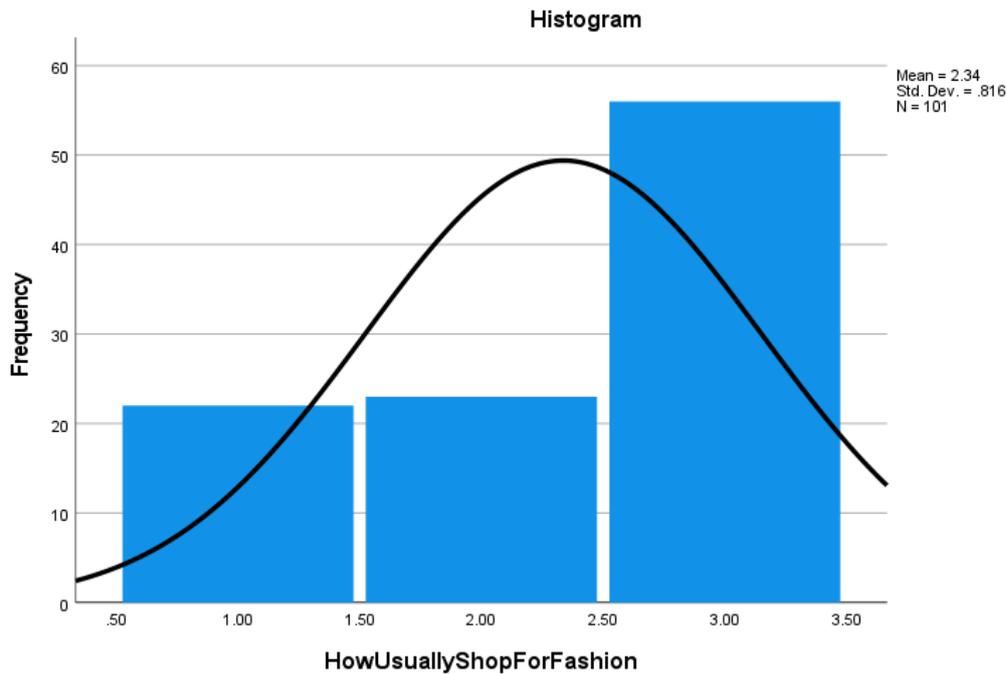

Figure 12 Q3 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q4: How often do you notice fast fashion brands sharing specific sustainability efforts (e.g., water savings, carbon reduction) on their websites or apps?

Options:

- **Never**
- **Rarely**
- **Sometimes**
- **Often**
- **Very Often**

Statistics

FrequencyOfNoticingFastFashio

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.7228
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		1.01113

Figure 13 Q4 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

The greatest number of responses was sometimes (39), which was indicative of moderate awareness of sustainability communication. This signifies how the digital touchpoints of the brand messaging are inconsistent regarding sustainable practices.
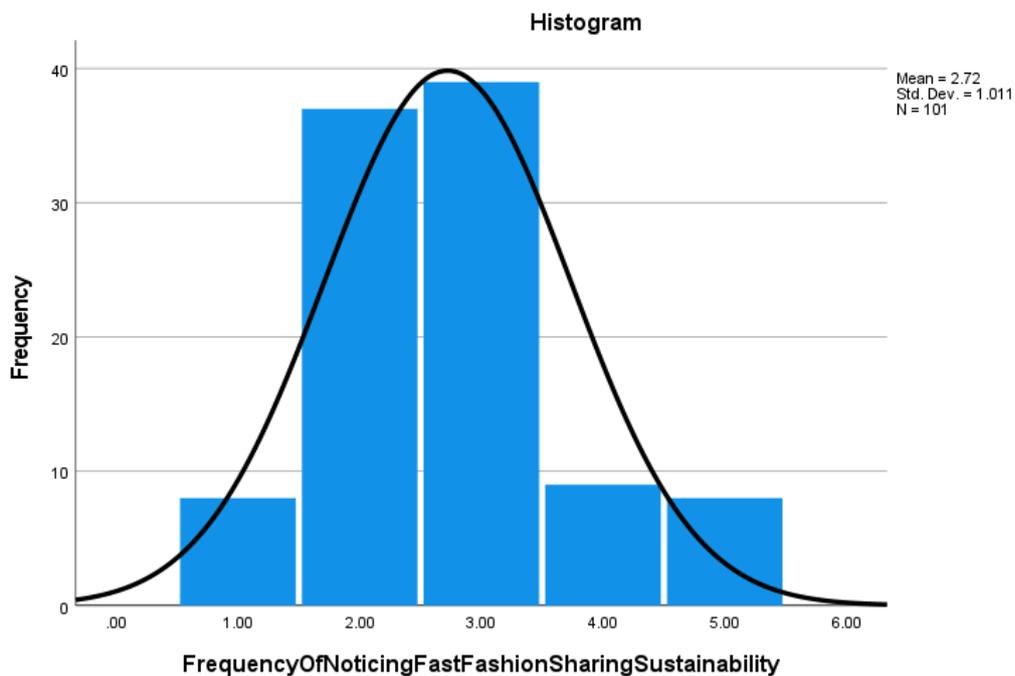

Figure 14 Q4 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q5: How effective do you find digital platforms (websites, social media) in communicating fast fashion brands' use of sustainable materials?

Options:

- **Not Effective**
- **Slightly Effective**
- **Moderately Effective**
- **Effective**
- **Very Effective**

Statistics

EffectivenessDigiPltfrmsCommu

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.7129
Median		3.0000
Mode		2.00
Std. Deviation		1.19446

Figure 15 Q5 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

Slightly Effective has a lead of 29.7%, the possible value of the same being that consumers would perceive some use to digital sustainability messages, but there is a need to enhance message clarity and contact.
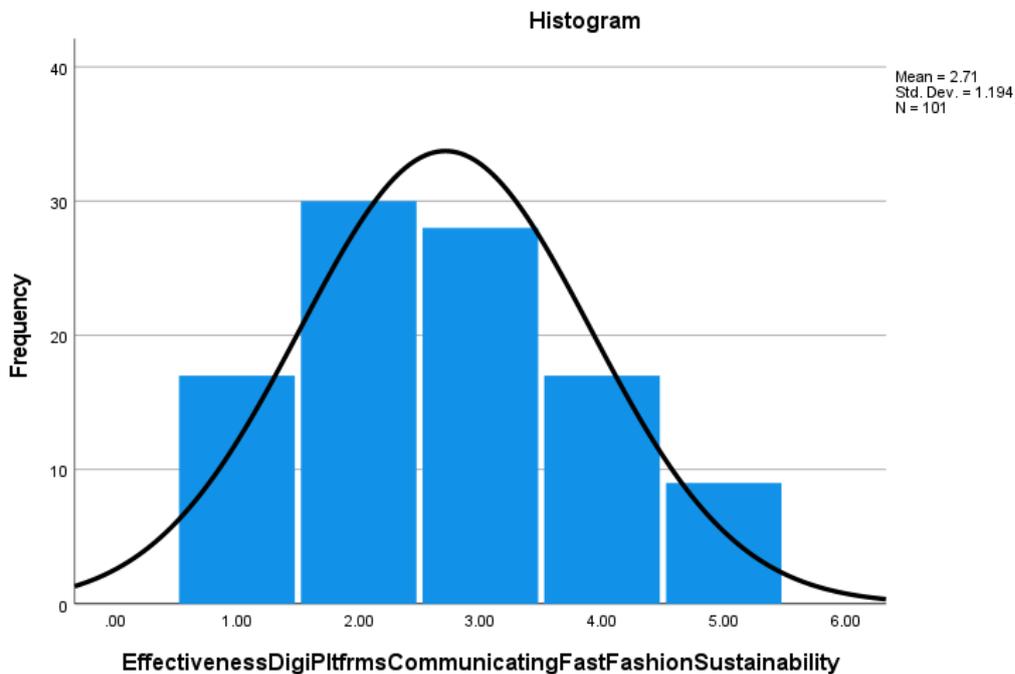
Figure 16 Q5 Histogram

Q6: How likely are you to engage with interactive features like QR codes that highlight a brand's sustainability efforts?

Options:

- **Very Unlikely**
- **Unlikely**
- **Neutral / Not Sure**
- **Likely**
- **Very Likely**

Statistics

LikelihoodEngmntInteractivFeatu

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.8515
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		1.16950

Figure 17 Q6 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

The most 27.7% are Neutral to get involved, which implies being uncertain of interactive sustainability tools. QR code helps brands achieve credibility and transparency.
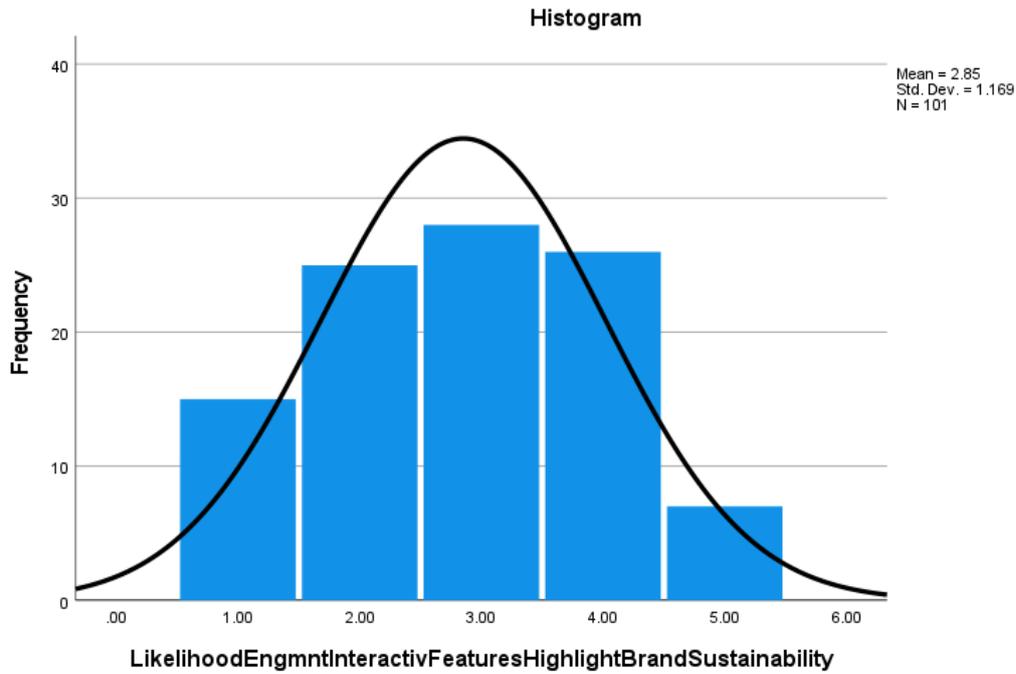
Figure 18 Q6 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q7: How likely do social media campaigns make a great influence on your perception of a brand's sustainability?

Options:

- **Very Unlikely**
- **Unlikely**
- **Neutral / Not Sure**
- **Likely**
- **Very Likely**

Figure 19 Q7 Descriptive Statistics

Most responses were obtained in the statement of likely, with 33 responding that social media has some effect on consumers in regard to sustainability and brand image.
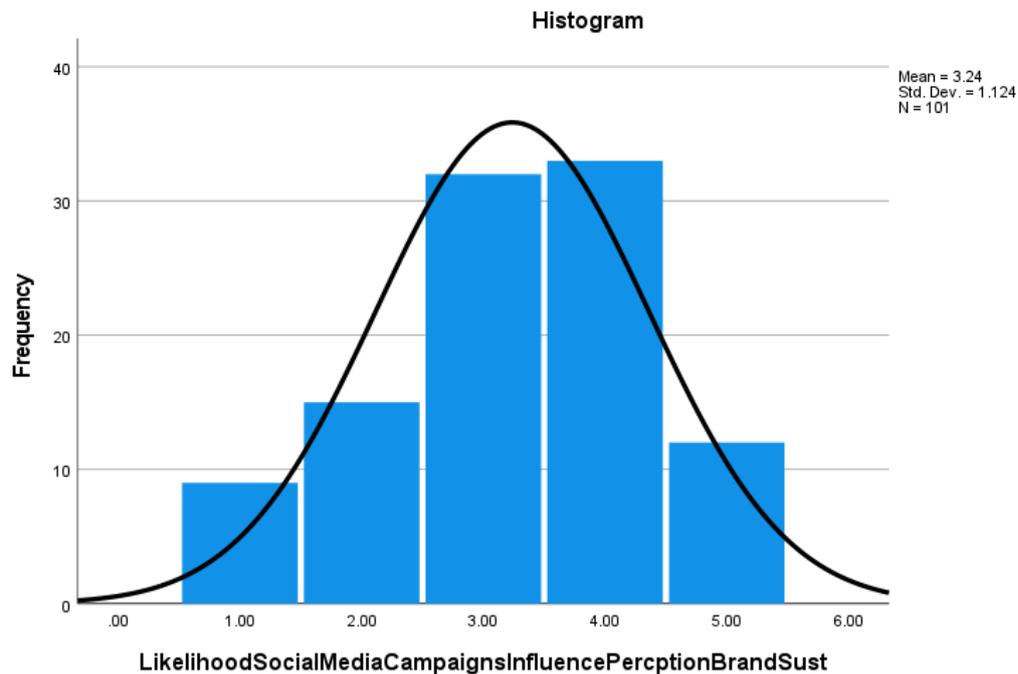
Figure 20 Q7 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q8: Do "behind the scenes" videos showing ethical practices impact your trust in a fast fashion brand?

Options:

- **No Impact**
- **Slight Impact**
- **Moderate Impact**
- **High Impact**
- **Strong Positive Impact**

Statistics

BehindScenesVideosOnEthicalF

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		3.2178
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		1.14546

Figure 21 Q8 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

There is dominance in the response of moderates with 34 responses, which implies that ethical imagery has moderate effects on the trust and authenticity of the brands to the consumers.
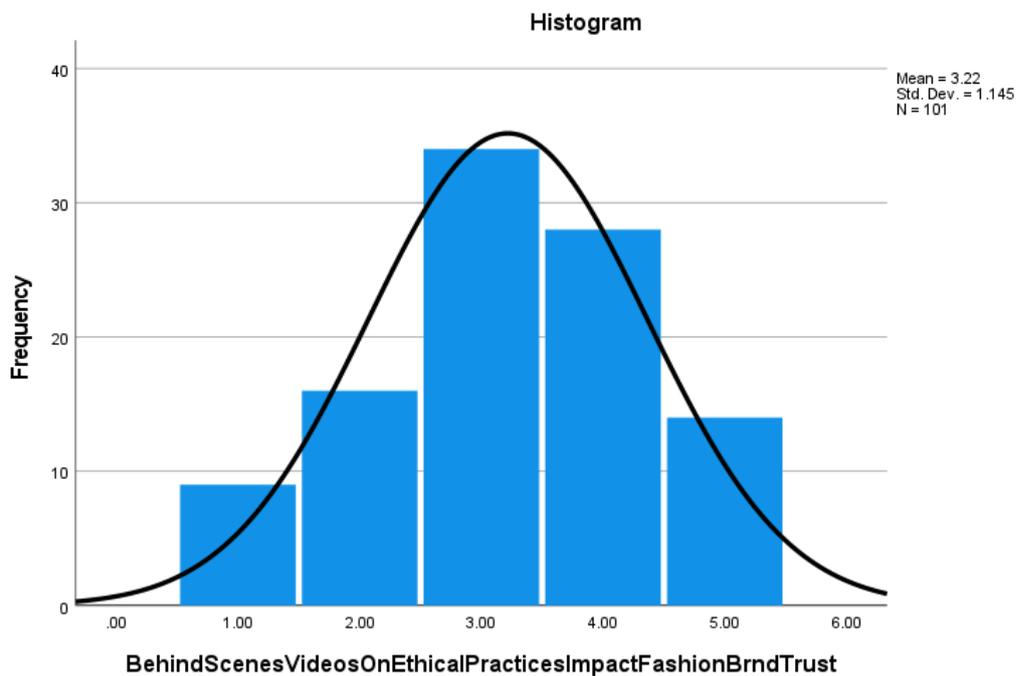
Figure 22 Q8 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q9: How likely are you to believe any sustainability claims made by fast fashion brands on digital platforms?

Options:

- **Very Likely**
- **Likely**
- **Neutral / Not Sure**
- **Unlikely**
- **Very Unlikely**

Statistics

LikelihoodBelievingSustainabilit

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.8416
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		1.10211

Figure 23 Q8 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

The most usual was neutral/not sure (33.7%), which demonstrates the scepticism of consumers or their indecisiveness in terms of digital sustainability claims, and the necessity of message verifiability is pertinent in this respect.
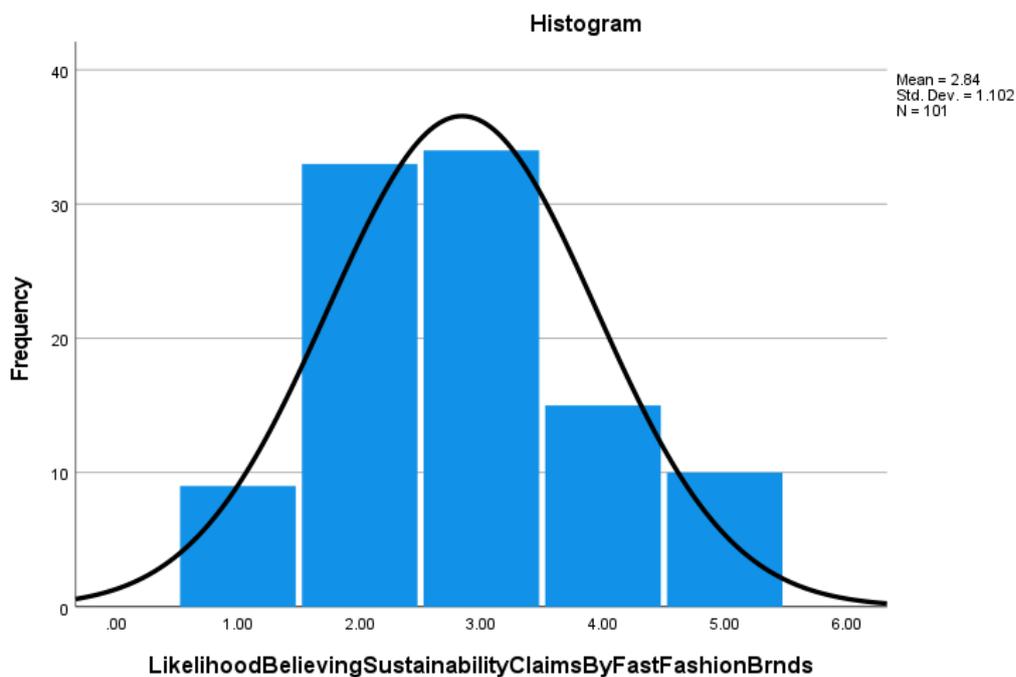
Figure 24 Q9 Histogram

Q10: Is there anything else you consider when evaluating a brand's sustainability?

Options:

- **Ethical labour practices**
- **Transparency in the supply chain**
- **Use of eco-friendly or recycled materials**
- **Sustainable packaging**
- **Independent sustainability certifications**

Statistics

FactorsConsideredEvaluatingSu

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.5743
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		1.17768

Figure 25 Q10 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

The majority (40), headed by sustainable packaging, highlighting the sustainability of the packaging work, is a key issue in the trust and sustainability evaluation of consumers.
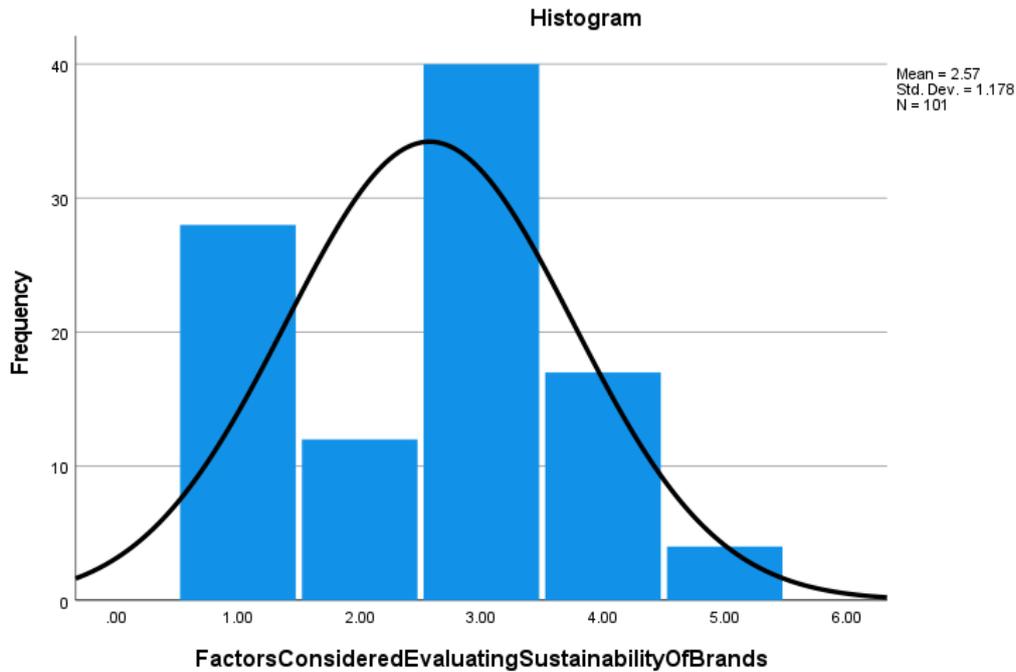
Figure 26 Q10 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q11: How important is it that brands regularly update their sustainability progress on websites or social media?

Options:

- **Not Important**
- **Slightly Important**
- **Moderately Important**
- **Very Important**
- **Extremely Important**

Figure 27 Q11 Descriptive Statistics

With 48 responses being told under the category of Very Important, the consumers would like to see sustained and publicised sustainability. Long-term trust cannot be based upon static claims.
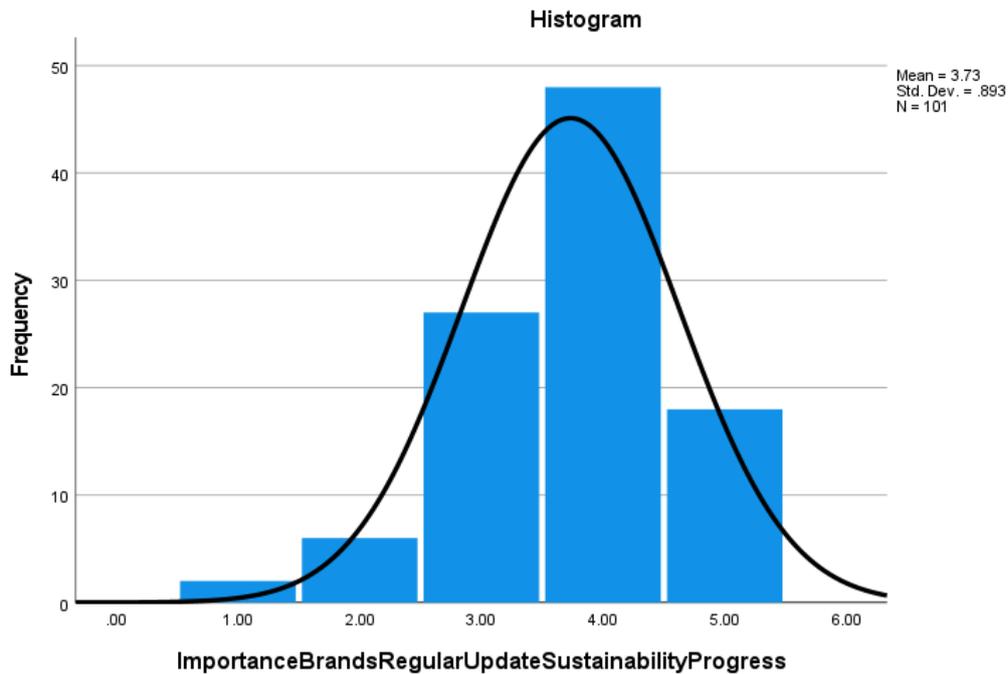
Figure 28 Q11 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q12: How often do you notice conflicting sustainability information across a brand's digital channels?

Options:

- **Never**
- **Rarely**
- **Sometimes**
- **Often**
- **Very Often**

Statistics

FrequencyNoticingConflictingSu

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.9703
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		1.00454

Figure 29 Q12 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

'Sometimes' with 47.5% portrays a lot of reluctance among platforms, which influences the reliability of brands and voids the consumer's understanding.
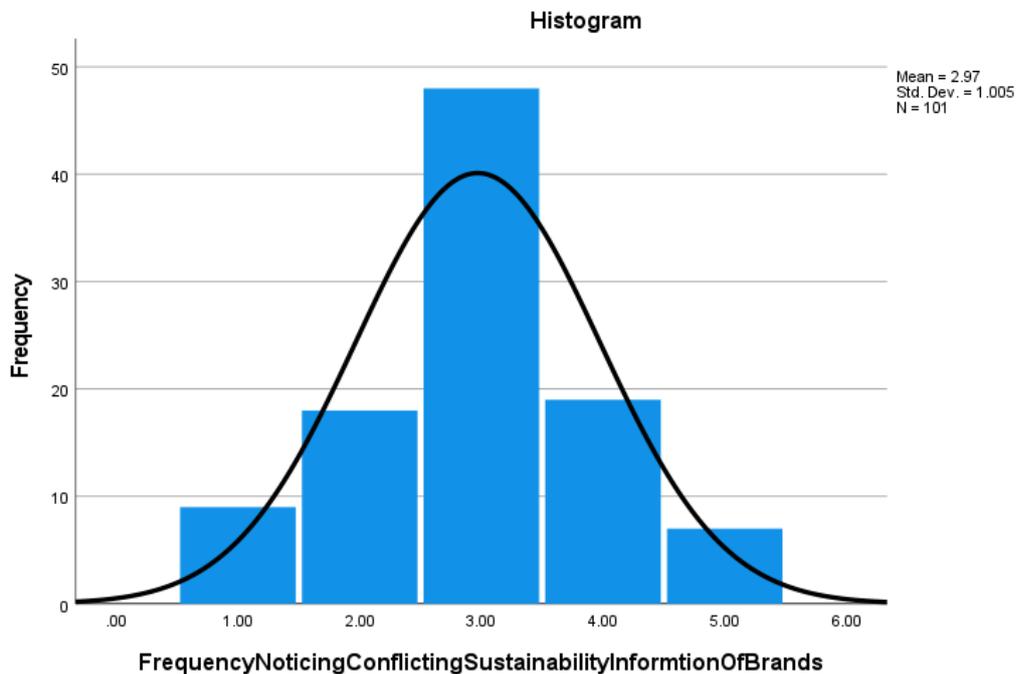
Figure 30 Q12 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q13: How much does the use of vague terms like "eco-friendly" without evidence reduce your trust?

Options:

- **Not at all**
- **Slightly**
- **Moderately**

- **Considerably**
- **Significantly**

Statistics

ExtentVagueTermsLikeEcoFrien

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		3.4752
Median		4.0000
Mode		3.00[a]
Std. Deviation		1.12778

a. Multiple modes exist.
The smallest value
is shown

Figure 31 Q13 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

The moderate and considerable, with 32 responses each, demonstrate that it minimises trust. Consumers accept no less in terms of evidence-based sustainability language--ambiguity raises suspicion and greenwash.
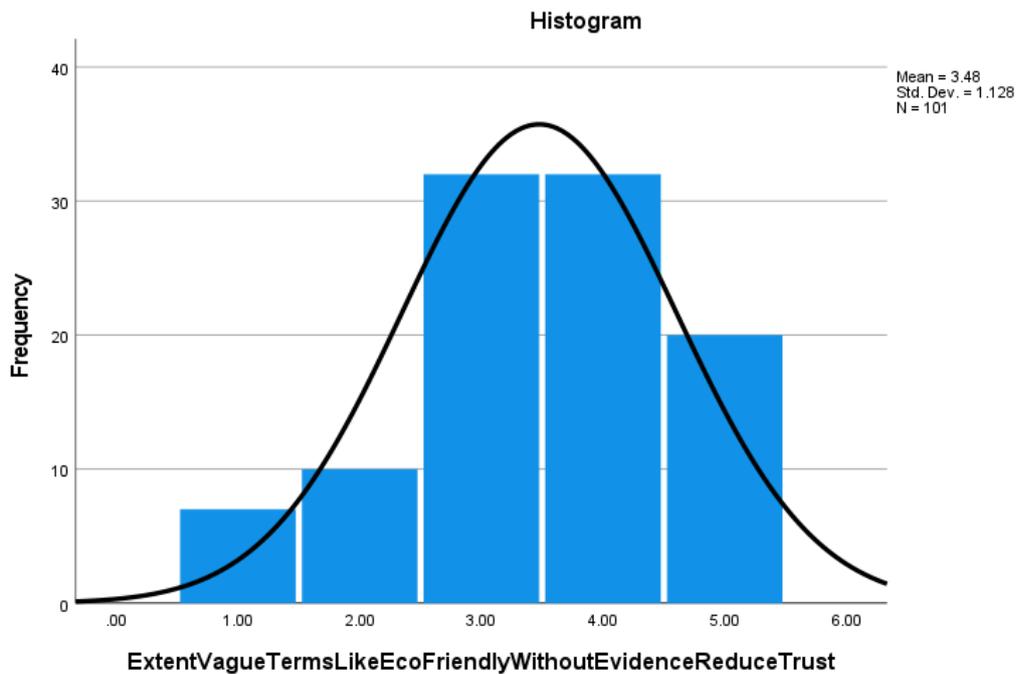
Figure 32 Q13 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q14: How likely are you to trust a brand that does not publish annual sustainability reports online?

Options:

- **Very Unlikely**
- **Unlikely**
- **Neutral / Not Sure**
- **Likely**
- **Very Likely**

Statistics

LikelihoodTrustingBrandsNotPu

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.5743
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		1.04256

Figure 33 Q14 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

There were 37 'Neutral' responses when the respondents were asked to trust a brand that does not publish annual sustainability reports online. The annual updates make people unsure in order to be accountable and authoritative.
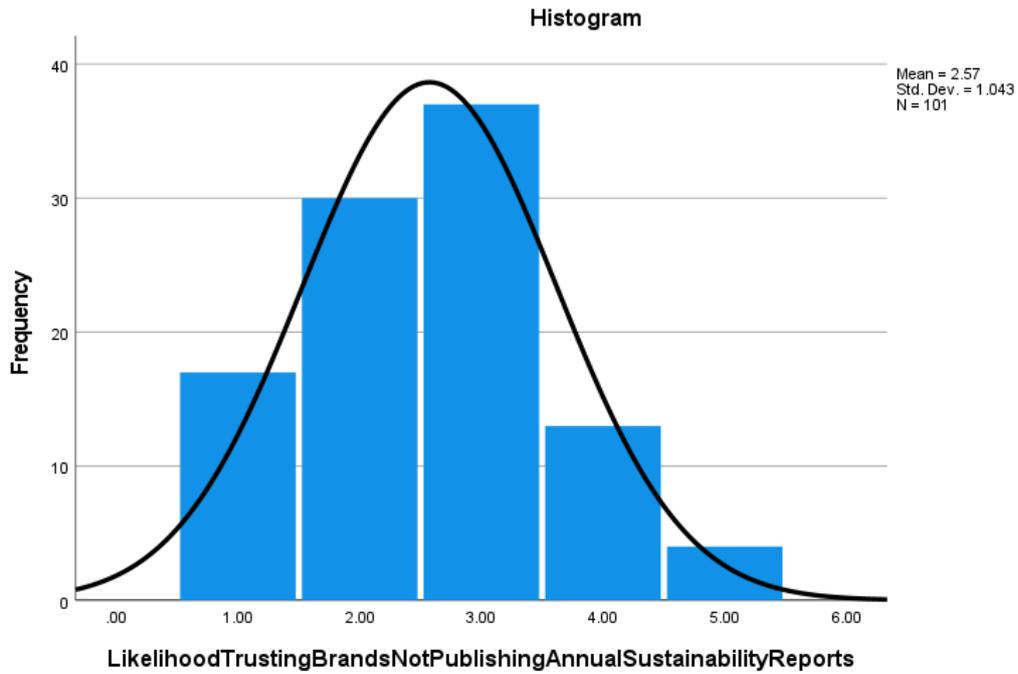
Figure 34 Q14 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q15: Do you agree that fast fashion brands are genuinely committed to sustainability efforts?

Options:

- **Strongly Agree**
- **Agree**
- **Neutral / Not Sure**
- **Disagree**
- **Strongly Disagree**

Statistics

FastFashionBrandsGenuinelyC

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		3.2475
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		.94240

Figure 35 Q15 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

The percentage of responses of Not Sure (38.6 %) indicates a lack of certainty of true commitment to consumers. The superficial action is regarded as unsatisfactory as businesses without further responsibility.
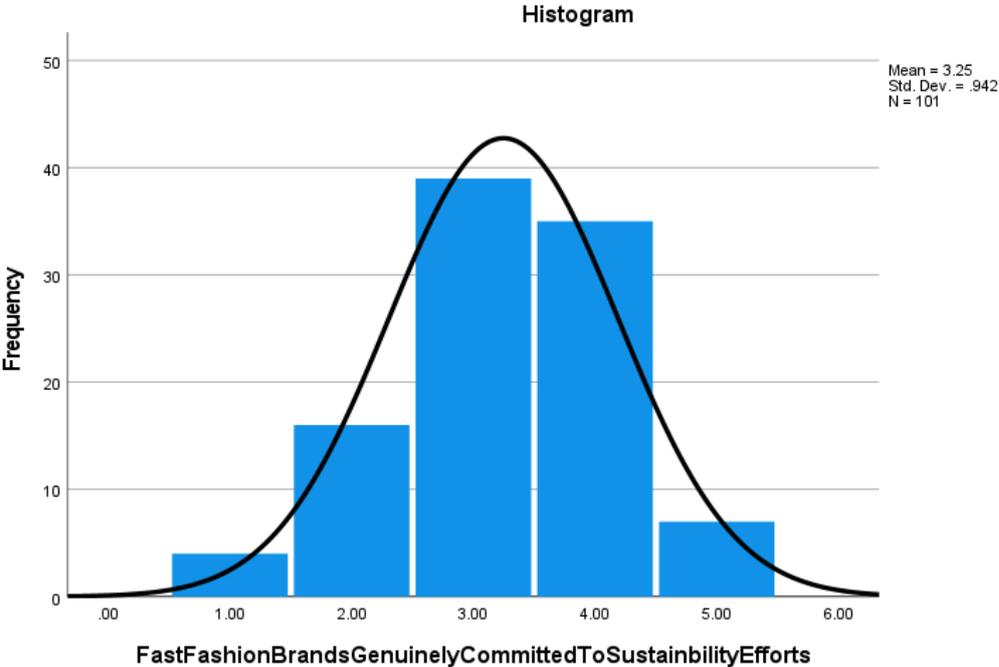
Figure 36 Q15 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q16: Do you think live Q&A sessions or live streams help address doubts about sustainability claims?

Options:

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Not Sure**

Statistics

LiveSessionsStreamsAddressD

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.1287
Median		2.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		.91283

Figure 37 Q16 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

The most common answer is 'Not Sure,' with 49 responses. It allows considering that interactive sessions may or may not increase transparency, resolve doubts, and create more trust in brand statements.
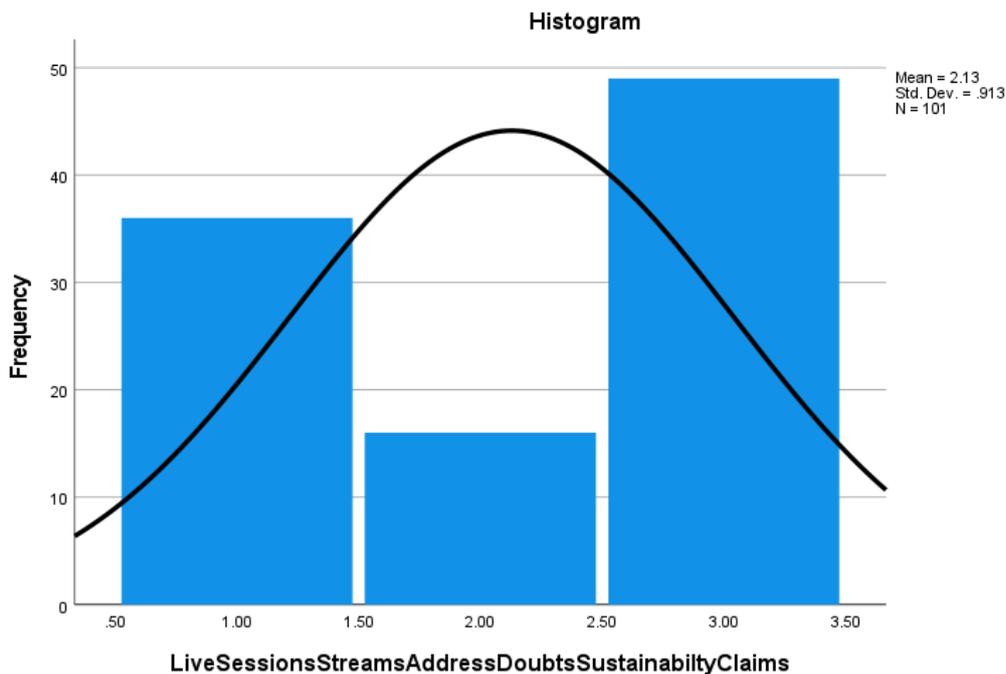
Figure 38 Q16 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q17: What specific action would make you trust a fast fashion brand more regarding its sustainability efforts?

Options:

- **Regularly publishing verified sustainability reports.**
- **Showing full transparency about production processes**

- **Using third-party certifications (e.g., Fair Trade, GOTS)**
- **Providing clear proof of material sourcing and impact**
- **Featuring real stories from workers and factories**

Statistics

SpecificActionsoMakeTrustFastF

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.7921
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		1.07997

Figure 39 Q16 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

The option of using third-party certifications had the most responses at 37, indicating that consumers regard the validation of third parties as the most trustworthy in determining the sustainability efforts in fast fashion.
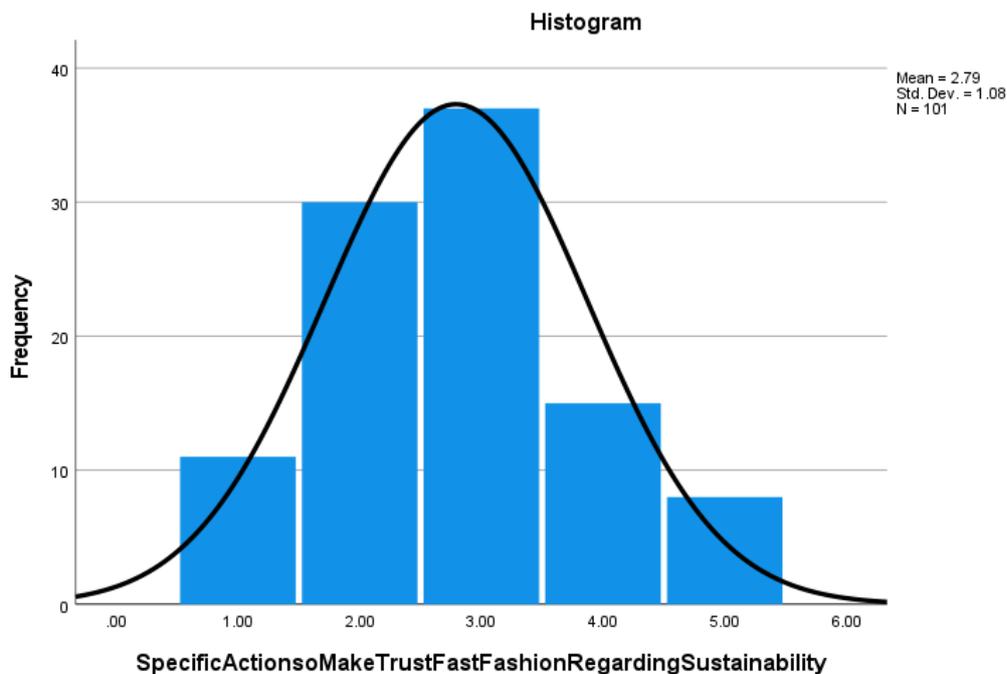
Figure 40 Q17 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q18: How often do you follow digital influencers who promote sustainable fashion?

Options:

- **Very Often**
- **Often**
- **Sometimes**
- **Rarely**
- **Never**

Statistics

FrequencyFollowingDigitalPlatfo

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.8812
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		1.16006

Figure 41 Q18 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

The average of 2.88 and the mode of 3.00 show that sustainable fashion-influencer followers predominately have the answer of Sustainable fashion flourishing: I follow sustainable fashion influencers to "Sometimes" with a medium level of variation in the response (SD = 1.16).
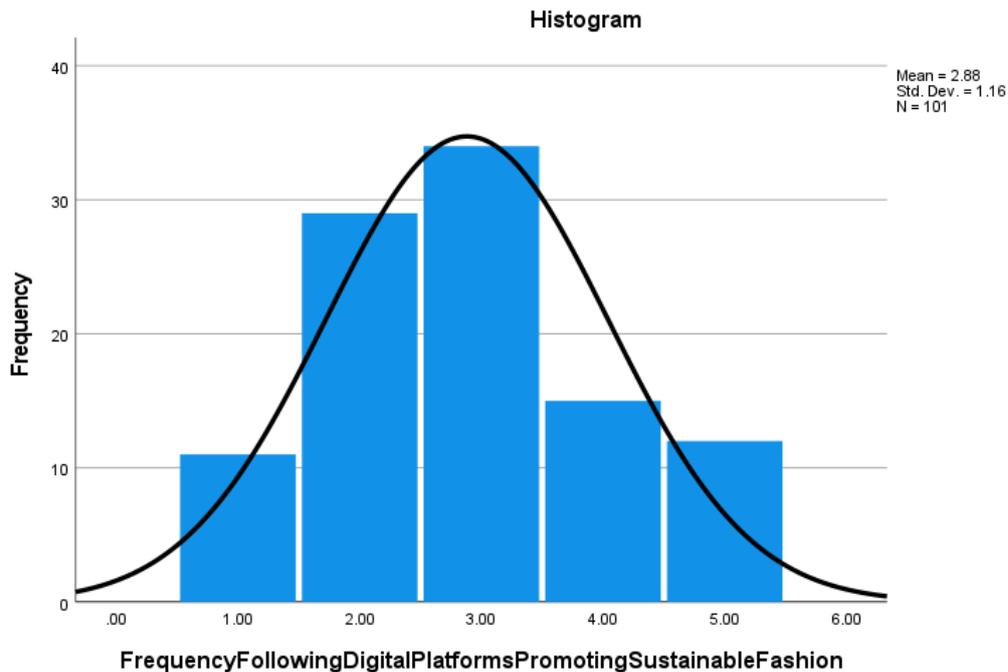
Figure 42 Q18 Histogram

Q19: How influential are these digital influencers in your decision to buy sustainable fashion?

Options:

- **Not Influential**
- **Slightly Influential**
- **Moderately Influential**
- **Influential**
- **Very Influential**

Statistics

InfleunceOfDigitalInfluencersInB

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.7228
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		1.14122

Figure 43 Q19 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

A mean of 2.72 and a mode of 3.00 indicate that the respondents tend to rate digital influencers as having a moderately influential level on their sustainable fashion decisions, with a moderate level of deviation (SD = 1.14).
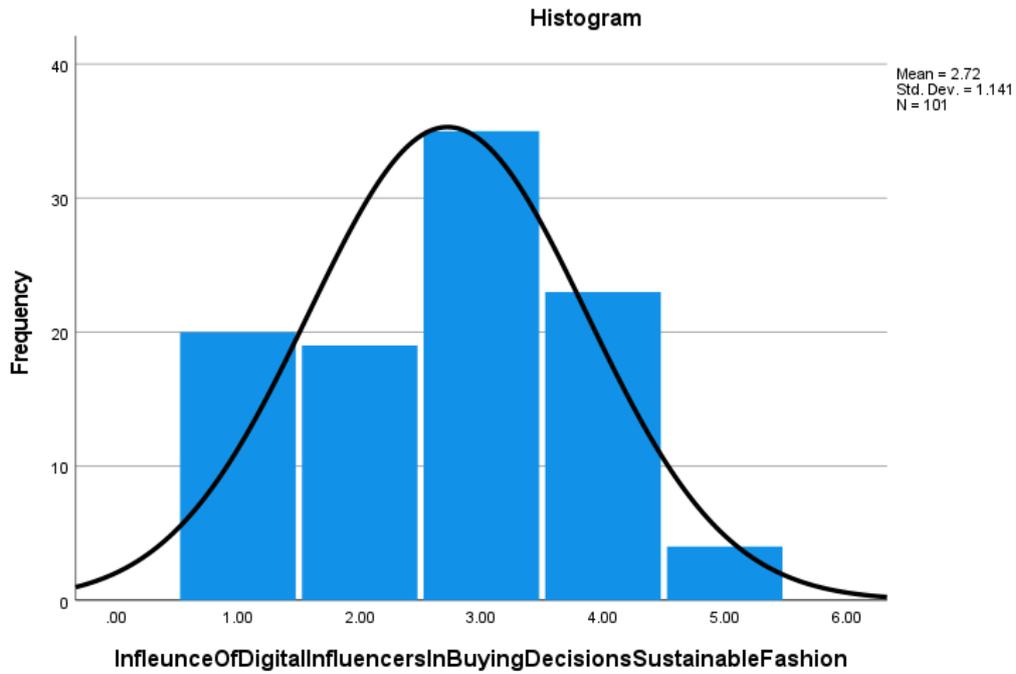
Figure 44 Q19 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q20: What qualities make an influencer's sustainability message credible?

- **Transparency**
- **Expertise**
- **Authenticity**
- **Relatability**
- **Other**

Figure 45 Q20 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

The mean (2.64) and mode (3.00) show that respondents prefer qualities that are in the middle ranking, e.g., authenticity or relatability, and the SD (0.91) tells about a slight asymmetry of perceptions when it comes to influencer credibility characteristics.
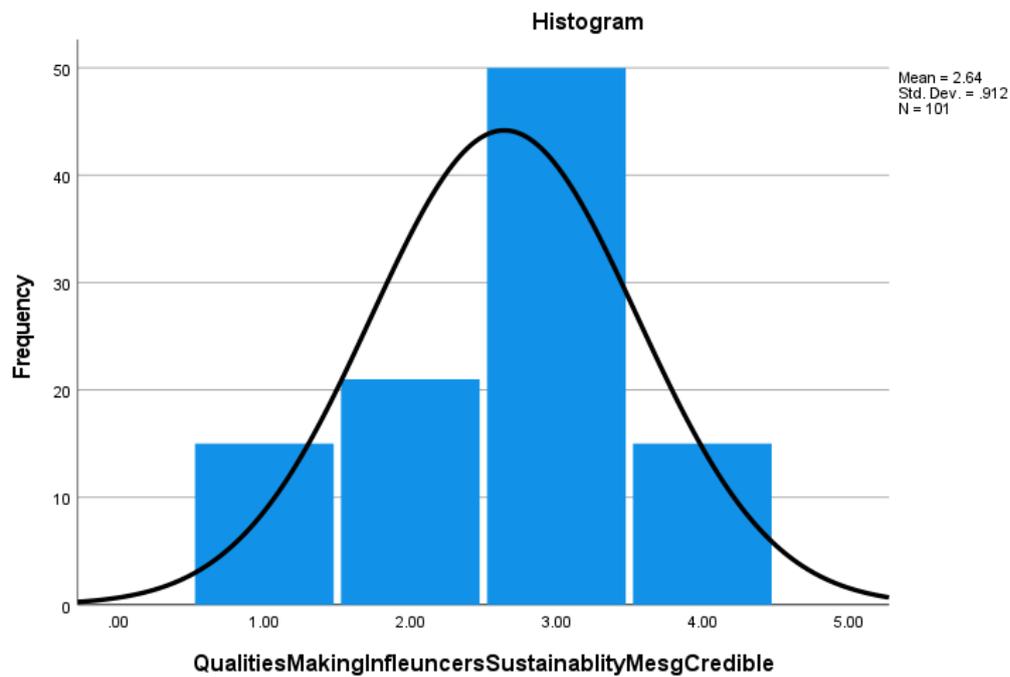
Figure 46 Q20 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q21 What qualities make an influencer's sustainability message credible?

- **Transparency**
- **Expertise**
- **Authenticity**
- **Relatability**
- **Other**

Statistics

LikelihoodResearchingBrandsS

N	Valid	12
	Missing	89
Mean		2.67
Median		3.00
Mode		1[a]
Std. Deviation		1.303

a. Multiple modes exist.
The smallest value
is shown

Figure 47 Q21 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

Generalisation is limited by the low number of responding valid cases (n=12). Nevertheless, an average of 2.67, with a median of 3.00, indicates a moderate possibility of conducting research on brand sustainability, even though there is a great variation (SD = 1.303).
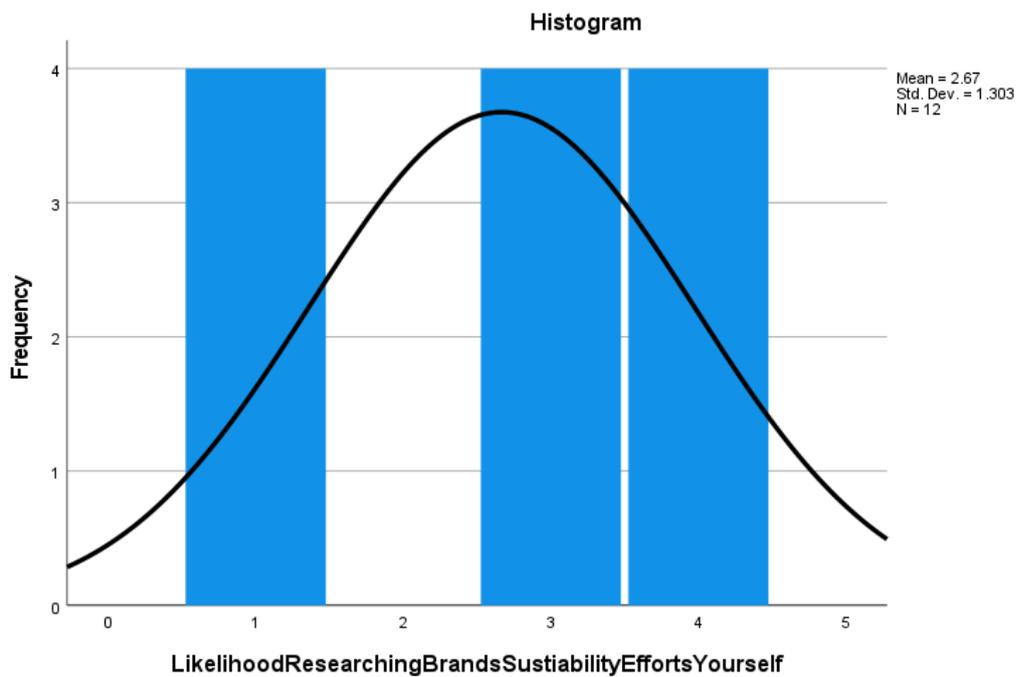
Figure 48 Q21 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q22 After seeing influencer content about sustainability, how likely are you to research the brand's sustainability efforts yourself?"

- **43.7%**

- **26.2%**
- **16.5%**
- **9.7%**
- **4.9%**

Statistics

LikelihoodPurchasingFastFashi

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.9901
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		.97463

Figure 49 Q22 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

The mean (2.99), median (3.00), and mode (3.00) suggest participants were moderately likely to research a brand's sustainability after seeing influencer content, with low variation (SD = 0.97463).
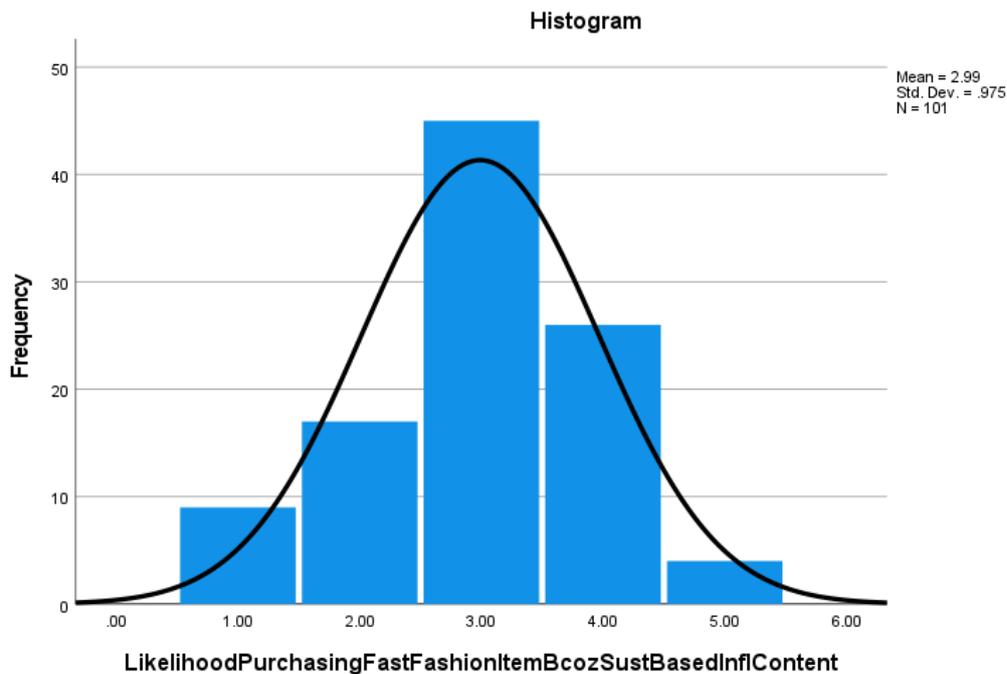
Figure 50 Q22 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q23 How likely are you to purchase a fast fashion item because of its sustainability, based on influencer-generated content?

103 responses

- **Very Unlikely**
- **Unlikely**
- **Neutral / Not Sure**
- **Likely**

Statistics

WaysInfleuncersBetterPromoteS

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.9802
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00ᵃ
Std. Deviation		1.09526

a. Multiple modes exist.
The smallest value
is shown

Figure 51 Q23 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

Q23 demonstrates an objective attitude of 101 respondents (Mean: 2.98; Median/Mode: 3.00) to buy fast fashion as a result of sustainable influencer content. The moderate spread (SD = 1.095) implicates the even-handed opinions, and the largest part of the answers are aggregated around the middle point of a 5-point scale.
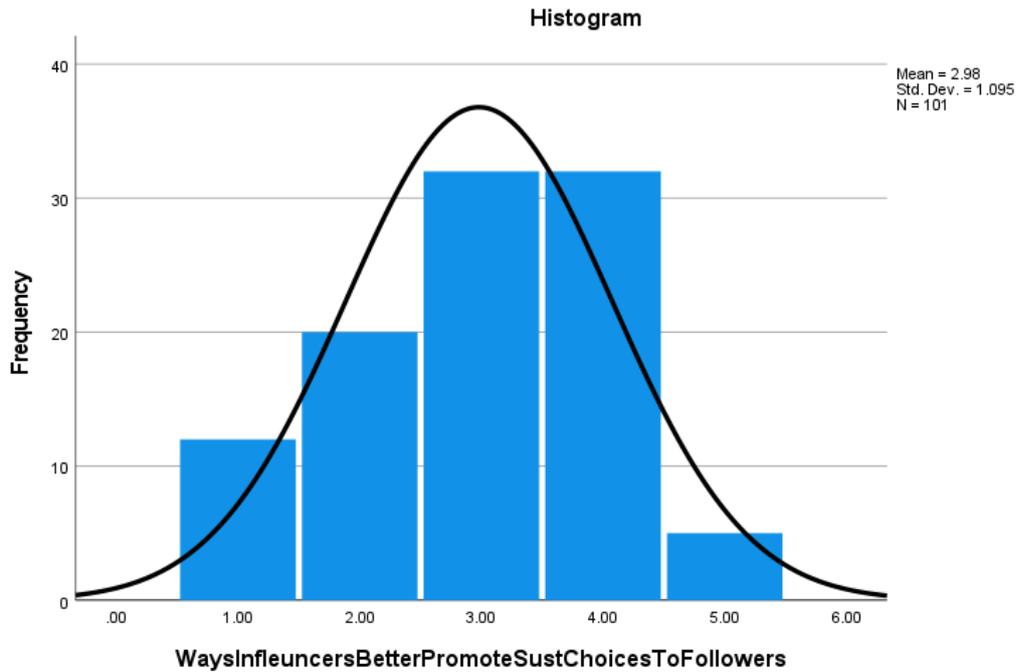
Figure 52 Q23 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q24 In what ways do you think influencers could better promote sustainable fashion choices to their followers?

- Being transparent about paid partnerships and sponsorships
- Educating followers on the environmental impact of fast fashion
- Sharing detailed information about sustainable brands and materials
- Promoting second-hand or slow fashion alternatives
- Showing how to style the same outfit multiple ways

Figure 53 Q24 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

In Q24, the respondents have a moderate agreement (Mean: 3.07; Median/Mode: 3.00) that influencers can enhance the promotion of sustainable fashion. The SD of 1.36 is an indication of a diversity of opinions, but the general opinion tends to be around the middle of the scale.
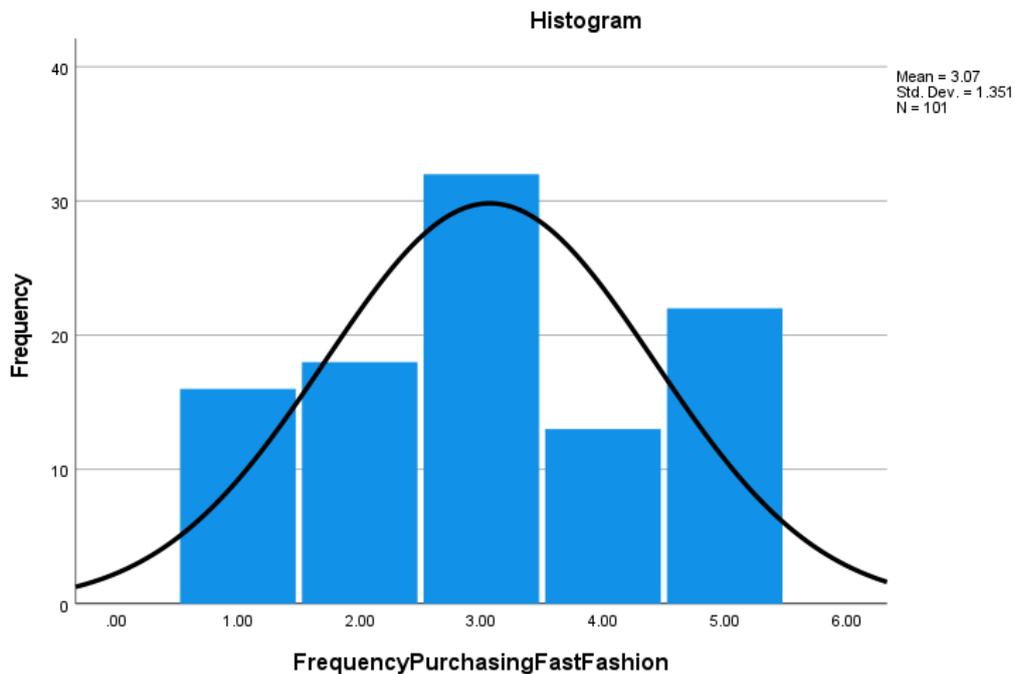
Figure 54 Q24 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q25 How often do you purchase fast fashion?
- **Weekly**
- **Monthly**
- **Every few months**
- **Rarely**
- **Never**

Statistics

IfPayMoreFastFashionProductIfIt

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.3960
Median		3.0000
Mode		3.00
Std. Deviation		.70823

Q25 shows below average fast fashion purchase frequency (Mean: 2.40), but the Median and Mode of 3.00 indicate that some of the respondents purchase occasionally. The low SD (SD = 0.708) shows that there is general agreement.
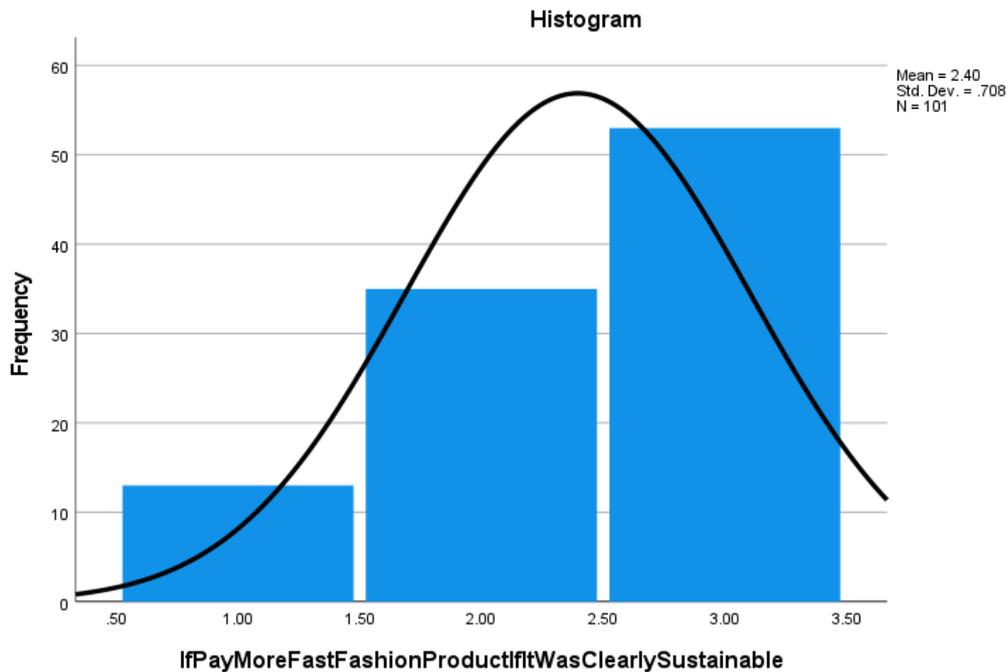
Figure 56 Q25 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q26 Would you pay more for a fast fashion product if it were clearly sustainable? 103 responses

- **Yes**
- **Maybe**
- **No**

Statistics

PerceiveEnvConcernsRegarding

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		1.7921
Median		2.0000
Mode		2.00
Std. Deviation		.40784

Figure 57 Q26 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

Q26 shows a high level of unwillingness to pay more for sustainable fast fashion (Mean 1.79, Median/Mode 2.00). The extreme low standard deviation (SD = 0.408) indicates that there is a high agreement among the respondents that premium pricing of sustainability should not be the case.
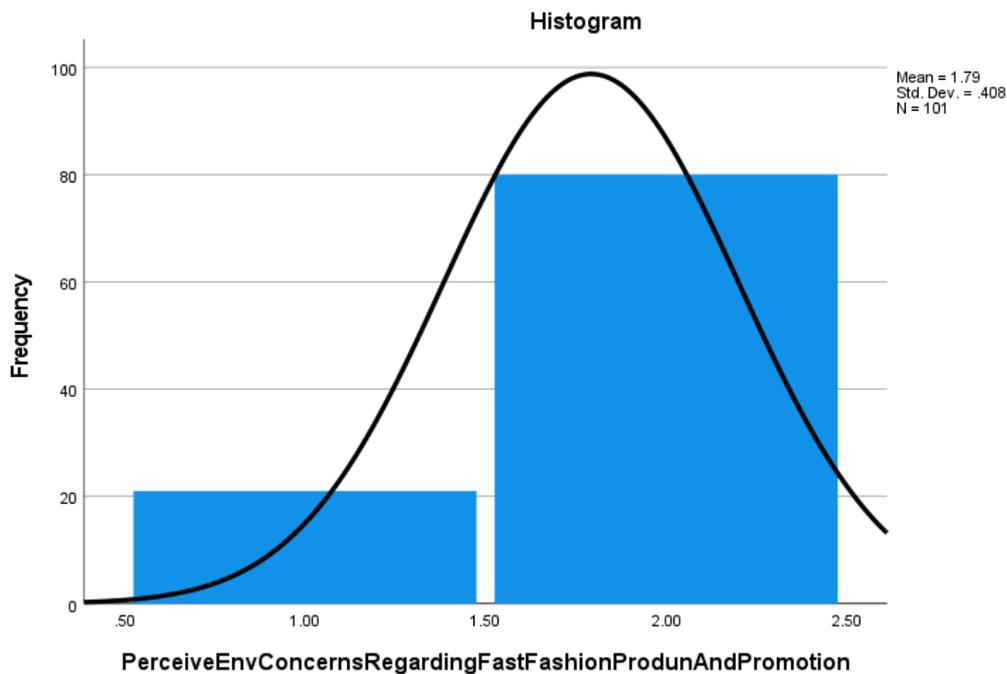
Figure 58 Q26 Histogram

Source: Self-Made

Q27 How do you perceive the environmental concerns associated with fast fashion production and their promotion of sustainable products?

Options:

- **A serious issue — sustainability claims often distract from the real damage.**

- **A moderate concern — some efforts are genuine, but more action is needed.**
- **Confusing — it's hard to tell what's real and what's just marketing.**
- **Not very concerning — I believe brands are improving gradually.**
- **Not a concern at all — I trust fast fashion brands to manage it responsibly.**

Statistics

EnvironmentalConcernsOnFastF

N	Valid	101
	Missing	0
Mean		2.0693
Median		2.0000
Mode		1.00
Std. Deviation		1.03206

Figure 59 Q27 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Self-Made

Q27 indicates that the majority of respondents (Mode: 1.00) are very aware of the environmental impact of fast fashion, but the few above the mean score increase the average to 2.07. Mixed and skewed concern is indicated by moderate variability (SD = 1.03).

Histogram

Mean = 2.07
Std. Dev. = 1.032
N = 101
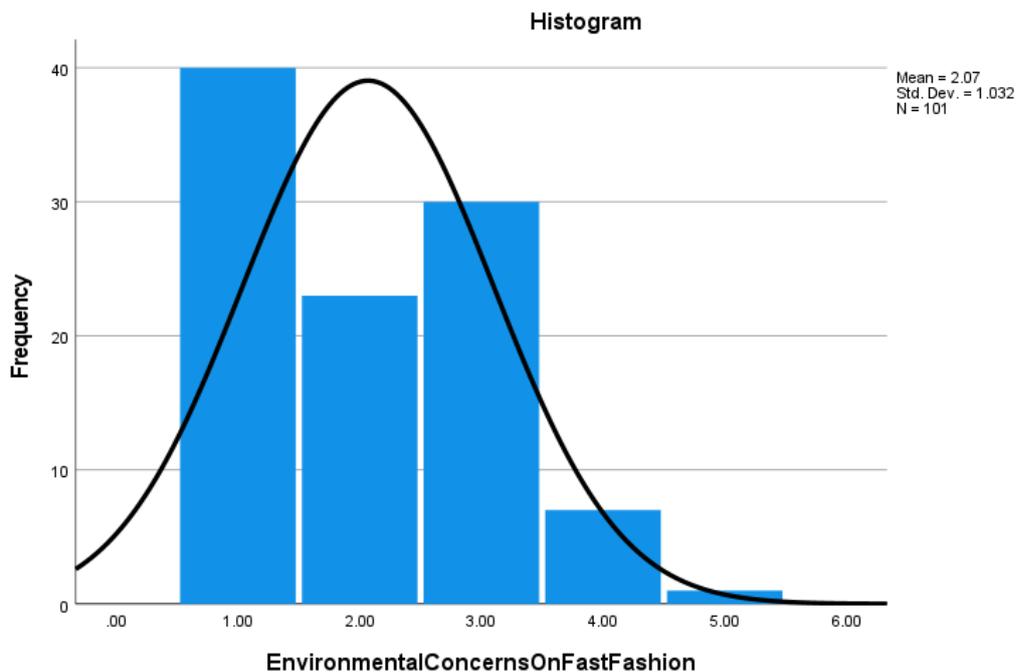
Figure 60 Q27 Histogram

4.2 Correlation and Regression Analysis

4.2.1 Q4 and Q5: Frequency of noticing sustainability efforts of fast fashion brands on digital websites and their effectiveness.

Correlations

		FrequencyOf NoticingFastF ashionSharin gSustainabilit y	Effectiveness DigiPltfrmsCo mmunicating FastFashionS ustainability
FrequencyOfNoticingFast FashionSharingSustaina bility	Pearson Correlation	1	.323**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	102.238	38.960
	Covariance	1.022	.390
	N	101	101
EffectivenessDigiPltfrms CommunicatingFastFash ionSustainability	Pearson Correlation	.323**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	38.960	142.673
	Covariance	.390	1.427
	N	101	101

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 61 Q4 and Q5 Correlation Analysis

Source: Self-Made

The correlation (r = .323, p = .001) implies that the more individuals see sustainability initiatives used by fast fashion companies on digital platforms, the more likely they are to perceive them as more useful when it comes to conveying sustainability messages.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
					Change Statistics				
1	.323[a]	.104	.095	1.13630	.104	11.499	1	99	.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), FrequencyOfNoticingFastFashionSharingSustainability

b. Dependent Variable: EffectivenessDigiPltfrmsCommunicatingFastFashionSustainability

Figure 62 Q4 and Q5 Model Summary

Source: Self-Made

The regression model is significant (F = 11.499, p =. 001), and the result demonstrates that the ability to perceive the existence of sustainability efforts is a predictor of perceived effectiveness of digital platforms. Nonetheless, the model only accounts for 10.4 percent of the variance ($R^2 = 0.104$) and therefore its effect on the variance is relatively small.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.847	1	14.847	11.499	.001[b]
	Residual	127.826	99	1.291		
	Total	142.673	100			

a. Dependent Variable: EffectivenessDigiPltfrmsCommunicatingFastFashionSustainability

b. Predictors: (Constant), FrequencyOfNoticingFastFashionSharingSustainability

Figure 63 Q4 and Q5 ANOVA Analysis

Source: Self-Made

The ANOVA findings (F = 11.499, p = .001) provide support for the fact that the regression model is significant and explains 14.847 units of variance in effectiveness perceptions, with 127.826 units that are unexplained, which means that the model is meaningful but has its limitations.

4.2.2 Q7 and Q8: Effects of efforts such as social media campaigns and 'behind the scenes' videos on ethical practices in shaping perceptions towards brands.

Correlations

		LikelihoodSocialMediaCampaignsInfluencePercptionBrandSust	BehindScenesVideosOnEthicalPracticesImpactFashionBrndTrust
LikelihoodSocialMediaCampaignsInfluencePercptionBrandSust	Pearson Correlation	1	.356**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	126.297	45.772
	Covariance	1.263	.458
	N	101	101
BehindScenesVideosOnEthicalPracticesImpactFashionBrndTrust	Pearson Correlation	.356**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	45.772	131.208
	Covariance	.458	1.312
	N	101	101

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 64 Q7 and Q8 Correlation Analysis

Source: Self-Made

The nature of the relationship is moderate and statistically significant (r = .356, p < .001), which implies that the participants who are impacted by the social media campaigns are also more inclined to trust fashion brands that post behind-the-scenes videos on ethical practices. (N = 101)

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
					Change Statistics				
1	.356[a]	.126	.118	1.05567	.126	14.328	1	99	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), BehindScenesVideosOnEthicalPracticesImpactFashionBrndTrust

b. Dependent Variable: LikelihoodSocialMediaCampaignsInfluencePercptionBrandSust

Figure 65 Q7 and Q8 Model Summary

Source: Self-Made

The regression model is statistically significant (F = 14.328, p < .001), indicating that the behind-the-scenes ethical videos are statistically significant in predicting the likelihood that

the social media campaigns have on the perception of the brand, but the model only explains 12.6 percent of the variance ($R^2 = .126$).

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.968	1	15.968	14.328	<.001[b]
	Residual	110.329	99	1.114		
	Total	126.297	100			

a. Dependent Variable: LikelihoodSocialMediaCampaignsInfluencePercptionBrandSust

b. Predictors: (Constant), BehindScenesVideosOnEthicalPracticesImpactFashionBrndTrust

Figure 66 Q7 and Q8 ANOVA Analysis

Source: Self-Made

The findings (F = 14.328, p < .001) support that the regression model is statistically significant, and 15.968 units of variance are explained and 110.329 units of unexplained, which means that behind-the-scenes videos have significant effects on perceptions that are formed by social media campaigns.

4.2.3 Q19 and Q22: Influence of digital influencers in shaping buying decisions and purchasing fashion content.

Correlations

		InfleunceOfDigitalInfluencersInBuyingDecisionsSustainableFashion	LikelihoodPurchasingFastFashionItemBcozSustBasedInflContent
InfleunceOfDigitalInfluencersInBuyingDecisionsSustainableFashion	Pearson Correlation	1	.060
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.548
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	130.238	6.723
	Covariance	1.302	.067
	N	101	101
LikelihoodPurchasingFastFashionItemBcozSustBasedInflContent	Pearson Correlation	.060	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.548	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	6.723	94.990
	Covariance	.067	.950
	N	101	101

Figure 67 Q19 and Q22 Correlation Analysis

Source: Self-Made

The r = .060, p = .548 is quite a weak positive correlation that indicates that there is no significant association between the effect that digital influencers have on the purchasing process, and the probability of purchasing a sustainable fashion item based on the information provided by the influencer. (N = 101).

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.060[a]	.004	-.006	.97775	.004	.363	1	99	.548

a. Predictors: (Constant), InfleunceOfDigitalInfluencersInBuyingDecisionsSustainableFashion
b. Dependent Variable: LikelihoodPurchasingFastFashionItemBcozSustBasedInflContent

Figure 68 Q19 and Q22 Model Summary

Source: Self-Made

The regression model is not significant (F = 0.363, p = 0.548) with a very weak correlation (R = 0.060) and only 0.4 percent of the variance is explained (R 2 = 0.004). This

implies that digital influencers do not play any significant role in predicting the propensity of consumers to buy sustainable fashion, depending on the content of the influencers.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.347	1	.347	.363	.548^b
	Residual	94.643	99	.956		
	Total	94.990	100			

a. Dependent Variable: LikelihoodPurchasingFastFashionItemBcozSustBasedInflContent

b. Predictors: (Constant), InfleunceOfDigitalInfluencersInBuyingDecisionsSustainableFashion

Figure 69 Q19 and Q22 ANOVA Analysis

Source: Self-Made

The result of the regression model is not significant, having an F-statistic of 0.363 and $p = 0.548$. It accounts for only 0.347 units of variance out of the total of 94.990, which means that 94.990 units remain unexplained, which means that the model fails to predict the outcome.

4.2.4 Q11 and Q12: Frequency of noting conflicting sustainability information and the Importance of brands regularly updating their sustainability progress on websites and social media.

Correlations

		ImportanceBrandsRegularUpdateSustainabilityProgress	FrequencyNoticingConflictingSustainabilityInformtionOfBrands
ImportanceBrandsRegularUpdateSustainabilityProgress	Pearson Correlation	1	.203*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.042
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	79.782	18.198
	Covariance	.798	.182
	N	101	101
FrequencyNoticingConflictingSustainabilityInformtionOfBrands	Pearson Correlation	.203*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	18.198	100.911
	Covariance	.182	1.009
	N	101	101

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Figure 70 Q11 and Q12 Correlation Analysis

Source: Self-Made

The Pearson correlation between how important brands is in keeping their sustainability work up to date and how often they notice that there are conflicting messages on sustainability was statistically significant, with a correlation of r =.203 and p =.042. It indicates that the participants more interested in receiving consistent information on sustainability by the brand are also likely to be aware of the inconsistencies regarding digital sustainability statements.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
					Change Statistics				
1	.203[a]	.041	.031	.98862	.041	4.247	1	99	.042

a. Predictors: (Constant), ImportanceBrandsRegularUpdateSustainabilityProgress

b. Dependent Variable: FrequencyNoticingConflictingSustainabilityInformtionOfBrands

Figure 71 Q11 and Q12 Model Summary

Source: Self-Made

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.151	1	4.151	4.247	.042^b
	Residual	96.760	99	.977		
	Total	100.911	100			

a. Dependent Variable: FrequencyNoticingConflictingSustainabilityInformtionOfBrands

b. Predictors: (Constant), ImportanceBrandsRegularUpdateSustainabilityProgress

Figure 72 Q11 and Q12 ANOVA Analysis

Source: Self-Made

Additional regressions revealed that the significance of regular sustainability updates described a small portion of variance (R^2 = .041, F (1,99) = 4.247, p = .042) in the variable notices (undermining keep) conflicting sustainability information. Although the relationship is modest, it signifies the presence of a significant pattern that should be considered in online brand communication.

4.2.5 Q8 and Q9: Beliefs and trust in sustainability claims of fast fashion brands because of behind the scene videos of ethical practices.

Correlations

		BehindScenesVideosOnEthicalPracticesImpactFashionBrndTrust	LikelihoodBelievingSustainabilityClaimsByFastFashionBrnds
BehindScenesVideosOnEthicalPracticesImpactFashionBrndTrust	Pearson Correlation	1	-.028
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.782
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	131.208	-3.515
	Covariance	1.312	-.035
	N	101	101
LikelihoodBelievingSustainabilityClaimsByFastFashionBrnds	Pearson Correlation	-.028	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.782	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-3.515	121.465
	Covariance	-.035	1.215
	N	101	101

Figure 73 Q8 and Q9 Correlation Analysis

Source: Self-Made

The results of the correlation analysis conducted using Q8 and Q9 indicate that the Pearson correlation coefficient between the perception that fast fashion brands that their claims about sustainability that are true and the effect of behind-the-scenes videos on ethical behaviour is negative and equals -0.028. Such a low negative correlation indicates that there is no meritorious linear relationship between exposure to ethical behind-the-scenes content and a rise in the consumer belief in such assertions. The probability value (p = .782) affirms that the answer is not statistically significant, which is to say that the relationship which is observed would have easily occurred as a result of chance happening on the sample size of 101 respondents.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
					Change Statistics				
1	.028^a	.001	-.009	1.10724	.001	.077	1	99	.782

a. Predictors: (Constant), BehindScenesVideosOnEthicalPracticesImpactFashionBrndTrust
b. Dependent Variable: LikelihoodBelievingSustainabilityClaimsByFastFashionBrnds

Figure 74 Q8 and Q9 Model Summary

Source: Self-Made

This conclusion can be further supported by looking at the model summary in more detail. The R value of 0.028 and R square of 0.001 show that the influence of behind-the-scenes ethical videos can only explain 0.1% of the difference in the belief in sustainability claims. Moreover, the adjusted R Square is negative (-0.009), and the model used is not good because it does not enhance the accuracy of prediction. The predictive capability is also poor (the standard error of the estimate is equal to 1.10724).

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.094	1	.094	.077	.782^b
	Residual	121.371	99	1.226		
	Total	121.465	100			

a. Dependent Variable: LikelihoodBelievingSustainabilityClaimsByFastFashionBrnds
b. Predictors: (Constant), BehindScenesVideosOnEthicalPracticesImpactFashionBrndTrust

Figure 75 Q8 and Q9 ANOVA Analysis

Source: Self-Made

ANOVA test also gave an F-value of 0.077 and a significance value of .782, which is a confirmation of there being no statistically significant relationship. Therefore, this type of video will not increase consumer confidence.

5.0 Discussions

5.1 Use of digital strategies influences the perceived sustainability and brand awareness of a fast fashion brand amongst UK consumers

This research highlights the fact that relationships between digital sustainability communication by fast fashion brands and UK consumers are uneasy and sometimes wary. The model was significant in proving the effectiveness of digital settings like websites and social media in relaying sustainable efforts to an extent (Q4 and Q5, r =.323, p=.001); however, the insignificance of the explanatory power (R^2 = 0.104) implies insufficient depth of confidence that consumers have in such initiatives. This corroborates the claims made by Sharma and Pandey (2023) that, despite the ability to raise awareness existing through digital strategies, consumer suspicion is still present due to not being deep enough and transparent enough.

Consumers demonstrated moderate reactance to QR codes and behind-the-scenes ethical videos (Q6 and Q8), but the rating of the belief in sustainability claims did not change significantly (r = –.028, p = .782). It proves the points expressed by Zhang *et al.* (2021), who claimed that online interactions should not be limited to purely formal measures to create real trust. Their low-level influence indicates that visual strategies fail to change perceptions unless they are credibly checked, which is in line with Shabbir *et al.* (2021), who outwardly pointed out that the brands that stimulate superficial green marketing tactics are frequently perceived as being unreliable.

On the one hand, social media campaigns weakly affected the perceptions in combination with ethical visual content (Q7 and Q8, r = .356, p < .001). This is in line with Gong and Janssen (2020), who indicated that even emotionally appealing information alongside ethical narrations would help improve brand trust. But since the regression model only explained 12.6% of the variance, it confirms the finding by Dwivedi *et al.* (2021) that the strengths of social media are usually overstated without the governing structural evidence, such as proven data or third-party certification.

Irregular messaging across digital platforms was also reported by consumers as a problem (Q11 and Q12, r = .203, p = .042). This supports the results identified by Verma and Chandra (2022) that disjointed digital communications decrease the levels of brand

cohesiveness and diminishes the credibility. Brands that either did not update the information frequently or employed indefinite terms, such as calling themselves eco-friendly without any corresponding evidence, met suspicion and matched what the literature has identified as greenwashing, an alarming issue (Rahman & Yadlapalli, 2021).

Moreover, the results supported the fact that brand commitment is still an area under question, as more than one-third of the respondents do not know whether sustainability claims are true (Q15). Such reluctance resonates with Singh *et al.* (2022), who outlined the discrepancy between the profit-maximisation marketing of fast fashion and the sustainability performance of the business. The use of influencer content should be combined with transparency and expertise, which were the top two criteria in terms of credibility (Q20). This is consistent with recommendations based on Goyal *et al.* (2021) regarding people increasing trust in digital spheres.

Although this study supports previous assumptions that digital strategies may be used as the means of increasing the awareness of sustainability (Sharma & Pandey, 2023; Gong & Janssen, 2020), it opposes more potent results addressed by Dwivedi et al. (2021) and Zhang *et al.* (2021) because the explanatory power here was weak (R 2 <= 0.126). This discrepancy implies that when unverified and consistent messaging is lacking, UK fast fashion consumers still remain sceptical in spite of greater exposure.

In summary, digital strategies have the potential to raise brand awareness and lead to sustainability perception, but that only works as long as they communicate consistently, evidence-based, and transparently. In the absence of it, the UK fast fashion consumer is interested, but not convinced.

5.2 Challenges fast fashion brands face while building consumers' trust through digital channels to promote sustainable purchase intentions

The discussion indicates a multifaceted interaction among consumer awareness, trust, and digital sustainability messages. According to the descriptive data, a demographic comprising individuals aged 25-34 years of age, was revealed to be the most receptive by indicating that middle-aged consumers who tend to frequent digital platforms, inclusive of fast fashion sustainability claims, are being exposed to it. Nevertheless, the amount of trust is still tenuous because it lacks coherence, caused by the existence of greenwashing, inconsistent messages, and ambiguous language. The cases of misleading sustainability claims found in the literature by Statista (2024) and Jolly and Butler (2024) were also confirmed in the findings-

47% of the respondents revealed inconsistencies (Q12), with 33.7% recording instances of indecisiveness whether to believe a sustainability message (Q9), indicating some doubt. Whereas regular updating related to sustainability was of great importance to many consumers (48), very few of them regarded digital platforms as efficient (Q5), which highlights the dissimilarity between expectation and the quality of communication.

This gap was strengthened by correlation analysis and regression analysis. This relationship between the variables was modest but still statistically significant, r = .323, p = .001, demonstrating that mere exposure is not enough to generate trust unless intended clarity and consistency are also there. In just the same way, mixed messages had a really big effect on trust (r =. 203, p =. 042), which is a note of caution in the article by Adamkiewicz *et al.* (2022) details the danger of confusing sustainability terms. Respectively, respondents were particularly sceptical of ambiguous terms like eco-friendly, lacking substantiation (Q13), which is in line with the concerns expressed by Evans and Peirson-Smith (2018). Although such initiatives as behind-the-scenes videos (Q8) did have some effect on trust (r = -0.028, p = .782), it can be seen that consumers are ready to pay more than lip-service visuals.

Higher methods of interaction (QR codes) were treated with suspicion (Q6), and even livestream broadcasts created doubt (Q16), which most likely indicates that, in the absence of transparency, digital attributes cannot guarantee credibility. Marko and Kus (2023) stressed the importance of environmental education; this result is consistent with the observation that the third-party certifications (Q17) were the most trusted measure. This implies that messaging online has to be evidence-based and not brand-led to limit scepticism.

There was also an overestimation of the role of the influencers. Though a significant portion (31.25%) of the respondents answered that they followed sustainable fashion influencers sometimes (Q18), the effect of influencers on sustainable purchases (r = .060, p = .548) was not statistically significant. This disputes the premises in neuromarketing experiments that influencers may have the ability to naturally elevate the credibility of brands. Instead of using influence, the respondents preferred authentic and verified content.

Although the current study supports Vassalo et al. (2024) and Back (2017) in terms of the importance of transparency, it goes against the neuromarketing findings that claim that an influencer by default contributes to credibility, as it was insignificant in the current experiment (p = .548). In a similar vein, the humble trust also clashes against the statements of Adamkiewicz *et al.* (2022) on how terminology alone might change the perception, suggesting that verified, third-party evidence might stand in the way of term clarity.

The discussion supports the publication of Vassalo *et al.* (2024), Hatley (2021a), and Back (2017), stating that transparency, ethics, and validated reporting are part of the fundamentals of building trust. Digital presence and real accountability are a misalignment that fast fashion brands ought to solve. Consumer trust may not be likely to be stable, therefore unlikely to have a great effect on digital marketing towards sustainable investments without standardised evidence-based communication on sustainability.

5.3 Digital influencers and online communication channels benefit from fast fashion brands and close the gap between sustainability value and the actual purchasing behaviour of consumers

Survey analysis has revealed a modest but also subtle effect of digital influencers and online communication channels on consumer behaviour towards sustainable fashion in the fast fashion industry. Social media campaigns are also recorded to have some influence, although it is moderate. In particular, 33% of the respondents stated that social media campaigns significantly contributed to the development of their attitude towards brand sustainability, and 31.1% felt neutral. This observation is congruent with Leenders (2019) stating that the potential of Instagram influencers to stimulate sustainable fashion consumption needs to be questioned, and exposure does not necessarily lead to behavioural change. Whereas Ge (2024) reported the increasing trend of sustainability communications led by influencers, our results suggest that the rise might not be followed by the corresponding change in consumer attitude or behaviour.

When it comes to a behavioural aspect, the proportion of those respondents saying that they often follow digital influencers who promote sustainable fashion was 15.5% and only 11.7% said they do so very often. This means that there is a small number of people interested in it, even though the literature by Banyt *et al.* (2023) and Rosely *et al.* (2024) suggests that influencers possess a high potential of causing behavioural changes both through hedonic and utilitarian appeals.

In the literature, perceived authenticity and relatability can determine the effectiveness of influencers (Revlon-Chion *et al.*, 2020). However, this was not a complete reflection in the survey. Although 34% of the respondents stated that influencers had a moderate effect on their purchasing decisions on sustainable fashion, 22.3% of them said the effect was strong. This implies that despite the potential of influencer marketing, it is subject to the actual audience connection and long-term engagement.

The three qualities pointed out by the respondents as making influencer communications credible are authenticity, transparency, and expertise. This supports the results of Revlon-Chion *et al.* (2020) and Liu (2022), who suggest that trustworthiness is more important than aesthetics or the number of followers in creating influence. Nonetheless, there formed a discrepancy between identifying reputable influencer characteristics and brand-related statements- 43.7% of subjects were uncertain whether they would personally research the sustainability efforts of a brand.

Regressions and correlations strengthened further the moderate role of influencers. The relationship between the influence of digital influencers on purchase decisions and the sustainable fashion purchases was very loose (r = .060) and statistically insignificant (p = .548). It was also not significant that the regression model explained an important variance (R2 = .004, F = .363, p = .548), and therefore, the impact of influencers does not significantly predict sustainable purchasing behaviour. These results agree with the findings of Johnstone and Lindh (2022), who indicated that internalising sustainable consumption values requires personal engagement with influencers. To know what can trigger change, the participants stated that change may be caused by educational material, including information on the environmental impacts and the promotion of second-hand fashion. This resonates with Cayaban *et al.* (2023), who insisted on incorporating sustainability messages into the wider digital plans as opposed to using only the superficial influencer material.

As the researches (Banyt teles *et al.,* 2023; Rosely *et al.,* 2024) conducted before concentrate on the compelling potential of influencers to change sustainable fashion behaviours, the current one is closer to Leenders (2019) and Johnstone and Lindh (2022) in the finding of no significant behavioural change (p = .548). This contradiction creates a hint that unless communications have the authenticity, transparency, and evidence-message, the mere influencer reach is not enough to link awareness to real sustainable purchase behaviour.

Lastly, even though 31.1% of the respondents reported that they could buy fast fashion due to the content of influencers, 32% were neutral, and 19.4% reported not being interested. These statistics reflect the warnings that digital advocacy can create awareness without ethical consumption, expressed by Bailey *et al.* (2022) and the Environmental Audit Committee (2019). Third-party certifications as a transparency tool were seen as a trust-adding tool, and are not currently used enough in influencer campaigns.

Overall, the results argue in favour of a multi-dimensional strategy, which incorporates credible collaborations, open communication, and evidence-based narration to establish conscious consumer behaviour via digital mediums.

The research results confirm H1, since frequent digital updates (Q11) and evident sustainability actions (Q4, Q5) helped influence consumer attitudes positively, which proves the fact that digital strategies contribute to brand awareness. H2 is confirmed with the high level of scepticism regarding unspecific promises (Q13), mixed messages (Q12), and low faith in online content (Q9) as evidence of distrust of fast fashion brands. H3 is, however, not strongly established where influencers were followed moderately (Q18), but the influence on the purchase was not significant (r = .060, p = .548), meaning it was not significant that using influencers as an individual measure changes consumer purchase to sustainable fashion.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Summary of findings

The present research was aimed at exploring how the digital channels promote sustainability for enhancing brand awareness. While influencing consumer purchasing intentions in the UK fast fashion. The data was collected through a structured survey and analysed through SPSS.

The findings have revealed that digital strategies, like social media or websites, have been widely used for promoting sustainability. Digital platforms can utilise digital trust mechanism whereby they can track consumer perception and strategise accordingly. But their actual impact on consumer behaviour or perception has found to be limited in the current study. While 64.1% have expressed their openness to sustainable fashion, only 20.4% would pay more, which indicated an attitudinal and behavioural gap. Similarly, the brands are investing in social media for content, but few respondents found it moderately effective, which challenged observations of Makrides *et al.* (2020) and Zhao *et al.* (2022).

The study has contributed as it offered a critical empirical counterpoint to overly optimistic views in the existing literature. This aligns with Hesse and Rundau (2023) and Papasolomou *et al.* (2022), who have pointed out a behavioural inconsistency and low salience, but contrasts with studies by Ge (2024) and Azhar (2024), who have highlighted the growing importance of engagement and digital influence.

Trust building is a challenge because of ambiguous language, fragmented communication, greenwashing and lack of transparency, which has hindered credibility. 33% consumers trust the claims made by brands, but 47.6% have observed inconsistency in communication. The digital influencers have also shown only a moderate influence on sustainable consumption, where 15.5% have frequently followed them. Though transparency, education and authenticity are observed as impactful content, the actual behavioural change is really limited. Thus, digital channels are showing potential but are only underutilised or ineffectively executed. An effective sustainability promotion of fast fashion will require consistent communication with transparency and a genuine influence of partnership for bridging the value-action gap.

6.2 Linking with Objectives

6.2.1 To explore the use of digital strategies influencing the perceived sustainability and brand awareness of a fast fashion brand amongst UK consumers.

The research addressed the first objective partially. The findings revealed that strategies like social media immersive tools or websites are being used by the brands, but the perception of the effectiveness amongst the consumers is underwhelming. While studies such as Azhar (2024); Eleftherakis *et al.* (2018) have suggested that there is a strong potential, the findings have pulled me to reflect on rare communication reflecting the disconnection of the audience or strategy.

6.2.2 To identify the challenges fast fashion brands face while building consumers' trust through digital channels to promote sustainable purchase intentions.

This objective was addressed because the study has identified key challenges like inconsistent communication, greenwashing, and lack of transparency. The number of respondents who trusted the sustainability claims of brands was only 33% with almost half reporting inconsistent messages. Such results are consistent with existing works that denounced vague or deceptive sustainability communication within the fast fashion sector. The research successfully united how the issues are eroding consumer trust and impacting purchase intentions. The low trust levels have indicated failure of current brand strategies, but the future efforts might prioritise a consistent omnichannel communication, regular reporting and interactive content for building credibility.

6.2.3 To understand how digital influencers and online communication channels benefit fast fashion brands and close the gap between sustainability value and the actual purchasing behaviour of consumers.

The objective was also partially addressed because the influencers were found to have moderate influence, where only a minor respondent have regularly followed them for fashion advice. Although there is potential, influencer-led content would lack the deep behavioural impact that reflects a gap between action and awareness. The success will rely upon confirmation of influencers' limited effectiveness, especially if they lack authenticity. The future strategies should involve a credible influencer who will prioritise education, transparency for better influence.

6.3 Policy implications

The findings suggested that the current communication about sustainability claims has lacked credibility and effectiveness, which has necessitated target policy interventions. The regulatory bodies and stakeholders will benefit by mandating a clearer disclosure, third-party certifications, transparency for combating greenwashing and inconsistent communication. Practically, the brands should invest in consistent omnichannel strategies and storytelling.

6.4 Limitations and Future Research

Limited sample size may have affected the results of the study since it made the generalisation of the study findings become limited to the wider population of consumers in the UK. It also limited the scope to fast fashion, avoiding any possibility of comparison to other segments of the fashion industry that can come as different with respect to sustainability. This also hindered the longitudinal observation since changes in attitudes/behaviours over time could not be measured due to time constraints. This could have led to the low explanatory ability and could not have led to further understanding of long-term effects of digital sustainability strategies.

Future studies might overcome such limitations by increasing the sample size to make it more representative and involving more age and demographic groups among multinationals and by increasing the study period to record the changes in consumer attitude. Increased geographic representation in the UK and longitudinal designs might be used to monitor the

changes better in three parameters namely trust, awareness and sustainable purchasing behaviour.

6.5 Recommendations

The brands that face similar issues like poor engagement, low trust and disconnection of sustainability messages, consumer behaviours are recommended to focus on consistent, transparent and engaging communication strategies. It is recommended to avoid greenwashing, collaboration with credible influencers, and regular update on sustainability efforts that might reflect authentic values.

It is also recommended to use interactive tools like video (behind the content) scenes, third-party certifications that increase trust, which is also aligned with Hately (2021a), who has aligned real behavioural changes and digital communication with honest and continuous updates for building consumer confidence.

The research results revealed that although digital approaches enhanced the awareness regarding brands, they lacked reliable evidence-based evidence that enhanced their credibility in answering RQ1. As such, to enhance the sense of authenticity, brands are advised to incorporate third-party certifications and ascertained sustainability measures in online material. In the case of RQ2, because 47 percent of the respondents were witnessing discrepancies in the messaging of the sustainability claim, brands ought to avoid using vague claims such as being eco-friendly and substitute these with direct, proven statements by regularly updating in a more transparent manner. In the case of RQ3, since the influencer effect on purchasing behaviour failed to be significant (p = .548), shift to repositioning influencers as sustainability educators by discussing informative content pertaining to environmental impacts and second-hand fashion, with a focus on authenticity, transparency, and expertise will help bridge this divide between consumer values on sustainability and their purchases.

The fast fashion brands should also position themselves such a way that it promotes emotional branding whereby people would associate buying from these companies with positive contribution to the planet. This way, the brands would be able to sell sustainable fashion items at a slightly higher price by taking consumer psychology into account.

References

Adamkiewicz, J., Kochanska, E., Adamkiewicz, I. and Łukasik, R.M. (2022) 'Greenwashing and Sustainable Fashion Industry', *Current Opinion in Green and Sustainable Chemistry*, 38(100710). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogsc.2022.100710.

Al-Ababneh, M.M. (2020) 'Linking Ontology, Epistemology and Research Methodology', *Science & Philosophy*, 8(1), pp. 75–91. Available at: https://doi.org/10.23756/sp.v8i1.500.

Algamal, A. (2019) *New Shocking Facts about the Impact of Fast Fashion on Our Climate*, *Oxfam*. Available at: https://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam-in-action/oxfam-blog/new-shocking-facts-about-the-impact-of-fast-fashion-on-our-climate/.

Anggriani, A., Daryanto, A. and Asikin, Z. (2024) 'Sustainable Apparel Product Purchase Decisions on Indonesian Gen Z and Millennial Women Consumers Using Theory of Planned Behaviour', *Indonesian Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship* [Preprint]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.17358/ijbe.10.1.223.

Asamoah, M. (2014) *Re-examination of the limitations associated with correlational research*, *Journal of Educational Research and Reviews*, pp. 45–52. Available at: http://sciencewebpublishing.net/jerr/archive/2014/July/pdf/Asamoah.pdf.

Azhar, N.M. (2024) 'Digital Marketing Strategies for Sustainable Brand Development', *Deleted Journal*, 1(1), pp. 164–173. Available at: https://doi.org/10.62207/szpd8p72.

Back, J. (2017) *Sustainable and Ethical Practices for the Fast Fashion Industry*. Available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/73345814.pdf.

Bailey, K., Basu, A. and Sharma, S. (2022) 'The Environmental Impacts of Fast Fashion on Water Quality: a Systematic Review', *Water*, 14(7), p. 1073. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/w14071073.

Banytė, J., Vaidelinskaitė, Š. and Šalčiuvienė, L. (2023) 'Investigating the Link between Consumer Attitudes and Behaviour in the Context of Sustainable Clothing: The Role of Social Norms', *Sustainability*, 15(24), pp. 16800–16800. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su152416800.

Blazquez, M. (2024) 'The Metaverse and its potential for digital sustainability in fashion', *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 15(3), pp. 303–319. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/20932685.2024.2339236.

Cayaban, J.G., Borres, R.D. and Janice, Ma. (2023) 'The Influence of Social Media and Sustainability Advocacy on the Purchase Intention of Filipino Consumers in Fast Fashion', *Sustainability*, 15(11), pp. 8502–8502. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su15118502.

Chang, H.J. (Julie) and Jai, T.-M. (Catherine) (2015) 'Is fast fashion sustainable? The effect of positioning strategies on consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions', *Social Responsibility Journal*, 11(4), pp. 853–867. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/srj-07-2014-0095.

Cheema, T. (2021) 'Fast-Fashion Meets Social Networking Users', *Research Anthology on Strategies for Using Social Media as a Service and Tool in Business*, pp. 1580–1606. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-9020-1.ch077.

Costantini, J. and Costantini, K. (2022) 'Communications on Sustainability in the Apparel Industry: Readability of Information on Sustainability on Apparel Brands' Web Sites in the United Kingdom', *Sustainability*, 14(20), p. 13257. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su142013257.

Darko, E.M., Kleib, M. and Olson, J. (2022) 'Social Media Use for Research Participant Recruitment: Integrative Literature Review', *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 24(8), p. e38015. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2196/38015.

Deloitte (2024) *The Sustainable Consumer*, *Deloitte United Kingdom*. Deloitte. Available at: https://www.deloitte.com/uk/en/Industries/consumer/perspectives/the-sustainable-consumer.html.

Disperati, F.M. and Cianfanelli, E. (2024) 'Digital art direction and sustainable communication for fashion in Italy: A literature review', in *4th International Conference on Environmental Design*. Available at: https://flore.unifi.it/bitstream/2158/1381452/1/MDA%20Conference%202024_978-88-5509-634-8_F.M.%20Disperati_E.Cianfanelli.pdf.

Eleftherakis, G., Gkasis, P., Hatzimpirros, E., Lagkas, T. and Tatsioka, Z. (2018) *Sustainable Fashion and Digital Communications: A Systematic Literature Review*. Available at: https://www.seerc.org/dsc2018/files/DSC2018%20-%20Proceedings.pdf#page=11.

Encarnación, M. and Roldán, A. (2023) 'Fast Fashion', *Routledge eBooks*, pp. 266–285. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429295607-18.

Environmental Audit Committee (2019) *Fixing fashion: clothing consumption and sustainability*, *Parliament UK*. Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvaud/1952/full-report.html.

Evans, S. and Peirson-Smith, A. (2018) 'The sustainability word challenge', *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 22(2), pp. 252–269. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/jfmm-10-2017-0103.

Ge, J. (2024) 'Influencers Marketing and its Impacts on Sustainable Fashion Consumption Among Generation Z', *Journal of Soft Computing and Decision Analytics*, 2(1), pp. 118–143. Available at: https://doi.org/10.31181/jscda21202438.

Göçer, A. and Tuğrul, T.Ö. (2015) 'How Brands Communicate Sustainability Messages in Emerging Markets', *Handbook of Research on Developing Sustainable Value in Economics, Finance, and Marketing*, pp. 47–62. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-6635-1.ch004.

Grazzini, L., Acuti, D. and Aiello, G. (2021) 'Solving the puzzle of sustainable fashion consumption: The role of consumers' implicit attitudes and perceived warmth', *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 287(1), p. 125579. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.125579.

Hageman, E., Kumar, V., Duong, L., Kumari, A. and McAuliffe, E. (2023) 'Do fast fashion sustainable business strategies influence attitude, awareness and behaviours of female consumers?', *Business Strategy and The Environment*, 33(2). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.3545.

Hatley, N. (2021a) *The impact of fast fashion, consumer behaviour and fashion brand communication on sustainability*. Available at: https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/627507/1/Noelle%20Hatley%20-%20Final%20Thesis.pdf.

Hesse, A. and Rundau, J. (2023) 'Effects of Sustainable Marketing on Fast Fashion Shoppers' Perception and Behavioral Inertia', *Journal of Sustainable Marketing*, 4(2), pp. 265–285. Available at: https://doi.org/10.51300/JSM-2023-114.

Hidayat, T. and Sananta, D.P. (2024) 'Theory of Planned Behavior on Green Marketing Influence to Green Purchase Decision', *Journal of Digital Marketing and Halal Industry*, 6(1), pp. 1–16. Available at: https://doi.org/10.21580/jdmhi.2024.6.1.20694.

Huang, J. and Zhou, P. (2024) 'Causes and effects of social media engagement in luxury fashion marketing: A comparative study over the COVID pandemic', *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising* [Preprint]. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10641734.2024.2377547.

Hur, E. and Faragher- Siddall, E. (2022) 'Young Consumer Perspectives on Government Policy Interventions for Sustainable Fashion Consumption in the UK', *Fashion Practice*, 14(3), pp. 405–427. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/17569370.2022.2125149.

Hyman, M. and Sierra, J. (2016) *Open- versus close-ended Survey Questions*, *ResearchGate*. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282249876_Open-_versus_close-ended_survey_questions. (Accessed: 20 March 2025).

Hyun, S. and Zhao, L. (2018) 'Responding to Sustainability with Sentimental Messages Disseminated through Social Media', *International Textile and Apparel Association Annual Conference Proceedings*, 75(1). Available at: https://www.iastatedigitalpress.com/itaa/article/id/1218/ (Accessed: 28 December 2024).

Iqbal, A., Khan, S.A., Abbasi, M.T., Ismail, F. and Khan, J. (2024) 'The Digital Echo: The Influence of Digital Marketing Channels on Brand Awareness and Consumer Purchase Decisions', *Research Journal for Societal Issues*, 6(3), pp. 134–155. Available at: https://doi.org/10.56976/rjsi.v6i3.274.

Israfilzade, K. and Hlushchenko, Z. (2024) 'Friends, Brands, and Influencers: Unpacking the Role of Social Media Marketing in Sustainable Fashion Adoption', *Global Journal of Economic and Finance Research*, 1(7). Available at: https://doi.org/10.55677/GJEFR/04-2024-Vol01E7.

Johnstone, L. and Lindh, C. (2022) 'Sustainably Sustaining (online) Fashion consumption: Using Influencers to Promote Sustainable (un)planned Behaviour in Europe's Millennials', *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 64(1), p. 102775. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102775.

Jolly, J. and Butler, S. (2024) 'Asda, Asos and Boohoo must avoid "greenwashing" after crackdown', *The Guardian*, 27 March. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/mar/27/asda-asos-and-boohoo-must-avoid-greenwashing-after-crackdown.

Joshi, A., Kale, S., Chandel, S., & Pal, D. K. (2015). *Likert scale: Explored and explained*. ResearchGate.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276394797_Likert_Scale_Explored_and_Explained (Accessed: 20 March 2025).

Kaushik, V. and Walsh, C.A. (2019) 'Pragmatism as a Research Paradigm and Its Implications for Social Work Research', *Social Sciences*, 8(9), pp. 1–17. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8090255.

Khan, N. (2024) *Chapter 9: Research Ethics in Education and Training*. BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS, pp. 79–95. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ravindra-Kushwaha-2/publication/383271882_Ethical_Frameworks_in_Special_Education_Volume_2nd/links/66c5d59184297b4b3ba688d6/Ethical-Frameworks-in-Special-Education-Volume-2nd.pdf#page=89. (Accessed: 20 March 2025).

Kittur, J. (2023) 'Conducting Quantitative Research Study: A Step-by-Step Process', *Journal of Engineering Education Transformations*, 36(4), pp. 100–112. Available at: https://doi.org/10.16920/jeet/2023/v36i4/23120.

Koning, J. de, Lavanga, M., & Spekkink, W. (2024). Exploring the Clothing Overconsumption of Young Adults: an Experimental Study with Communication Interventions. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *467*(0959-6526), 142970–142970. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2024.142970

Koo, M., & Yang, S.-W. (2025). Likert-Type Scale. *Encyclopedia*, *5*(1), 18–18. https://doi.org/10.3390/encyclopedia5010018

Kyngäs, H., Mikkonen, K. and Kääriäinen, M. (2020) *The Application of Content Analysis in Nursing Science Research*. Available at: http://repository.unimus.ac.id/7928/1/Helvi%20Kyng%C3%A4s%2C%20Kristina%20Mikkonen%2C%20Maria%20K%C3%A4%C3%A4ri%C3%A4inen%20-%20The%20Application%20of%20Content%20Analysis%20in%20Nursing%20Science%20Research%20%282020%2C%20Springer%29%20%5B10.1007_978-3-030-30199-6%5D%20-%20libgen.li.pdf#page=53 (Accessed: 20 March 2025).

Leenders, D. (2019) *Sustainable Fashion and Social Media Influencers An experimental study on the effectiveness of Instagram fashion influencers on consumers' attitude, awareness and purchase intention of sustainable fashion*, *Thesis.eur.nl*. Available at: https://thesis.eur.nl/pub/49913.

Li, M., Choe, Y.-H. and Gu, C. (2024) 'How perceived sustainability influences consumers' clothing preferences', *Scientific Reports*, 14(1). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-80279-4.

Liu, M. (2022) 'Determining the Role of Influencers' Marketing Initiatives on Fast Fashion Industry Sustainability: the Mediating Role of Purchase Intention', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13.https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.940649

Liu, S.-F., Lee, H.-C. and Lien, N.-H. (2020) 'Do fast fashion consumers prefer foreign brands? The moderating roles of sensory perception and consumer personality on purchase intentions', *Asia Pacific Management Review*, 26(2). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmrv.2020.09.001.

Lu, X., Sheng, T., Zhou, X., Shen, C. and Fang, B. (2022) 'How Does Young Consumers' Greenwashing Perception Impact Their Green Purchase Intention in the Fast Fashion Industry? An Analysis from the Perspective of Perceived Risk Theory', *Sustainability*, 14(20), p. 13473. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su142013473.

Magwegwe, F.M. and Shaik, A. (2024) 'Theory of planned behavior and fast fashion purchasing: an analysis of interaction effects', *Current Psychology*, 43. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-06465-9.

Maiti, R. (2024) *Fast Fashion and Its Environmental Impact*, *Earth.org*. earth.org. Available at: https://earth.org/fast-fashions-detrimental-effect-on-the-environment/.

Makrides, A., Vrontis, D. and Christofi, M. (2020) 'The Gold Rush of Digital Marketing: Assessing Prospects of Building Brand Awareness Overseas', *Business Perspectives and Research*, 8(1), p. 227853371986001. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/2278533719860016.

Marko, M. and Kusá, A. (2023) *Greenwashing and the Nature of Education in Relation to Consumer Trust in Fast Fashion Marketing Communication*, *Communication Today*. Available at: https://communicationtoday.sk/greenwashing-and-the-nature-of-education-in-relation-to-consumer-trust-in-fast-fashion-marketing-communication/.

Mas, A., Adyatma, C. and Prabawa, I.N.A. (2023) 'The Influence Of Social Media Quality On Brand Image: A Case Study Of Endek Users In Denpasar City', *Social Science Studies*, 3(5), pp. 380–394. Available at: https://doi.org/10.47153/sss35.7552023.

McKinsey & Company (2023) *What Is Fast Fashion and Why Is It a problem?* , *www.mckinsey.com*. Available at: https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-fast-fashion.

Mesjar, L., Cross, K., Jiang, Y. and Steed, J. (2023) 'The Intersection of Fashion, Immersive Technology, and Sustainability: A Literature Review', *Sustainability*, 15(4), p. 3761. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su15043761.

Mizrachi, M.P. and Tal, A. (2022) 'Sustainable Fashion—Rationale and Policies', *Encyclopedia*, 2(2), pp. 1154–1167. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/encyclopedia2020077.

Morandi, A. and Tonelli, C. (2023) *The impact of 3D technology on sustainability in fashion luxury product design: evidences from an exploratory analysis. TESI DI LAUREA MAGISTRALE IN MANAGEMENT ENGINEERING INGEGNERIA GESTIONALE*. Available

at: https://www.politesi.polimi.it/retrieve/f665be6e-ad41-496d-8ff1-36a053a56e06/2023_05_Morandi_Tonelli.pdf.

Neha, Joshi, P. and Kumar, N. (2024) 'Fast Fashion Brands: Sustainable Marketing Practices and Consumer Purchase Behaviour', *Tekstilec*, pp. 1–15. Available at: https://doi.org/10.14502/tekstilec.67.2023084.

Neumann, H.L., Martinez, L.M. and Martinez, L.F. (2020) 'Sustainability efforts in the fast fashion industry: Consumer perception, trust and purchase intention', *Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal*, 12(3). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/sampj-11-2019-0405.

Niinimäki, K., Peters, G., Dahlbo, H., Perry, P., Rissanen, T. and Gwilt, A. (2020) 'The Environmental Price of Fast Fashion', *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment*, 1(4), pp. 189–200. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1038/s43017-020-0039-9.

None Neha, Joshi, P. and Kumar, N. (2024) 'Sustainable Marketing Initiatives and Consumer Perception of Fast Fashion Brands', *Textile & leather review*, 7, pp. 104–124. Available at: https://doi.org/10.31881/tlr.2023.170.

Papasolomou, I., Melanthiou, Y. and Tsamouridis, A. (2022) 'The Fast Fashion Vs Environment debate: Consumers' Level of awareness, feelings, and Behaviour Towards Sustainability within the fast-fashion Sector', *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 29(2), pp. 1–19. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2022.2154059.

Park, Y.S., Konge, L. and Artino, A.R. (2019) *The Positivism Paradigm of Research*, *ResearchGate*. www.researchgate.net. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337693284_The_Positivism_Paradigm_of_Research (Accessed: 20 March 2025)..

Pervin, N. and Mokhtar, M. (2022) 'The Interpretivist Research paradigm: a Subjective Notion of a Social Context', *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 11(2), pp. 419–428. Available at: https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v11-i2/12938.

Petra, P. (2024) 'BARRIERS TO REACHING SUSTAINABILITY IN THE FAST FASHION INDUSTRY', *ECOFORUM*, 13(1). Available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/599441651.pdf.

PHAM, N.Q. (2023) *An investigation into how fast fashion brands construct their sustainability communication from the critical perspective of generation Z in Vietnam.* Available at: https://norma.ncirl.ie/6389/1/ngocquyetpham.pdf.

Ponto, J. (2015) 'Understanding and Evaluating Survey Research', *Journal of the Advanced Practitioner in Oncology*, 6(2), pp. 168–171. Available at: https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4601897/.

Rahman, A. and Muktadir, G. (2021) 'SPSS: An Imperative Quantitative Data Analysis Tool for Social Science Research', *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 05(10), pp. 300–302. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2021.51012.

Raka, N. and Chankov, S. (2024) 'Sustainability of Second-Hand Fast Fashion: Sentiment and Content Analysis on Consumer Attitudes on Social Media', *14thAnnual International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE)* [Preprint]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.46254/AN14.20240161.

Revlon-Chion, E., Bolat, E. and Liang, Y. (2020) *Instant Buying of Fast Fashion: Are Influencers to Blame?* Available at: https://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/34010/1/Instant%20Buying%20of%20Fast%20Fashion_%20Are%20Influencers%20to%20Blame_AMC2020.pdf.

Rey-García, M., Otero, A.R. and Mato-Santiso, V. (2018) 'The Challenges of Digital Transformation for Fast-Fashion Brands: A Proposal for an Operational Tool to Measure Omni-Channel Integration', *Advances in National Brand and Private Label Marketing*, pp. 95–103. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-92084-9_11.

Ronda, L. (2023) 'Overcoming barriers for sustainable fashion: bridging attitude-behaviour gap in retail', *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 52(1), pp. 44–61. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/ijrdm-02-2023-0056.

Roni, S.M. and Djajadikerta, H.G. (2021) *Data Analysis with SPSS for Survey-based Research.* Singapore: Springer Singapore. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-0193-4.

Roopa, S. and Rani, M. (2012) 'Questionnaire Designing for a Survey', *The Journal of Indian Orthodontic Society*, 46(4), pp. 273–277. Available at: https://doi.org/10.5005/jp-journals-10021-1104.

Rosely , N., Sakarji, S.R. and Thani, A.K.A. (2024) '"Sorry, I Couldn't Give Up Shopping!" How Live Streaming Urge Consumers towards Impulsive Fast Fashion Purchases', *An International Journal*, 16(2s). Available at: http://www.gbmrjournal.com/pdf/v16n2s/V16N2s-27.pdf.

Rosenstein, C. (2021) *Breaking News: Sustainable Fashion is In and Fast Fashion is Out; Breaking News: Sustainable Fashion is In and Fast Fashion is Out; Constructions of Sustainable Consumption in Fast Fashion Constructions of Sustainable Consumption in Fast Fashion Advertising*. Available at: https://openworks.wooster.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=12002&context=independentstudy .

Said, D. (2021) *Probability and Non-Probability Sampling - An Entry Point for Undergraduate Researchers*, *Ssrn.com*. Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm?abstractid=3851952. (Accessed: 20 March 2025).

SanMiguel, P., Pérez-Bou, S., Sádaba, T. and Mir-Bernal, P. (2021) 'How to Communicate Sustainability: From the Corporate Web to E-Commerce. The Case of the Fashion Industry', *Sustainability*, 13(20), p. 11363. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su132011363.

SanMiguel, P., Pérez-Bou, S., Sádaba, T. and Mir-Bernal, P. (2021) 'How to Communicate Sustainability: From the Corporate Web to E-Commerce. The Case of the Fashion Industry', *Sustainability*, 13(20), p. 11363. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su132011363.

Sathyanarayana, S. S., Pushpa, B. V., & Harsha, H. (2024). Selecting the Right Sample Size: Methods and Considerations for Social Science Researchers. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention (IJBMI)* . https://doi.org/10.35629/8028-1307152167

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., Thornhill, A. and Bristow, A. (2019) *'Research Methods for Business students' Chapter 4: Understanding Research Philosophy and Approaches to Theory Development*, *Researchgate*. www.researchgate.net. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330760964_Research_Methods_for_Business_Stud

ents_Chapter_4_Understanding_research_philosophy_and_approaches_to_theory_developme
nt. (Accessed: 20 April 2025).

Seock, Y., Shin, J.-A. and Yoon, Y. (2024) 'Embracing environmental sustainability consciousness as a catalyst for slow fashion adoption', *Sustainable Development*, 32(4). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.2889.

Shah, K.H. (2020) 'Sustainable Innovative Business Model For Fast Fashion Industry Augmenting Sharing Economy', *nternational Journal of Advanced Research in Science and Technology*, 9(1), pp. 797–817. Available at: https://www.ijarst.com/assets/backend/pdf/article/9_1_Sustainable%20Innovative%20Busine ss%20Model%20For%20Fast%20Fashion%20Industry%20Augmenting%20%20Sharing%20 Economy_pdf (Accessed: 27 December 2024).

Siegle, L. (2019) *Fast fashion is on the rampage, with the UK at the head of the charge*, *The Guardian*. www.theguardian.com. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2019/jun/21/fast-fashion-is-on-the-rampage-with-uk-at-the-head-of-the-charge. (Accessed: 20 Feburary 2025).

Soboleva, D. and Sánchez, A. (2024) 'Agent-Based Insight into Eco-Choices: Simulating the Fast Fashion Shift', *arXiv (Cornell University)* [Preprint]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.48550/arxiv.2407.18814.

Statista Research Department (2024) *Consumers would not buy from greenwashing fashion brands UK 2022*, *Statista*. Available at: https://www.statista.com/statistics/1382914/consumers-who-would-not-buy-from-greenwashing-fashion-brands-uk/. (Accessed: 20 Feburary 2025).

Tanujaya, B., Indra, C., & Mumu, J. (2023, January 24). *Likert Scale in Social Sciences Research: Problems and Difficulties*. ResearchGate; Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar, Pakistan. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366425620_Likert_Scale_in_Social_Sciences_Rese arch_Problems_and_Difficulties (Accessed: 20 March 2025).

Tőkés, G.E. (2022) 'The Digital Brand Identity of Fast-Fashion Brand Zara. A Case Study', *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Social Analysis*, 12(1), pp. 131–154. Available at: https://intapi.sciendo.com/pdf/10.2478/aussoc-2022-0007.

Tran, H.T. (2020) *The Influence of Digital Marketing on Consumer Purchase Decisions toward Fast Fashion Products*. Available at: http://dspace.unive.it/bitstream/handle/10579/18319/877214-1248125.pdf?sequence=2. (Accessed: 20 March 2025).

Vassalo, A.L., Marques, C.G., Simões, J.T., Fernandes, M.M. and Domingos, S. (2024) 'Sustainability in the Fashion Industry in Relation to Consumption in a Digital Age', *Sustainability*, 16(13), p. 5303. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su16135303.

Vladimirova, K., Henninger, C.E., Alosaimi, S., Brydges, T., Choopani, H., Hanlon, M., Iran, S., McCormick, H. and Zhou, S. (2023) 'Exploring the Influence of Social Media on Sustainable Fashion consumption: a Systematic Literature Review and Future Research Agenda', *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 15(2), pp. 1–22. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/20932685.2023.2237978.

Wiederhold, M. and Martinez, L.F. (2018) 'Ethical Consumer Behaviour in Germany: the attitude-behaviour Gap in the Green Apparel Industry', *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 42(4), pp. 419–429. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12435

Woiceshyn, J. and Daellenbach, U. (2018) 'Evaluating Inductive Vs Deductive Research in Management Studies', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: an International Journal*, 13(2), pp. 183–195. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/QROM-06-2017-1538.

Zhang, B., Zhang, Y. and Zhou, P. (2021) 'Consumer Attitude Towards Sustainability of Fast Fashion Products in the UK', *Sustainability*, 13(4), pp. 1–23. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su13041646.
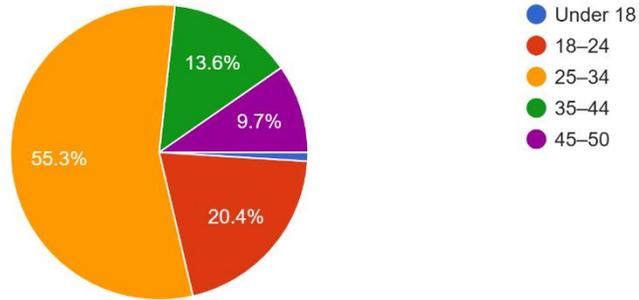
Zhao, L., Lee, S.H., Li, M. and Sun, P. (2022) 'The Use of Social Media to Promote Sustainable Fashion and Benefit Communications: A Data-Mining Approach', *Sustainability*, 14(3), p. 1178. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su14031178.
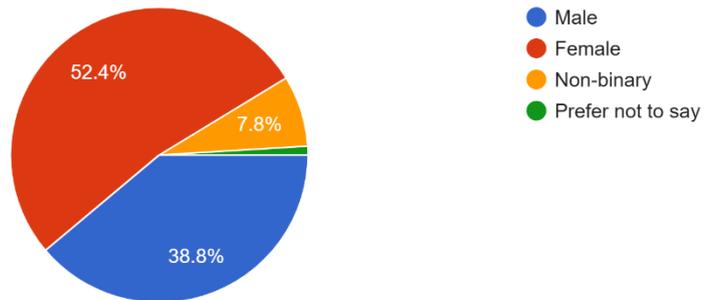
Appendix

Survey Responses

What is your age?
103 responses

- Under 18
- 18–24
- 25–34
- 35–44
- 45–50

13.6%
9.7%
55.3%
20.4%

What is your gender?
103 responses

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

52.4%
7.8%
38.8%

How do you usually shop for fashion?
103 responses
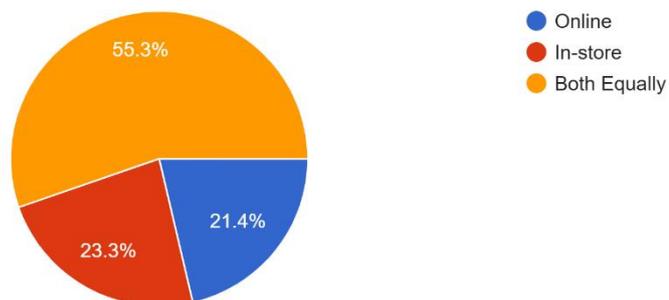
- Online
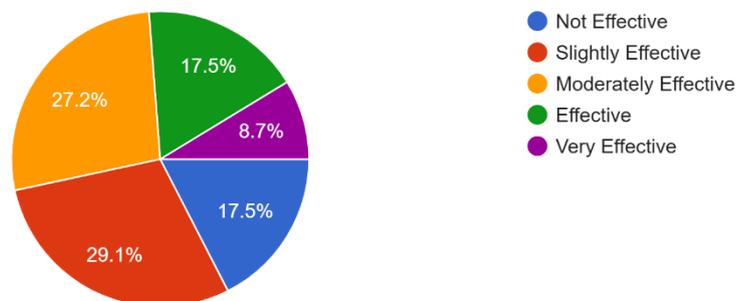- In-store
- Both Equally

55.3%
21.4%
23.3%

How often do you notice fast fashion brands sharing specific sustainability efforts (e.g., water savings, carbon reduction) on their websites or apps?

103 responses
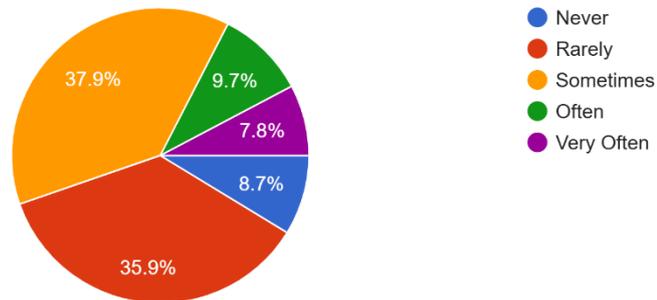
- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
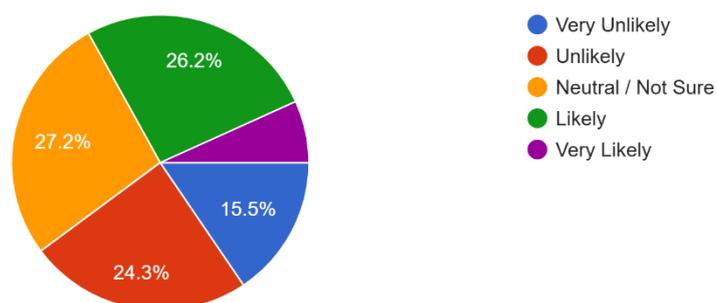- Often
- Very Often

37.9% / 9.7% / 7.8% / 8.7% / 35.9%

How effective do you find digital platforms (websites, social media) in communicating fast fashion brands' use of sustainable materials?
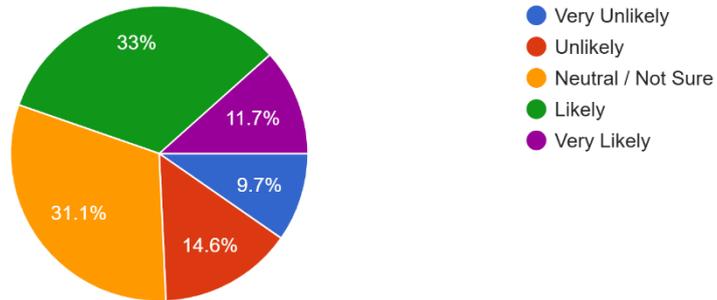
103 responses

- Not Effective
- Slightly Effective
- Moderately Effective
- Effective
- Very Effective

17.5% / 8.7% / 17.5% / 29.1% / 27.2%

How likely are you to engage with interactive features like QR codes that highlight a brand's sustainability efforts?

103 responses

- Very Unlikely
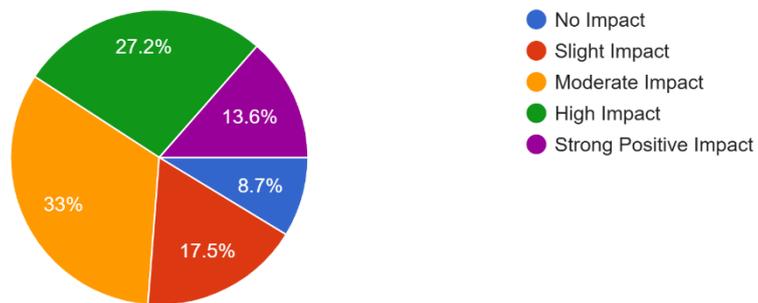- Unlikely
- Neutral / Not Sure
- Likely
- Very Likely

26.2% / 15.5% / 24.3% / 27.2%

How likely do social media campaigns make a great influence on your perception of a brand's sustainability?

103 responses

- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neutral / Not Sure
- Likely
- Very Likely

33%
11.7%
9.7%
14.6%
31.1%

Do "behind the scenes" videos showing ethical practices impact your trust in a fast fashion brand?

103 responses

- No Impact
- Slight Impact
- Moderate Impact
- High Impact
- Strong Positive Impact

27.2%
13.6%
8.7%
17.5%
33%

How likely are you to believe any sustainability claims made by fast fashion brands on digital platforms?

103 responses
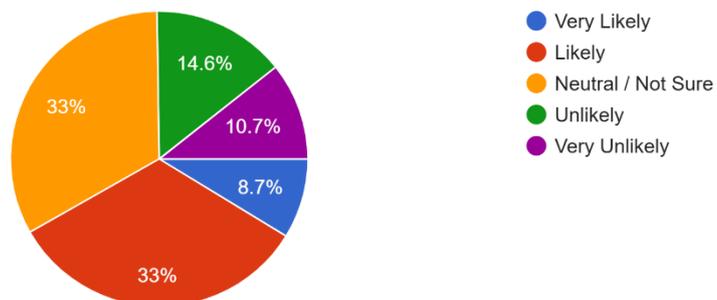
- Very Likely
- Likely
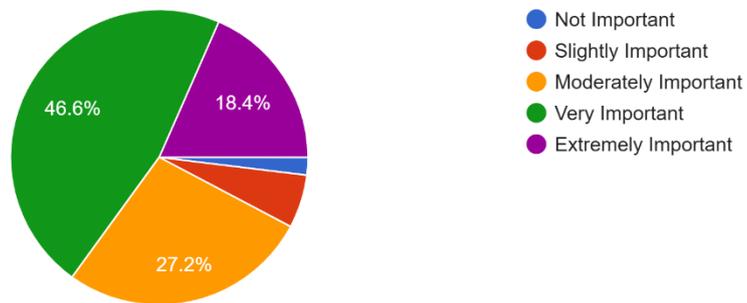- Neutral / Not Sure
- Unlikely
- Very Unlikely

33%
14.6%
10.7%
8.7%
33%

Is there anything else you consider when evaluating a brand's sustainability?
103 responses

- Ethical labor practices
- Transparency in the supply chain
- Use of eco-friendly or recycled materials
- Sustainable packaging
- Independent sustainability certifications

39.8% · 17.5% · 27.2% · 11.7%

How important is it that brands regularly update their sustainability progress on websites or social media?
103 responses

- Not Important
- Slightly Important
- Moderately Important
- Very Important
- Extremely Important

46.6% · 18.4% · 27.2%

How often do you notice conflicting sustainability information across a brand's digital channels?
103 responses

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very Often

47.6% · 18.4% · 9.7% · 17.5%
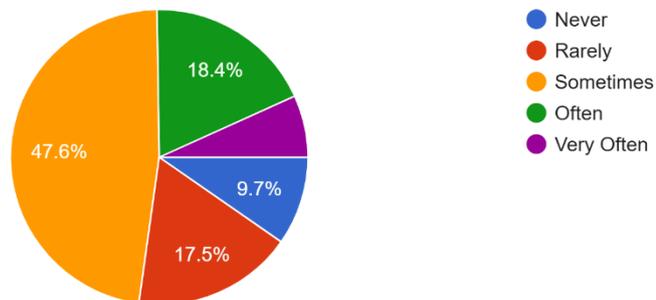
How much does the use of vague terms like "eco-friendly" without evidence reduce your trust?

103 responses
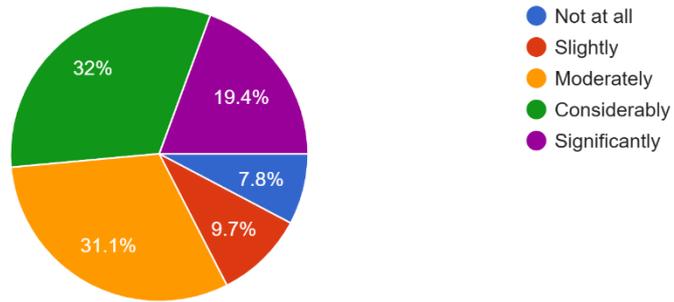
- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Considerably
- Significantly

32%
19.4%
7.8%
9.7%
31.1%

How likely are you to trust a brand that does not publish annual sustainability reports online?

103 responses
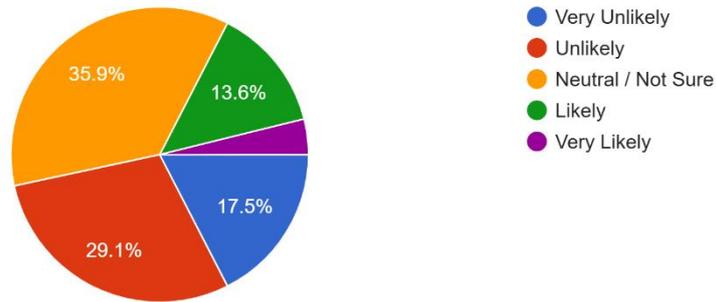
- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neutral / Not Sure
- Likely
- Very Likely

35.9%
13.6%
17.5%
29.1%

Do you agree that fast fashion brands are genuinely committed to sustainability efforts?

103 responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral / Not Sure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

34%
7.8%
38.8%
15.5%
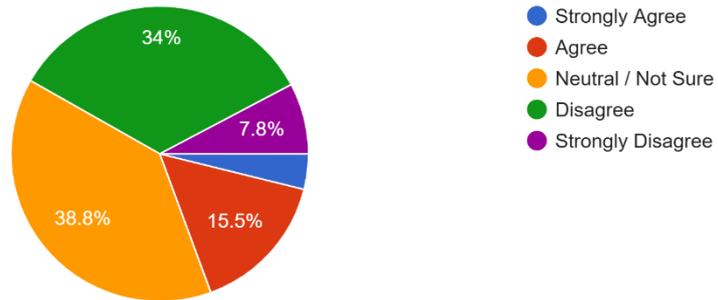
Do you think live Q&A sessions or live streams help address doubts about sustainability claims?
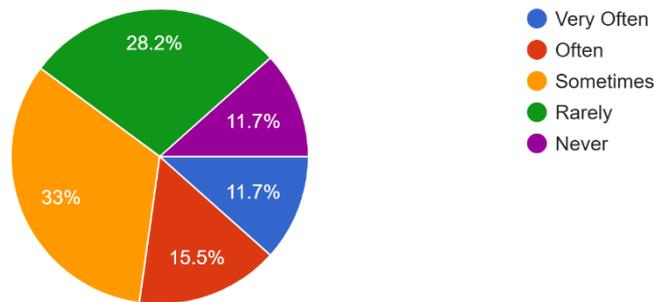
103 responses
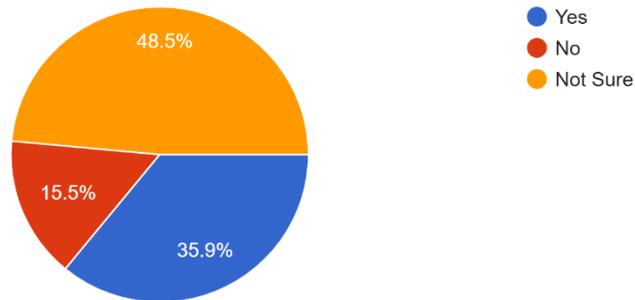
- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

48.5%
15.5%
35.9%

What specific action would make you trust a fast fashion brand more regarding its sustainability efforts?

103 responses

- 🔵 Regularly publishing verified sustainability reports
- 🔴 Showing full transparency about production processes
- 🟠 Using third-party certifications (e.g., Fair Trade, GOTS)
- 🟢 Providing clear proof of material sourcing and impact
- 🟣 Featuring real stories from workers and factories

How often do you follow digital influencers who promote sustainable fashion?
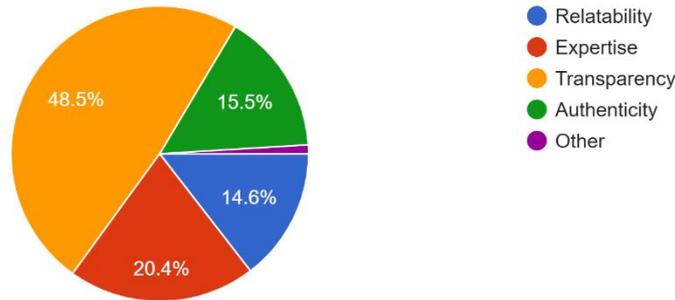
103 responses

- 🔵 Very Often
- 🔴 Often
- 🟠 Sometimes
- 🟢 Rarely
- 🟣 Never

How influential are these digital influencers in your decision to buy sustainable fashion?

103 responses

- 🔵 Not Influential
- 🔴 Slightly Influential
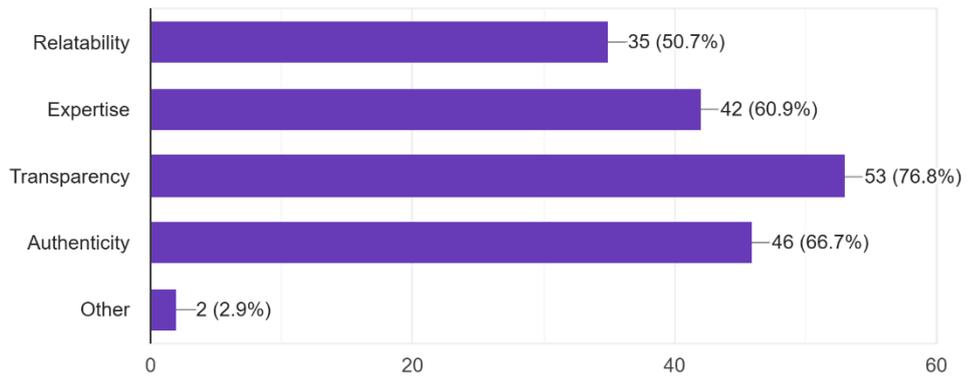- 🟠 Moderately Influential
- 🟢 Influential
- 🟣 Very Influential
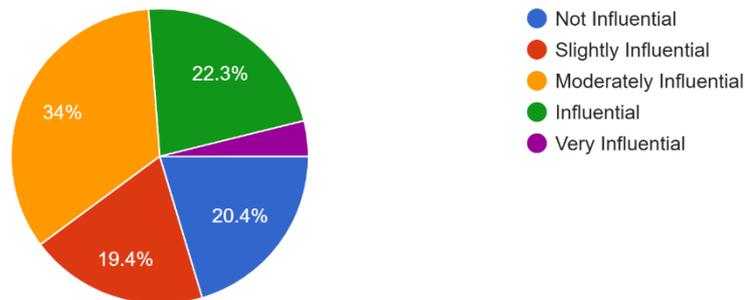
What qualities make an influencer's sustainability message credible? (Select all that apply)
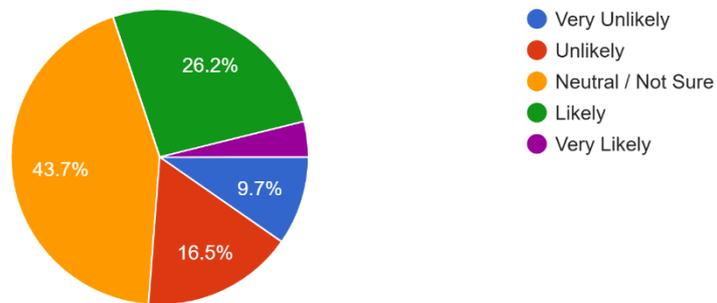103 responses

- Relatability
- Expertise
- Transparency
- Authenticity
- Other

48.5%   15.5%   14.6%   20.4%

What qualities make an influencer's sustainability message credible? (Select all that apply)
69 responses

Relatability	35 (50.7%)
Expertise	42 (60.9%)
Transparency	53 (76.8%)
Authenticity	46 (66.7%)
Other	2 (2.9%)

After seeing influencer content about sustainability, how likely are you to research the brand's sustainability efforts yourself?
103 responses

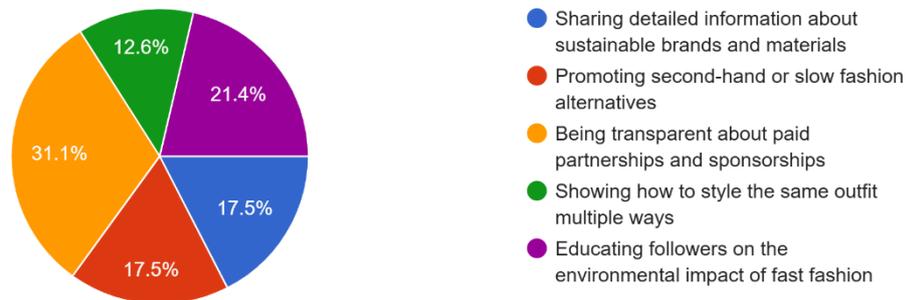- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neutral / Not Sure
- Likely
- Very Likely

26.2%   43.7%   9.7%   16.5%

How likely are you to purchase a fast fashion item because of its sustainability based on influencer-generated content?

103 responses

- 🔵 Very Unlikely
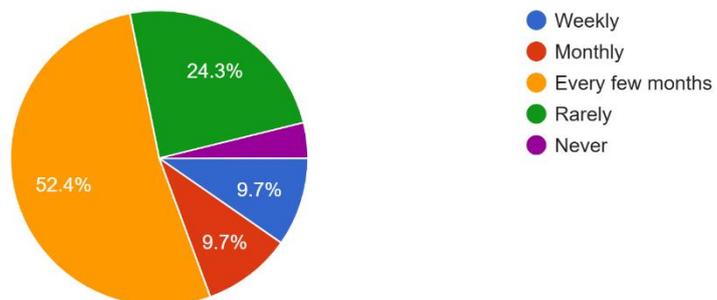- 🔴 Unlikely
- 🟠 Neutral / Not Sure
- 🟢 Likely
- 🟣 Very Likely

31.1%
32%
12.6%
19.4%
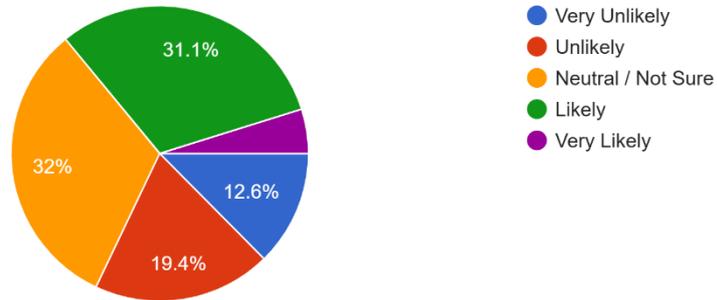
In what ways do you think influencers could better promote sustainable fashion choices to their followers?

103 responses

- 🔵 Sharing detailed information about sustainable brands and materials
- 🔴 Promoting second-hand or slow fashion alternatives
- 🟠 Being transparent about paid partnerships and sponsorships
- 🟢 Showing how to style the same outfit multiple ways
- 🟣 Educating followers on the environmental impact of fast fashion

12.6%
21.4%
31.1%
17.5%
17.5%

How often do you purchase fast fashion?

103 responses

- 🔵 Weekly
- 🔴 Monthly
- 🟠 Every few months
- 🟢 Rarely
- 🟣 Never

24.3%
52.4%
9.7%
9.7%

Would you pay more for a fast fashion product if it was clearly sustainable?
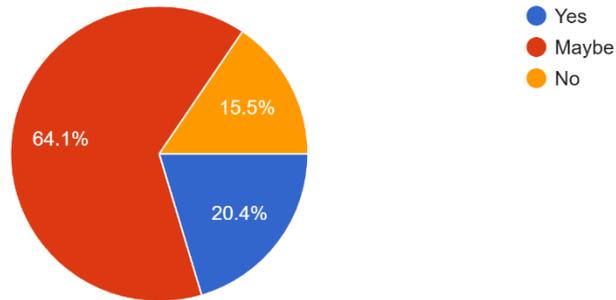
103 responses

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

64.1%
15.5%
20.4%

How do you perceive the environmental concerns associated with fast fashion production and their promotion of sustainable products?

103 responses

- A serious issue — sustainability claims often distract from the real damage.
- A moderate concern — some efforts are genuine, but more action is needed.
- Confusing — it's hard to tell what's real and what's just marketing.
- Not very concerning — I believe brands are improving gradually.
- Not a concern at all — I trust fast fashion brands to manage it responsibly.

29.1%
22.3%
40.8%