

## Consumer Segmentation in the Fashion Industry Using Social Media: An Empirical Analysis

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### Abstract

Social media has developed into a symbolic channel that affects consumer behavior due to the remarkable marketing and ecommerce opportunities that the internet has provided. This study is based on segmentation of consumers into different categories in the world of fashion using social media. This paper proposes two conceptual models (the FC-CBR model of consumer brand relationship and the FC-CBP model of consumer brand perception) for exploring further into these constructs and developing a more coherent theoretical framework. The study identifies factors of Consumer Brand Relationship (CBR) and Consumer Brand Perception (CBP) using social media in the fashion world. Subsequently, the manuscript groups fashion consumers into clusters using K-means cluster analysis based on consumer brand relationship and consumer brand perception. The manuscript demonstrates how the clusters can be used in the development of efficient targeting and positioning strategies by practitioners.

**Keywords:** Digital Networking, Social Networking Sites, Consumer Behavior, Fashion, Fashion Industry, Cluster Analysis

### 1. Introduction

Due to demanding consumers, globalization and fierce competition, marketing on social media is currently experiencing a number of challenges. Therefore, in order to address their own advantages and drawbacks in respect to competition, fashion

businesses must first evaluate the existing scenario [1]. In light of the fantastic opportunities that the internet has opened up for marketing and commerce, social media has refined into a symbolic channel that influences consumer behavior [2]. Numerous inputs that integrate both qualitative and quantitative factors are used to make judgments.

One of the most prominent online evolutions is the adoption of social media. More over 3.6 billion individuals globally or approximately half of the world's population used social media in 2022 [2]. Social media is especially noticeable in the fashion industry because fashion, lifestyle goods and beauty items dominate online consumer behavior for commodities related to fashion. In many countries throughout the world, fashion consumers start their search on digital sites, which helps them develop relationships with brands and shape perceptions of those brands. Access to knowledge about a variety of fashion goods is made possible by social media platforms, which also offer a number of advantages like customer assistance and systemization. Due to the increased elucidation channels and infinite opportunities for product differentiation that social media has brought about, it had a symbolic impact on fashion marketing [3]. Researchers have recently been attempting to better understand the connections that some brands consumers flourish with them [4]. However, both consumers and brands place a high value on brand relationships. While a fragile brand relationship between the consumer and brand leads to churn and brand switching, a good brand relationship emboldens repurchase intent [5].

Additionally, businesses can lessen the likelihood that clients switch to a competitive brand by implementing well-defined customer retention strategies [6]. As a result, it is crucial for fashion firms to regularly measure the status of their consumer brand relationship, as well as to shape consumer perception in order to improve the equation. This study proposes conceptual models to explain the significance of social media in understanding consumer behavior in the fashion world. The models serve as the foundation for developing a research tool to assess the contribution of social media to the progression of consumer behavior in the fashion sector.

The paper concentrates on explicating social media usage in segmenting fashion consumers according to two aspects of customer behavior, namely consumer brand relationship (CBR) and consumer brand perception (CBP). The manuscript attempts to conduct an exploratory factor analysis on the data collected with the research instrument in order to validate the below mentioned factors. Consumer segmentation, consumer profile extraction, and proposed targeting strategies are researched using k-means cluster analysis. Using the information acquired, the fashion CBR index (FCBRI) and fashion CBP index (FCBPI) were constructed.

## 2. Literature Review

The literature review section explores the impact of social media in the world of fashion and consumer behavior that has always been a contemporary marketing topic that has been widely discussed over the years. In order to explain the principles of consumer behavior, the most common strategy discusses customer brand relationship and consumer brand perception.

## **2.1. Social Media and Fashion Industry**

Social media is categorized by self-presentation/self-disclosure and social presence/richness of media [7]. Consumers typically use a variety of channels and touch points throughout their consumer journey [8]. Consumers might use fashion business app to look up information and prescreen selections, purchase the goods online from their laptop at home, pick it up in-person and then post their happiness on social media once they've received it [9]. Fashion brands must comprehend what motivates omni-channel consumers behavior in this cut throat omni-channel environment. If they hope to retain these consumers as well as provide each with the services they need since they do not all behave in the same way [10]. Fashion brands are better able to comprehend the needs of their consumers because to the communication opportunities provided by social networks [11]. The key point is that while doing social network marketing campaigns, many consumer demographic, cultural, geographic and behavioral groupings must be taken into account [12]. Despite this, research reveals that many fashion companies have joined social media platforms and invested a significant amount of money in social media marketing without having specific marketing objectives or strategies [9].

## **2.2. Consumer Behavior**

With increased media coverage, the assistance of social activists and a number of rigorous government regulations being applied to the business, fashion brands have also noticed changes in consumer behavior [13]. Numerous studies from all over the world have suggested that consumers are becoming more conscious of social media's role in impacting consumer behavior in the fashion world [11]. Where one-on-one connections would be challenging to maintain and improve, brand communities play a significant role [14]. Since the intimate act of self-disclosure might put oneself and others at risk, trust is necessary and essential [15]. Additionally dedication is necessary to the partnership, which includes working together as a team rather than independently, sharing tasks and assisting one another [16]. Due to their desire to interact with other users and share their brand experiences, this can either diminish or strengthen customer engagement [17]. A digital marketing strategy consequently offers a platform for others with similar interests [18].

## **2.3. Consumer Brand Relationship**

The ability to properly establish brand meaning in consumers' minds is essential to the consumer brand relationship [19]. In order to build a relationship and familiarity with consumers, brands might have a particular relevance [20]. For this study, we draw on the research in which the relationship between the consumer and the brand is viewed as a function of the brand's engrossment, reliability, engagement and conviction [21]. The consumer and brand may develop strong, positive emotional attachments as a result of the brand relationship [13]. Relationships are characterized as interactions across time. The interdependence that exists between the parties involved constitutes the essence of a relationship [5]. Consumer brand relationship

marketing also refers to keeping valuable clients through collaboration and participation [22].

## 2.4. Consumer Brand Perception

Consumer brand perception tells us about consumer awareness, perception or opinion about a product or brand. Consumers' past experiences, beliefs, habits, likes, dislikes and moods can all influence how they perceive products and services today. Any individual who encounters a stimulus analyses it in light of knowledge they already have about their behavioral intentions, beliefs, and emotions [20]. These evaluations help create a general viewpoint or orientation toward a specific subject within a predetermined frame of reference. For this study, we draw on the research in which the perception between the consumer and the brand is viewed as a function of the brand's impression, bonding, recognition, and dependability [19].

Through the review of the literature, a brief summary of the determinants identified in the research is included along with a discussion of the theoretical frameworks for the investigation. First, the factors affecting CBR and CBP are discussed followed by two conceptual models (Figures 1 and 2) for analyzing CBR and CBP in relation to the world of fashion. Readers will gain a complete grasp of the conceptualization and identification of important determinants in the research study from the thorough review of literature. This helped in grouping the factors mentioned in Figures 1 and 2, depending on the specific role they had in the development of CBR and CBP.

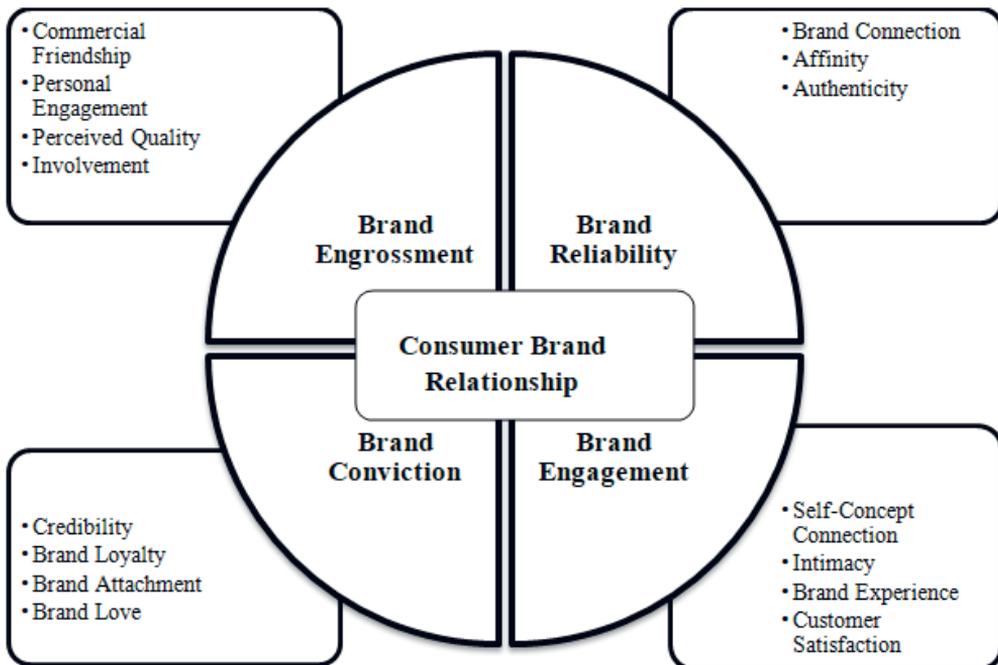


Figure 1. Fashion Consumers under CBR (FC-CBR)

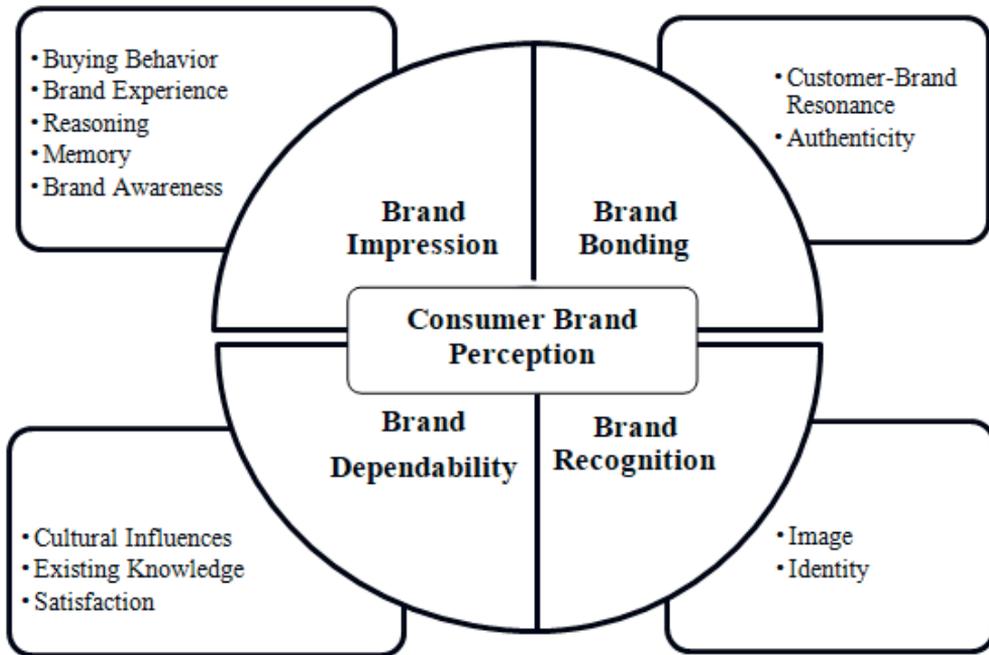


Figure 2. Fashion Consumers under CBR (FC-CBP)

### 3. Research Methodology

The research takes a theoretical and empirical approach to examine the social media's impact on consumer behavior with reference to fashion brands. This study uses exploratory factor analysis and k-means cluster analysis to attempt to quantify the social media's impact on fashion consumers. The goal of the manuscript is to validate the components listed below by performing an exploratory factor analysis on the data gathered using the research instrument. Using the information acquired, the fashion CBR index (FCBRI) and fashion CBPI index (FCBPI) were constructed. This study's research technique was organized as follows:

#### 3.1. Research Objectives

Based on the above literature review, the following research objectives are proposed for this manuscript:

1. Identification of factors for establishing relationships using social media in the fashion world.
2. Identification of factors for forming perceptions using social media in the fashion world.
3. Formulation of conceptual models to determine the use of social media in the fashion business in creating relationships and forming perceptions.
4. Extraction of fashion consumer clusters using cluster analysis method.

### 3.2. Research Instrument Formulation

In order to better understand how social media affects CBR and CBP in the fashion world, a questionnaire was developed with the help of a thorough analysis of literature. The research tool was bifurcated into three sections. The first section was proposed with the intention of gathering demographic data. The questionnaire's second and third sections were constructed to support research on the ways that social media can be used to evaluate CBR and CBP in the fashion sector, respectively. Additionally, the second section included 39 statements, while the third section contained 30 statements.

### 3.3. Establishing Reliability of the Instrument

Through the Cronbach's alpha test, the research instrument's dependability was determined. A result of more than 0.60 denotes the scale's acceptability [23]. The reliability test was carried out using the SPSS software after the data was gathered from 500 fashion consumers. It was determined that the values of Cronbach's Alpha (Table 1) for CBR and CBP were 0.909 and 0.891, respectively. As a result, it was decided that the research instrument may be used for data collection.

	<b>CBR</b>	<b>CBP</b>
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.909	.891
<b>Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items</b>	.910	.892
<b>N of Items</b>	39	30

Table 1. Results of the Pilot Study using Cronbach's Alpha

### 3.4. Proposed Data Collection and Analysis

The research instrument had 39 statements of CBR and 30 statements of CBP. Out of 575 respondents, 500 respondents administered the study of segmenting fashion consumers on the basis of consumer behavior using social media. On a scale of 1 to 5, the respondents were asked to rate each statement (1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree).

### 3.5. Sampling Method and Data Collection

The data was collected through snowball sampling. Researchers recruit fresh respondents for a test or study by using the snowball sampling approach. The researcher develops an online self-completion questionnaire for a group of people who are relevant to the study's subject, and then leverages contacts from that group to track down additional people for interview [24]. Ages of the interviewees ranged from 18 to 55 years. 500 out of the 575 responses were useful for this study.

### 3.6. Exploratory Factor Analysis

The method of factor analysis entails the mathematical expression of fictitious constructions utilizing a variety of observable indicators that may be precisely assessed. Exploratory factor analysis is a statistical method for data reduction and investigation of the occurrences underlying theoretical framework. This method is used to determine the type of association between the variable and the respondent. Data reduction entails breaking down large sets of measured variables into more manageable groups of constructs. Strongly correlated variables can be grouped together using the factor analysis technique. Latent constructs are the names given to these collections of variables.

### 3.7. K-Means Cluster Analysis

Cluster analysis is a typical technique for classifying objects or illustrating the structure of data. Data items are grouped together in fragmented clusters during the clustering process so that the data within the same cluster are similar while the data within separate clusters differ [25]. This tool is used to observe the properties of clusters and to zero in on a specific cluster for more investigation. By calculating the distance between each pair of things, it helps to determine how unlike two objects are. In a big data set, it aids in recognizing homogenous clusters of data. This indicates that data are divided into distinct groups, with data belonging to related categories sharing commonalities while having differences.

## 4. Data Analysis and Results

### 4.1. Factor Analysis

SPSS 26.0 was used for data analysis. Factor analysis utilizing the rotating component method was conducted on the complete set of data from 500 fashion consumers (Tables 2 and 3). The significant communalities in the data allowed us to conclude that the variables were depicted logically in the retrieved components. Thus, we were able to reduce the data while retaining component context (Figures 1 and 2). To identify associated factors that each item represented, the items with the highest loading were chosen. A factor loading of at least 0.5 was required for several of these elements in order to be maintained. As a result, two factors and ten items were removed from Table 2. Since seven items failed to load onto any factors, they were excluded from Table 3 altogether.

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Brand is trustworthy	.274	.201	.364	.187	.146	.628
Fashion brand's credibility	.271	.271	.608	.277	.102	.002
Building consumer loyalty	.207	.186	.594	.322	.156	.207
Closer to my preferred fashion brand	.353	.136	.638	.371	.107	.212

Love content of social media	.111	.134	.602	.179	-.231	.003
I identify myself if I love its social media content	.112	.341	.184	.587	.017	.288
Consumer value for a fashion brand	.216	.407	.623	.192	.140	.243
Brand Connection	.332	.408	.315	.420	.116	.182
Intimate with a fashion brand	.143	.416	.212	.414	.222	.390
Enriching my experience with a fashion brand	.284	.330	.472	.442	.029	.178
Feel positive about my preferred fashion brand	.408	.345	.478	.392	-.052	-.015
Advertising a fashion brand	.497	.280	.461	.337	.066	-.021
Contact with my preferred fashion designer	.298	.503	.234	.283	.160	-.044
Positive ecosystem for my preferred fashion brand	.273	.472	.316	.361	.321	-.099
Positive relationship on social media with preferred fashion brand	.289	.430	.435	.174	.352	.142
I feel satisfied by the social media content	.345	.455	.429	.299	.067	.060
Evaluating and comparing offerings of fashion brands	.340	.634	.120	.207	.074	.069
Building a fashion brand's authenticity	.241	.591	.317	.197	.201	.094
Consumer affinity towards fashion brand	.230	.723	.251	.110	.177	.166
Fashion brand in cultivating a consumer-focused business environment	.302	.495	.510	- .073	.331	.246
Retaining and attracting consumers better than rivals	.113	.625	.310	- .048	.490	.061
Engaged with my preferred fashion brand	.325	.592	.190	.298	.038	.332
Strong and dynamic relationship with preferred fashion brands	.521	.453	.230	.188	.174	.246
Commercial friendship with a fashion brand	.673	.325	.329	.054	.250	.149
Personal engagement with a fashion brand	.740	.150	.331	.062	.171	.140
Excellence and superiority of a fashion brand	.591	.138	.345	.113	.265	.169
Develops interest towards a fashion brand	.446	.650	.080	.351	.161	-.055
Endorses a fashion brand	.550	.343	.137	.241	.166	.245
Belief backed my good experience	.593	.311	.161	.224	.313	.071
Happiness towards the same fashion brand	.264	.062	.316	.653	.097	.146
Following a fashion brand on social media	.158	.172	-.065	.687	.234	.001
I feel happy to praise my choice of social media content	.553	.233	.320	.200	.128	.216
Fashion brands are trendy and relevant on social media sites	.671	.263	.143	.291	.439	.078
Trust social media content posted by a fashion brand	.258	.342	.038	.003	.123	.103
Experiences shared by my peers on social media	.337	.111	.324	.219	.443	.368
Time researching fashion brand before I	.259	.308	.182	.417	.539	-.141

decide to make my purchase						
Good brand advertisements attract me on social media sites	.335	.198	.255	.552	.203	.140
Good quality of social media images and content posted by a fashion brand	.396	.375	.304	.545	.154	-.115
A regular practice to search fashion brand items on social networking sites	.004	-.060	.267	.754	.019	-.189

Table 2. Rotated Component Matrix under CBR

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Makes me feel happy	.172	.260	.601	.210
Peers and family	.346	.181	.673	.139
Cultural influences on social media	.106	.111	.590	.383
Existing information on social media	.407	.218	.753	.227
The social media content influences consumer's mind	.010	.198	.122	.154
Decisions building	.495	-.016	.409	.486
Social media content created by a brand	.451	.003	.297	.362
I feel overjoyed	.642	.164	.294	.313
Brand purchase	.571	.260	.215	.184
Happy memories associated with the social media	.704	.302	.268	.034
Confident of the social media's content	.610	.106	.247	.183
Fashion brand experience	.598	.278	.164	.303
Content satisfaction	.434	.277	.368	.378
Fashion brands behaviors and characteristics	.090	.169	.107	.826
Search for fashion brand	.311	.367	.296	.779
Unhappy to leave my search	.056	.190	.263	.739
Fashion brand adds to my Self-esteem	.227	.871	.189	.175
In sync	.283	.756	.344	.219
Fashion brands keeps its promises	.401	.643	.059	.254
Impulsive buying	.565	.201	.308	.309
Affinity	.341	.233	.115	.103
Quality products	.008	.483	.067	.296
Memories that are happy	.665	.002	.250	.345
Brand's personality	.329	.750	.160	.228
Brand awareness	.896	.009	.007	.348
Use of fashion brands	.109	.290	.174	.563
Preferred fashion brand adds to my status	.621	.006	.208	.186
Content liking	.446	.492	.237	.110
Feel happy on people's comment	.412	.651	.231	.120
Content sharing	.002	.101	.390	.163

Table 3. Rotated Component Matrix under CBP

A focus group of six fashion industry experts was employed to help determine a numerical weight for each of the four aspects of CBR (Table 4): brand engrossment, brand reliability, brand conviction and brand engagement and four aspects of CBP

(Table 5): brand bonding, brand impression, brand dependability and brand recognition aspects using the weighted averages calculation method. The following weights (Tables 4 and 5) were retrieved for each of the parameters based on their rating employing the formula:

$$\text{Weight of each variable} = \Sigma Ni / \text{Total score}$$

Where,  $\Sigma Ni$  = Number of focus group responses for each scale component

	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Total	Weight
Brand Engrossment	3	3	4	5	5	4	24	0.27
Brand Reliability	5	4	2	4	3	3	21	0.23
Brand Conviction	4	5	3	3	3	4	22	0.25
Brand Engagement	2	5	5	4	3	3	22	0.25
							89	1

Table 4. Weighted Average Calculation (CBR)

The factor scores for the four components of brand engrossment, brand reliability, brand conviction and brand engagement of CBR were combined from each respondent in the sample. The expert weight under each of the four component categories was multiplied by the acquired total. The final fashion consumer brand relationship index (FCBRI) for each respondent was calculated by adding the resultant multiplied scores for the four categories brand engrossment, brand reliability, brand conviction and brand engagement. This FCBRI value currently illustrates the four elements of consumer brand relationship and exemplifies the strength of the bond between consumers and fashion companies. The strength of the relationship increases as the index score rises.

Equation Formation for Calculating Fashion Consumer Brand Relationship Index (FCBRI):

$$\text{FCBRI} = (0.27 * E_i + 0.23 * R_i + 0.25 * C_i + 0.25 * E_{ni})$$

Where,

E= Engrossment;           R= Reliability;  
C= Conviction;            En= Engagement;  
i= individual respondent

	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Total	Weight
Brand Bonding	2	5	4	3	5	2	21	0.25
Brand Impression	3	2	3	5	2	4	19	0.23
Brand Dependability	5	2	4	2	3	5	21	0.25
Brand Recognition	4	4	5	3	4	3	23	0.27
							84	1

Table 5. Weighted Average Calculation (CBP)

From each respondent in the sample, the factor scores for the four aspects of CBP: brand bonding, brand impression, brand dependability and brand recognition were

combined. The collected total was multiplied by the expert weight under each of the four component categories. The resultant multiplied scores for the four areas of brand bonding, brand impression, brand dependability and brand recognition were added to determine the final fashion consumer brand perception index (FCBPI) for each respondent. This FCBPI score currently exhibits the form of consumer perceptions of fashion companies and the four components of consumer brand perception. As the index score grows, the perception's strength also rises.

Equation Formation for Calculating Fashion Consumer Brand Perception Index (FCBPI)

$$FCBPI = (0.25 * B_i + 0.23 * I_i + 0.25 * D_i + 0.27 * R_i)$$

Where,

B= Bonding; I= Impression;  
 D= Dependability; R= Recognition;  
 i= individual respondent

**4.2. Fashion Consumer Brand Relationship Index (FCBRI) Data**

K-means was used to analyze the Fashion Consumer Brand Relationship Index (FCBRI) data. Four consumer clusters (Table 6) were derived using cluster analysis. The final cluster centers are shown in Table 6, which demonstrates that cluster 2 and cluster 4 are similar since there is a small distance between them. However cluster 1 and cluster 3 are very different because there is a large gap between them. It is thought that each consumer segment represents a uniform group of fashion consumers who have a comparable level of social media usage in improving relationship with the brand.

Cluster	1	2	3	4
1		12.077	5.869	10.398
2	12.077		8.535	5.441
3	5.869	8.535		9.565
4	10.398	5.441	9.565	
	28.344	13.976	18.1	15.006

Table 6. K- Means Cluster Analysis- Final Cluster Centers of CBR

<b>Cluster</b>	1	100.000
	2	135.000
	3	75.000
	4	190.000
<b>Valid</b>		500.000
<b>Missing</b>		0.000

Table 7. Number of Cases in each Cluster: CBR

**4.3. Fashion Consumer Brand Perception Index (FCBPI) Data**

Data from the Fashion Consumer Brand Perception Index (FCBPI) was analyzed using K-means. Four customer clusters were determined using cluster analysis (Table

8). Table 8's final cluster centers reveal that clusters 1 and 3 are similar since there is not much space between them, whereas clusters 2 and 4 are extremely different because there is a lot of space between them. Each consumer category is believed to reflect a consistent group of buyers who use social media to influence perceptions of the fashion brand to a similar extent.

Cluster	1	2	3	4
1		3.875	6.958	6.099
2	3.875		5.813	8.813
3	6.958	5.813		11.534
4	4.099	5.813	10.534	
	14.932	11.626	16.347	20.347

Table 8. K- Means Cluster Analysis- Final Cluster Center of CBP

Cluster	1	178.000
	2	84.000
	3	42.000
	4	200.000
<b>Valid</b>		500.000
<b>Missing</b>		0.000

Table 9. Number of Cases in each Cluster: CBP

## 5. Results

With the help of this study, members of the sample population were successfully grouped into clusters (Tables 7 and 9) that have distinct connections and viewpoints. These clusters shared traits provide light on the fundamental role that social media plays in influencing consumer behavior and how they interact with and perceive fashion businesses. With the use of this data, brands may create marketing plans that will improve their connections to the various clusters.

On the basis of the discussion above, we were able to develop the model for our study, which is the model for fashion consumers under CBR (FC-CBR) (Figure 1). This model will make it easier for us to comprehend the consumer psychology elements of brand engagement, reliability, conviction and engrossment. This would further help us to determine the impact that social media has in establishing relationships with fashion consumers. Using the literature review, we have categorized the following factors:

1. Commercial friendship, personal connection, perceived quality and involvement are all grouped together by the brand engrossment component of the model, which forms a relationship between brand engrossment and consumer brand relationship.
2. Brand reliability is a category that includes brand connection, affinity and authenticity.
3. Brand conviction will include the concepts of credibility, loyalty, attachment and love, establishing a link between brand conviction and consumer brand

relationships. As a result, brand engagement and customer brand relationships are created.

4. Self-concept connection, intimacy, brand experience and consumer happiness make up brand engagement. As a result, there is a connection between consumer brand relationship and brand engagement.

The model for fashion consumers under CBP (FC-CBP) was created based on the discussion above and provides a framework for our study (Figure 2). Understanding the components of brand impression, brand bonding, brand recognition and brand dependability from the perspective of consumer psychology will be made simpler by this model. By doing so, we would be better able to assess how a fashion consumer contributes in forming perception in the social media world. Using the literature review, we have categorized the following factors:

1. The buying behavior, brand experience, reasoning, memory and brand awareness factors are all included in the model's brand impression component, which establishes a link between brand impression and consumer brand perception.
2. Authenticity and customer-brand resonance could be categorized under brand bonding.
3. Brand dependability, which is grouped with cultural influences, prior knowledge and satisfaction, creates a link between brand dependability and consumer brand perception.
4. Brand recognition, which is grouped with image and identity, establishes a link between brand recognition and consumer brand perception. As a result, there is a connection between customer perception of a brand and brand recognition.

## **5.1. Consumer Segmentation, Consumer Profile and Social Media Content Strategies**

Consumer categories were created from the consumers using the two indexes using K-means cluster analysis (Figure 3). Additionally, the development of efficient targeting and positioning strategies will benefit from a comprehensive consumer cluster analysis of each of the consumer groups.

Profiles of the consumer cluster are shown in Table 9. The model that was eventually developed is shown in Figure 3. This illustrates the framework that fashion brands may use to comprehend how social media plays a role in establishing relationships and forming perceptions in a positive way.

### *5.1.1. Consumer Brand Relationship*

Based on the state of their relationship with the fashion brands, consumers were split into 4 segments. Table 6 presents a complete consumer profile. Additionally, using this profile, appropriate marketing plans were created to target each of the four consumer segments (Table 10).

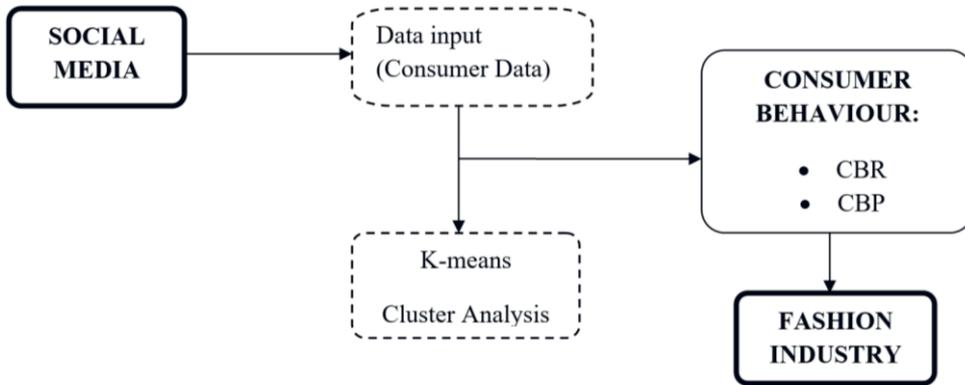


Figure 3. Consumer Segmentation in the Fashion Industry using Social Media

Cluster	Consumer Profile	Social Media Content Strategy
1	Consumers in this cluster score high on personal engagement and consumer involvement	Engagement, which was previously thought to be fairly stable in nature, has been suggested to become more dynamic in the context of social media [26], [27] and as it manifests in user-generated content, which is the totality of how people use social media [7]. Fashion brands can accomplish this by continuously concentrating on their competitive edge and informing these clients of their accomplishments. Along with following their suggestions, it is crucial to constantly solicit feedback from these customers.
2	Consumers in this cluster score high on brand connection. They also score moderate to high aspects of authenticity.	Brands that emphasize their authenticity attribute gain from increased consumer receptivity [28]. Working closely with these consumers and enlisting their participation as co-creators will help to strengthen the brand connection and authenticity. They should be informed of new advances by fashion brands and their comments can help them make improvements.
3	Consumers score high to moderate on intimacy and customer satisfaction. Consumers in this cluster score low on self-concept connection.	Intimacy has both behavioral (like mutual trust, physical familiarity, communication skills or consciousness) and emotional components (such as affective intimacy, cognitive intimacy, presence or commitment) [29]. Tools for consumer promotion may be helpful in winning these customers over to the fashion brands. Promotional campaigns can be created and put into action in order to increase or drive consumer perceptions of value and launch loyalty programmes for retaining customers.

		For these consumers, a strong relationship marketing strategy should be implemented. For fashion brands, customer satisfaction and reviews of their products are crucial.
4	Consumers score high on credibility and brand love.	Brand love expresses favorable thoughts and positive attachment to the fashion brands and helps to define and anticipate crucial post-consumption behaviors among happy customers [30]. The brand will maintain its salience and stay in the consumer's "evoked set" with a steady stream of direct marketing campaigns.

Table 10. Fashion Consumer Brand Relationship using Social Media- Cluster Profiles

5.1.2. *Consumer Brand Perception*

Based on the state of their perception with the fashion brands, consumers were split into 4 segments. Table 8 presents a complete consumer profile. Additionally, using this profile, appropriate marketing plans were created to target each of the four consumer segments (Table 11).

Cluster	Consumer Profile	Social Media Content Strategy
1	Consumers score extremely high to high on aspects of reasoning, memory and brand awareness of consumer brand perception. A small number of consumers showed uncertainty or disagreement towards buying behavior and brand experience, in forming their perception about the brand.	Quality positioning and benefit positioning can lead to higher cognitive components. Therefore, constant communication regarding the fashion brand's image and activities through mailers and social media posts is required. To enhance the consumer experience, fashion brands should send trial samples of their just launched items. Product evaluation and follow-up with customers regarding their experiences will improve brand perception, creating a strong sense of connection and enhancing the customers favored status.
2	Consumers in this cluster score moderate to high on customer brand resonance, but score moderate to low on belief and authenticity.	Consumer's associate designer labels, slogans and/or brand attributes with their brand knowledge [31]. Campaigns must be developed and carried out in order to increase the cognitive and emotive components of these customers. In order to enhance the customer experience and encourage reviews for peer-group reference, brands should distribute trial samples of their items. To create a sense of a cohort, referral activities should be included. Brands will have to work hard to build a relationship with these

		consumers by offering them a retention/reward plan.
3	Consumers score high on identity and style. Consumers in this cluster score low on society and image.	The brand should encourage customers to adopt a stylish and comfortable lifestyle by providing unique discounts or incentives. By connecting with elite influencers and social achievers in its marketing, the fashion brands should highlight its prestige worth. The fashion brands should use a variety of communication channels to highlight its ability to produce high-quality, fashionable apparel.
4	Consumers score high on customer satisfaction. Consumers in this cluster score extremely low on cultural influences and existing knowledge.	By providing special discounts or incentives for consuming the product, the fashion brands should promote and inspire consumers. The brand will maintain its salience and stay in the consumer's "evoked set" through a steady stream of direct marketing initiatives. The fashion brands should also use its marketing to associate it with elite influencers and social achievers in order to further stress the prestige value of the brand.

Table 11. Fashion Consumer Brand Perception using Social Media- Cluster Profiles

## 6. Discussion and Managerial Implications

Social media has created new channels for brand communication, as seen by the utilization of online brand interaction on social networking sites. Both CBR and CBP were found to have substantial effects on the importance of social media in the fashion industry in this study. The creation of CBRs involves a variety of potential social networks between vendors and consumers as well as within shared consumer experience. Brand loyalty, brand trust and brand reputation can all support long-term market innovation in the context of e-business.

Similar to marketers in the social media sector, academics are starting to analyze and comprehend the primary structures and processes that support the functioning of social media marketing. Working on various brand engrossment, reliability, conviction and engagement components with fashion customers is crucial for developing a consumer brand relationship. And it is crucial to work on numerous parts of brand impression, brand bonding, brand recognition and brand dependability components with the fashion consumers in order to shape consumer brand perception. Organizations must have a system in place to identify their consumer base, work with the important consumers and persuade them to become brand partners.

### **6.1. Consumer Brand Relationship**

Clusters 2 and 4 are the most important consumer groups since they contain those who are most suited to serve as brand ambassadors. These consumers will be interested in co-creation because they trust the brand and will work with it to ensure its success. The brand should continuously try to inform these consumers about its advancements, successes and competitive advantages. In order to include consumers in the co-creation process, these firms need also maintain a steady flow of consumer feedback and improvise on their end. In terms of size, Clusters 1 and 3 constitute a major cluster. Brands will benefit by investing in this category of consumers. By enticing these consumers with offers of special perks and then rewarding them for their loyalty, they should attempt to establish relationships with them. Consequently, it becomes more appealing and a relationship is established for the future.

### **6.2. Consumer Brand Perception**

Groups of customers in clusters 2 and 4 have the capacity to work together as consumers. By doing this, fashion brands will increase customer base and show connection with the customers that are valued their business. Although customers in clusters 1 and 3 are confused of what to expect from fashion businesses and their capabilities, they nevertheless cherish the positive experience they have with them. Additionally, even though they haven't expressed their attachment to or trust in any particular fashion brands, there is still a chance to convert them by providing information about the products, manufacturing methods, and other factors. By doing so it would give these consumers clarity and inspire trust in the brands.

## **7. Limitations**

With regard to social media, the interaction and perception of fashion consumers in India are helpfully illustrated in this publication. The focus of this work is the user replies from the snowball sampling approach, which were primarily concentrated to the north Indian fashion consumers. This research is broad and does not concentrate on any one brand in particular. In particular, if a vulnerable consumer wishes to make an informed choice, website characteristics will have a big impact on how consumers seek for social media information. Consumers form certain preconceived thoughts in their minds before deciding whether or not to conduct a search, based on the relationship between consumer brands and how those brands are perceived.

## **8. Future Research Directions**

This study is rare in the fashion industry since it provides a strong basis for similar studies to be carried out in other verticals of the industry, such as interior soft goods, footwear, beauty and accessories like bags and luggage. By using the research design of the current study and adapting the items to the applicable industry vertical, the new FCBRI and FCBPI indexes can be put into practice. Focused targeting strategies can be created for each consumer segment after the consumer segments have been

retrieved. This creative study clarifies how fashion consumers perceive social media and the relationship between them. Gaining a deeper comprehension of this relationship can help businesses forge lasting relationships with their customers and help them feel like co-creators of the fashion brand. To make comparisons between other fashion brands, this study can also be carried out for one particular fashion brand or for a large group of fashion brands. This will enable us to better comprehend how fashion consumers interact with fashion businesses and social media.

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