

Marketing Management of Generation Z: Factors Influencing the Tendency Toward Fast Fashion and an Examination of the Relationships Among These Factors from the Perspective of Iraqi Consumers

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Abstract - Generation Z, shaped by digitalization and social media, has become one of the most important groups in the global fast-fashion industry. The study focuses on the social, technological, behavioural, and economic factors and the relationships that affect fast fashion consumption among the Iraqi Gen Z. A mixed-method design was utilized in this research study. The qualitative portion consisted of a systematic literature review, semi-structured interviews with Iraqi Gen Z consumers, and the identification of themes of interest in fashion consumption. The quantitative portion employed Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) on data from 384 participants, with the sample size calculated from Cochran's formula. The research found that social media usage and online advertising play a significant role in fast-fashion orientation by influencing people's preferences and purchase intent. Access to new trends through digital technologies and platforms, coupled with people's behavioural and lifestyle-driven decision-making, significantly influences fast fashion consumption. In the Iraqi context, economic factors, particularly the ease of online shopping and the low prices of fast fashion, promote fast fashion consumption. In addition to the qualitative findings, the quantitative analysis revealed that the integrated model explained 35% of the variance in fast-fashion orientation among Iraqi Gen Z consumers, with economic factors and consumer behavior exerting the most significant influence. The study makes a theoretical contribution by proposing an integrated framework that combines the social, technological, behavioural, and economic aspects. Almost all the results should also assist fashion brands, marketers, and policymakers in understanding the values of Generation Z in developing and transitional economies, and in developing models that reflect the needs and desires of that cohort.

Keywords: Generation Z, Fast Fashion, Social Media Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Technology and Innovation, Iraq

I. INTRODUCTION

With changing consumer values, technological advancements, and increased global awareness of how businesses impact society and the environment, marketing

management has shifted its focus once again. In the past, the average consumer was Passive- they received products and marketing promotions. Now they evaluate and rank the brands they engage with on novelty, digital online ethical activism, social justice movements, and marketing the products themselves (Armstrong & Kotler, 2009). Ever-changing technology is most impactful on younger consumers. Their digital consumption is often driven by social peer simultaneity and aspirational lifestyles (Khademi et al., 2015). This has left many marketers with the dilemma of how to develop strategies effectively and efficiently in an ever-increasing global and national competitive landscape (Bagi & Hosseini, 2021).

Generation Cohorts differ in many impactful ways, and this is most evident in how digital consumers spend. Operational marketing and spending behaviour of Digital Generation Z is most affected by constant connectivity and marketing (Barenblatt, 2015). In low- or no-touch economies, the internet drives marketing management and real-time data analysis (Sethuraman et al., 2023). In low-touch economies, in cycles of rapid or periodic technological change, this has notably increased market competition.

One of the consequences of these dynamics is the rise of fast fashion. With quick design cycles, low costs, and fast fashion responsiveness, it meets the needs of the younger demographic. In these fashion segments, marketing activities such as sensory marketing, paid advertisements, and digital marketing help reinforce customer loyalty, increasing the likelihood of repeat purchases (Kazem & Ahmed, 2022; Sadat et al., 2023). Complex consumer-brand relationships are often studied through the prism of multivariate analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies (McQuitty, 2018).

Meanwhile, consumers' attitudes towards sustainability and responsible consumption have attracted increasing attention in marketing research. Knowledge, attitudes, and perceived behavioural control influence purchase decisions more significantly in the younger population (Amoako et al., 2020; Babaei Semiromi et al., 2020). The positive change in consumer perception and the competitive advantage can be achieved through marketing approaches that construct green positioning, innovative strategies, and value (Ar, 2012; Wu & Chen, 2014; Baker et al., 2014). However, especially in developing and transition economies, these marketing strategies and green positioning are often influenced by economic factors like low price, ease of use, and availability.

Communication patterns and the content consumption patterns of consumers on digital platforms have been studied for decades. Still, these patterns have only received the attention they deserve in tech circles over the last couple of years. Digital tools, webpages, and consumer and market analysis enable companies today to calibrate their marketing and offerings on the fly to real-time consumer behaviour (Rakhmanovich et al., 2025; Khademi et al., 2015; Au-Yong-Oliveira et al., 2018; Stone & Woodcock, 2014). At the same time, the tech focus increases the propensity for consumers to engage in impulse buying and the rapid spread of fads worldwide, without regard for differences in societal and cultural behaviours across countries.

More attention has been given to integrating marketing management, consumer behavior, and multidimensional sustainability in current publications. Still, the impact of this integration at the socio-economic perspective level is overlooked. It has been shown that socio-economic, cultural, and overall environmental factors exert a considerable influence on consumption levels. However, for some reason, this framework is often ignored (Chan, 2013; Bakhshandeh & Kazemi, 2017; Baltrėnas & Kazlauskienė, 2009). This is how the level of marketing management, the focus on educational materials tailored for consumers in a given country, and the focus on emerging economies explain the emphasis on marketing management. The intersection of strategies helps explain the added value to decrease the gap in educational materials.

In light of the focus on this intersection of variables, marketing strategies, how consumer behavior is directed, and the consumer's access to technology and the economy, these factors are also very important for acquiring new knowledge and understanding new technology (Shah & Vasudevan, 2025; Armstrong & Kotler, 2009; Barenblatt, 2015). This enables understanding of today's consumption culture (Armstrong & Kotler, 2009; Barenblatt, 2015). This allows for obtaining a complete and in-depth knowledge of consumer behavior and the applicability of marketing management in a fast, global, and changing environment for the economy, emerging markets, and evolving technology (Filfilan & Alattas, 2025; Armstrong & Kotler, 2009; Barenblatt, 2015).

Key Contribution

- Adds an interdisciplinary approach involving social media and technology, consumer behaviour, and economics, to understand the fast-fashion orientation of Generation Z.
- Investigate fast-fashion and digital marketing in an emerging developing economy by studying the case of Iraqi Gen Z consumers.
- Uses a multimethod approach and SEM to examine the complexity of consumer-marketing relationships.
- Highlights the importance of economic and behavioural factors in price-sensitive digital markets and offers marketers actionable insights.

The paper's aspects and how they will be addressed will be structured as follows. In Section II, the study assesses existing research on marketing management, consumer behavior, the digital sphere, and sustainability. The identified gaps and niches will also be evaluated, and the paper's focus will be clarified. In Section III, research designs and methodology, as well as instrument and sample selection, will be outlined. In Section IV, the primary phenomena of the research will be systematized, and the descriptive, measurement, and structural features of the models will be demonstrated. The primary phenomena to be analyzed in Section V will be drawn from the literature to provide findings with breadth and depth and, for proper contextualization in theory, the appropriate theoretical scaffolding. In the final part of the paper, Section VI, the author will not only summarize the work done but also focus on the more significant aspects of the research and the conceptualizations that could ensue.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Consumer awareness, attitudes, and purchase intentions are affected by advertising and integrated marketing communication, according to the literature. Recall, attention, and behavioral responses are affected by digital advertising, especially on social networking sites. User engagement, however, varies across advertisement messages and formats (Barreto, 2013). Integrated marketing communication models focus on the synergy among advertising, promotion, and brand communication to achieve effective promotion and the formation of enduring relationships with consumers (Belch & Belch, 2015).

When promotional stimuli are overwhelming to consumers, trust mechanisms are most needed. Trust has been a significant factor in consumers' adoption of products and services, especially in the modern digital and service economy. "Credibility of advertising messages and brand communication are positively correlated to consumer confidence and transactional willingness" (Naseri et al., 2022). Therefore, advertising management is not the sole

factor, as messaging must also be dependable to maintain consumer trust (Rastogi & Parashar, 2018).

From a multi-generational viewpoint, consumers also behave differently due to inter-generational values, expectations, and psychological differences (Boztepe, 2012). Investigations of generational mindsets indicate that younger cohorts are characterized by unique consumption motivations that are byproducts of social identity, peer pressure, and brand emotionality (Shapiro, 2013; Brooks, 2006). Such attributes are the utmost rationale for flexible marketing that targets the generation of interest and their preferred mode of communication.

Today, two big topics in marketing research are Sustainability and Green Marketing. Studies show that marketers who use environmentally responsive marketing elicit positive responses from consumers when they purchase their products, thereby changing consumers' attitudes towards the products and their brands. (Boztepe, 2012; Chan, 2013) Environmental advertising works differently depending on consumers' cultures and shows the need for focused, culturally aware marketing. (Ling et al., 2004) Also, marketing green products works when consumers believe that a brand honestly supports the environment and that its green practices are genuine, authentic, and true to its marketing (Saremi et al., 2014).

When consumers decide to buy a brand, there are other essential factors directly related to that brand. These factors include the brand image as a whole and consumers' overall brand attitude, which can overwhelm even the consumers' negative brand attitude. These factors include the presence of advertising and promotional campaigns specifically targeting that brand. (Buana et al., 2020) Consumers' emotional and rational brand associations can mediate the adoption of targeted marketing strategies, thereby increasing overall market purchasing intentions for a brand in a highly symbolic, identity-driven market. (Sethuraman et al., 2023; Haan, 1971)

Innovation management and sustainable development frameworks continue proving the necessity of coupling technological progress with responsible marketing within organizational boundaries. In rapidly changing industries, the ability to perform strategic innovations is regarded as the primary source of competitive edge and sustainable growth (Khamitdkhanovich et al., 2025; Roblek et al., 2014). The role of specialized education and professional training has also been highlighted as necessary in achieving marketing communication effectiveness and ethical marketing (Deleersnyder et al., 2009; Dobarji & Hamed, 2016). Regardless of these insights, the available literature still

suggests that the effectiveness of advertising, trust, characteristics of target generations, orientation toward sustainability, and perception of the brand all interact to influence consumer behavior in complex ways. The combination of these advertising dimensions is the focus of very few, if any, publications. This is especially true for the younger generation as consumers in developing economies. By bridging this gap, a more comprehensive understanding of how marketing strategies can be tailored to fit the digitally driven, sustainability-focused market can be achieved (Barreto, 2013; Haan, 1971).

III.METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

In this study, the author adopted a mixed approach that was more likely to lead to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, in this case, the Driver of the Fast Fashion Phenomenon for Generation Z. Using a mixed approach allowed for a more in-depth understanding of consumers' perceptions and the empirical evaluations of the hypothesized relationships. While the qualitative phase focused on answering the 'What' questions and on construct identification and contextual understanding of the theory, the quantitative phase concentrates addressing the implications of the findings, hypothesis testing, and statistical validation of the proposed model. This design made the study more robust by allowing exploration of the phenomenon and corroboration through qualitative evidence.

3.2 Conceptual Framework and Structural Model

It is essential to research and review information, and then, from these reviews, design and create a conceptual framework. The framework explains individuals' inclination toward fast fashion. The model suggests that, for members of Generation Z, fast-fashion orientation is influenced by a combination of social media, technology, innovation, consumer behaviour, and the economy. The combination of these factors was regarded as a latent variable.

The model's explanatory strength and direct relation with the dependent variable, the independent variables, and the fast-fashion inclination relation variables are shown in Fig. 1. The strength and direction of particular relationships are characterized by model path coefficients, while the proportion of variance explained in the dependent variable is described by the model's coefficient of determination (R-squared). The model was meant to encompass the behavioral and contextual drivers of fast fashion consumption in a digitally constrained, economically driven context.

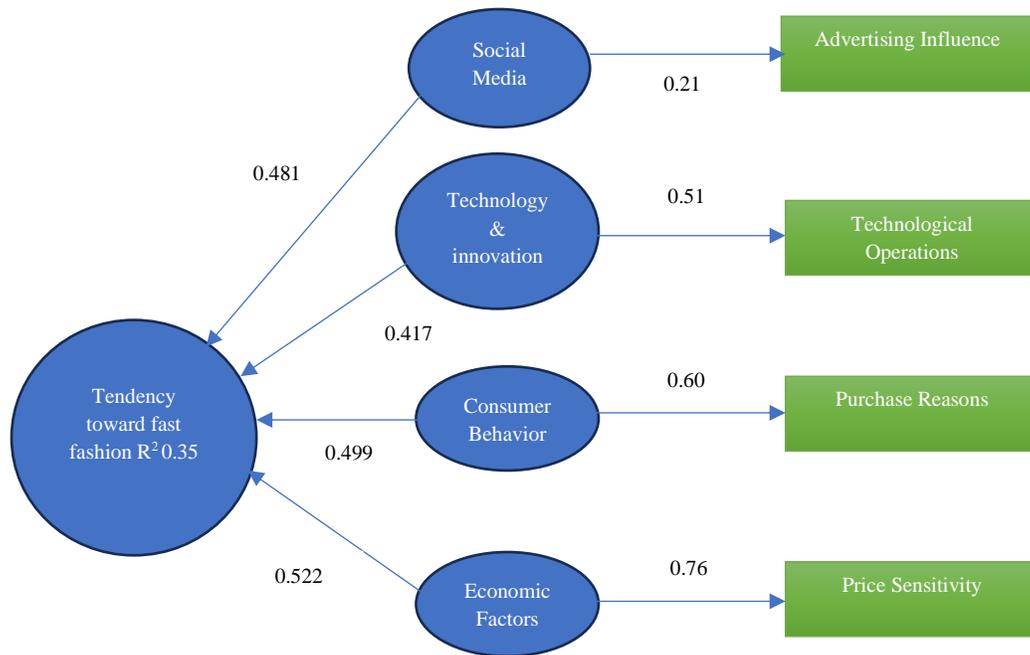


Fig. 1 Structural Equation Model of Factors Influencing the Tendency Toward Fast Fashion

3.3 Population and Sample Selection

The participants were Gen Z members aged 18 to 30 who use social media and have experience buying clothes. This age range was chosen because they are heavily influenced by digital marketing, buy things online, and stay up to date with the latest styles.

The first part of the research was qualitative. The participants were chosen purposefully and selectively based on their experience and knowledge of the concept of fast fashion, use of social media, and previous buying experience. The research continued until theoretical saturation was reached.

The sample size for the second, quantitative part of the study was calculated using Cochran's formula at the 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error, yielding a required sample size of 384 participants. The data were collected through an online survey, which was voluntary and aimed at achieving representativeness.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Two key tools were used to gather information to aid in the building of this framework. In this first part of the research, the qualitative component, we conducted semi-structured interviews to address the research objectives, including the themes of why people buy, influences such as digital and social media, cost factors, and the people in question's lifestyles. These interviews helped develop the constructs and items for the specific question(s).

In the second part of the research, the quantitative part, the development of a social instrument comprising several items on technologies and innovations, economics, and the consumer sphere was completed. These items were, in all cases, subjected to a 5-point Likert scale. These were to

indicate the level of disagreement and agreement, from strongly disagree to agree strongly. In all cases, the questionnaires were sent to experts in the relevant field for pretesting and subjected to the pretesting process to ensure accurate, appropriate, and actual content validity. They were subsequently distributed.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

The measurements needed to be accurate, and both their validity and reliability were thoroughly checked. Expert reviewers were used to determine the content and face validity of the questionnaires. Construct validity was assessed using both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses to confirm the factor structure underlying the items and examine their indicator loadings.

The reliability of the construct in the measurement model was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability. All the constructs showed reliabilities above the acceptable level of 0.70, indicating good internal consistency. These procedures ensured that the model measurement was accurate with respect to the constructs of the study's theory.

3.6 Data Analysis Technique

Informed by bias and variance structural equation modeling, SPSS was used to review and analyze the quantitative data obtained. Using exploratory factor analysis followed by confirmatory factor analysis, the SPSS model conducted structural equation modeling to examine social media, technology, innovation, consumer behavior, and economics, and to test hypotheses about the fast-fashion tendency.

To determine statistical significance, we used t-values, and to assess the magnitude of relationships, we used path

coefficients. This evaluation provided insight into how to analyze the model.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents

The quantitative analysis was conducted using data collected from 384 Generation Z consumers aged 18 to 30 years. Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the demographic characteristics and to ensure adequate representation of the target population.

TABLE I AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS (N = 384)

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–22	120	31.3
23–26	140	36.5
27–30	124	32.2
Total	384	100

As shown in TABLE I, the most significant percentage of participants was in the 23-26 age range (36.5%), followed by 27–30-year-olds (32.2%) and 18–22-year-olds (31.3%). This age distribution provides a fair representation of Gen Z consumers in their early adulthood, including students and young career professionals. This broad age distribution adds weight to the results on fast-fashion consumption behavior.

4.2 Measurement Model Assessment

Before evaluating the structural relationships, the measurement model's reliability and validity were examined.

TABLE II RELIABILITY AND CONVERGENT VALIDITY OF CONSTRUCTS

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Social media	0.767	0.802	0.56
Technology & Innovation	0.837	0.893	0.62
Consumer Behaviour	0.742	0.787	0.54
Economic Factors	0.712	0.895	0.65
Fast Fashion Orientation	0.755	0.820	0.58

TABLE II shows that all variables have Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability above 0.70, indicating good internal consistency. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are greater than 0.50, indicating good convergent validity among the variables. These results show that there is confident validity, and the variables do, in fact, measure what they claim to. The square roots of the AVEs also demonstrate discriminant validity, as the correlations with the other variables are lower, indicating that the variables are distinct.

4.3 Structural Model Results

The structural model was evaluated using variance-based SEM to examine the hypothesized relationships between the independent variables and fast-fashion orientation.

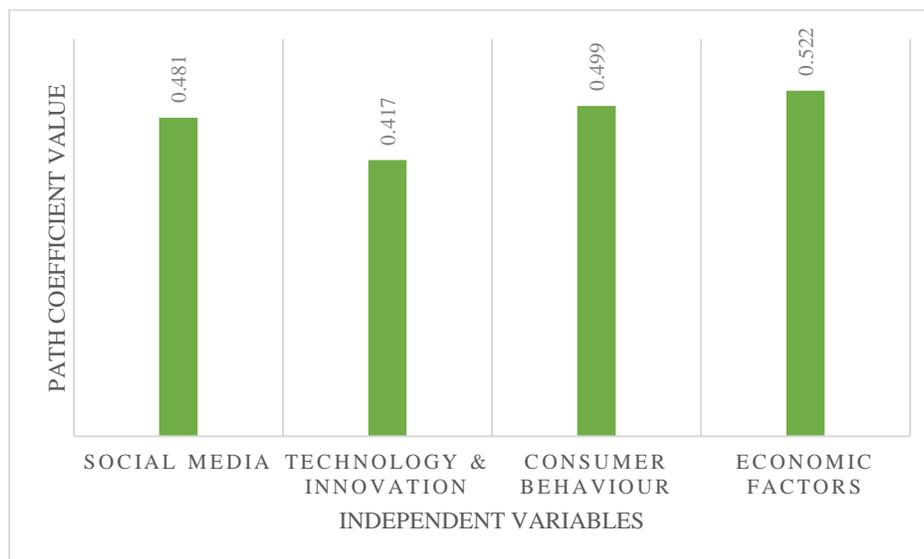


Fig. 2 Structural Model Results – Path Coefficients

In Fig. 2, we see that all four independent variables have a positive and significant influence on the fast-fashion orientation (i.e., they all positively influence it). This is referring to the four independent variables as a whole, not individually, given the context. As it seems that all four variables positively influenced the fast-fashion orientation,

the most substantial positive influence comes from the Economic factors ($\beta = 0.522$). Consumer Behavior ($\beta = 0.499$), then social media ($\beta = 0.481$), and finally, the least positive influence is Technological Innovation + social media ($\beta = 0.417$). This indicates that the relative influence of Economic Factors (Affordability + Value Perception) and

Consumer Behavior with social media is the primary driver of Gen Z's fast-fashion orientation.

TABLE III HYPOTHESIS TESTING RESULTS

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Social media → Fast Fashion Orientation	0.481	4.912	0.000	Supported
H2	Technology & Innovation → Fast Fashion	0.417	3.673	0.000	Supported
H3	Consumer Behaviour → Fast Fashion	0.499	4.142	0.000	Supported
H4	Economic Factors → Fast Fashion	0.522	3.877	0.000	Supported

As shown in TABLE III, all hypothesized relationships are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level ($t \geq 1.96$). The R^2 value of 0.35 indicates that the model explains 35% of the variance in fast-fashion orientation, suggesting

moderate explanatory power, which is acceptable in behavioral and marketing research. Fig. 3 shows the comparative influence of key determinants on fast fashion orientation.



Fig. 3 Comparative Influence of Key Determinants on Fast Fashion Orientation

The strength of the structural model is determined by the amount of variance it predicts, as measured by R^2 . Social media, technology, and innovation, Consumer Behavior, and Economic factors together account for 35% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.35$) in fast fashion orientation for Generation Z. This is considered a moderate amount of variance and is acceptable in social behavioral and marketing research, as there are multiple contextual psychological factors influencing the consumers' decisions. Thus, the R^2 confirms the predictive model and supports the relationships surrounding the hypothesis.

V. DISCUSSION

The study's evidence shows that blended social, techno, behavioral, and economic factors contribute to Gen Z's fast-fashion policy. Also, the evidence further supports recent Marketing Management Theories on the integration of digital participation, consumption driven by the desire for life, and perceived value in the decision to purchase.

The positive effect of social media on fast-fashion policy supports the previous study's evidence on the role of digital social media platforms in consumer decision-making and impulse purchases. The social media platform offers

continuous access to followers on the latest trends and instant advertising from fashion influencers and mass audiences. Social media brings instant trends. In Iraq, social media is the primary source of brand discovery and interaction in the fashion industry.

The role of technology and innovation solidifies the necessity of digital infrastructure. The removal of transactional barriers and the enhancement of consumer convenience rely on automated payment systems, mobile applications, and online platforms. These results align with previous studies in the field, which indicate that the younger segment of the population is more prone to impulsive buying and more hedonic in the shopping experience. The technology for the Generation Z cohort transcends being just a tool to a foundational piece of the shopping experience.

There is a strong Relationship Between the fast-fashion orientation and the Consumer behaviour. This describes the combination of lifestyle preferences, identity, and social behaviour. There is a common tendency among consumers in the Generation Z cohort to consider fashion as a form of social presentation and a means of social inclusion. The popularity of global fashion trends and peer pressure make it

more acceptable to buy frequently and disregard the durability of the fashion piece.

To many, it is clear that economic factors had the most significant influence on fast-fashion orientation. This reinforces the importance of affordability, price sensitivity, and perceived value in a transitional economy. Consumers will always opt for low-cost and easily accessible fashion alternatives. This is especially true for the young population, which faces many financial constraints. The tension between the dream of buying and limited finances has created a problem for young consumers.

This study supports the claim that multiple models of fast-fashion consumption are used simultaneously and analyzes each factor of the various models collectively. The present research is focused on Iraqi Gen Z and new, emerging, unstable economies. This study makes a positive contribution to the literature by considering other emerging unstable economies.

This study considers multiple factors in combination and concludes. Fashion Labels should create and implement digitally intensive, cost-effective, and behaviourally targeted strategies. Social media, technology, and value-based pricing should be focused on. Sustainable consumption among youth does not account for economic conditions. The youth in unstable economies impact consumption and should be factored in.

The interaction among the economic situation, the factors driving fast-fashion consumption, and digital behavioural patterns remains unknown. The world still needs to understand the real interaction between the world and behaviour. This is the real interaction of the digital world, the economy, and behaviour, and this is the unexplored. This explainer gives the world more to consume and an unsustainable globe.

VI. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This research assessed the main drivers underpinning fast-fashion consumption spending among Gen Z through the four social, technological, behavioural, and economic frames of a single integrated marketing management approach. Of the four determinants integrated and delineated in this study, all financial and consumer behavioural determinants were the strongest, while social media and technological pulls were the weakest. This demonstrates the consumption of fast fashion in light of the paradoxes of digitisation and the social construction of poverty. From a statistical standpoint, the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) results demonstrated that the proposed model accounted for 35% of the variance in fast-fashion orientation, highlighting the critical role of economic factors and consumer behavior. These insights provide valuable guidance for marketers aiming to target Gen Z consumers in emerging economies. In a theoretical sense, the study integrated, validated, and extended the literature on fast fashion and digital marketing. In a practical sense, the

research assists fashion brands, particularly policymakers, by showing that the Generation Z market demands digital, economically priced fashion products, which behavioural economics underpins.

Future Work

The future may explore different designs to understand better how fast-fashion consumption may change over time. This may include adding rural populations to gain a broader generalization within a population. Also, comparing countries with emerging economies helps understand how Generation Z plays a balancing role in eco-consciousness, as more sustainable variables within the study help explain how the generation in these countries overspends.

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