Examining the Impact of Social Media Advertisements in Promoting Fashion Sense among University Students

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Abstract

The study examines the impact of social media advertisements, specifically fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram, in promoting fashion sense among university students. The research uses a quantitative approach, using a survey method and a structured questionnaire. The sample size is 200 students from the University of Narowal. The findings show a significant positive association between exposure to fashion ads on social media and participants' fashion sense, purchasing behavior, and fashion exposure. This study provides valuable insights into understanding social media ad's impact in influencing choices and preferences related to fashion products, styles, and trends among the targeted demographic.

Keywords: Social Media Advertisements, Social Media, Fashion Ads, Fashion Sense, University Students, Purchasing Behaviour, and Fashion Exposure.

1.   Introduction

Social media has significantly influenced societal trends in the digital age, benefiting the fashion industry by promoting products, posting videos, and attractive pictures, as people spend more time online (Chua & Seock, 2020). In Pakistan, ad spending is projected to reach US $ 50.24m in 2023 in the Social Media Advertising market (Statista, 2023). Fashion news has evolved from being controlled by magazines to being advanced through social media platforms, where new trends and styles are shared by millions of people and through advertising, making trends more quickly known (Fashinnovation, 2020). Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube enable fashion influencers to reach millions of fashion-conscious individuals who desire constant access and accessibility (Harsh, 2022). Social media usage for fashion refers to how many fashion designers and advertisers utilize various social media platforms to promote fashion trends (Kiron, 2023).

A research by Ali (2023) highlights the influence of social media fashion photography on young people's self-awareness and fashion mainstreaming. This mental and social growth period, coupled with higher impressionability, has sparked interest in fashion, leading high fashion firms to target this younger audience.

1.1   Fashion Sense

Fashion sense refers to the way in which fashion is perceived and understood. It is not simply about following trends or conforming to societal norms, but rather about cultivating a unique conception of self through fashion choices (Monica et al., 2016). Fashion is the combination of accessories and clothing to create a visually appealing appearance, influenced by social trends, culture, and personal preferences, a form of self-expression (Kawamura, 2018).

Social media has significantly influenced university students' fashion sense, as it allows users to discover and share new trends, styles, and brands (Phua et al., 2017). Fashion significantly influences our lives, with individuals striving for different looks and becoming fashion enthusiasts. Students express their personality through their appearance and latest trends (LEWIS, 2021). Many influencers and brands promote fashion trends through advertising, which produces fashion aesthetics. The way the fashion business operates has

undergone a significant transformation thanks to social media platforms (Brahma, 2023).

1.2 Fashion Exposure

Fashion exposure refers to the extent to which individuals are exposed to fashion-related content, such as clothing, accessories, feet wear, and trends. Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram can be the source of fashion exposure, particularly among youth.

1.3 Advertising on Social Media

Online marketing tactics known as "social media advertising" involves promotion of products or services among targeted users by utilizing social networking platforms (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Social media advertising significantly promotes fashion sense among university students by exposing them to various fashion-related content from brands, influencers, and fellow users (Phua et al., 2017). Advertisements often use visually appealing videos, images, interactive content, and designs to engage users and capture their attention.

1.4 Facebook

Facebook, with 2.98 billion monthly active users the first quarter of 2023, is the world's most popular social networking site, enabling marketers to reach a vast audience (Statista, 2023). Facebook enables fashion influencers and brands to showcase styles and products through videos, carousel ads, and images, targeting specific interests, demographics, and behaviors (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

This targeted approach enables fashion advertisers to reach university students who are most likely to be interested in their offerings, thereby influencing their fashion sense. Facebook is a popular social media platform for advertising due to its numerous targeting features and large user base, allowing advertisers to customize their ads based on user interests and demographics (Emeritus, 2023). According to the most recent viewing data provided by the company, 19.2% of Pakistan's population was reached by Facebook advertisements in the beginning of 2022.

1.5   Instagram

Instagram is a popular social networking site for sharing visual content, particularly among younger users, including university students (Pew Research Center, 2018). With more than a billion users each month as of June 2018 (Statista, 2021), it provides a powerful platform for fashion brands and influencers to showcase their styles and engage with their target audience (Phua et al., 2017). Instagram Ads are popular for creating engaging visual advertisements that are more likely to be viewed by users than traditional text-based ad formats (Emeritus, 2023). According to a research by Casalo et al. (2018), because of Instagram visual interaction with consumers, fashion and luxury brands mostly utilize it. Instagram advertising promotes fashion brands in motivating consumers to make future fashion decisions and purchases.

Social media platforms have become crucial for information dissemination and trend propagation, particularly among university students who are learning and developing their personalities. However, there is limited understanding of the impact of social media advertisements on fashion Sense. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of two social networking sites mainly Facebook and Instagram ads in promoting fashion sense among, purchasing behavior towards fashion products and fashion exposure.

2.   Literature Review

Manyam et al. (2018) determined how social media is affecting young people's current fashion trends. 100 respondents were selected a sample by convenience method for study. Findings indicated that social networking sites are extensively used by students of age 18-24 and they get most of the fashion information. Minhas et al. (2021) studied Apparel Fashion Trends and Instagram about Gujranwala Youth. 100 students from the city of Gujranwala made up the research samples and study is quantitative in nature. According to findings, 90% of respondents said that Instagram is good for fashion and young people in Gujranwala adopted fashion or styles by following to numerous Instagram trends. According to a study by Letko (2019), social media is an essential component of daily living in today's society. According to the survey, 97% of the participants use social media every day. The findings

showed that just 24% of other customers and 74% of generation Z followed fashion influencers.

Therefore, the audience most affected by social media material is young people. Safdar (2021) measured the cultural impacts of social media on young people in Pakistan. The data show that virtually every aspect of university students' life has been influenced by internet media. Students' inspiration for new fashion trends, wearing styles, physical appearance, foreign cultures, frequent use of foreign languages, and a distance from religious activities, as assumed, was proven. Saha and Saha (2021) conducted a case study on Zara and H&M, analyzing the impact of social media on the fashion industry. The survey, involving 105 respondents, found that social media significantly influences fashion style, clothing choices, and trends. A study by Safdar and Khan (2020) on Pakistani women's digital media usage and cultural aspirations revealed that they are primarily inspired by new fashion trends, as digital media's global reach allows them to wear these trends.

Crews et al. (2015) found that both female fashion majors and non-fashion majors have a similar level of interest in fashion on social media. Both demographics use social media to communicate their interests, with 72% of non-fashion majors using it to stay current with fashionable trends. This highlights the importance of understanding and utilizing social media for fashion communication. A study by Mohr (2013) found that social media, including social networks, significantly influenced the opinions of fashion-related attendees during Fashion Week. Respondents considered the information provided by media sites vital or important, viewing themselves as knowledgeable sources of fashion advice to persuade others.

Elena (2020) employed a digital survey given to 120 participants, ranging in age from 16 to 23, to investigate how Instagram influencers serve as sources for fashion news. Instagram was commonly used to look up fashion trends, which is not surprising. 46% of the sample under investigation followed fashion trends on Instagram every day, 25% every week, 7% every month, and 22% less often. The frequency with which individuals followed trends varied depending on the degree of fashion innovation. Ann et al. (2022) studied the impact of media exposure on fashion consciousness through semi-structured interviews. The study found that most respondents admired fashion-

related celebrities and felt they were behind their role models. The media's current trends were adopted by respondents in unique ways, leading to buy intention. The study suggests that media exposure may contribute to a culture of bandwagoning.

Fashion is characterized by Rituraj and Scheidl (2021) as a highly visual sector in the present digital media era. Appearing on various social media sites, like Facebook or Instagram, is simple. In the online world, there are several new platforms, algorithms, and trends. Social media is regarded as a technique for igniting interest in and excitement for newly released goods. A research by Ahmad et al. (2015) on the impact of social media on the fashion sector found a significant correlation between social media usage and the industry. The study found that if social media usage increased by 1%, the fashion industry would expand by 20.6%. The 45.4% association between the two industries demonstrates their interdependence. Jesu Kulandairaj A. (2014) highlights the growing importance of social networking sites for information sharing, opinion-shaping, and communication. The study examines the advantages, adverse effects, and influences of these platforms on young people's lifestyles, as they are still in their early development stage, highlighting their potential influence on global discourse and communication.

Safdar (2022) studied the impact of internet media on Punjabi university students' perceptions of Pakistani culture confirmed three hypotheses: digital media influences clothing preferences, the connection between digital media usage and appearance changes, and a significant correlation between changing fashion trends and digital media usage. Bandara (2020) examined the impact of social media advertising on customers' shopping choices in the fashion industry. Results showed that social media marketing positively influenced customer behavior, with 87% of respondents following fashion brands and 59% being female and aged 21-31. Imtiaz et al. (2019) studied the impact of social network marketing on Pakistani consumers' intentions to buy female clothes. Results showed that social media platforms influence online word of mouth and users use content to exchange information and learn about brands.

Augustinus and Agnes (2020) studied Instagram marketing's impact on consumer fashion buying decisions. They found that Instagram promotes the app as a location for finding items, leading to online purchases. Key factors

influencing purchase decisions included availability, low prices, free delivery, positive reviews, a well-known brand, and a large following. Gul et al. (2014) examined the impact of social media on consumer behaviour and fashion awareness. The research found that social media had minimal influence on consumers' purchasing decisions and fashion awareness, with the significance of positive connections being low. The study by Rehman and Zeb (2022) found that social media advertising positively influences Muslim consumers' buying habits, particularly during the Ramadan holy month. The research found that 20% of customers aged 22-25 and 80% aged 18-21 were influenced by informative, entertaining, credible, user-friendly, private, and content aspects.

Djafarova and Bowes (2021) determined Instagram's influence on Generation Z's impulsive purchases in the fashion sector found that advertisements, opinion leaders, and user-generated content trigger pleasurable feelings, leading to impulse purchases. The study published a revised version of the "Stimulus-Organism-Response model" for Instagram. Dewi et al. (2022) found that social media marketing significantly influences customer willingness to buy clothing in Jakarta and Tangerang. Fashion marketers use social media as their primary advertising channel, with brand awareness playing a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intentions.

A study by Sriram et al. (2021) found a strong positive association between attention-grabbing elements and purchase intention, with celebrity endorsement being a significant factor. Emotional appeals and personal connections with celebrities also significantly influence purchase intentions. Jawaid and Rajadurai (2021) studied the impact of social media marketing on consumer loyalty in the fashion industry among college students. According to the results of this survey, 76.1% of respondents were concerned about fashion, compared to 23.9% who were not. The research also showed that while 47.7% of respondents did not favour internet shopping, 52.3% of respondents did. A research by Iqbal et al. (2020) found that social media advertising significantly influences consumer buying habits, particularly among young university students who are more likely to use the internet and social media, significantly affecting their purchasing behaviour.

3.   **Objectives**

- To examine the impact of Facebook and Instagram fashion ads in promoting fashion sense (clothes, feet wears & accessories) among university students.
- To study the impact of fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram in changing purchasing behavior of university students towards fashion products (clothes, feet wears & accessories).
- To analyze the impact of fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram in creating fashion exposure (new styles, trends & brands) among university students.

4.   **Research Questions**

1. What is the impact of Facebook & Instagram fashion ads in promoting fashion sense among university students?
2. How fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram change the purchasing behavior of university students towards fashion products?
3. How fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram create fashion exposure among university students about new fashion trends, styles and brands?

5.   **Research Hypotheses**

H1: Exposure to Fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram promotes fashion sense among university student.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between exposure to fashion ads on social media Facebook and Instagram and purchasing behavior towards fashion products.

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between exposure to fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram and Fashion exposure (new styles, trends and brands).

6.   **Theoretical Framework**

The foundation of this study is based on two theories to comprehend the impact of social media ads in promoting fashion sense among university students. Cultivation Theory, introduced by George Gerbner and his

colleagues in the 1960s, is a prominent theory in the field of mass communication and media. It focuses on the long-term effects of media exposure on individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours. The theory suggests that repeated and prolonged exposure to media content gradually shapes individuals' views of social reality. Gerbner initially applied this theory to the effects of television on viewers, but it can be adapted to various media platforms, including social media. The Cultivation Theory explores how exposure to media over time can shape our thoughts, beliefs, and actions. In relation to this study, it helps to understand how seeing fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram can influence university students' fashion sense, shopping habits, and overall knowledge of fashion trends.

Second one social learning theory which states that individuals learn and acquire behaviours through observing and imitating others, particularly in social contexts. Albert Bandura introduced Social learning theory in 1977. In relation to this study, social media advertisements and fashion sense, university students may observe, fashion ads on social media, influencers, celebrities, or their peers endorsing and showcasing fashionable clothing items through social media advertisements on Facebook and Instagram. Through these observations, they may learn about new fashion trends, styles, and ways to put together outfits. Social media ads provide students with a platform to see how others incorporate fashion into their lives, leading to the development of their own fashion sense.
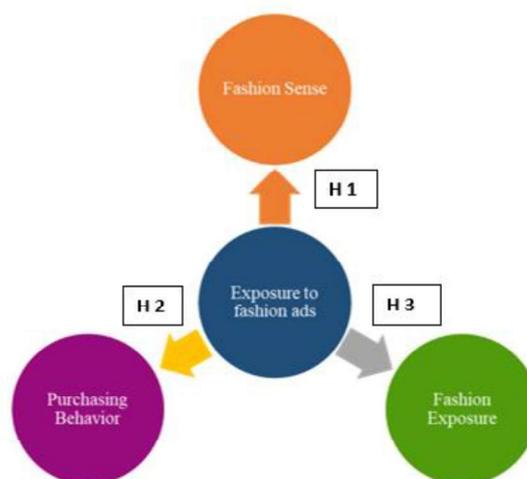

Figure 1 Proposed Theoretical Model

7.   Method

When beginning a research project, a researcher follows a set of comprehensive stages called a research methodology (Leedy & Ormrod 2001; Williams, 2011). For this study, a quantitative research approach is adopted. Quantitative research involves gathering data in order to quantify and statistically analyze data to support or disprove existing knowledge claims (Leedy & Ormrod 2001). Williams (2011) stated that the creation of a hypothesis or research topic, examination of the body of literature, and quantitative analysis of data are the initial phases in quantitative research.

Sukamolson (2007) explained, "there are several kinds of quantitative research. For example, it includes categories of 1) survey research, 2) correlational research, 3) experimental research, and 4) causal-comparative research". But for this study specifically survey research is adopted for examining the impact of social media ads in promoting fashion sense among university students. Sukamolson (2007) defines "survey research as the use of a prepared questionnaire and a scientific sampling technique to quantify certain demographic characteristics using statistical techniques".

This study uses a structured questionnaire to evaluate the influence of Facebook and Instagram fashion ads on university students' fashion sense, purchasing behavior, and exposure. The questionnaire uses a metric scale, the Likert Scale, developed by psychologist Rensis Likert, to measure respondents' agreement. The scale ranges from 1 to 5, with respondents indicating their level of agreement based on their preferences and positive responses which is measured by five points i.e. 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = moderate, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree (Joshi et al., 2015). 200 students (50% males & 50 % females) from the University of Narowal are chosen to be the part of sample. Non-probability sampling technique, also known as convenience sampling is utilized in this study. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 27 is used to draw statistical data.

8.   Findings

Out of the total 200 participants, 50 % are male and 50 % female students which is done intentionally to avoid gender biasness and equal representation of opinions of both genders. The majority (84%) fall within the age range of 18 to 22 years. A smaller proportion (16%) of participants are between the ages of 23 and 28 years. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are younger, representing the typical age group of university students. Among the participants, 32.0% reported being in their 13th year of education, while an equal percentage (32.0%) indicated being in their 16th year of education. Additionally, 20.0% of participants were in their 14th year, and 16.0% were in their 15th year of education.

8.1   Exposure to fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram

The findings reveal that 26.50% of participants had moderate exposure to fashion ads on Facebook, while 37.0% agreed with their exposure. However, 21.00% disagreed, and 6.00% strongly disagreed, while 9.50% strongly agreed with the exposure level. Regarding Instagram only 5.50% of 200 participants strongly disagreed with their exposure level to fashion ads on Instagram, while 21.0% indicated moderate exposure. 42.00% agreed with their exposure level, and 22.50% strongly agreed with their exposure.

Table 8.1 *Descriptive Statistics*

	Exposure to Fashion ads	Fashion sense	Purchasing Behavior	Fashion exposure
N	200	200	200	200
Mean	3.4500	3.5144	3.1210	3.5608
Median	4.0000	3.6667	3.2000	3.6667
Mode	4.00	3.67	3.00	3.67
Std. Deviation	.99370	.70540	.84518	.75099
Skewness	-0.671	-0.955	-0.187	-0.830
Kurtosis	-0.034	1.696	-0.365	1.053

Table 8.1 shows that exposure to fashion ads, fashion sense, purchasing behavior, and fashion exposure have mean values of 3.4500, 3.5144, 3.1210, and 3.5608 respectively, with standard deviations ranging from.99370 to.7599. The median and mode of these variables are 4.0000, 3.6667, 3.2000, and 3.6667, respectively, with almost identical values. To demonstrate a normal univariate distribution, values for asymmetry and kurtosis between -2 and +2 are deemed acceptable (George & Mallery, 2010). According to Hair et al. (2010) data is regarded as normal if the skewness and kurtosis are within a range of 2 to +2 and 7 to +7, respectively.

Table 8.2 *Reliability Analysis*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
. 922	24

Reliability of questionnaire is measured by Cronbach's Alpha value which is .922 and as it is greater than 0.7, it can be assumed that the questionnaire for this study is reliable.

Table 8.3 *Summary of correlation analyses*

Predictor	Dependent	R	P value	Relationship
Exposure to fashion ads	Fashion sense	0.637	< 0.001	Strong Positive
	Purchasing behavior	0.578	< 0.001	Moderate Positive
	Fashion exposure	0.596	< 0.001	Moderate Positive

Table 8.3 indicates that exposure to fashion ads correlate with Fashion sense at .637. Exposure to fashion ads correlate with Purchasing Behaviour at .578 and Exposure to fashion ads correlate with Fashion exposure at .596. The p significance value is (.001), indicating that the p value is smaller than the alpha value (0.05).

Table 8.4 *Summary of Regression Analyses*

Predictor	Dependent	R	R Square	P value	Coefficient
Exposure to fashion ads	Fashion sense	0.637	.405	< 0.001	.452
	Purchasing behavior	0.578	.334	< 0.001	.492
	Fashion exposure	0.596	.355	< 0.001	.451

Table 8.4 provides the summary of three linear regression analyses, examining the relationships between exposure to fashion ads on social media and three dependent variables: fashion sense, purchasing behaviour towards fashion products, and fashion exposure. For the first regression analysis, exposure to fashion ads shows a significant positive correlation with fashion sense (R = 0.637, R-squared = 0.405, p < 0.001). The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.452 indicates that for each one-unit increase in exposure to fashion ads, there is a corresponding increase of 0.452 units in fashion sense. Hence, Hypothesis 1 is accepted, as exposure to fashion ads promotes fashion sense among university students.

In the second regression analysis, exposure to fashion ads is significantly positively related to purchasing behavior towards fashion products (R = 0.578, R-squared = 0.334, p < 0.001). The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.492 suggests that for each one-unit increase in exposure to fashion ads, there is a corresponding increase of 0.492 units in purchasing behavior towards fashion products. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is accepted, indicating that exposure to fashion ads on social media influences students' purchasing behavior towards fashion products.

The third regression analysis shows a significant positive correlation between exposure to fashion ads and fashion exposure (R = 0.596, R-squared = 0.355, p < 0.001). The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.451 indicates that for each one-unit increase in exposure to fashion ads, there is a corresponding increase of 0.451 units in fashion exposure. Consequently, Hypothesis 3 is

accepted, signifying that exposure to fashion ads on social media expands students' exposure to diverse fashion styles, trends, and brands.

9. Discussion

The study reveals that Facebook and Instagram fashion ads significantly influence university students' fashion sense, with a significant proportion of participants strongly agreeing with their positive impact on various aspects of their fashion sense. Regarding their fashion sense, nearly half of the participants (49.50%) reported that their fashion sense had improved due to these ads, with an additional 21.0% strongly agreeing. Similarly, 42.50% agreed that these ads frequently served as a source of inspiration when creating outfits, while 26.50% expressed a moderate impact. Moreover, 38.0% agreed that these ads heightened their awareness of personal style, and 27.0% reported a moderate impact, indicating that exposure to these fashion ads plays a significant role in enhancing participants' sense of style and outfit creation.

The influence of fashion ads extended beyond outfit choices. Participants also acknowledged that these ads effectively provided insights on outfit combinations, with 52.50% agreeing and 17.0% strongly agreeing. A significant number of respondents (43.00%) also agreed that these ads inspire them to explore fresh fashion styles and trends, while 17.0% strongly agreed. These findings suggest that exposure to fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram encourages participants to experiment with their fashion choices and explore new styles and trends.

Furthermore, the findings of the study reveal that the impact of fashion ads was evident in shaping participants' perceptions of fashion trends and clothing preferences. A substantial proportion (43.0%) agreed that these ads influenced their perceptions of fashion trends, with an additional 20.0% strongly agreeing. Additionally, 44.0% agreed that these ads played a significant role in shaping their clothing preferences, indicating that exposure to these ads influenced their preferences for different types of clothing. Moreover, the influence of these ads extended to footwear and accessory choices. 40.0% of participants agreed and 9.0% strongly agreed that these ads played a role in shaping their footwear preferences, while 45.0% agreed and

12.0% strongly agreed regarding their accessory preferences. These findings highlight the substantial impact of fashion ads on participants' choices when it comes to selecting and adopting different types of footwear and accessories.

In terms of purchasing behaviour, the data indicated that fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram significantly influenced participants' decisions to buy fashion items. 34.5% agreed and 12.0% strongly agreed that these ads influenced their decisions to purchase fashion items, and 34.0% agreed that the ads made them more likely to buy the showcased fashion items. Additionally, 25.0% agreed and 13.5% strongly agreed that these ads influenced their decisions to purchase clothes, while 23.0% agreed and 11.5% strongly agreed regarding their footwear purchases, and 24.5% agreed and 12.0% strongly agreed regarding their accessory purchases. These findings suggest that exposure to fashion ads on social media platforms significantly influences participants' choices when it comes to buying different fashion products.

Fashion exposure was another aspect influenced by exposure to fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram. A significant number of participants (49.0%) agreed and 12.5% strongly agreed that these ads broadened their knowledge of diverse fashion styles. Additionally, 45.5% agreed and 22.5% strongly agreed that these ads increased their awareness of various fashion-related products and brands. Furthermore, 42.0% agreed and 14.0% strongly agreed that these ads inspired them to try out new and different fashion styles, while 36.5% agreed and 10.0% strongly agreed that these ads broadened their exposure to various fashion styles and trends. These findings suggest that exposure to fashion ads on Facebook and Instagram significantly contributes to participants' fashion exposure, enriching their understanding and appreciation of diverse fashion styles, trends, products, and brands.

The regression analyses and correlation support literature and these findings, revealing significant relationships between exposure to fashion ads on social media and the dependent variables. Results of inferential statistics provide the answers of the research questions and indicate that social media advertisements related to fashion have significant impact in promoting fashion sense among university students including changing their purchasing behavior

towards fashion products and providing fashion exposure about news fashion styles, trends and brands.

10.   Conclusion

The study concluded that there is significant positive association between exposure to fashion advertisements on social media and fashion sense, purchasing behaviour towards fashion products and fashion exposure to new and different fashion styles, brands and trends. Fashion industry is a huge sector of production in the world. This study holds substantial significance as it aligns with the United Nations SDG (sustainable development goal) no. 12, focusing on responsible consumption and production.

As in the light of literature, theories and findings of this study social media has huge impact on people especially university students who are the future of this world and it influences their choices, preferences and purchasing behavior towards fashion trends and products. So if social media advertisers and fashion production companies or brands utilize marketing and promotion strategies for promoting environment friendly fashion products with new trends then it can bring a positive change in the society. This study also extends the existing available literature in the similar domain of communication and media.

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