

RESEARCH PROPOSAL



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THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTIONS IN THE UK FASHION RETAIL INDUSTRY

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the research

The United Kingdom fashion retail industry has seen tremendous digital transformation in terms of eCommerce and social media marketing. According to eMarketer (2021) the value of ecommerce sales in the textile and clothing and footwear industries surged from GBP12.81 billion in 2019 to an expected GBP 22.59 billion by 2025, which clearly demonstrates a significant change in consumer purchasing behaviour towards online consumption. The steep growth rate of 2020 and 2021 of 23.1% and 24.0% growth respectively reflects how the pandemic accelerated the growth in online product discovery and consumption of fashion brands. This change has been also supported by the increased impact of social media advertising, as this allows brands to develop more targeted campaigns that can result in better consumer interaction and awareness of the brand (Chowdhury et al., 2024).

Social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook) have played a major role in influencing consumer purchase intentions, above all thanks to visual appeal, interactions with influencers and personalized recommendations (Wang et al., 2025). Liu and Liu (2025) suggest that fashion marketing has undergone a digital transformation, where the interactions of data-oriented engagements and building narratives has now become the essence of the purchasing process. Consequently, a large number of fashion brands in the United Kingdom are shifting more of their resources to digital advertisement campaigns to attract younger, tech-savvy customers who put increasing importance on brand authenticity and convenience (Siva et al., 2024). This enhances the need to understand the effects that such advertising methods have on the consumer buying intentions in the dynamic fashion e-commerce landscape in the United Kingdom.

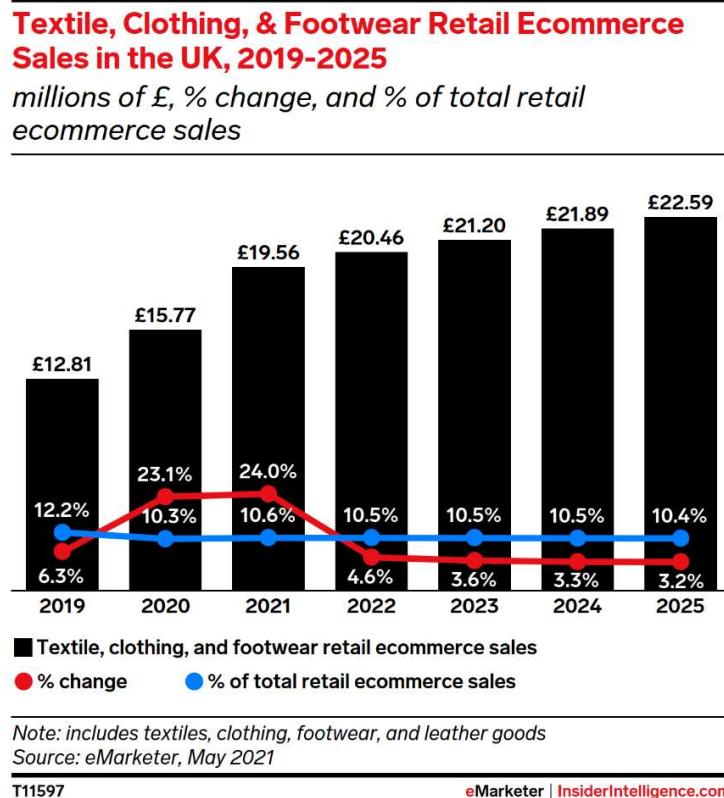


Figure 1: Textile, Clothing, and Footwear Ecommerce Sales Trends in the UK (2019–2025)

(Source: Sara Lebow, 2021)

1.2 Research Problem

Despite the constant growth of the UK fashion e-commerce sector, there continues to be a constant struggle to effectively assess the efficiency of social media advertising in terms of conversion between audience engagement and tangible purchase intent. Although e-commerce apparel in the UK is expected to exceed GBP22 billion by 2025 (eMarketer, 2021), the rate of growth of 3.2% shows that the market is becoming mature in the sense that it is increasingly difficult to maintain consumer loyalty and engagement. This poses a critical question to the marketers: are the existing social media marketing strategies sufficient in how they alter consumer decision-making or are the audiences becoming so desensitized to internet advertising.

In agreement with Bandara's (2021) view, social media campaigns have potential to extend exposure; however, the extent of its persuasion on buying behaviour is dependent on the emotional connection, building of trust, and the perceived value of the brand. Farhan et al. (2024) also argue that there are many campaigns that focus on exposure rather than persuasion, which leads to low behavioral results. Therefore, there is no systemic insight into how the advertising factors, namely, personalization, credibility of the influencer, and visual design influence the purchase intentions. This research issue, thus, involves defining the scope of the effect of social media advertising on consumer buying behavior in the UK fashion retail market, and thus help the brands to optimize their marketing digital strategies and achieve measurably positive change in consumer response.

1.3 Research rationale

This study is important because it tackles a critical need to understand the role of social media advertising in consumer purchase intentions in a digitally saturated UK fashion market. As the growth of ecommerce's stabilizes, brands will have to move from simply gaining attention to creating meaningful relationships with consumers where engagement turns into purchase (Wang et al., 2025). Understanding these dynamics is important in upholding competitiveness in an industry where it is now also the digital experiences that influence brand loyalty and customer lifetime value (Liu et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the content of social media that resonates with their values, identity, and emotions is becoming a stronger influencer in consumer purchasing intentions, and it is possible to conclude that psychological and social determinants also play an important role in shaping consumer purchase intentions (Wang et al., 2025). According to Shams, Chatterjee et al. (2024), perceived credibility, as well as consumer satisfaction, increases with the ultimate incorporation of digital communication coupled with high brand identity. Consequently, this research adds both to theoretical knowledge and practical implementation by systematically examining the role of different dimensions of social media advertising in affecting the decision-making processes of the fashion retail sector in the UK, specifically personalization, user, and influencer marketing.

1.4 Research aim, objectives and questions

1.4.1 Aim

The aim is to explore the Impact of Social Media Advertising on Consumer Purchase Intentions in the UK Fashion Retail Industry.

1.4.2 Research Objectives

- I. To analyse the impact of social media advertising on consumer purchase intentions within the UK fashion retail industry.
- II. To suggest practical recommendations for fashion retailers in the UK to enhance consumer purchase intentions through more effective and targeted social media advertising strategies.

1.4.3 Research Questions

- I. How does social media advertising influence consumer purchase intentions within the UK fashion retail industry?
- II. What recommendations can be proposed for UK fashion retailers to enhance consumer purchase intentions through effective and targeted social media advertising strategies?

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Research Onion

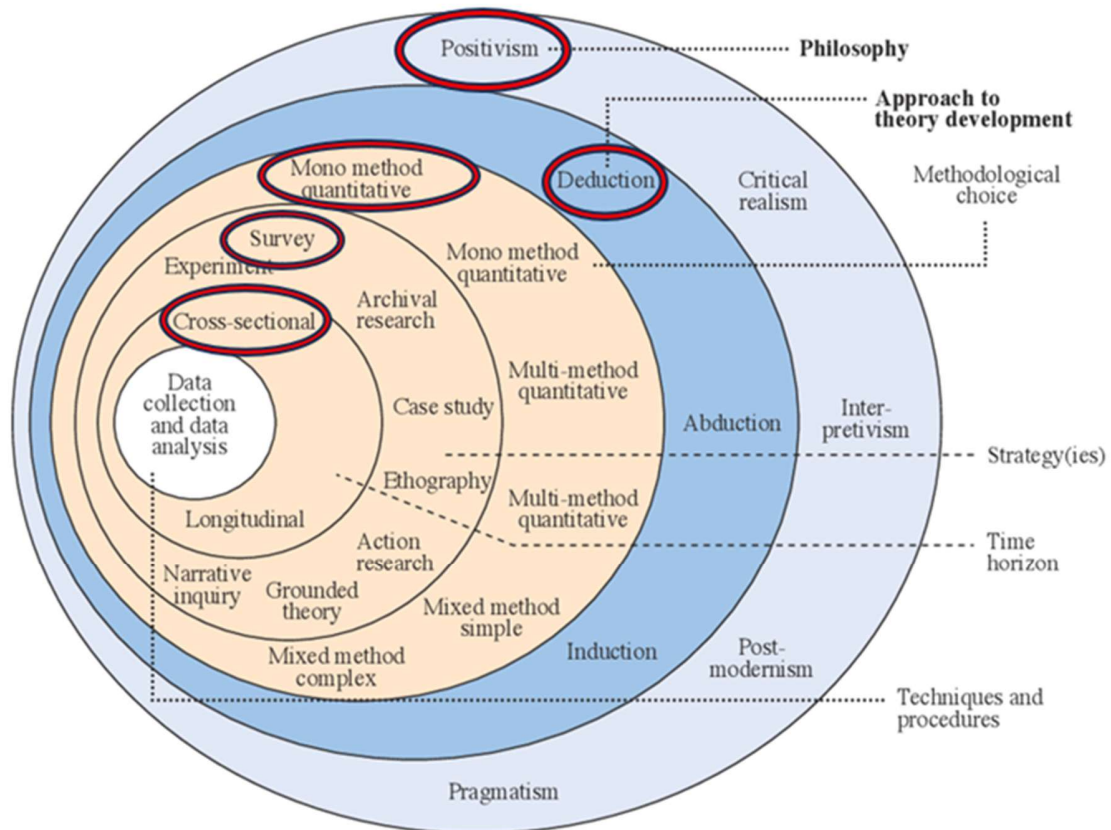


Figure 2: Research Onion

(Source: Saunders, 2019)

2.1.1 Research philosophy

A positivist paradigm will be followed in the study as it predicts the objective observation and the systematic quantification of the impact of social-media advertisement on consumer purchase intentions in the UK fashion retail market. Coupled with the use of empirical data and strict statistical analysis, positivism makes hypothesis testing easier and, consequently, BI can provide measurable insights (Herwanis et al., 2025). This research design aligns with the research goal to outline quantifiable relationships between variables the advertising exposure, consumer engagement, and purchase intention and,

therefore, guarantee validity and reliability of the findings obtained (Chowdhury et al., 2024; Bandara, 2021).

2.1.2 Research Approaches

A deductive approach will be used to empirically assess the established theories and theories models that explain consumer activity in digital and social media. The research will start with already established theoretical models, such as Theory of Planned Behaviour and formulate hypotheses which will be tested through quantitative research (Farhan et al., 2024). As this is a top-down logical approach the methodology enables the researcher to prove or disprove the theoretical assertions made about the effect of social media advertising on purchase intention (Jun et al., 2025; Thangarajan, 2025).

2.1.3 Research Design

The research design that will be used in the current research paper is a mixed descriptive or explanatory research design, which will be applied to study the effects of social media advertising on consumer purchase intentions. The descriptive step will define the salient behavioural patterns, and causal relationship investigation will be conducted in the explanatory step (Safitri et al., 2025). The dualistic approach makes it easy to detect the associative and predictive dynamics of consumer decision making. The design takes a somewhat fitting position in examining how the variables of brand engagement, influencer credibility, and personalization affect purchasing behaviours in the UK fashion retail industry (Liu et al., 2025).

2.1.4 Research Choices

This study will involve the use of a mono-method quantitative choice that is concerned with using numerical data obtained from structured choice questionnaires. The quantitative method backs up the objective analysis with the use of statistical tools to find out significant relationships among the various variables (Herwanis et al., 2025). As

quantitative research will give measurable outcomes, it is ideal to determine the extent to which social media advertising influences the purchase intention (Bandara, 2021). The mono-method approach ensures simplicity of the method, comparability of data, and higher precision in hypothesis testing (Chowdhury et al., 2024; Makwana et al., 2023).

2.1.5 Research Strategy

The research design will entail the implementation of surveys to gather primary data pertaining to consumers using social media advertising in the UK fashion retail market. Surveys will work well in terms of capturing the wide-scale, quantifiable responses in terms of attitudes and purchase behaviours (Farhan et al., 2024). The strategy will enable statistical testing of the relationship between such variables as ad exposure and intention to buy. It can also be used to collect any type of data efficiently with reduced diversity and a variety of demographics in various online opportunities (Siva et al., 2024; Jun et al., 2025).

2.1.6 Time Horizon

The research designs will be from cross-sectional time horizon as the research will be based on data at a particular point in time to analyse the existing effect of social media advertising on the purchase intention of consumers. This method is cost-effective to use and can be used to analyse the pattern of consumer attitudes in a certain period (Xu, 2025). As customer perceptions and engagement levels in fashion retail evolve rapidly, cross-sectional research offers a dynamic and current dataset that reflects the current efficacy of marketing strategies (Chowdhury et al., 2024; Herwanis et al., 2025).

2.2 Sampling

2.2.1 population

The study will target consumers in the United Kingdom that engage in the use of social media advertisements that relate to fashion retail products. This target segment consists

of users of social media, including Instagram, Facebook, and Tik Tok, who make or plan to make an online purchase of fashion products (Chowdhury et al., 2024; Siva et al., 2024).

2.2.2 Sampling Method

The probability of sampling using cluster sampling will be used to obtain equitable representation among various consumer cohorts. Respondents will be stratified into clusters according to geographical locality or platform usage which will help to promote heterogeneity and increase the reliability of findings (Makwana et al., 2023; Herwanis et al., 2025; Bandara, 2021).

2.2.3 Sample Size

To ensure statistical significance and accuracy, the study will be able to select a sample of about 150 respondents. The sample size would allow a substantive analysis of the patterns in consumer behaviour in relation to social media advertising, and it would maintain the practicability of data collection (Makwana et al., 2023).

2.3 Data Collection Method

Data will be gathered through a structured online survey shared through popular social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook and TikTok. For advertising purposes, the survey will have closed-ended questions on a five-point Likert scale to measure attitudes, engagement, and purchase intentions (Herwanis et al., 2025). The research design is considered the most efficient, broadly based and cost-effective way of assessing the fashion retail shoppers' quantitative variables from various and different consumer demographic segments of the United Kingdom by using this method of research (Chowdhury et al. 2024). Surveys via the internet also minimize the bias of interviewees and enables the statistical confirmation of answers, thus providing a solid foundation on

the analysis of the effects of social media advertisements on consumer buying habits (Bandara, 2021).

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis will be conducted using descriptive and inferential methods by statistical software such as Statistical Package System (SPSS). Descriptive statistics would be used to summarize the demographic patterns and response frequencies while correlation and regression would be used to test hypotheses about the impact of social media advertising on the purchase intentions of consumers (Farhan et al, 2024). This method of the analysis allows picking out the correlation between independent variables (advertising engagement, brand trust, influencer credibility) and the dependent one (purchase intent) (Thangararajan, 2025). The presentation of the results will be in the form of tables and charts to make the findings clearer to support the empirical validation of the theoretical assumptions to be stated under the positivist paradigm (Herwanis et al., 2025; Xu, 2025).

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Social media advertising

Social media advertising is any form of advertising carried out on social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and so on, as a way of promoting products by engaging with consumers through interactive and visual content. In the fashion industry, it plays an essential role in how the brand is perceived and in raising customer involvement (Siva and Felisiya, 2024). Bandara (2021) argues that for businesses capitalizing on social media advertising is cost-effective and very targeted and businesses can reach niche audiences and personalise messages in this way. According to Mishnick and Wise (2024), engagement metrics such as likes, shares and comments serve to enhance consumer awareness and interest. Additionally, Chowdhury et al. (2024) highlight that fashion stores rely on social media marketing ever more on visually appealing content and influencer

partnerships to shape consumer mindset and help brands become more appealing in the digital marketplace.

3.2 Consumer purchase intention

Consumer purchase intention is used to refer to the likelihood that a person will buy a product when it is subject to psychological, emotional, and social conditions (Farhan et al., 2024). In the fashion retail sector, purchase intention is built based on perceived value, brand trust and emotive attachment (Liu et al., 2025). Jun et al. (2025) argue that digital contact fosters familiarity and loyalty consequently having a positive impact on buying behavior. Additionally, Wang et al. (2025) claim that perceived authenticity is enhanced by emotional relatability that social media influencers cause, which leads to an increase in purchase intention.

With more exposure to digital media and the influence of variables such as visual appeal, influencer credibility, and peer interactions in a social media setting, they have a significant effect on the purchase intentions of consumers in an online fashion setting (Grabowska et al., 2025).

3.3 Relationship between social media advertising on consumer purchase intentions

A growing body of research suggests an apparent strong positive correlation between social media advertising and purchase intentions of consumers within the fashion retail environment. According to Thangarajan (2025), it has been observed that effective advertisements bear an impact on the cognitive and affective evaluations of consumers and therefore supplement the tendency to buy. In a similar vein, Chowdhury et al. (2024) report that rich and interactive content helps with improving brand recall and trust, which account for crucial driver factors in consumer decision-making. Rei et al. (2025) argue that personalization ads and influencer ads create brand loyalty and together create impulse-buy desires. Furthermore, Nguyen et al. (2020) identify consumer engagement

as the mediating construct between the advertising exposure and purchase intention. Consequently, consistent and credible digital communication via social media platforms can be translated into awareness to actionable consumer behavior in the fashion industry.

3.4 Literature gap

On the one hand, the impact of social media advertising on consumer behavior is confirmed by available literature; however, the lack of research directly considers the digital advertising environment of the UK fashion industry. Most investigations that remain have focused on the Asian or emerging markets; therefore, creating a gap in the contextual provisions about the dynamics of consumers in the West. Also, most scholarships focus on the levels of engagement, disregarding psychological processes, which interconnect advertising exposure with the purchase intention (Chowdhury et al., 2024). The implications of emotional relatability, the authenticity of influencers, and the design of the advertisement on the buying choices of the UK consumers still lack thorough study (Wang et al., 2025). As a result, this paper attempts to fill this gap by examining the direct effect of social media advertising in consumer purchasing behavior in the boundaries of the UK fashion retailing industry

3.5 Theoretical Framework: Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

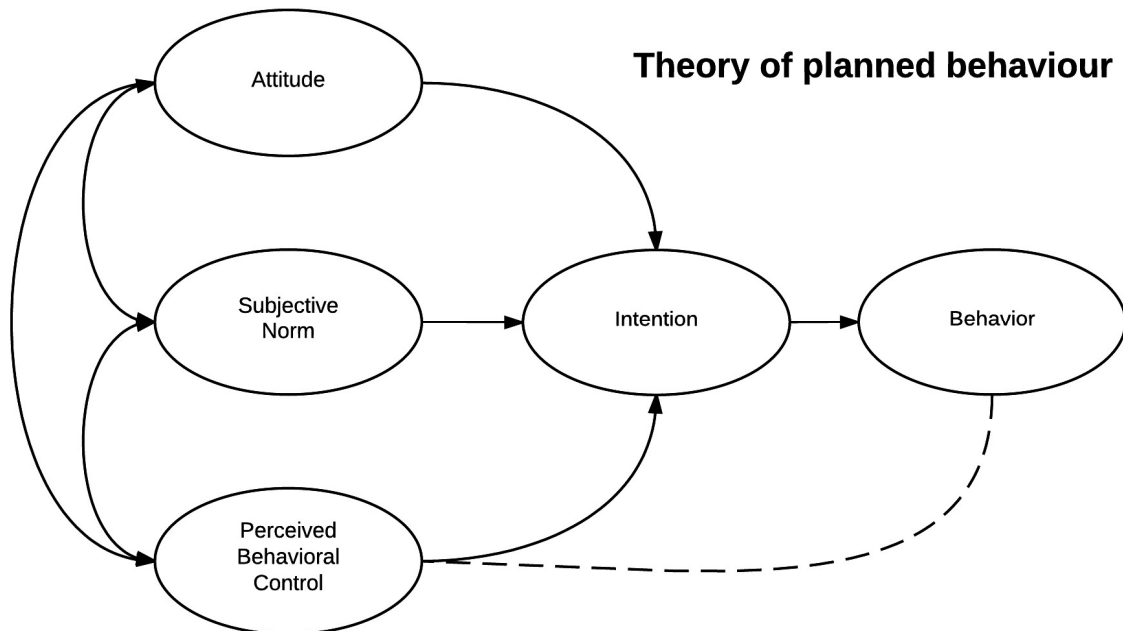


Figure 3: Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

This investigation is based on Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) which is a theory explaining how the three elements of individual attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control affect behavioral intentions. Existing literature shows that TPB has been widely applied to a variety of consumer researches to predict buying behaviors and decision making processes online (Rozenkowska, 2023). Within the context of social media advertising, the theory suggests that the attitude of consumers towards online advertisement, the social influence of peers, and the ease of purchase are the three factors that influence people's purchase intention (Chowdhury et al., 2024). Complementary researches by Bandara (2021) and Farhan et al. (2024) share a common view on the central importance of digital content as well as of the role of emotional care and the credibility of the influencer for psychological indicators that strengthen the tendency to consume. Accordingly, TPB provides a sound theoretical basis of the study on consumer behavioural response in the context of UK fashion retail advertising.

Chapter 4: Research Limitations

The study can face the limitation in sample size and limited range of data collection since the answers will be limited by the UK fashion consumers, who will use the chosen social media platforms. The benefit of using a cross-section survey limits the ability to capture the variations in consumer behavior over time. Also, self-report information can bring about bias of responses, since the respondents can give socially desirable responses. Notwithstanding such limitations, the study aims to establish trustworthiness by using the method of administering organized questionnaires and mathematical validation (Herwanis et al., 2025; Makwana et al., 2023).

Chapter 5: Research Ethics

Ethical considerations shall be the priority throughout the research process. Participants will be given as much information about the objectives of the study as possible, thus ensuring that they are participating voluntarily and that their identity remains confidential. No personal identifiers will be collected, and responses will be used only for academic pursuit. Informed consent will be obtained before data collection begins. The research will follow the ethical standards of honesty, transparency, and respect for the rights of the research participants, while adhering to the ethical guidelines of the institutions (Herwanis et al., 2025; Tengli, 2020). Data will be safely stored and only used for analysis.

Chapter 6: Timeline

Main activities and stages

MONTH	1				2				3				4			
Activity / Week	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Identify research area/gap																

Topic submission															
Discuss with the lecturer															
Get the approval															
Proposal preparation															
Proposal submission															
Approval for proposal															
Introduction															
Literature review															
Methodology															
Data collection															
Data analysis															
Conclusion, Prepare final draft															
Submission final dissertation															

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This study will look at how social media advertising influences a consumer to buy the product in the fashion retailing industry in the United Kingdom. Using positivist, quantitative approach, it attempts to establish relationships among the variables of advertisement engagement, personalized content and purchase intent. The projected results are likely to provide the marketers with insights with empirical bases that will provide an opportunity to develop data-driven, customer-based approaches. The study

equally aims at enhancing sparse literature by filling gaps in the knowledge into digital interactions and the attendant impacts on the choice of consumers in fashion retail.

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