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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN FASHION MANAGEMENT: A SURVEY STUDY ON CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS OF AI-GENERATED CONTENT IN EMERGING CLOTHING BRANDS

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Abstract

This study examines consumer perceptions of AI-generated content used by emerging clothing brands, focusing on perceived authenticity, consumer trust, and purchase intention. A survey of 59 respondents was analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability testing, and correlation analysis. The findings showed that most respondents were familiar with AI-generated fashion content, mainly through social media. While AI-generated designs were considered visually appealing, respondents were less convinced that AI could match human creativity. Perceived authenticity was significantly related to consumer trust ($r = .662$, $p < .001$), while consumer trust was significantly related to purchase intention ($r = .669$, $p < .001$). The study concludes that emerging fashion brands should combine AI with human creativity and use transparent, ethical practices to strengthen consumer trust and purchasing interest.

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Introduction:-

Background of the Study:-

In the last few years, the fashion industry has been changing quite a bit with the introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI). What used to be mostly a creative and manual field is now becoming more technology-driven. AI is now being used for things like trend forecasting, personalized recommendations, inventory management, and even virtual try-ons (McKinsey & Company, 2020; Huang & Rust, 2021). Because of this, brands can now work more efficiently and respond faster to what consumers actually want. At the same time, there's been a noticeable rise in the use of AI-generated content, especially in branding and design. Many emerging clothing brands are using AI tools to create product visuals, write descriptions, and even come up with design ideas. This helps them move faster, save costs, and keep up in a market that's already very competitive. You can see this especially with newer online-first brands trying to scale quickly (Davenport et al., 2020; Pasquale, 2019). But it's not all straightforward. Consumers today really care about things like authenticity and originality, especially in fashion. In many cases, people still prefer designs made by humans because they feel more real and creative (Longoni & Cian, 2022). Honestly, this is where things get a bit tricky because while AI makes things easier for brands, it can also make them feel less genuine if not used carefully. At the same time, there are other concerns as well—like transparency, data privacy, and ethical issues—which are becoming more important as AI use increases (Floridi et al., 2018). So, it becomes important to understand how consumers actually feel about AI-generated content and whether it affects their trust and buying decisions. Because of this, this study looks at consumer perceptions of AI-generated content in emerging clothing brands and its overall impact on the fashion industry.

Rise of AI-Generated Content in Fashion:-

The use of AI-generated content in fashion has increased a lot in the last few years. Earlier, it was mostly limited to simple automation, but now it has moved into areas like AI-generated models, virtual influencers, and generative design tools. These are not just experimental ideas anymore brands are actually using them in real campaigns and even in product development. For instance, AI-generated models and virtual influencers are being used to create marketing content without depending fully on traditional photoshoots. This makes things quicker and, in many cases, more cost-effective. In a similar way, generative design tools help brands come up with multiple design options in a short time. It's useful, especially when trends keep changing so fast. You can actually notice this more on social media, where a lot of content now has some level of AI involvement.

What's interesting is that emerging clothing brands are adopting these tools quite quickly. Since most of them are operating online and don't always have big budgets, AI becomes a practical option. It helps them create more content, stay consistent, and try out new ideas without spending too much. At the same time, this shift also changes how fashion content is being created and consumed. It opens up new possibilities, but also brings some questions around originality and how people perceive this kind of content. So, understanding this shift becomes quite important in today's fashion industry.

Shifts in Consumer Interaction with Fashion:-**Traditional to AI-Based:-**

Fashion is going through a transition in the way it creates and produces content; no longer is it completely produced by humans but rather through the help of artificial intelligence (AI). Historically, fashion content was done by humans - the usual cycle of producers begins with the photographer, stylist and creative director. With the rapid development of artificial intelligence, many aspects of this process have been automated and/or augmented. There are a lot of different types of AI tools available for fashion, including those that create digital models, provide automated styling or add personalization to the experience. AI tools can analyze the way people shop and what kind of styles they like and give them customized recommendations to keep the consumer interested in purchasing and increase the chance that they will ultimately convert to a sale (Davenport et al., 2020). AI can also provide a cost-efficient way for brands to produce high-quality visual content and do so with a faster turnaround time, which improves the scalability of brands and their ability to respond to trends (McKinsey & Company, 2023). While there are many benefits to using AI in the fashion industry, it does not replace the creative process of humans. AI enhances both the ideation and the execution of creativity while still allowing for brand storytelling and brand authenticity (Huang & Rust, 2021).

Role of Digital Platforms and Visual Marketing:-

Digital platforms have drastically changed how consumers find, assess, and interact with fashion. Fashion is also frequently marketed through and discovered via social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest; these platforms have become both marketing tools and search engines for fashion inspiration. The short-form video content that has permeated digital platforms has accelerated fashion trend cycles and the spread and acceptance of fashion styles (Abidin 2021). The influencer economy has altered consumer trust and has moved consumers from trusting traditional brand messages to trusting content creators for product recommendations (Freberg, Graham, M. H., & Sun 2011). Visual marketing plays an essential role in this framework. Quality image, curated aesthetic, and storytelling-oriented visual are essential means of grabbing consumer attention in a very competitive digital landscape. Moreover, features such as live streaming, augmented reality (AR) try-ons, and user-generated content drive consumer engagement and participation (Pantano & Vannucci 2019).

Research Problem:-**Ambiguity of Trust in Consumers' Attitudes and Perceptions of Authenticity:-**

Since AI in fashion content has resulted in confusion about the authenticity of the items depicted, there is now a level of uncertainty about how consumers perceive trust when it comes to these forms of fashion content. Due to the emotion-based nature of fashion consumption and the perceived authenticity of the content, AI-generated visuals and virtual representations may lead consumers to perceive less credibility when there is no clear distinction between the recorded event and how it was manufactured. The complexity of online consumer behaviour depends heavily on their perception of trust, as any ambiguity regarding the transparency of the content creation process may result in decreased consumer engagement and intent to purchase (Gefen et al. 2003).

Confusion Between Innovation and Artificiality:-

AI-generated content does have the potential to provide brands with greater innovations and efficiencies; however, it is also creating confusion among consumers as they struggle to differentiate between the technological advancements and the technology used to manipulate / develop the innovations. On the other hand, while innovations can provide a positive impact towards how consumers view brands, reliance on AI will de-value a brand's ability to connect with consumers through the means of relatability or emotional resonance, thus causing the consumers to develop perceptions of artificiality (Longoni et al. 2019). This contradiction presents challenges to brands, requiring them to balance the growth of technology with maintaining authenticity.

Research Gap:-**Scarcity of Primary Research Into Consumer Perception of New Brands:-**

The current literature on the use of AI in the fashion marketing space has primarily focused on well-established, major global brands. Leaving a large gap in knowledge on how consumers react to AI-based content that emergent or early stage fashion brands are producing. Many start up and independent labels are utilizing more of the digital space for their marketing and are dominated by visual representation and usage of AI-based tools to market themselves based upon their limited resources and the addictive need for rapid scaling. Limited research has been completed on consumer reactions to these types of strategies, and how trustworthy, relatable, and authentic they see the brands. Additionally, the majority of the research conducted is in developed countries, and much of the empirical research conducted on consumer behaviour has not been conducted in developing countries and may be very different given the cultural context and varying patterns of digital adoption (McKinsey & Company, 2023; Pantano & Vannucci, 2019). This means there is little knowledge on whether or not the findings from established brands can be applied to emergent brands that are operating in an ever-changing, highly competitive world of the digital realm.

Lack of Empirical Relationship Among Authenticity, Trust and Purchase Intentions:-

While past studies have focused on each of authenticity, trust and consumer behaviour separately, to date there has been no complete empirical models that include the three together in relation to AI produced fashion content. Prior studies have shown that perceived authenticity is a major contributor toward establishing a level of trust with a consumer and a high level of trust will result in a greater intent to purchase from an online retailer (Gefen et al., 2003; Morhart et al., 2015). Still, there is little empirical research to test how the collective interaction between these variables functions when consumers receive AI assisted or entirely AI created fashion content. Equally unclear is the potential role of perceived artificiality in moderating these variables as their relationship exists within the given context. With AI continuing to change how content is created, the relationship between authenticity and trust and how those two variables interact with each other in relation to consumer purchase decisions must be understood for both theoretical research and practical brand development.

Importance of the Research:-**Practical Implications for New Business when Implementing an AI Strategy:-**

Emerging fashion brands have considerable advantages from this study, as it provides practical value in implementing an artificial intelligence (AI) strategy to improve their marketing and content creation process. To start-up and independent fashion brands, who typically operate in a highly competitive, digitally-driven camera and are dependent on cost-efficient methods (i.e., use of AI tools) to create scalable amounts of content quickly, would benefit from this study. However, the success of the AI strategy will depend on the consumer's perception of AI-generated content: whether it is authentic, trustworthy, and relatable.

The study also provides actionable insights to assist new brands in creating more successful marketing strategies with the use of AI, based on consumer expectations. Specifically, this allows brands to assess the level of automation and creativity they should use when implementing technological innovation into their business strategies so that they can maintain their brand authenticity. With the increase of 'social media savvy' consumers seeking genuine, transparent brands to communicate with online, it is critical for companies to develop compelling visual stories and personalize their marketing efforts across platforms in order to maximize engagement, brand loyalty and intention to buy (McKinsey & Company, 2023; Huang & Rust, 2021).

Contributes to AI + consumer behavior literature:-

Previous studies have researched AI in digital marketing and the effects of AI on several constructs, including authenticity, trust, and intention to purchase, individually. However, there is a lack of literature that integrates all constructs when evaluating AI-generated fashion content. This study fills this gap by examining the relationships between the perceived authenticity of fashion content, the consumer trust in that content, and the intention to

purchase fashion products based on AI content. Therefore, this study expands on existing theoretical models by including AI as a moderator/influencer of decision-making in the purchasing process for consumers. Additionally, this examination contributes to a more thorough understanding of how technological innovations change dimensions of traditional marketing, specifically for industries like fashion with a heavy reliance on digital marketing.(Huang & Rust, 2021; Pantano & Vannucci, 2019). Finally, this study reveals potential new areas of research by acknowledging the need to research additional constructs (i.e., perceived artificiality, transparency, and the consumer's awareness of AI). Overall, this study provides an initial framework that will help researchers construct future studies regarding the ongoing development of the relationship between technology and consumer perceptions within digital ecosystems (Gefen et al., 2003; Morhart et al., 2014).

Review of Literature:-

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Fashion: An Overview:-

AI has greatly changed the fashion world by adding digital data technology to creative processes. By using AI, fashion brands can improve efficiency, make better decisions, and give consumers customized experiences within the design, marketing, and retail areas of their businesses. Also, as competition grows globally and consumer expectations change, AI is now viewed as a way to innovate and improve the fashion industry.

AI's Role in Design:-

AI has changed the way designers create by allowing them to use large sets of data and predictive analysis. Designers can use machine learning algorithms built into AI systems to look at historical sales records, social media trends, and consumer preferences, and use this to make predictions on trends to come with much more accuracy. Therefore, designers can make informed decisions and create collections based on what is in demand at that time (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

Furthermore, generative design tools (AI) are increasingly being used to create design concepts, patterns, and prototypes. These tools allow designers to produce many different variations of a design in a short amount of time, thus speeding up the idea-gathering process; therefore, designers have to rely less on manually sketching designs. Lastly, AI assists with rapid prototyping by allowing designers to digitize fabrics, fits, and styles, thus lowering production costs and making product development shorter (Huang & Rust, 2021).

AI-Generated Content in Brand Communication:-

AI has started playing an integral role in the Brand's Communication strategy and Marketing approach of Fashion Companies. Examples of AI-generated content include images, videos, articles, and other forms of media that are generated through machine learning and artificial intelligence. Advancements in deep learning and generative models over the past 10 years have allowed Fashion brands to produce more content faster, provide personalisation to their customers, and improve their communication strategy (Davenport et al., 2020; Huang & Rust, 2021).

Use of AI Visuals, Models, and Campaigns:-

Brands are able to use AI-generated visuals to minimize their dependence on traditional forms of photography, as these images are created digitally and can now be produced in higher quality than ever before. Many of these visuals can also be modified to fit each consumer's needs based on things such as the weather, personal style, or preferences, which allows for less expensive and faster turnaround times for creating content. The authors of the article "Artificial Intelligence in Marketing: Opportunities and Challenges" indicate that the use of AI has increased the efficiency of marketers through automation, such as in the creation of content, and through the use of consumer data in developing advertising strategies for personalized communications (Davenport et al., 2020).

Virtual models and AI-generated influencers are becoming more common in fashion marketing as users of these digital models can show their brand in a consistent manner and experiment with all types of new looks, without worrying about logistical issues that come with using live models. Studies show that these technological advances allow brands to maintain the same look all over the world and adapt the content they have to the local market (Choi et al., 2018).

Once a business implements an automated marketing strategy, they will use machine learning algorithms to create the advertising copy, choose the layout of the visual advertising materials, and continually optimize the overall success of the campaign. Additionally, machine learning is used to analyze and classify each individual consumer based on previous purchases and browsing patterns to send messages specific to each category of consumer (Grewal

et al., 2021). This ability to personalize communications is helping to improve consumer engagement and thus improve the effectiveness of brand communications.

Impact on Brand Storytelling:-

A large part of the way brands tell stories today is influenced by AI. Fashion storytelling has a long history of relying on creativity, culture and emotion, but with AI in the mix, brands are creating new and more targeted and dynamic stories using data for guidance. AI's ability to deliver personalized brand experiences is one of the key benefits of using it in storytelling. By utilizing data from consumers, AI applications can create stories that are tailored to individuals and strengthen the relationship between them and brands (Huang and Rust, 2021). An important part of creating a strong brand identity across global markets is ensuring the brand message remains consistent across different channels; AI assists with that as well (Pantano and Vannucci, 2019).

When implementing new technology like AI into their corporate storytelling processes, brands will encounter challenges. Some studies have demonstrated that while the use of an AI generated output may increase consumer perceptions of a brand being innovative (Longoni and Cian, 2022), it can also decrease the perceived authenticity of the brand. Consumers are typically less likely to view an AI-generated outcome as authentic than they would a human-made one, especially within industries that are hedonic in nature (e.g., fashion). This decrease in perceived authenticity diminishes the trust in the brand and creates less emotional connection with consumers.

Perceived Authenticity in AI-Generated Content:-

Authentic perception has an important function when determining how consumers will react to AI content creation within the fashion sector. The term "authentic" describes how much a piece of content can be viewed as authentic, representative of a human being, and full of emotional value. As AI continues to be used for creating content and how consumers distinguish between human-produced content and AI-produced content continuously develops, understanding this process will be vital for brands to develop their communication strategies.

Human vs. AI Perception Differences:-

Numerous studies show the significant differences between how consumers view human-produced content and how consumers view content generated by artificial intelligence (AI), even though improvements in generative AI have increased its ability to create realistic-looking content. Perceptual differences in the eyes of the consumer do exist. Evidence suggests that it is difficult for consumers to differentiate between AI-generated and human-created visuals when the source is not made clear (Zhang et al, 2025). In addition, other studies indicate that consumers experience difficulties determining if a piece of content was created by AI or if it was created by a human being, which suggests AI has reached a high level of creative and visual realism (Kostrz, 2024).

Once the consumer becomes aware of the source of content, their perceptions change. When the source of a piece of content is revealed to the consumer, human-created content is generally viewed more positively with regards to trust and authenticity than AI-generated content (Zhang et al., 2025). When consumers view AI-generated content, they typically perceive that content as having a greater level of mechanical consistency compared to emotionally-based content (also referred to as empathy). Conversely, human-based content has a different perception than that of AI-generated content (Zhao et al., 2025).

Emotional Connection and Realism:-

Authenticity is considered one of the key components of emotional connection, particularly in fashion where storytelling and expressing one's identity is fundamental to the brand. Research shows that user-generated (human) content evokes much greater emotional attachment and engagement than AI-generated (artificial) content. A study on Generation Z consumers looked at how they relate to authenticity and emotional resonance within branding and advertising; specifically, the results from the study indicated that Generation Z participants reported feeling a much stronger connection to human-made (i.e., user) content than AI-made (i.e., machine) content because it was deemed to have more "narrative warmth" and relatability (Meradi et al. 2025). Additionally, many view AI-generated content as being derivative of human emotion, thus inhibiting its ability to create deep, meaningful connections between consumers and brands. Although there are barriers to the emotional connection between AI-generated content and consumers because of these limitations, there are examples where AI-generated content can achieve a level of visual realism; in fact, there is evidence that advancements in generative models have resulted in making it difficult for consumers to distinguish between a real human face and an AI-generated face. As such, consumers have demonstrated relatively high (though not 100% accurate) rates of detecting whether a photo was created by a human (Huang et al. 2024).

Consumer Trust and Credibility in AI Content:-

Trust from consumers is an important aspect of evaluating how effective AI-generated digital content can be. In this sense, trust means that a consumer has confidence that an AI platform, system, or brand will provide them with accurate, ethical, and trustworthy information as AI becomes more and more integrated into digital marketing and communication. Therefore, it is now critical to know how trust is developed and how it can be lost.

Trust Formation in Digital Environments:-

Trust is built within digital relationships using many different methods, including technology performance, transparency, personalisation and perceived ethical behaviour of technology vendors. Digital technology, through its function, influences trust as well, by creating the consumer's experience with content, recommendations and brands. As the research shows, trust in an AI environment is directly related to personalisation and user experience. Overall, consumers are more likely to develop trust, if they are receiving personal and helpful recommendations via an AI system (Srivastava, 2025). Additionally, the use of AI technology provides consumers with comfort and familiarity with the technology, thus increasing their level of trust over time (Markou, 2025).

Transparency is another factor that plays a major role in the formation of trust. Research indicate(s) that clearly articulated information on how an AI system works can significantly increase user trust in AI-based systems, especially when the consumer understands how their data will be used by the provider (Park et al., 2024). In addition, marketing efforts that focus on ethical behaviour and clearly define consumer-brand relationships will lead to long-term loyalty (Ali, 2025). Ultimately, trust in AI does not occur automatically; it is built on many factors, including the consumer's perception of fairness, reliability and data privacy during their interactions with AI-based content. Collectively, these factors contribute to acceptance of AI-generated content.

Concerns Regarding Manipulation and Transparency:-

AI-produced materials offer many advantages; however, they could significantly threaten consumer trust because of concerns over transparency, manipulation, and how they are ethically used. Some of the key issues surrounding the evolution of AI-produced content are algorithmic manipulation and bias in algorithmic decisions. Research shows that the operation of AI-driven marketing will continue to be through non-transparent means; thus, it is hard for the customer to understand how content has been generated or how it has been “targeted” towards them (Kumar & Dayal, 2025). This lack of transparency may lead to consumers developing a sense of skepticism, which could lead to decreasing trust levels.

Another concern is that generative AI creates a new risk of content manipulation, which creates the possibility of generating false information. Studies show how AI will produce content that is produced through much lower “production” costs and is very near to actual people, which would subsequently create more significant challenges for consumers to believe in honesty or authenticity (Mukherjee, 2024). Transparency has its complexity in establishing trust. Although it is commonly assumed that providing a transparent environment promotes trust in the environment, research shows that creating transparency by providing customers information that artificial intelligence (AI) is being used to create content may decrease consumer's trust in the content since people may believe that AI-produced content lacks authenticity and credible (Schilke et al., 2025). Therefore, ethical transparency is necessary to maintain credibility in terms of AI-based communication practices (Walmsley, 2021).

AI-Generated Content and Brand Image:-

AI-generated content is now a significant contributor to how a company's brand is perceived in the marketplace and the reputation they have within the fashion industry. Brand image consists of how the consumer perceives the company, including whether it is innovative, provides quality products or services, and aligns with the emotional connection the consumer has with the organization. The use of AI when producing content creates a complicated new balance between using advanced technology and the perception of a company being authentic (Huang & Rust, 2021; Davenport et al., 2020).

Innovation vs. Authenticity Trade-off:-

Using AI in the form of high-quality, scalable, and personalized content provides brands with a way to differentiate themselves from one another and create a sense of innovation to foster more consumer engagement (Davenport et al., 2020). AI-produced imagery, campaigns, and designs also give consumers a sense that a brand is modern and efficient which ideally can help enhance brand perception in saturated markets (Grewal et al., 2021). However, this innovation often comes at the expense of perceived authenticity. Studies suggest that when consumers think of authenticity, they associate it with human creativity, craftsmanship, and originality. When a consumer sees content

that was produced by an AI, they will view that content as less authentic especially in hedonic sectors such as fashion (Longoni & Cian, 2022). A diminished perception of authenticity negatively impacts the consumer's trust and emotional connection to the brand.

Similarly, research suggests that revealing the use of AI can affect consumers' perceptions. While being transparent is viewed positively, the same does not hold true when revealing that AI-created content was produced by an AI—this reduces consumers' perceptions of the brand's effort, sincerity, and ultimately, diminishes the brand image (Floridi et al., 2018). The result is a strategic dilemma facing brands that want to leverage AI for innovation while protecting their authentic nature from their consumers.

Influence on Emerging Brand Positioning:-

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an essential component of the overall marketing strategy for new fashion brands, enabling them to gain traction in the marketplace. By creating cost-effective and scalable content instantly and providing personalised messaging to customers, new brands can compete with more established players in the market (Choi et al., 2018). Emerging fashion brands can also shape their brand identities through experimental diversity in visual aesthetics, narratives, and style, using AI-driven approaches. Increased levels of consumer engagement and overall brand loyalty can be achieved through AI-enabled personalised marketing (Huang & Rust, 2021). One potential challenge with over-relying on AI-generated content is finding and nurturing differentiation. The existing body of research shows that AI-generated content often lacks emotional depth and human interaction; therefore, it limits a brand's ability to create a unique identity and to develop long-term loyalty (Longoni & Cian, 2022).

Consumer Segmentation Based on AI Attitudes:-

The increasing role of AI in digital marketing and fashion communications allows consumers to interact with AI from many different points of view, and these viewpoints create segments based on consumer attitudes toward AI that can help marketers understand trust, engagement, and purchase behaviour (Davenport, 2020; Huang, 2021).

Tech-Optimists vs. Traditional Consumers:-

The study by Davenport et al. (2020), Huang and Rust (2021), Longoni et al. (2019) and Gursoy et al. (2019) identifies tech optimists and traditional consumers as two sub-groups of customers based on their receptiveness towards AI. Tech Optimist customers typically see AI as a way to improve convenience, effectiveness and personalisation and have a higher likelihood of trusting AI-generated recommendations and using automated systems as they associate AI technology with innovativeness and an improved user experience (Davenport et al., 2020). Tech-optimist customers also have a higher likelihood of adopting new technologies such as virtual try-ons, AI stylist services, and automated customer service, all of which positively influence their brand perceptions (Huang & Rust, 2021). On the other hand, traditional consumers tend to be more apprehensive about adopting AI. They typically prefer human creativity, authenticity and interpersonal connections and may feel that AI-generated content is impersonal or lacking humanity. Researchers have shown that concerns with privacy, data security, and ethical implications have been found to significantly limit trust in AI-driven systems among this group (Floridi et al., 2018).

Generational Differences (Gen Z Focus):-

Generational differences between age groups have a significant influence on their attitudes toward artificial intelligence; moreover, generation Z (Gen Z) represents one of the primary consumers in both digital and Fashion Markets. Generation Z represents Digital Natives, which means they are very accustomed to using algorithm-driven platforms, such as social media platforms, and therefore, generally speaking, feel more comfortable interacting with AI technology. Specifically, as the research shows, Gen Z generally exhibits a higher level of acceptance of algorithmically driven personalization, virtual experiences, and automated content because of their continued exposure to these digital environments and social media ecosystems.(Grewal et al., 2021). Gen Z has had an experience by engaging with these types of algorithm-based systems (referencing social media and other algorithm-driven platforms) and engaging with them provides an opportunity for Gen Z to adapt quickly to and efficiently and accurately engage with AI/human-type interactions. While Gen Z's acceptance of AI is quite high, it is not absolute. Gen Z has identified several key factors that strongly influence their acceptance of AI: authenticity, transparency, and ethical practices. Gen Z consumers value these qualities even when they are using advanced technology. In addition to these preferences, Gen Z has constant vigilance designed to keep them from falling victim to the exploitation of their data, the manipulation of their data, and the algorithmic bias in AI-generated content. All of these issues influence Gen Z's level of trust in AI-generated content. Therefore, brands targeting Gen Z must

understand how to balance personalized communications with transparent communications; as a result, brands must also not neglect the importance of humanizing their communications with Gen Z consumers.

Influence of AI on Purchase Intention:-

Consumer purchase intention, particularly in digitally-based environments such as retail fashion, is significantly influenced by Artificial Intelligence (AI). An individual's purchase intention reflects the likelihood that they will actually buy a product. (Davenport et al., 2020; Huang & Rust, 2021). Factors such as trust in a company or brand, the perceived value of the item purchased, and a personalised experience with the e-tailer can all affect purchase intentions. help decision-making based on data; provide more personalised product recommendations to consumers; and create a more engaging environment for consumers than ever before. Each of these impacts consumer behaviour in some way (Davenport et al., 2020; Huang and Rust, 2021).

Role of Trust and Perception in Buying Decisions:-

In Artificial Intelligence (AI) enhanced environments, purchasing intent is influenced by the level of trust. Consumers are more inclined to make purchases if they consider the AI system's capabilities (i.e., reliability, transparency, benefit). The degree of trust consumers have for AI recommendations will also influence their intent to purchase from AI-enabled businesses, especially when the AI system has been successful in providing relevant information and delivering accurate service, or product (Gursoy et al., 2019). Perception of the AI system is an additional consideration with respect to purchasing. Consumers' perceptions of AI as innovative, effective, and supportive can have a positive impact on their purchasing intent; however, consumers' perceptions of AI related to privacy concerns, lack of transparency, or perceived "artificialness" can cause consumers to become less confident in the AI system and hinder their intent to purchase (Longoni et al., 2019). Additionally, perceived "authenticity" of the AI, along with some level of emotional attachment, can create a sense of trust and thus impact the consumers' assessment of the degree to which an AI system has achieved its objectives. When a brand is able to effectively combine the efficiency of an AI system with the emotional appeal of a human-like, trustworthy entity, the likelihood of purchase increases (Huang & Rust, 2021). Therefore, the overall influence of trust and perception will mediate between the use of AI and the consumer's purchasing behaviours.

AI-Driven Engagement and Personalization:-

The use of personalization and engagement techniques through AI have a significant impact on driving purchase intention. Analyzing consumer data through browsing behavior, preference profiles, and historical purchase items allows AI systems to generate highly personalized recommendations that fit consumer specific needs. (Grewal et al., 2021). Additionally, AI generated engagement tools such as chatbots, virtual assistants, and recommendation engines create a continual point of interaction between consumers and brands. These types of tools not only provide convenience but also deliver a more interactive and responsive shopping experience, positively influencing purchase intention (Davenport et al., 2020). Furthermore, research shows that personalized marketing and product recommendations lead to increased customer satisfaction and greater intention to purchase, due to consumers feeling the interaction is relevant and valuable (Huang & Rust, 2021). Despite all the benefits of personalisation there are concerns regarding data privacy, as well as data manipulation, which could negatively affect trust; if these elements are not managed in a transparent way (Floridi et al., 2018).

Research Gap in AI-Fashion Consumer Studies:-

Even though AI is becoming a major part of the fashion world, it has been shown that there are significant gaps in the literature when looking at how consumers perceive AI and how well AI has been validated with real-life examples by valid researchers. While many previous studies have researched AI as it relates to marketing, personalizing, or selling a product, they have all failed to focus specifically on how to apply AI within the fashion industry (Huang & Rust, 2021; Pantano & Vannucci, 2019) so that more research can be done to determine if there exists a gap between consumer expectation and supplier ability to continue to fill that gap.

Lack of Survey -Based Empirical Validation:-

One of the main drawbacks of the literature on AI in fashion is that very few studies capturing consumer perspectives were conducted as primary surveys. Instead, most of the current literature is conceptual or based on secondary data (reporting on industry trends) or case studies. This makes it difficult to generalize results across consumers (Huang & Rust 2021, Davenport et al 2020). Some studies have explored consumer behaviours towards AI generally, and in terms of technology and digital marketing, but they did not examine AI in the fashion context (and how the use of AI content to promote purchasing decisions), further complicating researchers' and marketers' ability to understand how the AI will affect the purchasing decisions of consumers in fashion. Additionally, research

into constructs such as perceived authenticity, trust and purchase intention have a limited number of empirical studies that examine all of these constructs in isolation rather than attempting to integrate them into a conceptual framework. This has limited the researcher and marketer's ability to fully understand the impact of all of these constructs collectively on consumer behaviour (Longoni & Cian 2022).

Limited Focus on Emerging Clothing Brands:-

Another critical research gap concerns the limited attention paid to emerging and independent clothing firms. Most existing research has focused on large, well-established global brands that have significant resources and superior technological capabilities (Pantano & Vannucci, 2019). Emerging brands tend to operate in a different environment from larger brands. Because they frequently rely heavily on AI-generated content to reduce operational costs, scale up, and increase digital visibility, their use of AI is strategic and driven by necessity rather than experimentation. Despite this, there is no research examining how consumers' perceptions of AI-generated content shape or influence their purchasing behaviour for these smaller/new brands. Most empirical research has been conducted in developed markets, which may not accurately reflect consumer behaviour in developing economies such as India. Moreover, many cultural factors would contribute to consumer perceptions of and attitudes toward AI branding and, therefore, their willingness to buy from these brands (Grewal et al. 2021).

Theoretical Background:-

This research project is based on existing theories in consumer behaviour, technology acceptance, and branding, which help explain how AI-generated content affects consumer perceptions, trust, and purchase intention. These frameworks serve as a conceptual basis for understanding the research issue. Subsequently, Sections 2.1-2.8 provide a summary of the literature on these theories and the frameworks utilised in this research.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM):-

The Technology Acceptance Model was developed by Davis (1989), who proposes that two main factors determine an individual's acceptance of a technology (and ultimately how an individual will behave toward that technology): 1) the perceived usefulness of the technology; 2) the perceived ease of use of the technology. The basic premise of TAM is that the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of a new technology will influence users' acceptance of the technology and ultimately determine their behavioral intentions.

Perceived usefulness and ease of use:-

The perceived usefulness of a particular technology describes how well people believe that by utilizing the technology, it will increase their level of performance and/or experience. In terms of AI-generated content associated with fashion, this can also mean how efficient AI is at adding personalization, product recommendations and shopping ease. AI recommendation systems are an example of the role that AI-based technology plays in helping consumers find products that match their individual preferred characteristics, thus reducing search times and enhancing the decision making process. Research has identified that when consumers view an AI system as being useful (i.e., enhancing performance and/or experience), they tend to develop more positive attitudes toward the AI technology, therefore increasing their purchase intentions to use the digital technology (Davenport et al., 2020; Huang & Rust, 2021).

Source Credibility Theory:-

According to Source Credibility Theory, how credible a message source is has an effect on consumer attitude, level of trust in, and how consumers make purchasing decisions. Trustworthiness and expertise are the two main aspects that define how persuasive or reliable someone sees a piece of information (Hovland et al., 1953; Ohanian, 1990). This framework also provides insight into the ways in which consumers assess whether a message has been generated by a machine (artificial intelligence) or human.

Trustworthiness:-

The degree to which a source is viewed as honest, trustworthy, and impartial represents trustworthiness. This is an important consideration when it comes to AI-generated content. Customers may question the authenticity of the output, as well as the motivation for creating it. According to research, understanding how AI works, and believing that it does so fairly, can lead to greater trust in its outputs (Floridi et al., 2018). In terms of comparing human-generated to AI-generated outputs, there is a general perception that AI-generated content is less credible than that of humans because of concerns about authenticity and lack of emotional sincerity (Longoni & Cian, 2022). In addition, depending on the context, disclosing that a product was developed using AI can either increase or decrease

credibility; thus, transparency may increase perceived credibility while simultaneously decreasing the authenticity of AI-developed products (Longoni et al., 2019).

Expertise:-

Expertise encompasses how credible and knowledgeable a source is when providing reliable, valid data, thus allowing individuals to make sound decisions. In the realm of traditional marketing, humans (i.e., designers, influencers) represent the expertise elements because they were the original providers of this type of information. In an Artificial Intelligence ("AI") world, expertise is now primarily identified with data-analyzing capabilities/accuracy and far less with the creativity/emotion which were traditionally attributed to humans. AI has the ability to analyze tremendous amounts of data and produce recommendations that are very relevant to the user. Therefore, the user's opinion of the level of expertise that is represented by those users will be positively influenced by this facet of AI (Davenport et al., 2020). Although empirical studies offer evidence that people do consider AI to have technical capabilities, they do not generally consider AI to possess creativity/emotional expertise; therefore, consumers perceive creativity in industries to require human involvement (fashion being an obvious example) (Huang & Rust, 2021).

Thus, there exists a dichotomy with regards to the level of expertise attributed to AI and the level of expertise attributed to humans:-

(A) AI is perceived to be analytically expert, yet

(B) Humans are considered to be creatively expert.

This dichotomy plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals assess AI-generated results.

Perceived Authenticity Theory:-

Perceptions of Authenticity provide a basis for how a consumer gauges a Product or Brand's ascertainment of being Original, Real, & True to Identity. Authenticity has become an integral aspect of Consumer Behavior Research, as it closely associates with Trust, Emotional Connections, and Brand Loyalty, specifically in Experiential/Hedonic industries (fashion) (Morhart et al., 2015). Perceived Authenticity takes on an increased importance within the sphere of AI-generated content due to how consumers perceive Machine Generated Content to exhibit the same level of Originality/Human Touch as traditionally generated content would exhibit.

Importance of Originality:-

The originality of something is a massive part of being authentic, and it is also about the way something looks, and the uniqueness/creativity of each piece of content. According to consumers, originality is mostly attributed to human creativity, artistic expression, and cultural proximity. Many studies examined how apparent originality influences consumer perception of authenticity. These studies found that authenticity is directly affected when consumers perceive that a piece of content has been created by a unique individual or entity, as opposed to simply being mass-produced or artificially created (Beverland, 2005; Morhart et al., 2015). However, the emergence of AI-generated content will challenge consumer perception of authenticity and originality, as many pieces will be created using algorithms that have been trained on existing content. While many studies have noted that AI-generated content leads to aesthetically pleasing and creative outputs, many consumers believe that there is no true originality to the final product since consumers are aware that AI-generated content is the result of machine-generated outputs (Longoni & Cian, 2022). As a result, consumers may interpret AI-generated content to be unoriginal, or at best, to be a derivative piece of creativity, due to the existence of the algorithm(s) that created the output.

Importance of Human Touch:-

The human touch is the emotional, cultural and experiential qualities that human-created content contains. In fashion, a human touch is demonstrated through storytelling, craftsmanship and emotional and identity expression. Morhart et al., (2015) have shown that in the eyes of the consumer, content created by humans is generally perceived as having more authenticity than that produced by machine-generated systems due to the intentionality, emotion and time that it took for the human to produce the content versus the machine. On the other hand, while AI-generated content may indeed be technically accurate and visually realistic, because there is no human emotion, they are generally perceived to have a significantly less depth of emotional expression than a human-created product would. Longoni et al., (2019) further substantiate that consumers believe that AI-generated materials have less authenticity and emotional value than those created by a human, especially in the realm of creative design.

Consumer Trust Theory:-

In consumer trust theory, trust has an important role in consumer behaviour in uncertain or technology-oriented environments. Trust is defined as a consumer's readiness to depend upon (or have faith in) a brand, platform or system that they feel is reliable, honest and capable (Gefen et al, 2003). Trust can have a major effect on decision-making, engagement and intention to purchase when dealing with AI-generated material.

Role of Trust in Digital Decision-Making:-

Consumers who buy online do not have the ability to physically examine or interact directly with sellers (the supplier). Because of this, trust becomes an important factor for reducing perceived risk. Research has shown that consumers who have a higher level of trust are more willing to engage with a platform and complete a transaction, whereas those who have lower levels of trust may hesitate or avoid using the platform (Gefen et al., 2003; Pavlou, 2003). Additionally, AI technology can have an influence on the trustworthiness of AI systems by determining the degree to which the consumer perceives the personalization, recommendations, and interactions they receive from the AI as trustworthy, which can have a positive impact on their purchasing decisions (Huang & Rust, 2021).

Trust in AI atmospheres is not earned automatically. There are many considerations affecting the trustworthiness of AI systems:-

- Transparency: An understanding of how the AI works increases the consumer's confidence
- Data Privacy: The protection of an individual's personal information helps build trust
- Perceived Fairness: Ethical and unbiased outputs increase the credibility of AI

According to researchers, there is a negative correlation between lack of transparency/perception of manipulation and trust in AI systems, particularly when consumers view the AI systems as "black boxes" (Floridi et al., 2018).

Trust as a Mediating Factor:-

The influence of trust as a mediator between AI produced material and consumer behaviour.

For Instance:-

- Positive perceptions of AI lead to increased trust, and thus an increase in intention to purchase.
- Conversely, negative perceptions of AI, such as doubt over authenticity, can result in a decrease in trust and a consequent decrease in engagement.
- This highlights how trust serves to mediate between AI technologies and how they impact consumers' decision-making processes.

Also, according to existing studies, trust is closely correlated to perceived authenticity and perceived credibility, such that consumers tend to have more trust in AI-generated materials that meet their expectations of accurate representation of the role of AI and have natural/human-like attributes (Huang & Rust (2021); Longoni & Cian (2022)).

Application to the Study:-

Through examining how trust drives consumer reactions to AI fashion content, this research uses Consumer Trust Theory as a basis for understanding the role of trust in consumer reactions towards AI-produced artwork. Higher levels of trust in AI translate into greater levels of interaction and purchasing from the AI platform. Higher levels of distrust will reduce the likelihood of the consumer engaging with or purchasing from the platform as a result of concerns relating to authenticity, privacy, or manipulation. Therefore, trust will serve as a key connecting variable between a consumer's usage of AI and their perception of the brand and intention to purchase, which is essential in explaining consumer behaviour in the context of AI-based fashion marketing.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB):-

Icek Ajzen proposed the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as a popular framework for understanding how human perceptions and attitudes become translated into behaviours or behavioural intentions. According to TPB, the primary determinant of behaviour is behavioural intention, which is influenced by three independent sets of influences — attitudes towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived control over the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). When studying AI-generated content in fashion, TPB explains consumers' perception of AI leads to purchase intention and influences their decision-making behaviour.

Attitude → Intention → Behavior Linkage:-

Three variables are important in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB): attitude, intention to act and actual behaviour:-

- Attitude toward the behaviour refers to consumers' evaluation of the behaviour (i.e., purchasing from a brand that uses AI-generated content – whether they view it positively or negatively).
- Intention to act refers to how likely the consumer is to perform the behaviour.
- Actual behaviour is the final outcome of performing the behaviour (i.e., the act of making a purchase).

Research shows that having a positive attitude toward AI-generated content (due to its perceived usefulness, innovative nature and personalised features) leads to increased purchase intentions, ultimately leading to an increased likelihood of purchasing (Ajzen, 1991; Huang & Rust, 2021). On the other hand, negative attitudes related to the authenticity, trustworthiness or privacy of AI-generated content will lead to lower purchase intentions and thus decrease the likelihood of making a purchase (Longoni & Cian, 2022).

Role of Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioral Control:-

TPB is made up of three main influences. The first would be the attitude of consumer preference, opinion about performing the behavior, and how positively/negatively they perceive the behavior to determine whether they will do the behavior or not. The second would be the subjective norm which is defined as social pressure, for example, the opinions of friends, celebrities and other influential people who promote a certain behavior. The third one would be perceived behavioral control which is the belief of the consumer in how easier/difficult it will be to execute that particular behavior. An example of this is when consumers view AI-driven platforms as simple and accessible to navigate thereby they have greater perceived control which will lead them to change their intent into actual behavior and perform the desired act. (Ajzen, 1991).

Objectives of the Study:-

To examine the impact of perceived authenticity of AI-generated content on consumer trust in emerging clothing brands.

To analyse the relationship between consumer trust in AI-generated content and purchase intention toward emerging fashion brands.

Hypothesis:-

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between perceived authenticity of AI-generated fashion content and consumer trust in emerging clothing brands.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between consumer trust in AI-generated content and purchase intention toward emerging clothing brands.

Data Analysis:-**Variable Construction:-**

Construct	Items Used	Coding	Interpretation
Perceived Authenticity	PA1, PA2, PA3	Mean of items; higher score = stronger perceived authenticity	Predictor variable for H1
Consumer Trust	Trust Score	Single item coded 1–5; higher score = greater trust	Outcome variable for H1 and predictor variable for H2
Purchase Intention	PI1, PI2, PI3	Mean of items; higher score = stronger purchase intention	Outcome variable for H2
AI Exposure / Awareness	Familiarity and source of exposure	Frequency and percentage coding	Used for descriptive analysis only

Note. All hypothesis-related items were recorded on a 1–5 scale so that higher values reflected stronger agreement, stronger trust, or stronger purchase intention.

Descriptive Statistics:-**Sample Characteristics:-**

The final dataset included 59 respondents. A total of 58 respondents provided valid numeric age values, while one age entry was non-numeric and was excluded from the age mean calculation but retained for categorical and scale-based analysis. The mean age of valid respondents was 19.38 years (SD = 1.39). The sample was almost evenly distributed by gender, with 30 female respondents (50.8%) and 29 male respondents (49.2%).

Category	n	%
Age 16	2	3.4%
Age 17	5	8.5%
Age 18	5	8.5%
Age 19	15	25.4%
Age 20	22	37.3%
Age 21	7	11.9%
Age 22	1	1.7%
Age 23	1	1.7%
Invalid/non-numeric age entry	1	1.7%
Gender: Female	30	50.8%
Gender: Male	29	49.2%
Occupation: Student	58	98.3%
Occupation: Other	1	1.7%

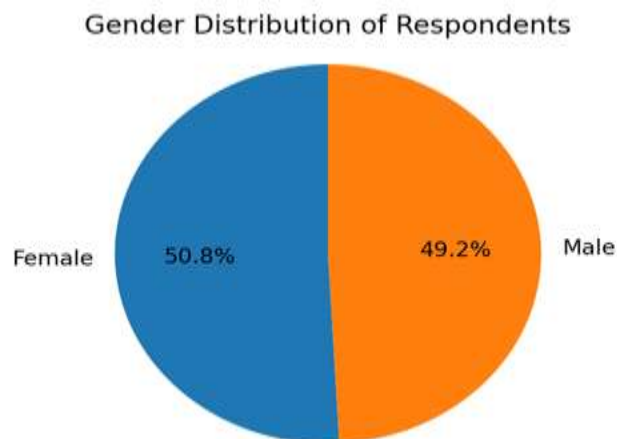


Figure 7.1 Gender Distribution of Respondents

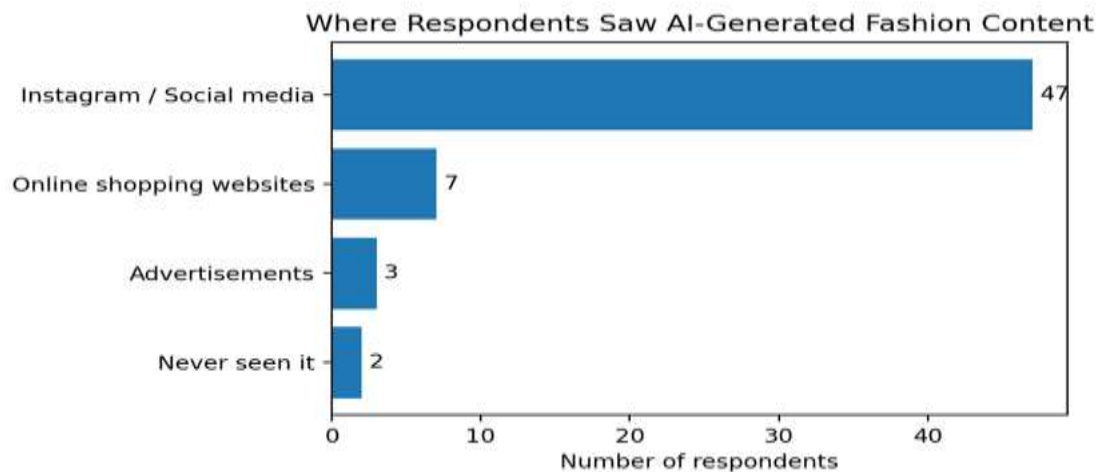


Figure 7.2 Sources Where Respondents Saw AI-Generated Fashion Content

Awareness and Exposure:-

Most respondents were familiar with AI-generated fashion content. The largest group reported being somewhat familiar (45.8%), followed by very familiar respondents (37.3%). Instagram/social media was the most common source of exposure, reported by 47 respondents (79.7%). This indicates that respondents were largely exposed to AI-generated fashion content through digital and social media platforms.

Familiarity Level	n	%
Somewhat familiar	27	45.8%
Very familiar	22	37.3%
Not Much	7	11.9%
Slightly familiar	3	5.1%

Source of Exposure	n	%
Instagram / Social media	47	79.7%
Online shopping websites	7	11.9%
Advertisements	3	5.1%
Never seen it	2	3.4%

Item-Level Descriptive Statistics:-

The highest mean among the scored items was recorded for appeal of AI-generated fashion designs ($M = 3.53$), suggesting that respondents generally found AI-generated designs visually appealing. Consumer trust recorded a moderate mean score ($M = 3.05$), indicating that respondents were neither strongly distrustful nor strongly trusting of brands using AI-generated marketing content. Purchase-related responses were also moderate, with the overall purchase intention score recording a mean of 3.18.

Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Median	Positive Response %
PA1 Appeal	AI-generated fashion designs are appealing	3.53	1.16	4.00	57.6%
PA2 Creativity	AI can create designs as creative as human designers	2.81	1.09	3.00	20.3%
PA3 Realism	AI-generated fashion images look realistic	3.02	1.15	4.00	52.5%
Trust Score	Brands using AI-generated marketing content are trustworthy	3.05	1.17	3.00	33.9%
PI1 Buy AI clothes	Would buy clothes designed with the help of AI	3.20	1.52	3.00	33.9%
PI2 Buy AI-using brand	More likely to purchase from brands using AI	3.10	1.36	3.00	25.4%
PI3 Support AI brand	Would support emerging clothing brands that use AI	3.24	1.54	3.00	35.6%

Construct-Level Descriptive Statistics:-

Construct	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max
Perceived Authenticity	3.12	0.89	3.33	1.00	5.00
Consumer Trust	3.05	1.17	3.00	1.00	5.00
Purchase Intention	3.18	1.31	3.00	1.00	5.00

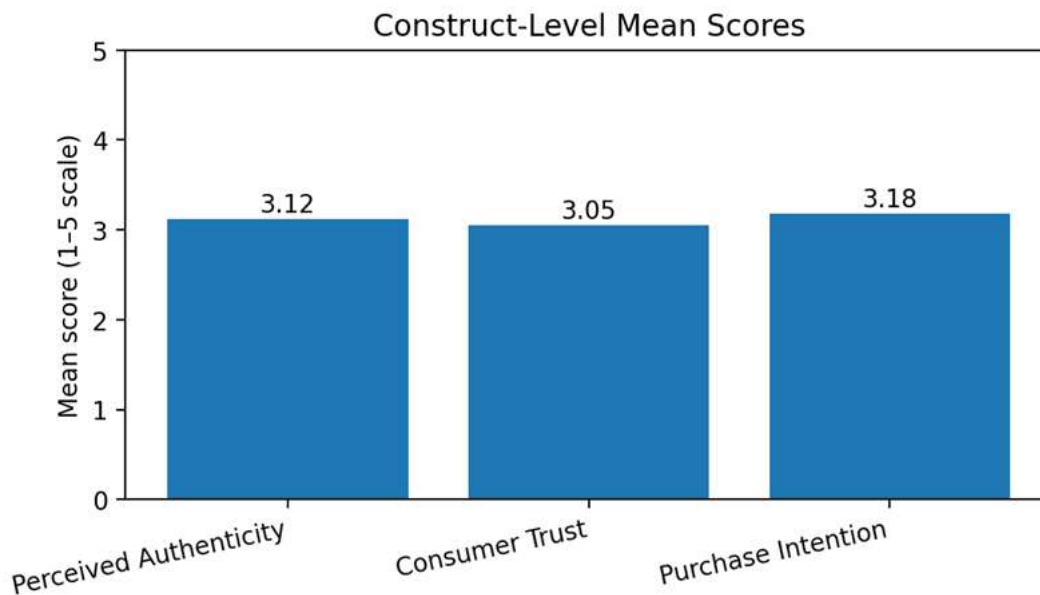


Figure 7.3 Construct-Level Mean Scores

Reliability and Validity:-**Reliability:-**

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Values above .70 are generally considered acceptable, while values close to .60 may be accepted cautiously in exploratory research. The overall selected scale showed good reliability, indicating that the selected items measured related aspects of consumer perception toward AI-generated fashion content.

Scale	Items	No. of Items	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Overall selected scale	PA1–PA3, Trust, PI1–PI3	7	0.878	Good
Perceived Authenticity	PA1, PA2, PA3	3	0.677	Acceptable for exploratory use
Consumer Trust	Trust Score	1	N/A	Single-item measure; alpha not applicable
Purchase Intention	PI1, PI2, PI3	3	0.872	Good

Validity:-

Content validity is supported because the items directly correspond to the study variables: perceived authenticity, consumer trust, and purchase intention toward emerging clothing brands using AI-generated content. Construct validity is partially supported by the positive and statistically significant correlations between perceived authenticity and trust, and between trust and purchase intention. This pattern is consistent with the theoretical expectation that authentic-looking AI-generated content can improve consumer trust, which may then strengthen purchase intention. A limitation is that the study relies on self-reported perceptions rather than actual buying behavior. Therefore, purchase intention should be interpreted as stated willingness to buy, not as confirmed purchase behavior.

Correlation Analysis:-

Relationship	Test	Coefficient	p-value	Interpretation
Perceived Authenticity × Consumer Trust	Pearson r	0.662	< .001	Strong positive relationship; supports H1

Perceived Authenticity × Consumer Trust	Spearman rho	0.666	< .001	Consistent rank-order confirmation
Perceived Authenticity × Purchase Intention	Pearson r	0.633	< .001	Positive relationship supporting within the model
Perceived Authenticity × Purchase Intention	Spearman rho	0.667	< .001	Consistent rank-order confirmation
Consumer Trust × Purchase Intention	Pearson r	0.669	< .001	Strong positive relationship; supports H2
Consumer Trust × Purchase Intention	Spearman rho	0.620	< .001	Consistent rank-order confirmation

The correlation results show that perceived authenticity had a significant positive relationship with consumer trust ($r = 0.662$, $p < .001$). This indicates that respondents who perceived AI-generated fashion content as more appealing, creative, and realistic were also more likely to trust emerging clothing brands using such content. Consumer trust also had a significant positive relationship with purchase intention ($r = 0.669$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher trust was associated with stronger willingness to purchase from emerging clothing brands.

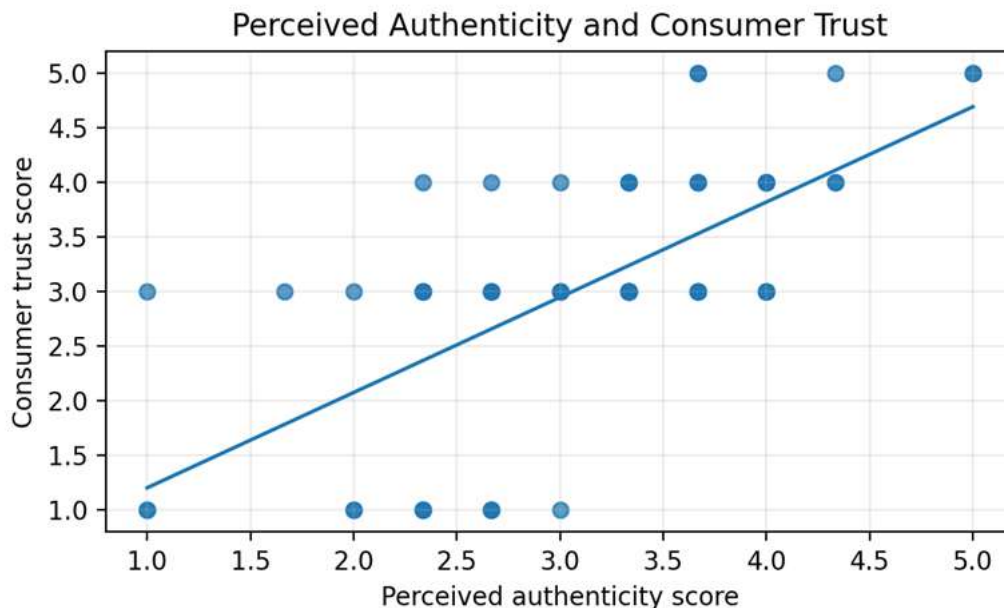


Figure 7.4 Relationship Between Perceived Authenticity and Consumer Trust

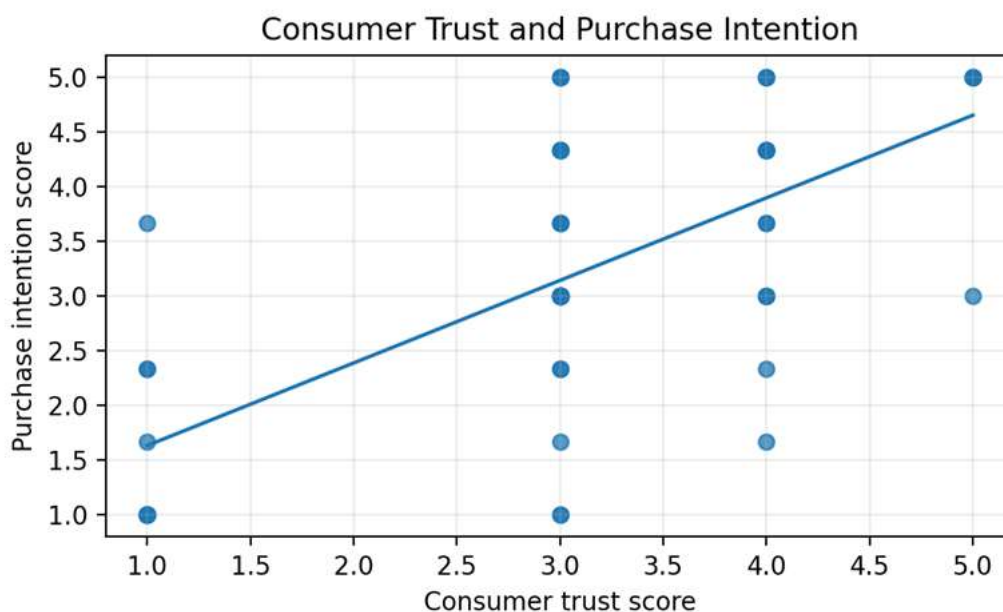
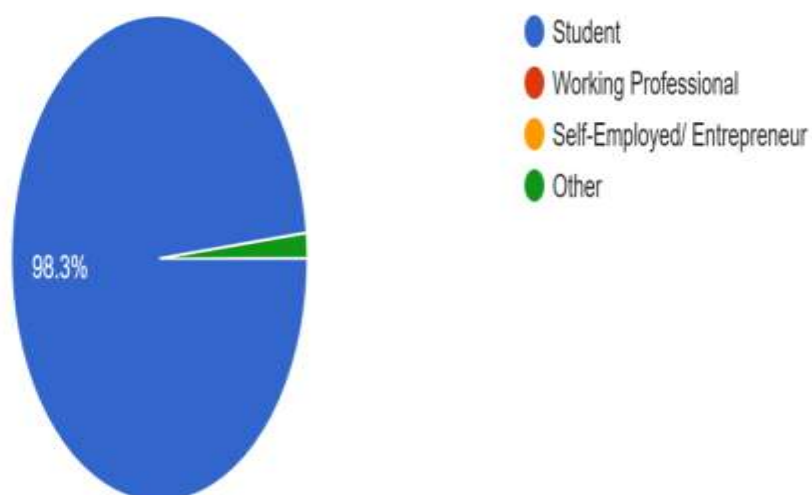


Figure 7.5 Relationship Between Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention

Additional Tables or Figures:-

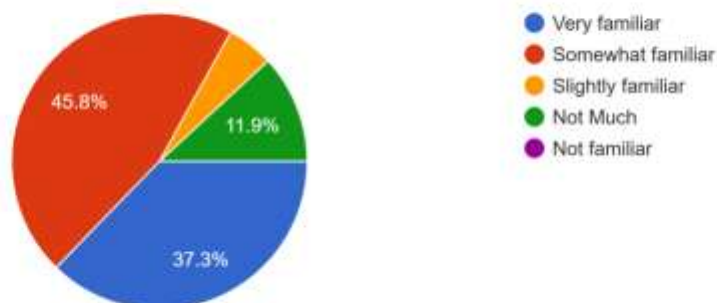
What is your occupation?

59 responses



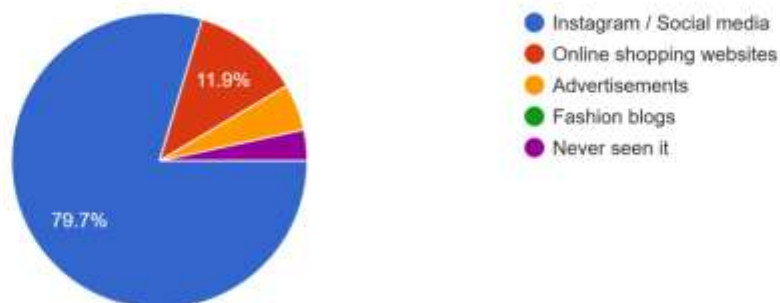
How familiar are you with AI-generated fashion content (designs, ads, models)?

59 responses



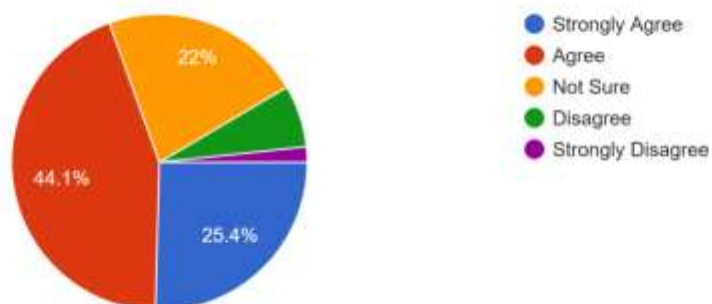
Where have you seen AI-generated fashion content?

59 responses



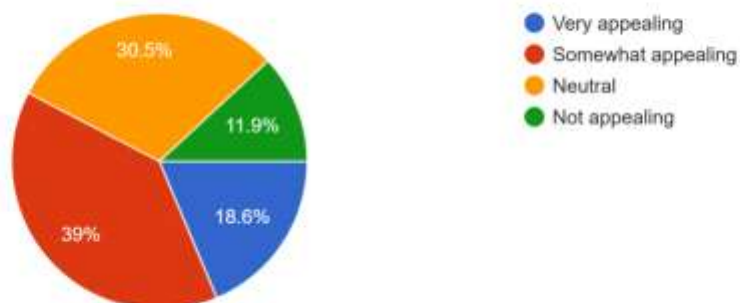
Do you believe AI is becoming important in the fashion industry?

59 responses



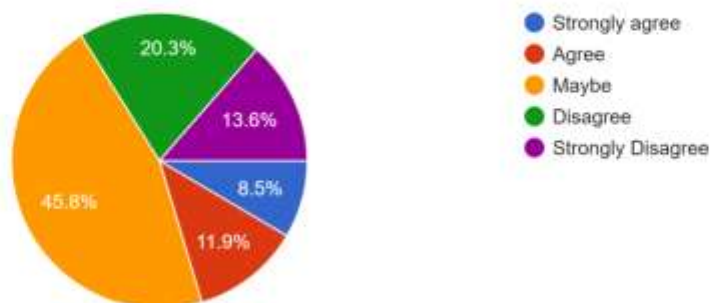
How appealing do you find AI-generated fashion designs?

59 responses



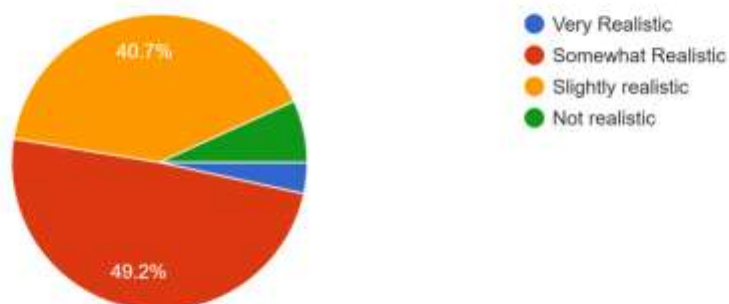
Do you think AI can create designs as creative as human designers?

59 responses



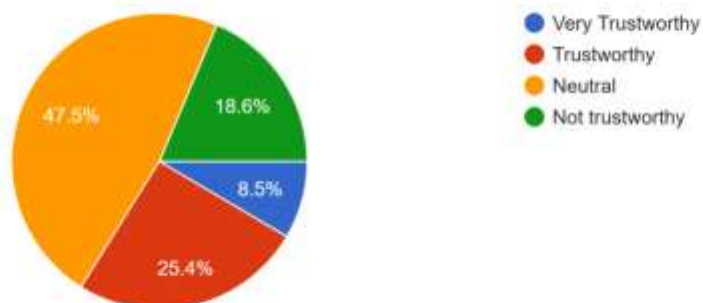
How realistic do AI-generated fashion images look to you?

59 responses



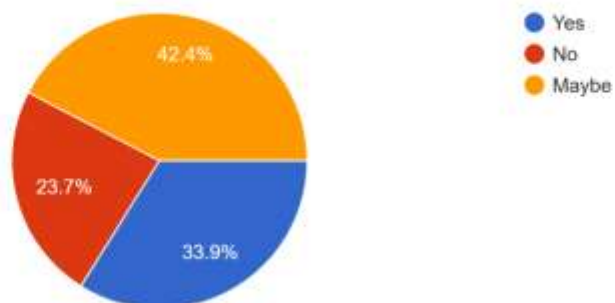
How trustworthy do you find brands that use AI-generated marketing content?

59 responses



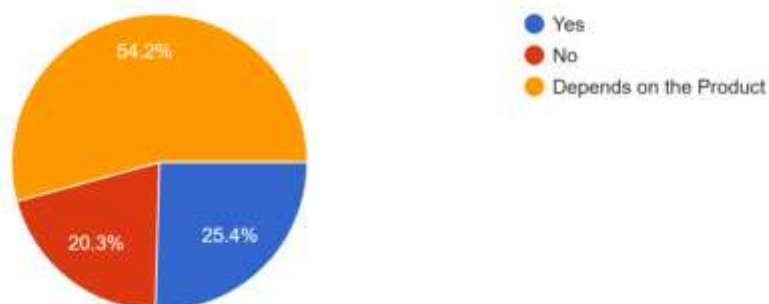
Would you buy clothes designed with the help of AI?

59 responses



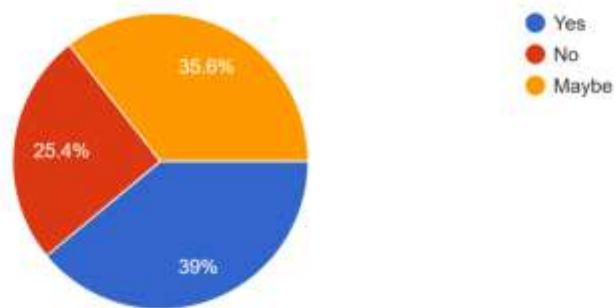
Are you more likely to purchase from brands using advanced technology like AI?

59 responses



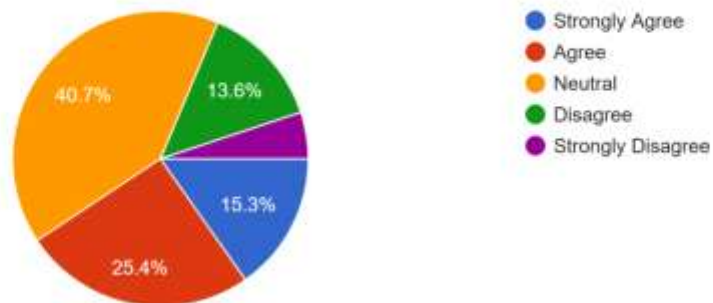
Do you think AI helps emerging fashion brands compete with established brands?

59 responses



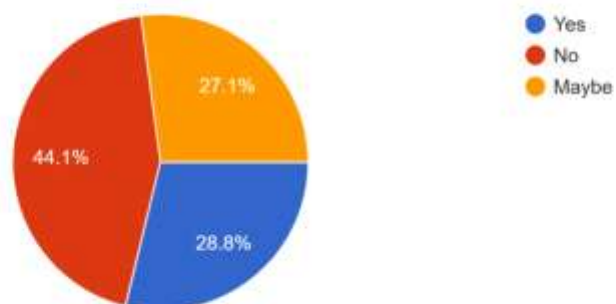
Do AI-generated campaigns make a brand appear more innovative?

59 responses



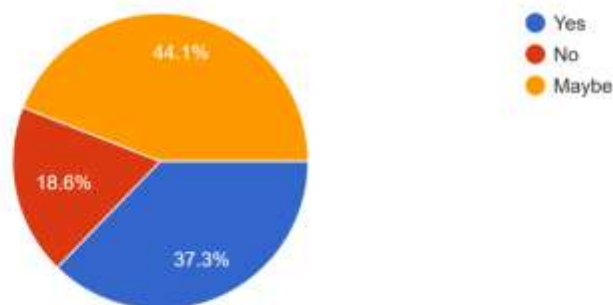
Are you concerned that AI may replace human fashion designers?

59 responses



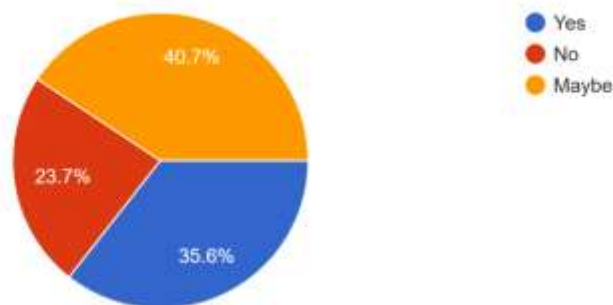
Do you believe AI will positively impact the future of fashion brands?

59 responses



Would you support emerging clothing brands that actively use AI technology?

59 responses



Hypothesis Testing:-

Hypothesis	Relationship Tested	Analysis	Statistic	p-value	Decision
H1	Perceived authenticity → consumer trust	Pearson correlation	$r = 0.662$	$< .001$	Supported
H2	Consumer trust → purchase intention	Pearson correlation	$r = 0.669$	$< .001$	Supported

H1 was supported. The analysis showed a significant positive correlation between perceived authenticity of AI-generated fashion content and consumer trust in emerging clothing brands ($r = 0.662$, $p < .001$). This suggests that when AI-generated fashion content appears more authentic, realistic, and appealing, consumers are more likely to trust the brand using it.

H2 was also supported. Consumer trust had a significant positive relationship with purchase intention toward emerging clothing brands ($r = 0.669$, $p < .001$). This means that respondents who trusted brands using AI-generated content were more likely to express willingness to purchase from those brands.

Overall, the results indicate that perceived authenticity plays an important role in building consumer trust, and consumer trust further contributes to purchase intention. Therefore, emerging clothing brands using AI-generated content should ensure that such content appears realistic, credible, and aligned with consumer expectations.

Results and Discussion:-

This chapter presents and interprets the findings obtained from the survey on consumer perceptions of AI-generated content used by emerging clothing brands. The analysis focuses on respondents' demographic characteristics, familiarity with AI-generated fashion content, perceptions of its appeal, creativity and realism, trust in brands using

such content, and willingness to purchase from AI-driven fashion brands. The chapter also evaluates the two proposed hypotheses concerning the relationship between perceived authenticity and consumer trust, and between consumer trust and purchase intention. All hypothesis-related items were measured on a five-point scale, with higher scores indicating stronger agreement, trust, or purchase intention.

Demographic Profile:-

The final sample consisted of 59 respondents. The demographic profile was examined in terms of age, gender, occupation, and familiarity with AI-generated fashion content. These characteristics provide important context because consumers' exposure to digital platforms and emerging technologies may influence how they evaluate AI-generated marketing content.

Age of Respondents:-

Of the 59 respondents, 58 provided valid numerical age responses. One non-numerical age entry was excluded from the calculation of the mean age but retained for the remaining categorical and scale-based analyses. The respondents with valid age data were between 16 and 23 years old. The mean age was 19.38 years, with a standard deviation of 1.39 years. The largest age category was 20 years, representing 37.3% of the sample, followed by 19 years, representing 25.4%.

Table 8.1 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
16 years	2	3.40%
17 years	5	8.50%
18 years	5	8.50%
19 years	15	25.40%
20 years	22	37.30%
21 years	7	11.90%
22 years	1	1.70%
23 years	1	1.70%
Invalid/non-numerical response	1	1.70%
Total	59	100.00%

Respondents aged 19 and 20 together accounted for **62.7%** of the sample. Therefore, the findings primarily represent the views of late-adolescent and young-adult consumers. This age group is relevant to the study because younger consumers commonly interact with digital fashion content through social media, online shopping platforms, recommendation systems, and digital advertising. However, the restricted age range means that the findings cannot automatically be generalised to middle-aged or older consumers. The results should therefore be interpreted mainly as representing the perceptions of Generation Z consumers.

Gender of Respondents:-

The gender distribution was nearly equal. The sample consisted of 30 female respondents and 29 male respondents.

Table 8.2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	30	50.80%
Male	29	49.20%
Total	59	100.00%

Female respondents represented 50.8% of the sample, while male respondents represented 49.2%. This balanced distribution reduces the likelihood that the overall results were disproportionately shaped by one gender.

However, the study did not conduct a separate statistical comparison of male and female responses. It therefore cannot conclude whether gender significantly influenced perceived authenticity, trust, or purchase intention. Further research could use an independent-samples test or other group-comparison method to investigate possible gender differences. The occupational profile was highly concentrated, with 58 respondents, or 98.3%, identifying as students. Consequently, the sample mainly represents young consumers who may have considerable digital exposure but potentially limited independent purchasing power.

Familiarity with AI-Generated Fashion Content:-

Respondents were asked to indicate their familiarity with AI-generated fashion content.

Table 8.3: Familiarity with AI-Generated Fashion Content

Familiarity Level	Frequency	Percentage
Very familiar	22	37.30%
Somewhat familiar	27	45.80%
Slightly familiar	3	5.10%
Not much familiar	7	11.90%
Total	59	100.00%

The largest category consisted of respondents who were somewhat familiar, accounting for 45.8% of the sample. A further 37.3% described themselves as very familiar. Together, 83.1% of respondents were either somewhat or very familiar with AI-generated fashion content. Only a relatively small proportion reported limited familiarity. Approximately 11.9% indicated that they were not very familiar, while 5.1% described themselves as only slightly familiar.

These results indicate that most respondents had sufficient prior exposure to form an informed consumer perception of AI-generated fashion content. Nevertheless, familiarity should not be interpreted as technical expertise. Respondents may recognise AI-generated visuals or understand that AI is being used in fashion without necessarily understanding how generative AI models, recommendation algorithms, or automated content systems operate.

Overall, the demographic profile indicates that the sample consisted predominantly of digitally exposed young consumers, with an almost equal gender distribution and a relatively high level of familiarity with AI-generated fashion content.

Awareness of AI in Fashion:-

Consumer awareness was assessed through respondents' familiarity with AI-generated fashion content and the sources through which they had encountered such content. The findings indicate that AI-generated fashion content was already familiar to most participants. As reported previously, 83.1% of respondents described themselves as either somewhat or very familiar with it. This suggests that AI in fashion was not viewed as an entirely new or abstract concept by the surveyed group. Respondents were also asked where they had encountered AI-generated fashion content.

Table 8.4: Sources of Exposure to AI-Generated Fashion Content

Source of Exposure	Frequency	Percentage
Instagram/social media	47	79.70%
Online shopping websites	7	11.90%
Advertisements	3	5.10%
Never seen it	2	3.40%
Total	59	100.00%

Instagram and other social media platforms were the dominant sources of exposure, reported by 79.7% of respondents. Online shopping websites were the second most common source, although they accounted for only 11.9% of the sample. Advertisements accounted for 5.1%, while only 3.4% stated that they had never encountered AI-generated fashion content. The strong concentration of exposure through social media indicates that consumers are primarily encountering AI-generated fashion content within highly visual and rapidly changing digital environments. On these platforms, AI-generated visuals may appear in brand advertisements, influencer-style content, product imagery, virtual models, design concepts, and personalised promotional material.

The findings also suggest that consumer understanding of AI in fashion may be shaped more by repeated visual exposure than by formal or technical knowledge. A respondent may recognise that an image, model, or advertisement appears to be AI-generated without understanding how it was produced or how extensively AI was used. Therefore, awareness in this study should be interpreted as consumer-level recognition and exposure, rather than a detailed understanding of AI systems. This distinction is important because familiarity can increase consumers' comfort with AI while still leaving uncertainty regarding authenticity, data use, creative ownership, and transparency. The findings demonstrate that AI-generated fashion content has already entered the normal digital media environment of young consumers. For emerging fashion brands, social media is therefore likely to be the primary setting in which consumers develop initial opinions regarding the credibility, creativity, and authenticity of AI-generated brand communication.

Perception of AI-Generated Content:-

Consumer perceptions of AI-generated content were examined through three items measuring the appeal, perceived creativity, and realism of AI-generated fashion content. These three items were combined to form the study's perceived-authenticity construct.

Table 8.5: Consumer Perceptions of AI-Generated Fashion Content

Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Median	Positive Responses
PA1	AI-generated fashion designs are appealing	3.53	1.16	4	57.60%

PA2	AI can create designs as creative as human designers	2.81	1.09	3	20.30%
PA3	AI-generated fashion images look realistic	3.02	1.15	4	52.50%

The overall perceived-authenticity construct recorded a mean of 3.12, a standard deviation of 0.89, and a median of 3.33. This indicates a moderate perception of the appeal, creativity, and realism of AI-generated content.

Appeal of AI-Generated Content:-

The statement that AI-generated fashion designs are appealing received the highest mean score among the perception items, with a mean of 3.53 and a median of 4.00. Approximately 57.6% of respondents provided a positive response. This finding indicates that consumers can appreciate the visual qualities of AI-generated fashion content. AI appears capable of producing designs and images that attract attention and meet consumers' basic aesthetic expectations.

For emerging fashion brands, this suggests that AI-generated visuals may be useful for creating visually engaging social media content, experimenting with different design concepts, and developing promotional material at a relatively rapid pace. However, visual appeal alone does not demonstrate that consumers view the content as authentic or emotionally meaningful. A consumer may find an AI-generated design attractive while remaining uncertain about the originality, credibility, or human intention behind it.

Perceived Creativity:-

The statement that AI can create designs as creative as human designers received the lowest mean score, at 2.81, with only 20.3% of respondents providing a positive response. This result reflects considerable hesitation regarding AI's ability to match human creativity. Although respondents may recognise AI as a useful design tool, they appear less willing to regard machine-generated outputs as equivalent to the creative contribution of human designers. The result supports the distinction between using AI to assist creativity and using AI to replace human creativity. Respondents may accept AI for generating alternatives, analysing trends, creating drafts, or assisting with visual experimentation. However, they may continue to associate originality, intention, cultural understanding, and meaningful storytelling with human designers. The comparatively low creativity score is particularly important for fashion because fashion is not evaluated solely through technical accuracy or efficiency. It is also associated with identity, artistic expression, cultural relevance, and personal interpretation.

Realism of AI-Generated Fashion Images:-

The realism item recorded a mean score of 3.02, with a median of 4.00. Approximately 52.5% of respondents gave a positive response. This suggests that many consumers considered AI-generated fashion images reasonably realistic, although the overall mean remained close to the neutral point. Therefore, respondents did not show a uniformly strong belief in the realism of AI-generated imagery. The result may indicate variation in the quality of AI-generated content that respondents had previously encountered. High-quality AI visuals may appear convincing, while poorly generated content may contain inconsistencies in body proportions, clothing details, fabric appearance, lighting, or physical context. Emerging brands should therefore avoid assuming that all AI-generated imagery will automatically be accepted as realistic. The quality and consistency of the output remain important to consumer evaluation.

Emotional Appeal:-

Emotional appeal was identified as an important dimension in the theoretical discussion of AI-generated fashion content. However, the survey did not include a separate item directly measuring emotional connection, narrative warmth, relatability, or emotional resonance. Consequently, the present results do not allow a direct statistical conclusion regarding whether consumers found AI-generated content emotionally engaging. The appeal item reflects general or visual attractiveness rather than emotional attachment. The contrast between relatively high visual appeal and relatively low perceived creativity nevertheless suggests that consumers may appreciate what AI-generated content looks like without attributing the same level of creative intention or human meaning to it. This interpretation should be treated cautiously because emotional appeal was not independently operationalised. Overall, the results indicate that respondents were relatively receptive to the aesthetic potential of AI-generated fashion content, but more cautious about its human-level creativity and authenticity. The findings support a hybrid approach in which AI assists content development while human creators remain responsible for creative direction, storytelling, and brand identity.

Trust in AI-Generated Fashion Content:-

Consumer trust was measured through the statement that brands using AI-generated marketing content are trustworthy. The trust item recorded a mean score of 3.05, a standard deviation of 1.17, and a median of 3.00. Approximately 33.9% of respondents provided a positive response. These findings indicate a moderate and cautious level of trust. Respondents were not strongly distrustful of brands using AI-generated content, but neither did they demonstrate strong or widespread confidence in such brands. The mean score being close to the scale midpoint suggests that many respondents remained uncertain.

Their trust may depend on additional factors that were not directly measured, including:-

- whether the brand discloses its use of AI;
- whether the product received matches the AI-generated representation;
- whether human designers supervise the creative process;
- whether the brand protects consumer data;
- whether the content appears misleading or manipulated; and
- whether AI use is consistent with the brand's identity.

The relationship between perceived authenticity and consumer trust was strong and statistically significant. Perceived authenticity and consumer trust produced a Pearson correlation of $r = 0.662$, $p < .001$. The Spearman rank-order correlation produced a similar result of $\rho = 0.666$, $p < .001$. These findings show that respondents who rated AI-generated fashion content as more appealing, creative, and realistic also tended to express greater trust in brands using such content. The similarity between the Pearson and Spearman results strengthens confidence in the pattern because the relationship remained significant when examined using both parametric and rank-order methods. However, consumer trust was measured through only one survey item. A single-item measure does not capture all dimensions of trust, such as honesty, reliability, competence, transparency, benevolence, and ethical responsibility. Cronbach's alpha could therefore not be calculated for the trust construct. The result should consequently be interpreted as a general measure of brand trust rather than as a comprehensive assessment of all components of consumer trust. Overall, the findings demonstrate that acceptance of AI-generated fashion content depends not merely on exposure to the technology but on how credible and authentic the resulting content appears. For emerging clothing brands, technologically advanced content is unlikely to build trust unless it is also realistic, consistent, and aligned with the expectations created by the actual product.

Influence on Purchase Intention:-

Purchase intention was measured using three items examining respondents' willingness to buy AI-assisted clothing, purchase from brands using AI, and support emerging clothing brands that use AI.

Table 8.6: Purchase Intention toward AI-Driven Fashion Brands

Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Median	Positive Responses
PI1	Would buy clothes designed with the help of AI	3.2	1.52	3	33.90%
PI2	More likely to purchase from brands using AI	3.1	1.36	3	25.40%
PI3	Would support emerging clothing brands that use AI	3.24	1.54	3	35.60%

The overall purchase-intention construct recorded a mean score of 3.18, a standard deviation of 1.31, and a median of 3.00. The purchase-intention scale demonstrated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.872. The overall score suggests a moderate level of purchase intention rather than strong consumer commitment. Respondents were not uniformly opposed to purchasing from AI-driven brands, but their responses did not indicate widespread enthusiasm either. The highest purchase-intention mean was recorded for supporting emerging clothing brands that use AI, with a mean of 3.24. This was followed by willingness to buy clothes designed with the help of AI, with a mean of 3.20. The lowest mean was recorded for being more likely to purchase from a brand specifically because it uses AI, at 3.10. This pattern suggests that the use of AI may be acceptable to consumers but may not

independently function as a strong purchasing incentive. Consumers may be willing to support or purchase from an AI-using brand, but the use of AI itself does not necessarily make the brand more desirable. The relatively large standard deviations, ranging from 1.36 to 1.54, indicate considerable variation among respondents. Some participants were strongly willing to purchase from AI-driven brands, while others were hesitant or resistant. This variation may reflect differences in technological openness, previous exposure to AI, personal attitudes toward creativity, trust in digital content, concerns about product misrepresentation, or preference for human-designed products.

Consumer trust had a statistically significant positive relationship with purchase intention. The Pearson correlation between trust and purchase intention was $r = 0.669$, $p < .001$, while the Spearman correlation was $\rho = 0.620$, $p < .001$. The findings indicate that respondents who expressed greater trust in brands using AI-generated content were also more willing to purchase from and support such brands. Trust therefore appears to be an important factor connecting favourable perceptions of AI content with consumer willingness to buy. Perceived authenticity also had a significant positive correlation with purchase intention, with $r = 0.633$, $p < .001$. Although this relationship was not one of the two primary hypotheses, it provides additional support for the proposed behavioural pathway. However, the study measured purchase intention rather than actual purchase behaviour. Respondents' stated willingness to buy does not establish that they would complete a real transaction involving their own money. Purchase intention may be influenced by hypothetical attitudes and may change when consumers evaluate price, quality, fit, reviews, return policies, or brand reputation. The findings therefore indicate that trust is associated with stronger purchase intention, but they do not establish that AI-generated content directly causes purchasing behaviour.

Hypothesis Testing:-

The study proposed two hypotheses concerning the relationships among perceived authenticity, consumer trust, and purchase intention.

Table 8.7: Summary of Hypothesis-Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship Tested	Statistical Test	Result	p-value	Decision
H1	Perceived authenticity and consumer trust	Pearson correlation	$r = 0.662$	$< .001$	Supported
H2	Consumer trust and purchase intention	Pearson correlation	$r = 0.669$	$< .001$	Supported

Hypothesis 1:-

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between perceived authenticity of AI-generated fashion content and consumer trust in emerging clothing brands.

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between perceived authenticity and consumer trust:-

$r = 0.662$, $p < .001$

The probability value was below the conventional significance level of .05. Therefore, the relationship was statistically significant, and H1 was supported. The result indicates that respondents who viewed AI-generated fashion content as more appealing, creative, and realistic were more likely to regard the brands using such content as trustworthy.

The Spearman correlation produced a similar result:-

$\rho = 0.666$, $p < .001$

This consistency provides additional support for the relationship. The findings suggest that emerging clothing brands can strengthen consumer trust when their AI-generated content appears credible, realistic, and visually appropriate. However, because the analysis was correlational, it cannot establish that perceived authenticity caused trust to increase. It demonstrates that the two variables were strongly associated within the surveyed sample.

Hypothesis 2

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between consumer trust in AI-generated content and purchase intention toward emerging clothing brands.

The Pearson correlation analysis showed a strong positive relationship between consumer trust and purchase intention:-

$r = 0.669, p < .001$

The relationship was statistically significant, and H2 was therefore supported. The finding means that respondents who considered brands using AI-generated marketing content more trustworthy also reported greater willingness to purchase from or support such brands.

The Spearman correlation provided additional confirmation:-

$\rho = 0.620, p < .001$

The result supports the theoretical position that trust is an important factor in digital purchasing decisions. Consumers cannot physically inspect products through AI-generated marketing content, making confidence in the honesty and reliability of the brand especially important. The findings from H1 and H2 are consistent with the proposed conceptual pathway:

Perceived authenticity → Consumer trust → Purchase intention:-

Nevertheless, this study did not perform a formal mediation analysis. It therefore cannot conclude statistically that trust mediates the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention. The results support the proposed sequence of relationships, but mediation would need to be tested using regression, bootstrapping, or structural-equation modelling.

Interpretation of Results:-

The findings provide several important behavioural insights into how young consumers respond to AI-generated content used by emerging clothing brands.

High Exposure Does Not Guarantee Strong Acceptance:-

Most respondents were already familiar with AI-generated fashion content, and social media was the dominant source of exposure. However, the construct means for perceived authenticity, trust, and purchase intention remained moderate. This demonstrates that repeated exposure to AI-generated content does not automatically result in strong trust or purchase intention. Consumers may become accustomed to seeing AI-generated images while continuing to evaluate whether the content is authentic, realistic, and credible. For emerging brands, visibility is therefore not sufficient. The quality and honesty of the content remain central to consumer acceptance.

Visual Appeal Exceeds Perceived Human-Level Creativity:-

AI-generated fashion designs received a relatively favourable appeal score of 3.53, while the belief that AI could be as creative as human designers received a lower score of 2.81. This difference represents one of the clearest behavioural findings of the study. Consumers appear willing to acknowledge that AI can produce attractive outputs without accepting that it possesses creativity equivalent to that of a human designer. This distinction suggests that consumers evaluate AI as a useful production or assistance tool rather than as a complete substitute for human creative judgement. Emerging fashion brands may therefore benefit from presenting AI as part of a collaborative creative process.

Consumer Acceptance of AI Is Conditional:-

The results do not show complete rejection of AI. Purchase-intention scores remained near or slightly above the midpoint, indicating that many consumers were open to supporting brands that use AI. However, this acceptance appears conditional on the perceived quality and trustworthiness of the content. Consumers may accept AI when it enhances design, personalisation, speed, or visual experimentation, but may resist it when it creates misleading representations or removes the sense of human contribution. AI use should therefore complement the brand's value proposition rather than become the only feature on which the brand depends.

Trust Functions as a Key Behavioural Link:-

The strong relationship between perceived authenticity and trust, combined with the strong relationship between trust and purchase intention, indicates that trust is a central factor in consumer decision-making. The findings suggest that AI-generated content is unlikely to translate into purchase intention merely because it is innovative. Consumers must first believe that the brand and its representations are credible. For an emerging clothing brand, this is especially important because it may not yet possess the reputation, customer reviews, or long-standing identity of an established fashion company. Misleading or low-quality AI content could therefore produce a disproportionate loss of trust.

AI Is Not an Independent Purchase Motivation:-

The statement that respondents would be more likely to purchase from a brand because it uses AI received the lowest purchase-intention mean of 3.10 and only 25.4% positive responses. This indicates that AI adoption alone is not a sufficiently strong reason for consumers to select a fashion brand. Consumers are still likely to evaluate conventional purchasing factors such as design quality, price, fit, product quality, brand values, credibility, and customer experience. Emerging brands should therefore avoid positioning AI as a substitute for product value. AI should be used to improve the consumer experience or support creative production rather than as a superficial promotional claim.

A Hybrid AI-Human Model Is Likely to Be More Acceptable:-

The combination of moderate AI acceptance, relatively positive visual-appeal ratings, and lower human-level creativity ratings supports the use of a hybrid model. Under this model, AI can assist with idea generation, design variation, trend analysis, content scaling, or personalisation, while human designers retain control over creative direction, cultural interpretation, emotional storytelling, ethical judgement, and final approval. Such an approach allows emerging brands to benefit from AI's operational advantages without weakening the human identity of the brand.

Findings Should Be Interpreted Within the Study's Measurement Boundaries:-

The results provide useful evidence but should be interpreted within several boundaries. First, the sample consisted primarily of students between 16 and 23 years of age. The findings therefore mainly represent digitally active young consumers and cannot be generalised to the entire fashion market. Second, consumer trust was measured with a single item. Future studies should use a multi-item trust scale covering credibility, honesty, reliability, transparency, and ethical confidence. Third, the perceived-authenticity construct was operationalised through appeal, creativity, and realism. These items capture important evaluations of AI content, but they do not directly measure all aspects of authenticity, such as originality, sincerity, human intention, cultural meaning, or consistency with brand identity. Fourth, emotional appeal was discussed as an important theoretical factor but was not directly measured through a separate survey scale.

Finally, the study used correlation analysis. The statistically significant relationships support the hypotheses, but they do not prove causation. Future research could use experimental designs, regression models, mediation analysis, or comparisons between human-generated and AI-generated advertisements to test the proposed behavioural process more rigorously. Overall, the findings indicate that young consumers are aware of and moderately receptive to AI-generated fashion content. They appreciate its visual potential but remain cautious about its creativity, authenticity, and trustworthiness. Perceived authenticity is strongly associated with consumer trust, while consumer trust is strongly associated with purchase intention. Emerging clothing brands should therefore use AI in a transparent, credible, and human-supervised manner that strengthens rather than replaces the brand's creative identity.

Conclusion:-**Summary of Findings:-**

The goal of this research was to analyze how consumers view Artificial Intelligence (AI) produced material for new clothing lines, with an emphasis on the linkages of perceived authenticity, consumer confidence, and intention to buy. Researchers and practitioners alike are now needing to understand how customers regard AI generated output as fabric technology becomes embedded in the retail industry and online interaction among brands and consumers.

This research confirms that participants have a high degree of awareness about the use of AI in the fashion industry, with most of them already knowing some form of principle about AI clothing products but discovering their first exposure through other people, such as family members or friends (to name a few). Facebook and Instagram are the two principal forms of social media used by participants to learn about new or existing brands. In summary, AI is

now a prominent form of current fashion product marketing and consumers, particularly those belonging to the Generation Z category, are constantly viewing AI generated material while searching for their next purchase online. In the research, they discovered that the survey respondents who were surveyed showed positive thoughts regarding AI-created content (fashion). More than one-half of the participants surveyed stated that they like that AI can help create beautiful designs, increase personalization, and promote creativity in fashion. However, the respondents still had serious doubts about whether the AI-generated designs were genuine and if the design had an emotional appeal, i.e., emotional connection. Even though the respondents viewed AI as a "creative tool," they still believed that originality, emotional depth, and true storytelling are associated with human designers. These results suggest that consumers will be able to accept AI as a tool that assists human creative process rather than replacing it.

Another key area of this study was to evaluate the nature of the relationship between perceived authenticity and consumer trust. Through statistical analyses of the data collected, there was a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.662$, $p < .001$) between perceived authenticity of AI generated fashion content and consumer trust in newly emerging clothing companies that use this content. The second goal of this research study was to discover if trust in brands would impact a consumer's intention to make a purchase. The results of this study support the second hypothesis by confirming a positive and statistically significant relationship between trust in a brand and the consumer's likelihood of purchasing ($r = .669$, $p < .001$). Consumers that have higher levels of trust in brands that utilize artificial intelligence (AI) to create marketing content are more likely to purchase the products of those brands. These findings support the theory that perceived authenticity is an important contributor to developing trust from consumers and that trust from consumers is an important influence on purchase intention. Therefore, clothing brands that are just starting should not rely entirely on AI for efficiency or to produce creative content. Instead, they should incorporate AI with human creativity and authenticity through transparent storytelling in order to create greater consumer relationships.

Theoretical Contributions:-

This study is continuing to add to the body of academic literature on Artificial Intelligence, consumer behaviour and the digital fashion marketplace by providing new, empirical data regarding consumers' perceptions of AI Generated content in relation to new clothing brands. Analysis of past research has shown a majority of researchers, to date, have focused on the marketing performance of established global fashion brands or the adoption of AI from a technological perspective; whereas, this research is addressing how the use of AI generated marketing materials affect consumers' perceptions of genuineness, trustworthiness and willingness to purchase items.

The major theoretical contribution of this study includes the development of a conceptual framework, which integrates the variables of perceived genuineness, trust and purchase intention into one single model. Research findings have shown that researchers have previously examined each of these variables separately. The findings from this research demonstrate that there are positive relationships between perceived genuineness and consumer trust, and between consumer trust and purchase intention, thereby, providing additional support to existing theories of consumer decision-making in technology driven environments.

The results also confirm many existing theoretical models that were previously referred to in the research presented. These include the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Source Credibility Theory, Consumer Trust Theory, Perceived Authenticity Theory, and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Acceptance of AI-generated content occurs based on both technological capabilities of the content as well as the perceived credibility, authenticity and emotional appeal of the content. This research extends the existing theoretical basis by showing that emotional and psychological factors still play a large role in influencing consumers' acceptance of content created using advanced technology.

Another important aspect of this research is the emphasis placed on newly emerging fashion brands. Most research to date has focused on large multinational fashion companies that have access to many forms of technology. By focusing on smaller / newer fashion companies, this research will help broaden the understanding of how AI can affect consumer behaviour at companies that operate within a resource-constrained environment, where AI is now being used for operational enhancements, cost reductions and increased online visibility.

The importance of balancing technological innovation and human creativity is emphasized in this research too. While consumers tend to appreciate the efficiency of AI and its creative capabilities, they still value aspects such as authenticity, emotional storytelling, and human input. This finding advances the ongoing conversation surrounding the use of AI as an augmentation tool instead of a substitute for human creativity within creative industries.

In conclusion, this research serves as a basis for future academic research into fashion marketing and AI content. Future researchers can extend this model with other variables such as perceived transparency, ethical considerations, perceived artificiality, consumer innovativeness, brand loyalty, and actual purchasing behaviours. Comparative research across different cultures, countries, and generations may provide meaningful insights into how consumers continue to view AI's role in their everyday digital lives as the technology is increasingly becoming integrated.

Recommendations:-

Based on the findings of the study, emerging clothing brands should use artificial intelligence in a manner that improves innovation and operational efficiency without reducing the authenticity, credibility, and human character of their brand communication. The results showed that perceived authenticity was strongly associated with consumer trust and that higher consumer trust was associated with stronger purchase intention. The recommendations below focus on helping emerging fashion brands use AI-generated content responsibly and effectively.

Use of Hybrid Content: AI and Human Creativity:-

Emerging clothing brands should adopt a hybrid content-development model in which artificial intelligence supports human designers rather than replacing them. The study found that respondents generally considered AI-generated fashion designs visually appealing, but they were less convinced that AI could create designs that were as creative as those produced by human designers. This suggests that consumers recognise the technical and visual capabilities of AI but continue to associate originality, cultural understanding, emotion, and meaningful storytelling with human creators.

AI can be used during the initial stages of design and content creation to generate ideas, create visual alternatives, analyse trends, experiment with styles, prepare campaign concepts, and adapt content for different digital platforms. These applications can help emerging brands reduce costs, save time, and produce content more efficiently. However, human designers and creative teams should remain responsible for reviewing, refining, and approving the final output. Human involvement can ensure that the content remains original, culturally appropriate, emotionally meaningful, and consistent with the identity of the brand.

Brands may communicate that their content is AI-assisted and human-curated. This approach can present the brand as technologically progressive while reassuring consumers that human judgement and creativity remain central to the design process. A hybrid approach is therefore likely to provide a more effective balance between innovation and authenticity.

Transparency in AI Usage:-

Emerging fashion brands should communicate clearly when artificial intelligence has been used in product design, visual campaigns, virtual modelling, product descriptions, or personalised recommendations. Transparency is particularly important when AI-generated images could be mistaken for photographs of real products, human models, or actual environments. Consumers may feel misled if they later discover that an apparently realistic campaign image was artificially generated or if the physical product differs considerably from its digital representation.

Disclosure should explain how AI contributed to the content rather than merely stating that AI was used. For example, brands may clarify whether AI was used for initial concept generation, image enhancement, virtual modelling, design experimentation, or complete visual production. They should also mention when the output has been reviewed or modified by a human creative team. This can help consumers understand the extent of AI involvement and reduce uncertainty regarding the authenticity of the content.

The disclosure should be written in simple language and placed where consumers can notice it without interrupting their shopping experience. Brands should also clearly distinguish between creative campaign visuals and genuine product photographs. Real product images should be provided wherever possible so that consumers can accurately assess the fabric, colour, construction, and fit of the item before making a purchase.

Transparency should also apply to AI-based personalisation. When brands collect browsing behaviour, purchase history, size preferences, or style interests to generate recommendations, consumers should be informed about the information being collected and the purpose for which it is used. Clear disclosure regarding both content generation and consumer data can support credibility and strengthen long-term trust.

Enhancing Consumer Trust through Ethical and Responsible AI Practices:-

Consumer trust should remain a central consideration when emerging brands use AI-generated fashion content. The findings showed that respondents who considered AI-generated content more authentic were more likely to trust the brands using it. Trust was also positively related to purchase intention. Brands should therefore ensure that AI-generated content is accurate, ethical, transparent, and consistent with the actual products offered.

AI-generated images should not exaggerate the fit, fabric, colour, texture, construction, or functional qualities of a garment. Consumers may lose confidence in a brand if the product received does not match the image used in the advertisement. Every AI-generated image, product description, recommendation, or promotional message should therefore be reviewed by a human team before publication. Human review can help identify unrealistic representations, factual errors, offensive content, cultural inaccuracies, and misleading claims.

Brands should also protect consumer privacy when using AI-based recommendation and personalisation systems. They should collect only the data necessary for a clearly defined purpose and should explain how the information will be stored, used, and shared. AI should not be used to pressure consumers through deceptive scarcity, false urgency, intrusive targeting, or emotionally manipulative recommendations. Personalisation should improve convenience and relevance rather than exploit consumer vulnerabilities.

Ethical AI use should also include fair and inclusive representation. AI-generated fashion content should reflect diversity in body type, skin tone, cultural identity, gender expression, age, and physical appearance. Since AI systems can reproduce biases present in their training data, brands should regularly review their outputs to ensure that they do not promote unrealistic or discriminatory standards of beauty.

Emerging brands should additionally provide consumers with a clear method for reporting misleading, inappropriate, or unrealistic AI-generated content. Responding openly to such feedback can demonstrate accountability and strengthen the relationship between the brand and its customers.

Marketing Strategy for Emerging Brands:-

Emerging clothing brands should use AI as a supporting marketing resource without allowing the technology to replace their distinctive brand identity. The study showed that consumers were moderately willing to purchase from brands using AI, but the use of AI was not itself a strong reason for selecting a brand. Brands should therefore avoid depending entirely on terms such as AI-powered or AI-generated as their main promotional message.

The central marketing proposition should continue to focus on product quality, originality, price, fit, reliability, customer service, and brand values. AI should enhance these elements by helping brands improve recommendations, personalise communication, create relevant content, respond to trends, and streamline customer support. The value offered to consumers should remain more important than the technology used to create it.

Emerging brands should establish clear visual and communication guidelines before using generative AI tools. These guidelines should define the brand's preferred aesthetic, tone, colours, storytelling themes, representation standards, and acceptable applications of AI. Each generated output should be reviewed to ensure that it supports rather than weakens the identity of the brand.

Human-centred storytelling should remain an essential part of fashion marketing. Brands can highlight the experiences of founders, designers, artisans, production teams, customers, and communities connected with the product. Showing the people and processes behind AI-assisted content can make the brand appear more relatable and prevent its communication from becoming mechanical or emotionally distant.

Social media should be used strategically because it was the main source through which respondents encountered AI-generated fashion content. Brands can use social media to test consumer reactions, explain their use of AI, compare creative approaches, present actual product images, and collect feedback about authenticity and credibility. This allows social media to function as a platform for consumer dialogue rather than only as a channel for promotion.

Before launching a large AI-generated campaign, emerging brands should test the content with a smaller consumer group. Feedback regarding realism, appeal, originality, trustworthiness, and consistency with the brand can help

identify potential problems. Content that receives attention but creates doubt or reduces trust should be revised before wider publication.

Overall, AI should be used to strengthen the consumer experience and operational capacity of an emerging fashion brand. It should not replace the human creativity, emotional storytelling, and consistent identity that allow consumers to recognise and trust the brand.

Limitations of the Study:-

Although the study provides useful insights into consumer perceptions of AI-generated content used by emerging clothing brands, the findings must be interpreted within certain methodological limitations. These limitations relate primarily to the sample size, demographic concentration, use of self-reported data, measurement of the research variables, and correlational nature of the analysis.

Sample Size Constraints:-

The study was conducted with a sample of 59 respondents. Although this sample was sufficient for exploratory descriptive analysis, reliability testing, and correlation analysis, it remains relatively small for drawing conclusions about the wider population of fashion consumers. A limited sample size may reduce the statistical precision of the findings and increase the possibility that the observed results are influenced by the specific characteristics of the participants.

The demographic composition of the sample also restricts the generalisability of the study. Most respondents were between 18 and 21 years of age, and almost all participants were students. The results therefore primarily represent the perceptions of young, digitally active Generation Z consumers. These consumers are particularly relevant to the topic because they frequently use social media, online shopping platforms, and digital recommendation systems. However, their attitudes may differ from those of older consumers, working professionals, individuals with higher purchasing power, or consumers with less exposure to artificial intelligence.

The limited geographical, occupational, and age diversity of the sample means that the findings cannot be considered representative of all fashion consumers. Consumers from different regions, income groups, educational backgrounds, and age categories may have different expectations regarding creativity, authenticity, transparency, privacy, and the use of AI in fashion marketing. A larger and more diverse sample would improve the external validity of the study and allow for comparisons between different consumer groups.

Self-Reported Bias:-

The study relied on self-reported survey responses to measure perceived authenticity, consumer trust, and purchase intention. Self-reported data may be affected by social desirability, inaccurate recall, misunderstanding of questions, or the tendency to select responses that participants believe are expected or socially acceptable. Respondents may therefore have reported attitudes that do not completely reflect their actual reactions or purchasing behaviour.

Participants may also have had different understandings of what qualifies as AI-generated fashion content. Some respondents may have previously encountered highly realistic AI-generated images, while others may have based their answers on visibly artificial or low-quality content. Since all respondents were not shown the same standardised examples before completing the survey, their responses may have been influenced by different prior experiences.

The study measured purchase intention rather than actual purchasing behaviour. Respondents may state that they are willing to purchase from an emerging brand using AI-generated content without completing such a purchase in a real commercial situation. Actual consumer decisions may also depend on price, garment quality, fit, reviews, brand reputation, delivery options, return policies, and personal financial circumstances. The results should therefore be interpreted as stated willingness to buy rather than confirmed purchasing behaviour.

Consumer trust was measured through a single survey item. Trust is a multidimensional concept that can include honesty, reliability, competence, transparency, fairness, privacy protection, and ethical conduct. A single item may not fully capture these different dimensions, and its internal reliability could not be assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Future studies should use a validated multi-item consumer trust scale to obtain a more comprehensive and reliable measure.

The perceived-authenticity construct was measured using items relating to appeal, creativity, and realism. While these dimensions are relevant to consumer evaluations of AI-generated fashion content, they do not capture every aspect of authenticity. Authenticity may also include originality, sincerity, human intention, cultural relevance, craftsmanship, and consistency with the identity of the brand. The construct used in this study should therefore be interpreted as a combined evaluation of visual appeal, creativity, and realism rather than as a complete measure of authenticity.

The study also used correlation analysis to test the hypotheses. The significant relationships demonstrate that perceived authenticity was associated with consumer trust and that consumer trust was associated with purchase intention. However, correlation does not establish causation. The results do not prove that increasing the authenticity of AI-generated content will directly cause trust to increase or that increasing trust will necessarily cause consumers to purchase from the brand.

Future Scope of Research:-

Future research can expand the present study by using larger and more diverse samples, improving the measurement of the principal constructs, and applying experimental and longitudinal research designs. Further investigation is necessary because AI-generated fashion content is developing rapidly, and consumer perceptions may change as the technology becomes more realistic, accessible, and widely used.

Cross-Cultural Studies:-

Future studies should examine consumer perceptions of AI-generated fashion content across different countries and cultural contexts. Attitudes toward artificial intelligence, human creativity, privacy, authenticity, and fashion consumption may vary according to cultural values and levels of technological development. Consumers in highly digitised societies may be more familiar with AI-generated content and may evaluate it differently from consumers in markets where generative AI is less widely used. Cultural expectations regarding craftsmanship, originality, artistic ownership, and human involvement may also influence whether AI-generated content is perceived as innovative or artificial.

Comparative studies could examine consumers in India alongside participants from Europe, North America, East Asia, the Middle East, and other emerging markets. Such research would help determine whether the positive relationships among perceived authenticity, consumer trust, and purchase intention are consistent across cultures. It could also identify market-specific differences that emerging fashion brands should consider when designing international campaigns. Future cross-cultural research should include consumers from different age groups, income categories, occupations, educational backgrounds, and levels of technological familiarity. This would provide a more complete understanding of how demographic and cultural characteristics influence acceptance of AI-generated fashion communication.

Longitudinal Analysis:-

The present research collected data at one point in time. Future studies should use longitudinal designs to examine how consumer attitudes toward AI-generated fashion content change over an extended period. Consumer perceptions may become more favourable as AI-generated content becomes more realistic and consumers become increasingly familiar with it. Alternatively, awareness of copyright concerns, data misuse, deceptive content, and algorithmic manipulation may lead to greater scepticism. Longitudinal research would allow researchers to observe whether repeated exposure strengthens familiarity and acceptance or increases concern about authenticity and ethical use.

Researchers could survey the same participants at multiple intervals to measure changes in perceived authenticity, trust, awareness, and purchase intention. Such studies could also examine whether consumers become better at recognising AI-generated content and whether disclosure continues to influence their perceptions after AI becomes a normal part of fashion marketing. Longitudinal analysis could further evaluate whether positive purchase intention translates into actual brand engagement, repeat purchases, or long-term loyalty. This would provide stronger evidence regarding the commercial consequences of AI-generated fashion content than a single cross-sectional survey.

Impact of Advanced AI, Deepfakes, and Virtual Influencers:-

Future research should examine how advanced forms of generative AI influence consumer perceptions of fashion brands. AI systems can now create highly realistic models, product images, campaign environments, voices, and

videos that may be difficult to distinguish from real content. These developments may improve visual engagement while simultaneously increasing concerns regarding deception, manipulation, and authenticity. Deepfake technology represents an important area for further investigation. Researchers should examine whether consumers lose trust when they discover that a fashion model, influencer, testimonial, or campaign video was artificially generated. Studies should also assess whether clear disclosure reduces concerns or whether it causes consumers to perceive the content as less authentic and emotionally meaningful.

Virtual influencers should be studied in comparison with human influencers. Future research could compare consumer responses to human influencers, fully virtual influencers, and digitally altered human influencers. Such comparisons could measure differences in credibility, relatability, emotional connection, expertise, brand trust, and purchase intention. Research should also examine whether consumers respond differently to virtual influencers depending on the type of fashion product being promoted. Consumers may be more accepting of AI-generated models in fast fashion, digital clothing, or experimental campaigns than in luxury fashion, sustainable fashion, or products that depend heavily on craftsmanship and heritage.

The ethical implications of advanced AI should also receive greater attention. Future studies should examine issues involving model consent, intellectual property, ownership of AI-generated designs, unrealistic body standards, discriminatory representation, and misleading product imagery. Research in these areas can support the development of responsible industry standards and disclosure practices. Future researchers may also conduct controlled experiments in which participants are shown human-generated, AI-generated, and hybrid fashion campaigns. Comparing responses across these groups would make it possible to determine how the source of content affects authenticity, trust, emotional appeal, and purchasing behaviour. Such studies could also test whether disclosure labels such as “AI-generated,” “AI-assisted,” or “human-curated” produce different consumer reactions. Overall, future research should move beyond general awareness of AI and investigate the specific conditions under which advanced AI strengthens or weakens consumer relationships with fashion brands. This will become increasingly important as deepfakes, virtual influencers, synthetic models, and personalised AI-generated campaigns become more common within the fashion industry.

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