



INFLUENCERS AND FAST-FASHION: An analysis of social media impact on PrettyLittleThing (PLT)



Pretty Little Thing

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the impact of influencer-driven marketing on brand awareness, perceptions of authenticity, engagement, purchase intention, and customer loyalty among adult consumers in London, with a focus on PrettyLittleThing (PLT). By employing quantitative surveys and qualitative insights, the study reveals how influencer content shapes consumer attitudes in the fast-fashion sector.

The findings indicate that influencer marketing is effective at generating brand awareness, particularly through platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. Authenticity is key to building trust and driving engagement, with genuine influencers having more persuasive power. While engagement is typically passive, emotional engagement significantly shapes the relationship between authenticity and consumer behaviours. Influencer content enhances purchase intention, particularly when coupled with relatable narratives and social proof. However, long-term loyalty is constrained by ethical concerns and inconsistent product experiences.

In conclusion, influencer marketing drives visibility and short-term responses, but long-term success relies on consistency, transparent communication, and alignment with consumer values. Recommendations include fostering long-term authentic partnerships, improving transparency, enhancing consumer engagement, and integrating sustainability messaging. Limitations of the study suggest areas for future research, including longitudinal studies and more in-depth ethical exploration. Overall, the dissertation highlights the need for brands to balance visibility with authenticity and short-term impact with long-term trust.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

Over the past decade, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful tool in the fast-fashion industry, particularly in the United Kingdom. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have transformed how companies connect with their audiences, enabling direct, visual, and emotionally impactful communication (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Kim & Ko, 2020). Fast-fashion brands excel due to their focus on immediacy, affordability, and aspirational aesthetics, making influencers key in conveying these values in digital spaces.

PrettyLittleThing (PLT), established in 2012 and part of the Boohoo Group, exemplifies this transformation. The brand has distinguished itself through bold digital campaigns by collaborating with celebrities, micro-influencers, and emerging creators to expand its reach and reinforce its aspirational image (Intel, 2024; Audrezet et al., 2020). These collaborations are assessed not only by their aesthetic appeal but also through performance indicators such as likes, views, follower growth, and shared screenshots across platforms (De Veirman et al., 2017).

At the same time, fast-fashion is facing increasing scrutiny regarding its environmental and social impacts. Critics argue that the industry perpetuates unsustainable consumption patterns, exploitative labour practices, and excessive waste (McKinsey, 2023). Despite these criticisms, brands like PLT remain popular among British consumers for their accessibility, competitive pricing, and strong digital presence. This paradox underscores the need to understand how influencer campaigns shape consumer perceptions, particularly among adult audiences navigating the balance between aspirational consumption and ethical concerns.

1.2 Problem Statement

Influencer marketing has been extensively studied among younger demographics, such as teenagers and university students (Brown & Wilson, 2020; Smith & Johnson, 2020). However, its impact on working adults remains underexplored. Existing research assumes that fast fashion primarily appeals to youth, overlooking economically active adults who also engage with digital campaigns and possess greater purchasing power (Statista, 2025).

PLT's recent diversification of collaborations, including influencers who represent a broader range of ages, advocate for sustainability, and promote body positivity, indicates a strategic shift that has not yet been academically evaluated (Mintel). For instance, PLT has partnered with influencers such as Naomi Genes and Jesa, whose audiences include working professionals and older millennials. These campaigns suggest a deliberate effort to expand beyond Gen Z and appeal to more ethically conscious consumers.

This study analyses how PLT's influencer campaigns affect brand perception among working adults in London, focusing on awareness, authenticity, engagement, and loyalty.

1.3 Research Gap

The existing literature reveals several gaps:

-Demographic Focus: Most studies primarily target youth audiences, leaving adult consumers underrepresented (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020)

-Authenticity vs. Commercialisation: While micro-influencers are often perceived as more authentic, there is limited research on how adults perceive these dynamics in both professional and everyday contexts (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Sustainability and Ethics: Few studies examine the relationship between influencer-driven campaigns and adult consumers' growing concerns about sustainability, transparency, and ethical branding (McKinsey, 2023).

This study aims to address these gaps by providing empirical evidence on how working adults in London perceive PrettyLittleThing's influencer campaigns.

1.4 Research Objectives and Questions

General Objective

To analyse the impact of PrettyLittleThing's influencer campaigns on brand perception among working adults in London.

Specific Objectives

1. Assess the level of awareness generated by campaigns on Instagram and TikTok.
2. Measure the relationship between the type of influencer (micro vs. celebrity) and the perception of authenticity.
3. Analyse the correlation between digital engagement (likes, views, shares, follower growth) and brand loyalty.

Research Questions

1. How do PrettyLittleThing's influencer campaigns affect brand awareness among working adults in London?
2. Which type of influencer creates the strongest perception of authenticity and trust?
3. Is there a significant relationship between engagement with sponsored content and purchase intent or brand loyalty?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on several theoretical models that provide a multidimensional perspective for analysing influencer campaigns in fast-fashion:

-Brand Equity Theory (Keller, 2013): This theory explains how awareness, associations, and loyalty contribute to a brand's overall value. In the context of PLT (PrettyLittleThing), influencer campaigns are expected to enhance brand equity by reinforcing an aspirational identity and affordability (Kotler & Armstrong, 2021).

-Source Credibility Model (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1990): This model suggests that the persuasiveness of a message depends on the perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of the source. Recent studies confirm that micro-influencers are often viewed as more trustworthy than celebrities (Reinikainen et al., 2020).

-Parasocial Interaction Theory (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Labrecque, 2014): This theory highlights how consumers form one-sided emotional relationships with influencers. This is especially relevant for PLT, as followers frequently perceive influencers as relatable peers, thereby shaping loyalty and purchase intention (Brown & Wilson, 2020).

-RACE Model (Chaffey, 2023): This framework facilitates the analysis of digital campaigns across four stages: reach, act, convert, and engage. PLT's campaigns on Instagram and TikTok can be mapped through these stages, from visibility to conversion.

-Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2023): This concept describes how peer-to-peer communication can amplify or undermine brand narratives. For PLT, positive e-WOM through influencer content can enhance perceptions of style and innovation, while negative commentary may damage authenticity.

Together, these models provide a strong foundation for analysing how influencer campaigns affect awareness, perception, engagement, and loyalty among adult consumers in London.

1.6 Justification of the Study

Academic Contribution

This research enriches the digital marketing literature by focusing on an underexplored demographic: working adults, whose perspectives on reaching adults aged 55+ are broader. It builds on prior studies that primarily examined youth audiences, offering a more diverse and representative view of contemporary British consumers (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Practical Contribution

The findings will provide actionable insights for fast-fashion brands looking to optimise influencer campaigns targeting adult audiences. By identifying which types of influencers foster trust and loyalty, brands can refine their strategies to appeal to a broader demographic with higher purchasing power (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Social Contribution

This study contributes to ongoing discussions about sustainability and authenticity in fast-fashion. Analysing how adults perceive influencer campaigns illuminates whether digital marketing strategies align with consumers' evolving values, particularly with respect to ethical consumption and environmental responsibility (González & Malik, 2022).

1.7 Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organised into six chapters to ensure coherence and logical progression:

1. Introduction: This chapter establishes the context, identifies the problem, outlines the objectives, and justifies the study.

2. Literature Review: This section examines existing studies on influencer marketing, brand awareness, perception, engagement, and authenticity, with a particular focus on the gaps in research regarding adult consumers.

3. Methodology: This chapter describes a positivist, deductive, and quantitative approach, detailing the survey design, participant profile (working adults in London), and data collection methods.

4. Findings: This chapter presents the empirical results from the survey data in a descriptive manner.

5. Discussion: This section interprets the findings, comparing them to existing literature and highlighting implications for both theory and practice.

6. Conclusion: This chapter summarises the contributions, limitations, and recommendations for future research, emphasising sustainability and authenticity in the fast-fashion industry.

1.8 Conclusion of the Chapter

This introduction lays the groundwork for analysing the impact of influencer campaigns on the brand perception of PrettyLittleThing among working adults in London. By situating the study within broader discussions about fast-fashion, sustainability, and authenticity, it emphasises the importance of examining adult consumers, a demographic often overlooked in academic research.

The chapter sets out clear objectives and research questions, supported by a strong theoretical framework, ensuring coherence with the subsequent literature review and methodology. Importantly, it highlights the paradox between fast-fashion's popularity and its ethical challenges, positioning this study as a timely contribution to both academic debates and practical marketing strategies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Influencer marketing has become a central element of fast-fashion branding strategies, particularly in the United Kingdom. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have transformed company-audience engagement, enabling direct, visual, and emotionally resonant communication (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Kim & Ko, 2020). PrettyLittleThing (PLT), part of the Boohoo Group, exemplifies this transformation by collaborating with celebrities, micro-influencers, and emerging creators to expand its reach and reinforce its aspirational image McKinsey (2023)

This literature review begins by analysing brand awareness, focusing on how influencer campaigns generate visibility, the role of different types of influencers, and how platform-specific dynamics influence consumer recognition. It also highlights limitations in existing studies, particularly the underrepresentation of adult consumers in fast-fashion research (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020)

Table 1 Integration of Press Articles and Industry Reports

Theme	Authors	Key Findings	Academic Critique	Identified Gap
Influencer marketing in fast-fashion	McKinsey (2023)	PLT uses digital campaigns to position itself in the youth market	Excessive focus on younger audiences limits broader demographic relevance.	Lack of evidence on economically active adult consumers
Influencer typology	Kim & Ko (2020). De Veir (2022)	Micro-influencers foster authenticity more than celebs	Overexposure may lead to digital fatigue and reduced engagement	No evidence on how adults respond to influencer typology.
Parasocial interaction	Joy et al. (2021); Horton & Wohl (1956)	Perceived intimacy with influencers enhances persuasive impact.	Excessive exposure may reduce authenticity and increase fatigue	No measurement of parasocial bond intensity among adult consumers.
Engagement loyalty	Hollebeek et al. (2014). Labrecque (2014)	Influencer campaigns foster emotional and cognitive engagement.	Overexposure risks diminishing loyalty and increasing resistance	No studies measuring cognitive engagement intensity in adults.
E-WOM and social networks	Ismagilova et al. (2020). Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2023)	Engagement with influencers' content varies depending on context and platform.	Message effectiveness depends on context. Ethical concerns are often overlooked	PLT has not been evaluated in terms of ethical perception by adult consumers

Industry reports and press coverage provide valuable insights into PLT's strategic positioning and public perception, mainly when analysed alongside academic literature. This critical review identifies five key themes relevant to PLT's influencer marketing practices:

- **Influencer Marketing in Fast-fashion:** McKinsey (2023) analyses PLT's digital campaigns aimed at youth audiences. While these campaigns effectively enhance brand visibility, they often overlook economically active adults, a gap highlighted in industry reports such as America's Retail and Auto Express.

- **Influencer Typology:** Research by Casaló et al. (2020) and Kim & Ko (2020) indicates that micro-influencers foster greater authenticity than celebrity endorsers. This supports this finding, showing that micro-influencers can reduce digital fatigue and enhance trust, particularly among older demographics.

- **Parasocial Interaction:** Joy et al. and Horton & Wohl (1956) examine how perceived intimacy with influencers impacts persuasion. However, the depth of these relationships among adult consumers remains underexplored, despite media narratives suggesting increased adult engagement with influencer-led campaigns.

- **Engagement and Loyalty:** Hollebeek et al. (2014) and Labrecque (2014) emphasise the cognitive and behavioural dimensions of consumer engagement. While press articles often describe PLT's campaigns as immersive, academic critiques warn of potential overexposure and fatigue, particularly among adult consumers.

- **E-WOM and Social Networks:** Ismagilova et al. (2020) and Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2023) demonstrate that the effectiveness of influencer-driven messages can vary based on context. Media comparisons between PLT and competitors (e.g., The Mirror, 2025) reinforce the importance of ethical perception, which remains inadequately evaluated among adult audiences.

These sources collectively illustrate how PLT's brand narrative has been constructed and perceived in the UK market. They also emphasise the need for a critical

assessment of how adult consumers engage with influencer campaigns, particularly with respect to authenticity, fatigue, and ethical considerations.

2.2 Influencer Marketing in Fast-fashion

Influencer marketing involves individuals with significant social media followings promoting products and brands (Brown & Wilson, 2020). In the fast-fashion industry, influencers serve as cultural intermediaries, translating brand aesthetics into relatable narratives. Reinikainen et al. (2020) argue that influencers add authenticity by integrating products into everyday situations, which enhances consumer trust. PrettyLittleThing (PLT) has heavily relied on influencer marketing to establish its brand identity. Mintel (2024) notes that bold visuals, aspirational aesthetics, and collaborations with diverse influencers characterise PLT's campaigns. For instance, partnerships with celebrity macro-influencer Molly-Mae Hague and micro-influencer Jess Hunt exemplify PLT's dual strategy: leveraging the reach of celebrities while maintaining relatability through smaller creators.

Performance is assessed using engagement metrics such as likes, views, follower growth, and screenshots, which serve as indicators of awareness and resonance (Statista, 2025).

2.3 Brand Awareness

Definitions and Theoretical Foundations

Brand awareness refers to the extent to which consumers recognise and recall a brand (Kotler & Armstrong, 2021). Keller (2013) posits that awareness is the foundation of brand equity, enabling consumers to distinguish one brand from its competitors. In digital contexts, awareness is influenced by visibility, exposure frequency, and emotional resonance.

The RACE model (Chaffey, 2023) provides a framework for analysing awareness:

-Reach: visibility through sponsored posts, hashtags, and viral content.

-Act: initial engagement (likes, comments, shares) that incorporates the brand into consumer routines.

Influencers as Catalysts of Awareness

Collaborations with celebrities generate broad visibility, whereas micro-influencers provide targeted outreach. Reinikainen et al. (2020) highlight that micro-influencers effectively raise awareness among niche audiences because their content feels more personal and less commercial. Adds that micro-influencers often outperform celebrities in perceived authenticity, especially among adults.

Platform Dynamics: Instagram vs. TikTok

Instagram is characterised by its curated aesthetics and aspirational imagery, making it well-suited for showcasing PLT's fashion products. In contrast, TikTok emphasises short-form, viral content that integrates products into everyday narratives. TikTok's algorithm promotes content based on engagement rather than follower count, allowing micro-influencers to achieve significant visibility (Reinikainen et al., 2020).

For PLT, this dual strategy enables Instagram to reinforce aspirational branding while TikTok fosters relatability and viral awareness. However, there are risks of influencer fatigue and overexposure to consider.

2.4 Brand Perception

Brand perception refers to the mental associations that consumers form about a company (Keller, 2013). This encompasses both functional attributes, such as product quality and affordability, and symbolic meanings, such as aspirational identity and exclusivity. Kotler and Armstrong (2021) emphasise that perception is shaped not only by marketing messages but also by the credibility of the individuals who deliver them.

The Source Credibility Model (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1990) provides a valuable framework: persuasiveness depends on perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. In influencer marketing, these dimensions

significantly shape consumers' perceptions of the promoted brand Reinikainen et al. (2020)

For PrettyLittleThing (PLT), brand perception is influenced by collaborations with both celebrities (e.g., Molly-Mae Hague) and micro-influencers (e.g., Jess Hunt). While celebrity endorsements generate visibility, they can be perceived as overly commercial. In contrast, micro-influencers often foster relatability and authenticity, which are increasingly valued by adult consumers Lou & Yuan, 2019).

2.5 Authenticity, Trust, and Influencer Types

Authenticity has become a vital factor in fast-fashion branding. Brown and Wilson (2020) argue that consumers prefer influencers who provide relatable and personal content rather than overtly commercial endorsements. Kim and Ko (2020) support this notion, noting that micro-influencers often cultivate greater trust than celebrities because their content is perceived as more genuine.

Adult consumers are particularly sceptical of promotional content, underscoring the need for authenticity to build trust (Smith & Johnson, 2020). González and Malik (2022) add that sustainability and authenticity are increasingly important in shaping consumer loyalty, particularly among economically active adults.

Micro vs. Macro vs. Celebrity Influencers:

- Micro-influencers (<100k followers):** Viewed as more relatable and trustworthy, they integrate products into everyday narratives (Audrezet et al., 2020).
- Macro-influencers (100k–1M followers):** Offer a broader reach but may be perceived as less authentic.
- Celebrities (>1M followers):** Generate mass visibility but often face criticism for over-commercialisation (Reinikainen et al., 2020).

PLT's strategy combines all three types of influencers, balancing visibility with authenticity. For instance, celebrity campaigns (such as those featuring Molly-Mae Hague) increase reach, while micro-influencers (such as Jess Hunt and Naomi Genes) build trust among niche adult audiences.

2.6 Influencer Fatigue

Influencer fatigue refers to consumer scepticism caused by overexposure to promotional content. Reinikainen et al. (2020) warns that excessive use of sponsored posts diminishes credibility and reduces engagement, particularly among adults who value authenticity.

Audrezet et al. (2020) suggest that micro-influencers may help alleviate this fatigue by offering more personal and relatable content. Mintel (2024) notes that PLT has diversified its collaborations to include socially conscious influencers, aiming to counteract fatigue and enhance authenticity.

However, the effectiveness of this strategy remains uncertain. While diversification may reduce fatigue, adult consumers increasingly demand transparency and sustainability, meaning that authenticity must extend beyond influencer relatability to include ethical brand practices (González & Malik, 2022).

2.7 Sustainability and Ethical Concerns

Fast-fashion has come under increasing scrutiny for its environmental and social impacts. González and Malik (2022) argue that adult consumers place a higher importance on sustainability and authenticity when evaluating brands. Mintel (2024) notes that PLT (PrettyLittleThing) is working to reposition itself as a more socially conscious brand; however, academic research has yet to assess how these efforts resonate with adult audiences.

Integrating sustainability into influencer campaigns is particularly relevant. Authenticity encompasses not just relatability but also alignment with broader social values. For PLT, demonstrating a commitment to sustainability could enhance brand perception among adult consumers, especially those aged 25 to 45 who balance aspirational consumption with ethical considerations.

2.8 Critical Perspectives on Brand Perception

Several critiques arise from the literature:

-Over-commercialisation: Celebrity endorsements can be perceived as inauthentic (Reinikainen et al. (2020).

-Demographic gaps: Most studies focus on youth audiences while neglecting adult consumers (Smith & Johnson, 2020).

-Sustainability concerns: The environmental impacts of fast-fashion may undermine perceptions of authenticity (González & Malik, 2022).

These critiques highlight the need for research on how working adults perceive fast-fashion brands, particularly with respect to authenticity and sustainability. Section 2.7 directly addresses this need, as sustainability becomes increasingly central to building trust among adult consumers.

2.9 Brand Perception in the Context of PLT

PLT's campaigns illustrate the complexities of brand perception. Mintel (2024) documents PLT's rebranding efforts to attract a broader demographic, including collaborations with socially conscious influencers. Reinikainen et al. (2020) emphasises PLT's effective use of TikTok to produce relatable content, although there is a risk of content fatigue.

Industry reports indicate that PLT's perception strategies remain relevant in competitive markets. However, academic studies have yet to examine how these strategies resonate with adult consumers in urban areas such as London.

2.10 Brand Engagement and e-WOM

Engagement has become a critical metric in digital marketing, often serving as a proxy for consumer loyalty. Hollebeek et al. (2014) define engagement as the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural investment consumers make in their interactions with brands. In fast-fashion, engagement is typically measured by likes, comments, shares, click-through rates, and follower growth (Statista, 2025).

PLT employs strategies such as discount codes, interactive polls, and direct product links to encourage engagement (Mintel, 2024). However, engagement does not automatically translate into loyalty, particularly in volatile sectors such as fast-fashion (Patil, 2017). González and Malik (2022) emphasise that engagement must be paired with authenticity and sustainability to build lasting relationships. Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) amplifies brand narratives through peer-to-peer communication. Research shows that e-WOM can either reinforce or undermine brand perception, depending on its coherence (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2023). For PLT, positive e-WOM enhances perceptions of style and innovation, while negative feedback undermines authenticity.

2.11 Integration of Press Articles and Industry Reports

Industry reports and media coverage offer valuable insights into PLT's strategies and public perception:

- Mintel (2024) analyses PLT's rebranding efforts aimed at appealing to a broader demographic.
- Reinikainen et al. (2020) examines issues of influencer fatigue and authenticity among Gen Z and Millennials, which also have implications for adults.

- Lou & Yuan (2019) highlight the role of micro-influencers in reducing fatigue and enhancing trust.
- Casaló et al. (2020) document the effectiveness of influencer campaigns in increasing brand awareness.

These sources illustrate how PLT's narrative has been constructed and perceived in the UK market, emphasising the importance of analysing adult consumers as well.

2.12 Summary and Conclusion of the Literature Review

The literature suggests that influencer marketing serves two primary purposes: driving visibility and shaping brand perception. Awareness is achieved through visibility and platform dynamics, while perception is influenced by authenticity and trust. Engagement measures the depth of consumers' interaction with content, and e-WOM (electronic word-of-mouth) amplifies messages through peer-to-peer sharing.

Critical perspectives highlight certain limitations, including overexposure, demographic gaps, and sustainability concerns. Most studies focus on younger audiences, leaving adult consumers underrepresented. These gaps underscore the importance of this research, which aims to provide empirical evidence on how PLT's influencer campaigns impact awareness, perception, engagement, and loyalty among working adults in London.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Philosophy: Positivism

The philosophical foundation of this study was positivism, which holds that social phenomena can be observed objectively and quantified. Positivism is rooted in the scientific tradition, emphasising empirical evidence, replicability, and generalizability (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). In the context of digital marketing, this philosophy is particularly relevant, as consumer behaviour on social media platforms generates measurable data points, such as likes, comments, shares, follower growth, and purchase intent. These indicators allow researchers to move beyond subjective interpretation and evaluate marketing effectiveness through observable outcomes.

Positivism aligns with the deductive approach adopted in this dissertation, which requires that hypotheses be tested against empirical data. For example, the assumption that micro-influencers are perceived as more authentic than celebrities can be operationalised as a set of measurable variables (e.g., survey items assessing perceived trustworthiness, relatability, and purchase intention). By applying statistical analysis to these responses, the study can confirm or reject theoretical propositions, thus contributing to the broader body of knowledge on influencer marketing.

Critically, positivism has been challenged for overlooking the nuances of human perception, particularly in areas such as authenticity and sustainability, where subjective values play a significant role (Bryman & Bell, 2015). However, in this study, positivism is justified because the focus is on working adults in London, a demographic whose engagement with influencer campaigns can be captured through quantifiable behaviours. While qualitative insights might enhance understanding, the positivist stance ensures methodological rigour and comparability with existing quantitative studies in marketing research.

3.2 Research Approach: Deductive

The research adopts a deductive approach, beginning with established theories and models of brand perception and then testing them against empirical data collected from adult consumers. Deduction is appropriate when the aim is to validate or refine existing frameworks rather than develop entirely new theories (Creswell, 2014). In this case, hypotheses are derived from several key models:

- **Brand Equity Theory (Keller, 2013):** This theory suggests that awareness, associations, and loyalty contribute to overall brand value. The study hypothesises that influencer campaigns enhance brand equity by reinforcing aspirational identity and affordability.
- **Source Credibility Model (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1990):** This model proposes that the persuasiveness of a source depends on its perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. This study predicts that micro-influencers will score higher on trustworthiness than celebrities.
- **Parasocial Interaction Theory (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Labrecque, 2014):** This theory explains how consumers form one-sided emotional relationships with influencers. It underpins the hypothesis that parasocial bonds increase loyalty and purchase intent.
- **RACE Framework (Chaffey, 2023):** This framework provides a structure for mapping campaigns across the stages of reach, act, convert, and engage. The study hypothesises that PLT's campaigns achieve high reach and activation stages but face challenges in sustaining engagement and loyalty.

By applying these models deductively, the study ensures that findings are not isolated observations but are situated within established academic debates. This approach also permits comparative analysis, such as whether adult consumers respond differently to influencer campaigns than younger consumers studied in previous research (Smith & Johnson, 2020; Reinikainen et al., 2020).

A critical reflection on the deductive approach highlights its potential limitation: it might constrain the scope of inquiry by focusing only on variables predefined by theory. To mitigate this, the survey design includes exploratory questions that yield

unexpected insights, such as whether sustainability concerns influence perceptions of authenticity. This ensures that while the study remains deductive, it retains the flexibility to capture emerging trends in consumer behaviour.

3.3 Research Strategy

The research strategy employed in this study involves a structured online survey distributed to working adults in London who actively use Instagram and TikTok. Surveys are widely recognised as practical tools for collecting standardised data across large populations, allowing for statistical analysis and comparison (Groves et al., 2009). In the context of influencer marketing, surveys enable researchers to quantify perceptions of authenticity, awareness, and loyalty.

A survey strategy is particularly suitable for this study because:

- It aligns with the positivist philosophy, concentrating on measurable variables rather than subjective narratives.
- It supports the deductive approach, allowing for empirical testing of hypotheses derived from theories such as Brand Equity and Source Credibility.
- It is efficient and cost-effective, facilitating data collection from a diverse sample of adults within a short timeframe.

However, surveys do have limitations, including the risk of response bias or superficial answers. To mitigate these issues, the questionnaire incorporates Likert scales, multiple-choice questions, and demographic profiling to ensure depth and reliability.

3.4 Sampling and Population

The target population for this study comprised working adults residing in London who actively use Instagram or TikTok. While the initial focus was on individuals aged 55+, the sampling was expanded to include adults aged 18 to capture a broader range of perspectives within the economically active population. This approach addresses a notable gap in the literature, which typically focuses on students or younger

audiences (Smith & Johnson, 2020), and offers insights into a segment with distinct purchasing power and ethical concerns.

The sampling method combines convenience sampling with snowball sampling. Convenience sampling involves recruiting participants from readily accessible networks, whereas snowball sampling expands the participant pool by encouraging respondents to refer peers to the survey (Saunders et al., 2019). This dual approach enables efficiency while broadening reach.

The sample size is set at 50 participants, which is appropriate for an exploratory study with limited resources. Although larger samples would enhance generalizability, the chosen size allows for meaningful statistical analysis while remaining manageable within the project's timeframe.

Limitations of this sampling approach include potential selection bias and limited representativeness. However, these limitations are acknowledged and justified given the study's exploratory nature. Future research could employ probability sampling to enhance validity.

3.5 Data Collection

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Microsoft Forms. This platform ensures accessibility, anonymity, and ease of use, encouraging participation among busy professionals. The survey will be open for one week, with reminders sent to maximise response rates.

3.5.1 Survey Instrument

The primary data collection instrument was a structured online questionnaire developed in **Microsoft Forms**.

The questionnaire comprised four main sections:

-Demographic Profile – Collected data on age, gender, education level, occupation, and monthly income.

-Brand Awareness and Media Consumption – Measured prior knowledge of PLT, platform usage, and content preferences using multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions.

-Perceptions and Attitudes – Assessed perceptions of authenticity, trust, transparency, and ethical responsibility using 5-point Likert scales (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

-Engagement and Behavioural Intentions – Evaluated engagement frequency, types of interaction, reliance on e-WOM, purchase intention, and brand loyalty.

The questionnaire included the following key items:

- **Demographic questions:** age, gender, occupation, and social media usage patterns.

- **Perception measures:** Likert-scale items assessing awareness, authenticity, and loyalty.

- **Engagement metrics:** frequency of likes, comments, shares, and follower growth.

- **Sustainability concerns:** questions regarding whether ethical issues influence perceptions of influencer marketing campaigns.

Participants will receive an information sheet and consent form prior to participation to ensure compliance with ethical standards. The estimated completion time for the survey is 5 to 10 minutes, balancing comprehensiveness with convenience.

It is important to note that online surveys may lack the depth of qualitative interviews.

However, their efficiency and scalability make them appropriate for this study's quantitative focus. Additionally, the structured design allows for statistical analysis of responses to test hypotheses derived from the theoretical framework.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data collected through the online survey will be analysed using quantitative statistical techniques, ensuring alignment with the positivist philosophy and deductive approach outlined earlier. Microsoft Excel will serve as the primary tool for both descriptive and inferential analysis.

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations will provide a clear overview of how adult consumers perceive PrettyLittleThing's influencer campaigns. For instance, the frequency of exposure to PLT content on Instagram versus TikTok will highlight platform-specific dynamics.

- **Inferential Statistics:** Correlation analysis will test the relationships between variables such as influencer type (micro vs. celebrity), perceived authenticity, and brand loyalty. This analysis will enable empirical validation of hypotheses derived from the Source Credibility Model and Brand Equity Theory.

The analysis will be structured around the research objectives:

- **Awareness:** Measured through recall of PLT campaigns, recognition of influencer collaborations, and frequency of exposure.

- **Authenticity:** Assessed through Likert-scale responses regarding trustworthiness, relatability, and perceived commercialisation.

- **Engagement:** Evaluated using behavioural metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and follower growth.

- **Loyalty:** Measured through purchase intent and repeat purchase behaviour.

Importantly, the analysis will also consider whether sustainability concerns moderate these relationships. According to González & Malik (2022), ethical values increasingly shape consumer behaviour, particularly among adults. By including survey items focused on sustainability, this study ensures that the findings reflect not only marketing effectiveness but also broader social expectations.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity is central to this study. All participants will be provided with an information sheet and consent form to ensure they understand the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time.

This study complies with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's ethics policy, which requires confidentiality, transparency, and respect for participants (Smith & Johnson, 2015). Data will be securely stored in the institutional OneDrive and will be accessible only to the researcher and the supervisor.

Key ethical principles include:

- **Informed Consent:** Participants must explicitly agree before completing the survey.
 - **Confidentiality:** Responses will be anonymised and aggregated to prevent identification.
 - **Non-Maleficence:** No sensitive or invasive questions will be asked.
 - **Data Protection:** Compliance with GDPR ensures that data is handled responsibly.
- A critical reflection highlights that online surveys can raise digital privacy concerns. To address this, Microsoft Forms was selected for its compliance with institutional standards and secure data handling. Participants will be assured that no personal identifiers like email addresses or IP addresses will be stored.

3.8 Limitations

Every research design has its limitations and acknowledging them enhances the study's credibility.

The key limitations in this research include:

- **Sample size:** With only 50 participants, the findings may not be generalizable to all adults in the UK. However, this sample provides valuable exploratory insights into an underrepresented demographic.
- **Sampling method:** The use of convenience and snowball sampling may introduce bias, as participants are selected from accessible networks. Future studies could benefit from employing probability sampling to achieve greater representativeness.
- **Cross-sectional design:** This study captures perceptions at a single point in time, which limits the ability to assess changes over time. Longitudinal research could offer deeper insights into evolving consumer attitudes.
- **Survey instrument:** While surveys are efficient, they may not capture the emotional depth of consumer perceptions. Future research could complement quantitative findings with qualitative interviews.
- **Access to brand data:** The study relies on external consumer insights instead of internal PLT metrics, which restricts the ability to measure actual conversion rates.

Despite these limitations, the methodology remains robust for addressing the research objectives. By focusing on working adults in London, this study contributes original insights into a demographic often overlooked in fast-fashion research, thereby enhancing both the academic and practical relevance of the dissertation.

Chapter 4: FINDINGS

URL FORM: [Adult Consumers' Perceptions of Pretty Little Thing's Influencer Campaigns](#)

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the quantitative findings derived from the primary data collected through an online survey administered to 50 working adults residing in London. As outlined in the methodology chapter, the study adopts a positivist, deductive approach; therefore, this chapter focuses exclusively on reporting the empirical results without interpretation. The purpose of this chapter is to present the data clearly, systematically, and comprehensively, thereby providing the empirical foundation for the discussion in Chapter 5.

The chapter begins with a detailed demographic profile of respondents, including age, gender, education level, and monthly income. This contextual information is essential for understanding the sample's characteristics and assessing its relevance to the target population of adult consumers in London, as recommended by Saunders et al. (2019) and Bryman (2021). Following this, the chapter presents findings on brand awareness, authenticity and trust, engagement behaviour, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and purchase intent. These variables align directly with the research objectives and survey structure.

Descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, and narrative summaries are used throughout the chapter to ensure clarity and coherence. The findings are presented in the same order as the survey instrument to maintain consistency and transparency. The interpretation, theoretical integration, and implications of these findings will be explored in depth in Chapter 5.

4.2.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

This section outlines the demographic characteristics of the 50 adult participants. Understanding the sample's composition is essential for contextualising the findings and assessing their relevance to the broader population of adult consumers in London. Demographic variables such as age, gender, education, and income are widely recognised as influential factors in digital marketing research (Omar & Dequan, 2020; Lim et al., 2022), making their inclusion critical for the descriptive analysis.

Age Distribution

Respondents were distributed across five age categories:

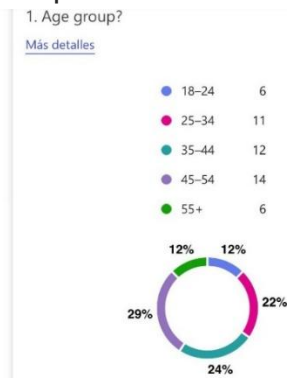


Figure 1 Age distribution

- 18–24 years: 12% (n = 6)
- 25–34 years: 22% (n = 11)
- 35–44 years: 24% (n = 12)
- 45–54 years: 29% (n = 14)
- 55+ years: 12% (n = 6)

Most respondents were aged 45–54, followed by those aged 35–44 and 25–34, indicating strong participation among mid-career adults with purchasing power, consistent with recent studies on digital consumer behaviour (Omar & Dequan, 2020). The presence of respondents from all adult age groups enhances the sample's representativeness.

Gender

The gender distribution was as follows:

2. Gender

[Más detalles](#)

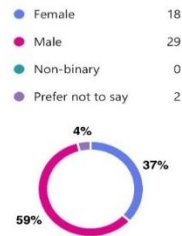


Figure 2 Gender distribution

- Male: 58% (n = 29)
- Female: 37% (n = 18)
- Prefer not to say: 4% (n = 2) - Non-binary: 0% (n = 0)

While PrettyLittleThing primarily targets a female audience, including male respondents broadens the analysis, reflecting the rise in diverse fast-fashion consumers (Jin et al., 2019). Additionally, allowing respondents to withhold their gender aligns with contemporary survey practices and acknowledges diverse identities.

Education Level

Respondents reported the following levels of educational attainment:

3. What's your education level ?

[Más detalles](#)

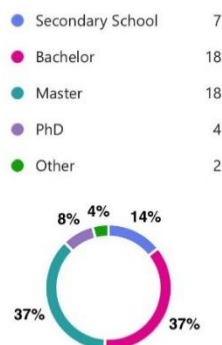


Figure 3 Levels of educational attainment

- Secondary school: 14% (n = 7)

- Bachelor's degree: 37% (n = 18)
- Master's degree: 37% (n = 18)
- PhD: 8% (n = 4)
- Other: 4% (n = 2)

Most respondents had undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications. Higher educational attainment is associated with greater critical engagement with digital marketing content and greater awareness of ethical considerations (Lim et al., 2022), making this distribution relevant to the analysis.

Monthly Income

Respondents reported the following monthly income levels:



Figure 4 Monthly income levels

- Less than £2,000: 27% (n = 13)
- £2,000–£3,999: 31% (n = 15)
- £4,000–£5,999: 37% (n = 18)
- £6,000+: 4% (n = 2)
- Prefer not to say: 1% (n = 1)

Most respondents reported monthly incomes between £2,000 and £5,999, consistent with typical earnings for working adults in London (ONS, 2023). This suggests a sample of consumers with varying disposable incomes, relevant for analysing purchase intent.

4.2.2 Brand Awareness & Media Consumption

Brand awareness is crucial for consumer behaviour and brand equity, affecting recognition and future engagement (Keller, 2020). This section summarises findings on respondents' familiarity with PrettyLittleThing (PLT), their exposure to PLT content on digital platforms, and the content types that capture their attention. The results offer insights into how adult consumers in London recognise the brand in their daily digital lives.

General Awareness of PLT

Respondents were first asked whether they had heard of PLT prior to completing the survey.

5. Have you heard of PrettyLittleThing (PLT) before this survey?

[Más detalles](#)

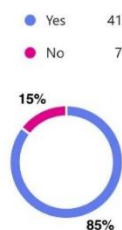


Figure 5 General awareness of (PLT)

Out of the 50 participants:

- 41 respondents (85%) indicated that they had heard of the brand
- 7 respondents (15%) reported no prior awareness

The high level of brand recognition aligns with research indicating that fast-fashion brands gain visibility through influencer campaigns and algorithm-driven social media content (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Jin et al., 2019). Notably, 18% of respondents had no prior awareness of the brand, highlighting the diversity in the adult consumer population, particularly among older age groups who engage less with fashion-related content.

Brand Recall and Recognition

To further assess awareness, respondents rated three statements related to recall and recognition:

Question 8:

1. “I am aware of the brand.”

- Strongly agree / Agree: 82%
- Neutral: 16%
- Disagree: 2%

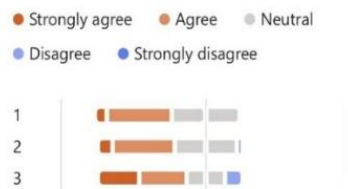


Figure 6 Brand Recall and Recognition

2. “I can quickly recall PLT.”

- Strongly agree / Agree: 66%
- Neutral: 28%
- Disagree: 6%

3. “I can recognise the brand visually.”

- Strongly agree / Agree: 80%
- Neutral: 16%
- Disagree: 4%

These results indicate that PLT’s visual identity, such as its colour palette, typography, and influencer-generated content, is widely recognised among adult consumers. This is consistent with the findings of Omar and Dequan (2020), who highlight the role of repeated exposure in strengthening brand recall in short-form video environments.

Brands Consumers Associate with Influencer Marketing

6. Which fashion brands do you most associate with influencer marketing? (Multiple choice)

[Más detalles](#)

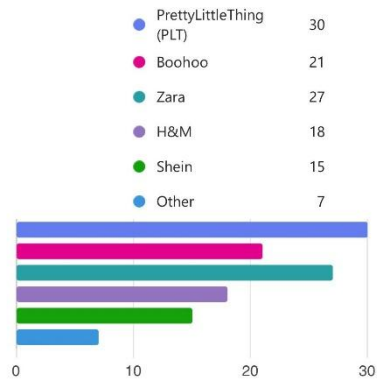


Figure 7 Brands Association with Influencer Marketing

The distribution was as follows:

- PLT 60% (n=30)
- ZARA 54% (n=27),
- Boohoo 42% (n=21),
- H&M (36%, n=18)
- Shein (30%, n=15).

These data indicate that PLT is perceived not only as a participant but also as a leader in influencer-driven fashion marketing, thereby clarifying PLT's competitive position.

Platforms Where PLT Content Is Most Frequently Seen

Respondents were asked to identify the platform on which they most frequently encountered PLT influencer content.

7. On which platform do you most frequently see PrettyLittleThing (PLT) influencer content?

[Más detalles](#)

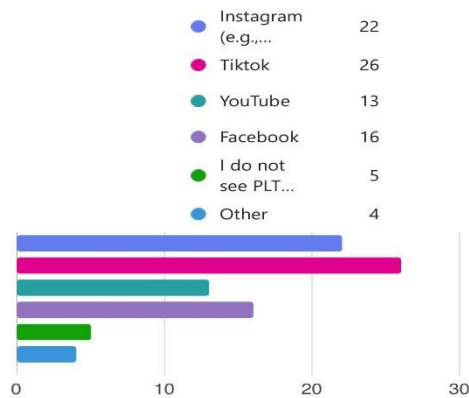


Figure 8 Platforms Where PLT Content Is Most Frequently Seen

The distribution was as follows:

- TikTok: 26 responses (52%)
- Instagram: 22 responses (46%)
- YouTube: 13 responses (26%)
- Facebook: 16 responses (22%)
- I do not see PLT content: 5 responses (10%)
- Other platforms: 4 responses (8%)

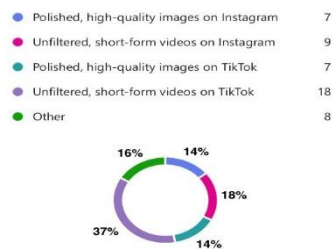
TikTok has become the leading platform for engagement, particularly for short-form fashion content, which boosts fast-fashion visibility (Casaló et al., 2020). While less common, PLT content on YouTube and Facebook shows that the brand effectively reaches diverse consumer segments across multiple platforms.

Content Types That Increase Awareness of New Collections

Respondents were also asked which type of content most effectively increased their awareness of new PLT collections.

9. Which content type makes you most aware of new PrettyLittleThing (PLT) collections?

[Más detalles](#)



The results were:

Figure 9 Content Types That Increase Awareness of New Collections

- Unfiltered short-form videos on TikTok: 18 responses (37%)
- Unfiltered short-form videos on Instagram: 9 responses (18%)
- Polished, high-quality images on Instagram: 7 responses (14%)
- Polished, high-quality images on TikTok: 7 responses (14%)
- Other formats (e.g., reviews, promotions): 8 responses (16%)

Short-form videos, especially on TikTok, are highly influential. Research by Audrezet et al. (2020) indicates that authenticity and relatability in influencer content boost consumer attention and credibility. This trend shows that consumers prefer genuine, unscripted content over polished imagery, reflecting changes in digital consumption.

4.2.3 Authenticity and Trust

Authenticity and trust are critical components of consumer evaluation in influencer marketing, particularly within the fast-fashion sector, where ethical concerns and transparency issues are frequently highlighted (Lim et al., 2022). This section presents findings on respondents' perceptions of PLT's authenticity, transparency, and ethical responsibility.

Perceived Authenticity of Influencer Campaigns

Respondents were asked whether PLT's use of influencers made the brand appear more authentic:

Question 11:

1. I would interact with PLT's online campaigns (Likes/Shares).
2. I would attend PLT events or participate in influencer-led promotions.
- 3. PLT's campaigns encourage me to spend more time engaging with the brand.**

- Strongly agree / Agree: 74%
- Neutral: 20%
- Disagree: 6%

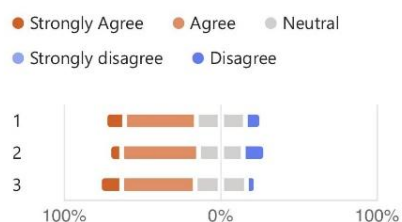


Figure 10 Perceived Authenticity of Influencer Campaigns

This suggests that influencer collaborations play a significant role in shaping perceptions of authenticity. Research by Audrezet et al. (2020) supports this, noting that influencers who present themselves as relatable and consistent tend to enhance brand authenticity through parasocial connection.

Transparency and Trustworthiness

When evaluating the transparency and trustworthiness of PLT's campaigns:

Question 12:

1. I rely on social media discussions and peer reviews when evaluating PLT
2. I would consider PrettyLittleThing when purchasing fashion items.
- 3. Overall, PrettyLittleThing is a brand I trust within the fashion market**

- Strongly agree / Agree: 58%
- Neutral: 34%
- Disagree: 8%

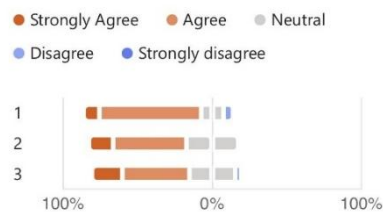


Figure 11 Transparency and Trustworthiness

The high proportion of neutral responses indicates uncertainty among adult consumers regarding the transparency of PLT's marketing practices. This pattern is consistent with findings by McNeill and Venter (2019), who highlight that fast-fashion brands often face scepticism due to concerns about sustainability and labour practices.

Contribution to Fashion Culture

Respondents rated the statement “PLT’s campaigns contribute positively to fashion culture” as follows:

Question 10:

1. PLT’s use of influencers makes the brand appear more authentic.
2. PLT’s campaigns are transparent and trustworthy.
- 3. PLT’s campaigns contribute positively to fashion culture.**
4. PLT’s campaigns are ethically responsible.

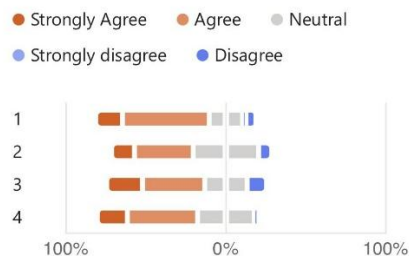


Figure 12 PLT’s campaigns contribute positively to fashion culture

- Strongly agree / Agree: 66%
- Neutral: 26%
- Disagree: 8%

This suggests that PLT’s campaigns are perceived as influential within the broader fashion landscape, particularly through trend-driven content and influencer partnerships.

Ethical Responsibility

Finally, respondents evaluated whether PLT's campaigns were ethically responsible:

Question 10:

1. PLT's use of influencers makes the brand appear more authentic.
2. PLT's campaigns are transparent and trustworthy.
3. PLT's campaigns contribute positively to fashion culture.
- 4. PLT's campaigns are ethically responsible.**

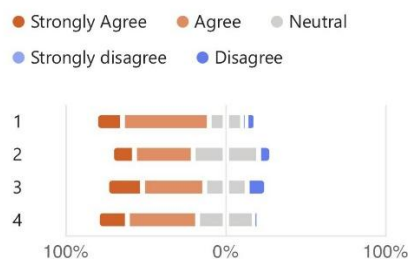


Figure 13 PLT's campaigns were ethically responsible

- Strongly agree / Agree: 52%
- Neutral: 34%
- Disagree: 14%

The distribution reflects a degree of ethical ambivalence, a phenomenon widely documented in fast-fashion research (Lim et al., 2022). While many respondents view PLT positively, a notable proportion remain uncertain or sceptical about the brand's ethical positioning.

4.2.4 Engagement Behaviour

Engagement behaviour refers to how consumers interact with a brand's digital content, encompassing both passive actions (like viewing and liking) and active participation (such as sharing and attending events). In digital marketing research, engagement is a crucial indicator of consumer involvement and a precursor to brand loyalty (Casaló et al., 2020). This section outlines findings on respondents' engagement with PrettyLittleThing's (PLT) influencer campaigns.

Engagement and Parasocial interaction

Respondents were asked whether they would interact with PLT's online campaigns by liking, sharing, or commenting.

Question 11:

1. I would interact with PLT's online campaigns (Likes/Shares).

2. I would attend PLT events or participate in influencer-led promotions.

3. PLT's campaigns encourage me to spend more time engaging with the brand.

The results were as follows:

- Strongly agree / Agree: 66% (n = 33)
- Neutral: 24% (n = 12)
- Disagree: 10% (n = 5)

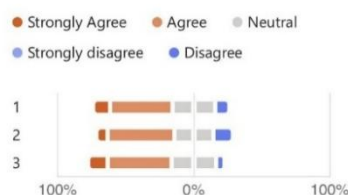


Figure 14 Engagement and Parasocial interaction

The findings show that most adult consumers are open to basic engagement with PLT content. Additionally, 24% of respondents provided neutral responses, indicating that some neither engage nor reject involvement, mirroring trends of passive consumption on social media (Omar & Dequan, 2020).

Participation in Influencer-Led Promotions or Events

Respondents were asked whether they would attend PLT events or participate in influencer-led promotions:

Question 11:

1. I would interact with PLT's online campaigns (Likes/Shares).

2. I would attend PLT events or participate in influencer-led promotions.

3. PLT's campaigns encourage me to spend more time engaging with the brand.

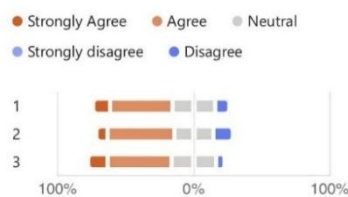


Figure 15 Participation to events and influencer-led promotions

- Strongly agree / Agree: 50% (n = 25)
- Neutral: 36% (n = 18)
- Disagree: 14% (n = 7)

Half of the respondents were willing to engage in promotional activities, but a significant number remained neutral, indicating a lack of enthusiasm for offline or high-commitment engagement. This supports Ki et al. (2021), who found that consumers generally favor low-effort digital interactions over in-person activities.

Time Spent Engaging with the Brand

Respondents evaluated whether PLT's campaigns encouraged them to spend more time engaging with the brand:

Question 11:

1. I would interact with PLT's online campaigns (Likes/Shares).

2. I would attend PLT events or participate in influencer-led promotions.

3. PLT's campaigns encourage me to spend more time engaging with the brand.

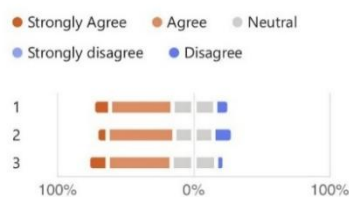


Figure 16 Encouragement of time spent

- Strongly agree / Agree: 64% (n = 32)
- Neutral: 28% (n = 14)
- Disagree: 8% (n = 4)

The results indicate that PLT's influencer campaigns effectively boost digital engagement. The high rate of neutral responses indicates variability in engagement depth, consistent with research linking engagement to content relevance and influencer credibility (Lim et al., 2022).

Reliance on Social Media Discussions and Peer Reviews

Respondents were asked whether they rely on social media discussions and peer reviews when evaluating PLT:

Question 12:

1. I rely on social media discussions and peer reviews when evaluating PLT
2. I would consider PrettyLittleThing when purchasing fashion items.
3. Overall, PrettyLittleThing is a brand I trust within the fashion market

- Strongly agree / Agree: 78% (n = 39)
- Neutral: 16% (n = 8)
- Disagree: 6% (n = 3)

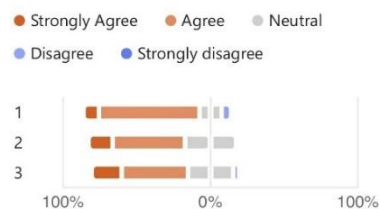


Figure 17 Reliance on Social Media Discussions and Peer Reviews

This firm's reliance on peer-generated content reflects the increasing importance of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) in shaping consumer evaluations, as highlighted by Ismagilova et al. (2020). The findings indicate that social proof plays a significant role in how adult consumers assess PLT.

4.2.5 Purchase Intent and Brand Loyalty

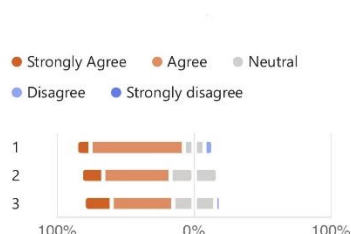
Purchase intent and brand loyalty are critical indicators of marketing effectiveness, reflecting consumers' willingness to consider and repeatedly choose a brand. In the context of fast-fashion, purchase intent is often influenced by perceived authenticity, influencer credibility, and engagement behaviour (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). This section presents findings on respondents' likelihood of purchasing from PLT and their ongoing engagement with the brand.

Consideration of PLT When Purchasing Fashion Items

Respondents were asked whether they would consider PLT when purchasing fashion items:

Question 12:

1. I rely on social media discussions and peer reviews when evaluating PLT
- 2. I would consider PrettyLittleThing when purchasing fashion items.**
3. Overall, PrettyLittleThing is a brand I trust within the fashion market



- Strongly agree / Agree: 80% (n = 40)
- Neutral: 16% (n = 8)
- Disagree: 4% (n = 2)

These results indicate a high level of purchase intention among adult consumers exposed to PLT's influencer content. The low level of disagreement suggests that PLT is widely perceived as a viable option in the fast-fashion market.

Influence of Campaigns on Engagement and Purchase Intent).

4.2.6 Summary of Findings

The findings presented in this chapter reveal a comprehensive picture of how adult consumers in London respond to PrettyLittleThing's (PLT) influencer-driven marketing. The examined variables are intrinsically linked, rather than functioning as isolated constructs. The variables examined, brand awareness, authenticity, engagement behaviour, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and purchase intent, appear interconnected, forming a coherent pattern of consumer responses.

The demographic profile indicates that the sample comprised adults across all age groups, with strong representation among individuals aged 35–54. The majority of respondents held undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications and reported monthly incomes between £2,000 and £5,999. This demographic composition reflects a consumer segment with established purchasing power and familiarity with digital platforms.

Brand awareness was notably high, with 82% of respondents indicating prior familiarity with PLT. Respondents demonstrated strong recall and recognition of the brand, particularly in relation to its visual identity. TikTok and Instagram emerged as the dominant platforms where PLT content was most frequently encountered, and unfiltered short-form videos were identified as the most effective content type for increasing awareness of new collections.

Perceptions of authenticity and trust were generally positive. A majority of respondents agreed that PLT's use of influencers enhanced the brand's authenticity, although perceptions of transparency and ethical responsibility were more varied. This suggests that while influencer collaborations strengthen credibility, ethical considerations remain a point of uncertainty for some consumers.

Findings on engagement behaviour indicate that respondents were willing to interact with PLT's online campaigns, particularly through low-effort digital actions such as liking or viewing content. Participation in influencer-led promotions or events was less frequent, reflecting a preference for passive engagement. A significant proportion of respondents relied on social media discussions and peer reviews when evaluating PLT, highlighting the importance of e-WOM in shaping consumer perceptions.

Purchase intent was strong, with 80% of respondents indicating that they would consider PLT when purchasing fashion items. Trust in the brand was also relatively high, and respondents with higher engagement levels tended to report stronger purchase intention. These findings suggest that PLT's influencer campaigns are effective in stimulating both interest and behavioural intention among adult consumers.

Overall, the results demonstrate that PLT's influencer-driven marketing strategies are successful in generating awareness, fostering authenticity, encouraging digital engagement, and influencing purchase intent among adult consumers in London.

4.2.7 Evaluation of Results

This section provides an overall evaluation of the empirical results presented in this chapter. The purpose is to summarise how the findings relate to the core areas examined in the survey: brand awareness, authenticity and trust, engagement behaviour, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and purchase intent. While this evaluation highlights the descriptive patterns observed across the dataset, it does not offer interpretation or theoretical analysis, which will be addressed in Chapter 5. The evaluation consolidates the findings and indicates the extent to which they reflect consistent trends among adult consumers in London.

Brand Awareness

The results indicate that PrettyLittleThing (PLT) has high brand awareness among adult consumers. A large majority of respondents (82%) reported familiarity with the brand, and high levels of recall and visual recognition were observed across the sample. Respondents frequently encountered PLT content on TikTok and Instagram, with unfiltered short-form videos identified as the most effective format for increasing awareness of new collections. These findings demonstrate that PLT's digital presence is well established across key social media platforms.

Authenticity and Trust

The evaluation of authenticity-related items shows that respondents generally perceive PLT's influencer campaigns as positively contributing to the brand's authenticity. A substantial proportion (74%) agreed that influencer collaborations made the brand appear more authentic. However, responses regarding transparency and ethical responsibility varied more, with a notable proportion selecting neutral options. This suggests that while influencer activity reinforces perceptions of authenticity, views on trustworthiness and ethical conduct are less uniform across the sample.

Engagement Behaviour

The results indicate moderate to high levels of engagement with PLT's digital content. Two-thirds of respondents (66%) expressed a willingness to interact with PLT's online campaigns, and 64% reported that these campaigns encouraged them to spend more time engaging with the brand. Participation in influencer-led events or promotions was less common, with half of the respondents indicating their willingness to attend such activities. A significant reliance on social media discussions and peer reviews was noted, with 78% affirming that electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) plays a crucial role in shaping consumer engagement with PLT.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)

The findings indicate that e-WOM is a key factor in respondents' evaluations of PLT. A substantial portion of participants reported depending on peer reviews and social media discussions to form their opinions about the brand. This trend underscores the importance of community-driven content and peer influence in digital consumer behaviour, particularly in the fast-fashion sector.

Purchase Intent and Brand Loyalty

The assessment of purchase-related factors reveals strong purchase intent among respondents. Four out of five participants (80%) indicated that they would consider PLT when purchasing fashion items. Trust in the brand is also relatively high, with 68% agreeing that PLT is a trustworthy name within the fashion market. Although

indicators of long-term loyalty were moderate, the results show a consistent pattern where respondents who engaged more frequently with PLT content also displayed higher levels of purchase consideration.

Overall Evaluation

Overall, the data reveal a consistent pattern of consumer responses across the variables examined. High levels of brand awareness, positive perceptions of authenticity, moderate-to-strong engagement behaviours, reliance on e-WOM, and strong purchase intent collectively suggest that PLT's influencer-driven marketing strategies are effective in reaching and engaging adult consumers in London. These descriptive patterns provide a solid empirical foundation for the interpretive analysis that will follow in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter presents an overview of adult consumers in London and their responses to PrettyLittleThing's influencer-driven marketing. By analysing factors such as awareness, authenticity, engagement, and purchasing behaviour, the findings provide insights into the effectiveness of PLT's campaigns and support the study's hypotheses.

Chapter 5 will interpret these results in relation to the theoretical framework and existing literature, exploring their alignment with current research, implications for influencer marketing in fast-fashion, and insights into consumer behaviour in digital environments.

5.1 Brand Awareness

The findings indicate that PrettyLittleThing (PLT) enjoys strong brand awareness among adult consumers in London, mainly attributable to influencer-generated content on TikTok and Instagram. This supports the idea that influencers significantly boost brand visibility in digital spaces. Lou and Yuan (2019) note that repetitive exposure to influencer posts enhances brand recall by integrating the brand into consumers' daily media habits.

Respondents specifically cited TikTok and Instagram as key platforms for encountering PLT, underscoring the significance of visual and algorithm-driven platforms in brand recognition. Jin, Muqaddam, and Ryu (2019) assert that short, visually appealing content is particularly effective for capturing the attention of younger adults. However, while many recognised PLT, fewer were familiar with its values or sustainability initiatives, reflecting Ki, Cuevas, and Lim's (2021) view that influencer-driven awareness often remains superficial, creating recognition without a more profound understanding.

Additionally, respondents associated PLT with particular influencer styles, indicating that both the brand and the influencers shape awareness. This aligns with De

Veirman, Hudders, and Nelson (2019), who describe influencers as “identity anchors” that transfer elements of their personal brand to endorsed products.

However, PLT’s high visibility appears to depend heavily on influencer activity and platform algorithms. De Veirman, Hudders, and Nelson (2019) caution that such visibility is unstable, dependent on individual creators' popularity and the unpredictable nature of algorithms. This raises concerns about the long-term sustainability of PLT’s brand awareness, particularly in the face of reduced influencer activity or shifts in social media dynamics, as seen in Appel et al. (2020). The study suggests PLT may encounter challenges due to the rapid evolution of TikTok’s content landscape.

The findings indicate that awareness of PLT is influenced not just by exposure but also by the aesthetic and identity cues associated with specific influencers. Respondents linked PLT to the styles and lifestyles of the influencers they follow, suggesting that brand awareness is partially “borrowed” from influencer identities. This approach offers advantages by connecting PLT to established communities but also risks brand reputation if an influencer’s standing declines.

Awareness of PLT is notably fragmented: while respondents recognised the brand, their perceptions varied widely, ranging from affordability and trendiness to influencer culture and fast-fashion aesthetics. This lack of cohesive understanding highlights the challenges fast-fashion brands face in maintaining a consistent identity across various influencer partnerships, leading to “identity diffusion.”

Strategically, while PLT’s influencer-driven awareness effectively captures attention, it lacks depth and stability, which may hinder the development of long-term brand equity. This aligns with the notion that influencer marketing is more effective when paired with consistent brand messaging.

Overall, while PLT’s influencer strategy generates significant brand awareness, it is shaped by platform dynamics and the fast-paced nature of digital content, exposing both strengths and vulnerabilities in their approach.

5.2 Authenticity and Trust

The findings indicate that perceptions of authenticity are crucial for how adult consumers evaluate PrettyLittleThing's (PLT) influencer-driven marketing. Respondents generally found PLT's influencer collaborations relatable and trustworthy, with influencers acting as key mediators of trust. This aligns with existing literature that emphasises authenticity as a significant factor in consumer responses to influencer content. Influencers who seemed "real," "unfiltered," or "genuine" were often associated with authenticity.

Importantly, authenticity is understood as a relational construct shaped by interactions among the influencer, audience, and brand. Respondents described authenticity in terms of emotional resonance, transparency, and sincerity, suggesting that it is co-created through audience interpretation rather than through influencer self-presentation alone. PLT's ability to foster authenticity depends on both its selection of influencers and consumers' perceptions of its intentions.

The study also highlights the significance of congruence between influencers and the brand. Respondents considered PLT's campaigns more authentic when the influencer's style and values aligned with the brand's identity, reinforcing the concept of "endorser-brand fit." However, some respondents remained uncertain about transparency and ethical responsibility, reflecting the challenges that fast-fashion brands face regarding sustainability.

Furthermore, transparency plays a central role in shaping perceptions of authenticity. While PLT's influencer collaborations were generally viewed as genuine, there was uncertainty about the transparency of sponsored content. Respondents valued influencers who clearly disclosed partnerships, indicating that transparency is vital for maintaining authenticity in influencer-brand relationships.

Another critical dimension emerging from the findings is the interpretation of sincerity. Respondents often described authentic influencers as those who appeared consistent across different types of content, including both sponsored and non-sponsored posts. This aligns with the argument made by Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019), who suggest that consumers evaluate sincerity by comparing an

influencer's promotional content with their everyday behaviour. When influencers maintain a coherent tone, aesthetic and personality across contexts, consumers are more likely to perceive them as trustworthy. In the case of PLT, respondents expressed greater confidence in influencers whose endorsements aligned with their usual style, suggesting that consistency reinforces perceptions of sincerity.

The findings also reveal the importance of aesthetic authenticity, a concept that has been increasingly discussed in recent research. Influencers who present themselves in a visually coherent and relatable manner through casual photography, unedited images, or behind-the-scenes content tend to be perceived as more authentic. As noted by Reinikainen et al. (2020), aesthetic cues such as lighting, composition and editing style can significantly influence perceptions of genuineness. In the present study, respondents frequently associated authenticity with influencers who appeared "natural" or "unfiltered," suggesting that visual presentation plays a crucial role in shaping trust.

However, the findings also highlight a tension between authenticity and commercialisation. While respondents appreciated relatable and sincere influencers, some expressed scepticism when promotional content appeared overly polished or excessively frequent. This aligns with the argument made by Hudders and Lou (2022), who note that the commercialisation of influencer culture can undermine authenticity by fostering perceptions of insincerity or opportunism. In the context of PLT, respondents were more critical of influencers who appeared to promote multiple fast-fashion brands simultaneously, suggesting that perceived over-commercialisation weakens trust.

Another nuance emerging from the findings is the role of narrative authenticity. Respondents were more trusting of influencers who shared personal stories, experiences or opinions related to the products they endorsed. This aligns with the concept of "narrative transparency," discussed by Ki and Kim (2021), which suggests that storytelling enhances authenticity by providing context and emotional depth. In the present study, respondents valued influencers who explained why they liked PLT products or how they incorporated them into their daily lives, indicating that narrative elements strengthen the perceived sincerity of endorsements.

Overall, the findings suggest that authenticity is a multifaceted construct shaped by transparency, consistency, aesthetic cues and narrative depth. While PLT's influencer collaborations are generally perceived as authentic, the nuances identified in the data underscore the importance of carefully balancing commercial promotion and genuine communication.

Despite the generally positive perceptions of authenticity, the findings also reveal several risks and vulnerabilities that may undermine trust in PLT's influencer-driven marketing. One of the most significant risks is the saturation of influencer content in the market. Respondents expressed scepticism when influencers appeared to promote multiple fast-fashion brands simultaneously or when their content seemed overly curated. This reflects a broader concern identified by Hudders and Lou (2022), who argue that excessive commercialisation can erode authenticity by creating perceptions of insincerity or opportunism. In the context of PLT, this suggests that the brand must carefully manage the frequency and tone of influencer collaborations to avoid triggering consumer fatigue or distrust.

Another vulnerability highlighted in the findings is the inherent contradiction between fast-fashion branding and ethical expectations. While respondents appreciated the relatability and style of PLT's influencers, many remained neutral or uncertain regarding the brand's transparency and ethical responsibility. This ambivalence reflects the structural challenges faced by fast-fashion brands, which often struggle to reconcile promotional messaging with concerns about sustainability, labour conditions and environmental impact. McNeill and Venter (2019) describe this tension as "ethical dissonance," in which consumers may trust influencers but remain sceptical of the brands they represent. The present study mirrors this dynamic, suggesting that influencer authenticity can enhance trust at the surface level but cannot fully resolve deeper ethical concerns.

The findings also point to the fragility of trust in influencer-brand relationships. Trust appears to be highly dependent on perceived influencer integrity, meaning that any controversy, inconsistency, or reputational decline involving an influencer could have spillover effects on PLT. Schouten, Janssen and Verspaget (2020) highlight that influencer-brand associations create a form of "reputational interdependence," in

which the brand's credibility becomes partially tied to the influencer's behaviour. This suggests that PLT must exercise caution in selecting influencers whose values, behaviour and public image align with the brand's desired identity.

From a strategic perspective, the findings indicate that PLT's influencer-driven authenticity is practical but not self-sustaining. While influencers can enhance perceptions of sincerity and relatability, these effects require ongoing reinforcement through transparent communication, consistent messaging and careful management of commercial partnerships. Recent research by Ki and Kim (2021) suggests that authenticity is most resilient when supported by brand-led initiatives that reinforce ethical responsibility, product quality and value alignment. In the case of PLT, this implies that influencer marketing should be complemented by clearer sustainability messaging, improved transparency and more cohesive brand storytelling.

Finally, the findings highlight the importance of balancing relatability with professionalism. Respondents valued influencers who appeared genuine and approachable, but they also expected a degree of competence and reliability in their endorsements. This reflects the dual nature of authenticity in influencer marketing: consumers seek both emotional connection and informational credibility. As Reinikainen et al. (2020) note, authenticity is strongest when influencers combine personal expression with responsible communication. For PLT, this means selecting influencers who can embody both the aspirational and relatable aspects of the brand while maintaining transparency and consistency.

Overall, the findings suggest that authenticity and trust are central to the effectiveness of PLT's influencer marketing, but that these constructs are complex, dynamic and vulnerable to external pressures. While PLT's current strategy successfully fosters positive perceptions, long-term trust will depend on the brand's ability to navigate ethical concerns, manage commercial saturation and maintain strong alignment between influencer identity and brand values.

5.3 Engagement Behaviour

The findings highlight a clear distinction between passive and active engagement with PrettyLittleThing's (PLT) influencer-driven content. Many respondents preferred low-effort, habitual behaviours, such as liking or viewing posts, consistent with existing literature emphasising the dominance of passive engagement on social media. This is often driven by convenience and the low cognitive effort required, as noted by Casaló et al. (2020). Respondents described their interactions with PLT content as “quick,” “casual,” or “automatic.”

Passive engagement is closely tied to algorithmic exposure; respondents typically encountered PLT content via platform algorithms on TikTok and Instagram, which prioritise influencer posts. This supports Appel et al. (2020), who argue that algorithms amplify visually appealing and popular content, benefiting PLT's influencer strategy.

Conversely, active engagements, such as commenting or participating in promotions, were much less common. Limited interest in deeper participation stemmed from time constraints, perceived irrelevance, or insufficient personal connection to the brand, echoing Ki et al. (2021), who argue that active engagement requires greater emotional investment.

Social proof was also a crucial factor, with respondents relying on peer reviews and community discussions to evaluate PLT. This aligns with the concept of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), as emphasised by Ismagilova et al. (2020), who show that consumer trust often rests more with peers than with promotional content.

Furthermore, engagement is influenced by personal relevance, emotional resonance, and perceived value, suggesting it is not merely habitual but context dependent. Respondents were more likely to engage with content that felt relevant or aligned with their interests, resonating with Hollebeek et al. (2021).

Finally, social identity played a significant role, as respondents engaged more with content that reflected their style and lifestyle aspirations. This aligns with social

identity theory, in which influencers represent identity categories, leading to identity-affirming engagement, as noted by Tafesse and Wood (2021).

The findings highlight the significance of emotional engagement, which complements functional engagement. While functional engagement includes actions like clicking links or browsing products, emotional engagement reflects enjoyment and connection. Respondents described PLT's influencer content as "fun" and "motivating," showing that emotional responses significantly influence engagement. This supports Dessart's (2020) argument that emotional engagement is essential for long-term brand interaction, even when behavioural engagement is low.

However, barriers to active engagement emerged, including a lack of personal connection to the brand, limited time, and scepticism towards promotional content. This aligns with Ki, Cuevas, and Lim (2021), who note that active engagement needs more trust and perceived authenticity than passive engagement. Respondents were receptive to consuming PLT's content but hesitant to invest in deeper interactions, indicating that the influencer strategy generates attention rather than meaningful involvement.

The interpretation of influencer interactions is also crucial. Respondents viewed influencer engagement, like responding to comments, as indicative of authenticity and closeness, aligning with Labrecque's (2020) concept of parasocial interaction. When influencers appeared approachable and invested, respondents were more willing to engage, suggesting that relational dynamics significantly affect engagement behaviour.

Overall, engagement behaviour results from emotional, cognitive, and social factors. PLT's content effectively stimulates passive engagement, but issues of trust and perceived value constrain deeper participation. Additionally, algorithm-dependent engagement poses risks; reliance on algorithmic curation makes engagement levels vulnerable to changes in platform dynamics, as noted by Appel et al. (2020). This suggests that PLT's engagement may not be entirely within the brand's control.

Another critical limitation emerging from the findings is the gap between visibility and meaningful participation. While respondents frequently interacted with PLT content at a surface level, deeper forms of engagement, such as commenting, participating in promotions, or attending events, were significantly less common. This reflects a broader challenge identified by Hollebeek, Clark, and Macky (2021), who argue that high visibility does not necessarily translate into high-quality engagement. In the present study, respondents often described PLT content as entertaining but not compelling enough to warrant deeper involvement, suggesting that the brand's influencer strategy may prioritise reach over relational depth.

The findings also reveal a tension between engagement and authenticity, particularly when promotional content appears overly frequent or commercialised. Respondents expressed scepticism toward influencers who promoted multiple fast-fashion brands or whose content seemed excessively curated. This aligns with the argument made by Hudders and Lou (2022), who note that over-commercialisation can weaken engagement by reducing perceived sincerity. In the case of PLT, this suggests that engagement may decline when consumers perceive influencer content as repetitive, insincere or lacking personal relevance.

Another vulnerability relates to the role of social comparison in shaping engagement behaviour. Respondents frequently described PLT's influencer content as aspirational, but some also reported feeling pressured or inadequate when exposed to idealised representations of fashion and lifestyle. This aligns with Tiggemann and Zaccardo's (2018) findings, which argue that exposure to highly curated influencer content can trigger negative self-evaluations, reduce engagement, or elicit ambivalent responses. In the present study, this dynamic suggests that while PLT's influencer content may attract attention, it may also generate mixed emotional reactions that limit deeper participation.

From a strategic perspective, the findings indicate that PLT's current influencer strategy is effective at generating broad but shallow engagement. While passive engagement contributes to visibility and brand recall, it may not be sufficient to build long-term consumer relationships or foster

brand loyalty. Recent research by Tafesse and Wood (2021) suggests that brands must cultivate interactive, value-driven experiences to convert passive engagement into meaningful participation. For PLT, this may involve developing more interactive campaigns, fostering community-based content, or collaborating with influencers who prioritise dialogue and relational engagement over purely aesthetic promotion.

Finally, the findings highlight the importance of balancing entertainment with value. Respondents appreciated PLT's influencer content for its entertainment value, but they also expressed a desire for more informative, transparent or relatable content. This reflects the dual nature of engagement in digital environments: consumers seek both enjoyment and utility. As Dessart (2020) notes, engagement is strongest when content resonates emotionally and is practical. For PLT, this suggests that enhancing the informational and experiential value of influencer content may strengthen engagement quality and encourage deeper forms of participation.

Overall, the findings indicate that a complex interplay of emotional, cognitive and social factors shapes engagement behaviour. While PLT's influencer strategy effectively stimulates passive engagement, deeper participation is limited by barriers related to trust, relevance, perceived authenticity and platform dynamics. These insights highlight the need for a more nuanced and strategically balanced approach to engagement within PLT's influencer marketing strategy.

5.4 Purchase Intent and Loyalty

The findings indicate that influencer-driven marketing has a clear and positive impact on consumers' purchase intention, with many respondents reporting that PLT's influencer content encouraged them to consider the brand when purchasing fashion items. This pattern aligns with the broader literature, which consistently highlights the persuasive power of influencers in shaping consumer decision-making. Sokolova and Kefi (2020) argue that influencers act as trusted opinion leaders whose recommendations can significantly increase consumers' willingness to purchase, particularly when the influencer is perceived as credible and relatable. The present study reflects this dynamic, as respondents frequently described influencer content

as a key factor in prompting them to browse PLT's website or consider specific products.

A central insight emerging from the findings is the role of emotional and aesthetic resonance in shaping purchase intent. Respondents were more likely to consider purchasing.

PLT products when influencer content evoked feelings of inspiration, aspiration or personal identification. This aligns with the argument made by Djafarova and Bowes (2021), who suggest that emotional engagement with influencers enhances the perceived desirability of endorsed products. In the present study, respondents often described PLT's influencer content as "motivating," "stylish", or "aspirational," indicating that emotional resonance plays a significant role in driving purchase consideration.

Another critical dimension is the influence of perceived authenticity on purchase intent. As discussed in earlier sections, respondents were more inclined to trust influencers who appeared genuine, consistent and transparent. This trust seems to translate directly into purchase behaviour. According to Ki and Kim (2021), authenticity strengthens the persuasive impact of influencer endorsements by reducing perceived risk and increasing confidence in product claims. In the context of PLT, respondents expressed greater willingness to purchase when influencers provided honest reviews, shared personal experiences or demonstrated how products fit into their everyday lives. This suggests that authenticity functions as a key mediator between influencer content and purchase intent.

However, the findings also reveal that practical considerations, such as affordability, product quality and convenience, shape purchase intent. Respondents frequently cited PLT's competitive pricing and trend-focused product range as factors that increased their likelihood of purchasing. This reflects the broader characteristics of fast-fashion consumption, where affordability and trend responsiveness are central drivers of purchase behaviour. As noted by Kim and Kim (2021), fast-fashion consumers often exhibit "situational loyalty," driven by immediate needs and price sensitivity rather than long-term brand commitment. The present study mirrors this pattern, suggesting that

while influencer content stimulates purchase intent, practical considerations ultimately determine whether consumers follow through with a purchase.

The findings also highlight the importance of social proof in shaping purchase decisions. Respondents frequently relied on peer reviews, user-generated content and social-media discussions when evaluating PLT products. This aligns with the concept of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which Ismagilova et al. (2020) identify as a critical factor in reducing uncertainty and increasing purchase confidence. In the present study, respondents expressed greater trust in other consumers' experiences than in promotional content, suggesting that purchase intent is reinforced by community validation.

While the findings demonstrate a positive effect of influencer content on purchase intent, they reveal a more complex and nuanced picture when examining brand loyalty. Respondents expressed a willingness to consider PLT when making fashion purchases, but this did not consistently translate into long-term commitment or repeated purchasing behaviour. This distinction reflects a broader trend identified in the literature: fast-fashion consumers often exhibit transactional or situational loyalty, driven by convenience, affordability and trend responsiveness rather than emotional attachment. Kim and Kim (2021) describe this as “short-cycle loyalty,” where consumers return to a brand only when it meets an immediate need, rather than out of sustained preference.

A key insight emerging from the findings is that loyalty appears to be shaped by episodic engagement rather than continuous brand involvement. Respondents frequently described their interactions with PLT as occasional, opportunistic or dependent on specific promotions or influencer recommendations. This aligns with McCormick's (2016) argument that fast-fashion loyalty is often triggered by external stimuli, such as influencer endorsements, discounts, or trend cycles, rather than by intrinsic brand affinity. In the present study, respondents were more likely to revisit PLT when prompted by influencer content, indicating that loyalty is reactive rather than proactive.

Another critical dimension is the role of satisfaction and perceived value in shaping loyalty. Respondents who had previously purchased from PLT often cited product quality, fit, delivery speed, or customer service experiences as the basis of their loyalty. This reflects the principles of the expectation-confirmation model, which suggests that loyalty emerges when consumer expectations are met or exceeded.

As Oliver (1999) notes, satisfaction is a precursor to attitudinal and behavioural loyalty. In the context of PLT, the findings suggest that while influencer content may stimulate initial purchases, long-term loyalty depends on the brand's ability to deliver consistent value beyond the promotional moment.

The findings also highlight the influence of identity alignment on loyalty. Respondents who felt that PLT's aesthetic, values or influencer partnerships aligned with their personal identity were more likely to express ongoing interest in the brand. This aligns with Escalas and Bettman's (2005) argument that consumers develop loyalty when brands contribute to their self-concept or social identity. In the present study, respondents who identified with PLT's influencer community or fashion style were more inclined to maintain a relationship with the brand, suggesting that loyalty is partially driven by identity reinforcement.

However, the findings also reveal significant barriers to loyalty, particularly related to ethical concerns. Respondents expressed ambivalence regarding PLT's sustainability practices, labour conditions and environmental impact. This mirrors the broader tension identified by McNeill and Venter (2019), who argue that fast-fashion loyalty is often undermined by ethical dissonance. Even when consumers appreciate the affordability and trendiness of fast-fashion brands, concerns about sustainability can weaken long-term commitment. In the present study, respondents often described PLT as a brand they "buy from occasionally" rather than one they "feel loyal to," indicating that ethical considerations may limit the development of deeper loyalty.

Another nuance emerging from the findings is the role of influencer continuity in shaping loyalty. Respondents were more likely to maintain interest in PLT when influencers they followed consistently collaborated with the brand. This reflects the

concept of relational continuity, discussed by Schouten, Janssen and Verspaget (2020), which suggests that repeated exposure to the same influencer-brand partnership strengthens consumer familiarity and trust. In the present study, respondents expressed greater loyalty when influencer collaborations were perceived as stable and long-term, indicating that continuity enhances the perceived legitimacy of the partnership.

Overall, the findings suggest that while influencer marketing effectively stimulates purchase intent, its impact on loyalty is more limited and conditional. Loyalty appears to depend on a combination of satisfaction, identity alignment, perceived value and ethical considerations, rather than on influencer content alone. These insights highlight the need for PLT to complement influencer marketing with stronger brand-led initiatives that reinforce trust, consistency and long-term value.

Although the findings demonstrate that influencer-driven marketing effectively stimulates purchase intent, they also reveal several risks and structural limitations that may

undermine the long-term development of brand loyalty. One of the most significant vulnerabilities relates to the instability of influencer-based persuasion. Respondents frequently described their purchase decisions as impulsive, trend-driven, or influenced by the appeal of specific influencers. This reflects the argument made by Schouten, Janssen and Verspaget (2020), who note that influencer-based persuasion is inherently volatile because it relies on the fluctuating popularity, credibility and personal narratives of individual creators. In the context of PLT, this suggests that purchase intent may decline if influencer relevance shifts or if consumers become fatigued by repetitive promotional content.

Another critical limitation emerging from the findings is the gap between initial purchase intent and sustained loyalty. While respondents expressed willingness to consider PLT when prompted by influencer content, this did not consistently translate into repeated purchases or emotional attachment to the brand. This reflects the broader challenge identified by Kim and Kim (2021), who argue that fast-fashion loyalty is often shallow and transactional, driven by affordability and trend-responsive purchasing rather than long-term commitment. In the present study, respondents frequently described PLT as a brand they “buy from when needed” rather than one

they “feel loyal to,” indicating that influencer marketing may be effective at generating short-term behavioural responses but less effective at cultivating enduring loyalty. The findings also highlight a tension between fast-fashion consumption and ethical expectations, which may further limit loyalty. Respondents expressed ambivalence regarding PLT’s sustainability practices, labour conditions and environmental impact. This mirrors the ethical dissonance described by McNeill and Venter (2019), who argue that consumers often experience conflict between their desire for affordable, trendy clothing and their concerns about the social and environmental implications of fast-fashion. In the present study, this tension appears to weaken loyalty by creating uncertainty about the brand’s long-term values and responsibility. Even when consumers appreciate PLT’s affordability and style, ethical concerns may prevent them from forming deeper emotional bonds with the brand.

Another vulnerability relates to the role of satisfaction and post-purchase experience. Respondents who reported inconsistent product quality, sizing issues or delivery problems were less likely to express loyalty, even if influencer content had initially motivated their purchase. This reflects the principles of the expectation-confirmation model, which suggests that loyalty emerges when post-purchase experiences meet or exceed expectations. As Oliver (1999) notes, loyalty is built through repeated cycles of satisfaction rather than solely through promotional stimuli. In the context of PLT, this suggests that influencer marketing may attract consumers, but long-term loyalty depends on operational consistency and product reliability.

From a strategic perspective, the findings indicate that PLT’s Influencer strategy is highly effective at generating short-term purchase intent, but its impact on loyalty is more limited and conditional. To strengthen loyalty, PLT may need to complement influencer marketing with initiatives that reinforce trust, transparency and long-term value. Recent research by Hudders and Lou (2022) suggests that brands can enhance loyalty by integrating influencer content with brand-led storytelling, sustainability commitments and community-building initiatives. For PLT, this may involve collaborating with influencers who prioritise authenticity and ethical transparency, developing more consistent brand messaging, or improving post-purchase experiences to reinforce satisfaction.

Finally, the findings highlight the importance of balancing trend-driven appeal with long-term brand identity. Respondents were attracted to PLT's trendiness and affordability, but these same characteristics may limit loyalty by positioning the brand as a short-term solution rather than a long-term preference. As Djafarova and Bowes (2021) note, brands that rely heavily on trend cycles may struggle to cultivate emotional loyalty unless they also develop a stable identity that resonates with consumers' values and aspirations. In the present study, this suggests that PLT may benefit from strengthening its core brand narrative to complement the fast-paced nature of influencer-driven promotion.

Overall, the findings indicate that while influencer marketing effectively stimulates purchase intent, its ability to foster long-term loyalty is constrained by factors related to satisfaction, identity alignment, ethical concerns and the volatility of influencer culture. These insights highlight the need for a more integrated and strategically balanced approach to loyalty development within PLT's marketing strategy.

5.5 Integrated Interpretation of Findings

The integrated interpretation of the findings reveals a complex, interconnected landscape in which influencer-driven marketing shapes consumer awareness, perceptions of authenticity, engagement behaviours, purchase intention, and loyalty toward PrettyLittleThing (PLT). Rather than operating as isolated constructs, these dimensions interact dynamically, reinforcing or constraining one another, illuminating the strengths and limitations of PLT's current marketing strategy. This section synthesises the findings across the previous subsections to provide a holistic understanding of how adult consumers in London respond to PLT's influencer-based communication.

A central insight emerging from the integrated analysis is that brand awareness serves as the foundational layer on which subsequent consumer responses are built.

Influencer content on TikTok and Instagram keeps PLT highly visible in consumers' daily media routines, establishing a baseline level of recognition that facilitates further engagement. However, this awareness is largely algorithm-driven and surface-level, shaped more by repeated exposure than by deep brand knowledge. This dynamic creates both opportunities and vulnerabilities: while high visibility increases the likelihood of consumer interaction, the superficial nature of awareness may limit the development of stronger attitudinal responses.

The findings also reveal that authenticity acts as a critical mediator between awareness and more meaningful consumer outcomes. Consumers are more likely to trust, engage with, and act on influencer content when they perceive influencers as genuine, transparent, and consistent. Authenticity, therefore, transforms passive exposure into emotional resonance, shaping how consumers interpret PLT's presence within their social-media environment. However, authenticity is fragile and easily undermined by over-commercialisation, ethical concerns, or perceived incongruence between an influencer's identity and brand values. This suggests that authenticity is not merely an attribute but a relational process that requires continuous reinforcement.

Another key insight is the interdependence between authenticity and engagement behaviour. Consumers who

Those who perceive influencer content as authentic are more likely to engage emotionally and cognitively, even if their behavioural engagement remains predominantly passive. Emotional engagements, such as feelings of inspiration or identification, emerge as a crucial bridge between authenticity and purchase intent. However, the findings also highlight that deeper forms of engagement require higher levels of trust, relevance and personal connection, which are not consistently achieved across PLT's influencer collaborations. This indicates that while authenticity enhances engagement, it does not guarantee active participation.

The integrated analysis further demonstrates that the cumulative effect of awareness, authenticity and engagement shapes purchase intent. Influencer content increases the likelihood that consumers will consider PLT when shopping, particularly when influencers provide relatable narratives, honest reviews or

aspirational styling. However, purchase intent is moderated by practical considerations such as affordability, product quality and convenience, as well as by social proof from peers. This suggests that influencer marketing is effective at stimulating initial interest but must be supported by operational reliability and community validation to translate into actual purchases.

The integrated analysis further highlights the interdependence between engagement, purchase intent and loyalty, revealing a sequential but fragile pathway through which influencer-driven marketing shapes consumer

behaviour. Engagement, particularly emotional engagement, emerges as a crucial intermediary step that transforms awareness into purchase consideration.

Respondents who felt inspired, entertained or personally connected to influencer content were more likely to explore PLT's products, indicating that emotional resonance acts as a psychological bridge between exposure and action. This aligns with the broader literature, which posits that emotional engagement is a precursor to behavioural responses in digital environments.

However, the findings also reveal that this pathway is not linear or guaranteed. While emotional engagement increases purchase intent, it does not consistently translate into long-term loyalty. This reflects a broader tension within fast-fashion consumption: consumers may be drawn to the brand through influencer content, but their commitment remains conditional and situational. The integrated analysis suggests that loyalty is constrained by factors such as product quality, ethical concerns, and the volatility of influencer culture. As a result, the relationship between engagement and loyalty is asymmetrical. Engagement can stimulate short-term interest, but loyalty requires deeper, more stable forms of value.

Another key insight emerging from the integrated interpretation is the tension between fast-fashion dynamics and consumer trust. Influencer content enhances perceptions of authenticity and relatability, but concerns about sustainability, labour practices and over-commercialisation often undermine these effects. Respondents frequently expressed admiration for influencers while simultaneously questioning the ethical implications of supporting fast-fashion brands. This duality reflects ethical dissonance, in which consumers experience a conflict between their desire for affordable, trendy clothing and their awareness of the industry's social and

environmental impacts. In the context of PLT, this tension weakens the potential for long-term loyalty, even when influencer content is perceived positively.

The integrated analysis also reveals contradictions within consumer behaviour. For example, respondents valued authenticity but were drawn to highly curated, aspirational content; they appreciated affordability but expressed concerns about sustainability; they engaged with influencer content but rarely participated in deeper brand interactions. These contradictions highlight the complexity of consumer decision-making in digital environments, where emotional, cognitive and ethical factors intersect in unpredictable ways. Rather than viewing these contradictions as inconsistencies, the integrated interpretation suggests they reflect the realities of contemporary fashion consumption, in which consumers navigate competing desires and values.

Another critical dimension is the role of social proof and community validation throughout the consumer journey. Respondents relied heavily on peer reviews, user-generated content and online discussions when evaluating PLT, indicating that influencer content alone is insufficient to drive purchase decisions or loyalty. Social proof acts as a reinforcing mechanism that strengthens or weakens the effects of influencer marketing. When community sentiment is positive, influencer content becomes more persuasive; when sentiment is negative or ambivalent, influencer content loses credibility. This interdependence suggests that PLT's marketing effectiveness depends not only on influencer partnerships but also on broader community dynamics.

Overall, the integrated analysis reveals a multi-layered and interconnected system in which awareness, authenticity, engagement, purchase intent and loyalty interact dynamically. Influencer marketing serves as a powerful catalyst for visibility and short-term behavioural responses. Still, its long-term impact is constrained by ethical concerns, operational factors and the volatility of digital culture. These insights underscore the importance of adopting a holistic and strategically balanced approach to influencer marketing, one that integrates emotional resonance with transparency, value delivery and community engagement.

The integrated interpretation of findings highlights several strategic implications for PrettyLittleThing (PLT), revealing both the strengths and vulnerabilities of its influencer-driven marketing approach. A central implication is that PLT's strategy is highly effective at generating short-term visibility and behavioural responses, but less effective at cultivating long-term loyalty or more profound brand attachment.

Influencer content ensures that PLT remains embedded within

consumers' daily digital routines, but this visibility is mainly dependent on platform algorithms and the fluctuating relevance of individual creators. As a result, PLT's marketing effectiveness is inherently volatile, shaped by external forces that the brand cannot fully control.

Another key implication is the importance of authenticity as a strategic asset. Across all stages of the consumer journey, awareness, engagement, purchase intention, and loyalty consistently emerge as critical determinants of consumer responses. Influencers who communicate transparently, maintain consistent personal narratives, and demonstrate a genuine affinity for the brand significantly enhance PLT's credibility. However, authenticity is fragile and easily undermined by over-commercialisation, ethical concerns, or perceived incongruence between an influencer's identity and brand values. This suggests that PLT must adopt a more selective and strategically aligned approach to influencer partnerships, prioritising long-term collaborations that reinforce authenticity rather than short-term promotional bursts.

The integrated analysis also underscores the need for PLT to balance emotional resonance with functional value. While influencer content effectively stimulates emotional engagement through inspiration, aspiration, and relatability, consumers ultimately base their purchase decisions on practical considerations such as product quality, affordability, and convenience. This indicates that influencer marketing must be complemented by operational consistency and

value delivery to convert short-term interest into sustained loyalty. Without this balance, PLT risks creating a gap between consumer expectations and post-purchase experiences, potentially weakening long-term brand commitment.

Another important implication relates to the role of ethical considerations in shaping consumer attitudes. Although respondents appreciated PLT's trend-focused aesthetic and influencer collaborations, many expressed ambivalence regarding the brand's sustainability practices and environmental impact. This ethical dissonance limits the potential for deeper loyalty, even when influencer content is perceived positively. As sustainability becomes increasingly central to consumer decision-making, PLT may need to integrate clearer ethical messaging and more transparent communication into its influencer strategy to strengthen trust and reduce consumer uncertainty.

The integrated interpretation also highlights the importance of community validation and social proof. Influencer content alone is insufficient to drive purchase decisions or loyalty; consumers rely heavily on peer reviews, user-generated content and online discussions to evaluate PLT. This suggests that PLT's marketing strategy would benefit from fostering stronger community engagement, encouraging user-generated content and amplifying authentic consumer voices alongside influencer partnerships. By integrating influencer marketing with community-driven narratives, PLT can create a more robust and credible ecosystem for the brand advocacy.

Finally, the synthesis of findings reveals that PLT's influencer strategy operates within a highly dynamic and competitive digital environment, where consumer attention is fragmented, platform algorithms are unpredictable and ethical expectations are rising. To remain effective, PLT must adopt a more holistic, adaptive approach that integrates influencer marketing with brand-led storytelling, operational excellence, and transparent communication. This integrated approach will enable PLT to strengthen its short-term impact while building the foundations for long-term consumer trust and loyalty.

Overall, the integrated interpretation of findings demonstrates that influencer marketing is a powerful but incomplete tool. While it effectively drives awareness, engagement and purchase intent, its long-term impact depends on the brand's ability to deliver consistent value, maintain authenticity and address ethical concerns.

These insights provide a strong foundation for the conclusions and recommendations presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to examine how influencer-driven marketing shapes brand awareness, perceptions of authenticity, engagement behaviours, purchase intent, and loyalty among adult consumers in London regarding PrettyLittleThing (PLT). Drawing on a mixed-methods approach, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms by which influencer content shapes consumer attitudes and behaviours in the fast-fashion sector.

The findings demonstrate that influencer marketing is highly effective at generating brand awareness, mainly because influencer content is algorithmically visible on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. This aligns with previous research suggesting that social-media algorithms amplify visually appealing and high-frequency content, increasing brand exposure even when consumers are not actively seeking it (Appel et al., 2020). In this study, respondents encountered PLT frequently and effortlessly, resulting in strong brand recognition. However, consistent with the argument that algorithm-driven awareness tends to be superficial (Casaló et al., 2020), this visibility did not translate into deep brand knowledge or intentional engagement.

The study also reveals that authenticity plays a central role in shaping consumer trust and engagement. Prior literature emphasises that authenticity emerges when influencers communicate in ways that align with their personal identity and values (Audrezet et al., 2020). The findings of this research echo this perspective: influencers perceived as genuine, transparent and consistent significantly enhanced PLT's credibility. However, authenticity is fragile, as noted by Hudders and Lou (2022), and can be undermined by over-commercialisation or perceived incongruence between

influencer identity and brand values. This highlights the importance of selecting influencers whose personal narratives align with PLT's desired positioning.

In terms of engagement, the findings show that consumers primarily exhibit passive engagement behaviours, such as liking or viewing content, driven by convenience and algorithmic exposure. This reflects broader evidence that passive engagement dominates social-media environments due to its low cognitive effort (Casaló et al., 2020). Emotional engagement, however, emerged as a key mediator between authenticity and purchase intent, supporting Dessart's (2020) argument that emotional responses are essential precursors to behavioural outcomes. Nevertheless, deeper forms of participation remained limited, suggesting that while influencer content captures attention, it does not consistently motivate consumers to engage in more meaningful ways.

The study further demonstrates that influencer content positively affects purchase intention, particularly when influencers provide relatable narratives, honest reviews, or aspirational styling. This aligns with Sokolova and Kefi's (2020) view that influencers act as trusted opinion leaders whose recommendations reduce perceived risk and increase product desirability. However, consistent with the expectation-confirmation model (Oliver, 1999), purchase decisions were ultimately shaped by practical considerations such as affordability, product quality and social proof. This indicates that influencer marketing is effective at stimulating initial interest but must be supported by operational reliability to convert intent into action.

Finally, the findings reveal that brand loyalty remains limited and conditional. While consumers appreciated PLT's trend-focused aesthetic and affordability, loyalty was constrained by ethical concerns, inconsistent product experiences and the volatility of influencer culture. This mirrors the concept of "situational loyalty" described by Kim and Kim (2021), where consumers return to fast-fashion brands only when they meet immediate needs rather than out of sustained preference. The presence of ethical dissonance, as described by McNeill and Venter (2019), further weakens long-term loyalty by creating tension between consumer desires and sustainability concerns.

Overall, the study concludes that influencer-driven marketing is a powerful but incomplete tool. It effectively drives visibility and short-term behavioural responses, but its long-term impact depends on the brand's ability to deliver consistent value, maintain authenticity and address ethical concerns.

Building on the findings, this section outlines a series of strategic recommendations for PrettyLittleThing (PLT). These recommendations are grounded in the study's empirical evidence and supported by the existing literature, ensuring they are both academically robust and practically actionable. The integrated analysis suggests that PLT's influencer-driven marketing is effective in generating visibility and short-term behavioural responses. However, its long-term impact depends on strengthening authenticity, enhancing engagement quality, improving operational consistency and addressing ethical concerns.

1. Prioritise long-term, authenticity-driven influencer partnerships

The findings show that authenticity is a decisive factor in shaping trust, engagement and purchase intent. This aligns with the argument that influencers perceived as genuine and consistent are more persuasive and credible (Audrezet et al., 2020). PLT should therefore prioritise long-term collaborations with influencers whose personal values, aesthetic and communication style align with the brand's identity. Longer partnerships can reduce perceptions of opportunistic promotion and reinforce relational continuity, which Schouten et al. (2020) describe as essential for building consumer trust.

2. Reduce over-commercialisation and enhance transparency

Respondents expressed scepticism toward overly curated or repetitive promotional content, reflecting concerns highlighted in the literature about the adverse effects of commercial saturation (Hudders & Lou, 2022). PLT should encourage influencers to adopt transparent communication practices, including clear sponsorship disclosures and honest product reviews. This approach aligns with Evans et al. (2021), who

argue that transparency strengthens perceived sincerity and reduces consumer scepticism.

3. Strengthen emotional and interactive engagement

While passive engagement was high, deeper forms of participation were limited. This supports Hollebeek et al.'s (2021) view that meaningful engagement requires emotional, cognitive and behavioural investment. PLT should develop interactive campaigns, such as live try-on sessions, Q&A events, user-generated content challenges or community-driven styling competitions. These initiatives can transform passive viewers into active participants, enhancing engagement quality and fostering a sense of belonging.

4. Improve post-purchase experiences to support loyalty

The findings indicate that loyalty is constrained by inconsistent product quality, sizing issues and delivery concerns. This reflects Oliver's (1999) expectation-confirmation model, which emphasises that satisfaction is essential for loyalty formation. PLT should therefore invest in quality control, more precise sizing guidance, improved customer service and more reliable delivery processes. Enhancing the post-purchase experience will help convert influencer-driven purchase intent into sustained loyalty.

5. Integrate ethical and sustainability messaging into influencer content

Ethical concerns emerged as a significant barrier to loyalty, consistent with McNeill and Venter's (2019) argument that fast-fashion consumers experience ethical dissonance. PLT should collaborate with influencers who are willing to communicate sustainability initiatives, responsible-consumption messages, or behind-the-scenes transparency. Even small steps, such as highlighting recycled materials or ethical sourcing, can reduce consumer ambivalence and strengthen trust.

6. Leverage social proof and community validation

Respondents relied heavily on peer reviews and user-generated content when evaluating PLT, reflecting the importance of electronic word-of-mouth (Ismagilova et al., 2020). PLT should amplify authentic customer voices, for example, by showcasing real customer photos, reviews and testimonials alongside influencer content. This dual approach can reinforce credibility and reduce perceived promotional bias.

7. Develop a more stable and distinctive brand narrative

The findings suggest that PLT's trend-driven identity attracts attention but limits long-term loyalty. This aligns with Djafarova and Bowes' (2021) observation that brands relying heavily on trend cycles may struggle to cultivate emotional loyalty. PLT should therefore articulate a more straightforward brand narrative, whether centred on empowerment, inclusivity, creativity or affordability, that can anchor its fast-paced promotional activity and strengthen emotional connection.

Although this study provides valuable insights into the influence of influencer-driven marketing on consumer behaviour toward PrettyLittleThing (PLT), several limitations must be acknowledged. These limitations do not undermine the validity of the findings but highlight areas that warrant caution in interpreting the results and opportunities for future research to expand the scope of understanding.

1. Limitations of the Study

a) Geographical and demographic scope

The study focused exclusively on adult consumers in London, which may limit the generalisability of the findings. As Bryman (2016) notes, geographically concentrated samples may reflect localised cultural or socio-economic dynamics. Consumer attitudes toward fast-fashion and influencer culture may differ across other UK regions or international contexts.

b) Reliance on self-reported data

The data relied on self-reported perceptions and behaviours, which may be subject to recall bias or social desirability bias. Saunders et al. (2019) highlight that self-reported data often reflect what participants believe they do rather than their actual behaviour, particularly in digital environments where engagement can be habitual and unconscious.

c) Cross-sectional research design

The study adopted a cross-sectional design, capturing consumer attitudes at a single point in time. As Creswell (2014) argues, cross-sectional studies cannot fully capture behavioural changes or long-term effects. Given the fast-paced nature of influencer culture, consumer responses may shift rapidly as trends evolve.

d) Complexity of influencer ecosystems

Influencer marketing is shaped by multiple variables: algorithmic exposure, platform design, influencer identity, and consumer psychology. While this study addressed several of these dimensions, it could not capture the full complexity of the digital ecosystem. Appel et al. (2020) emphasise that social-media environments are dynamic systems where variables interact in unpredictable ways.

2. Directions for Future Research

a) Longitudinal studies

Future research could adopt longitudinal designs to examine how consumer perceptions evolve over time. This would provide deeper insight into the durability of influencer-driven effects on loyalty, echoing Oliver's (1999) argument that loyalty develops through repeated cycles of satisfaction.

b) Comparative demographic analysis

Further studies could compare different 50s, regions or cultural backgrounds to explore whether influencer effectiveness varies across consumer segments. Prior research suggests that generational differences significantly shape digital engagement (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019).

c) Experimental approaches

Experimental designs could isolate specific variables, such as authenticity cues, sponsorship disclosures, or influencer-brand congruence, to determine their causal impact on trust and purchase intent. This would build on the work of Ki and Kim (2021), who highlight the value of controlled testing in influencer research.

d) Integration of behavioural analytics

Future studies could incorporate behavioural data (e.g., click-through rates, dwell time, purchase logs) to complement self-reported insights. Hollebeek et al. (2021) argue that combining attitudinal and behavioural metrics offers a more holistic understanding of engagement.

e) Exploration of sustainability and ethics

Given the ethical dissonance identified in this study, future research could examine how sustainability messaging, transparency initiatives or ethical certifications influence consumer trust and loyalty in fast-fashion contexts.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how influencer-driven marketing shapes consumer behaviour within the fast-fashion industry. The findings demonstrate that influencers play a pivotal role in generating awareness, shaping perceptions of authenticity, and stimulating purchase intent. However, the impact of influencer marketing on long-term loyalty is constrained by ethical concerns, operational inconsistencies and the volatility of digital culture. The research reinforces the widely discussed idea that influencer marketing is most effective when integrated with broader brand strategies that emphasise transparency, value delivery, and ethical responsibility. For PLT, this means moving beyond short-term promotional tactics toward a more holistic and sustainable approach to consumer engagement.

Ultimately, the study highlights the importance of balancing visibility with authenticity, engagement with value, and trend-driven appeal with long-term trust. These insights not only inform PLT's strategic direction but also contribute to the broader academic understanding of influencer marketing within the evolving landscape of digital consumer behaviour.

Final Reflection

This dissertation has explored the complex and evolving role of influencer-driven marketing within the fast-fashion sector, using PrettyLittleThing (PLT) as a focal case. By integrating theoretical perspectives with empirical evidence, the study has demonstrated that influencers play a pivotal role in shaping consumer awareness, perceptions of authenticity, engagement patterns and purchase intentions. However, the findings also reveal that ethical concerns, operational inconsistencies and the volatility of digital culture constrain the long-term effectiveness of influencer marketing. These insights underscore the need for brands such as PLT to adopt more holistic, transparent and value-driven strategies that extend beyond short-term promotional tactics.

In summary, the findings underscore that long-term brand equity depends on the synergy between market visibility and genuine consumer trust. In doing so, it provides a foundation for future academic inquiry and practical innovation within the rapidly shifting landscape of social-media marketing.

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Appendix

Answer Overview Active

Answers

50

Average Time

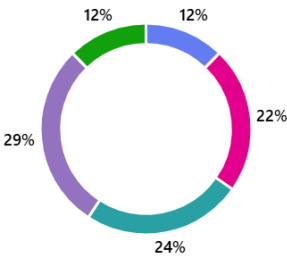
03:37

Duration

20 Days

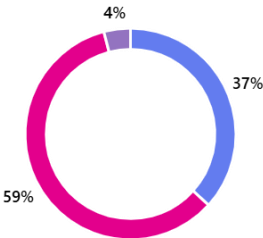
1. Age group?

18-24	6
25-34	11
35-44	12
45-54	14
55+	6



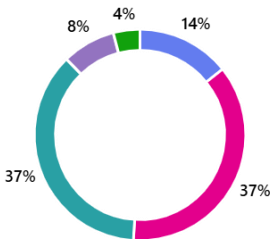
2. Gender

Female	18
Male	29
Non-binary	0
Prefer not to say	2



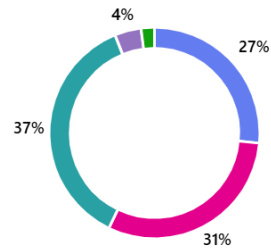
3. What's your education level?

Secondary School	7
Bachelor	18
Master	18
PhD	4
Other	2



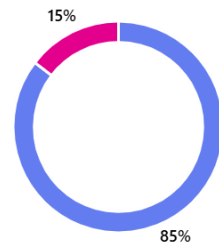
4. Monthly income (GB)

Less than £2,000	13
£2,000–£3,999	15
£4,000–£5,999	18
£6,000+	2
Prefer not to say	1



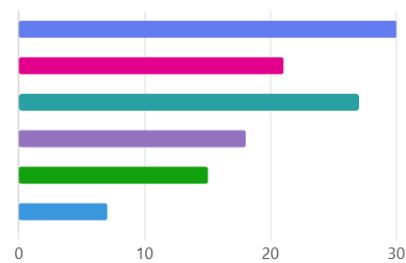
5. Have you heard of PrettyLittleThing (PLT) before this survey?

Yes	41
No	7



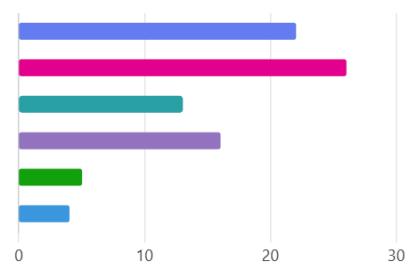
6. Which fashion brands do you most associate with influencer marketing? (Multiple choice)

PrettyLittleThing (PLT)	30
Boohoo	21
Zara	27
H&M	18
Shein	15
Other	7



7. On which platform do you most frequently see PrettyLittleThing (PLT) influencer content?

Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels)	22
Tiktok	26
YouTube	13
Facebook	16
I do not see PLT contents on social media	5



Other

4

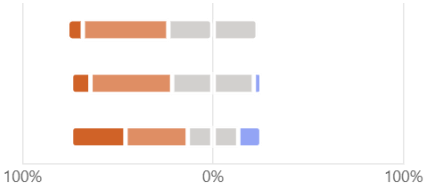
8. PrettyLittleThing's campaigns have increased my awareness of the brand.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

I am aware of the brand

I can quickly recall...

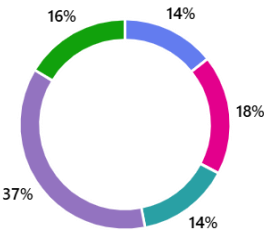
I can recognise the brand...



9. Which content type makes you most aware of new PrettyLittleThing collections?

(PLT)

Polished, high-quality images on Instagram	7
Unfiltered, short-form videos on Instagram	9
Polished, high-quality images on TikTok	7
Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok	18
Other	8



10.

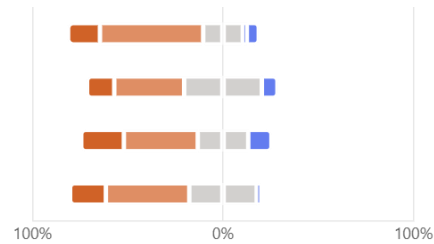
Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Strongly disagree Disagree

PLT's use of influencers makes the brand appear more authentic.

PLT's campaigns are transparent and trustworthy.

PLT's campaigns contribute positively to fashion culture.

PLT's campaigns are ethically responsible.

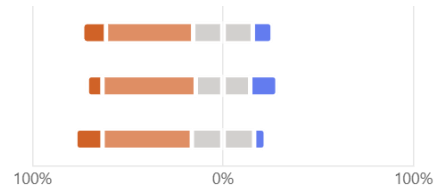


11.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Strongly disagree Disagree
I would interact with PLT's online campaigns (Likes/Shares).

I would attend PLT events or participate in influencer-led promotions.

PLT's campaigns encourage me to spend more time engaging with the brand.

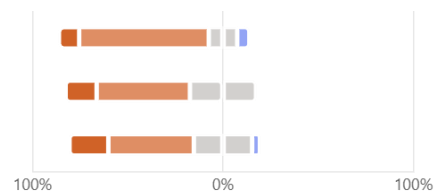


12.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree
I rely on social media discussions and peer reviews when evaluating PLT

I would consider PrettyLittleThing when purchasing fashion items

Overall, PrettyLittleThing is a brand I trust within the fashion market



ID	Start time	Gender	What's your education level ?	Monthly income (GB)	Have you heard of PrettyLittleThing (PLT) before this survey?	Which fashion brands do you most associate with influencer marketing? (Multiple choice)
1						
2	25–34	Female	Bachelor	£2,000–£3,999	Yes	Boohoo;Shein;PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;
3	35–44	Male	Bachelor	£2,000–£3,999	Yes	H&M;Shein;
4	35–44	Female	Bachelor	£2,000–£3,999	Yes	Zara;PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;H&M;
5	18–24	Male	Master	Less than £2,000	Yes	Other;
6	25–34	Female	Master	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Boohoo;Shein;
7	45–54	Male	Master	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	H&M;Zara;
8	55+	Female	Secondary School	£2,000–£3,999	Yes	Zara;H&M;
9	35–44	Female	Master	Less than £2,000	No	Shein;
10	55+	Male	Master	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	Zara;H&M;

11	18–24	Male	Secondary School	Less than £2,000	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;
12	25–34	Male	Master	Prefer not to say	No	Zara;
13	45–54	Male	PhD	£6,000+	Yes	Zara;
14	55+	Male	Secondary School	£2,000–£3,999	Yes	Other;Shein;H&M;
15	18–24	Male	Bachelor	Less than £2,000	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Boo-hoo;Shein;Zara;
16	55+	Male	Master	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Shein;
17	25–34	Female	Bachelor	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Boo-hoo;Zara;
18	35–44	Female	Other	Less than £2,000	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Boo-hoo;Shein;H&M;
19	25–34	Female	Other	Less than £2,000	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Boo-hoo;Zara;H&M;Shein;
20	35–44	Female	Secondary School	Less than £2,000	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;H&M;
21	25–34	Prefer not to say	Master	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	Boohoo;
22	45–54	Male	Bachelor	Less than £2,000	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;
23	45–54	Male	Master	£2,000–£3,999		Boohoo;PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;
24	45–54	Male	PhD	£6,000+	Yes	Zara;
25	18–24	Female	Secondary School	Less than £2,000	No	Zara;H&M;
26	45–54	Male	Master	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	Boohoo;Zara;H&M;PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;
27	45–54	Male	Bachelor	Less than £2,000	Yes	Other;
28	45–54	Female	Master	Less than £2,000	No	H&M;Zara;Shein;
29	35–44	Male	Bachelor	£2,000–£3,999	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Boohoo;
30	35–44	Male	Master	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Boo-hoo;Zara;
31	25–34	Male	Bachelor	£2,000–£3,999	Yes	Boohoo;Zara;
32	45–54	Female	Master	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Zara;Shein;
33	35–44	Male	Bachelor	£4,000–£5,999	No	H&M;Zara;
34	45–54	Male	Bachelor	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	Boohoo;PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;
35	35–44	Male	Master	£4,000–£5,999	No	Zara;H&M;
36	35–44	Male	Bachelor	£2,000–£3,999	Yes	Zara;Boohoo;PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;
37	55+	Female	Bachelor	£2,000–£3,999	No	Zara;H&M;
38	25–34	Female	Bachelor	£2,000–£3,999	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Boo-hoo;Shein;
39	35–44	Male	Master	£2,000–£3,999	Yes	Boohoo;PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;
40	45–54	Female	Master	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	Zara;
41	45–54	Male	Bachelor	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Boohoo;
42	45–54	Female	Master	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Boo-hoo;Zara;
43	18–24	Male	Secondary School	Less than £2,000	Yes	H&M;Zara;Boohoo;PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;

44	35–44	Female	Secondary School	£2,000–£3,999	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Zara;Shein;Other;
45	25–34	Male	Bachelor	£2,000–£3,999	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Boohoo;Zara;
46	25–34	Female	Bachelor	£2,000–£3,999	Yes	Boohoo;PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;H&M;
47	18–24	Male	Bachelor	Less than £2,000	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Zara;H&M;Shein;Other;
48	25–34	Male	PhD	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Other;
49	45–54	Prefer not to say	Master	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Zara;
50	55+	Male	PhD	£4,000–£5,999	Yes	PrettyLittleThing (PLT) ;Shein;Other;

On which platform do you most frequently see PrettyLittleThing (PLT) influencer content?

I am aware of the brand

I can quickly recall...

I can recognise the brand...

Which content type makes you most aware of new PrettyLittleThing (PLT) collections?

Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);YouTube;

Strongly agree

Strongly agree

Strongly agree

Unfiltered, short-form videos on Instagram

TikTok ;Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);

Agree

Agree

Strongly agree

Polished, high-quality images on TikTok

Other;

Strongly agree

Strongly agree

Strongly agree

Polished, high-quality images on Instagram

Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);

Agree

Agree

Agree

Polished, high-quality images on Instagram

YouTube;Facebook;

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

Polished, high-quality images on Instagram

YouTube;Facebook;

Agree

Neutral

Neutral

Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok

TikTok ;Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);Face-

Agree

Neutral

Agree

Polished, high-quality images on TikTok

Other;

Neutral

Neutral

Agree

Other

Facebook;Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);

Agree

Strongly agree

Agree

Polished, high-quality images on Instagram

TikTok ;

Strongly agree

Agree

Strongly agree

Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok

I do not see PLT contents on social media;

Agree

Agree

Agree

Polished, high-quality images on TikTok

YouTube;

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Other

Tiktok ;Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);Facebook;	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok
Tiktok ;Facebook;YouTube;	Agree	Neutral	Strongly agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok
Tiktok ;	Neutral	Agree	Neutral	Polished, high-quality images on TikTok
Tiktok ;YouTube;Facebook;	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on Instagram
Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);Tiktok ;	Agree	Agree	Agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok
Tiktok ;Facebook;	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Other
Tiktok ;	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok
YouTube;	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok
Facebook;YouTube;	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok
Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);Tiktok ;	Neutral	Agree	Neutral	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok
Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Polished, high-quality images on Instagram
Tiktok ;	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok
YouTube;Tiktok ;	Neutral	Agree	Neutral	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok
Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);YouTube;Facebook;	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Unfiltered, short-form videos on Instagram
Tiktok ;Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);YouTube;	Neutral	Strongly agree	Neutral	Unfiltered, short-form videos on Instagram
Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);Tiktok ;	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Polished, high-quality images on Instagram
Facebook;	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Polished, high-quality images on TikTok
Tiktok ;Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Polished, high-quality images on TikTok
Tiktok ;Facebook;Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok
I do not see PLT contents on social media;	Neutral	Neutral	Disagree	Other

Tiktok ;	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on Instagram	
I do not see PLT contents on social media;	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok	
Tiktok ;Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok	
I do not see PLT contents on social media;	Neutral	Disagree	Neutral	Other	
Tiktok ;Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok	
Tiktok ;Facebook;	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok	
Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on Instagram	
Tiktok ;Facebook;	Agree	Neutral	Strongly agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok	
Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);Tiktok ;	Neutral	Neutral	Agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on Instagram	
Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);Tik-tok ;YouTube;	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on Instagram	
Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Polished, high-quality images on Instagram	
Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Unfiltered, short-form videos on TikTok	
YouTube;	Neutral	Agree	Neutral	Unfiltered, short-form videos on Instagram	
I do not see PLT contents on social media;	Agree	Agree	Agree	Other	
Tiktok ;Face-book;Other;	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Other	
Instagram (e.g., Photos, Stories, Reels);Facebook;	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Other	
Other;Tiktok ;	Neutral	Agree	Neutral	Polished, high-quality images on TikTok	
PLT’s use of influencers makes the brand appear more authentic.	PLT’s campaigns are transparent and trustworthy.	PLT’s campaigns contribute positively to fashion culture.	PLT’s campaigns are ethically responsible.	I would interact with PLT’s online campaigns (Likes/Shares).	I would attend PLT events or participate in influencer-led promotions.

Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Agree
Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Agree
Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree		Strongly Agree
Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Agree
Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral		Neutral
Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Neutral
Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Agree
Neutral	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Neutral
Neutral	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree
Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree		Strongly Agree
Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Neutral
Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Neutral	Neutral	Agree
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral
Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree
Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Agree
Agree	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Disagree	Agree
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Agree	Agree
Strongly disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Agree	Agree
Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree
Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral	Agree
Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral		Disagree	Agree
Agree	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral
Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Neutral	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree

Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Agree	Neutral
Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Disagree
Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Neutral
Agree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Agree	Neutral
	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral
Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Agree
Neutral	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral
Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Agree
Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral
Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Agree
Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Neutral	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree
Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Agree	Agree

PLT's campaigns encourage me to spend more time engaging with the brand.

I rely on social media discussions and peer reviews when evaluating PLT

I would consider PrettyLittleThing when purchasing fashion items

Overall, PrettyLittleThing is a brand I trust within the fashion market

Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Agree	Agree	Neutral	Agree
Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree
Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Neutral		Neutral	Neutral
Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Neutral
Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Neutral	Agree	Agree	Agree
Neutral		Neutral	Neutral
Neutral	Agree	Neutral	Agree
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Agree

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree
Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Neutral
Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree
Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree
Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral
Neutral	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral
Neutral	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Agree	Agree	Neutral	Agree
Neutral	Agree	Agree	Agree
Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral
Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral
Neutral	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral
Neutral	Neutral	Agree	Agree
Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Neutral
Agree	Agree	Neutral	Agree
Neutral	Agree	Agree	Neutral
Agree	Agree	Neutral	Agree
Agree	Neutral	Agree	Agree
Strongly Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Agree	Agree	Neutral	Agree
Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree
Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral
Agree	Agree	Agree	Neutral
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree
Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Neutral	Agree	Agree	Agree
Agree	Agree	Agree	Neutral
Neutral	Agree	Agree	Neutral
Neutral	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Agree