

**A STUDY TO EXPLORE COSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS FAST
FASHION CLOTHIG INFLEUNCED BY SOCIAL MEDIA IN EUROPE**

by

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THIS DISSERTATION IS DEDICATED BY ALL FAST FASHION AND
SOCIAL MEDIA IN EUROPE.

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Abstract

A STUDY TO EXPLORE COSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS FAST FASHION CLOTHIG INFLEUNCED BY SOCIAL MEDIA IN EUROPE.

Background

The research investigates upon influence of social media on consumer buying behavior within European fast fashion industry with a special focus on purchase decisions. At present social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram emerging drastically as primary sources of fashion inspiration where brands increase readily rely upon digital content strategies to make their consumers more engaged and make a purchase. Therefore, the study examines the key factors including brand engagement, convenience, platform type, privacy and influencer endorsement to identify their impact on purchase intentions. The research has focused upon Technology acceptance model, Elaboration likelihood model, Social Influence theory and Consumer culture theory.

Methods

The research adopts a pragmatic research philosophy along with deductive approach and descriptive cross-sectional design. The data is collected using structured close ended questionnaire from a stratified random sample of 384 European social media uses. The quantitative analysis consists of SPSS which includes reliability, validity, correlation, regression and ANOVA tests to explore the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Results

Data analysis showed that the social media factors were statistically significant in regard to fast fashion purchasing behaviour among the European population. The mean scores of all constructs were moderate in nature, which indicated similar levels of influence. Correlation analysis showed that the consumer buying behavior and engagement with the brand ($r = .674$), the type of platform used ($r = .668$), and influencer endorsement ($r = .618$) are all positive and significant with $p < .001$. The regression analysis also showed that the model has a strong explanatory power as it accounts 69.7 %of variation in the consumer buying behavior.

Discussion and Conclusion

As it was discussed, the phenomenon of fast fashion buying via social media in Europe is complex and context specific. The nature of platforms and content type often dictate a swapping of impulse and planned purchases by consumers. Instagram and Tik Tok were identified to have a complementary effect, where Instagram is associated with using planned purchasing and Tik Tok is associated with using impulse purchasing. The social media involvement has a positive impact on the purchase decisions, but it should be supported by such factors like trust and convenience. The influencer marketing proved to have a stronger purchasing power as compared to the brand advertisement, whereas the celebrity endorsement had a greater influence as compared to the peer recommendation given the sense of aspiration.

KEYWORDS

Fast Fashion, Social Media, Europe, Brand engagement, Consumer behavior, Convenience, Privacy, Platform type, Influencer endorsement

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	4
Abstract	5
Table of Contents	7
List of Abbreviations	12
List of Tables	13
List of Figures	14
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	15
1.1 Introduction	15
1.2 Research Problem.....	16
1.3 Purpose of Research	18
1.4 Research Rationale.....	22
1.5 Significance of the study	23
1.6 Research Purpose and Questions	25
Objectives.....	26
CHAPTER 11: LITERATURE REVIEW	28
2.1 Introduction to chapter	28
2.2 A brief overview about consumer behavior	28
2.2.1 Factors influencing consumer behavior.....	29
2.2.2 Relationship between consumer behavior and fast fashion.....	39
2.2.3 Relationship between consumer behavior and social media	40
2.2.4 Planned purchase and impulse purchase	41
2.2.5 Role of celebrity endorsement in shaping consumer buying behavior.....	43

2.2.6 Theory of planned behavior.....	44
2.3 A brief overview of social media	46
2.3.1 Benefits of social media	46
2.3.2 Factors of social media	47
2.3.3 Impact of Instagram and Tik Tok customer purchasing behavior in fast fashion	48
2.3.4 Social media engagement correlates with actual purchase decision	49
2.3.5 Level of effectiveness of influenza marketing against brand advertisement towards driving the customer purchase	50
2.3.6 Brand engagement and social media	51
2.3.7 Convenience and social media	52
2.3.8 Privacy and social media	53
2.3.9 Platform Type and social media	54
2.3.10 Influencer endorsement and social media	55
2.3.11 Technology acceptance model.....	55
2.3.12 Consumer culture theory	56
2.3.13 Social Influence Theory.....	57
2.3.14 Elaboration Likelihood Model.....	58
2.4 A brief overview of the fast fashion industry.....	60
2.4.1 Factors contributing to fast fashion industry	60
2.4.2 Theory of consumer decision making process	61
2.5 Conceptualization.....	62
2.5.1 The relationship between brand engagement and consumer buying behavior of fast fashion	63
2.5.2 The relationship between convenience and consumer buying behavior of fast fashion	63

2.5.3 The relationship between privacy and consumer buying behavior of fast fashion	64
2.5.4 The relationship between platform type and consumer buying behavior of fast fashion	65
2.5.5 The relationship between influencer endorsement and consumer buying behavior of fast fashion.....	66
2.5.6 Literature gap.....	66
4.6 Conceptual Framework	68
2.6.1 Hypothesis	68
2.7 Chapter summary	68
CHAPTER 111: METHODOLOGY	70
3.1 Overview of Research Problem.....	70
3.2 Operations of Theoretical Constructs.....	70
3.3 Research Purpose and Questions.....	71
3.4 Research Design.....	72
3.5 Population.....	75
3.6 Participant Selection.....	76
3.6.1 Pilot test	76
3.7 Instrumentation.....	78
3.8 Data Collection Procedures	78
3.8.1 Data Management.....	79
3.9 Data Analysis	79
3.9.1 Reliability and Validity of the Study	80
3.10 Research Design Limitation.....	81
3.11 Ethical issues	81

3.12 Conclusion.....	82
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS.....	83
4.1 Introduction	83
4.2 Reliability and validity testing	83
4.3 The demographic information.....	85
4.4.1 Descriptive.....	95
4.4.2 Inferential statistics.....	97
4.4.2.1 Correlation testing	97
4.4.2.2 Linear regression	99
4.3.4 Hypothesis	102
4.4 Triangulation of the Results	103
4.5 Summary	104
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION.....	106
5.2 Discussion of findings in relation to research questions	106
CHAPTER VI: SUMAMRY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	118
6.1 Summary	118
6.2 Implications.....	119
6.2.1 Implications for stress management	119
6.2.2 Applications to Practitioners	121
6.3 Recommendation for Future Research.....	122
6.3.1 Recommendation for Action	123
6.4 Limitations of the study.....	125
6.5 Conclusion.....	126
REFERENCES	128

APPENDIX A: QUESTIOANNIRE.....	143
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM	148
INFORMED CONSENT FOR QUESTIOANNRIE	148
APPENDIX C: DATA SHEET	149

List of Abbreviations

TPB : Theory of Planned Behavior

List of Tables

Table 3.1 Pilot test results	77
Table 4.1 Reliability and validity testing	84
Table 4.2 Descriptive	96
Table 4.3 Correlation testing	97
Table 4.4 Linear regression	99
Table 4.5 ANOVA Test	100
Table 4.6 Model Coefficients - Consumer buying behavior	101
Table 4.7 Hypothesis	103

List of Figures

Figure 2.1 Theory of planned behavior.....	45
Figure 2.2 Technology acceptance model	56
Figure 2.3 Elaboration Likelihood Model	59
Figure 2.4 Consumer decision making process	62
Figure 2.5 Conceptual Framework	68
Figure 4.1 Gender	85
Figure 4.2 What is your age group?.....	86
Figure 4.3 What is your marital status?	87
Figure 4.4 Do you mainly live in?	88
Figure 4.5 What are the main Europe fast fashion brands you purchase?	89
Figure 4.6 How often do you purchase fast fashion?.....	90
Figure 4.7 What is the most significant factor influencing your purchase decision for fast fashion clothing?.....	91
Figure 4.8 On average how much do you spend annually on fast fashion clothing?	92
Figure 4.9 Which best describes your usual behaviour when you purchase fast fashion clothing that is influenced by social media?	93
Figure 4.10 Whom would you say is the most influential source that affects your decision making when purchasing fast fashion?	94
Figure 4.11 Which would you say is the social media platform that most significantly influences your decisions to purchase fast fashion?.....	95

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Social media is currently considered as one of the most influential forces which shaped the fast fashion industry. It redefines how the consumers discover trends. They also evaluate products and interact with brands. In Europe, where digital engagement is high, the platforms such as TikTok and Instagram have evolved central factors for fashion inspiration and trend diffusion. Therefore, the research title is “A study to explore consumer behavior towards fast fashion clothing influenced by social media in Europe,” is developed as a response to the significant and rapidly growing impact of digital environments regarding consumer choices in the fast fashion sector. With daily shopping behaviors and online interaction being currently intervened constantly, it is necessary to understand the influence factor that has become important for industry practices and academic knowledge gain.

In 2024, the valuation of the fast fashion market in Europe was 47.5 billion USD, manifesting enormity and economic importance (Dimension Market Research, 2024). The rise of mobile technology and visually driven platforms over the last decade has accelerated the pace of fashion content consumption and trend adoption. According to Prameswari (2022), 52% of European consumers look to social media for fast fashion inspiration, reflecting the transition from traditional advertising to user-centric and algorithm-driven content. The aesthetics of Instagram and short-form video consumption of TikTok together with the community-led influencer marketing trends contribute to the perpetuation of new styles that grow desire and appetite for purchase.

At the same time, social interaction with products on social media does little to convert into actual sales. In fact, only 38% of social media users engage with a fast-fashion brand in both its social media and site forums (Vladimirova, 2022). With such a large gap between users who visit fast fashion sites and those who engage with products on social media, large margins of social media purchases are sighted in the name of consumer behaviour. As noted above, 64% of Gen Z consumers made impulse-fashion purchases every month on the basis of some social media content at their disposal (Horberry, 2024). That would mean that social-media influence greatly varies across demographic groups and for various types of purchasing. These varying behaviours

pave the way for interesting inquiry about the psychological and social forces that nudge either impulsive or planned purchasing decisions when one dwells within the realms of digital space.

Moreover, a majority of scholarly work is still shaped by a technological determinism, assuming that much exposure will therefore inevitably shape behaviour in a predictable matter. These discourses omit the agency of consumers, the saturation of digital advertising, the desensitisation caused by influencer content repeatedly showcased, and resistance that digitally literate audiences seem to put up seeking authenticity rather than strategic persuasion. It is in no way 'one-size-fits-all' to incorporate learnings from some other industries such as beauty or technology into fast fashion, fast fashion being characterized by its immediacy (product life cycle) and affordability with its disposable emotional aspect.

European considerations bring further complexity because of culture, sustainability norms or lack thereof, and digital levels of literacy. Regional studies are scarce in number and are limited to these parts, thereby leading to theoretical generalizations that fall short of grasping Europe's detailed socio-digital fabric.

The research attempts to cover gaps in academic knowledge, shallow concerns of presently available electronic literatures, and the need to analyze whether and how social media actually influence and distort consumer behavior in a fast-fashion market in Europe.

1.2 Research Problem

Call it a sure wave caused by the rise of breathtaking transformation in the fast fashion industry, uplifted by hyped platforms like Instagram and TikTok going viral, becoming the space for trend exposure, customer engagement, and brand presence-especially among younger consumers. In Europe, where the use of social media is considered the highest in the world, fast fashion brands are increasingly banking on the digital context in order to influence consumer perceptions and make them loosen their purse strings. As Prameswari (2022) states, some 52% of European citizens have used social media as a source of fast fashion inspiration, showing how much the sector is dependent on its digital ecosystem for visibility and relevance. Social media has no doubt turbocharged engagement but remains unconvincing at least in its ability to perpetuate actual purchase behaviour.

The considerable amount of user engagement notwithstanding, a most critical issue has propped up - the conversion rate from social media engagement to final purchase is vastly low. Vladimirova (2022) claims that a relatively meager fraction of social media users engaging with content based on fast fashion go on to complete the sell-in fact only 38% do this-suggesting an evident sizeable rift between eyeballs on screens and outcomes of commerce. This discrepancy between eye-opening concepts leads to the need for questioning the extent of effectiveness of the present-day digital strategies if stirring up the proposition of a somewhat related assumption that high engagement automatically translates into a boon of sales for any and every organization. Something else was getting inside. Of course, even these few examples of discrepancies suggest that it is likely very complex: Switch to fitful consumer behavior in a digital fast-fashion framework that engagement metrics alone are not designed to consider.

Another issue is the rising influence of impulsive buying among young consumers. According to Horberry (2024), 64% of Gen Z shoppers make at least one impulsive fashion purchase per month following social media influence, reflecting the emotional and spontaneous characteristic of consumerism amongst digital-native groups. Few studies differentiate between impulse and planned purchase behaviours, which are guided by distinct psychological, emotional and social mechanisms. The disregard for these differences propagates oversimplifications regarding consumer behaviour and impedes marketers in designing fully-fledged and successful digital campaigns.

Another major drawback in contemporary literature is that it tends only to scrutinize industries that are outside the fast fashion space, for example, industries like beauty, technology, or general ecommerce, which produce valuable insights but cannot be directly applied to fast fashion because it is distinguished by its fast trend cycles, affordability, high product turnover, and falling consumer loyalty. This impairs researchers for generalization of findings to the European fast fashion industry in its entirety. Furthermore, most of the prior research is globally generalized rather than grasping any one particular geographic reality, thereby overlooking Europe's unique cultural diversity, capacity for digital maturity, and consumer expectations. While European consumers present substantial variation on sustainability, authenticity, and brand government, concepts that are missed in a worldwide study but which have a profound and yet unmeasured implication for fast fashion consumption.

It is apparent that there is still limited empirical evidence on the relative influence of user-generated content and peer recommendations.

Additionally, the use of engagement metrics like likes, views and shares further adds to the inaccurate comprehension of consumer behavior. These metrics provide insights into how viral the content went and not what the real intention, emotional charge, or readied purchase state of the consumer is. Consequently, a brand could misread dainty engagement as heightened consumer interest, thereby taking branding initiatives with very slim opportunities for making sense-and thus wasted money. This is a strategic risk for an industry which boasts thin margins and thus fierce competition.

Together, there emerges in practice a significant challenge to the understanding of how social media content categories affect consumer behavior-with regard to the impulse versus planned purchase distinction-in the practices of European fashion. The existing body of knowledge does not reflect current platform dynamics, leading psychological realities underpinning consumer decisions, or regional variations and cultural interpretations of digital consumption.

Problem statement

It is evident that there is lack of comprehensive understanding of how consumer behavior towards fast special clothing in Europe is influenced by social media specifically in concern of the differentiation effects of various content types on planned and impulse purchase decisions.

1.3 Purpose of Research

The main objective of this research is to scrutinize by a qualitative approach the impact of social media on consumer behaviour in fast fashion clothing of Europe, which will encompass significant conceptual, empirical, and practical work that strengthens the current literature. The importance of social media as a transforming paradigm in the fashionscape told from the defined mindlessness of people the categorically negative stance of some authors. For the most part, these types of studies are very fragmented, packaged at a general level, and propose mainly hedged assumptions about the direct impact of social media engagement on purchase intention. This research project, therefore, plans to deepen an evidence-based understanding of the role of social media in consumer decision-making, particularly in the case of Gen Z and Millennials the abounding forces behind online fast fashion consumption.

In current literature, social media has been described as an important medium for disseminating trends and bringing visibility to brands. For instance, Prameswari (2022) shares that 52% of European consumers view Instagram and TikTok as fashion outlets for inspiration, signifying a high amount of influence at the early stages of the consumer decision-making process (59). The argument in this regard, however, has criticized the model for advocating exposure over effectiveness. High visibility of certain stimuli does not define their influence. The disconnect gets further underscored when Vladimirova (2022) shows that the engagement of fast fashion content on SNS remains unconverted into purchasing among only 38% of users. Therefore, this research seeks to go beyond merely identifying those possible factors that have impact on the actual decision to convert high-influence engagement into desire rather than keeping it at the stage of being passive engagement.

Furthermore, the rising influence of impulsive purchase behavior within younger consumers is another issue. Horberry (2024) identified that 64% of the Gen Z shoppers make at least one impulsive fashion purchase per month due to the social media influence which indicated the emotional and spontaneous nature of consumption within the digital native groups. But still the existing study is really differentiate between the plan and impulse purchases where the two behaviors driven by distinct psychological, social and emotional mechanisms. Therefore, the failure to acknowledge such differences result in oversimplifying the understanding of consumer behavior and limiting marketers ability to design targeted strategies and effective digital campaigns.

The others glaring limitation in the existing literature is the focus on industries other than fast fashion, such as beauty, tech, or ecommerce. Yes, they offer insights, which in theory may be extrapolated and applied, but fast fashion is defined by rapidly changing trend cycles, affordability, high turnover of products in various designs, and fickle consumer loyalty, rendering these not entirely direct comparisons. This demarcation limits applicability to find existing on European fast fashion. No wonder the bulk of this previous research pays only scant attention to a mutual Western or global European context: none of the rich cultural diversity and digital maturity. The complex consumer expectations also differ significantly from one place to another. The ways in which different countries view sustainability, authenticity, and brand transparency a theme hardly

featured in the above global studies mainly but essential in shaping the fast-fashion purchase process showcase the idea.

When brands invest heavily in influencer marketing, celebrity endorsements, peer recommendations, and interactive content, there is confusion about which content format fuels purchase intention towards making a conversion. Even if influencer marketing is considered very effective, how efficient a platform has also remained questionable. Some studies suggest that excessive promotional content can lead to a decline in the trust and respect consumers have for a brand due to audience fatigue, and that is also reflected in the decrease of credibility for a brand. On the other hand, user-generated content spurs authenticity, peer recommendations are supposed to be better, but no empirical data provides their direct effect and how their effects vary from one another.

Finally, the purpose of the research extends to the theoretical advancement where the consumer culture theory, decision making models and digital persuasion frameworks have not fully incorporated specifically for the role of algorithmic feeds and parasocial relationship with influencers. There is blood boundary between entertainment and commerce on specific platforms such as TikTok through critical analysis the research is able to contribute to updating and contextualizing such theoretical frameworks towards a rapid evolving digital marketplace.

Specific aims

By highlighting identified deficits in present scholarship, the objectives of the study aim to bridge the misalignment in the theoretical and methodological discourse. Firstly, one of the aims of the research is to critically scrutinize the socio-cognitive and structural factors that are believed to be behind the research problem. It is felt that for too many researches, this particular aspect of the research problem is not taken up with enthusiasm and impetus, but instead it only merely describes the mechanisms of cognizing the problem. As Mehrad (2024) argues, the research without much theoretical underpinning is liable to reproduce trendy theories of social behaviors without capturing the real essence of sociological actions. Therefore, this research, by way of applying critical analytical lenses, will delve far deeper, elaborating on how the contextual parameters such as power relations, digital infrastructures, cultural norms, or organisational design, serve as mould for stakeholder behavior.

The second aim is to find a way to evaluate effectiveness and limitations in the existing practice, policies, or behavior of relevant fields with respect to the research problem in order to address the ubiquitous generalizability issues found in most applied research. Many of the existing studies usually include small samples and those that look farther below the surface than the simple positivist assumptions; this means very little attention is paid to lived experiences and intersectionality, or the numerous structural inequities (Jackson, 2021). From the pragmatic point of view, this goal is justified as, beyond the measurement of immediate outputs, effective functioning also involves analysis of why something went wrong to solve gaps, disparities, and operational roadblocks. By reflecting critically, a more differentiated picture of the assets and liabilities involved in any practice is achieved in support of evidence-informed decision-making.

Moreover, and concurrently, identifying the gaps in the existing knowledge stores and opening them with a variety of alternative perspectives or theoretical framings goes some way in the direction of answering demands for a decolonized, inclusive, and epistemologically diverse scholarship. Scholars like Madikiza (2025) decry that many dominant research traditions are too deeply shaped by Eurocentric assumptions that exclude non-Western ways of knowing. This research seeks to resist and eliminate epistemic hierarchism by offering alternative interfaces from, say, Indigenous knowledge, critical theory, or participatory methodologies for the study at hand. This focus is indispensable not only for the purposes of intellectual rigour, but also to make an ethical appeal against the hegemony of singular narratives.

The fourth and ultimate aim is (4) to generate empirically grounded insights that can inform future policy, organizational strategy, or community practice, addressing the frequent disconnect between research and real-world application. Lim (2025) have argued that research findings generally do not affect practice because the findings are either inaccessible, poorly contextualised, or insufficiently robust. Convergence of efficient methodological tools and stakeholder-targeted policy application in this research will generate ideas to close the evidence–practice gap. The objective underpinning this aim is the need for applicable ever so rich knowledge in designing sustainable, ethical, and contextually relevant solutions.

These aims together contribute to the development of a critical, theoretically informed and methodologically rigorous study. The aims do not aim to simply fill a gap; rather, they attempt at challenging dominant assumptions and rectifying methodological shortcomings in the existing

literature. They seek to democratise knowledge production. From a multifaceted perspective, the research is oriented to make significant academic potentially social, responding to present-day debates on the issues of equity, representation and evidence-based practice.

Research is to explore consumer behavior towards fast fashion through the influence by social media in Europe.

1.4 Research Rationale

The examination of consumer behaviour towards fast fashion clothing on the part of social media in Europe brings to light both practical and theoretical gaps in contemporary scholarship. Social media come about as a medium that cultivates a market around Instagram and TikTok, wherein it acts as the place for trend spotting, judgment of peer set, authenticity, and engagement of the brand (Madhura, 2022). Digital penetration in Europe is being rather high, and increasing numbers of online-oriented consumers are driving this estimate. Fast fashion is considered to reach the 47.5 million dollar industry by 2024 (Dimension Market Research, 2024). However, regardless of the scale, the current studies reveal a dearth of link between digital activity and concrete purchasing activity, henceforth demanding concentrated research in this magnitude.

Engagement and conversion gaps are identified here as key motivations driving the study. Prameswari (2022) indicated that nearly half of European consumers (52%) get inspiration for fast fashion from social media, yet only 38% of viewers go on to make a purchase due to the same piece of content (Vladomirova, 2022). For these high numbers of their users going from being engaged to completing a purchase to occur, the visibility of content needs not just be on social media, but also become possible on a commercial dimension, thus challenging the industry's assumption that increased online engagement will automatically generate revenue. By investigating the gap, the research is radically interrogating the efficacy of digital marketing strategies, particularly how they mechanistically help or hinder the translation of user attention into purchase.

Other studies are needed to discern the distinction between impulse and planned buying behavior driven by disparate psychological, sociological, and digital signals; as Horberry (2024, p. 44) insisted, 64 percent of Gen Z online shoppers at least once a month make impulse purchases via the influence of social media, showing the power of emotionally infused, algorithmically chosen content. Nevertheless, the prior studies have mostly treated social media influence as a single factor

without finding the avenues through which content format, platform characteristics, and influencer credibility could differentially affect either planned or impulse purchases. Understanding this distinction is a precondition for crafting marketing strategies aimed at engaging and enhancing conversions.

The unique role of regions and contexts is justified by inadequacies in the existing literature. Previous research on social media influence has either targeted technology or beauty sector firms or has presented global histories. It is not very helpful for a segment of the industry: fast fashion in Europe. Europeans are very culturally diverse and socially active online and increasingly interested in authenticity and sustainability, behaviors that are directly reflected in digital consumption patterns (Euromonitor, 2023). This makes the European-doing analysis more contextually relevant and useful for informing theoretical frameworks and industry practices.

From a practical point of view, fast fashion companies continue to spend heavily on influencer collaborations, peer reviews, and digital advertising, without clear-cut understanding as to which strategies deliver conversions from engagement into purchase. By examining how different types of social media content are connected to consumer behavior, the study gives actionable learnings concerning more effective resource allocation, campaign effectiveness, and the return on investment. Moreover, it sheds light on the fickle loyalty behavior within fast fashion, a world with short trend cycles, swiftly changing consumer preferences.

To reflect upon moving beyond the ghetto of fast brands, answers to problems relating to the survey said social talent from the local communities can help build an identity with consumers. Think it was unavoidable for the companies to involve their actors and salespeople and to accept actors themselves as communicators in the business. By this approach, the employers would jointly develop the public image of the company.

1.5 Significance of the study

The significance in the study was to develop actionable insights for the fast fashion industry and provide a theoretical contribution to the knowledge analyzed. At a time when social media has become a central component in marketing and trend-sharing, learning about the impact of this domain on consumers and how it is uplifting consumer decision-making processes would prove to be an important survey to sweep into. Now, platforms like Instagram and TikTok were by no means mere venues for brand visibility but also seed purchase intent among the customers through

peer endorsement, influencer marketing, and algorithm-driven content as proven by Madhura (2022). For all their virtues, hence, businesses have still not been able to make actual purchases at a fraction of social media's responsibilities; they were able to purchase products because of the influence brought by the Facebook Company (Vladimirova, 2022). This scenario underscores the need for a study that can isolate the content-type and strategy that drives higher conversions. This would stand to benefit the industry in real terms when it comes to marketing.

Practically speaking, for all practical purposes, the study equips fast fashion brands with evidence-based insights to yield improvement in digital marketing action and return on investment (ROI). A significant amount of money is typically spent on social media campaigns including influencer collaborations, paid advertisements, and content creation. Without understanding the main purchases made by consumers, money may be misappropriated to campaigns that only gain visibility and fail to generate sales. The study empowers the differentiation between those consumers who purchase on impulse and those who plan using a subtle learning of consumer decisions, thereby offering a perspective for brands to design campaigns that are both cost-sensitive and conversion-centric (Horberry, 2024). For instance, should it be found that short content and intense emotions are greases for impulsive purchases, brands can choose to be prudent by tailoring its content strategy for high relevancy and effectively dealing with revenue generation from the actions, while again entertaining planned-purchase prospects through good informative versus comparison-focused contents.

This study could also be valuable in refining brand-consumer relationship management. In 2023, European speedy fashion consumers particularly from generations Z and Y begin to diffuses real relations, personalization, and associations with dispatching brand social values such as sustainability (Goel, 2025). Comprehending the dynamics among influencer marketing, personal recommendations, and brand consumer trust, the study would introduce valuable thoughts about website branding initiatives. By identifying the accurate crucial variables and via the creative application of their study's findings, it will further guide strategic brand management decisions alongside adding maximum value for business operation in such dynamic and high-speed marketplace competition.

Moreover, the study initiated strategic content and campaign planning. This prioritizes content initiatives that could yield strong impacts towards models of advertising dispensation. Plenstrategy: Brands working on data analysis can embrace predictive content analytics--a clean culture shift in marketing practice toward understanding programs printed on experimental grounds beyond marketing vanity metrics of engagement, such as likes or views (Prameswari, 2022).

This study, not only for economic impact studies, has important theoretical and sustainability contexts. The fast fashion industry is often slammed for its environmental degradation and unsustainable means of consumption. By separating planned from unplanned buying, the study could present an opportunity for campaigns promoting conscious consumption to align Asian market strategies with social responsibility targets.

Therefore, the study makes a significant contribution to academic knowledge by offering a European-specific perspective for social media influence on fast fashion consumption in a region with a broad range of cultural, economic, and digital literacy contexts. Most of the available literature generalizes from regions or (few) industries, inhibiting the study's wider applicability (Dimension Market Research, 2024). This gap is successfully filled by an application-oriented study that meets industrial stakeholders' requirements and offers some theoretical standpoints given to interested scholars busy in the study of digital consumer behaviour.

Thus, the study is indeed useful as a platform to consider well-paced marketing strategies considering customer engagement and margin/profitability improvements on one side and on social obligations concerning the aspects of consumer behaviour on another.

1.6 Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this research is to investigate the influence of Instagram and TikTok on fast-fashion consumer behavior in Europe. Due to the multifunctional emergence of social media sites as major tools for marketing and trend dissemination, a gap between engaged versus actual purchasing behavior has become even more pronounced in today's society. For example, Prameswari's (2022) study reports social media being a prominent source of inspiration for fast fashion for 52% of European consumers, whereas Vladimirova (2022) found that only 38% of customers under such inspiration "converted" into sales, thereby revealing a major engagement-to-conversion gap. This

research sets out to investigate the factors that bring about this disparity, deviating from mere social media metrics like likes or shares into the deeper insight into psychological and social mechanisms that affect impulse and planned buying habits.

Furthermore, another aim is to differentiate between impulse buying and planned buying behavior and how they are influenced by different cognitive and emotional triggers. Horberry (2024) asserts that 64% of Gen Z consumers make monthly impulse purchasing decisions out of the influence of social media and not just any that are combined by the extant body of literature since it does not account for platform-specific content, algorithmic recommendations, or influencer credibility. It is for this reason that the study seeks to bring to attention corresponding subtleties and recommend meaningful applications that may inform marketing strategies to increase the digital campaign conversion ratio.

This study examines the geographical gap as well as the context in previous literature. Much of the recent literature is about non-European markets or from one sector, e.g. cosmetics or electronics, etc., which may not be tailored to Europe's culturally diverse digital citizens using fast fashion. Thereby, this study stands to bridge academic understanding with industrial application in theoretical frameworks. Also, in pointing the way toward practical strategies for marketing, this research would seem to set the stage for theoretical frameworks such as Consumer Decision-Making Process and Consumer Culture Theory.

In general, the study aims at providing an interrogation of whether social media content impacts consumer behavior on an evidence base, which draws lines about engagement vs. conversion, impulse purchasing vs. planned purchases, thereby offering insights to make market practices more targeted, efficient, and effective in the context of fast fashion in Europe.

Objectives

The main objective is to explore consumer behavior towards fast fashion through the influence by social media in Europe.

Sub Research objectives

1. To distinguish between impulse purchases and planned purchases influence through social media content.

2. To analyze the impact of Instagram and Tik Tok on customer purchasing behavior in the fast fashion sector in Europe.
3. To examine how the social media engagement correlates with the actual persons in decision.
4. To evaluate the level of effectiveness of influencer marketing against the brand advertisement towards driving the customer purchase.
5. To assess the role of celebrity endorsement and peer recommendation in shape in the customer buying behavior.

Research questions

1. What is the difference between impulse purchases and planned purchases influence through social media content?
2. What is the impact of Instagram and Tik Tok on customer purchasing behavior in the fast fashion sector in Europe?
3. How the social media engagement correlate with the actual persons in decision?
4. What is the level of effectiveness of influencer marketing against the brand advertisement towards driving the customer purchase?
5. What is the role of celebrity endorsement and peer recommendation in shape in the customer buying behavior?

CHAPTER 11: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to chapter

This chapter is an extensive overview of the current literature on consumer behavior, social media, and the fast fashion sector, focusing on Europe especially. It thoroughly analyzes the factors that impact consumer behavior, which are, for instance, brand engagement, convenience, privacy, platform type, and influencer endorsement, and it goes into detail about how these variables manage both planned and impulse purchases. Besides, the chapter scrutinizes the influence of celebrity endorsements and peer recommendations on consumer decision-making by referring to well-established theories like the Theory of Planned Behavior, Consumer Decision-Making Process, Consumer Culture Theory, Social Influence Theory, and the Elaboration Likelihood Model.

Besides, the literature review points out the specific features and the growth patterns of the fast fashion industry, such as quick trend changes, low prices, and large customer acceptance. The review then looks at social media platforms namely Instagram and TikTok as the major players in the consumer engagement and purchase behavior market and also sheds light on the gap between the online interaction and actual conversion. The last part of the chapter is dedicated to the conceptualization of the relationships among the principal variables, the identification of the research gap, and the formulation of hypotheses that direct the research. This literature review not only provides a theoretical and empirical basis for the comprehension of the social media impact on fast fashion consumer behavior but also guides the formulation of the study's conceptual framework.

2.2 A brief overview about consumer behavior

Consumer behavior is the term that covers the whole process of the individual's actions in regard to a product or service, such as selection, purchase, utilization, and disposal, and is influenced by a mixture of cultural, social, psychological, and personal factors (Eastman, 2023). All the aforementioned factors together determine decision-making, whereby rational appraisal and emotional reactions are both taken into account. Traditional frameworks, like the ones suggested by Cole (2017), think of consumer behavior as a sequential decision-making process divided into stages such as need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation. Although such frameworks are still considered as the basis, they usually do

not deal appropriately with the intricacies of contemporary, digitally mediated consumption, especially in the case of rapidly changing industries like fast fashion.

In the above-mentioned traditional view, Eastman (2023) steps forward by putting the accent on digital engagement and value consciousness of Generation Z, thus pointing out that social media has a role not just in product awareness but also in attitudes, social validation, and purchase intentions. It marks a move from the conventional concentration on rational decision-making to a more sophisticated comprehension of the ways in which external factors, such as influencer marketing, peer recommendations, and algorithmically curated content, work with the individual attitudes to provoke both intentional and impulse buying. Yet, Eastman's project is still very much dependent on classical models which might not be suitable for the context of short-form, interactive and visually-driven platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

The current body of literature is mostly non-specific in terms of fast fashion sector by the highly volatile trends, low prices and fast content cycles that are the main characteristics. Most of the research either considers all e-commerce businesses as one group or focuses on other industries, which limits the European consumers' diverse culture and high digital activity's applicability to the findings. Moreover, there is little empirical evidence to indicate the difference in consumer behavior with regard to influencer-led versus peer-driven social media content, especially in terms of conversion from engagement to actual purchase (Vladimirova, 2022).

This study fills the void of literature by putting under the microscope the consumer behavior in the European fast fashion market from the angle of both, planned and impulse buying. The author expresses a more actionable and context-specific understanding of the ways social media influences consumer decision-making by mixing new digital engagement metrics with old behavioral theories. Such understanding is the key for fast fashion brands that want to be ahead in their digital marketing strategy, to enhance engagement, and to raise conversion rates within a very competitive and fast-changing market.

2.2.1 Factors influencing consumer behavior

Consumer behavior is determined by various factors working together in a complex manner these factors are psychological, personal, and social, and they all affect the process of making a decision and the intent to buy (Kavita, 2023). The psychological aspect, which includes people's feelings, beliefs, and drives, is like a pushing force inside the person that decides how they would judge

different brands and their products (Sostar, 2023). Similarly, personal aspects such as salary, way of living, and particular tastes, are also influencing consumption choices among the population, especially in the fast fashion industry where price and fashion sensitivity are the main factors determining the purchase (Sostar, 2023). Alike to the aforementioned, both the writers, Kavita (2023) and Sostar (2023) emphasize the importance of such basic factors, yet their studies do not shed much light on the digital and social media landscape that gradually becomes essential tool in influencing modern consumer behavior.

Brand interaction has been considered as the key factor that determines the consumer behavior in fast fashion. Rodríguez (2023) claims that the active engagement with the fashion brands such as liking, commenting, and sharing helps in building brand recognition, trust and eventually purchase intention. Such engagement is very important for the fast fashion industry as the trends are short-lived and the consumer attention is fickle. Along with that, convenience also plays a significant role in influencing the behavior; Siddiqui (2025) highlights that easy navigation, fast payment methods and being able to access the site from any device are the reasons behind both planned and impulsive buys.

Concerns about privacy are another major factor. Onitiu (2022) explains, consumers are now more likely to consider data privacy and protection of personal information as a factor in their decision to use a digital platform. Therefore, if a platform is perceived as secure, it is more likely to be trusted and the consumer will engage with it and come back again. The type of the platform is also important; Won (2020) mentions that visual and algorithm-based platforms like Instagram and TikTok create higher interaction and have a more powerful influence on purchasing decisions than text-based platforms. Finally, endorsement by an influencer functions both as a social and psychological signal that affects attitude and perception. According to Yaacob (2021), influencers are the ones giving power to the brand, making them more relatable and keeping them in the know which eventually leads to, especially, Gen Z and Millennials being more inclined to buy.

However, the prior studies have pointed out the factors separately and it seems that there is a lack of integrative research that looks into their combined influence in the fast fashion social media scene. Most of the existing literature covering retail or other sectors tends to ignore the lively and algorithmic nature of platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Thus, this gap signals the urgent

need to determine through what manner did these factors together affect engagement, conversion of planned and impulse purchases, and actual sales in the European fast fashion market.

2.2.1.1 Brand engagement

Brand engagement denotes the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral bond that a consumer forms with a particular brand. It indicates the extent to which consumers are not just aware of the brand or have purchased it once, but are in fact actively interacting with, participating in, or supporting the brand. Among the ways engagement can be expressed are social media interactions (likes, shares, comments), loyalty programs, or through engaging in brand campaigns. According to Rodríguez et al. (2023), one of the major factors influencing the purchase intention is brand engagement as it creates emotional appreciation, joy, and trust which can be the deciding factor in the choice of product to be bought. In short, brand engagement means establishing a very close and deep relationship between the consumer and the brand.

Brand engagement is becoming increasingly important in consumer purchasing decisions in the fashion industry, operating through emotional, cognitive and behavioral commitments to brands. The study by Rodríguez, Cuesta-Valiño, and Ripoll (2023) on Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) in fashion retail makes use of a sample of data comprising 1,296 Spanish consumers analyzed through structural equation modeling (SEM). Their study findings show that the more consumer engagement there is, which is indicated by active interactions with the brand, the greater the consumer happiness and consequently the purchase intention, which is significantly affected. Thus, consumer decision-making is mainly driven by emotional factors, and it is not only the case that the engagement is the purchase process and everything that goes with it psychological, of which emotional satisfaction is the main mediating factor in the consumer path to actual purchasing behavior. The mediation of happiness presents a more refined interpretation of how the engagement takes relational forms in the consumer-brand relationship that are stronger than the ones created merely by the consumer being exposed to the product or having received some information about it.

Furthermore, Sang Vo Minh et al. (2022) study the social brand engagement on social media, the brand equity and the purchase intention in the Vietnamese fashion market with 637 respondents aged 18–50 and their impact. The data obtained were analyzed and the analysis reveals that the engagement with the brand has a positive effect on brand equity, which is a factor that helps the

purchase intention indirectly. On the other hand, social brand engagement is not a significant moderator in the relationship of brand association with purchase intention, which means that not all engagement behaviors are equally effective in transforming into brand associations that are deeper. The situation is such that, for the effective conversion of interactions into purchases, engagement had better be in tune with brand messaging.

It is clear from both studies that there are indirect routes through which brand engagement shows its effects on consumer behavior. The researchers, on the one hand, Rodríguez et al. (2023) pinpoint emotional satisfaction as the mediator, on the other hand, Vo Minh et al. (2022) zero in on brand equity. Thus, they together push the limits of theoretical comprehension by indicating that the engagement provides relational and psychological value rather than merely facilitating the buying decision.

Nevertheless, the studies also have drawbacks. They both applied cross-sectional designs which are a limitation on the extent of causation that can be drawn. The work of Rodríguez et al. (2023) is confined to Spanish consumers, while Vo Minh et al. (2022) are looking at Vietnam, thus raising questions about the generalizability of results for the fast fashion segment in Europe. Also, in both research, the measurement of engagement and intentions is largely based on self-reporting rather than on observation of actual purchasing behavior, and they do not take into account that different engagement actions (e.g., liking, sharing, commenting) might have different impacts on the outcomes.

In summary, the literature indicates that brand engagement is the main factor motivating consumer purchasing intention via emotional and relational mechanisms, however, the longitudinal designs, cross-cultural comparisons and behavioral measurements should be in the toolkit of future research to capture the subtle effect of specific engagement behaviors on fast fashion consumption in Europe, especially.

2.2.1.2 Convenience

In consumer behavior, the term as well as the concept of convenience, is the fact and the ease of accessing, evaluating, and purchasing products or services. This aspect comprises sometimes the layout of the website/app, the product being in stock, the speed of delivery, ways of payment, and smooth online navigation. According to the study conducted by Siddiqui (2025), the main reason for convenience to be such a strong factor in consumer decision-making because it makes the

shopping experience so simple and therefore attracts the consumers to make a purchase. The fast fashion market, which is characterized by the rapid turnover of trends, convenience can be the factor that decides whether the consumer's impulse or thoughtful purchase happens right away.

Convenience has emerged as a crucial element in the online consumer behavior map, especially concerning the fashion sector because it eliminates the barriers in the transaction and corresponds with the consumers' wish for rapid service. Siddiqui, Zafar, and Naseem (2025) look into the online convenience (accessibility, usability, time-saving) effects on the buying decision process in the fashion apparel industry in Pakistan. The authors conducted a survey with 237 participants and revealed a strong positive association between online convenience and consumer buying preferences, which was mediated by electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).

The findings also indicate that the more the online platforms are user-friendly, easily accessible and designed to save users' time, the higher the chances are that consumers will share reviews and give recommendations, and this content-driven by peers will further support their purchasing decision.

In the same way, Adeola, Moradeyo, Muogboh, and Adisa (2021) research the consumer values that are considered as instrumental, such as service convenience (time-saving, ease of transaction), and their impact on online purchase behavior in Nigeria's fashion market.

The researchers conducted a cross-sectional study involving 241 participants and concluded that instrumental values alongside terminal values (e.g., satisfaction, happiness) significantly impact online purchase behavior. Their results particularly pointed out that service convenience (part of instrumental value) is one of the major factors that drive online fashion purchases, thus giving an indication that consumers put practicality over aesthetics when it comes to the online shopping experience.

Importantly, both studies support the idea that convenience has both direct and indirect effects on purchasing behavior. For instance, Siddiqui et al. (2025) discussed eWOM as a mediator that demonstrates, on the one hand, how convenience has the potential to make customers' lives easier when buying and, on the other hand, how this very activity creates more peer recommendation, which in turn, influences the decisions. Conversely, Adeola et al. (2021), through the classification

of consumer values, assert that convenience is not limited to just usability but rather it is among the core consumers' instrumental values and thus, it shapes over time the purchasing habits.

In spite of the above contributions, limitations exist. Siddiqui et al.'s (2025) research has the drawback of the small, confined to one geographical location sample (Pakistan), which affects the generalizability of the findings to other fast fashion markets (such as Europe). Furthermore, their dependence on self-reported eWOM behavior surveys might inflate the actual mediating effect. Also, Adeola et al. (2021) face the same problem of cross-sectional study design, which constrains any causal inference; in addition, their demographic concentration on a Nigerian emerging market context might restrict the generalizability of their findings to more developed or culturally different areas.

The available literature reflects a unanimous view that online convenience is a major motivator of purchase behavior in fashion environments, mainly through transactional facilitation and the activation of recommendation-driven decision paths. Notwithstanding, our understanding of the dynamics related to these behaviors will need to be supported by further longitudinal studies in conjunction with cross-cultural samples, especially in fast-paced markets such as European fast fashion, to validate and enhance our knowledge.

2.2.1.3 Privacy

Privacy is the safeguarding of personal and behavioral data of consumers in digital environments. It also covers the very issues of collecting, storing, and using data by brands or social media platforms. Onitiu (2022) says that consumers' notions of privacy can make or break their trust in online platforms, which in turn will impact their interaction with brands and buying decisions. In the case of fast fashion, privacy concerns can drive consumers away from being engaged and making transactions, but at the same time, if the marketers are honest about their privacy practices and use secure platforms, consumer confidence will grow.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that privacy is one of the major factors that online consumers consider, especially in the case of digital retail areas such as fast fashion. Onitiu (2022) conducts a theoretical exploration of privacy and points out that the algorithm-based personalization systems in the fashion business can lead to the loss of the consumer's freedom and the consumer's invisibility. She claims that the systems in question do not have any advantages but rather create “filter bubbles” which are very close to the consumer's choices and at the same time decrease their

individuality. Trust and brand engagement can be further eroded by the invisibility and loss of freedom created. Privacy issues, in this case, have a broader aspect that includes the psychological and identity concerns of the consumers which might prevent them from being actively involved in the personalized fashion content. The current scenario brought by the above discussion is the one where privacy perceptions can indirectly impact purchase behaviour, especially in very personalised and trend-oriented markets like the European fast fashion (Onitiu, 2022).

Aiello et al. (2020) on the other hand take an empirical approach and observe the privacy issues affecting online consumers' readiness to share personal information and make transactions online. They conclude that the brand's perceived warmth is very effective in reducing at once the privacy concerns and increasing the chances of personal data disclosure which eventually leads to buying behavior. A structured sampling method was employed for the study and it reveals that emotional factors like trust and friendliness are powerful to consumers' decisions regarding privacy, thus making privacy an issue both in terms of cognition and emotion. The study's findings imply that brands can, based on this, target the privacy barriers down and make purchasing easier just by giving priority to the emotional and relational engagement along with the security measures that are technical.

The most important point of Onitiu's (2022) article is that it reaches conceptual depth and critically tackles the ethical dimensions and identity issues related to privacy that are often left out of consideration in empirical studies. But absence of empirical data makes it less applicable for the marketing strategies that need to be immediately implemented. Aiello et al. (2020) deliver strong empirical support connecting privacy views with consumers' intention to act, and their step by step analysis throughout the purchasing process adds more layers to understanding the process of buying in general. The use of self-reported data that might not coincide with actual behavior and the limitation in the generalizability of results to other markets or fast fashion-focused contexts are among the shortcomings.

Indispensably, these studies highlight the fact that the influence of privacy on purchasing behavior is both direct and through identity issues and emotional trust. The deep understanding of these dynamics can turn into a competitive advantage in terms of consumer engagement, reduction of privacy resistance, and increased conversion rates for fast fashion brands that are active on social media and use personalization. Researchers in the future should perform an empirical investigation

into the relationship between privacy perceptions, social media engagement, and actual purchases in different European markets in order to come up with effective and data-driven marketing strategies.

2.2.1.4 Platform type

The term platform type denotes the particular digital or social media channels that consumers select for their communications with brands. Each platform (Instagram, TikTok, online fashion-sharing sites, etc.) has its own content presentation, interaction mechanisms, and social atmosphere which will, therefore, alter consumer behavior in various ways. According to Won (2020), the marketing strategies' effectiveness is largely dependent on the chosen platform type since every single platform has its own set of specific user demographics, interaction styles, and ways to influence the intention to buy differently.

The platform type is very vital in influencing the ways consumers buy the products in the fashion industry. Won and Kim (2020) studied this among the fashion-sharing platforms and considered the three consumer motivations - utilitarian, hedonic, and ecological - in forming consumers' attitudes and their intention to buy. The quantitative approach taken in this study using South Korean consumers numbering 180 as sample uncovered that hedonic and ecological motives have a notable positive impact on attitudes of the consumers while the impact of utilitarian motives, however, was weak. Furthermore, the researchers found that product replacement cycle (PRC) acts as a moderating factor in the relationship between consumers' attitudes and their intention to purchase, meaning that more frequent consumers will always be taking actions based on the good attitudes they have towards the platforms. Ultimately, this research brought up an important point that the type of platform does not matter only because of its structural or functional design but rather, it is through the interaction with consumers' value systems and behavior patterns that the type of platform comes to play.

To add to this, Nash (2019) looked at how social media influence fashion consumer decision-making in the UK, particularly among Generation X and Y. Employing qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and focus groups, she determined that social media mainly functions as a source of inspiration and information gathering instead of directly encouraging purchases. Similar to Instagram, she pointed out that social media offers visual stimuli and user-generated content that modify consumer perceptions but that very high involvement does not always mean that there

will be the same level of purchase intention. This factor brings out the subtle and indirect impact of platform type on consumer behavior; it is suggested that though platforms do help in creating awareness of the brands and trends, they are not a certain factor in bringing about immediate sales.

There are strengths in both studies. The quantitative study by Won and Kim (2020) provides compelling proof of platform-specific motivations and the role of consumption cycles thus adding to the understanding of the sharing economy in the fashion industry. Nash (2019) uses qualitative analysis to give rich, contextual insights into the limitations of social media influence on purchasing behavior. However, there are limitations of the studies as well: Won and Kim's sample size is quite small and is limited to South Korea which makes generalization difficult and also they used cross-sectional design which does not allow tracking of long term behavior. Nash's study, although very thorough, is limited by a small sample and two generational cohorts and thus lacks a statistical estimation of platform effects.

To sum it up, both studies prove that platform type has a significant impact on consumer engagement and purchasing behavior, although each study describes a different mechanism. Fashion-sharing platforms draw purchasing action directly through motivations and consumption cycles, while social media platforms indirectly by controlling perceptions and the process of being inspired. The outcomes of the research point to the necessity for further studies in the fast fashion milieu across Europe, where a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches will be developed to verify how different platform types convert consumer interest into actual purchase behavior.

2.2.1.5 Influencer endorsement

Influencer endorsement is when people who have a lot of followers online promote a brand or product using their reliability, knowledge, and trust with the audience. Yaacob (2021) states that influencers alter consumers' opinions and actions by influencing the brand image, giving social proof, and creating a wish for fashionable or approved products. In the case of fast fashion, influencer endorsement has the power to trigger both impulse and planned purchases, especially among the young generations of Gen Z and Millennials who appreciate peer endorsement and social proof. Gradually, influencer marketing has taken over and turned into a major force that is responsible for the promotion of the fashion industry. This phenomenon, along with others, has

significantly impacted the ways that brands and their consumers interact, and ultimately, the purchase intention of the latter.

In the study which is considered here and was carried out by Chetioui, Benlafqih, and Lebdaoui (2020), the authors propose a model that is based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and they study the interplay between consumer attitudes toward fashion influencers and brand attitude and purchase intention. These researchers surveyed 610 Moroccan consumers and analyzed their data using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique. The analysis yielded a very interesting finding that customers having a positive attitude towards the influencers will not just like the brand but will also want to buy its products. They have also mentioned that among the factors that are established as influencing consumers' positive attitude towards FIs are perceived credibility, trust, influencer expertise, subjective norms, behavioral control, and congruence between the influencer and the brand.

Influencer endorsement has a strong positive and statistically significant correlation with purchase intention in the fashion context, as shown in Yaacob's (2021) study. The study was based on a sample of 163 online consumers of fashion goods taken during the Covid pandemic period, and its findings are published in the Journal of Content, Community & Communication. The results reveal that influencer endorsement correlates with purchase intention very strongly ($r = 0.48$) and even higher than online reviews ($r = 0.25$) or social media ads ($r = 0.35$) correlations.

This stresses the point that influencer endorsement is the most persuasive technique when compared to the more conventional and the less trusted peer digital content.

The key strengths of the paper by Chetioui et al. (2020) combine solid theoretical grounds (based on TPB), a vast sample, and advanced PLS-SEM mediation testing. They present major influencers' implications not only that they matter by spotting the main psychological antecedents that lead to the favorable attitudes. However, their study is not without a limitation; it depends on the self-reported purchase intention method, which may not always correspond to actual buying behavior; moreover, it covers Moroccan culture only, which limits the possibility of cross-cultural generalizations, especially to the fast-fashion-dominated European markets.

On the other hand, Yaacob's (2021) investigation is fully supported by direct quantitative results demonstrating the connection of the influencer endorsement to the purchase intention with clear

correlation statistics. However, the small sample size (163) and the pandemic context may limit the generalizability of the applicability of the findings outside the specific study conditions. Furthermore, the research is correlational in nature and thus, cannot determine causality—whether influencers induce purchasing or just happen to attract those who already intend to buy.

Due to the fact that they have different types of studies, the researchers' findings complement each other. Credibility of the influencers, trust of the consumers, and alignment with the brand are the main elements that dictate and direct consumer behavior in the fashion industry. Nonetheless, more research especially in the context of the European fast fashion market, is necessary to confirm these factors and see if the same relationships apply in terms of actual sales.

2.2.2 Relationship between consumer behavior and fast fashion

The research which been conducted in regard to fast fashion consumption repeatedly indicated about the strong behavior poem exerted by social media but the key tensions remain under Explore. Gupta (2018) identified about the aspiration and logic underpinning consumers engagement with the fast fashion. The researcher argued about the digital platforms exposing the individuals lifestyle ideals which has increased the fashion turnover and normalized the frequent low-cost purchase. Furthermore, the empirical findings indicated that the consumers are more motivated not only through affordability but within their desire to evaluate idealize identities that are circulated through influencer and peer network. But the study is limited by its primary emphasis upon lifestyle aspiration. It insufficiently Entangles on how different media platforms such as visual cues and influence endorsement with short form videos triggering the distinct psychological and behavioral patterns.

Papamichael (2024) adds to the development of this discourse by preempting the increasing pressure of trends created by digital media settings. The analysis provides a refined explanation of how the process of impulsive buying is being affected through algorithmic visibility, real-time micro-trends, and emotionally-driven fashion content. However, even though it is relevant nowadays, the study is mostly conceptual. It does not empirically gauge consumer reactions to specific content categories and does not compare differences between demographic or regional.

Both authors are convincing together to show that social media has a structurally important part in the maintenance of the rapid consumption cycles, which proves that there is a positive correlation between the influence of the media and the purchase behaviour. However, the common weakness is the fact that they do not consider the influence of various types of social media content on how to balance the short-term satisfaction and long-term intentions. This is especially applicable in Europe, where discourse of sustainability, regulatory force and cultural contrast influence fashion participation.

2.2.3 Relationship between consumer behavior and social media

The research which being conducted about the psychological social drivers of fast fashion consumption highlighted about the central role of social media towards shaping the decision making. Ather (2019) has argued that social media platforms strongly transforming how consumers evaluate along with compare and select fashion products which emphasize upon influence of peer networks and brand storytelling. The findings indicated that the narrative driven contains strengthens the emotional attachment and reduces the cognitive effort during the choice making. Furthermore, it has been highlighted about the altered selection process whether researchers contribute in understanding how consumers adopt trends more rapidly and relying upon socially curated chaos rather than about rational evaluation. But the study remains limited with its generalized treatment about social media influence and provides little distinction between the effects of peer content brand, generated advertisements and influencer messaging.

Jamil (2022) supplements this perspective by establishing the primary psychological mechanisms that are driving the fast-fashion buying: fear of missing out (FOMO) and consumer trust in influencers. The study demonstrates the role of influencers as reputable go-between, whose authenticity evokes impulse and deliberated purchases. It is important to note here that Jamil is able to bring up ethical issues, claiming that persuasive digital environments blur the distinction between true recommendation and manipulation. However, as much as this is an excellent ethical framing, the study is indicated to be based on an extensive amount of self-reported perceptions as well as not empirically investigating the ways in which the creation of certain content types or platform characteristics influences behavioural changes.

Both authors, together, emphasize the strength of social media to reinforce consumer interest, brand difference, as well as fashion responsiveness, in the case of fast fashion. Their effort substantiates that social influence, psychological triggers and mediated trust are highly predictive of buying intentions. Nevertheless, in the entire literature, one obvious weakness is the lack of a granular analysis of how various types of content influencer marketing, brand advertisements and peer-recommendation, uniquely influence impulse and planned purchasing behaviour.

2.2.4 Planned purchase and impulse purchase

The distinct between impulse and plant purchasing remains central to understand about consumer behavior within the rapid shift about fast fashion markets. According to Morozova (2024) planned and impulse purchasing represent two constructing decision making processes which help in shaping consumer behavior in a contemporary fast fashion market. Planned behavior could be considered as a deliberate and rational process which guide through information search along with budgeting and cognitive evaluation (Magwegwe, 2024). The consumers engaging in plant purchasing typically compare alternatives while assess the value and aligning choices with long term preferences and financial constraints. Its key benefit is that support of informed and financial responsible decision while reduce of post purchase regret and promoting sustainable consumption (Magwegwe, 2024). But the disadvantages would be the time and cognitive effort which is required limiting the responsiveness to rapidly changing fashion trends, specifically within the fast fashion industry where the new styles emerge quickly.

Conversely, impulse behaviour is unthought-through, emotion-based and is commonly initiated by external factors like limited time deals, influencer promotion, and graphically convincing social media posts (Gandhi, 2020). The main advantage of impulse purchasing is that it creates instant satisfaction and pleasure, indulging the psychological desire of something new or self-identification. But the disadvantages would be the unplanned free buying frequently result in excess spending along with loss of ethics that increase the harm to the environment which provides and unsustainable loop for fast fashion purchasing (Gandhi, 2020).

The two behaviours are essential in the current research due to the fact that social media settings are becoming more and more grey on distinguishing between premeditated and unplanned decisions. Individualised digital ads: Personalised digital content, such as influencer recommendations or algorithmic advert, can change the mind of a consumer creating a planned

intention to act impulsively in minutes. This is more applicable to the multi-faceted fast-fashion market in Europe where cultural peculiarities influence the way people perceive and react to online signals. The knowledge of these behavioural mechanisms can enable the research to investigate the effect of the particular types of social media content on planned purchasing and impulse purchasing behaviour, and the mediating role of psychological factors in the correlation, including fear of missing out, influencer trust, and peer approval.

Altogether, the evaluation of planned and impulsive behaviours is a holistic way of evaluating the influence of social media that determines fast-fashion consumption, consumer vulnerability, and sustainability.

Morozova (2024) conceptualises about planned purchase as a deliberate and cognitive driven process that shaped the research and the work highlighted about consumers engaging Russian evaluation with the comparing alternative and aligning with purchase of financial consideration. This has contributed valuable insight to a structured nature about consumer decision making but the analysis remains heavily upon theoretical and provides limited empirical evidence about how digital stimuli may disrupt or alter the planned behavior specifically in a highly interactive social media environment.

Conversely, D'Souza (2024) explained about the imp purchasing as a factor which affect based behavior without free intention. The research also cites such emotional stimuli as excitement, urgency, and perceived scarcity as key factors that guide impulsive buying, especially in the context of fast-fashion. Notably, D'Souza expresses prominent ethical issues, stating that digital marketing methods take advantage of consumer vulnerabilities by targeting algorithmically, offering a limited time, and providing personalized suggestions. Although this is a crucial ethical prism, the study fails to analyze the study of various digital content formats and their intensification or mitigation effect on impulsivity in a systematic way.

Both authors concur that the digital space is becoming a place where the line between the premeditated and impulse buying is becoming more of a gray area. The process behind this convergence is real-time exposure of products, instigations by influencers, and the use of personalised marketing strategies, which motivate consumers to move efforts quickly between their evaluation and action. However, a research limitation of both studies is their inadequate consideration of cultural difference. Despite the fact that fast-fashion consumption is universal,

both authors do not explore the idea of personalised digital marketing influencing planned purchasing in varied cultural groups in different ways.

The gap is especially applicable to Europe whereby consumer behaviour differs greatly based on cultural standards, fashion and even sustainability attitudes and values. The current research hence contributes to the literature by investigating the effect of personalised digital marketing on planned and impulse buying among the heterogeneous consumer groups of fast-fashion markets in Europe. Through cross-cultural analysis of differences and content-specific influences, the study provides a novel understanding of processes by which digital persuasion changes the purchasing intentions.

2.2.5 Role of celebrity endorsement in shaping consumer buying behavior

Celebrity endorsement has continued to be a dominant marketing strategy which is also applied in fashion sector that helps in shaping consumer perception and impacting on purchase decisions. According to Hussein (2020) indicated that celebrity credibility expertise and attractiveness significantly increases the consumer trust and brand recall. These factors further help to create a strong psychological association between the endorser and the product. The research demonstrated that celebrities function as a symbolic role model whose perceived status and lifestyle help in influencing the consumer aspiration. But the analysis threatens celebrity influence as a largely uniform and overlooking variation in consumers skepticism across demographic groups and digital factors. This has further limit the generalizability of the findings to different market environments specifically for online for special industry.

A more modern approach is presented by Mohan (2025) who discusses the development of endorsement in digital markets, where established celebrities are now competing with influencers. The results by Mohan indicate an increasing consumer need to see quality, genuine, and relatable messages besides esteem in the brand, versus the brand itself. The paper criticizes the overdependence on celebrity image in the industry since digital consumers particularly the younger ones are more sensitive to endorsers who have actual product use and clear communication. Even though Mohan manages to bring out this change, the research is still conceptually motivated and does not test the concept of digital trust or demographic segmentation empirically.

The two authors agree on the persuasive nature of endorsement but they are different in the way they identify the motivating factor. Whereas Hussein (2020) focuses on attractiveness and credibility, Mohan (2025) predicts authenticity and value fit. This trend is indicative of bigger shifts in customer requirements in digital fashion markets. The major weakness of both studies is the lack of studies of how consumer demographics, age, gender and cultural background, and the differences in the level of digital trust, mediate the effectiveness of endorsements.

The current study will fill this gap by exploring the functionality of celebrity and influencer endorsement in the fast-fashion market of Europe and evaluating the variable effects of such practices on different demographic groups and the level of trust. The strategy facilitates the study of the influence of endorsement strategies on online buying behaviour within culturally diverse online settings.

2.2.6 Theory of planned behavior

Theory of Magnetic Behavior was developed by Adzen in 1991 and provides a structured framework to understand how individuals' intention leading to shape the actions. According to theory there are three key dimensions which determine behavior such as attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms and perspective behavior control (Ryan, 2023).

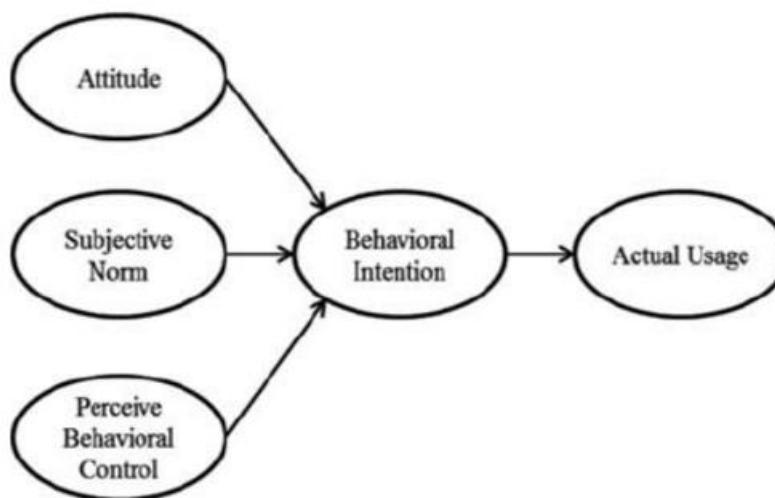
Attitude toward the behaviour is a personal judgment on how an individual assesses to execute a given action (Chandra, 2018). In consumer situations, consumer attitude towards a product purchase enhances the chances of interaction. The advantage of this aspect is that it is predictive; marketers and researchers are able to predict the buying trends through the consumer perceptions (Bosnjak, 2020). However, TPB presupposes rational consideration, and emotional or impulsive motivation are disregarded, which are especially relevant when it comes to fast-fashion situations where novelty, and a desire to follow the fashion are the key factors in decision-making and impulse buying.

The subjective norms are perceived social pressures and demands on peers, family or influential individuals (Chandra, 2018). This aspect brings out the social aspect of the decision-making process, which focuses on conformity and approval as determinants of behaviour. The advantage lies in the fact that it can draw the mechanisms of social influence, including the effect of influencer marketing or peer recommendation on fast-fashion consumption (Bosnjak, 2020). The weakness,

however, is that it can overstate the rational compliance and forestall the internal conflicts or opposition to normative pressure.

Perceived behavioural control entails the perceived ease or difficulty of an individual to execute the behaviour (Chandra, 2018). It includes self-efficacy and resources or barriers evaluation. This aspect plays a vital role towards forecasting planned and adaptive behaviour, including budgeting in advance of making purchases. One of its weaknesses is the belief that control perceptions equal the actual capability which might be false when impulse or emotional stimulus dominates the rational thought process (Bosnjak, 2020).

Figure 2.1 Theory of planned behavior



Source: (Rya, 2023)

TPB is a suitable fit to describe planned purchasing and the influence of intention in directing behaviour but less capable of describing impulse buying and emotional reactions caused by social media, influencer endorsement or time-related promotions in the fast-fashion context. Connected to research, TPB offers a starting point in analysing intentional purchase behaviour and emphasizes the necessity to incorporate emotional and digital-environmental aspects in a comprehensive understanding of how people in the current fast-fashion consumer behaviour operate.

2.3 A brief overview of social media

According to Kaphle (2024) indicated social media has an interactive tool which fosters community building personalized engagement and user generated content. The research emphasized upon digital platforms which helped the consumers to receive information as well as to participate actively towards shaping the brand narratives This helps in creating a sense of belonging and strengthen the engagement that turn influencer consume attitude and loyalty. But the research mainly focusses on engagement mechanics and provides limited insight about cultural and psychological factors Its help in moderating these effects.

Grover (2022) on the other hand discusses the cultural and emotional aspects of social media marketing and how digital stimuli affect brand perception and impulse buying. Grover defines some of the main psychological stimuli, such as excitement, aspiration, and emotional resonance, which influence consumer reactions in fast-digitalized platforms. This contribution of the study is that it acknowledges cross cultural variability in these triggers. However, it has a weakness of a generalized approach by Grover who does not identify the impacts of particular types of content, like posts of an influencer, receiving a recommendation of a peer, or a brand advertisement.

Both authors give credit to the power of the social media marketing but in different perspectives: Kaphle dwells on the interactivity and involvement of the community, and Grover presupposes emotional and cultural influences on decision making among consumers. Irrespective of their contributions, the two studies arrive at the same conclusion about the continuing worries on the topic of the content produced by algorithms, which can undermine the autonomy of users, subtly influencing decisions. Nonetheless, they both lack an empirical analysis of the functioning of these mechanisms in dissimilar types of content in social media.

2.3.1 Benefits of social media

Wojtowicz (2024) conducted a study and indicated that the multifaceted advantages of social media in knowledge obtaining youth empowerment and behavior shaping. The work explored about how platforms facilitate health literacy along with emotional support networks and positive behavioral interventions. The findings indicate that social media is a constructive tool that helps in increasing well-being and promotes informed decision making. But the research analysis is limited by its concentration on health-related outcomes which provides only little exploration of economic and consumer-oriented behavior.

Conversely, Ghafar (2024) concentrates on the socio-economic opportunity of social media especially in creating the digital entrepreneurship, civic, and the participatory culture. His results emphasise the democratising nature of social media as it allows users to create businesses, organise communities, and shape the conversation. Although this view adds valuable implications to the concept of empowerment and the digital participation, it offers little consideration to the psychological or behavioural mechanisms that support consumer decision-making. Moreover, both articles lead to the similar conclusion, focused on the issues of misinformation, highlighting the way uncontrolled content can help to pervert perceptions and restrain effective interaction.

Although writing in different fields, the authors appreciate the transformative communicative capabilities of the social media. Nonetheless, one notable weak point in the two studies is the fact that they do not dwell much on the cognitive and psychological processes by which the social media influences consumer behaviour. They both do not investigate how people perceive online signals, process personalised information, or form purchase intentions in marketing scenarios, specifically in the context of fast-fashion consumption, where emotions and algorithmic focus on customers have a significant impact on purchases.

2.3.2 Factors of social media

Kumaradeepan (2023) mentioned that the emotional gratification, personal engagement, entertainment value and brand user integration are the central drivers for social media usage. The research further indicated that emotional motivations including engagement, mood regulation and inspiration play a vital role in shaping consumer interaction with the digital content and tools. Such information contributed to understanding about why users spend prolonged time on social media platforms and how emotional resonance increases their responsiveness to marketing messages. But the study remains broad and provides limited explanation regarding commercial outcomes including brand specific influence and purchase behavior.

On the contrary, Onofrei (2022) preempts brand authenticity and consumer trust as the key factors of social media influence. His work takes a relational view of marketing in that clear communication, unchanging message, and perceived honesty goes a long way in increasing consumer loyalty and interactivity. This model is an informative observation of why certain brands have a greater impact digitally than others. However, the study by Onofrei focuses more on the

long term relationship and fails to take into consideration the triggering factors, which in the fast-fashion market are fast moving and emotionally intense to cause spontaneous buying.

Despite the fact that the two authors acknowledge the psychological foundations of social media use, however, they are not equal in their priorities: Kumaradepan stresses emotional motivation whereas Onofrei dwells upon the relational factors based on trust. The similarity between the two studies is that they do not pay much attention to the formats of the strategic content, i.e., influencer posts, user-generated reviews, or targeted advertisements, and their influence on consumer choices.

2.3.3 Impact of Instagram and Tik Tok customer purchasing behavior in fast fashion

Bandara (2021) focused on these visually driven platforms help in shaping the consumer decisions through aspirational identity formation and social validating. The study indicated that curated images along with lifestyle portrayals and influencer esthetics helped to create and idealize consumption environment which encourage for impulse buy specifically within the Gen Z users who look for peer recognition and trend alignment. Furthermore, the study provided valuable insight into identifying purchasing patterns but the limit of it is narrow focus on aspirational cues which provides limited analysis about technological systems including algorithmic recommendation which reinforces the behaviors.

Bonilla-Quijada (2024), in his turn, uses a more critical perspective by analyzing the algorithm architecture of Instagram and Tik Tok. Her work puts emphasis on the fact that data-based content curation enhances buying anxiety by using personalised suggestions and micro-targeted ads. She is concerned with such ethical issues as the manipulation of algorithms, the decreased autonomy of users, and the psychological burden of the constant experience of being subject to trendy cycles. Despite the fact that this view contributes to the research of structural causes of consumer behaviour, the study is not empirical enough and is more conceptual in regard to the way in which users process or resist the urgency generation by the algorithm.

Although the authors use different methods, they both suggest that Instagram and TikTok have a significant impact on brand image, trend sensitivity, and impulse buying in the sphere of fast-fashion. They also admit the persuasive power of the platforms, which is motivated by the influencer marketing, visual immediacy, and constant circulation of the content. Nonetheless, there still exists a significant literature gap on the way consumers reconcile brand-based urgency with

more considered, planned decision-making. The current literature focuses on impulse buying, but it does not provide much information on cognitive strategies applicable to the consumer to control or rationalize the purchase of fast-fashion products.

Instagram and Tik Tok

Instagram is a social media that is visual-oriented and focuses on photos, short-length videos, stories, and content produced by influencers (Chaudhary, 2021). Brands and creators are popular with it due to its high aesthetic value and its capacity to develop lifestyle-based identities. One of the advantages of Instagram is that it can be used to influence brand image using edited images, narration or story telling, and targeting advertisement. It enables companies to target particular groups and promotes the presence of high engagement rates in terms of likes, comments, and interactive options, like Reels (Ingrassia, 2022). Nevertheless, it has such shortcomings as algorithmic biases in favor of some content types, depriving users of control over the algorithm and risking excessive consumption (Chaudhary, 2021). Another criticism that has been directed at Instagram is that it promotes unrealistic standards, social comparison, and impulse buying because of the constant access to idealized lifestyles (Ingrassia, 2022).

Tik Tok is a short-video application that operates on the basis of algorithmic suggestions that tailor the content to the users (Zhou, 2024). It has advantages in terms of being very viral, entertaining, and highly persuasive in trend building, and this is why it is an effective instrument of promoting fast-fashion fashion. TikTok supports creative engagement with the help of challenges, user-made content, and influencer marketing, which can quickly influence the preferences of consumers (Almoqbel, 2025). Though, its disadvantages are the fear of manipulation of algorithms, the shortened attention span, and the spread of unchecked or convincing information (Zhou, 2024). Another potential factor that contributes to impulse buying is the rapid tempo of the environment of Tik Tok, which exposes users to product advertisements, haul videos, and fads with such a change in a short period. (Almoqbel, 2025).

The two platforms are major players in consumer behaviour particularly fast fashion, that is, a fusion of entertainment, social validation, and personalised marketing.

2.3.4 Social media engagement correlates with actual purchase decision

Macias (2024) conducted a study and identified that emotional and communal aspects of engagement peer interaction are given that emotional resonance and sense of digital belonging are

the central factors which drive consumer intention. The findings further indicated that the interactive features including comments, community dialogs and shared experience create a socially reinforced environment where the consumers feel more confident and motivated to act upon purchase impulses. But the study emphasized upon emotion and social dynamics without any examination about technological mechanisms which intensify or structure the behaviors.

Lim (2022) on the contrary dwells upon data-driven personalisation and providing content by algorithm. His study describes how social media applications use behavioural information to personalize advertisements, suggestions, and visual content to influence consumer preferences in the most accurate way. Lim believes that this algorithmic curation is more engaging, and it is more likely to create brand attachment, yet it also brings serious ethical problems. Particularly, he criticizes the rhetorical strength of algorithms that might possibly mediate consumer behaviour, diminish autonomy, and erase the lines between actual preference and artificial desire. Regardless of its contribution, the work of Lim is mostly theoretical, and it provides few details on how users bargain or resist such forces in reality.

Both authors are in agreement that high engagement levels contribute to brand loyalty, and as well as positively relate to the purchase intention. However, one similarity between the two studies is that no one has investigated the way consumers strike the equilibrium between algorithmic persuasion and genuine choice-making, especially in such an industry as fast fashion when both impulse and planned behaviour are present.

To fill this gap, the current study focuses on examining the effect of algorithmic content and emotional resonance and social interaction in the collective influence of these two factors in purchasing behaviour in the fast-fashion market in Europe. The research aims at enhancing the comprehension of how the engagement translates to the real purchase decisions by examining both psychological and technological drivers.

2.3.5 Level of effectiveness of influencer marketing against brand advertisement towards driving the customer purchase

The studies of Vijaya (2024) and Kumar (2024) collectively explore about the comparative effectiveness of influencer marketing and traditional brand advertising that shape the consumer purchase decisions. Deepika (2024) focuses on the central role of trust-based relationship between influencer and the followers where the researcher argued that cursive authenticity content

relatability parasocial interaction significantly increases the purchase intention. The findings indicated that the influencer could actively activate emotional and social cues by the brand advertising struggles to achieve specifically within the younger digital native consumers. However, the limitation of the study is its narrow demographic focus and the strong reliance upon self-reported measures which inflate the perceived effectiveness of the influence of education.

On the other hand, Kumar (2024) also emphasizes the strategic relevance of brand advertising by pointing out that the reach of the message to a wide audience, stability in the message, and brand connection are crucial to the long-term brand equity. Kumar (2024) presents a data-driven comparison that influencer campaigns produce a short-term sharp rise in engagement, whereas brand advertising produces a more significant share of the long-term recognition and consumer recall. However, as Kumar focuses on brand-oriented metrics, it ironies out the psychological processes that induce social-media-based persuasion. His caution of over-dependence on influencers, particularly because of the danger of disingenuousness, content overload, and follower burnout, is a warning that there should be a golden mean between the two strategies where either approach is implemented with moderation.

One of the main weaknesses in both works is that they do not include segmentation-based analysis. Both authors do not distinguish the effectiveness of influencers among different consumer groups, types of products, or buying situations, even though it is proven that the influence of the influencers can differ significantly depending on their age, the level of their involvement, and the level of familiarity with a certain brand. This brings out a definite literature gap: knowledge of the comparative performance of influencer marketing versus conventional advertising in varied groups of customers and decision making.

2.3.6 Brand engagement and social media

Perera (2023) and Dineva (2024) both examine about the role of brand engagement on social media which shape customer loyalty and purchase intention. Perera (2023) indicated about the interactive communication, two-way brand consumer dialog and personalized content creating stronger emotional bonds that turn to increase loyalty and intention of purchase. The findings highlighted how responsiveness, users generated participation and authenticity generate a sense of co-creation positioning social media as a relational rather than transactional factor. But the study is limited by its resilience on wider measure of engagement treating likes, shares and comments which are

equally influential apart from evidence that different engagement types have varying psychological aspects.

Rationalizing the conceptual arguments presented by Perera, Dineva (2024) offers solid statistical data that show that the social media use and purchasing intention are significantly positively correlated ($b = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$). Her numerical mode of argumentation solidifies her ideas that engagement is a compelling instrument as it reinforces brand recognition, perceived worth and trust. However, the statistical orientation of the study does not consider the more underlying behavioural mechanisms, including emotional contagion, perceived social proof, or impulsive triggers, which can be used to understand why engagement has such an influence. Moreover, the two scholars are more focused on the overall purchasing behaviour, without distinguishing between impulse and planned purchases, although there is a significant body of literature indicating that digital settings differently influence spontaneous purchasing than carefully considered and information-based choices.

Such omission is an important literature gap. The example of fast fashion consumers behaviour is mixed, as they tend to be driven by algorithmic exposure, peer validation and hedonic motivation, but both studies do not assess the role of engagement as a unique contributor to these types of behaviours. Further studies ought to unravel the influence of a particular engagement strategy (e.g., interactive stories, personalised-recommendations, influencer collaboration) to drive a particular consumer journey.

2.3.7 Convenience and social media

Lina (2022) mention about the role of online convenience specifically effortless navigation along with quick access for information and seamless transaction process which help to shape Gen Z's cognitive and effective attitudes towards a specific brand. Furthermore, the findings suggested about reduction of friction in the digital journey which encourages spontaneous decision making which automated foster impulse buying impulse fashion. The study also provided valuable insight into the psychological impact of convincing where it remains limited by the narrow focus on platform usability. There was critical concern about privacy along with data security and algorithmic profiling which influenced trust and perceive convenience that were not exam by restricting the study's ability to capture the complexity of digital consumer behavior.

In line with this view, Pfeiffer (2023) shows that social media enables easy communication channels, where 74 percent of the users select brands that provide hassle-free digital interactions in both messaging, customer support, and buying processes. The research highlights convenience as one of the key factors in consumer preference, but it is based on how the consumer generally interacts with the brand, as opposed to the purchasing performance. Moreover, the evidence is mostly descriptive, not going deeper into the behavioural theory (planned behaviour, cognitive load or instant gratification) that could be used to describe why convenience has a powerful impact in the fast fashion buying setting.

Collectively, the two studies reiterate convenience as a crucial driver of consumer behaviour but fall short of differentiating its effects on impulse and planned consumer behaviour, which is especially relevant to fast fashion where trends change quickly and the price is low, making it easy to buy on the spur of the moment.

2.3.8 Privacy and social media

Kumar (2016) Identified about the privacy as a center of challenge social media enrollment and the findings highlighted that 63% of users expressed concern about data misuse, unclear data sharing and surveillance. Further modifying things focused upon trust deficits that significantly undermine user engagement and online purchase confidence. But apart from the offering the early empirical evidence in regard to privacy risk perceptions the study limits its relevance to contemporary digital ecosystem that shaped through algorithmic targeting, intensified data collection practices and behavioral analytics. The analysis remains wider which focuses on general social media interactions rather than set a specific behavior including fast fashion.

The article by Lumare (2024) serves as a more recent point of view because it considers the issue of privacy among European social media users and claims that 68% of them are reluctant to buy fast fashion products due to perceived privacy risks. The researchers also conclude that there is a statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) negative correlation between social media use and privacy concern, implying that the greater the perceived risk, the less the consumer will be engaged. Although the study is more contextually informed, its focus lies more on the general risk perception without demarcating the role of privacy in defining particular types of purchasing behaviour. As an example, it does not take into account the possibility that privacy anxiety is disproportionately disruptive of planned purchases, which require more information search, as opposed to impulse

purchases, which are made in a short period of time and can possibly circumvent the privacy-related contemplation.

As well as both authors explicitly set the privacy and trust to be crucial inhibitors to consumer engagement, neither of them studies the interaction of privacy issues with psychological processes like cognitive risk processing, emotional reactions, or decision-making speed, distinguishing between planned and impulse purchasing in fast fashion scenarios.

2.3.9 Platform Type and social media

Shahbaznezhad (2022) and Lewin (2022) investigated about how platform type and content format focus on shaping consumer engagement and brand related intention within social media platforms. Shahbaznezhad (2022) indicated that visually rich and interactive content on platforms including Tik Tok and Instagram significantly increases the engagement ($\beta=0.56$, $p<0.01$) The study highlighted about the esthetically appealing of post along with interactive stories and news generated content could capture attention increase the likely of brand interaction and foster emotional involvement. These findings provided valuable insight into content driven engagement, but the research is limited in distinguishing how this interaction translate to specific purchase behavior such as impulse buying versus plant within the fast fashion.

Lewin (2022) adds to this by developing a moderating factor of platform type. According to the research, the content of short-form videos on Tik Tok motivates increased impulsive purchase behavior, building on dynamic images, algorithmic suggestions, and challenges based on trends. Conversely, platform-specific mechanisms in influencing consumer behaviour were found with trust and deliberate consideration ($b = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$) as the dominant results of Instagram posts that are not moving. Nevertheless, the study by Lewin is rather correlational and does not go as far as to investigate the psychological mechanisms behind the differences between platform type in influencing buying impulsiveness and plannedness, including emotional stimulations or social evidence.

The two research works also highlight the need to match the content strategy with the features of the platform so as to maximise engagement and purchase intentions. However, there is a literature gap on a combination of content type, platform and unique buying behaviours in fast fashion.

2.3.10 Influencer endorsement and social media

Rayasam (2022) and Ren (2023) investigated the impact of influencer endorsement upon brand attitude and purchase intention with a special focus on social media context and emphasizing on persuasive power of digital personalities. Rayasam (2022) indicated a strong positive relationship between brand attitude ($\beta=0.62$, $p<0.01$) and influence of credibility which demonstrated perceive expertise reliability increment and attractiveness towards consumer trust and subsequently strengthening the purchase decision. The study for the highlighted about the importance of credibility in shaping consumer perception but it focused on general outcomes only without differentiating between impulse and plant purchase behavior.

Ren (2023) extends this argument and shows that influencer trustworthiness plays a major role in influencing both impulse buying ($b = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$) and planned purchasing ($b = 0.39$, $p < 0.01$). The study points out that the influencers act as mediums, influencing consumer buying decisions by way of suggestions, recommendations, and content that the consumer can relate to. The research by Ren provides a subtle understanding of behavioural differences with trust being able to evoke both impulsive emotional reactions and rational choices. Nevertheless, both articles pay mostly attention to the measure of credibility and trust and neglect the possibility that these effects can be mediated by demographic factors (age, gender, cultural background) and platform differences (Instagram, Tik Tok).

One of the weaknesses is a lack of segmentation analysis which lowers the generalizability of results to various categories of consumers. Also, each of the studies does not exhaustively test the impact of the content type, engagement mode, or platform peculiarities on the comparative effectiveness of influencer endorsements.

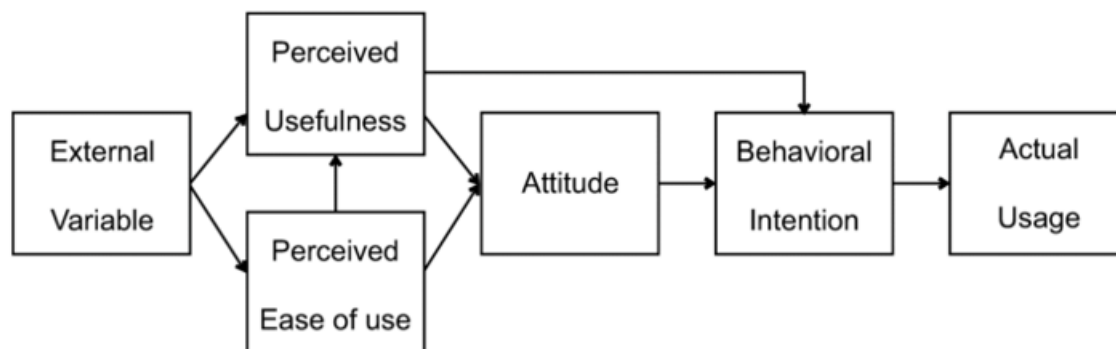
2.3.11 Technology acceptance model

Technology acceptance model is broadly applied for framework that explains in user adoption of technology using two primary dimensions such as perceive usefulness and perceive ease of use (Legramante, 2023). The passive usefulness indicates the degree to which the user believes when using technology increasing performance or achieving desired outcomes. Of use helping capturing the decree to which the technology is considered free of effort. However, both dimensions are empirical robust they provide clear predictive power to understand the digital adoption within diverse context. The simplicity of the model is the combination with strong empirical support

which indicate a significant strength specifically for obligation in E-commerce and digital consumer.

Legramante (2022) elaborated TAM by incorporating user satisfaction, proving that perceived usefulness and ease of use have a direct effect on user satisfaction that subsequently affects further use of digital platforms. Schorr (2023) analysed the theoretical development of TAM and its influence on future models, it is important to note that the core constructs still play an important role, but TAM does not adequately account for social, cultural, and contextual factors - factors that are important to studying consumer behaviour in interactive digital spaces. In both research articles, there is consensus that TAM is a good model predicting intention and adoption but its limitations decrease its applicability in situations where social influence, peer validation and emotional trigger play a critical role like in online purchases associated with fast-fashion.

Figure 2.2 Technology acceptance model



Source: (Legramante, 2023)

The concept of perceived usefulness is under the research topic of digital consumer behaviour as it is linked to the practical value of platforms, including convenient navigation, customized selections, and smooth purchases, whereas perceived ease of use enables interaction and impulsive communication. Nevertheless, the failure to contextualize and socialize leaves a gap in the significance of additional studies that can bring together cultural, peer, and emotional factors to offer a more holistic picture of technology-mediated consumer decision-making.

2.3.12 Consumer culture theory

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) explains about how consumer behavior is embedded between the culture, symbolic context and social rather than being purely individualistic or economically driven (Arnould, 2005). The theory focus on consumption practices that reflect wider social

identities, lifestyle meanings cultural norms and position consumers as an active participant within the co-creation of meaning (Arnould, 2005). The theory focused on three dimensions such as consumption practices, consumer identity projects and market culture narratives. The consumption practices examine how the individuals interact with services and products that include routines to rituals and symbolic users. While the market and cultural narratives focus on the influence of advertising, social trends and media that shape consumer perception and expectations. The consumer identity projects search about how individuals use consumption to express, negotiate and construct personal and social identities (Arnould, 2005).

CCT can be applied to the area of fast-fashion research tremendously, as it offers the prism through which to view the social media, influencer culture, and trend dynamics toward affecting planned and impulse purchases (Askegaard, 2015). As an example, aspirational lifestyles on Instagram or TikTok can affect identity construction, social validation and symbolic consumption in Gen Z consumers.

The key strengths of the theory are that it can capture the cultural, social, and symbolic forces behind consumption that are not inherently economic and it can provide a better understanding of the consumer behaviour of digital consumers (Askegaard, 2015). Its limitations, however, are in its complexity and specificity in context making generalisation difficult. The bulk of CCT studies is qualitative and interpretive that does not recognise any quantifiable behavioural consequences, including buying frequency or using platforms.

The existing literature offers an in-depth insight into symbolic and social consumption but does not include a quantitative evaluation of the interaction of cultural and social aspects with psychological motivation in digital fast-fashion environments. Thus, the gap between cultural sense-making and quantifiable consumer behaviours needs to be filled by additional studies to provide practical information on social media marketing and strategic involvement.

2.3.13 Social Influence Theory

Social Influence Theory (SIT) explains how the individual behavior, decisions and attitude are shaped through actions opinions and expectations of others in the same social network or communities (Davlembayeva, 2024). The theory consists of social pressure that could lead to conformity compliance and internationalization of norms which influence both public behavior and private attitude (Rachmad, 2025). The theory comprises of three dimensions such as normative

influence, informational influence and referent influence. The normative influence happens when the individuals conform to obtain social acceptance or to avoid disapproval (Rachmad, 2025). Then the informational influence arises when the individuals rely upon the knowledge or expertise of others to guide their decision making (Rachmad, 2025). The referent influence focuses on the role of aspirational or peer groups which shape the behavior by providing models to identify and lifestyle choices (Rachmad, 2025).

The issue of fast-fashion and social media makes SIT immensely applicable when it comes to learning about the impulse purchase as well as planned purchase (Davlembayeva, 2024). Normative and referent effects are Increase in social media to recommendations and influencer mentions which help in measuring the visibility engagement such as likes, shares and comments. As a form of influence, informational influence comes in the form of user reviews, trend reporting and algorithmically curated content that informs consumer perception and choice (Rachmad, 2025).

The benefits of SIT are that it describes the conformity of behaviour and decision-making by peers, which is especially important in digital marketplaces where social validation and following trends are the primary motivators (Rachmad, 2025). The drawbacks of the theory are, however, in its tendency to underestimate the agency of individuals, emotional motivation, and personal cognition, and especially in impulse-driven markets such as fast fashion.

The current literature supports the importance of the social influence on brand perception, engagement and purchase intentions but does not consider the interaction between social influence and psychological motivations in different demographic groups and platforms. The current research is aimed at bridging this gap by studying the interaction of social influence with the nature of contents, platform, and purchase type to offer practical implications to strategic digital marketing in the fast-fashion industry in Europe.

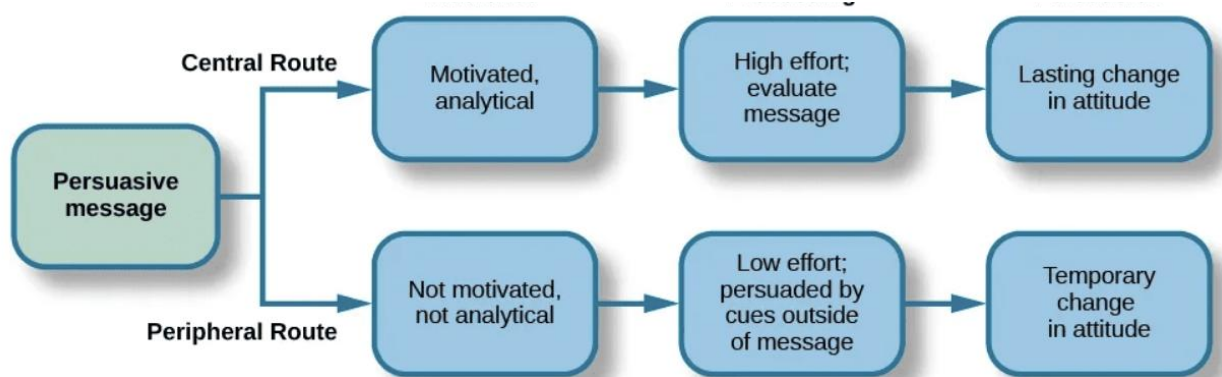
2.3.14 Elaboration Likelihood Model

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) was developed in 1986 by Petty and Cacioppo which explain how individuals process persuasive messengers and make decisions using two-way primary routes such as the central route and the peripheral route (Petty, 2012). The central route focuses on high elaboration where the individuals carefully evaluate the message content along with logical arguments and evidence before forming an attitude or to make a decision (Petty, 2012).

The peripheral route is contrasting that relies on how low elaboration and influence through superficial cues such as source attractiveness, popularity and credibility rather than message substance (Petty, 2012). Therefore, each of these factors such as motivation, cognitive engagement and ability determine the route dominance.

ELM especially applies to online consumer behaviour and fast fashion, in which social media campaigns have been known to involve both directions (Petty, 2012). Central route processing can be used in situations where consumers consider the in-depth information of products, reviews, or sustainability assertions prior to making an intended purchase (Nickerson, 2023). Peripheral cues such as influencer post content popular with other users or hashtags could be used to increase impulse purchase by appealing to the consumer emotions or social approval (Nickerson, 2023).

Figure 2.3 Elaboration Likelihood Model



Source: (Nickerson, 2023).

The most important strength of the model is that it can explain the dual processing pathways, both in the rational and heuristic decisions (Nickerson, 2023). This binary is particularly applicable in explaining the various consumer behaviours in online marketing set-ups. Nevertheless, weaknesses are an excessive focus on the personal cognitive abilities, and frequently a failure to recognize the social, cultural, and algorithmic forces that condition digital interaction.

Recent studies substantiate the fact that ELM can be successfully used to describe the formation of an attitude and purchase intention but in many instances do not take into consideration the interactive relationships between content type, platform, and consumer demographics. Hence, this research builds on ELM by investigating the effects of central and peripheral cues in Instagram

and Tik Tok on impulse and planned purchases of fast-fashion products and offers practical implications of the study to focus on marketing tactics.

2.4 A brief overview of the fast fashion industry

Centobelli (2022) explain that the central theme in first fashion literature as the persistent tension between sustainability and consumer demand. The study focused on urgent environmental and ethical concerns which include waste over production and labor exploitation which advocate for sustainable supply chain practices and for corporate responsibility. The research provides a strong critique about industry practices whether research is largely theoretical but lacks empirical examination focus on consumer behavior and its applicability in designing actionable interventions.

This view is supplemented by Dzhengiz (2023), which studies the appeal of affordability, responsiveness to trends, and product turnover in consumers. The work highlights that the popularity of fast fashion has a strong social and psychological basis, which include peer pressure, fashion following, and impulsive buying, are the driving forces behind the high rates of consumption. Nevertheless, the study does not pay much attention to the environmental impact of such behaviour and fails to consider the mediating effect of digital platforms, social media, or cultures of influencers on purchasing decisions.

The two studies have reached the point that reforms are required, and the tension between profitability and sustainability continues to exist. However, there is a methodological gap that exists in the sense that the conventional models of consumer behaviour fail to explain the subtle psychological and social motivations behind fast fashion consumption.

2.4.1 Factors contributing to fast fashion industry

Ren (2023) and Hayes (2024) explore about the core factors which drive the fast fashion industry highlighting trend responsiveness and affordability as the central mechanisms to sustain high consumer demand. The research of Ren (2023) emphasizes on the cultural and ethical dimensions specifically where labor practices and environmental concerns are in place and argues that the consumer awareness of such issues creates tension between social responsibility and purchase behavior. The study further discusses how far special consumption is embedded with the cultural norms and the aspirational identities but is limited due to the insufficient examination of how digital platforms and social media shape the ethical consideration within the purchase process.

Conversely, Hayes (2024) uses an economic and operational approach and argues that mass production, efficient supply chains and low-cost offerings are important facilitators of industry development. Hayes emphasizes the importance of a high-speed turnover in products as a way of staying in the trend and consumer interest, and accentuates the profitability of the market-driven approaches. Yet, this view is rather blind to the ethical and social consequences of fast fashion consumption, especially, the psychological and social aspects that are mediated by digital marketing and social media.

Both papers recognize affordability and accessibility as the key aspects but disagree on the sustainability perspective. There is a significant knowledge gap regarding the impact of social media on the ethical consumer behaviour of fast fashion situations.

2.4.2 Theory of consumer decision making process

The consumer decision making process theory consist of five sequential stages which guide an individual from the initial recognition to the requirement of those purchase behavior (Marc, 2022). Problem recognition is the initial phase, which happens when a consumer notices that there are some differences between actual and desired conditions, which in fast fashion are elicited by social media trends and influencer recommendations. Information search is the second stage and entails options seeking, both in the internal memory and outside the memory, in digital environments, it manifests itself in algorithm-based platforms that offer curated product recommendations, which impact awareness and consideration. Purchase decision stage involves the choice of a product, which in the case of fast fashion is often hastened by impulse visuals, incorporated in the targeted advertisement or flash offers. Lastly, post purchase behaviour entails satisfaction evaluation, repeat, or negative response, which is usually enhanced by social sharing or online commentaries.

According to Marc (2022), algorithmic content on social media makes the process of impulse buying faster and, in effect, changes the usual decision-making route. Suomala (2020) criticizes the idea of scrolling rationality because human thoughts should be assumed to be purely cognitive, and psychological aspects, including availability bias, heuristics, and emotional stimuli, play a role in fast fashion consumption. Both the researchers admit the strength of external stimuli but differ in their approaches: Marc uses behavioural data analytics, and Suomala concentrates on the interpretation of the results using psychology.

Figure 2.4 Consumer decision making process



Source: (Marc, 2022)

The limitation of both studies lies in the fact that they did not give enough attention to the distinction between impulse and planned purchase in each of the stages based on social media. This research gap highlights the importance of additional studies to be conducted in order to investigate the processes according to which social media contents are unique to the occurrence and growth of fast fashion consumer behaviour that can be applied to strategic marketing intervention and sustainable consumption practices.

2.5 Conceptualization

The conceptualizer focused on identify the individual and dependent variables to different empirical studies and then developing the conceptual framework and hypothesis.

2.5.1 The relationship between brand engagement and consumer buying behavior of fast fashion

Rodrigues et al. (2023) examine about the relationship between consumer buying behavior and brand engagement in fashion media sector whereas the study position brand engagement as an independent variable and consumer purchase intention as the dependent variable. While the brand engagement is conceptualized as an emotional cognitive behavioral connection with the consumer establishing with brand, joy, fostering trust and appreciation in turn influences the purchase decision.

It uses a strong dataset of 1, 296 Spanish consumers and applies a structural equation modeling (SEM) to investigate the hypothesized relationships. The results suggest that brand engagement and purchase intention are highly related in a positive way, which means that an increase in the emotional and interactive involvement with the brand can greatly enhance the probability of consumers selecting products of the brand. This is especially focused on fast fashion, where high product turnover and consuming trends necessitate a high consumer-brand relationship to maintain the loyalty and purchasing a product again.

The strengths of this research are its extensive sample size, its quantitative approach, and operationalization of brand engagement, which are reliable to marketers aiming at improving the sale of fast fashion using engagement strategies. There are however limitations such as the focus on one geographic area (Spain), which can decrease the generalizability, and the cross-sectional design that only allows knowing the changes in behaviour in the long term. On the whole, it is possible to emphasize that the research highlights the paramount importance of brand engagement as an influencer of consumer buying behaviour in the fast fashion setting.

2.5.2 The relationship between convenience and consumer buying behavior of fast fashion

Siddiqui (2024) and Naseem (2025) investigate the impact of online convenience which include usability accessibility and time saving features on consumer buying behavior in fast fashion which identified convenience as an independent variable and consumer purchase decision as the dependent variable. The research focused on fast fashion consumers specifically influenced through platforms that facilitate effortless browsing, seamless navigation and quick check out that could accelerate impulse and plan behavior.

The study uses a quantitative research methodology and implements a correlation test stating a significant positive correlation between online convenience and online buying behavior ($r = 0.68$, $p = 0.01$). This means that the perceived convenience is strongly associated with the probability of online buying of fast fashion products. The paper identifies convenience as an important determinant that lowers cognitive load, increases user satisfaction, and repeat engagement, which is essential in online fast fashion markets.

The strengths of this research are a clear operationalization of the concept of convenience, as well as rigorous statistical test, which could be used in taking action regarding e-commerce strategies. Yet, there are drawbacks: the study is geographically limited to Pakistan, which may impair cross-cultural generalizability, and the cross-sectional study design will not provide any long-term consumer behavior. Moreover, the research fails to distinguish between impulse and planned purchases and there still is space to explore it further. In general, it highlights the critical importance of convenience in forming the consumer behavior of fast fashion and guides the optimization of digital marketing.

2.5.3 The relationship between privacy and consumer buying behavior of fast fashion

Onitui (2022) and Aiello et al. (2020) explore about the relationship between consumed buying behavior and privacy concerns in the fast fashion where the privacy treated as the independent variable and consumer purchase intention as the dependent variable. Onitui (2022) argue that the algorithmic based personalized system could undermine the autonomy of consumer and create a sense of invisibility. Potentially discouraging the engagement and percent decisions whereas personalized recommendations been provided as designing to increase convenience may raise privacy concerns which influence consumer willingness to conduct a transaction online.

Aiello et al. (2020) focus on studying the problem of privacy, empirically exploring the impact of information about the safety of data processing, storage, and use on the willingness of consumers to provide personal information and buy. Their quantitative analysis indicates that there is a significant negative correlation between online purchase intention and privacy concerns ($r = -0.53$, $p < 0.01$), i.e., the larger the privacy apprehension, the lower the online purchase intention of fast fashion products.

To their credit, the merits of these studies are the two-fold method of combining theoretical knowledge with empirical confirmation, which enables to get a comprehensive vision on the importance of privacy in digital consumer behavior. Nevertheless, there are some limitations: Onitiu (2022) does not include empirical testing, and Aiello et al. (2020) dwell more on general online behavior than on impulse and planned purchase in fast fashion. These gaps indicate the necessity of a study on the interaction of privacy issues with social media content and personalization to facilitate impulsive and considered fast fashion buying.

2.5.4 The relationship between platform type and consumer buying behavior of fast fashion

Won (2020) and Kim (2020) examine the relationship between consumer buying behavior and platform type in fast fashion where the platform type is considered as the independent variable and the consumer purchase intention was the dependent variable. Won (2020) highlighted about the different platforms attracting unique user demographics along with interaction styles and engagement patterns that influence the consumer decision making in different ways. Platforms with visual interactive features help to increase the impulse buying while others support for more deliberate evaluation.

Kim (2020) has empirically investigated 180 South Korean consumers using fashion-sharing sites by looking at consumer motivations (utilitarian, hedonic and ecological) as mediators in attitudes and purchase intentions. Their quantitative research showed a strong positive relationship between hedonic motivation and purchase intention ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$) and ecological motivation and purchase intention ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$), which shows that the platform allowing enjoyment and taking ethical factors into account brings a strong influence to buying behavior. Utilitarian motives were less significantly correlated and the association was not significant, indicating that simple functional convenience is not so relevant.

The strengths of the study are that the type of platform is operationalized clearly, motivational factors have been taken into account and strong statistical analysis is used to estimate the relationships. Weaknesses include a small sample with a narrow scope (a single cultural setting, South Korea) that would constrain the generalizability. Moreover, the paper does not distinguish between planned and impulse purchases, which leaves a gap in the interpretation of how the

strengths of a platform impact unique consumer behavior in fast fashion, which is the field of the current research.

2.5.5 The relationship between influencer endorsement and consumer buying behavior of fast fashion

Yaacob (2021) and Chetioui et al. (2020) investigate about the influence of influence engagement and consumer buying behavior in past fashion which identified the influence endorsement as the independent variable and the purchase intention as the dependent variable.

Based on a sample of 163 online fashion consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic, Yaacob (2021) suggests that the relationship between influencer endorsement and purchase intention is a strong positive one ($r = 0.48$) compared to the online reviews ($r = 0.25$) and social media advertisements ($r = 0.35$). This implies that influencer recommendations are considered more believable and persuasive to consumers, which in effect influence planned and impulse purchase.

Chetioui et al. (2020) develop this knowledge by means of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and a bigger sample size and by means of the PLS-SEM mediation analysis to examine the impact of the credibility, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of influencers on attitudes and purchase intentions. Their results affirm that influencer endorsement has a significant positive effect on consumer interaction and buying intentions and the effect is mediated by brand attitude and perceived social norms.

The benefits of such studies are merging theoretical frameworks (TPB), quantitative rigor, and analysis of various online marketing tools in comparison. There are also limitations concerning the context specificity: Yaacob is limited to a period of the pandemic and a rather small sample, whereas Chetioui et al. are only concentrated on one cultural environment, making the generalization problematic. Even with such limitations, both articles confirm the importance of influencer endorsement in consumer purchase behavior within fast fashion, and it presents a strategic opportunity to implement digital targeted marketing.

2.5.6 Literature gap

The literature review demonstrates a number of the most important aspects of consumer purchasing in fast fashion such as influencer promotion (Yaacob, 2021; Chetioui et al., 2020), platform type (Won, 2020; Won and Kim, 2020), privacy (Onitiu, 2022; Aiello et al., 2020), online convenience

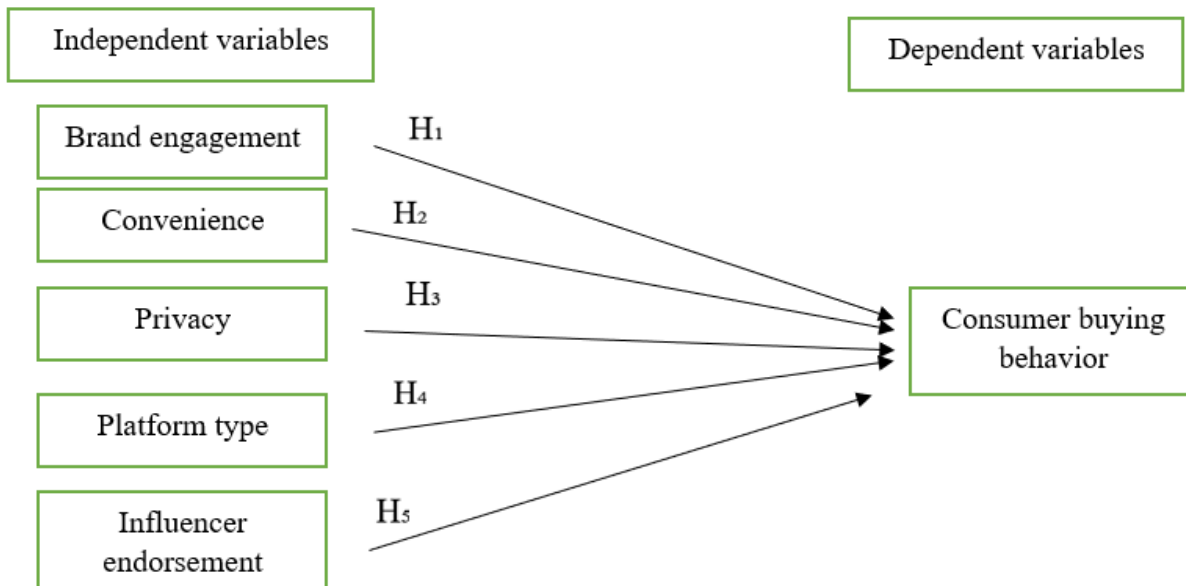
(Siddiqui, Zafar, and Naseem, 2025), and brand interaction (Rodriguez et al., 2025). Together, these research findings indicate that digital marketing practices, social media, and the personalized experiences play an important role in influencing the purchase intention and planned and impulse buying is influenced by aspects of trust, credibility, usability, and emotional experience. According to statistical analyses, the correlations between the variables are high, which is why influencer endorsement ($r = 0.48$), convenience ($r = 0.68$), and platform-driven hedonic motivation ($r = 0.61$) are considered to be predictive.

Apart from these insights the key literature gaps being identified whereas most studies are context specific which focus on single geographical regions such as Spain, Pakistan and South Korea or short-term data which limits the generalizability aspect across the European fast fashion industry. Furthermore, there is insufficient differentiation between planned and impulse purchase with the mechanism using social media content along with platform type and engagement strategies interacting to influence such distinct behaviors which are largely unexplored. While privacy concerns have also been under examined in conjunction with social media personalization and market stimuli. Further research therefore is required to historically investigate about how digital marketing strategies, privacy concern, platform characteristics, convenience and brand engagement collectively shape fast fashion consumer behavior specifically across diverse European markets in order to inform both marketing practices and ethical consumer engagement.

4.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is developed using empirical studies information.

Figure 4.5 Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher's work

2.6.1 Hypothesis

H₁: There is a relationship between brand engagement on social media and consumer behavior.

H₂: There is a relationship between convenience and consumer behavior.

H₃: There is a relationship between privacy and consumer behavior.

H₄: There is a relationship between platform type and consumer behavior.

H₅: There is a relationship between influencer endorsement and consumer behavior.

2.7 Chapter summary

The chapter is a critical review of the factors that affect the buying behavior of consumers in the fast fashion industry, specifically social media and digital marketing. The major factors are influencer endorsement, the type of platform, online convenience, privacy, and brand engagement, which influence both estimated and impulse buying. The chapter incorporates various theoretical frameworks in trying to contextualize such behaviors. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is

used to explain that attitudes, the subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control play a role in the purchase decision process, whereas the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is used to consider the perceived usefulness and ease of use in the interaction with a digital shopping environment. Also, the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), the Social Influence Theory, and the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) can bring an understanding of how social, cultural, and psychological variables mediate the interaction with the marketing of fast fashion. All these frameworks support the investigation of how the social media influences consumer decision-making in the study.

CHAPTER 111: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of Research Problem

The fast fashion industry in Europe has experienced significant digital shift with social media function Imagine YouTube such as Instagram and TikTok which is become a trend discovery, brand communication and consumer engagement. Apart from the high online interaction it has been identified that over half of European consumers rely upon social media for fashion transformation and inspiration where the conversion from the engagement to actual purchase remains disproportionately low such as only 38% proceeding to buy (Vladimirova, 2022). These factors indicate a significant gap between the tension generator using digital content and the final purchase decision made by the consumers. While the past research indicates an overlook of this gap failing to identify which specific content formats or influences or marketing strategies that significantly drive impulse buying or plan buying (Parameswari, 2022). Additionally, the previous studies rarely distinguish between these two decision types and are mostly conducted outside the European fast fashion context. Furthermore, the brands lack clear evidence-based information into how Gen Z and millennials respond to different social media aspects (Horberry, 2022). Therefore, this study addresses the critical requirement to understand about how social media influences the fast fashion consumer behavior within Europe.

3.2 Operations of Theoretical Constructs

Some of the major theoretical constructs are operationalised in the study to enable a systematic investigation of the theme on how social media influences consumer behaviour of the European fast fashion market. Planned and impulse buying are assessed as two behaviour outcomes, in that the first one (planned purchases) entails a careful assessment and information search, whereas the latter (impulse purchases) entails a spontaneous decision influenced by online stimuli. The constructs of platform type, influencer endorsement, brand engagement, convenience, and privacy concerns are the operationalised consistent of social media influence and all measured with validated items of scale used in previous research. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) guides the quantification of the perceived usefulness and usefulness ease whereas the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) directs the quantification of central versus peripheral information processing. Social Influence Theory also sustains peer impact constructs and constructs of normative pressure. The theory that supports cultural and identity-based reasons behind the fast fashion consumption is the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT). Taken together, the constructs

enable the research to quantify the transformation of engagement into planned/impulsive buying by different social media factors.

3.3 Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of the research is to systematically investigate different factors which shape individuals attitudes digital making and behaviors within the fast fashion industry. Through the adoption of evidence-based approach the study looks into generating more empirical insights that would contribute to practical applications and theoretical knowledge. As Creswell (2023) emphasized a clearly defined research purpose to provide coherence between research methods, questions and expected outcomes. With the alignment of such view the current study in set addressing the identified gaps in literature by clarifying casual or correlation relationship which provides actionable recommendations for the stakeholders.

Specific Aims

The study has developed three aims in order to meet its overall purpose.

Aim 1 is be to define and quantify the most important variables that affect the phenomenon studied, which is be accompanied by the prior literature that emphasizes the significance of variables interaction and specificity of the context (Bryman, 2016).

The second objective is to examine the statistical or thematic relationships of these variables in order to establish their significance, patterns, and prediction worth.

The third aim is to understand the results in relation to the existing theoretical bases, which allows the research to become a part of current academic discussions and suggest evidence-based approaches to practice (Saunders et al., 2019).

The combination of these objectives guarantees methodological rigour, as well as produces meaningful insights, which are relevant to both theory and practice.

Research questions

1. What is the difference between impulse purchases and planned purchases influence through social media content?
2. What is the impact of Instagram and Tik Tok on customer purchasing behavior in the fast fashion sector in Europe?

3. How the social media engagement correlate with the actual persons in decision?
4. What is the level of effectiveness of influencer marketing against the brand advertisement towards driving the customer purchase?
5. What is the role of celebrity endorsement and peer recommendation in shape in the customer buying behavior?

Hypothesis

H₁: There is a relationship between brand engagement on social media and consumer behavior.

H₂: There is a relationship between convenience and consumer behavior.

H₃: There is a relationship between privacy and consumer behavior.

H₄: There is a relationship between platform type and consumer behavior.

H₅: There is a relationship between influencer endorsement and consumer behavior.

3.4 Research Design

Research philosophy

A recent philosophy is considered as a belief system which guides how knowledge is developed, interpreted and applied to a study (Sharma, 2024). It informs how the researcher assumes about the reality shapes the decision according to data collection analysis. The three common philosophical positions would be positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism (Sharma, 2024).

The philosophy in this study is pragmatic since it allows one to combine both quantitative research methods like structured questionnaires with qualitative information based on secondary literature. Pragmatism focuses on the results of practicality and appreciates the application of multiple practices to respond to complex consumer behaviours due to social media (Sharma, 2024). It has its benefits such as flexibility, practical use, and the possibility to generate the comprehensive understanding, but difficulties can be observed in matching the different types of data.

In order to achieve the research objectives, the data is gathered by designing a structured survey and analysed using SPSS. Results is be matched with secondary literature in order to provide validity and create actionable information to consumer behaviour and marketing strategies.

Research approach

A research approach is the overall plan and procedure that is used by a research and it consists of covering data collection, analysis and interpretation (Sagepub, 2023). The two common approaches would be deductive to test the existing theories and inductive which helps in developing new theories from data (Sagepub, 2023). The third would be mixed method approach which is a combination of both which is often aligned with the pragmatic philosophy.

The research method embraced in this study is deductive in nature since it seeks to research proven theories of consumer behaviour with the help of quantitative information collected in a structured manner. The benefits of the deductive approach include objectiveness, clarity, and the possibility to evaluate hypotheses in a statistical manner (Sagepub, 2023). Nevertheless, it restricts the extent of delving into unexpected or emergent results that are not established.

The study addresses the social media users to respond to the research problem and aims at the achievement of the objectives, which involves a statistical analysis using SPSS. The results are matched with secondary literature to confirm conclusions. This systematic method is reliable and is informative of actionable insights concerning fast-fashion marketing strategies.

Research design

Research design is the total plan which outlines how a research is conducted that consists of data collection, measurement and analysis (McCombes, 2021). It makes sure that the research problem is addressed effectively and the objectives are made systematically. For this study the researcher uses a descriptive professional research design that provides data to be collected at a single point of time and to analyze the consumer behavior which focus on social media influence and purchase presidents within the fast fashion industry.

The design has the following benefits; it is cost effective, fast to collect data and appropriate in tracking trends. But there are also some drawbacks, such as the impossibility to determine causality and the presence of bias in the responses (McCombes, 2021). In order to attain the objectives of

the research, the structured questionnaires are given to a representative sample of the social media users. Data gathered is undergo statistical analysis which help the study to come up with actionable information that guide successful marketing concepts in the fast-fashion industry.

Research strategy

A recent strategy is considered as a general plan which guides how data is collected and analyzed to answer research questions while achieving research objectives (Magusiak, 2019). It consists of a framework to select appropriate methods and tools for the specific data collection and analysis. The common strategies would be case studies, grounded theory, action research, experiments, archival research and survey (Magusiak, 2019).

In this study, the most appropriate method is the survey strategy since it implies the distribution of structured questionnaires to a significant sample of users of social media who subscribe to fast-fashion content. This is in line with the quantitative nature of the study and allows the statistical analysis of the consumer behaviour patterns (Magusiak, 2019).

The advantages of the survey strategy include its affordability, scalability and the possibility to get data that comes across different geographical locations. Nevertheless, it has shortcomings such as the possibility of low response rate and probability of misinterpretation of questions by the participants. To respond to the research problem and achieve the objectives, the survey is elicit a data on purchasing behaviour, the pattern of engagement, and the impact of the various types of content on social media

Research choice

Research choice is considered as the selection of qualitative, quantitative or mixed method approaches to guide the study in how data is collected and interpreted based upon the nature of the research problem (Phairm 2021). For this study the researcher uses a mixed method which is a combination of quantitative data gathering using structured questionnaires with qualitative insight provided through secondary academic literature. The integration gives a comprehensive understanding about the consumer behavior and the influence of social media on fast fashion purchase decisions.

The main benefits of the mixed-method approach are triangulation, better validity, and cross-verification through the use of the data set (Phair, 2021). Restrictions, however, are based on more time to integrate data and complexity of the analysis (Phair, 2021).

In order to meet the research problem and objectives, quantitative data is analysed applying statistical methods ANOVA and regression. The qualitative literature put these patterns into a context providing a theoretical depth and enhancing the interpretation and validity of the findings.

Time horizon

Time horizon is referred to time frame over which data is collected and analyzed which is classified as either cross-sectional data gathering at a single point in time or longitudinal which consists of repeated observations over an extended time frame (Chen, 2023). But this study a cross sectional time horizon is used due to the research focus on understanding the current consumer behavior and the immediate influence upon social media on fast fashion purchase decision the look to track behavior changes over a certain time but to capture the present patterns regardless of the cross-sectional approach is more suitable. The pros of having a cross-sectional time horizon are that it is cost-effective, less time is needed to collect data, and insights can be made fast as relevant to rapidly changing digital crises (Chen, 2023). Nonetheless, its primary weakness is that it cannot monitor behavioral changes or trends.

The one-time structured survey is involve fast-fashion consumers who are actively involved with social media platforms to cover the research problem and achieve the objectives.

3.5 Population

The population is considered which have been completing a group of individuals that are relevant to the research problem from which the sample is obtained (Shah, 2024). In the case of this paper, the intended population is made up of European consumers who view Instagram or Tik Tok as a source of fashion information, content, or make purchases. The posts made by influencers, brand advertisements, fashion hauls, styling videos, peer recommendations are the common fast-fashion posts these users engage with on a regular basis. As astonishing amounts of people use both platforms in Europe, the population size is estimated to be more than one million people, which is large enough to warrant statistical generalisation. The target population is suitable as Instagram and Tik Tok are established as the main sources of inspiration in fast-fashion among Gen Z and

Millennials, who engage in fast-fashion consumption (Prameswari, 2022). This distinct digital consumer category makes the study quite relevant to the research objective of establishing the impact of social media on the purchasing behaviour in the fast-fashion sector.

3.6 Participant Selection

The participants' selection consists of selecting individuals from the population with the use of structured sampling method to ensure representative ness (Shah, 2024). The research employs a composite stratified sampling method, a non-probability purposive and probability stratified random sampling method. Originally, the purposive sampling is used to reduce the population to the consumers, who: (1) are located in Europe, (2) use Instagram or Tik Tok, and (3) follow at least one fashion-related account. This makes it relevant and maximizes relevance with the focus of the study. Strategic random sampling follows the filtering process and allows the participants to be selected at random by stratified random sampling and proportionally represent important strata that include the type of the platform, gender, and age.

The benefits of using this method are enhanced validity, increased relevance of the participants and minimized sampling bias. Limitations however are further complexities, time factor and the dependence on proper identification of strata. The total sample size is 384 respondents, and the population is guided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of the population that is above one million with the confidence level of 95 and margin of error of 5.

3.6.1 Pilot test

In this case, pilot test, first with 18 participants, is done to determine any ambiguity or misunderstanding in the questionnaire items. The pilot feedback was reviewed and required modifications will be made to enhance reliability and validity.

Table 3.1 Pilot test results

Item Reliability Statistics

	If item dropped
	Cronbach's α
Brand engagement	0.730
Convenience	0.785
Privacy	0.758
Platform type	0.797
Influencer endorsement	0.827
Consumer buying behavior	0.710

Source: SPSS data results

In order to test reliability Cronbach Alpha method was used and reliability was accepted for values above 0.70. The analysis of the initial pilot survey questionnaire provided ratings for each of the variables between 0.710 and 0.827 with none of the variables falling below 0.70. Accordingly, it is accepted that the survey questions that were included in the initial questionnaire can be considered as reliable.

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

χ^2	df	p
42.5	15	<.001

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy

	MSA
Overall	0.685
Brand engagement	0.705
Convenience	0.662
Privacy	0.769
Platform type	0.640
Influencer endorsement	0.686

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

χ^2	df	p
Consumer buying behavior		0.654

The bare minimum acceptable values in order to determine validity of the data was established as Bartlett's Test of Sphericity p-value < 0.05 (significant) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value > 0.50 (marginal/acceptable) . As identified in the above table Bartlett's Test of Sphericity p-value < 0.01 and the KMO test presented values between 0.640 and 0.769 for all of the variables. The outcome of the testing for the pilot questionnaire accepts that the questions are valid and aligned with the research questions of the study.

3.7 Instrumentation

The research instrument used for the study is a structure close ended questionnaire with a 5.1 Likud scale items designed to capture about the consumer behavior social media engagement and fast fashion purchase patterns The questionnaire is divided into two parts such as part one collecting the demographic and behavioral data including age gender purchasing frequency and spending. Part two consists of measuring the perception of brand engagement convenience privacy platform type influencer endorsement and buying behavior with the use of 5-point likert scale whereas one indicating strongly disagree until 5 indicating strongly agree. The instrument allows for systematic and quantifiable measurement of variables which provides statistical analysis consisting of correlation regression and ANOVA. The advantages would be the ease of administration of a larger sample which standardization of responses for comparison and suitable for quantitative analysis (Sehwali, 2024). However, the limitation consists of restricted depth of responses with potential misinterpretation of questions and inability to capture the nuance motivations behind consumer decisions since it does not consist of open-ended insights (Sehwali, 2024).

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Data connection is considered as a systematic process too gather information which are relevant for the research objectives (Bhandari, 2020). First a pilot test is conducted to understand the misunderstandings in the questionnaire items and with the feedback from the pilot analysis the main data collection is then carried out with 384 participants. The primary data is collected through

a structured, closed-ended questionnaire which administered by Google Forms and a link to the questionnaire is given to the chosen respondents. The target population consist of the most active users of Instagram or Tik Tok who consume fast fashion content on these platforms. This makes the answers reflective and in line with the research aims. Some of these advantages are cost-effectiveness, distribution ease, and rapid response collection.

3.8.1 Data Management

Data management is referred to the systematic handling organizing and protecting the data collected to ensure the accuracy consistency and accessibility for the required analysis (Alkhatib, 2024). In this study, the researcher gathers information about consumers of fast fashions in Europe on such variables as engagement, convenience, privacy, influencer endorsement, and platform type, which are the independent variables, and consumer purchase behavior, the dependent variable. All the information is kept in digital form with limited accessibility to ensure confidentiality and integrity. To determine reliability, data cleaning activities such as verification of incomplete responses, duplication of responses, and inconsistencies is performed. Moreover, response coding and categorizing makes it possible to perform systematic quantitative analysis with the help of statistical programs, including SPSS. Ethical standards are followed, and the relationships between variables can be analyzed properly by having proper data management, which gives a good foundation to draw actionable insights about the role of social media in purchasing behavior of fast fashion.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis consists of a systematic examination of the collected data to address the research objectives and to the developed hypothesis (Romesburg, 2019). For the following study the researcher uses responses connected using Google Forms and then such been imported to the SPSS software which allows for efficient generation of statistical outputs with tables and charts Initially the reliability and validity tests are conducted to ensure that the survey instrument procedures consists and accurate measurements been identified to confirm the trustworthiness of the data (Romesburg, 2019).

The relationships between the independent variables, brand engagement, convenience, privacy, influencer endorsement and platform type, and consumer buying behavior is explored subsequently through use of regression analysis. With the assistance of this analysis, the degree

and the impact of each of the factors can be identified. The mean differences between the groups of demographics then be tested through ANOVA to determine whether there are any significant differences in the purchasing behavior in terms of age and gender (Tarlow, 2015). Besides, correlation analysis is used to determine the strength and direction of the association between two variables whereby the researcher accept or reject any hypothesis depending on whether the association is found to be statistically significant (Kumar, 2012).

This step-by-step analytical process guarantee the full picture of understanding the impact of the social media on consumer behavior in fast fashion, and this gives a set of practical insights to the marketers, as well as contribute to the process of data-driven decision-making.

3.9.1 Reliability and Validity of the Study

Reliability

Reliability is considered as the consistency and stability of research instruments to measure what is in intended to measure over specific time (McLeod, 2024). Reliability is important in this study because the structured questionnaire is consistent in measuring the perception of the participants about the brand engagement, convenience, privacy, influencer endorsement, platform type, and consumer buying behavior in fast fashion. The reliability is evaluated through the use of Cronbach alpha that is used to measure the internal consistency of the Likert-scale items. The alpha of 0.70 or more is considered to be acceptable as it shows that the items used in the survey have similar and consistent results throughout the sample (McLeod, 2024).

Validity

Validity is the accuracy and appropriateness of the instrument to measure the intended constructs (McLeod, 2024). In this study, validity is used to ensure that the questionnaire items are able to measure effectively the theoretic constructs of interest. Reviewing of the questions with the existing literature and expert opinion ensure that content validity is achieved since the questions are supposed to capture all the variables. Factor analysis in SPSS is used to determine construct validity to verify whether the items fall under their respective dimensions, i.e., brand engagement or influencer endorsement (McLeod, 2024).

The reliability and validity testing ascertain that the measurement tools used in the study are consistent and accurate, which would improve the credibility of the results and meaningful interpretation of consumer behavior in the European fast fashion environment.

3.10 Research Design Limitation

Research design limitations is referred to the inherent constraints and weaknesses within the chosen methodological framework that influence the accuracy of the generalizability or interpretation of the findings (McCombes, 2021). For the following days such a descriptive cross sectional design being selected which allows for data collection as single point of time and to analyze about consumer behavior and social media influence one it has a cost effective and time efficient design carries specific limitation. Another would be use of one research instrument which is closed ended an unable to understand the overall psychological aspects along with emotional factors of the participants and limited towards obtaining open answers. The research consists of only five independent variables whereas there are multiple variables to be investigated upon to identify the impact on consumer behavior relation to fast fashion.

First, cross-sectional research is not capable of drawing a causal conclusion, i.e., it is possible to make observations of correlations among variables (i.e., influencer endorsement and purchase intention), but it is impossible to prove the existence of cause-and-effect relationships. Second, the design could be subject to the bias of responding, the participants can over- or understate the level of their engagement with fast fashion content, which influence the validity of the findings. Thirdly, the temporal shift in the consumer behavior is impossible to be measured, such that changing trends, seasonal factors or even marketing campaigns can affect consumer decision making in a way that is not represented by a one time survey.

The limitations may affect the interpretation of findings especially when determining the influence of social media strategies on impulse versus planned purchases. Researchers need to acknowledge such limitations and where feasible, offset the design with sound statistical controls, secondary data triangulation, and careful extrapolation of findings on larger consumers of European fast fashion.

3.11 Ethical issues

Ethical considerations are necessary to ensure that the research is conducted with participants right being properly protected and responsibly (Resnik, 2020). In this research, informed consent

expressed to all the participants and the objective of the research stated, participation in the research is voluntary and the participants are made to understand that they can withdraw at any stage without any implications. Anonymity of personal identities and preservation of confidentiality are regarded as a priority, as the participants are given a reference number (Resnick, 2020). All the data that the researcher gathers and stored safely, and the researcher only use it to fulfill academic roles. The absence of any data due to withdrawal of some participants is taken care of by employing more respondents to ensure that the necessary sample size is attained. Moreover, such ethical compliance go on to the correct use of secondary data; all the sources is referenced and cited properly based on the university requirements to maintain academic integrity and validity (Resnik, 2020). These ethical standards would make the research more credible and protect the rights and trust of the participants.

3.12 Conclusion

The chapter provides a comprehensive framework to investigate the influence of social media on consumer buying behavior within the European fast fashion market. The study uses a pragmatic research philosophy with the support of deductive quantitative focus approach while it incorporates secondary qualitative data for the contextualized findings. A descriptive cross sectional research design is reluctant with a combination of a service strategy which makes sure the systematic data collection from three hundred and eighty-four samples of Instagram and TikTok users. The researcher uses stratified random sampling which guarantees the relevance of participants across age, gender and platform usage while it consists of 5.1 Likert scale questionnaire to capture the key constructs of brand engagement convenience platform type privacy and influence endorsement. The data analysis is conducted using SPSS including reliability, validity, correlation, regression and ANOVA tests that provides examination of relationship between independent and dependent variables the ethical considerations would be careful observation to maintain participant confidentiality and providing inform consent.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter provides A detailed analysis of the data gathered through the survey questionnaire which was implemented as part of the data acquisition process. The chapter presents initially an overview of the reliability and validity testing in order to demonstrate the accuracy and alignment of the survey questionnaire to the main research objectives. The chapter then presents an overview of the demographic data findings that are used to articulate the participants profile and provide wider information as to specific elements of the consumers behaviour such as purchasing patterns and key factors that motivate purchase intentions.

Next the chapter presents an overview of the descriptive statistics and inferential statistics that are specifically culminated to analyse the relationships in variables expressed in the framework designed in the study. The chapter concludes with the acceptance and the rejection of hypothesis paving the way for the detailed discussion of the research finding's ability to answer the research questions and fulfil objectives of the study.

4.2 Reliability and validity testing

The below section tests the reliability and validity of the survey questionnaire. All of the data acquired from the total number of respondents were used to check the degree of reliability and validity. The Cronbach alpha method was used to test reliability and using this approach ensures that if the survey questionnaire is circulated to a similar sample in the future the results obtain would be considered reliable. The application of bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy resulted in the assessment of the factor analysis suitability of the survey data, thus proving if the survey items had the required common variance to represent the constructs allied to the research objectives.

Table 4.1 Reliability and validity testing

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's α
Brand engagement	5	0.838
Convenience	5	0.853
Privacy	5	0.859
Platform type	5	0.838
Influencer endorsement	5	0.853
Consumer buying behavior	5	0.81

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

χ^2	df	p
1022	15	<.001

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy

	MSA
Overall	0.879
Brand engagement	0.9
Convenience	0.895
Privacy	0.914
Platform type	0.907
Influencer endorsement	0.892
Consumer buying behavior	0.813

Source: SPSS data results

The reliability analysis revealed strong internal consistency among all variables at the study. The Alpha Cronbach's values of Brand Engagement ($\alpha = .838$), Convenience ($\alpha = .853$), Privacy ($\alpha = .859$), the Platform type ($\alpha = .838$), Influencer Endorsement ($\alpha = .853$), and Consumer Buying Behavior ($\alpha = .810$) each notably exceeded the widely accepted threshold of .70. This suggests that the items measuring each construct have a high degree of congruence among them, validating the dimensions intended by the study. Of those, Privacy and Convenience were the most reliable, suggesting that the respondents judged these constructs in a consistent and coherent manner.

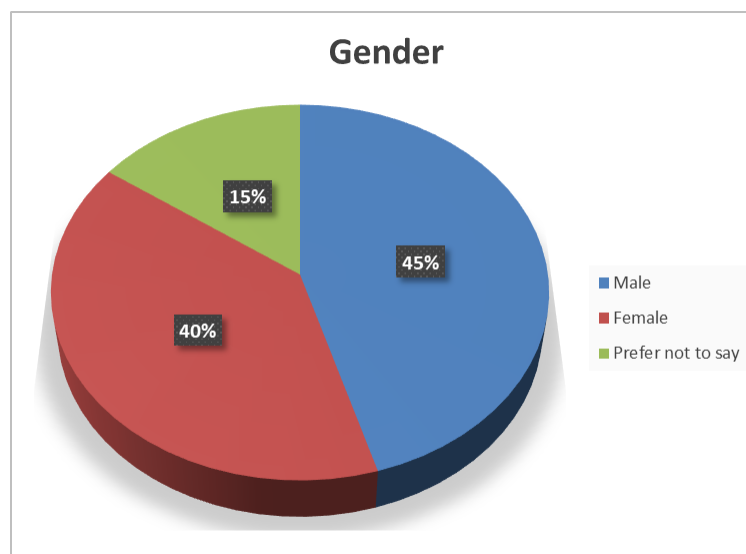
The developed capacities determining the goodness of fit KMO were presented while other Bartlett's test of sphericity measurement was also used. Significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity has confirmed that the sample showed sufficiently strong correlations among the variables for a factor analysis to be meaningfully carried out. The KMO value stands at 0.879 records excellent sampling adequacy, depicting that the entries above are appropriate for any factor analysis. Meanwhile, the data seems to carry good correlation among the variables given each one with acceptable levels of sharing spirit. Privacy, MSA = 0.914, Platform Type, MSA = 0.907, and Brand Engagement, MSA = 0.900, all fall within the strong adequacy range that points to the validity of measurement scales capturing them.

Even with the least MSA, Consumer Buying Behavior had a value as high as 0.813, qualifying it for factor analysis. In summary, it is concluded that the scales used to measure brand engagement, convenience, privacy, platform type, influencer endorsement, and consumer buying behavior are reliable and valid for purposes of analysis in this study.

4.3 The demographic information

The following section presents an overview of the demographic information that was acquired through the survey questionnaire to provide an overview of the participants profile as well as information pertaining to certain aspects of their buying behaviour.

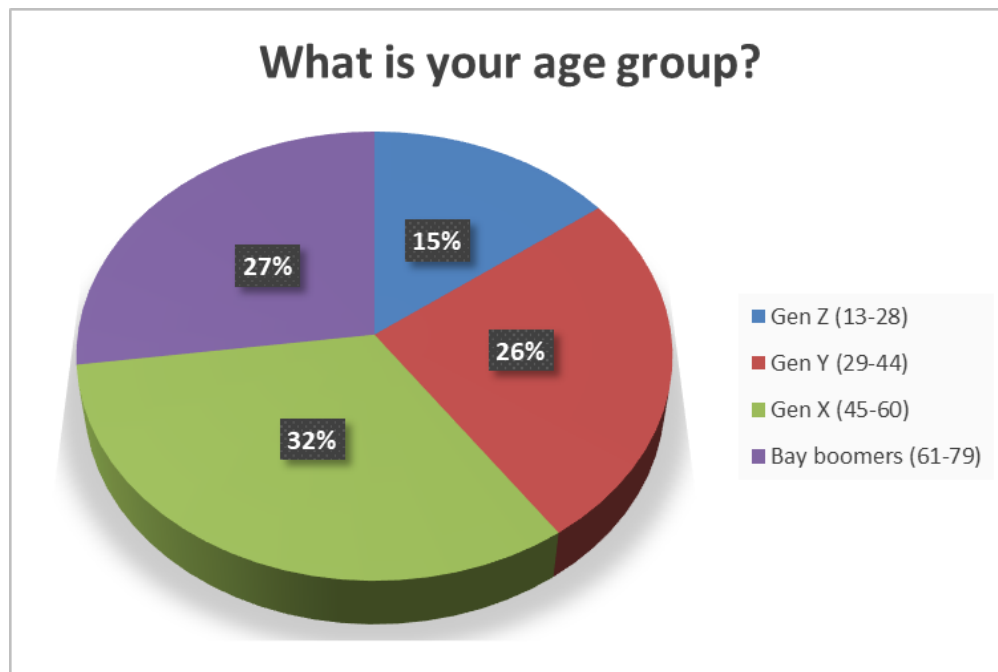
Figure 4.1 Gender



Source: SPSS data results

Based on the response rate received for participant gender the evidence suggests that there is a generally equal division of gender with 45% being male and 40% being female with 15% choosing not to state their gender. The data acquired could be considered to be an adequate representation of society having no potential gender biased opinions being formed as a majority perspective throughout this survey.

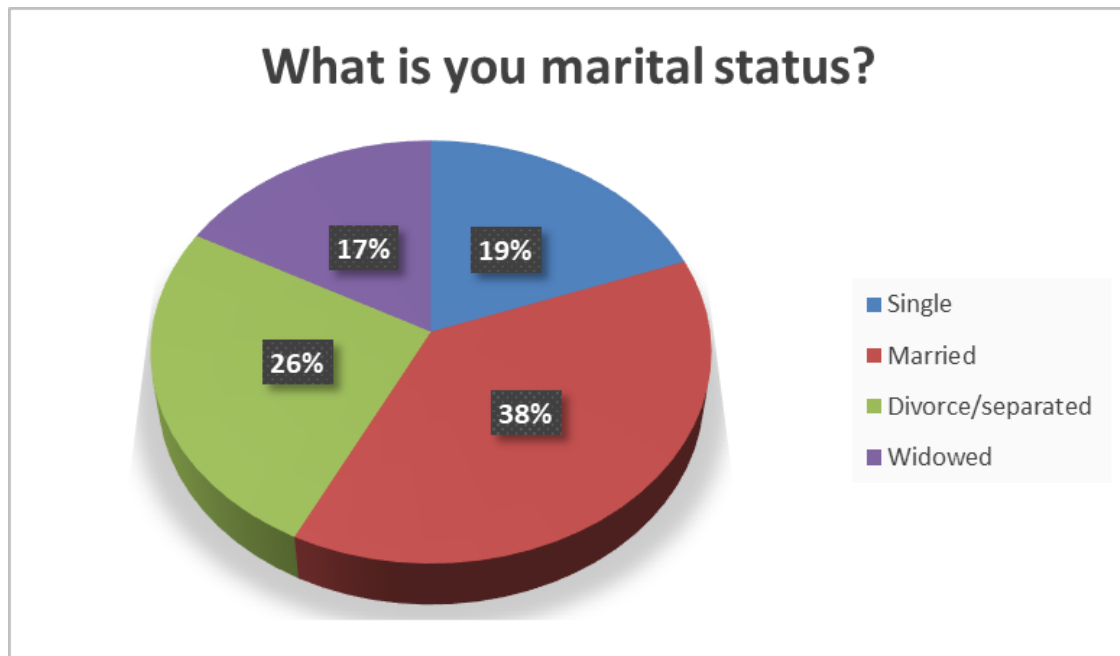
Figure 4.2 What is your age group?



Source: SPSS data results

The age group distribution demonstrates that the majority are Gen X between the ages of 45- and 60-years old constituting 32% of the respondents with 26% of the respondents in Gen Y between 29 and 44 years old. While the next highest category of baby boomers at 27%, Gen Z is at 15%. Therefore, it can be considered that the majority participants have a high degree of technological integration between the age group categories of Gen Z and Gen X that are generally considered more technologically inclined and more active on social media platforms.

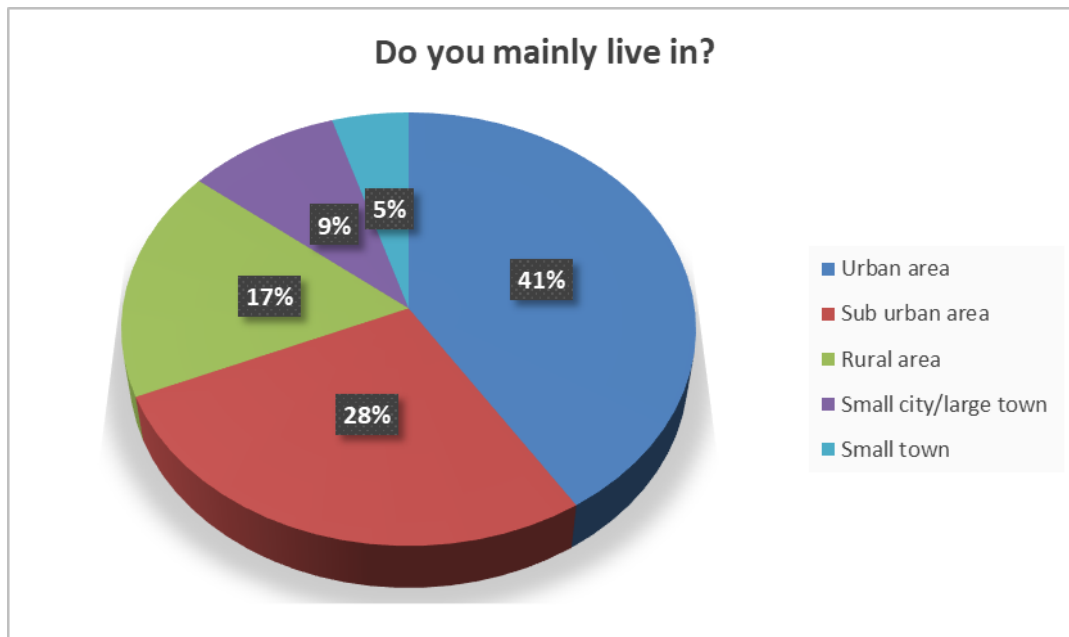
Figure 4.3 What is your marital status?



Source: SPSS data results

From the total number of responses 30% stated that they were married with 19% stating that they are single and 26% stating they were either divorced or separated. Among the responses 17% stated that they were widowed. This representation indicates that the survey questionnaire had been circulated to a wide number of persons from different marital status is which could also be taken into consideration based on how their behaviour is either different from each other or is similar to each other. The overall findings of the study could then determine if marital status plays a key role or is merely a demographic factor that does not have a major impact.

Figure 4.4 Do you mainly live in?



Source: SPSS data results

The data findings for geographic location indicated that 41% were in urban areas with 28% in sub urban areas and only 17% in rural areas of Europe. It was also seen that 9% and 5% respectively live in small cities and small towns. Therefore, the findings of this question show that the survey questionnaire was able to reach a wider geographic location. Based on the responses is an accurate representation of population patterns with more people living in metropolitan cities and large urban areas and few living in smaller cities and towns.

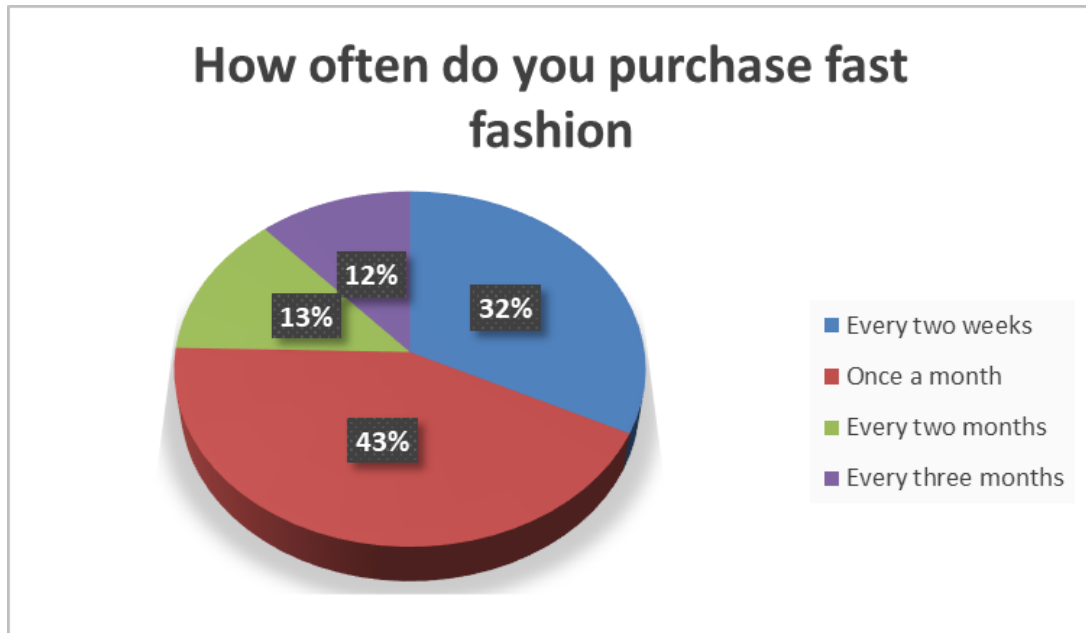
Figure 4.5 What are the main Europe fast fashion brands you purchase?



Source: SPSS data results

The main fast fashion brands purchased by the population of this study within Europe indicates that Shein is considered to be the most frequently purchased online brand represented by 32% of the responses while 24% state that they purchased Primark which is mainly an in-store brand. It was observed that 22% purchase other brands while 13% purchase H&M and 9% purchase Zara. The responses are a typical and accurate representation of purchase patterns in which a majority of consumers tend to purchase more economically easy to purchase products while others may look for more value features in their purchase decisions.

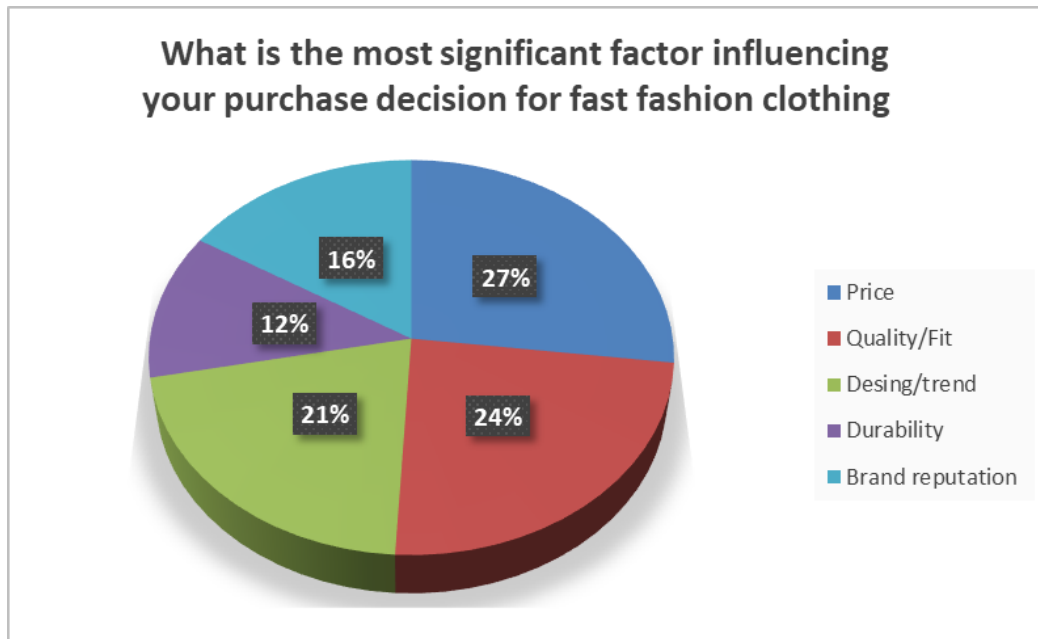
Figure 4.6 How often do you purchase fast fashion?



Source: SPSS data results

The majority of responses 43% stated that they would purchase fashion clothing once a month while 32% stated they would purchase every two weeks. A smaller number of respondents specifically 13% and 12% stated that they would purchase fashion clothing every two months and three months respectively. The findings indicate that a majority of respondents would be inclined to purchase fashion clothing on a more regular basis.

Figure 4.7 What is the most significant factor influencing your purchase decision for fast fashion clothing?

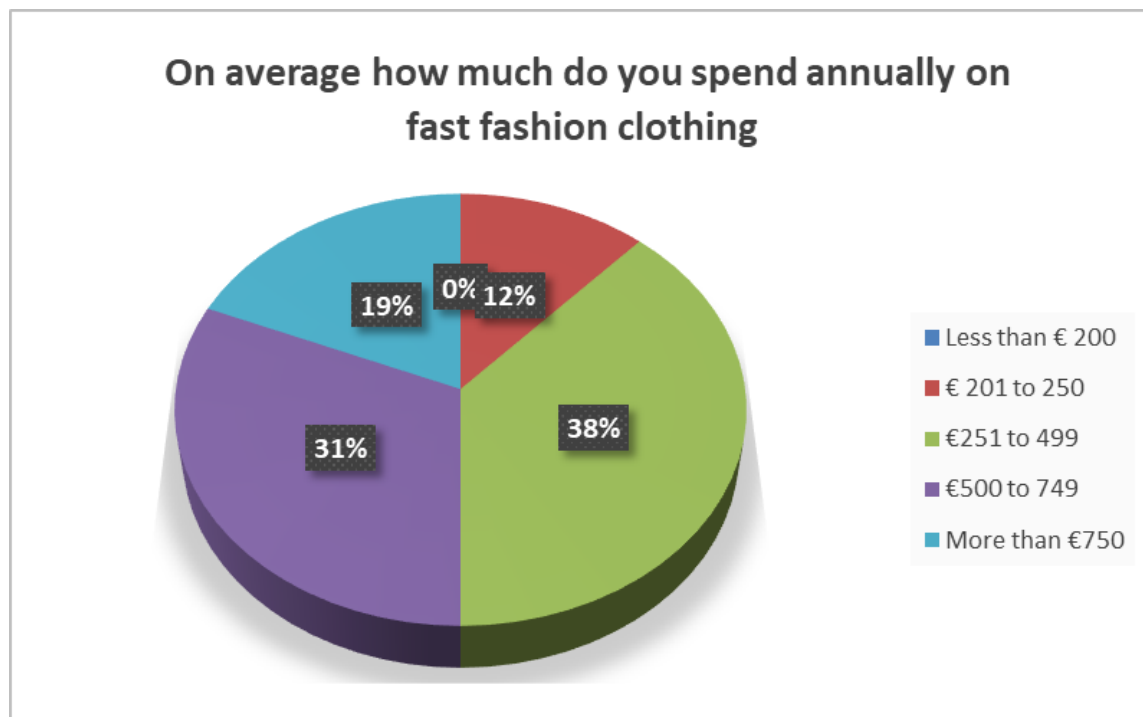


Source: SPSS data results

Consumers were requested to stipulate the most significant factor that influences their purchase decision and the response is while having some level of majority seem to have an close to equal distribution. Price was seen as the most significant by 27% however 24% stated that quality and fit was more important and 21% stated that design and trend was more important. Alternatively 16% stated that brand reputation was important while only 12% stated that durability was important. In this question respondents were only given the option to select the most important factor however it does not account for the fact that some respondents or even a larger majority may evaluate multiple factors close to each other when making their purchase decisions.

While this question only answers the most important factor it cannot exclude the fact that aspects such as price quality and design trend may be evaluated simultaneously by respondents when they choose to purchase a specific brand or consider the recommendation by external source.

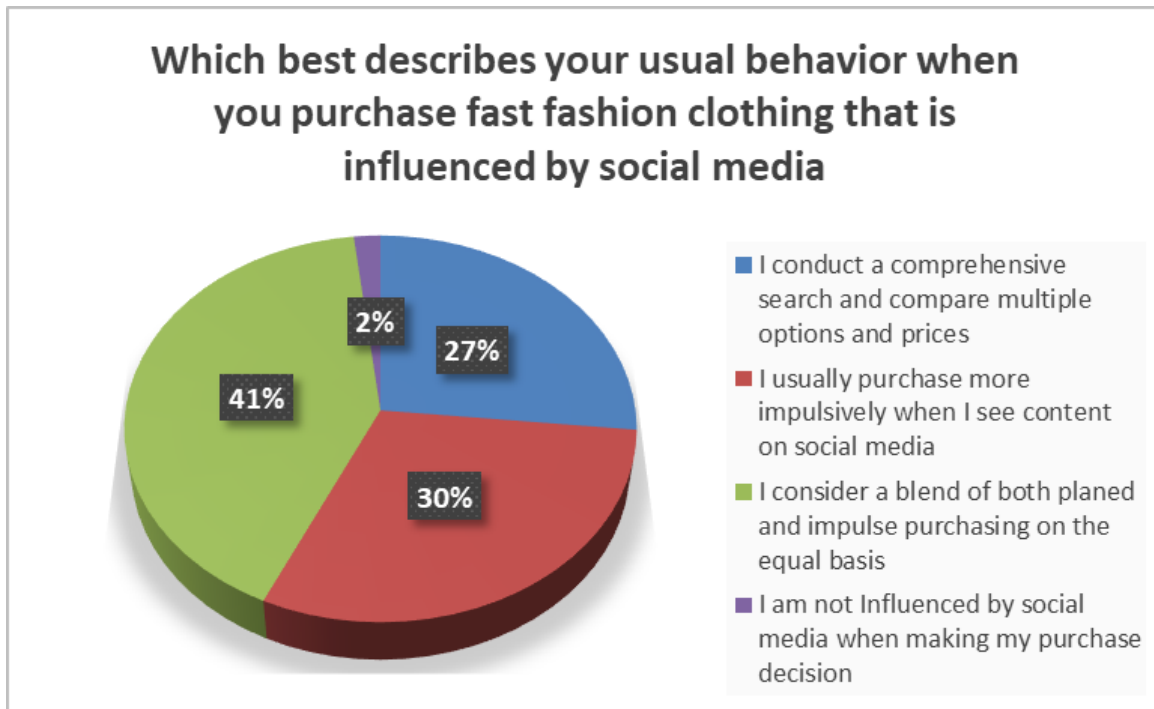
Figure 4.8 On average how much do you spend annually on fast fashion clothing?



Source: SPSS data results

Respondents were asked to stipulate the average amount they would spend on purchasing fashion clothing annually and 47% stated they would spend between €251 to €499, while 39% stated they would spend anything between €500 to €749. A total of 19% of the respondents stated that they would spend more than €750 annually while only 12% stated they would spend between €201.00 and €250 annually. There were no respondents that stated they would spend anything lower than €200 on an annual basis. The evidence clearly suggests that respondents on average would spend anything between €350 to €750 on an annual basis to purchase clothing.

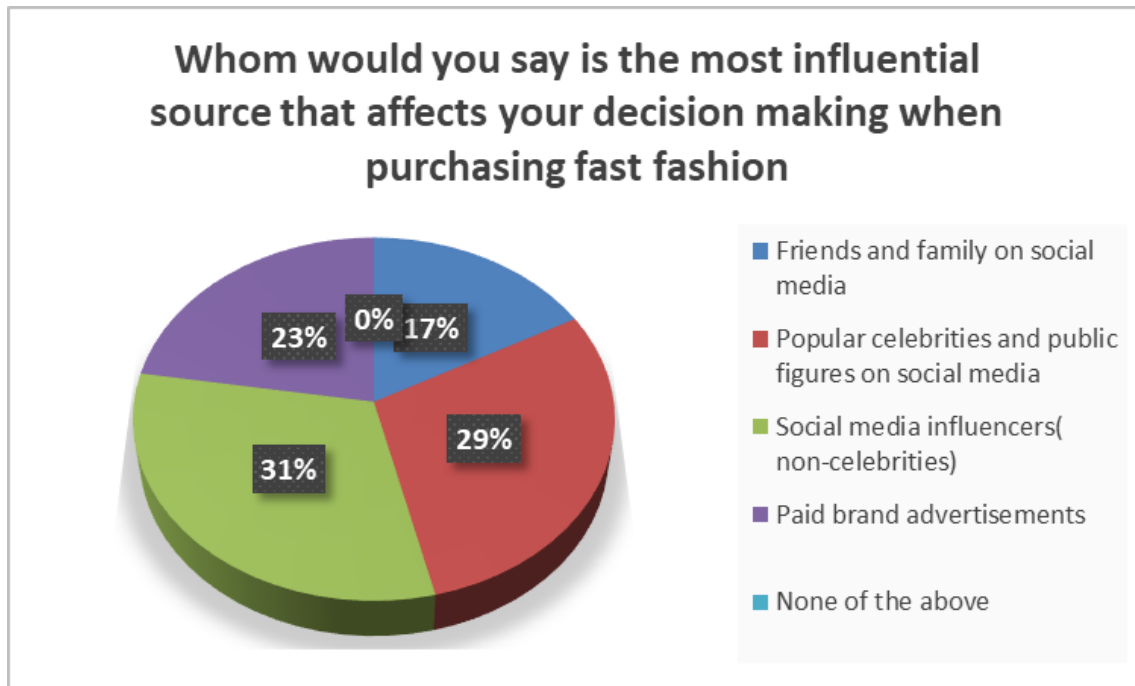
Figure 4.9 Which best describes your usual behaviour when you purchase fast fashion clothing that is influenced by social media?



Source: SPSS data results

A majority of respondents as indicated by 41% consider a blend of both planned and impulse purchasing on an equal basis when they make they are purchased decision of fast fashion that is influenced by social media. A total of 30% stated that they would usually purchase more on an impulse basis while 27% stated that they conduct a comprehensive search comparing multiple options such as prices when making their purchase decisions. A nominal level of 2% stated that they are generally not influenced by social media. Therefore based on these findings it is evident that most persons would alternate between impulse purchasing as well as planned purchasing which could be also considered to be a highly situational element.

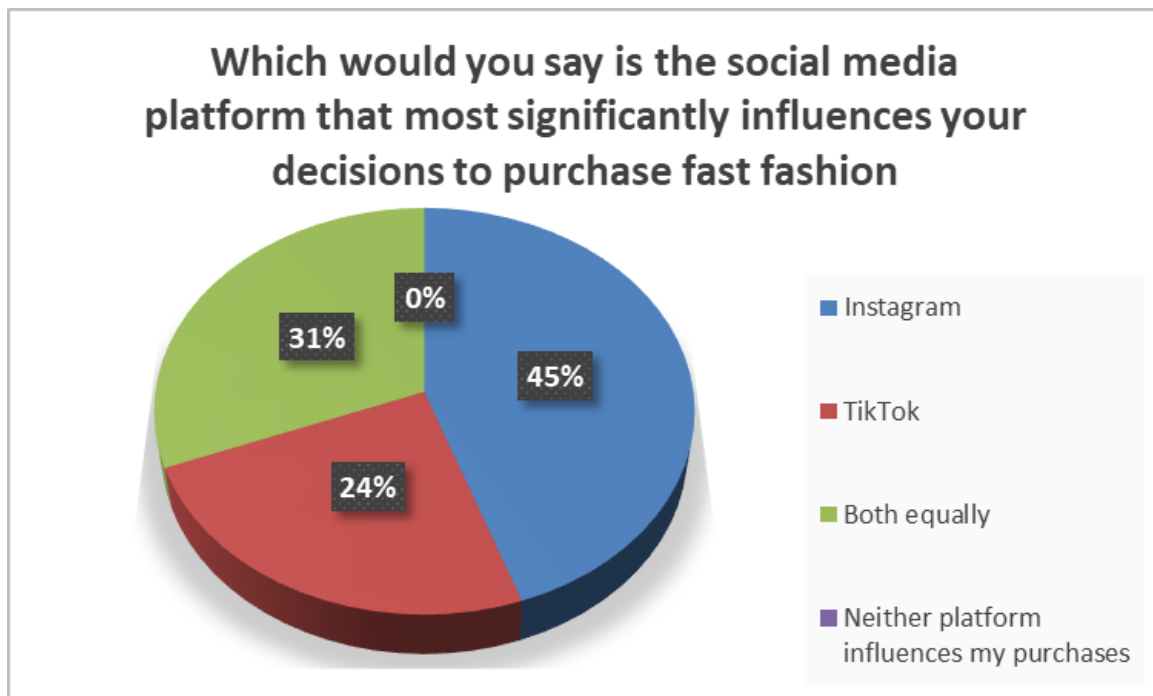
Figure 4.10 Whom would you say is the most influential source that affects your decision making when purchasing fast fashion?



Source: SPSS data results

Respondents were required to stipulate the most influential source that effects their decision when purchasing fast fashion too which 31% stated social media influences in a non-celebrity category. A further 29% stated that popular celebrities and public figures on social media regulate their decisions while 23% stated that paid brand advertisements also had the propensity to regulate their purchase decision. Friends and family on social media were seen to be there lowest source of influence at 17% which is an indication that individuals value the opinions of persons with some level of position or status on social media rather than closer social circles of persons that they have intimate associations.

Figure 4.11 Which would you say is the social media platform that most significantly influences your decisions to purchase fast fashion?



Source: SPSS data results

Respondents overwhelmingly stipulate that as a sole platform Instagram is chosen by 45% of the respondents while TikTok is chosen only 24% of the time. More noteworthy is that 31% states that they would use both equally which also the significant finding indicating that a strong level of social media presence may be maintained by these individuals. However, the fact that 45% of the respondents only use Instagram to make their purchasing choices significantly tips the scales more towards a favourability of the features and functions as well as the level of prisms of celebrities on these platforms that influence purchase decisions.

4.4 Descriptive and inferential statistics

4.4.1 Descriptive

The following section presents an overview of the descriptives statistics related to the study. The key areas for consideration are the mean value and the degree of standard deviation which essentially shows the extent of variation of responses for the central mean by the participants.

Table 4.2 Descriptive

Descriptives

	Brand engagement	Convenience	Privacy	Platform type	Influencer endorsement	Consumer buying behavior
N	384	384	384	384	384	384
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.49	3.48	3.50	3.53	3.49	3.42
Standard deviation	0.680	0.689	0.680	0.678	0.667	0.683

Source: SPSS data results

Statistical description reveals a high agreement consensus across the variables studied by the mean values which are distributed around the middle point of the Likert scale. Brand engagement received an average of 3.49 (SD = 0.68), wherein the participants on the average expressed a little agreement that they are engaging with fast fashion brands on the social media platform, which was also confirmed by the low standard deviation that indicates the previous agreement was indeed shared by different respondents.

In the same manner, convenience led to a result of 3.48 (SD = 0.689) which connoted a fairly moderate view that social networks are a breeze in terms of browsing, talking, and buying. The comparable standard deviation shows that the convenience experiences of the respondents were almost alike. Privacy concerns gave a mean of 3.50 (SD = 0.68), which is higher than the previous one slightly, revealing that the participants are pretty much divided regarding the issue of data privacy trust in the companies that collect the data, however, there is still some variation of privacy perceptions.

The variable concerning the type of platform showed the same meaning of 3.53 (SD = 0.678) which means that the social media platform selection has a moderate impact on how the consumer makes a decision to purchase. Influencer endorsement was indicated by the mean of 3.49 (SD = 0.667), which showed a generally positive but cautious acceptance of the influencers, and at the same time the lowest dispersion of the variables, meaning that the respondents shared the same

views very strongly. Moreover, consumer buying behavior was not different from the above trend with a mean of 3.42 (SD = 0.683) indicating a moderate shift towards social media-influenced purchasing decisions. To sum up, the low and consistent standard deviations across all variables suggest that response patterns were stable and that the constructs measured had reliability.

However the fact that all of the mean value's range between 3.42 and 3.53 Is a clear indication that the respondents only experience an average level of impact and influence from each of these variables with relation to their effect consumer buying behaviour. It is possible that majority of consumers expressed or experienced polar opposite perspectives for each of these variables at different stages of their engagement levels. This has led to the selection of a full range of opinions in the Likert scale finally resting on an average mean level of value

4.4.2 Inferential statistics

4.4.2.1 Correlation testing

The following section performs A correlation analysis testing of the individual variables to determine the degree of relationship between each of the individual independent variables and the common dependent variables. The intention is to prove the existence of relationships thereby affirming or rejecting the overall hypothesis in the conceptual framework.

Table 2.3 Correlation testing

Correlation Matrix		Brand engagement	Convenience	Privacy	Platform type	Influencer endorsement
Consumer buying behavior	Pearson's r	0.674	0.607	0.578	0.668	0.618
	df	382	382	382	382	382
	p-value	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

Source: SPSS data results

The correlation between consumer buying behavior and brand engagement is medium ($r = .67$, $p < .001$). A relationship established between brand engagement and consumer buying behavior mentions that while consumers interact intensively with a brand by means of liking, following, sharing, and other engagement activities, their likelihood of purchases shoots up considerably. The practical implication is that an emotional and cognitive connection between a brand and customer

plays a pivotal role in elucidation of the buying intention as positive. As this relation is statistically significant ($p < .001$), it can be taken as an important predictor of consumer behavior for the context.

Convenience and consumer buying behavior are found to be positively correlated of medium strength. The correlation coefficient ($r = .607$) means that with increases in perceived convenience in the use of platforms or services leads to increased buying tendencies. The factors such as ease of navigation, methods and modes of payment, speed of checkout process, and user's general experience have a strong influence on how purchase decisions are made. The point direction of the correlation reflects consumers' preference for platforms that save time and effort. In which convenience is evidently modeled as a contributing factor to develop favorable consumer behaviors and becomes a prominent feature for marketing to encourage purchases as opposed to other competing products.

There is a weak positive correlation between privacy and consumer behavior. If the R-value is .578, that means that privacy-aware consumers who think their personal data is in sensitive hands are likely making purchases. This link echoes the increased relevance that data-security, authenticity, and trust hold in the domain of digital worlds. Consumers will interpret security as a form of credit, and this, in turn, will mitigate what they perceive to be a risk and support buying. Because the p-value for the correlation is below statistical significance ($p < .001$), privacy should be seen as much a major aspect for consumer decision-making, whether on a more technical or an ecommerce platform.

A medium-strong positive relationship has been observed between platform type and consumers' buying behavior. The correlation ($r = .668$) indicates that platform features such as user interface and functions, social interaction and reputation, etc., contribute to purchase decisions. It is possible that users may prefer platforms that match their habit or possess advanced features, credibility and social environment. The statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) correlation indicates that the choice of a platform meaningfully predicts the buying activity. It is important for the company to focus on this being a platform to enforce the trust of the user and to drive the outcome of purchase as the platform support.

The situation with influencer endorsements and consumer behavior is seen in a medium positive relationship. The coefficient ($r = .618$) suggests that consumers who trust or follow influencers

are easily influenced by their recommendations. Influencer acts as a social proof to make the brand more credible and bring about a positive attitude towards a product or service. This underscores the strong influence digital personalities now have on modern buying patterns. Its significance ($p < .001$) demonstrates the possibility that influencer endorsement is one of the substantial determinants of consumer purchase intentions.

4.4.2.2 Linear regression

The following section presents a regression analysis that was conducted in order to determine the extent to which the combined variables would have an outcome on the dependent variables performance.

Table 4.4 Linear regression

Model Fit Measures			
Model		R	R ²
	1	0.835	0.697

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=384

Source: SPSS data results

The regression model shows that $R=0.835$; the extent of this result means that all combined predictors have shown strength in the relation and correlation with the buying behavior of the consumer. Certainly, there exists a relatively high correlation between these independent variables and the variations in the dependent variable, hence persuasively demonstrating the formative connection within the predictors in relation to the consumer buying tendency.

The fact that the R^2 value of 0.697 ignites 69.7% of consumer buying behavior variance is explained by the model. In other words, this is a commendable contribution in the behavioral and social sciences where human decision-making is a product of numerous complexes, unobservable factors.

Since R^2 close to or at almost 0.70 represents acceptable to high explanatory power, it is believed that independent variables included in the model explain those consumer buying behaviors across the tropes. The 30.3% left represents factors that lie without the model, such as personality traits, economic conditions, and marketing exposure, that may further influence consumer decisions. Nevertheless, a high R^2 underlines the model's capacity to explain.

Table 4.5 ANOVA Test

ANOVA Test					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Brand engagement	6.2	1	6.2	43.3	<.001
Convenience	4.94	1	4.941	34.5	<.001
Privacy	4.79	1	4.786	33.4	<.001
Platform type	5.2	1	5.196	36.3	<.001
Influencer endorsement	6.11	1	6.107	42.6	<.001
Residuals	54.15	378	0.143		

Source: SPSS data results

The ANOVAs testing reveals if the regression model explains the response variable- the consumer behavior- significantly better when together as a full model as compared with a model without predictors. The individual evaluation for each predictor is done in conjunction with Type III Sum of Squares, which demonstrates the effect that every given predictor has when all the predictors are in the model.

P- values were less than. 001 across all variables which, in turn, signify highly significant effects. Therefore, the variables—Brand engagement, Convenience, Privacy, Platform Type, and Influencer endorsement—all contribute meaningfully to explaining about the differences in consumer buying behavior or to the target response variable. The F-values give information which is very close to their effect strengths and are therefore more important than the tests of the significance of individual predictors. This is by far the best way to evaluate the contribution of F-value to the test.

- Brand engagement (F=43.3) is the most influential factor thereof, as the more engagement activities-bearing impact would be used on buying decisions, e.g., creating brand attachment and involving with the content.
- Convenience, with the highest F-value of 34.5, further emphasizes the ease of use, accessibility, and time saved in influencing purchase behavior.
- Privacy, with a high F-value of 33.4, also seems to be a powerful factor: Security of data, transparency, and consumer trust matter in this decision-making process.
- The type of platform, one of the predictors, had a high F-value of 36.3, with a major degree of commercial influence on phone operations.

- With a high F-value of 42.6, influencer endorsement is another critical aspect that shapes consumer purchasing behavior.

A large portion of the variance remains unexplained by the predictors, while at the same time the residual sums of squares are quite low, considering how great the explained variance is. Furthermore, jointly, the ANOVA results confirmed the model's significance statistically and that each predictor significantly added for predicting consumer buying behavior.

Table 4.6 Model Coefficients - Consumer buying behavior

Model Coefficients - Consumer buying behavior

Predictor	Estimate	SE	Standardized coefficient (β)	t	p
Brand engagement	0.249	0.0378	0.247	6.58	<.001
Convenience	0.205	0.0348	0.206	5.87	<.001
Privacy	0.195	0.0338	0.194	5.78	<.001
Platform type	0.229	0.038	0.227	6.02	<.001
Influencer endorsement	0.233	0.0357	0.228	6.53	<.001

Source: SPSS data results

The model coefficients provide micro-level insights on the impact of each predictor variable on consumer buying behavior while other variables are controlled for. In terms of the validity of the hypothesis, both the unstandardized estimates and the standardized coefficients yield consistent information.

Brand Engagement ($\beta = 0.247$)

Brand engagement is evidently a strong predictor. Upon a standard deviation increase in brand engagement, consumer buying behavior increases by 0.247 standard deviation-increases, implying that interacting and involving emotional ties with the brand act as strong catalysts for shopping decisions. With an abnormally high t-value of 6.58, this effect looks even more robust because $p < .001$.

Convenience ($\beta 0.206$)

Among the predictors, convenience possesses a slightly smaller but still significant effect. Standardized coefficients indicate that improvements in ease of use, efficiency, and accessibility contribute effectively to consumer behavior. Observations of statistical significance ($t = 5.87$, $p < .001$) imply that consumers strongly value platforms that add ease in transactions.

Privacy ($\beta = 0.194$)

Although slightly weaker than some other predictors, privacy also has a significant role in influencing consumer my behavior. Their willingness to make actual purchases is largely driven by the level of trust in safety and confidentiality agreements with the platform. A strong, statistically valid ($t\text{-value} = 5.78$, $p < .001$) indicator further demonstrates privacy's importance and corresponds with the current concerns about privacy protection by consumers.

Platform Type ($\beta = 0.227$)

Variability starch in the site type has a positive and statistically significant effect and the extent to which the characteristics are synonyms for these platforms such as interface design, believability of the site, all interactive components, or as an example, the resolution of the social environment reinjects. Assignment with b of 0.227 bordered in strong statistical significance ($t = 6.02$) carries great weight in molding consumer experiences and behaviors.

Endorsement by Influencers ($\beta = 0.228$)

Influencers are very powerful. With a β of 0.228, it ranks closely along the more vital attributes of the site types. The β 0.228 for endorsement ratifies the implication that endorsements and messages by trustworthy and likable influencers influence payment intentions. The impressive t -value of 6.53 pushes the point the great strength and influence of endorsements statistically and in terms of digital consumer behavior models.

4.3.4 Hypothesis

Based on the statistical evidence the below decisions have been made for the proposed hypothesis in the conceptual framework.

Table 4.7 Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Values	Result
H ₁ : There is a relationship between brand engagement on social media and consumer behavior.	P<.001	Accepted
H ₂ : There is a relationship between convenience and consumer behavior.	P<.001	Accepted
H ₃ : There is a relationship between privacy and consumer behavior.	P<.001	Accepted
H ₄ : There is a relationship between platform type and consumer behavior.	P<.001	Accepted
H ₅ : There is a relationship between influencer endorsement and consumer behavior	P<.001	Accepted

Source: SPSS data results

Based on the above all of the positive hypotheses have been accepted thereby establishing the validity of the conceptual framework. Accordingly, it is determined that brand engagement convenience privacy platform type and influencer endorsements all have a relationship to affect consumer behaviour.

4.4 Triangulation of the Results

The triangulation of demographic, descriptive, and inferential data provides a comprehensive picture of how social media influences fast fashion consumer behavior in Europe. The demographic findings reveal that the sample is well represented across various characteristics such as gender, age, social status and geographic areas with greater concentration in urban and suburban regions. This is in line with present-day consumption trends, as the populations of cities are usually more susceptible to the influence of social media and fast fashion brands than their counterparts in rural areas. The age range is primarily composed of Gen X and Gen Y, which is indicative of a digitally experienced group that mixes more or less depending on the habit and the social-media-driven sway, and this is also seen in the combination of impulse and planned purchases that the respondents have reported.

The demographic insights are further supported by descriptive statistics, which reveal that the mean values of all the key constructs have been consistent and moderate across the board. Those constructs are brand engagement, convenience, privacy, platform type, influencer endorsement, and consumer buying behavior. The mean scores of 3.42 to 3.53 show that the respondents are not very much against social media influence or very much in favor of it, but they are at a moderate level of social media influence, and it is a constant level of influence. The standard deviations, which were relatively low and the same across the variables, show that the response patterns were stable, implying that these perceptions are common among the different demographic subgroups rather than being influenced by extreme or polarized views.

The entire interpretation is reinforced by the inferential analysis. The correlation results show a statistically significant positive relationship between all the independent variables and consumer buying behavior which indicates that engagement, convenience, privacy, platform characteristics, and influencer endorsement have a combined effect on the purchasing decision.

The regression analysis supports this pattern with the model accounting for almost 70% of the variance in consumer buying behavior. The combined statistical evidence indicates that no single factor works in isolation, but brand engagement, influencer endorsement, and platform type come out as particularly strong drivers. The triangulated findings, when viewed together, depict a unified behavioral ecosystem where demographic context, moderate perceptual influence, and statistically robust relationships are the factors that together explain fast fashion purchasing behavior in a social-media-dominated environment.

4.5 Summary

Dependent variables and independent variables of brand engagement, privacy, platform type, and influencer endorsement had medium-strength positive correlation with the purchasing behavior of the consumer. In essence, this ensemble of behaviors represents the extent to which the various factors influenced consumers' purchasing behavior, imbibing the notion of consumer behavior in the digital realm.

From the results of regression analysis, it can be concluded that all five independent variables can potentially significantly and positively predict consumer buying behavior. In other words, the model accounts for 69.7% of the variance; accordingly, the ANOVA table confirms that each of the predictors is explained with some meaningful impact. As can be seen from the standardized

beta values, factors influencing brand engagement, influencer endorsement, and platform type have a more notable impact on consumer buying behavior than convenience or privacy. In sum, the model bears good explanatory power for consumer buying behavior and pace-driven significant statistics.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

Based on the data findings that was discussed in the previous chapter, this chapter brings into focus alignment between the data findings and the main research questions there by providing specific answers to the key research questions of the study. In taking this approach the chapter essentially demonstrates the ability of the data findings to relate or contradict with wider academic knowledge on the subject matter in relation to the specific research questions that have been the centre focus of conducting this research.

5.2 Discussion of findings in relation to research questions

5.2.1 What is the difference between impulse purchases and planned purchases influence through social media content?

For the first research question, its primary concern was to make a distinction between instant and planned buying when looking closer into the fast fashion apparatus in Europe. The empirical findings from this study are that, when considering the influence of social media, consumer buying behavior cannot be anchored on impulse or planning; it falls under the continuum shaped based on situational, cognitive, and social factors. This finding aligns with current literature arguing that social media environments increasingly blend traditional demarcations between rational and irrational decision-making (Morozova, 2024; Papamichael, 2020).

From a demographic analysis, it has come to light that 41% of respondents have an equal liking for both impulse shopping and planned shopping, 30% incline on impulsive shopping exclusively and 27% are in favour of planned purchasing. This scientifically verified only the pronouncement that has earlier been declared by Horberry (2024), who said that digital consumerism implies a constant swinging between emotional and thoughtful decisions depending on the exposure to content and contextual signals. Algorithmic feeds, influenced promotions, and overly-time based offers can, within fractions of a second, convert a planned intention into an impulse-driven action. Hence proving the fact circulating, i.e., as stressed by D'Souza (2024), accelerated decision-making cycle in fast fashion consumption.

The logistical proof of this argument is further reinforced by descriptive statistics. The average rating of consumer buying behavior ($M = 3.42$) suggests a moderate reinforcement in the direction of social media-driven consumption instead of pure impulse buying. This moderation implies that impulse and planned purchases are conflated rather than working in complete isolation. Similar

mood patterning struck brand engagement ($M = 3.49$) and platform type ($M = 3.53$), thus that they are activated into behaving and think over their behavior; they do not do mindlessly. The same puts itself neatly afore an Anthem question in Eastman 2023, saying that clients these days have developed more capabilities on top of debatable evaluation of software along with emotional impact while gliding through digital markets.

The inferential points adopted here strongly increased the propensity toward more sales behavior through influencer endorsement. An influencer endorsement displayed a strong positive correlation with buying behavior ($r = .618$, $p < .001$) and a very strong standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.228$). It implies that influencer content primarily functions as a peripheral cue, according to the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), causing impulsive or now but later purchases as a result of attractiveness, credibility, and social proof. It can be inferred that whilst privacy ($\beta = 0.194$) and convenience ($\beta = 0.206$) provide known factors in terms of withdrawal and purchase-related behavior, the primary notion of purchasing lines persistently and notably within trust, perceived risk, and usability, tying in with Siddiqui et al. (2025) and Onitiu (2022).

At a theoretical level, it implies the concurrent functioning of the central and the peripheral routes. To put it in pure entrepreneurial language, central processing would come into effect when a planned purchase would be influenced by the opinion of consumers based in product-related data, reviews, or platform credibility, having a bit fairer comparability of privacy and convenience. Conversely, peripheral purchase of impulse is mostly influenced by endorser visibility appealing to the influencer and aesthetics of the platform-recent findings of Gandhi (2020) and Jamil (2022); their research has magnified upon emotional arousals and fear of missing out (FOMO) as core drivers for such spontaneous consumption.

Furthermore supportive of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) in explaining shopping intentions is perceived behavior control and attitude towards social media information. The limitation of the theory in accounting for unprompted behavior is, however, explicated in this study, reinforcing Bosnjak's (2020) criticism on the inadequacy of TPB to consider emotional and situational prompts that fashionably condemn fast fashion environment. It is not as simple, however, to draw a conclusion from the empirical evidence presented in this study that no single

theory of purchase, twofold in social media, accounts for its behavior, and thus an integrated approach melding TPB and ELM contributes better.

In contrast to a prior study that framed fast fashion consumption on social media as mostly impulsive (Gupta, 2018), this time another study says that decision making for European consumers is quite hybrid and not purely impulsive (Bandara, 2021). It is possible that in the European context, higher digital literacy, stronger privacy awareness, and greater platform familiarity contributed to this complexity, which supports Vladimirova's (2022) argument for regional specificity.

Overall, the results endorse and in some cases extend literature available by highlighting social media influence as having the potential to introduce planned and impulse purchases as correlated behavioral reactions not fully separated from each other, contingent upon content type, platform attributes, and the consumer's personal context. It is imperative for an academic and managerial understanding, thus elevating the urgency for fast fashion brands to strike a balance between such emotionally charged content and other informational and trust-building strategies in reaching European consumers.

5.2.2 What is the impact of Instagram and Tik Tok on customer purchasing behavior in the fast fashion sector in Europe?

As key focus of the current study was to verify to what extent Instagram and TikTok could dictate customer purchasing behavior behaviors among the fast fashion sector of Europe. The findings from the current research show both platforms having a significant but concentratively less extensive effect on buying behavior. Such findings reinforce and further extend the literature ill-used beforehand which centered the image and algorithmic-driven platforms as the powerhouse drivers of fashion consumption in the present world (Won, 2020; Bandara, 2021).

Demographic findings indicate that Instagram is still a singular platform dominating users: 45% of respondents expressed it as their main influence in making fast fashion purchasing thoughts; however, TikTok was seen by 24%, with 31% maintaining usage for the two platforms evenly. In such a way, it might be indicated that while TikTok was the talk of the town, Instagram still has more structural influence within the European context. This finding confirms Prameswari (2022), who contended that Instagram's curated aesthetics, brand consistency, and established influencer

ecosystems have made it quite effective in guiding purchase intentions, mostly for consumers who are very endowed with familiarity and credibility.

Descriptive statistics provide concrete evidence of the argument. The average on the platform type variable was 3.53, which implies a casual but consistent modicum of influence in the direction of social media platforms and purchasing behavior. Thus, with only a modest standard deviation observed, it appears that opinions are largely shared by purchasers, regardless of their age or gender. This piece of evidence supports Nash's (2019) argument that these platforms are stable points of reference, not poles of extremes when it comes to making fashion decisions.

Inferential analysis provides a stronger empirical validation of the effect of the platform. The type of platform showed a medium-to-strong positive association with consumer buying behavior ($r = .668$, $p < .001$) and emerged as a significant study variable that emerged as a statistically significant predictor in the regression model ($\beta = 0.227$, $p < .001$). These results reveal that the competitive advantage of platform service providers is dependent on various structural features such as interface design, content formats, and instruments for social interaction, giving birth to more purchase probability. This current work is comparable to the results of Won and Kim (2020), where hedonic and experiential platform characteristics combined showed considerable influence on purchase intention when engaged in fashion instances.

The findings concerning Instagram and TikTok show that qualitative differences are shown above solely the best option. TikTok's influence seems to have more to do with impulsive buying, with short video clips, viral challenges, and algorithmic personalization as the underlying principles. The finding further corroborates Bandara (2021) and Lewin (2022), who said that TikTok does not only create a fast immersive environment but also heighten excitement (excitatory effect) and fear of missing out (FOMO), leading these types of emotions to make impactive purchase decisions pretty sooner. Instagram's influence, on the other hand, seems to relate more with planned buying behavior due to popular pages, influencer loyalty, and product information availability. This suggests that Instagram seems to even facilitate a major buyer's expedition and serves Ingrassia's (2022) argument about having and fostering an audience along the way.

Expounding on the interaction of the two platforms in the process of consumer purchase, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) states that TikTok content mainly activates the peripheral route, a path that is driven by the strong presence of critical influence, visual charm, and

entertainment value (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Conversely, Instagram is known for keeping a balance between the peripheral and central routes, allowing consumers to witness great emotional attraction and cognitive evaluation. This is why a significant percentage of those surveyed are imparting that both platforms have been in equal use rather than just any one.

The findings go against the studies which popularise TikTok over Instagram in a more generalized lens (Bonilla-Quijada, 2024). The context does show that TikTok does have some influence on Western consumers. However, their caution and balanced opinion about it seem to have something to do with higher digital literacy, more effective mechanisms of privacy, and well-established trust that are also connected to European brands on Instagram (Vladimirova, 2022). The contextual nuance suggests that regional specifics are necessary and that perhaps global over-generalizations may hence obscure local peculiarities in consumer behavior.

5.2.3 How the social media engagement correlates with the actual persons in decision?

The objective of this research question was to investigate the relationship between social media use and real buying behavior among the consumers of fast fashion in Europe. These results of the study indicate the positive association between social media engagement and consumer buying behavior to be clear and statistically significant which makes it clear that social media engagement is not just a symbolic form of interaction but an important antecedent of purchase decisions. Nevertheless, this relationship is subtle in nature, which advocates literature that highlights engagement as an enabling and not a deterministic component in consumer decision-making.

Brand engagement produced a moderate-strong positive relationship with consumer buying behavior ($r = .674$, $p < .001$), which implies that the more a consumer interacts according to the brand, whether by following, liking/Commenting on posts, and reading promotional materials, the more likely that their consumer buying behavior will tend to increase. This connection was further supported by regression analysis as brand engagement was identified to have the strongest prediction of consumer buying behavior ($b = 0.247$, $p < .001$) of all the independent variables. The results can be well aligned with those of Rodriguez et al. (2023) who say that engaging emotionally and cognitively helps to build relations with a brand and purchase intentions because it promotes trust and psychological attachment.

Although there is such strong statistical correlation, results of the descriptive statistics indicate that engagement does not necessarily lead to purchase. The average brand engagement ($M = 3.49$) is an average measure of agreement that depicts that the consumers, although actively involved, are not single-mindedly translating their engagement into buying behavior. The observation confirms the fact that an engagement-conversion gap can be observed in the context of fast fashion, according to Vladimirova (2022), online interactions can be high without corresponding sales. The current research thus offers an empirical clarity by proving the fact that engagement enhances the possibility of a purchase although it does not negate the role of other mediating variables.

This connection is further put into context in the literature using the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). To Petty and Cacioppo (1986), the engagement behaviors like liking or sharing content, could be peripheral-routes processing, which are motivated by emotion appeal or social approval but not profound cognitive processing. This is the reason why the engagement might not be a sufficient condition to generate purchase without the supportive factors of convenience, trust, and platform usability. In the given study, the influential influence of convenience ($b = 0.206$) and privacy ($b = 0.194$) is that consumers frequently have to switch between engagement and purchase when the environment conditions are right (i.e., the low risk and the low effort).

The Social Influence Theory also elaborates that through engagement, the purchase decision is influenced indirectly. Viral recognition, such as the number of likes, comments, and shares, are perceived as social proof and indicate popularity and acceptance, and can make perceived risk less threatening, stimulating buying behavior (Davlembayeva, 2024). This process especially applies to fast fashion settings when those factors as trend validation and peer alignment are vital aspects of consumption behavior (Gupta, 2018). The findings of the study thus justify the idea that engagement enhances the social and psychological context within which the decision to make a purchase takes place as opposed to being an independent stimulus.

Notably, the results will confound naive beliefs that hold engagement metrics equal to ensured sales. Although engagement is a strong predictor, it is only effective when it is interacting with the platform design, influencer credibility, and consumer trust. This confirms the opinion of Nash (2019) that the main purpose of social media is an inspirational and evaluation platform rather than a sales channel.

Overall the research proves that the activity on social media is positively and significantly related to the real purchasing choice in the European fast fashion market. The engagement is, however, a catalyst and not a direct cause because it raises the probability of buying the product by promoting emotional involvement, social validation, and brand recognition. This subtlety takes contributions of literature further and elucidates the conditionality of the engagement-purchase relationship and the role of combining the engagement strategies with the trust-building and convenience-enhancing systems to facilitate the actual consumer conversion.

5.2.4 What is the level of effectiveness of influencer marketing against the brand advertisement towards driving the customer purchase?

The empirical results of the research suggest that influencer marketing is an extremely powerful stimulus of consumer purchasing behavior and in most instances, the influencer marketing has a greater and a more immediate impact on purchase decision making compared to traditional brand advertising. Nonetheless, the results indicate as well that influencer marketing effectiveness was contextual and best when combined with the overall brand communication initiatives.

Inferential analysis creates a robust argument of the usefulness of influencer marketing. Influencer endorsement showed a medium positive relationship with consumer buying behavior ($r = 0.618$, $p < .001$) and became one of the strongest predictors in the regression model ($b = 0.228$, $p < .001$). Such results coincide with those made by Yaacob (2021) who discovered that influencer endorsement was more credible compared to online reviews and conventional advertisements on social media, especially because of perceived legitimacy and credibility. The statistically significant influence that is brought out in this research supports the idea that influencer marketing is a key component in influencing the purchase of fast fashion.

This is also supported by demographic findings. A significant percentage of the respondents cited social media influencers and celebrities as their main influencer of influence when buying fast fashion compared to brand advertisements and peer referrals. Such a trend can be associated with the argument suggested by Chetoui et al. (2020) that the credibility of the influencer and parasocial relations increase brand attitudes and lessen consumer resistance to persuasive messages. Influencers play the role of social intermediaries that make brand messages more human, so promotional content looks less commercial and more familiar with ordinary people compared to traditional ads.

Theoretically, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is an excellent explanation of the findings. The content of the influencers mainly utilizes the peripheral pathway of persuasion where attractiveness, popularity, and perceived expertise are presented and have an impact on the attitudes without much mental processing (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Central-route processing, which is more attention-demanding and critical evaluation is frequently needed in brand adverts. Consumers might be willing to make fast decisions in situations where there are low prices and high turnover of trends in fast fashion, thus making influencer marketing more effective (Nickerson, 2023).

Although the influencer marketing has a high performance, the results do not imply that brand advertising does not work. Advertisement of brands is applicable in building of brand equity, brand awareness and uniformity over the long run. Kumar (2024) claims that influencer campaigns create a short-term interest and conversion spike, but brand advertising helps build recognition and trust in the long term. The current research is also in favor of this view because it is found that influencer endorsement is most effective when consumers already have some familiarity with the brand which is usually achieved by using conventional advertising platforms.

Significantly, the results also criticize too hopeful presumption of influencer marketing as an all-purpose solution. The average score of influencer endorsement ($M = 3.49$) shows that endorsement is not unconditional but cautious. This validates the criticism of Mohan (2025) that over-exposure to influencers can result in sceptical or tiring or unauthentically perceived, especially when partnerships are too business-like. In such a way, the success of influencer marketing depends on credibility, alignment of influencers with brand values, and the suitability of the platform.

The analysis portrays that influencer marketing tends to be more suitable than brand advertising in prompting purchases of fast fashion in Europe. Influencers are effective in driving emotional appeal to people, social evidence, and impulse purchase, whereas brand advertisements have the supportive role of establishing brand authenticity and enduring trust. These discoveries lead to the continuation of existing literature as the introduction of the necessity of a balanced and strategically combined approach, where influencer marketing serves as a stronger contributor to the short-term conversion, and brand advertising serves as a more stable medium to maintain relationships with the consumers in the long term.

5.2.5 What is the role of celebrity endorsement and peer recommendation in shape in the customer buying behavior?

This research question aimed at investigating the impact of celebrity endorsement and peer recommendation on customer buying behavior in European fast fashion industry. The results of the present research suggest that the two sources of influence have a significant effect on the process of purchasing decisions, but not to the same extent, as some of them are more credible, perceived to have greater authority, and have a stronger impact as emotions. Comprehensively, celebrity endorsement turned out to be more dominant in comparison to peer endorsement, but peer influence is still applicable in particular social and contextual frames.

The demographic data indicate that more respondents were more likely to be influenced by celebrity and public figures on social media (29) than friends and relatives on social media (17). This implies that consumers place more persuasive power on those people in visibility, status and perceived expertise as opposed to close social networks. These observations are aligned to Hussein (2020), who states that celebrity endorsers become sources of aspirational reference points, which influence the consumer attitude based on their beauty, trustworthiness, and symbolic connection to their aspired way of life.

Socially, the Social Influence Theory (SIT) will be a valuable theory that can be used to explain these findings. Celebrity endorsement works mainly on the principles of referent influence, where consumers want to be similar to the people they admire, and also peer recommendations mainly on the principles of normative influence, where people tend to conform to the social groups they are part of (Rachmad, 2025). Referent influence seems to hold more importance in the context of the fast fashion, in which the expression of identity and alignment with trends are core, which confirms Gupta (2018) argument that aspirational consumption is one of the primary factors in fashion-related decision-making.

The powerfulness of the socially mediated influence is also supported in the context of inferential analysis. Influencer endorsement: including the celebrity figures, it was shown to have a significant positive correlation with consumer buying behavior ($r = .618$, $p < .001$; $b = 0.228$, $p < .001$). These results are consistent with those of Chetioui et al. (2020), who discovered that the credibility of celebrities and influencers has a positive impact on brand attitudes and purchase intention, which is provided by trust and assumed expertise. The regression findings also suggest that the influence

of endorsement is effective despite other variables of convenience, privacy, and the type of platform.

Nevertheless, peer recommendation should not be ruled out as insignificant as the findings also point. Despite the fact that peers were less prominently mentioned as a source of influence, their impact is less obvious and depends on the situation. According to Ren (2023), peer recommendation seems to have more power in the case of planned purchasing, where consumers would like to be reassured, validated, and experience feedback before making a commitment to a purchase. This difference can be used to understand the reason peer influence can seem less influential in a fast fashion setting with impulse purchasing and fashion trends being the key factors, as emphasized by D'Souza (2024).

These dynamics are further explained by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). The peripheral route of persuasion is frequently triggered by celebrity endorsement as fame, attractiveness, and popularity cause quick decision-making without significant mental noise (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Peer recommendations, on the other hand, have a higher probability of tapping the central route, especially when the consumers are considering quality, fit or value of the product. Due to the low-end and rapidity of fast fashion, it is possible that consumers prefer peripheral clues, thus increasing the influence of celebrity endorsement more than peer recommendation.

Although celebrities have a greater influence, the literature warns on excessive dependence on celebrity endorsement. Mohan (2025) points out the rising consumer suspicion of blatantly promotional endorsements where genuine and relatable endorsements are becoming more and more moderating of the effectiveness of endorsements. This means that in as much as celebrities will continue to be influential, the influence will be best achieved when the endorsement is perceived to be authentic and consistent with brand image.

Overall the findings have had established that the influence of celebrity endorsement is more eminent than peer recommendation in influencing the fast fashion purchasing behavior of European consumers mainly because of the aspirational value as well as the fact that it triggers impulse-driven buying behavior. The peer recommendations are less predominant but still help to build trust and make judgments based on deliberation. Combined, the mentioned trends point to the complexity of social persuasion within online fashion markets and the need to strike the right balance between aspirational endorsement and real-life social validation.

5.3 Chapter Summary

The chapter critically discussed the findings of the study as they applied to the research questions and the body of literature that was available on the impact of social media and fast fashion consumer behavior in Europe. The conversation was no longer on descriptive reporting but the interpretation of how the empirical evidence concurs, extends or contradicts previous theoretical and empirical research.

The chapter has first dealt with the differentiation between impulse and planned purchasing behavior that is determined by the social media. The results showed that European consumers do not work in a single purchasing mode, but often switch between impulse and planned purchasing decisions based on the situational conditions, exposure to the contents, and platform dynamics. This ambivalent conduct is consistent with the recent literature emphasizing the lack of separation between rational and emotional decision-making in the digital context and confirms the topicality of the combined theoretical views, including the Elaboration Likelihood Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior.

The next discussion has explored how Instagram and Tik Tok have affected the purchasing behavior of fast fashion. Findings showed that the two platforms have a significant effect on consumer decisions albeit in varied ways. Instagram proved to be more effective in the context of the long-term Any engagement and premeditated purchasing, and TikTok served as a precursor to impulse buying using the algorithm-based, short-term content. The result adds to the literature by highlighting the complementary effect over the competitive one among the platforms, especially in the European context.

The chapter examined how social media interactions and activities relate to actual purchase decisions. The results indicated engagement to be positively associated with purchasing behavior though not all will be converted to purchasers only because of engagement. Rather, the engagement is a facilitating factor that increases emotional involvement, social confirmation, and brand recognition, which should be backed by trust, convenience, and the ease of use of the platform to lead to purchase.

The influencer marketing effectiveness compared to brand advertising was addressed as well. Influencer marketing was also observed to have a stronger direct purchase driving power,

especially emotional appeal and social proof, whereas brand advertising served as an add-on factor to achieve long-term brand awareness and credibility. Lastly, the role of the celebrity endorsement and peer recommendation were discussed, and it was concluded, that in fast fashion situations celebrity endorsement is more influential, as it is more aspirational, whereas in respect to trust and planned behaviour peer recommendation is more useful.

On balance, this chapter shows that social media manipulation of fast fashion consumption is poly faceted, situational, and determined by the interplay of platforms, types of content, and social actors. These insights will give grounds to the final chapter that will summarize implications, limitations and new research recommendations.

CHAPTER VI: SUMAMRY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

The aim of the research was to investigate the effects of social media-specific variables in digital marketing on consumer purchasing behaviour in the fast fashion European market. The study was inspired by the fast development of social media sites like Instagram and Tik Tok and how they are taking over more and more influence in determining both planned and unplanned buying behaviors. Based on the available theories such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), the Social Influence Theory (SIT) and the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), the study created a conceptual framework that, based on the two variables brand engagement and convenience, privacy, platform type and influencer endorsement, correlates with consumer buying behavior.

The literature review revealed that affordability, trend responsiveness, and symbolic value are the motivating factors behind consuming fast fashion and that social media deepens peer pressure, aspirational identity construction, and making impulsive choices. The previous research findings continually identified the engagement, credibility of the influencers, the design of the platform, and factors of trust as influential determinants of online purchases, yet found gaps in evaluating these variables in an integrated and empirical way within a European fast fashion framework.

A positivist research, and quantitative research design was followed. A structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data by way of a questionnaire on 384 participants. Cronbach alpha, Kaiser- Meyer -Olkin (KMO) measure, and Bartlett test of sphericity were used to indicate reliability and validity. Data analysis was done through descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and multiple regression through SPSS.

The results indicated that the five independent variables are all positively related to consumer buying behavior statistically significant. The strongest indicators were brand engagement and influencer endorsement, then next were platform type, convenience, and privacy. The regression model accounted 69.7 percent of consumer buying behavior and therefore it has great explanatory power. These findings were discussed in connection to the theory, and it was confirmed that social media is a digital ecosystem with some technological capabilities, social influence, and mechanisms of trust that jointly define the consumption of fast fashion.

The statistical findings also provide better support to the overall conclusions of the study. The test of reliability indicated high internal consistency of all constructs where Cronbach alpha was found to be between 0.810 and 0.859 which is higher than the acceptable level of 0.70. Factorability was verified by the excellent sampling adequacy ($KMO = 0.879$) and the significance of the Bartlett Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 1022, p < .001$). The results of Descriptive statistics indicated moderate consistency in variables with a mean of 3.42-3.53 and a low S.D (0.67-0.69) indicating consistency in response patterns. The correlation analysis indicated that there were significant positive correlations between consumer buying behavior and all the predictors with their coefficients of $r = 0.578$ (privacy) to $r = 0.674$ (brand engagement). The results of multiple regression showed that the model fits well ($R = 0.835, R^2 = 0.697$), which proves that the digital marketing variables together have a strong predictive ability.

6.2 Implications

The implications are discussed under stress management and applications to practitioners.

6.2.1 Implications for stress management

- **Lessening the Bias of Decision Fatigue with Less Complex Digital Experiences.**

The results indicate that convenience significantly impacts consumer purchasing behavior in a positive manner ($b = 0.206, p < .001$). Reduced cognitive load and decision fatigue is achieved through simplified navigation of the platform, product information, and simplified checkout processes. This is in terms of stress management as effective interventions in work place situations by decreasing the complexity of tasks reduce the strain on the mind. An example of such a brand is Uniqlo, which has managed to excel by giving consumers clean interfaces and limited products selections to make them feel that they are in control instead of feeling overwhelmed with the plethora of choices (Roll, 2025). This feeling of control has been known to minimize stress and enhance satisfaction in the decision making process.

- **Emotional Control based on Positive Brand Interaction.**

Brand engagement proved to be the most important predictor of consumer buying behavior ($b = 0.247, p < .001$). Involving material that causes one to feel enjoyment, inspired, or belonging can be a coping mechanism at the emotional level. Just as the stress management program, which facilitates positive socializing, interactive brand content (polls, stories, behind-the-scene video)

will give the consumers a short emotional relief out of the everyday stressors. The Instagram storytelling approach by Zara where it centers on aspirational, yet still relatable images has proved to be effective in producing an emotional appeal but not imposing a sense of urgency to buy now (Tőkés, 2022).

- **Reducing The Anxiety with Transparency and Privacy Insurance.**

The privacy was statistically significant predictor of the buying behavior ($b = 0.194$, $p < .001$). Data usage transparency reduces anxiety and perceived risk, which is in line with the principles of stress management, which stress the importance of predictability and trust. Social networks and websites like H&M where the policy of cookies and data protection is explicitly presented and the discomfort is eliminated in the minds of consumers (H&M, 2025). The consumers also have less psychological stress when they are secure in their online interaction which results in less pressured buying choices which are more confident.

- **Promoting Healthy Coping Behaviours through Platform Design.**

The strong influence on consumer behavior was observed with platform type ($b = 0.227$, $p < .001$), and the impact that interface design has on stress levels. The visually stimulating nature of Instagram and Tik Tok platforms stimulate impulse purchasing, which in some cases may result in post purchase stress or remorse. Mindful consumption is encouraged by brands that offer features like wish lists, reminders, delayed checkout services, etc. Indicatively, ASOS lets individuals save products and view them in the future, which contributes to deliberative decision-making and minimizes the stress of impulsive purchases (Nguyen, 2025).

- **Lessening the Social Pressure by using Bonafide Influencer Endorsement.**

The implication of influencer endorsement was high ($b = 0.228$, $p < .001$), but its stress-related meaning is authenticity. Unrealistic promotion can lead to more social comparison pressure, and more approachable influencers stimulate psychological comfort. Effective campaigns, like the partnerships of Primark and micro-influencers, focus on real-life styling and style affordability, and lowering unrealistic expectations (Mahmu, 2024). This is in line with the stress management strategies that discourage negative comparisons and encourage realistic self-judging creating a basis where consumers have a healthier well-being.

6.2.2 Applications to Practitioners

- **Bringing Long-Term Value through Strategic Brand Engagement (Strategic Level).**

Sustained brand engagement should be the priority of the practitioners instead of short-term promotional strategies. The research reveals brand engagement as the most influential predictor of consumer buying behaviour ($b = 0.247$, $p < .001$) and hence the fact that the emotional and cognitive affiliations are the determinants of repeat purchase. On the strategic level, brands like Zara have proven to rely on the regular visual narration and interactive marketing to keep the engagement going without over-discounting (Liu, 2024). This can be implemented by practitioners by creating long-term content calendars, community-building programs and interactive content (polls, reels, question and answer) that build brand attachment and customer lifetime value, and not just conversion metrics.

- **Optimisation of Platform-Specific Strategies (Tactical Level).**

The type of platform holds a significant impact on the purchase ($b = 0.227$, $p < .001$), which indicates that various platforms need dedicated content strategies. Instagram and Tik Tok are different platforms that practitioners ought to optimise at a different level and not use the same message. Here is an example of Tik Tok approach used by Shein, with the help of short-form and trend-based videos, the company encourages immediate buying behaviour, whereas Instagram is associated with high-end brand aesthetics and premeditated purchasing (Sohid, 2024). On the tactic level, marketers are advised to use different content formats, posting rate and interaction systems to platform algorithms to achieve the highest reach and most efficient result possible.

- **Increasing Convenience to boost Conversion (Operational Level)**

Operational efficiency is an important area of application because convenience is a significant attribute of consumer behaviour ($b = 0.206$, $p < .001$). The practitioners could improve friction by streamlining the checkout procedures, providing various payment methods, and providing mobile interfaces. This is because ASOS has been able to boost conversion rates through the introduction of one-click checkout and easy returns (Huang, 2022). On operational level, the increase in convenience can be directly converted to directly measurable results like an increase in the rate of conversion, a decrease in the rate of cart abandonment, and customer satisfaction.

- **Establishing Trust by Open Privacy Practice (Governance Level).**

Buyers were also found to be highly concerned with privacy ($b = 0.194$, $p < .001$). Digital marketing requires practitioners to inculcate clear data governance into digital marketing. The consent management and clear communication of data use is a good example of how transparency may help build trust in H&M as it is GDPR-compliant (H&M, 2019). On a governance level, clear privacy notices, opt-in, and ethical data use policies should be put in place by the practitioners not only to make sure that the regulatory policies are adhered to, but also increase the brand credibility and consumer trust.

- **Taking advantage of Authentic Influencer Partnerships (Relational Level).**

Influencer endorsement had a significant positive impact on consumer purchase behaviour ($b = 0.228$, $p < .001$). Nevertheless, success is pegged on authenticity and not solely on the popularity of the influencer. The examples of the micro-influencer partnerships of Primark demonstrate that the relatable content can be more convincing and more interesting than the celebrity promotion (Stackinfluence, 2025). On a relational level, to build trust, engagement, and purchase intentions, practitioners ought to pay attention to long-term influencer relationships, matching the audience, and open sponsorship disclosures.

6.3 Recommendation for Future Research

- **Apply various data gathering tools.**

The future studies need to use a mixture of the research instruments instead of using the structured questionnaires alone. Although surveys are useful in perceptions at scale, some combination of in-depth interviews, focus groups, digital ethnography and platform analytics would enable more complex understanding of the underlying motivations as well as behaviours. This is because interviews might reveal emotional motivation of impulse buying whereas platform analytics (clicks, watch times, conversions) may confirm self-reported purchasing behaviour. The application of more than one tool would minimize common method bias.

- **Insert Psychological and Emotional Variables.**

Instead of brand engagement, convenience, and privacy as the sole factors, the future research must include the psychological variables like emotional regulation, self-control, compulsive

buying tendency, fear of missing out (FOMO), and digital fatigue. Such constructs are especially applicable to the fast-fashion situation when algorithmic content and promotion within time limits can increase stress and impulsivity. The incorporation of these variables would broaden the behavioural theory and provide the reasons why not all consumers are resistant to the influence of social media.

- **Test Sustainability and Ethical Awareness Variables.**

Sustainability consciousness, ethical consumption attitudes, and environmental concern and perceived greenwashing as independent variables or moderators should be combined in future studies. With growing criticism of fast fashion as damaging to the environment, the interactions between the ethical awareness, and social media marketing may shed light on the tensions between the intent to act in ways that promote in society and the actual buying behaviour. These variables would also make research cope with the current sustainability debates.

- **Research Platform-Specific and Technological Variables.**

Further research should incorporate algorithm transparency, personalization level, content type (short-form video and a static post), and AI-based recommendations as four distinct variables in future research rather than attempting to examine the type of platform. These aspects could strongly affect autonomy, trust and impulsive consumption. Experimental designs would be used to investigate the effect that varying algorithmic exposures have on purchasing.

- **Social and Economic Moderators to be included.**

The moderating variables that should be tested in future studies are the income level, financial stress, life stage and employment status. These factors can be a better explanation of variation in fast fashion consumption patterns than the demographics themselves. The economic variables and behavioural measures would be better combination to explain and improve policy relevance.

6.3.1 Recommendation for Action

- **Build Consumer Trust by having good privacy.**

Privacy issues were considered as one of the elements of consumer behavior. The key brands should be concerned with data security and open communication. Alibaba (China) had launched high-level encryption and trust seals in its e-commerce systems, which enhanced the confidence

of consumers and enhanced mobile purchases (Rahman, 2025). Better privacy guarantee will directly deal with consumer reluctance and create repeat purchase behavior.

- **Maximize Features on the Platform to be more convenient.**

Purchase behaviour was dependent on convenience and the type of platform, but moderate levels of engagement suggest that there is room to improve. Rakuten (Japan) had streamlined its mobile app interface that made its site easy to navigate and one-button to checkout resulting in more frequent purchases (Rakuten, 2025). Minimalistic features eliminate friction and appeal to the planned and impulse buying behavior.

- **Expand the Social Media outside of Instagram and Tik Tok.**

Consumers were too platform-specific and restricted. Shein (China) has also stretched to YouTube Shorts and Snapchat campaigns, which attract younger audiences and give a higher level of engagement compared to Instagram (Li, 2022). Multi-platform methods reduced the platform dependency and it becomes more influential.

- **Use Micro-Influencers to reach out to the target audience.**

The endorsement of the influencer affects buying, but it may differ depending on the consumer groups. Nike (USA) contracted niche fitness influencers on Instagram and Tik Tok to create localized campaigns and, as such, the conversion rates of the localized campaigns were high compared to generic celebrity endorsements (Chen, 2024). Micro-influencers are more credible and remedy inconsistent patterns of engagement.

- **Activate Interactive Content to moderate Planned and Impulse Purchases.**

There was mixed planned and impulse buying by the consumers. The interactive mobile app challenges and reward systems enabled Starbucks (USA) to make spontaneous purchases and remain structured at the same time (Smartico, 2024). Both behaviors of buying can be stimulated using gamified and interactive approaches, which is why this choice fits the two tendencies identified in the respondents.

6.4 Limitations of the research

- **Geographic Scope was limited.**

The research was conducted exclusively to the consumers in Europe which limits the generalization of the results to other areas. The social media usage patterns, brand preference, and fast fashion consumption behavior in the markets like Asia, North America, or Africa might have a significant difference. An example is that the popularity of platforms and the influence of influencers in Europe might not be applicable globally, which restricts the external validity.

- **Dependence on self-reported Data.**

The survey questionnaire used in the collection of data is prone to self reporting bias. It is possible that the respondents are going to exaggerate or downplay their involvement, privacy issues, or buying habits with the aim of doing it on purpose or not. This brings in the possibility of social desirability bias, especially to aspects such as privacy which respondents can perceive as socially significant.

- **Restricted Variables Under consideration.**

The study involved a limited number of independent variables (brand engagement, convenience, privacy, type of platform, and influencer endorsement) as well as a dependent variable (consumer buying behavior) only. Other factors that might have contributed to the results like economic status, peer pressure, culture, and psychological characteristics were not taken into consideration. This could have led to the lack of completeness of the representation of the drivers of consumer behavior in the fast fashion.

- **Cross-Sectional Design**

This research design was a cross sectional survey, which considered consumer behavior at one point. The involvement of consumers, the use of platforms, and the influence of the influencers may change quickly, based on trends, advertising efforts and world events. Consequently, longitudinal information on the shifting trends of the social media impact could not be given.

- **Platform Bias.**

Though, 384 responses were evaluated, most of the respondents were clustered in urban and suburban areas and biased towards particular age groups (Gen X and Gen Y). Also, the respondents gave a preference to Instagram and Tik Tok platforms which might have biased the results in favor of the features and influence mechanisms of such platforms not taking into consideration behaviors in new or niche platforms.

6.5 Conclusion

This research examined how consumer buying behavior in the European fast fashion sector is affected by digital marketing variables, which have been introduced using social media. Quantitative, positivist method was applied in the collection of data involving 384 respondents and analysis of the data using reliability testing, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression. All the independent variables such as brand engagement, convenience, privacy, platform type and influencer endorsement were found to have significant positive associations with consumer buying behavior, which validates the conceptual framework. The most important predictors were brand engagement and influencer endorsement, with platform type, convenience, and privacy coming right after and the regression model describing 69.7% of the variance in purchasing behavior.

The results show that social media marketing is a system of interconnectedness. Customers make a combination of planned and unplanned purchases with the support of more visual-oriented channels, like Instagram and Tik Tok. The demographic profile being mainly Gen Y and Gen X participants who are either urban or suburban indicates that the purchasing behavior is highly influenced by digital literacy and familiarity with the platforms. The importance of privacy issues was also not as high, which implies that the trust in the safety of the data is essential but not the most crucial in the context of fast fashion shopping.

In the study, it is shown that successful digital marketing strategies should be conducted in multi dimension form, integrating a brand engagement, collaboration with influencers and the optimization of the platform to achieve the maximum effect on consumers. Meanwhile, the research demonstrates that attention must be paid to the differences in demographics, characteristics of the platform, and privacy guarantees to increase consumer trust and satisfaction.

Although the study gives a good explanation, geographic scope, use of self-reported survey data, limited variables, cross-sectional design, and platform biases are the weaknesses, which imply that

future studies should extend to other geographical locations, use longitudinal designs, and other variables including economic status, peer influence, and cultural factors.

To sum up, this study reveals the fact that social media is a potent force behind the consumption of fast fashion, and brand involvement, influencer promotion, and the type of the media are the determinants. The results can offer useful guidance to marketers, practitioners, and policymakers who are interested in streamlining social media approaches, gaining consumer trust, and improving the purchase behavior of consumers in the digital fast-fashion market.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

A STUDY TO EXPLORE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS FAST FASHION CLOTHING INFLUENCED BY SOCIAL MEDIA IN EUROPE.

Ref no:.....

As the researcher I would like to assure you that your response and personal information will be kept strictly confidential. The data collected will be used solely for the research purpose in completing the degree and your participation is entirely voluntary. The survey questionnaire has been designed as a tool to gather information which are relevant to the research that is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the academic qualification. Please select only one answer for each question and mark with a “x”

Part 1

1 What is your gender?

Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say ☐

2 What is your age group?

Gen Z (13-28) ☐ Gen Y (29-44) ☐ Gen X (45-60) ☐ Baby boomers (61-79) ☐

3 What is your marital status?

Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced/separated ☐ Widowed ☐

4 Do you mainly live in?

Urban area ☐ Suburban area ☐ Rural area ☐ Small city/large town ☐ Small town ☐

5 What are the main European fast fashion brands you purchase

ZARA ☐ H&M ☐ PIMARK ☐ SHEIN ☐

6 How often do you purchase fast fashion

Every two weeks Once a month Every two months Every three months

7 What is the most significant factor influencing your purchase decision for fast fashion clothing

Price Quality/ Fit Desing/trend Durability Brand reputation

8 On average how much do you spend annually on fast fashion clothing

Less than € 200 € 201 to 250 €251 to 499 €500 to 749 More than €750

9. Which best describes your usual behavior when you purchase fast fashion clothing that is influenced by social media

- ☐ I conduct a comprehensive search and compare multiple options and prices
- ☐ I usually purchase more impulsively when I see content on social media
- ☐ I consider a blend of both planed and impulse purchasing on the equal basis
- ☐ I am not Influenced by social media when making my purchase decision

10. Whom would you say is the most influential source that affects your decision making when purchasing fast fashion

- ☐ Friends and family on social media
- ☐ Popular celebrities and public figures on social media
- ☐ Social media influencers (non-celebrities)
- ☐ Paid brand advertisements
- ☐ None of the above

11. Which would you say is the social Media platform that most significantly influences your decisions to purchase fast fashion

- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ Both equally

☐ Neither platform influences my purchases

Part 2

(1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3 =moderate, 4= agree, 5=strongly agree)

		1	2	3	4	5
12	Brand Engagement					
12.1	Do you follow Brand's social media pages for updates on collection and offers?					
12.2	Does the brand's social media engagement make you feel more connected to the brand?					
12.3	Are you likely to interact with the brand's social media posts?					
12.4	Have brands social media posts influenced your decision to purchase their clothes?					
12.5	Does the quality of the brand social media content increase your interest in the products?					
13.0	Convenience					
13.1	Do you find it convenient to contact brands customer service used in social media?					
13.2	Do social media platforms make it easier for you to browse through brands fashion products?					
13.3	Does the brand's social media presence help you to access their product information and reviews quickly?					
13.4	Do you find it convenient to shuffle clothes directly used in the social media?					
13.5	Do social media promotions from the brand save your time when searching for deals and discounts?					
14.0	Privacy					
14.1	Have privacy concerns ever stop you from interacting with the brand on social media?					
14.2	Are you comfortable in sharing your personal information with the brand through social media?					

14.3	Do you trust the brand to protect your data when engaging with their social media platforms?					
14.4	Do you feel confident that the brand's social media platforms consist of adequate security measures for your information?					
14.5	Are you concerned about the privacy of your data when purchasing using the brand social media links?					
15.0	Platform Type					
15.1	Do you primarily engage with the brand using Instagram rather than other social media platforms?					
15.2	Does the type of platform brand use influence how often you interact with their content?					
15.3	Do platform specific promotions influence the purchase decision such as exclusive Instagram deals?					
15.4	Does the brand presence on different social media platforms affect how you shop for their products?					
15.5	Do you find the brand's fashion content more appealing towards certain platforms than others?					
16.0	Influencer Endorsement					
16.1	Do brands collaborations with influencers positively affect your perception about the brand?					
16.2	Are you more likely to purchase brand clothing when it is endorsed by different influencers that you follow?					
16.3	Do you trust fashion recommendations from the influencers collaborating with specific brands?					
16.4	Do social media influences affect your decision in exploring brand fashion products?					
16.5	Do influencer endorsement increase your interest in brands clothing collections?					
17.0	Consumer buying behavior					
17.1	Do social media influencers have a greater impact on your impulse fashion purchases than on your planned purchase?					

17.2	Do you believe that Tik Tok has a stronger influence than Instagram on my fast fashion purchase decisions?					
17.3	Do you think the more you engage with fashion content on social media the more likely you are to buy fashion items?					
17.4	Do you think the more persuaded to purchase fast fashion items by influencer posts than by rand advertisements?					
17.5	Do you think peer recommendations influencer your fast fashion purchases more than celebrity endorsements?					

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



INFORMED CONSENT FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

INFLUENCE: THE APPLICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON FAST FASHION.

I, ... agree to be questioned for the research which will be conducted by Zamin Taghizada doctorate students at the Swiss School of Business and Management, Geneva, Switzerland.

I certify that I have been told of the confidentiality of information collected for this research and the anonymity of my participation; that I have been given satisfactory answers to my inquiries concerning research procedures and other matters; and that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the research or activity at any time without prejudice.

I agree to participate in one or more **electronically recorded questionnaire** for this research. I understand that such interviews and related materials will be kept completely anonymous and that the results of this study may be published in any form that may serve its best.

I agree that any information obtained from this research may be used in any way thought best for this study.

.....

.....

Signature of Interviewee

Date

APPENDIX C: DATA SHEET

	B r a n d e n g a g e m e n t					Convenience					Privacy					Platform type					Influencer endorsement					Consumer buying behavior				
P a r t i c i p a n t s		12 .1	1 2 . 2 3	1 2 . 3 4	1 2 . 4 5	1 3 . 1 2	1 3 . 3 2	1 3 . 3 3	1 3 . 3 4	1 3 . 3 5	1 4 . 1 2	1 4 . 2 3	1 4 . 3 4	1 4 . 4 5	1 5 . 1 2	1 5 . 2 3	1 5 . 3 4	1 5 . 4 5	1 6 . 1 2	1 6 . 2 3	1 6 . 3 4	1 6 . 4 5	1 6 . 5 1	1 7 . 1 2	1 7 . 2 3	1 7 . 3 4	1 7 . 4 5			
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5	5. 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	3 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	3 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	5 0 0	5 0 0	4 0 0	5 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	4 0 0	5 0 0	3 0 0	
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