

**EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BRAND AWARENESS IN  
THE FASHION INDUSTRY IN LEEDS**

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## **Abstract**

This research examines the influence of social media on brand awareness within Leeds' fashion industry, focusing on consumer engagement and marketing strategies. The study investigates how platforms like Instagram and TikTok, with their visual and interactive appeal, support brand visibility and drive consumer behaviour.

Using a mixed-method approach, data were collected through qualitative interviews with marketing professionals, focus groups with consumers, and quantitative surveys. Thematic analysis and statistical techniques were applied to uncover insights into platform usage, consumer preferences, and marketing outcomes.

Findings reveal that Instagram dominates as a visual branding tool, while TikTok is gaining traction among younger demographics. Key strategies, including high-quality visuals, influencer collaborations, and user-generated content, significantly impact brand perception. However, challenges such as market saturation and brand image dilution remain critical concerns.

The research highlights the need for localized and adaptive social media strategies for fashion brands in Leeds. Recommendations include leveraging analytics to tailor content, focusing on authenticity through user-generated content, and adopting innovative engagement tactics to build consumer trust and loyalty. These insights provide actionable guidelines for local and international businesses seeking to optimize their digital marketing strategies in competitive markets.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Background**

In a recent Statista projection, social media use in the UK is expected to be active, with 50 million users by 2025, many of whom will actively consume fashion-related information. Moreover, the findings from Leeds City Council research in 2023 indicate that 45% of participants reported making purchases based on recommendations from social media sites, and 70% of respondents stated that they follow fashion labels on social media (Iglesias, Markovic, and Rialp, 2019). Social media has revolutionized marketing practices, particularly in industries where visual appeal and consumer engagement are critical, such as fashion. The rise of platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter has democratized brand-building, enabling large and small fashion brands to connect directly with consumers at a fraction of the cost of traditional advertising. Leeds, a major UK city with a thriving fashion retail sector, offers a unique context for studying these trends, given its mix of established and independent fashion brands leveraging social media to enhance brand awareness and consumer engagement. This underlies the significant role of social media in changing customer behavior and perception in the context of fashion brands. The research is expected to dig deep into these trends and analyze the impact of social media on brand awareness and customer interaction in Leeds' fashion industry.

### **Introduction**

As the influence of digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter continue to grow, brands can reach consumers in ways never possible. Bilgin (2018) argues that social media's rise has also democratized brand building in small and large fashion companies that can reach and influence more people without investing as much as traditional media channels cost. This means that the importance of the space that social media takes in brand awareness has become an area of research worth considering, especially in cities such as Leeds, due to their reputation for having a robust fashion retail sector.

A major city in the United Kingdom, Leeds has a rich fashion heritage with plenty of independent and large-scale fashion brands, both emerging and established. In this scenario, social media helps form perceptions of consumers, increase brand exposure, and drive sales. By integrating social media marketing into the fashion industry's strategies, the landscape of brand perception and how brands interact with their audiences has changed. This research investigates the effect of social media on fashion brand awareness in the fashion industry in



Leeds and how social media shapes consumer behavior and contributes to the success of local fashion brands.

Fashion brands have mainly utilized the visual nature of platforms such as Instagram. As Instagram's focus on high-quality images and video enables a brand to present its product in aesthetically appealing ways, it appeals to fashion-conscious consumers (Bilgin, 2018). As a result of this visual-centric approach, the fashion influencer has become a type of marketing that encourages people to interact with brands, increasing influencer marketing where a fashion influencer with a large audience promotes a product, creating trust and authenticity in the consumer to follow through and buy. Basit and Sethumadhavan's (2021) research indicates the strong influence social media influencers can have on a brand image as they contribute to forming consumer attitudes towards fashion brands based on visually appealing content and product recommendations.

Social media marketing has quickly become a practice adopted by fashion brands in Leeds to cut the surface of traditional advertising. These platforms enable brands to create personalized, targeted campaigns that attract particular demographics. Appel et al. (2019) state that social media allows brands to raise brand visibility and engage with their audience more deeply by sharing behind-the-scenes content, offering personalized recommendations, and responding to real-time customer questions. Such engagement builds a community perspective around the brand and is vital in creating a loyal customer in the long run.

Social media marketing has revolutionized how brands and consumers interact in the fashion industry. Today's consumers are more likely to interact with a brand on social media before buying, using these mediums to research products, read reviews, and even buy straight from the source. Khan et al. (2019) find that social media dramatically impacts consumer behavior, especially in the fashion industry, due to the visibility and rapidity of trends. Social media is increasingly where consumers find new brands and stay informed about the latest fashion trends, especially for younger generations.

Moreover, fashion brands' interaction with consumers on social media provides honest feedback on brand strategies that can be changed quickly based on consumer preferences and trends. Social media analysis presents value to consumer behavior, which marketers can utilize to make marketing strategies more relevant and enhance brand engagement, as discussed in Dewi et al. (2022). Brands must also pay close attention to their social media presence to avoid backlash from controversial posts or miscommunication (Hsiao et al., 2020).

But, whilst there are many challenges, there are great opportunities for fashion brands in Leeds. The power of social media to engage in personalized, interesting content can be used by local fashion brands to build a solid following, boost brand loyalty, and raise sales. With social media constantly developing, brands must adapt to changes as fast as possible using the new features and tools available to stay ahead of the competition and keep their audience interested.

## **Research Aim and Objectives**

### **Aim of the Research**

The research involves an understanding of the ways through which the social media platform influences consumer involvement and brand awareness within Leeds' fashion industry.

### **Objectives of the Research and**

1. To identify which social media channels are more effective for Leeds-based fashion firms.
2. To explore how these companies strategize in social media to enhance their brand.
3. To assess the level of engagement by customers of the fashion businesses on social media.
4. To critically analyze the overall influence of social media on customer buying behavior within the fashion sector.

## **Research Questions**

1. Which social networking sites are more used by Leeds-based fashion brands?
2. Which social media strategies do Leeds fashion-based companies employ to raise their profile?
3. What are the Leeds customer's social media interactions with the fashion brands?
4. How does social media affect customer buying behavior in the Leeds fashion industry?

## **Rationale**

The Leeds fashion market is dynamic, and most local companies are investing a lot of resources into creating an apparent online presence (Tran, 2021). However, a dearth of in-depth research exclusively examines how social media channels impact brand recognition in

this region. Studying the issue at hand is essential as it would expose to what extent fashion brands successfully utilize the various social media strategies. More importantly, understanding user behavior on these platforms could enable businesses to design their marketing communication initiatives to draw much more attention based on the needs and desires of their users (Su and Chang, 2018). The study is of significance as it could serve the purpose of a guideline for regional fashion firms in terms of how they could make the most of social media to help boost their interaction with customers and create awareness of the brand, which would ultimately result in more sales and growth.

### **Practical Importance to International Businesses**

The insights from this research hold immense value for international businesses aiming to enter or expand in the UK market, particularly in cities like Leeds. Social media's global nature enables brands to localize their marketing strategies while leveraging universal trends. For international fashion labels, understanding consumer preferences in Leeds through social media analytics can guide product offerings, pricing strategies, and promotional campaigns. Moreover, social media offers cost-effective ways to engage local audiences and compete with established domestic brands. By adopting the findings of this research, international businesses can align their strategies with the expectations of Leeds' fashion-conscious consumers, ensuring tremendous success in a highly competitive market.

### **Research Deliverables**

This study aims to provide the following key deliverables:

- **Comprehensive Platform Analysis:** Analysis of all the possible social media platforms for fashion brands in Leeds, keeping in view consumer preferences and engagement trends.
- **Strategic Framework for Social Media Marketing:** Strategic Framework for Social Media Marketing: A structured approach for the implementation of fashion brands to promote their brands through focused digital marketing strategy.
- **Consumer Engagement Insights:** An in-depth analysis of consumer interactions with fashion brands on social media and how these interactions influence purchasing behavior.

- The Challenges and Opportunities Report: An identification of the main challenges fashion brands encounter while engaging in social media and the ways in which the barriers can be overcome.
- Practical Recommendations to Fashion Brands: Suggestions to fashion brands that can help them maximize brand visibility, consumer trust and long-term engagement by optimizing the social media marketing strategies.

## **Research Structure**

- Chapter 1: Introduction, including background, rationale, and research objectives.
- Chapter 2: Literature review, theoretical framework, and hypotheses development.
- Chapter 3: Research methodology, detailing the data collection and analysis approach.
- Chapter 4: Findings, analysis, and discussion of results.
- Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations for Leeds-based fashion brands.

## **Summary of Chapter 1**

The introduction highlights the transformative role of social media in the fashion industry, focusing on its impact on brand awareness in Leeds. It emphasizes how social media platforms enable brands to engage directly with consumers through personalized campaigns, influencer collaborations, and user-generated content. The discussion underscores the importance of brand awareness as a cornerstone of long-term success in a competitive market, particularly in fashion, where trends and consumer preferences change rapidly. The introduction also outlines the challenges posed by social media saturation and brand image dilution while recognizing the significant opportunities for local fashion brands in Leeds to use these platforms effectively to build loyal customer bases and achieve sustainable growth. The research aims to examine these dynamics, offering insights that can guide local businesses in optimizing their digital marketing strategies.

## Chapter 2: Literature review

### Introduction

Marketing literature has been heavily discussing the role of the social media in building brand awareness and reading consumer engagement. Nevertheless, its effect in particular regional settings, for example the fashion industry in Leeds, is not well documented. This chapter critically reviews prior work on the use of social media for building brand, consumer behavior and marketing strategy. It will be structured from first by introducing key theoretical frameworks, and then the industry overview followed by review of relevant empirical studies. A research model is also presented as a structured approach for the study.

### Overview of the Fashion Industry in Leeds

Leeds is a key retail hub for the UK fashion industry which is a major economic contributor. An analysis of social media marketing trends in the city is suitable because it is a mix of independent fashion boutique stores and global brand stores. Research published by Leeds City Council (2023) shows that 70% of local consumers follow fashion brands on social media and it is its role in the way they make their purchases.

To further illustrate market trends, **Table 2.1** provides an overview of social media penetration and engagement within the fashion industry in Leeds.

Metric	Value
Total Audience	47188
Total Engagement	502421
Total Audience Gained	21356
Total Impressions	17533170

**Table 2.1:** Social Media Engagement Metrics for Fashion Brands in Leeds

### Theoretical Framework

Two primary theoretical models used for explaining consumer engagement and brand awareness in digital marketing are used as the basis for this study.

- **Attention, Interest, Desire, Action (AIDA) Model:** This model shows how social media marketing draws in customers, piques their curiosity, cultivates their desire, and eventually influences their purchase decisions.
- **Brand Equity Theory:** This theory emphasizes how crucial perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand recognition are to building customer trust and increasing sales.

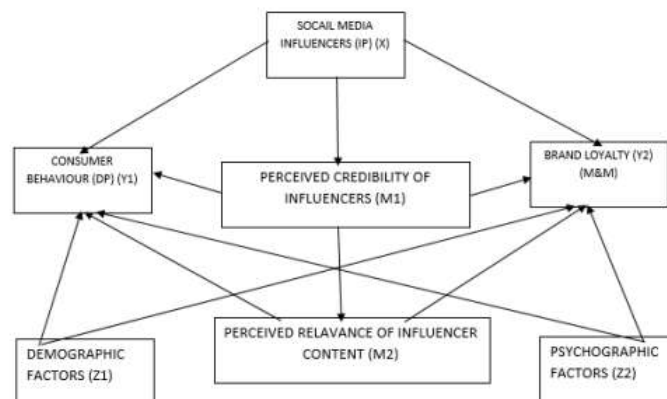
This research explores how such social media marketing strategies impact consumer behavior and brand perception in Leeds fashion industry with these frameworks.

## Research Model

A structured research model is developed to guide the study, integrating key variables such as:

- **Social Media Engagement:** How consumers interact with brands on platforms like Instagram and TikTok.
- **Brand Awareness:** The extent to which consumers recognize and recall fashion brands in Leeds.
- **Consumer Purchasing Behavior:** The influence of social media marketing on buying decisions.
- **Influencer Marketing:** The role of influencers in shaping consumer perceptions.

A graphical representation of the research model is presented in **Figure 2.1** below:



**Figure 2.1:** Research Model Depicting Social Media's Impact on Brand Awareness and Consumer Behavior

## **The Role of Social Media in the Fashion Industry**

Through social media marketing brands now reach consumers by delivering interactive visual content (Rrustemi & Baca, 2021). Fashion brands have chosen Instagram and TikTok as their main platforms because each platform delivers different content styles that boost consumer interaction. (Bilgin, 2018)

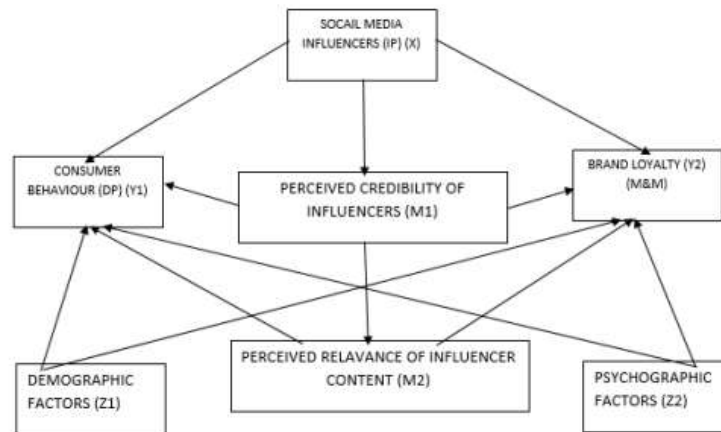
Appel et al. (2020) uncovered findings that show companies achieving better trust from customers when they embrace high-quality visual content and influencer partnerships. The credibility of brands relies heavily on user-generated content (UGC) according to Liu et al. (2020).

They also played a key role in this transformation due to the rise of social media influencers. These people, who have a great following, act as trusted intermediaries between brands and consumers. Basit & Sethumadhavan (2021) conducted research that suggests that influencer marketing has a big part to play in cultivating consumer points of view about fashion brands through the trust and honesty the influencer has worked so hard to build with their clients. When influencers promote products and fashion items, they have a profound effect on purchasing, so influencers are viewed as the top Internet business influencers.

### **Role of Influencers and User-Generated Content**

The marketing of influencers on the platform continue to shape digital fashion marketing as its fundamental element. The promotion of brands by fashion influencers occurs primarily through Instagram and TikTok platforms by means of genuine and captivating content dissemination. According to Hsiao et al. (2019) consumers believe in influencer recommendations above other standard promotional methods. Brand authenticity together with consumer trust grows through the implementation of user-generated content (UGC). The practice of customer-generated hashtag usage and product review submission allows brands to gain additional customer engagement.

This Figure presents evidence about the levels of consumer engagement when content stems from influencer marketing.



**Figure 2.2: Impact of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Engagement**

### **Social Media Strategies for SMEs**

Small fashion businesses in Leeds together with medium-sized fashion companies employ inexpensive digital marketing approaches to fight against bigger fashion brands. According to Rienda et al. (2020) particular marketing methods combined with rapid customer contact and marketing targeted at local communities enable brands to differentiate themselves.

Additionally, the research shows that social media gives SMEs an advantage as it helps them to watch trends and adjust a strategy quickly. They can understand their audience better and create targeted marketing campaigns using Instagram insights and Facebook analytics tools. Rienda and Ruiz-Fernández (2020) analyzed the UK and Ireland's fashion sector SMEs in-depth. Results show how trademarks and social media presence affect business performance and international market penetration. In many instances, SMEs that use these tools successfully find themselves better engaged with and selling to consumers. Social media effectiveness has been shown in another compelling example: Primark, whose use of social media has allowed the management of its brand reputation and customer interaction. As discussed by Jones et al. (2009), Primark's digital strategy is centered on meaningful interaction with its audience, sustainability, and corporate responsibility.

### **Impact of Social Media on Brand Awareness and Consumer Behavior**

Social media can not only increase brand visibility but also determine consumer behavior. Two-way communication, sharing behind-the-scenes content, and personalized recommendations improve the consumer experience, increasing brand loyalty and awareness



(Appel et al., 2019). For brands, social media gives consumers a more active part to play in the brand's story, allowing them to interact with a brand in ways that were not previously possible. Social media marketing is considered using online platforms to interact with customers and advertise products or services. Tritama and Tarigan (2021) stated that brand awareness is one of the most critical factors influencing a purchase decision since it enables a consumer to identify and remember products easily. Brands in industries heavily reliant on aesthetics love platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok because they allow them to create visually compelling content. Ahmad et al. (2015) state that social media can transform the relationship between brands and consumers. According to their findings, platforms such as Twitter and Instagram are cost-effective channels for brand identity communication, trend understanding, and collections promotion.

Platforms like Instagram are highly visual-centric and offer real benefits for fashion brands. Using high-quality images and videos will allow users to become emotionally engaged, and sharing content will further benefit the brand in spreading its reach. As Rustemi & Baca (2021) indicated, consumers' perception of brand quality directly influences their purchasing intentions, which social media marketing determines. Furthermore, social media affects how consumers in the fashion industry behave since a trend or product is visible on social media. According to Khan et al. (2019), young consumers seek new brands and the latest fashion trends on social media platforms. Consumers can confirm their purchase decisions through peer reviews, ratings, and user-generated content, and through these platforms, these platforms validate a brand's credibility and reputation.

### **Social Media Strategies and Engagement in Fashion**

Social media marketing has become a cornerstone of modern fashion marketing because of effective social media strategies. Both organic content, paid advertisements, collaborations with influencers, and user-generated content are used by brands to engage consumers and foster long-term relationships (Bilgin, 2018). Parameters such as age, location, and fashion preferences (Dewi et al., 2022) are leveraged on social media to make personalized campaigns tailored to a particular demographic. Engagement tactics are one aspect of social media marketing that needs to foster brand loyalty. Consumers interact with brands in real time by responding to questions, sharing personalized recommendations, and even providing exclusive behind-the-scenes content, building loyal communities around their

products. Having a community can help generate more customers and lifetime value (Appel et al., 2019).

### **Measuring the Effect of Social Media on Consumer Behaviour**

Analytics tools have made measuring the effect of social media on brand awareness much more straightforward. The BrandImageNet model that Liu et al. (2020) created utilized machine learning to analyze social media created by consumers and brand portrayal from the data. The results show a strong relationship between the presence of positive visual content on social media and brand perception. Similarly, Shwastika and Keni (2021) point out that brand awareness plays a key role in the purchasing intentions of the fashion industry. According to their study, consistent branding across platforms is essential for a cohesive consumer experience.

### **Key Empirical Findings and Their Relation to Research Questions**

1. **Social Media Platforms:** Instagram and TikTok are particularly effective for visual branding, while Facebook remains relevant for targeted advertising (Phua et al., 2017). This relates to the research question of identifying the most effective platforms.
2. **Consumer Engagement:** Engagement strategies like interactive content and influencer marketing drive loyalty and advocacy (Hollebeek et al., 2014).
3. **Buying Behavior:** Peer reviews, user-generated content, and direct brand interactions significantly influence purchasing decisions (Hajli, 2014).

### **Overview of the Industry**

The UK fashion industry is a major economic contributor, with Leeds emerging as a significant retail hub. Local brands leverage social media to compete with global players by creating personalized and localized campaigns. Research indicates that 70% of Leeds consumers follow fashion brands on social media, underscoring its critical role in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions (Iglesias et al., 2019).

### **Enhancing Criticality in the Literature Review**

The existing research delivers useful information yet it falls short when it comes to studying the specific market of Leeds. The study addresses a research gap between global social media

research about brand awareness and specific local behaviors of Leeds-based fashion brands including their unique marketing challenges. This research evaluates multiple social media approaches through assessment of successful practices along with zones for better performance.

## **Challenges and Opportunities in Social Media Marketing**

### **Challenges:**

1. Market Saturation: Brands find it challenging to be visible on social media due to increased competition.
2. Brand Image Dilution: Excessive material and advertising, especially for expensive products, can lessen exclusivity.
3. Resource Limitations: Smaller firms could find it difficult to stay on top of the quickly evolving trends in digital marketing.

### **Opportunities:**

1. Personalized Marketing: Brands may use social media to customize content for particular customer groups.
2. Real-Time Customer Engagement: Building trust with consumers via direct contact increases brand trust.
3. Data-Driven Decision-Making: By utilizing customer data, analytics tools allow firms to enhance their marketing efforts.

## **Research gap**

Much research has been conducted in the area of social media marketing. Still, the studies mainly focused on the fashion industry in the setting of Leeds are conspicuously lacking. Most of the available research either speaks on a global level or focuses on some of the major fashion hubs like Milan, P, Paris, and New York City (Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2017). As such, this gap will be closed through this research for an enhanced understanding of the context of how social media affects brand awareness and consumer behavior for businesses in Leeds. This study will become helpful because it focuses on a specific region and thus will offer valuable suggestions catered to regional fashion labels. It can also act as a benchmark for similar studies across the places. A contrast and comparison of the literature with diverse

viewpoints regarding the efficacy of various social media tactics: Such may be found findings as those of De Veirman et al. (2017) show the growing power of social media celebrities, and others, such as Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), focus on content marketing. Apart from that, Hollebeek et al. (2014) have covered previous studies concerning customer participation, and those regarding purchase decisions have been elaborated on by Hajli (2014) for a complete understanding of the social and psychological factors tied to the issue. To create a comprehensive understanding of the impact of social media on brand perception in the Leeds fashion business, this study will bring in these many perspectives.

## **Summary of Chapter 2**

A critical evaluation of literature relating to brand awareness and consumer engagement through social media platforms has been performed which includes essential theoretical grounds and industrial observations. The research model presents an analytical design to study how social media marketing relates to brand awareness and consumer purchasing decisions. The upcoming section details the research approach for data collection and analysis.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The research methodology for this study receives complete justification through this chapter which explains all methodological decisions. The chapter first introduces the research philosophy and approach then moves on to describe the research design after which it presents information about the population selection and sampling techniques and data collection and analysis approaches. The main methodology receives graphical illustration to enhance its clear understanding.

### **Research Philosophy**

Accordingly, this research adopts the interpretivism research philosophy, which focuses on the construction of meaning by individuals (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). The interpretive approach is compatible with the ultimate goal of the study as it focuses on the complex interplay between the implemented social media strategies and consumers within the Leeds fashion sector. This work relies on analyzing and interpreting individual consumers and the social environment they inhabit, and because of this, provides a nuanced examination of consumer actions and cultural interactions with brands. Interpretivism is particularly suitable for understanding SMS impact of SMS, since it is sensitive to perception; changes in perception shift the experiences of specific stakeholders in particular contexts that characterize interactive platforms.

A qualitative approach is used to support interpretive philosophy, and the data is collected to build theories based on observed patterns instead of hypothesized ones. This makes it possible for the research to adapt, study, and gather data and facts that are in line with the reality of the Leeds fashion industry. This also enables the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, making the research comprehensive in providing an understanding of how the strategies taken in social media relate to brand awareness.

### **Research Approach**

The research design is inductive; the study starts with detailed analyses of particular analysis data and moves upwards to develop general propositions. This kind of research is ideal for investigation, focusing on obtaining new knowledge and not checking research hypotheses

(Bryman 2016). From these data, the study aims to uncover patterns and correlations that enhance the assessment of the effects of social media on brand recall. An inductive approach is most helpful in such environments as social media marketing, where trends are swiftly shifting, and consumer behavior constantly evolves.

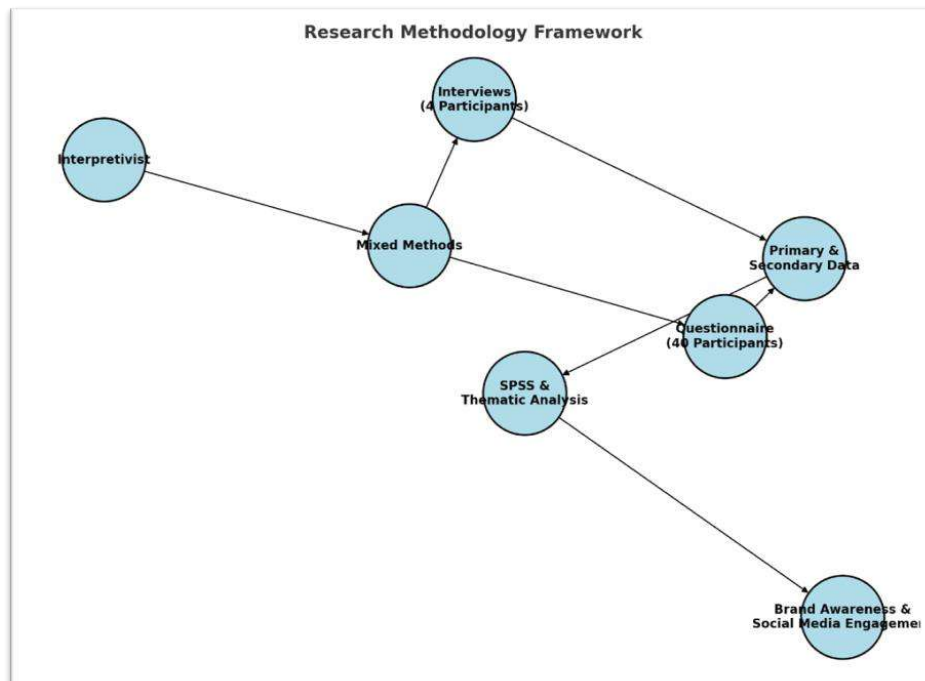
## Research Strategy

Using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods guarantees an exhaustive study of the research problem. The current study uses a case study approach involving fashion brands in Leeds to give detailed information on their social media usage (Yin, 2018). This informs that the case study method gives an authentic, real-life touch, especially while analyzing the relationship between social media strategies and consumers and their brands.

## Research Design

This study employs a questionnaire-based survey for quantitative data collection and semi-structured interviews for qualitative data collection. The combination of these methods ensures that the research captures both measurable consumer trends and deeper insights into brand engagement behaviors.

A graphical representation of the research methodology is presented below:



**Figure 3.1:** Research Methodology Framework

## **Advantages of Surveys**

- Scalability: Reaches a large and diverse sample quickly.
- Quantifiable Results: Provides statistical insights into consumer behaviors.
- Cost-Effectiveness: Online distribution minimizes expenses.
- Standardization: Ensures consistency in data collection.

Surveys are especially effective for this research as they can address a large population of consumers from Leeds and thus provide a proper quantitative base for the work.

## **Population and Sampling**

### **Target Population**

The target population consists of two groups:

1. Individuals who participate with fashion brands on social media platforms choose to reside in Leeds.
2. The social media marketing professionals who focus on fashion within the Leeds market.

### **Sampling Technique and Justification**

The research utilizes questionnaire-based sampling for its quantitative section that involves 40 participants who use social media to connect with fashion brands. A structured questionnaire enables the methodical acquisition of data about consumer engagement together with brand perception and purchasing behavior.

The qualitative data collection includes four interviews with marketing experts specialized in social media marketing. The researchers selected participants through purposive sampling because this method ensures that interviewees have valuable experience and knowledge about the research subject (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

### **Sample Size**

- Quantitative Data: 40 participants responding to the questionnaire.
- Qualitative Data: 4 marketing professionals participating in interviews.

## **Data Collection Methods**

This study collects both primary and secondary data:

### **1. Primary Data:**

- Questionnaire: Administered to 40 consumers to gather structured quantitative data.
- Semi-structured interviews: Conducted with 4 marketing professionals to gain qualitative insights into social media strategies.

### **2. Secondary Data:**

- Peer-reviewed journal articles, industry reports, and fashion market analyses.

## **Justification for Chosen Data Collection Methods**

The selection of both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as data collection methods is based on their ability to complement each other and ensure comprehensive findings.

### **1. Questionnaires (Quantitative Method):**

Using questionnaires represents an optimal choice because they allow consistent recording of consumer data patterns and brand engagement trends (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The data analysis through SPSS programming platform evaluates meaningful trends using 40 participant responses. The use of closed-ended questions leads to concrete measurable responses which supports unbiased data interpretation according to Bryman (2016). This approach enables rapid information collection alongside quick evaluation which makes it a suitable method for obtaining extensive market insights.

### **2. Semi-structured Interviews (Qualitative Method):**

The choice of interviews serves to obtain detailed insights from marketing experts who work with social media marketing as per Saunders et al. (2016). The semi-structured interview technique provides researchers with the freedom to explore significant topics through their interview responses. Through this approach the research can examine how fashion brands approach their awareness campaigns by studying their motivations and their strategic choices



and decision paths. The qualitative method provides contextual understanding to statistical survey data by explaining consumer patterns identified in the questionnaire.

### **3. Triangulation of Data Sources:**

The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods produces reliable results which boost the validity of the study. A comprehensive evaluation results from merging information gained through questionnaires from consumers and industry expert interviews regarding social media effects on brand awareness. Combining the approaches helps eliminate possible biases that exist when using one data collection method and it allows diverse perspectives to be included in the analysis.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

#### **Quantitative Analysis**

Survey data will be analyzed using SPSS 26.0:

- Descriptive Statistics: Summarize data trends.
- Inferential Statistics: Test relationships between variables (e.g., engagement and brand awareness).

#### **Qualitative Analysis**

Interview feedback and focus group recording will be coded for thematic analysis, enabling qualitative patterns and insights to be found (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Data will be coded using census data and NVivo software for data analysis and organization.

### **Integration of Results**

Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods will be combined to inform a synthesis of the results to respond to the research questions. For example, interview patterns will be crosschecked with survey trends to confirm the findings.

### **Validity and Reliability**

- Validity: Achieved through triangulation, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure comprehensive findings.

- **Reliability:** Ensured through standardized survey instruments and consistent interview protocols.

Thus, these measures make the study's findings credible, sufficiently reliable for use in actual settings, and devoid of biases stemming from skewed data sampling.

### **Ethical Considerations**

- **Informed Consent:** Participants will receive detailed information about the study and provide written consent.
- **Confidentiality:** Participant data will be anonymized to protect privacy.
- **Ethical Approval:** The university ethics committee will review and approve the study.

### **Limitations**

1. **Time Constraints:** One limitation of using cross-sectional design is it disallows the evaluation of developments within a specific period.
2. **Sample Diversity:** They assume they should focus on Leeds; they reduce the possibility of generalizing the results to other areas.
3. **Technological Dependence:** It can also fail to include participants without using the Internet when taking the survey.

### **Summary of Methodology**

This chapter has outlined the research methodology, including the research philosophy, approach, design, sampling methods, data collection techniques, and analysis procedures. A graphical representation of the methodology framework has been introduced to enhance clarity. Justifications for methodological choices have been strengthened to ensure coherence and rigor. The next chapter will present the research findings and analysis.

## Chapter 4: Findings, Analysis, Evaluation, Discussion

### Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, analysis, evaluation, and discussion of the research conducted on the impact of social media on brand awareness within the fashion industry in Leeds. By combining quantitative data from surveys with qualitative insights from interviews and focus groups, the chapter explores how fashion brands utilize platforms like Instagram and TikTok to enhance visibility, engage audiences, and influence consumer behavior. The analysis addresses key themes such as platform effectiveness, content strategies, and consumer engagement, linking the results to the research questions and existing literature. Patterns, correlations, and discrepancies are critically examined to evaluate the effectiveness of social media strategies while highlighting challenges such as market saturation and brand image dilution. The discussion further identifies opportunities for improvement, offering actionable recommendations for optimizing digital marketing strategies to foster brand loyalty, enhance consumer trust, and drive sustainable growth in the competitive fashion industry.

### Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with four marketing professionals. Thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo software to identify recurring themes.

#### Interviews:

**Table 4.1:** Interview questions and answer by the managers.

Question	Manager 1	Manager 2	Manager 3	Manager 4
Question: How do you utilize social media platforms to enhance brand awareness and engagement among your target audience?	We focus on Instagram and TikTok because they are highly visual platforms. Collaborating with influencers and leveraging	We primarily use Facebook and Instagram to create a sense of community. Our posts include product highlights, behind-the-	We rely heavily on paid advertising on platforms like Instagram and Snapchat, targeting younger audiences.	We use Instagram and LinkedIn to share our brand's story, focusing on sustainability. Collaborating with eco-

Purpose: To understand strategies employed by fashion brands in Leeds for social media marketing.	user-generated content are key strategies. We also use interactive features like polls and live sessions to engage directly with our audience.	scenes content, and local promotions. We also engage directly with customers through comments and messages.	Short, engaging videos, trend-focused posts, and constant analysis of engagement metrics are at the core of our strategy.	conscious influencers and encouraging customers to share their experiences with our products are important parts of our approach.
<p>Question: What approaches do you use to maintain authenticity while promoting fashion brands, and how does this impact consumer trust and purchasing behavior?</p> <p>Purpose: To explore the role and effectiveness of influencer collaborations in building consumer trust.</p>	<p>We only collaborate with influencers who align with our luxury brand ethos. Additionally, we highlight behind-the-scenes content to show our commitment to quality, which resonates with our audience.</p>	<p>We ensure authenticity by sharing real customer stories and reviews. Our direct engagement with the audience—through responses to comments and DMs—helps build trust.</p>	<p>Authenticity is a challenge in fast fashion, but we focus on transparency by sharing stories about product sourcing and providing honest customer testimonials to validate our claims.</p>	<p>1. Our authenticity comes from our core values. We show every step of our production process and collaborate with influencers who are genuine advocates</p>

				for sustainability, fostering consumer trust.
<p>Question: What type of social media content from fashion brands influences your purchasing decisions the most, and why?</p> <p>Purpose: To identify consumer preferences and the types of content that drive engagement and purchases.</p>	<p>High-quality visuals and influencer endorsements are most effective for us. Luxury consumers expect exclusivity, so our content must reflect that standard.</p>	<p>Promotions, local collaborations, and personalized messages perform best. People love to see products styled in everyday settings.</p>	<p>Short-form videos, trend-driven posts, and limited-time discount offers have the biggest impact. These create urgency and align with fast-paced consumer habits.</p>	<p>Stories about sustainable practices, user-generated content, and reviews resonate deeply. Consumers respond well to content that aligns with their values.</p>
<p>Question: How do you measure the impact of social media campaigns on brand perception and sales</p>	<p>We track metrics like engagement rates, conversion rates, and website traffic from social</p>	<p>We rely on direct feedback from customers and monitor sales increases during specific campaigns. Engagement</p>	<p>We use advanced analytics tools to track ROI on campaigns. Metrics like click-through rates, purchase</p>	<p>We measure impact through sentiment analysis, customer feedback, and increases in engagement with</p>

<p>performance in the fashion industry?</p> <p>Purpose: To gain insights into metrics and tools used to assess the effectiveness of social media strategies.</p>	<p>media ads.</p> <p>Surveys also help us understand how campaigns shape perceptions of luxury.</p>	<p>metrics like comments and shares are key indicators for us.</p>	<p>conversions, and follower growth are essential to evaluate success.</p>	<p>sustainability-focused content. Sales linked to cause-driven campaigns are also a strong indicator.</p>
<p>Question: How has your perception of a fashion brand changed due to its social media presence, and what factors contributed to this change?</p> <p>Purpose: To understand how consumers perceive and evaluate brands based on their online activities.</p>	<p>Social media has transformed how we connect with luxury consumers. It allows us to create a sense of exclusivity while reaching global audiences effortlessly.</p>	<p>Social media has helped us connect with local customers more personally. It's allowed us to build a loyal community and gain exposure without big marketing budgets.</p>	<p>Social media enables us to stay relevant in a fast-moving industry. We can quickly adapt to trends and reach younger demographics with tailored content.</p>	<p>Social media has been instrumental in educating our audience about sustainability. It has allowed us to align our message with like-minded consumers and foster long-term relationships.</p>

## Thematic Analysis Results

### Theme 1: The Role of Influencers in Brand Awareness

Interviewees emphasized that influencer collaborations significantly boost brand credibility and visibility. Manager A noted, *"We rely on influencers because their followers trust their opinions, which translates into higher engagement rates."*

### Theme 2: Challenges of Market Saturation

Participants acknowledged that social media is highly saturated, making it difficult for smaller brands to stand out. Manager B stated, *"We constantly innovate with content strategies to keep up with competition."*

### Theme 3: Consumer Trust and Authenticity

All four participants agreed that consumers value authenticity in brand messaging. Manager C highlighted, *"User-generated content and behind-the-scenes posts drive engagement because they feel real."*

**Table 4.2:** Thematic Analysis Summary

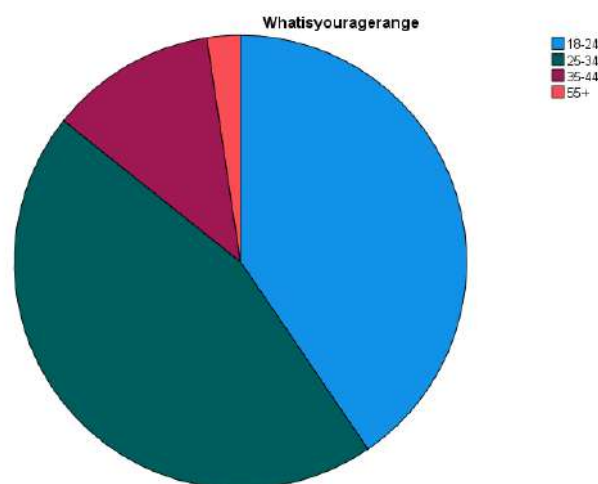
Theme	Key Findings	Supporting Quotes
<b>Role of Influencers in Brand Awareness</b>	Influencers increase brand credibility and engagement.	"We rely on influencers because their followers trust their opinions." - Manager A
<b>Challenges of Market Saturation</b>	Social media saturation makes it difficult for brands to stand out.	"We constantly innovate with content strategies to keep up with competition." - Manager B
<b>Consumer Trust and Authenticity</b>	Consumers value authenticity in brand messaging and content.	"User-generated content and behind-the-scenes posts drive engagement." - Manager C

## Quantitative data

### What is your age range?

**Table 4.3:** Showing the statistics of age by respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24	17	40.5	40.5	40.5
	25-34	19	45.2	45.2	85.7
	35-44	5	11.9	11.9	97.6
	55+	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	



**Figure 4.1:** Showing the statistics of age by respondents

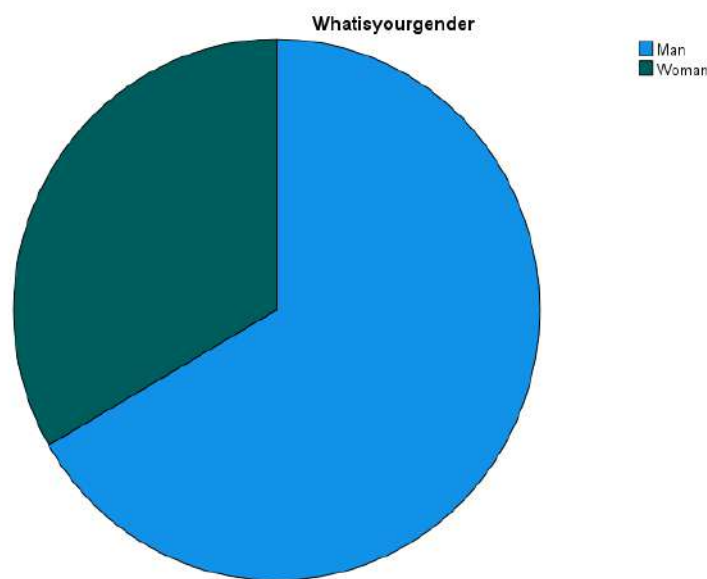
The table illustrates the age distribution of participants in the study, with the majority falling within the 25-34 age range, accounting for 45.2% of respondents. This is closely followed by the 18-24 age group, which represents 40.5% of the sample. Together, these two younger age groups constitute 85.7% of the participants, indicating a predominant focus on younger consumers. The 35-44 age group makes up 11.9% of respondents, while those aged 55 and above comprise a mere 2.4%. This distribution reflects a significant skew towards younger demographics, likely aligning with the study's focus on social media use and engagement, as younger individuals are typically more active on digital platforms.



## What is your gender?

**Table 4.4:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Man	28	66.7	66.7	66.7
	Woman	14	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	



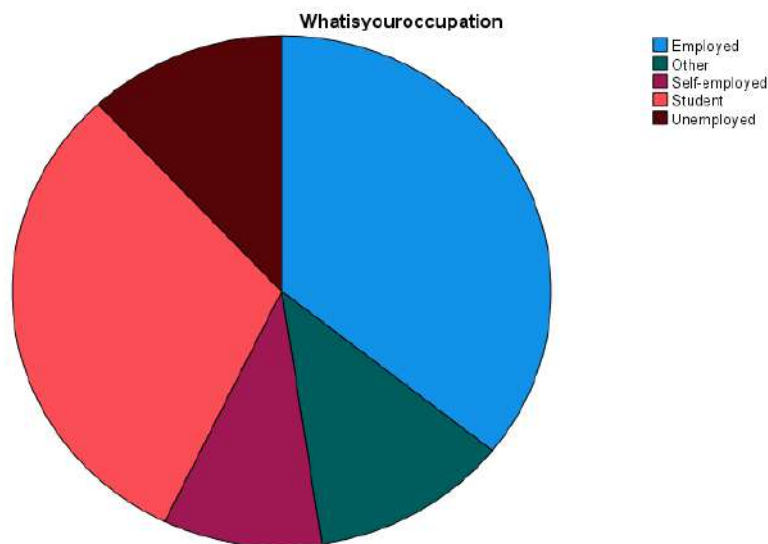
**Figure 4.2:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 3

The table shows the gender distribution of the study's participants, with men comprising the majority at 66.7% and women representing 33.3%. This indicates a notable gender imbalance among the respondents, with two-thirds being male. This distribution may influence the findings, particularly if gender-specific behaviors or preferences play a role in the study's focus on social media and fashion brand awareness.

## What is your occupation?

**Table 4.5:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Employed	15	35.7	35.7	35.7
	Other	5	11.9	11.9	47.6
	Self-employed	4	9.5	9.5	57.1
	Student	13	31.0	31.0	88.1
	Unemployed	5	11.9	11.9	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	



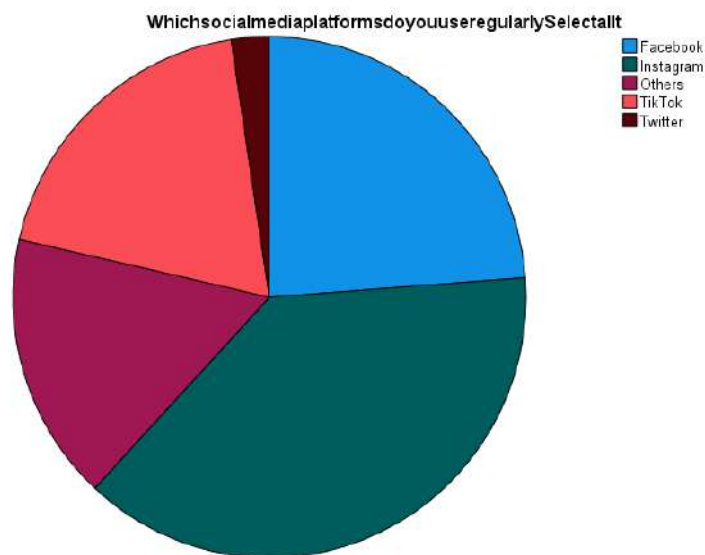
**Figure 4.3:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 4

The table outlines the occupational distribution of the participants, showing that 35.7% are employed, making it the largest group, followed closely by students at 31.0%. Those classified as unemployed and "other" each represent 11.9% of the respondents, while 9.5% are self-employed. This distribution reflects a diverse sample with significant representation from both the employed and student demographics, indicating that the study captures perspectives from individuals at different stages of professional and academic life. The relatively lower percentages of self-employed and unemployed participants provide a balance, ensuring varied insights into social media usage and fashion brand awareness.

### Which social media platforms do you use regularly?

**Table 4.6:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 5

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Facebook	10	23.8	23.8	23.8
	Instagram	16	38.1	38.1	61.9
	Others	7	16.7	16.7	78.6
	TikTok	8	19.0	19.0	97.6
	Twitter	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	



**Figure 4.4:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 5

The table emphasizes what social network the participants preferred, and once again, Instagram takes the leading place, being actively used by 38.1% of the respondents. Facebook closely follows this with a twenty-three-point eight percent showing that the site is especially popular, although not like Instagram. TikTok is also popular; it is used by 19,0% of participants with a frequency of more than once a day. Other platforms stand at 16.7%, comprising a variety of different preferences, and finally, Twitter has the least usage, with only 2.4% of the respondents who use it regularly. This distribution places greater emphasis

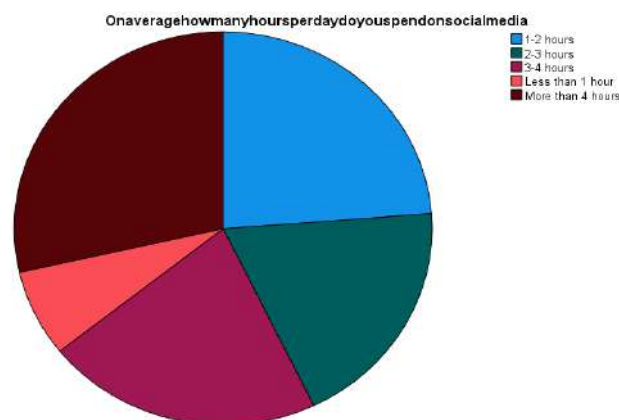
on visually-oriented applications such as Instagram and TikTok in particular, which is relevant to the main subject of the study: the recognition of fashion brands, the primary criterion for which is visual appeal.

#### On average how many hours per day do you spend on social media?

**Table 4.7:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 6

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-2 hours	10	23.8	23.8	23.8
	2-3 hours	8	19.0	19.0	42.9
	3-4 hours	9	21.4	21.4	64.3
	Less than 1 hour	3	7.1	7.1	71.4
	More than 4 hours	12	28.6	28.6	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows how much MEDIA time per day the participants spent on social media. The highest percentage group, which is 28.6%, spent more than 4 hrs. on social networking sites. Among those who spend 1-2 hours a day on the forum, 23.8% of the respondents, who spend 3-4 hours – 21.4%; and 2-3 hours, 19.0%. The least active, 7.1%, uses less than one hour a day for social media. From this data, it can be inferred that most participants often use social media regularly, hence fitting for this research centered on social media and fashion brands' awareness among consumers.

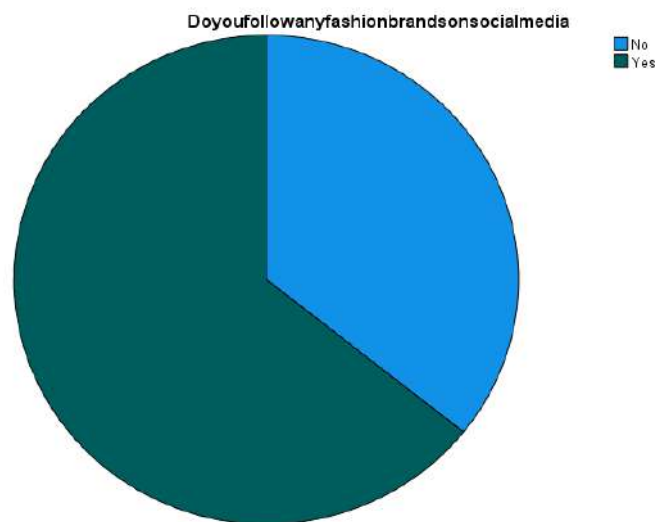


**Figure 4.5:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 6

### Do you follow any fashion brands on social media?

**Table 4.8:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 7

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	15	35.7	35.7	35.7
	Yes	27	64.3	64.3	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	



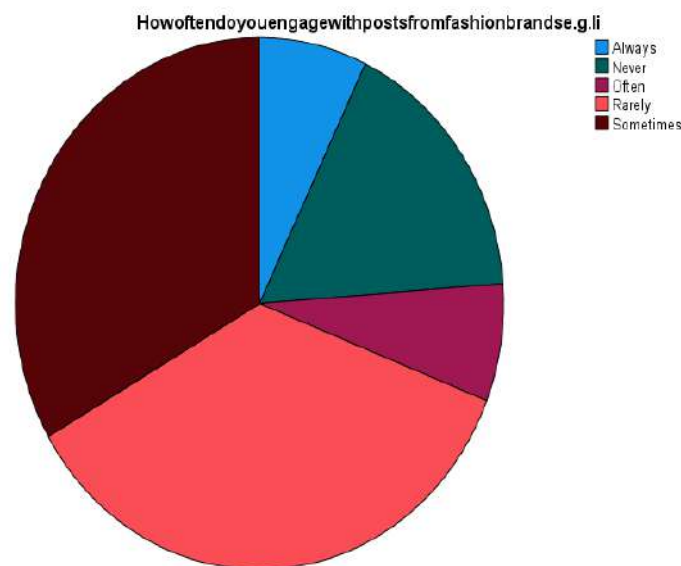
**Figure 4.6:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 7

The table shows that the majority of the participants, 64.3%, use social media to follow fashion brands while 35.7% do not. This indicates that the respondents are very connected to these fashion brands which makes them have a necessity to follow up on the brands constantly. This is consistent with the objectives of this study concerning the effects of social media in enhancing brand awareness of fashion brands, where about half the sample engages in fashion content through social media platforms, which could, in turn, influence their buying behavior.

## How often do you engage with posts from fashion brands?

**Table 4.9:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 8

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	3	7.1	7.1	7.1
	Never	7	16.7	16.7	23.8
	Often	3	7.1	7.1	31.0
	Rarely	15	35.7	35.7	66.7
	Sometimes	14	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	



**Figure 4.7:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 8

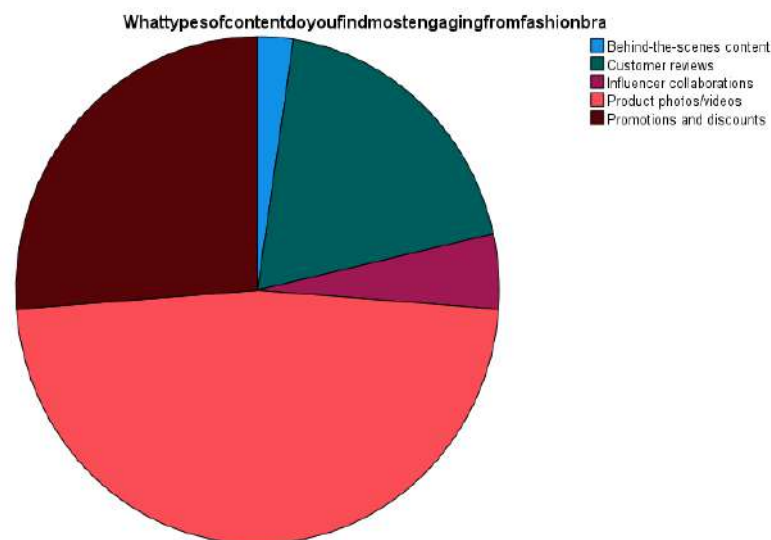
From the table below, it can be seen how often participants reacted, commented, clicked, saved, or shared posts belonging to this category. About half of the respondents "never" (18.3%) or only "rarely" (17.8%) or "sometimes" (16.9%) post or comment on such posts. Smaller proportions suggest regular communication: 7,1% 'often' and 7,1% 'always.' From this data, it is evident that most participants follow un/fashion brands' content at least once a week; however, sustained engagement appears to be less frequent; this underscores the

potential for brands to develop more engaging or innovative content to trigger more active partake from consumers.

### What types of content do you find most engaging from fashion brands?

**Table 4.10:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 9

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Behind-the-scenes content	1	2.4	2.4	2.4
	Customer reviews	8	19.0	19.0	21.4
	Influencer collaborations	2	4.8	4.8	26.2
	Product photos/videos	20	47.6	47.6	73.8
	Promotions and discounts	11	26.2	26.2	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	



**Figure 4.8:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 9

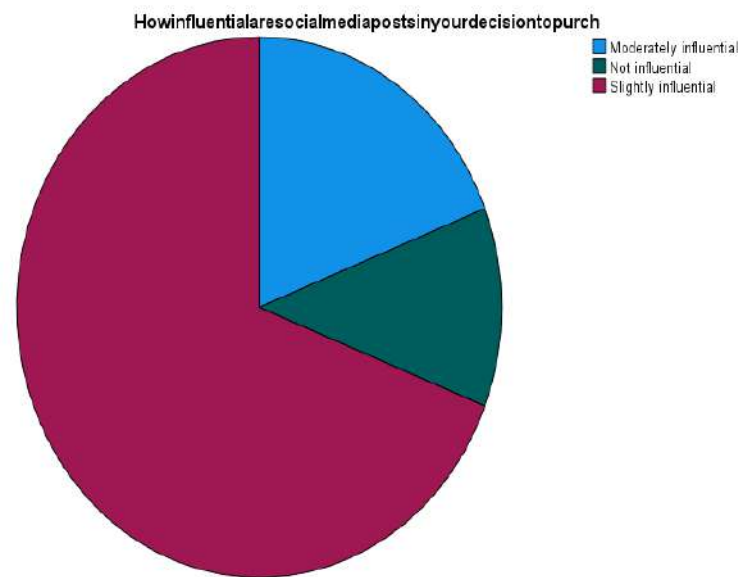
The table identifies the types of content participants find most engaging from fashion brands on social media. Product photos and videos are the most popular, with 47.6% of respondents favoring this content, followed by promotions and discounts at 26.2%. Customer reviews engage 19.0% of participants, while influencer collaborations attract 4.8%, and behind-the-scenes content is least favored, engaging only 2.4%. This distribution underscores the visual

and promotional appeal of fashion content, highlighting the importance of showcasing products and offering value-driven incentives to capture audience interest effectively.

### How influential are social media posts in your decision to purchase?

**Table 4.11:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 10

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Moderately influential	8	19.0	19.0	19.0
	Not influential	5	11.9	11.9	31.0
	Slightly influential	29	69.0	69.0	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	



**Figure 4.9:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 10

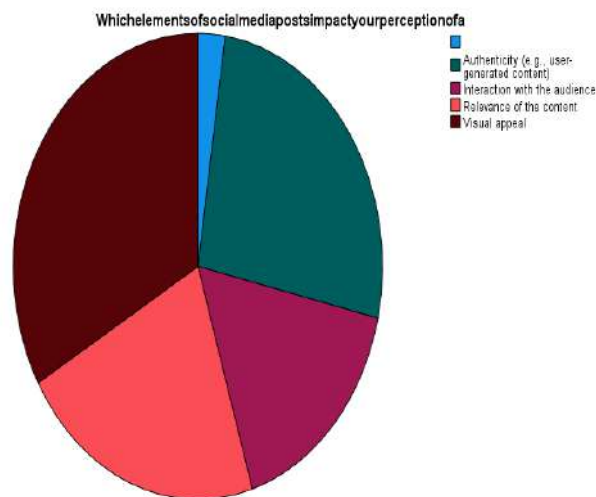
The table reveals the influence of social media posts on participants' purchasing decisions. A significant majority (69.0%) find social media posts "slightly influential," while 19.0% consider them "moderately influential." Only 11.9% of respondents regard such posts as "not influential." This suggests that while social media posts do play a role in shaping consumer behavior, their influence is generally moderate to low, indicating a potential need for brands to refine their content strategies to enhance their impact on purchasing decisions.



### Which elements of social media posts impact your perception of brand?

**Table 4.12:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 11

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2.4	2.4	2.4
Authenticity (e.g., user-generated content)	11	26.2	26.2	28.6
Interaction with the audience	7	16.7	16.7	45.2
Relevance of the content	9	21.4	21.4	66.7
Visual appeal	14	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	42	100.0	100.0	



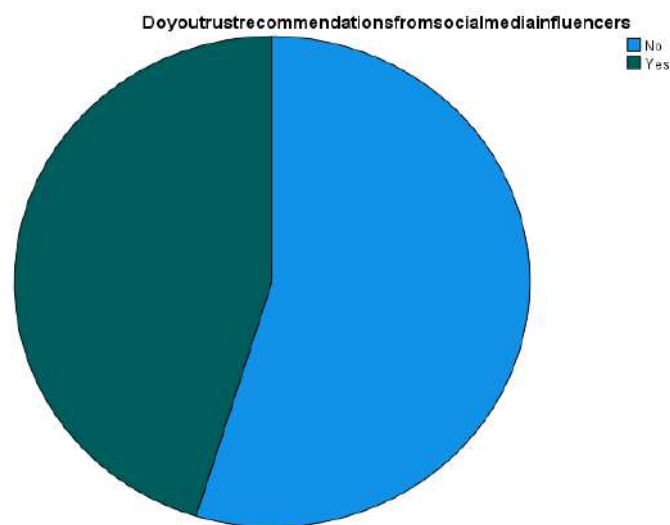
**Figure 4.10:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 11

The table outlines the elements of social media posts that impact participants' perceptions of fashion brands. Visual appeal is the most significant factor, influencing 33.3% of respondents, followed by authenticity, such as user-generated content, at 26.2%. Content relevance impacts 21.4% of participants, while interaction with the audience is influential for 16.7%. A negligible 2.4% selected other unspecified elements. This data highlights the importance of visually engaging, authentic, and relevant content in shaping consumer perceptions of fashion brands on social media.

**Do you trust recommendations from social media influencers:**

**Table 4.13:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 12

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	23	54.8	54.8	54.8
	Yes	19	45.2	45.2	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	



**Figure 4.11:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 12

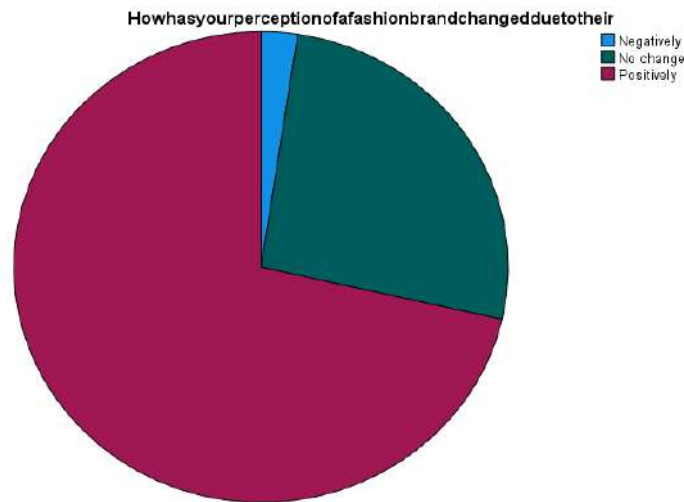
The table shows that a slight majority of participants (54.8%) do not trust recommendations from social media influencers, while 45.2% indicate that they do. This split suggests a degree of skepticism towards influencer endorsements, although a significant portion still finds them credible. These results highlight the need for fashion brands to carefully consider their choice of influencers and ensure authenticity and transparency to build trust among their audience.

**How has your perception of a fashion brand changed due to their social media activity?**

**Table 4.14:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 13

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Negatively	1	2.4	2.4	2.4

No change	11	26.2	26.2	28.6
Positively	30	71.4	71.4	100.0
Total	42	100.0	100.0	



**Figure 4.12:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 13

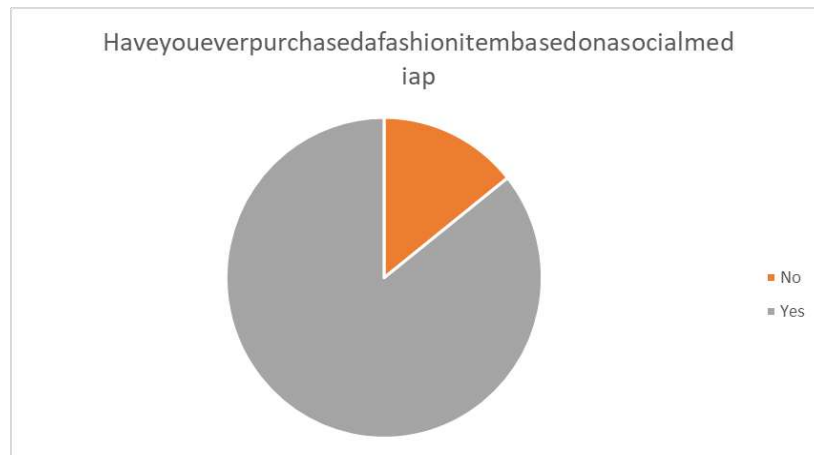
According to the table, a majority of the participants, 71.4%, confessed to having a positive change in the perception of a fashion brand caused by its social media activity, with 26.2% responding negatively. Thus, a disproportionately small amount of the respondents (2.4%) claimed to have been negatively affected. Using a combination of survey and interview data, these insights suggest that a well-planned and effectively implementing social media strategy can substantially enhance the evaluation of a brand, and it should be noted that in order to modify consumer attitudes favorably, a consistent and valuable, and a positive social media presence is essential.

#### Have you ever purchased a fashion item based on a social media post?

**Table 4.15:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 14

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	6	14.3	14.3	14.3

Yes	36	85.7	85.7	100.0
Total	42	100.0	100.0	



**Figure 4.13:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 14

The table shows that the majority of the participants (85.7%) have bought a fashion item that was advertised on a social media platform, as opposed to 14.3% who said that they have not. This suggests the impact of the consumer buying decision-making process and social media marketing as a viable communication tool in influencing buying decisions through emphatic communication of fashion brands.

#### What type of social media content influences your purchasing decisions the most?

**Table 4.16:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 15

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Discount offers or promotions	14	33.3	33.3	33.3
	High-quality product images	13	31.0	31.0	64.3
	Positive customer testimonials	10	23.8	23.8	88.1
	Videos (e.g., tutorials, fashion shows)	5	11.9	11.9	100.0

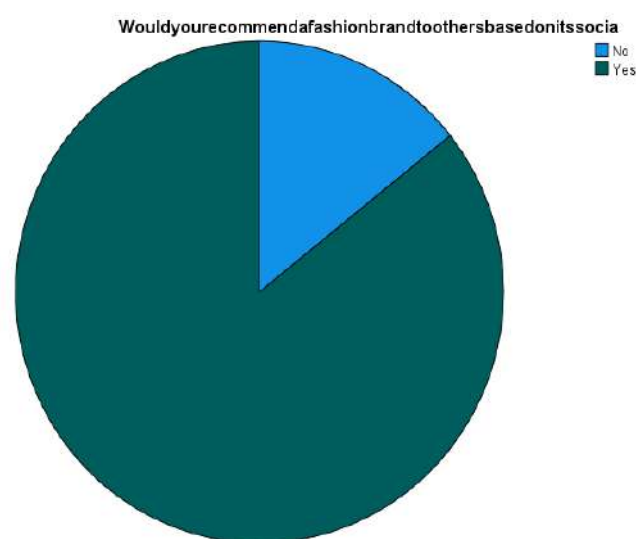
Total	42	100.0	100.0	
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In the table, the view is provided of the types of information in social network networks that affect the purchase: 33,3% of respondents reported that discount offers or promotions had the greatest impact. Just behind are highly detailed product images with 31,0% and positive customer reviews that affect 23,8%. Television programs, including educational programs or fashion shows, affect 11.9% of the respondents. This distribution supports the contemporary fashion consumer knowledge that value-oriented and appealing creatives, as well as credible testifiers, significantly influence their purchase decisions.

**Would you recommend a fashion brand to others based on its social media presence?**

**Table 4.17:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 16

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	6	14.3	14.3	14.3
	Yes	36	85.7	85.7	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	



**Figure 4.15:** frequency, percent and cumulative percent of question 16

As shown in the table below, 85.7 % of the participants would endorse a fashion brand based on social media presence, as opposed to 14.3% who would not. This proves social media is a very powerful tool when it comes to establishing endorsement, meaning that a friendly and favorable display of the brand doesn't just help individuals make decisions regarding their purchase of any particular product but also helps create a customer base that that in spreading the word on the brand.

## **Discussion**

The insights derived from this research position how social media is revolutionizing the fashion industry in Leeds. By comparing insights from interviews with marketing managers to the literature reviewed, this discussion highlights key themes: the convenience of the platform, kinds of content, ways of engaging customers, and the position of influencers in content sharing, as well as possible ways of maximizing the impact of social media efficiently.

The interviews further showed that IG was the most popular choice for fashion brands as the literature has pointed out to be appropriate for aesthetic industries (Bilgin, 2018). TikTok was also presented as a new platform popular among young people, which is confirmed by the latest research indicating the active use of the site in increasing brand recognition (Appel et al., 2020). It suggests that Facebook is highly effective in target advertisement, more so for boutique and fast-fashion brands. The study corroborates the Khan et al. (2019) on the broad demographic appeal.

The literature reveals that social media is a great leveler – that is, a tool where big and small brands can target consumers affordably (Rrustemi & Baca, 2021). Despite major brands, it also reflects new-generation brands; Leeds may be a good example of this paradigm. However, as Tran pointed out in the year 2021, the important sides of these platforms earned their ubiquity, which means new tactics to stand out must be created periodically.

Some common types of content have been identified in the study: awareness posts, visual content, promotional content, and glimpses of backstage content. Product pictures were found to produce the highest level of audience engagement, conforming to the research hypothesis on Instagram, which is a highly image-based platform (Hsiao et al., 2019). Sales promotions were also found to have been significant, a factor particularly in brands associated with fast fashion, in furtherance to what Dewi et al. (2022) pointed out, showing that value-based content boosts customer loyalty.

All the managers supported the requirement of the audience in authentic content as it lies in its ability to establish trust. For instance, sustainable brands have used the backstage content to display some blatant practices that they affiliated to kind, specifics of Basit and Sethumadhavan's (2021) work speaking of the role of transparency in shaping the meanwhile customers' impressions. The interviews also bolstered the literature on the role of UGC as a trust-building element, in which the managers stressed the benefits of consumer reviews and tagged posts (Liu et al., 2020).

There was also a significant relationship between consumer engagement, brand loyalty, and awareness. The interviews showed that things like polls and live sessions are efficient in building stronger bonds with the audiences. This accords with Brodie et al. (2013), who assert that Virgin brand communities exhibit bi-directional communication.

Further, the research establishes that social media has an impact on consumers' buying behavior in that consumers use social media to find information about new trends and to get endorsement of their buying decisions through reviews and recommendations. This finding supports Hajli's (2014) conclusion that social media supports users in decision-making by offering actual feedback.

Although, the level of influence was not the same as the majority of the consumers considered the social media advertisements as 'slightly influential' or 'moderately influential'. This supports Shwastika and Keni (2021), who affirm that though social media increases brand awareness, the effect does not translate to sales based on the content posted.

From marketers' responses, influencer collaborations were established as a key motivator for consumer trust. Premium brands aimed at working with influencers who are fitting to the branding of their luxury products and services, while boutique and fast fashion brands targeted local influencers for marketing. The present research supports Hsiao et al.'s (2019) insight that influencer marketing optimally brings brands and consumers closer together.

The literature also supports the finding on the role of influencers in improving brand authenticity. A social media influencer, which Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) noted to be a trusted third party, gives a brand's message credibility. The interviews supported this, based on managers' comments that consumers are likely to rely on endorsements from influencers who they feel are authentic.

However, there are some risks inherent within the concept of leveraging social media, which are outlined below: The market becomes overcrowded, Second The brand image gets watered down, and last but not least, for this method to be effective, one requires plenty of resources. The candidates shared some worries about becoming less noticeable in a crowded market, as

the authors discussed in Sarin and Sharma (2023) about the challenges that organizations face when working in overcrowded spaces.

Brand image dilution was an obvious risk and especially averted for luxury brands that need to be available to a wider customer base while at the same time maintaining their 'luxury' appeal. Naturally, Hsiao et al. (2020) but also overly promoting your products on social media can be a disadvantage as it diminishes brand image. Likewise, Ahmad et al. (2015) state that the focus on tensions increases pressure on resources for a smaller brand, which needs to keep up with the dynamically changing digital environment.

Thus, there are more prospects than difficulties. Social media is cheap and a perfect way of building brand awareness and creating sales. Through the help of analytics tools, brands can now come up with various measures that would suit consumers' behaviors. As Rienda and Ruiz-Fernández (2020) pointed out, the more SMEs engage with social media, the more ready they are to compete with larger counterparts, a revelation that best captures the Leeds fashion sector.

For fashion brands based in Leeds, this research provides comprehensive information to improve their social media approach. First, using Instagram and TikTok as the primary visual platforms can improve the brand acknowledgment factor among young audiences. Second, integrating posts that are original, unsponsored, from behind the scenes, or with influencers helps nurture trust and customer loyalty. Third, if decision-makers are willing to take a data-based approach to track engagement and modify the activity, the application stays relevant in a constantly changing environment.

These results further elucidate the vital significance of social media in constructing the Leeds fashion brand and influencing consumer responses. The present study fits well into the existing literature by stressing the importance of platform choice, message truthfulness, and consumer participation. Hindrances such as market saturation may pose some drawbacks to continually incorporating social media systems, yet fashion brands cannot underestimate the opportunities for growth and a great place to innovate since they offer a crucial tool for attaining competitive advantage in a competitive world.

## **Summary of Chapter 4**

This chapter presented the research findings and their interpretations, linking them to the research questions and literature. The quantitative analysis provided statistical insights into consumer engagement, while the qualitative analysis identified key themes such as influencer



impact, brand authenticity, and market challenges. The next chapter will present the study's conclusions and recommendations.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

This last chapter presents a complete review of the study through its summary of essential discoveries along with academic implications and management implications and specified research constraints and recommended future research paths. This investigation establishes its worth for academic and practical applications.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

This research examined how social media affects brand visibility and actively engages customers in the Leeds fashion business sector. Brand awareness proves most effective through Instagram and TikTok platforms because these platforms offer users highly interactive visual content. Influencer marketing became an essential driver for modifying how customers viewed products and which purchase choices they made. Consumer interest in authentic communication from brands proved essential since they choose real-life content rather than conventional advertisements. Digitally operating fashion brands face two significant barriers since their presence in the market has become saturated while they struggle to preserve customer trust.

### **Academic Contributions**

The existing digital marketing research benefits from this analysis because it connects the theoretical gaps about social media effects on fashion brand awareness across regions. Research on social media branding has been studied before yet this study delivers original market analysis of fashion in Leeds so it contributes distinctive regional data. The research analysis utilizes AIDA Model and Brand Equity Theory as theoretical constructs to evaluate digital marketing effectiveness by providing empirical backings for their applicability. The research design uses mixed methodologies to strengthen the results through its combination of quantitative method and qualitative method which creates a comprehensive view of how social media affects brand awareness.

### **Managerial Implications**

The research delivers significant insights that teach fashion brands and digital marketers together with business strategists about improving their social media approach. The selection of marketing platforms should focus on Instagram and TikTok since these networks exhibit intense consumer interaction rates. Marketers must incorporate authentic content from their

customers and show productions in their content to build trust and credibility. Social media analytics should become a core aspect of strategy-making since they enable businesses to monitor consumer behavior to better target their marketing moves. In the competitive fashion market brands should concentrate their efforts on unique customer segments to establish themselves as different entities. Micro-influencers represent a profitable alliance for strategic partnerships because their content generates improved audience interaction while offering more cost-efficient options than macro-influencers do. The engagement of consumers can be improved by brands who focus on real-time interaction that involves live sessions Q&A segments and interactive features including polls. Marketers who customize their communications according to individual preferences along with behavioral information experience both improved purchase conversion and create lasting brand faithful customers.

### **Research Limitations**

- **Sample Size Constraint:** The research was limited to 40 consumer respondents and 4 industry professionals, which may not be fully representative of the broader market.
- **Regional Scope:** The findings focus on Leeds, and results may not be generalizable to other regions.
- **Evolving Digital Trends:** Social media trends change rapidly, which may impact the long-term relevance of the findings.

### **Future Recommendations**

- **Expanding Sample Size and Diversity:** Future research should include a larger and more diverse sample across different demographics and locations to enhance generalizability.
- **Comparative Studies Across Industries:** Studies could explore how social media impacts brand awareness in industries beyond fashion, such as food, technology, or travel.
- **Longitudinal Studies:** Conducting longitudinal research can help understand evolving consumer engagement trends over time and how brands adapt to changes in social media marketing.
- **Exploring the Role of Emerging Technologies:** Future studies could examine how artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) influence social media marketing effectiveness.

- **Investigating the Ethical Aspects of Social Media Marketing:** Future research should explore issues related to privacy, influencer transparency, and the impact of social media algorithms on consumer behavior.
- **Assessing Consumer Trust and Brand Loyalty in Digital Marketing:** Additional research could examine the long-term impact of social media engagement on consumer trust and brand loyalty.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

The research conducted extensive investigations about how social media affects brand recognition and customer involvement within the Leeds fashion sector. Our research findings benefit both scholarly knowledge and market-based marketing approach development. By leveraging the insights provided, fashion brands can enhance their digital presence, refine engagement strategies, and navigate the challenges of social media saturation. The research highlights the growing importance of digital marketing in the fashion industry and provides a foundation for further exploration into evolving social media trends and their impact on consumer behavior.

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## **Appendix:**

### **Appendix 1: Ethical Form**



Ethical form (1).pdf

### **Appendix 2: Primary data**



Impact of Social  
Media on Brand Aw:

### **Appendix 3: Questionnaire**



Impact of Social Media on Brand Awareness.pdf

### **Appendix 4: Data Analysis**



data analysis file  
2.spv