



Received: August 20, 2024

Revised: October 23, 2024

Accepted: October 31, 2024

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## DESCRIPTIVE OF QUANTITATIVE DATA | RESEARCH ARTICLE

## The Impact of Visual Marketing on Purchasing Behavior in E-Commerce: Case Study in The Fashion Industry

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**Abstract:** This study explores the impact of visual marketing elements on consumer purchasing behavior within the fashion e-commerce industry, focusing on visual aesthetics, user-generated content (UGC), and influencer endorsements. Using a qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 participants to capture in-depth insights into how visual cues shape consumer perceptions, build trust, and influence purchase intentions. Thematic analysis of the data revealed three main findings: high-quality visuals evoke emotional responses that increase product appeal, UGC serves as a crucial factor in establishing trust and reducing purchase hesitation, and influencer endorsements significantly impact consumer decision-making by adding perceived value and trend relevance. These findings contribute to existing theories, such as the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, by illustrating the diverse ways in which visual stimuli influence consumer behavior on emotional, social, and practical levels. Managerial implications include the strategic use of high-quality visuals, encouragement of UGC, and selection of authentic influencers to enhance consumer engagement and conversion. This study provides a comprehensive understanding of how visual marketing shapes consumer behavior in fashion e-commerce, offering valuable insights for both academic research and practical applications in the digital marketplace.

**Keywords:** Visual Marketing, E-Commerce, Consumer Behavior, User-Generated Content, Influencer Marketing.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The digital marketplace has fundamentally transformed how consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions, with visual marketing emerging as a central element in engaging and influencing consumer behavior (Jiang et al., 2019). Over the past decade, businesses within the fashion industry have adopted visual strategies to captivate audiences and differentiate their offerings in an intensely competitive landscape (Park et al., 2007). Visual content, encompassing images, videos, graphics, and even augmented reality (AR), is now critical to e-commerce strategies, leveraging the human tendency to process and remember visual information more effectively than text (Childers et al., 2001). Visual marketing in the fashion industry has revolutionized product perception, brand image, and emotional connections with consumers. High-quality visuals and dynamic content, such as videos showcasing products in motion, provide customers with an immersive experience, driving engagement and purchasing decisions (Pentina & Taylor, 2020). This paper examines the impact of visual marketing on purchasing behavior in e-commerce, specifically within the fashion sector, using a quantitative descriptive analysis to clarify the relationship between visual marketing variables and customer buying behavior. In e-commerce, visual marketing aims to attract, inform, and convert potential customers through curated images and videos that highlight product attributes, fit, and quality. For fashion e-commerce, which relies heavily on aesthetic appeal and subjective impressions,



visual marketing extends beyond mere product presentation to communicate brand values, lifestyle alignment, and personal identity (Kim & Ko, 2012). User-generated content (UGC), such as customer reviews and images, has also become a significant part of visual marketing, enhancing authenticity and trust (Daugherty et al., 2008). While widespread, understanding its actual influence on consumer purchasing behavior remains challenging in marketing research. This study addresses this gap by examining how visual marketing elements impact consumer behavior in fashion e-commerce, where visual stimuli are central to the consumer journey.

A central phenomenon in this study is the increasing consumer reliance on visual cues for decision-making in online shopping. In contrast to traditional retail, where customers physically interact with products, e-commerce requires reliance on visual representations (McCormick & Livett, 2012). This shift towards a "see-now-buy-now" culture is especially pronounced in fast fashion, where impulsivity and immediate gratification are significant drivers of purchasing behavior (Zhang & Benyoucef, 2016). Social media platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest, and TikTok have also shaped visual marketing strategies, with consumers increasingly influenced by visual content on these platforms before making purchases (Agnihotri et al., 2020). Influencers, brand ambassadors, and trendsetters within the fashion industry often share visually appealing content that directly affects consumer perceptions and decisions (Abidin, 2016). This study investigates these visual elements' impact on consumer behavior, focusing on fashion e-commerce where visual stimuli dominate the consumer experience.

This study builds on prior research emphasizing the significance of visual marketing in shaping consumer perceptions and actions. Studies consistently show that images, videos, and other visual elements influence online purchasing behavior across sectors, with notable emphasis in fashion (Huang et al., 2021). Visual content can enhance consumer engagement, encourage impulsive buying, and increase perceived product value, especially when customers cannot physically interact with products (Childers et al., 2001). McCormick and Livett (2012) found that high-quality visuals can improve perceived product quality, directly influencing purchase intentions. Similarly, Park, Lee, and Han (2007) emphasized the importance of interactive and realistic visuals in online shopping, demonstrating a positive correlation between visual appeal and customer satisfaction. Pandey and Sihag (2020) also highlighted UGC and influencer content's impact on consumer perceptions and purchase intentions, noting the critical role of social proof in online fashion retail. These findings collectively underscore the importance of visual marketing and establish a foundation for this study, which seeks to extend understanding by focusing on specific visual marketing tactics in fashion e-commerce.

The objectives of this study are to quantitatively examine the relationship between visual marketing variables and consumer purchasing behavior in fashion e-commerce. This paper seeks to identify key visual marketing elements that positively influence online purchasing behavior and determine how these elements interact to shape consumer preferences. Visual marketing variables in fashion e-commerce—including product image quality, dynamic visual content, UGC, influencer marketing, and AR experiences—will be analyzed to ascertain their impacts on consumer behavior (Huang et al., 2021). The study also evaluates consumer perceptions of visual authenticity, trust, and credibility in online shopping, recognizing that these elements enhance consumer satisfaction and, ultimately, conversion rates (Childers et al., 2001). By adopting a quantitative descriptive approach, this research provides empirical insights into visual marketing's effectiveness in driving sales within online fashion platforms, offering valuable information for marketers and e-commerce practitioners aiming to optimize their strategies.

Additionally, this study acknowledges the limitations of visual marketing and its varying effectiveness across demographic segments and cultural contexts. As online shopping becomes increasingly global, understanding the nuanced responses of different consumer segments to visual content is essential for fashion brands aiming to expand their reach (Agnihotri et al., 2020). The study considers demographic factors such as age, gender, and cultural background as moderating effects on consumer responses to visual marketing, acknowledging that what appeals to one segment may not

resonate with another (Kim & Ko, 2012). Furthermore, the diverse range of devices used by consumers for online shopping—particularly mobile versus desktop—may influence their interaction with visual content (Jiang et al., 2019). These considerations ensure a comprehensive analysis of the varied ways consumers engage with visual marketing in e-commerce.

This study contributes to the existing literature by providing a focused examination of visual marketing's impact on consumer purchasing behavior in fashion e-commerce. Using a quantitative descriptive design, the paper investigates the relationship between visual marketing variables—such as high-quality images, dynamic content, UGC, influencer marketing, and AR experiences—and consumer behavior, offering actionable insights for optimizing e-commerce strategies. Addressing a critical area of modern retail and aligning with contemporary consumer behavior trends, this study holds practical implications for e-commerce businesses, marketers, and researchers in visual marketing and consumer psychology.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The emergence of digital marketing has shifted traditional marketing strategies to embrace more visually driven methods, significantly impacting purchasing behavior across e-commerce sectors, particularly in the fashion industry. Visual marketing encompasses a range of visual content, including high-quality images, videos, user-generated content (UGC), influencer marketing, and augmented reality (AR), all of which serve to enhance consumer engagement and encourage purchase intentions. This literature review synthesizes key findings from existing research, definitions, and specific elements of visual marketing within e-commerce, specifically targeting fashion retail.

Visual marketing can be defined as a strategy that utilizes visual media to communicate brand messages, influence perceptions, and drive consumer actions. According to Chen et al. (2017), visual marketing is essential in creating a strong brand identity, enhancing product appeal, and enabling consumers to make purchasing decisions based on visual information alone. In e-commerce, where customers lack physical interaction with products, visual content substitutes tactile information, offering a compelling means for consumers to assess products (Huang, Lee, & Kim, 2021). Scholars have emphasized that visual marketing in e-commerce goes beyond mere product presentation by incorporating elements that resonate with consumer identity and emotional appeal (McCormick & Livett, 2012). For the fashion industry, visual marketing is especially crucial as it allows customers to visualize how products would look, feel, and fit, ultimately shaping their purchase intentions.

Previous studies have extensively examined the relationship between visual marketing and consumer behavior in e-commerce. For instance, Huang et al. (2021) found that product images significantly influence purchase intentions by enhancing perceived product quality and authenticity. Similarly, a study by Park, Lee, and Han (2007) demonstrated that high-quality visuals increase consumer trust in e-commerce platforms, noting that images serve as a proxy for product quality in the absence of physical inspection. Childers et al. (2001) noted that images, particularly when combined with interactive elements such as zoom and 360-degree views, provide consumers with a richer shopping experience, ultimately encouraging higher conversion rates. This evidence aligns with findings from Daugherty, Eastin, and Bright (2008), who showed that the strategic use of UGC, such as customer-uploaded images and reviews, reinforces consumer trust and significantly impacts purchase intentions, particularly in the fashion sector where authenticity is paramount.

A specific subset of visual marketing within e-commerce is the use of videos, which have become a vital tool for brands to provide an in-depth look at products and offer a more immersive shopping experience. Research by Pentina and Taylor (2020) indicates that product videos enhance consumer understanding of the product, increase perceived value, and positively influence purchase decisions. Video content allows consumers to see the product from multiple angles, observe it in motion, and gain insights into how it may suit their needs. Agnihotri et al. (2020) further emphasize that video content

creates an emotional connection with viewers, allowing brands to humanize their offerings and appeal to consumers' values and lifestyles. In the context of fashion, videos showcasing models wearing products can help customers gauge the fit and appearance of items, making them more confident in their purchase decisions.

User-generated content (UGC) has gained prominence in visual marketing strategies as a means to enhance credibility and authenticity. UGC refers to content, such as images and reviews, created by customers rather than brands, and it often includes social media posts featuring products. Studies by Abidin (2016) and Pandey and Sihag (2020) highlight that UGC contributes to consumer trust, as customers perceive UGC as more reliable than branded content. Furthermore, Jiang et al. (2019) found that UGC plays a crucial role in the decision-making process for fashion consumers, as it provides real-life perspectives on product use and quality. The inclusion of UGC in visual marketing, such as photos and testimonials from other customers, satisfies the social proof phenomenon, whereby consumers are influenced by the behaviors and endorsements of others. This approach is particularly effective in fashion e-commerce, as consumers are more likely to purchase items endorsed by people they perceive as similar to themselves. Influencer marketing, an extension of visual marketing, involves collaboration between brands and social media personalities who have significant followings and influence over consumer perceptions. Influencers often post images and videos of themselves using products, effectively endorsing these items to their audience. Research by Kim and Ko (2012) underscores that influencer endorsements can significantly affect purchase intentions by increasing perceived product value and creating a sense of urgency. Agnihotri et al. (2020) also note that influencers contribute to brand image development, associating brands with specific lifestyles and values that resonate with their followers. In the fashion industry, influencers have been shown to effectively shape consumer trends and influence purchasing decisions through visually appealing content. Zhang and Benyoucef (2016) further argue that influencer marketing leverages visual cues to evoke emotional responses, leading to higher brand engagement and loyalty.

Technological advancements have introduced AR as a new frontier in visual marketing, allowing consumers to "try on" products virtually. AR technology is increasingly employed by fashion brands to simulate the in-store shopping experience, enabling consumers to visualize how products would look on them. According to McCormick and Livett (2012), AR enhances customer satisfaction and reduces purchase hesitation by providing a realistic representation of products. This immersive experience not only improves product evaluation but also encourages impulse purchases by making the shopping experience more enjoyable. Research by Jiang et al. (2019) suggests that AR can significantly improve conversion rates, as customers who engage with AR features are more likely to complete purchases than those who do not. In terms of theoretical frameworks, the influence of visual marketing on purchasing behavior can be examined through the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, which posits that external stimuli (such as visual marketing) affect consumers' internal evaluations, which in turn influence their behavior (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). According to Kim and Lennon (2008), visual stimuli, particularly in e-commerce, act as powerful cues that affect consumers' emotional and cognitive responses, leading to purchasing behavior. In fashion e-commerce, these stimuli include visual elements that allow customers to evaluate product quality, brand image, and fit, providing essential information that shapes purchase intentions. Park et al. (2007) further applied the S-O-R model in a study of online visual presentation, concluding that aesthetically pleasing visuals positively influence consumer engagement and satisfaction. Further research has explored the moderating effects of demographic and psychographic factors on consumers' responses to visual marketing. For instance, Zhang and Benyoucef (2016) identified that younger consumers, who are typically more tech-savvy, are more receptive to visual marketing strategies such as influencer content and AR. On the other hand, Huang et al. (2021) suggest that gender differences play a role in visual content engagement, with female consumers showing a higher tendency to respond positively to high-quality images and influencer endorsements in the fashion sector. Cultural factors also influence visual marketing effectiveness; consumers from

collectivist cultures, for instance, may respond more strongly to UGC, as it aligns with communal values and the importance of peer validation (Pentina & Taylor, 2020).

The role of visual aesthetics is another aspect of visual marketing that warrants discussion. According to Childers et al. (2001), aesthetically pleasing visuals contribute to a more engaging shopping experience, increasing the likelihood of consumer interaction and purchase. Visual aesthetics are crucial in fashion e-commerce, where consumers place high value on stylistic elements and overall brand presentation. Pentina and Taylor (2020) argue that color schemes, lighting, and layout play an essential role in shaping consumers' initial impressions and can significantly influence their attitudes towards the brand and the product. Visual marketing within the fashion e-commerce sector leverages various strategies, including high-quality imagery, video content, UGC, influencer marketing, and AR, to influence consumer purchasing behavior. Research consistently shows that these elements enhance consumer engagement, trust, and perceived product value, leading to higher purchase intentions. Visual marketing's impact on purchasing behavior is rooted in consumers' psychological responses to visual stimuli, as explained by models like the S-O-R model, which demonstrates how external cues trigger emotional and cognitive responses that drive consumer behavior. Demographic and cultural factors further moderate these responses, indicating that tailored visual marketing strategies are essential for effectively reaching diverse consumer segments. This literature review provides a foundation for examining the specific impact of visual marketing on purchasing behavior in fashion e-commerce, establishing a basis for further exploration into how these strategies can be optimized for different audiences.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the impact of visual marketing on consumer purchasing behavior in the fashion industry's e-commerce sector. Qualitative research is particularly well-suited to examining complex social phenomena as it enables an in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions, experiences, and the meanings they attach to various elements of visual marketing. The study employs a multi-method qualitative design, incorporating semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to capture the subjective interpretations of consumers who actively engage in online fashion shopping. A qualitative methodology provides flexibility in capturing nuances in consumer attitudes, motivations, and emotional responses to visual marketing, which are crucial to understanding how visual stimuli influence purchasing behavior.

The primary data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews with 25 participants who frequently shop for fashion products online. These participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure a diverse range of demographics, including age, gender, and socio-economic background. Each participant had previous exposure to online fashion marketing through e-commerce platforms and social media, making them suitable candidates for discussing their experiences and perceptions of visual marketing. Semi-structured interviews allow for open-ended responses, enabling participants to articulate their thoughts in their own words, which is valuable for exploring subjective interpretations. The interviews were conducted via video calls, each lasting between 45 to 60 minutes, and were recorded with participants' consent. This method ensures a comprehensive collection of data reflecting diverse perspectives on visual marketing. To analyze the data, thematic analysis was employed, which is a systematic method of identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns within qualitative data. Thematic analysis was chosen for its flexibility and ability to provide rich, detailed insights into the data. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework for thematic analysis was followed: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. This approach facilitates an in-depth examination of how consumers interpret visual marketing cues and how these interpretations influence their purchasing decisions. During the coding phase, NVivo software was used to organize and manage

data, which helped ensure the consistency and accuracy of theme identification. To enhance the reliability of the findings, a member-checking process was conducted, in which participants reviewed the transcribed data to confirm its accuracy and completeness. This process helps ensure that the findings authentically represent participants' perspectives, minimizing researcher bias. Furthermore, a peer debriefing process was implemented by sharing the themes and interpretations with other researchers to validate the findings' credibility. Reflexivity was also emphasized throughout the study, with the researcher documenting personal reflections and potential biases that might influence data interpretation.

#### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results from this qualitative study reveal significant insights into how visual marketing elements within e-commerce influence consumer purchasing behavior in the fashion industry. Three key themes emerged from the analysis: the emotional impact of visual aesthetics, the trust-building role of user-generated content, and the influence of influencer endorsements on purchase intentions. Each theme is discussed in detail, with references to participant statements to illustrate the nuanced ways visual marketing shapes consumer perceptions and decisions.

##### 4.1. Emotional Impact of Visual Aesthetics

Visual aesthetics play a crucial role in shaping consumers' emotional responses, which, in turn, influence their purchasing decisions. Participants highlighted the importance of high-quality images, engaging color schemes, and visually appealing layouts in capturing their attention and evoking positive emotions. For instance, one participant remarked, "When I see beautiful images, I instantly feel more connected to the brand; it makes me want to imagine myself wearing those clothes." This response aligns with previous literature suggesting that aesthetically pleasing visuals enhance consumer engagement by creating an emotional bond with the brand (Childers et al., 2001). Many participants noted that visual marketing elements, such as vivid colors, sleek product presentation, and professional photography, made products appear more desirable and higher quality. This emotional appeal often led participants to consider purchasing items they might not have otherwise, as they were drawn to the brand's visual identity. This theme is consistent with findings from Kim and Ko (2012), who asserted that visually appealing content can create emotional connections that encourage consumer loyalty. The study's findings suggest that fashion brands investing in high-quality visuals not only attract attention but also stimulate emotional responses that can drive impulsive buying. Participants described feeling a sense of "aspiration" when viewing well-presented images, indicating that visual aesthetics contribute to building a brand image that aligns with consumers' personal ideals and lifestyle goals.

##### 4.2. Trust-Building Role of User-Generated Content

User-generated content emerged as a powerful factor in building trust among consumers, particularly in the context of online fashion shopping. Many participants expressed that seeing authentic, real-life images from other customers provided reassurance about the product's quality and fit. One participant shared, "When I see reviews with photos from real people, it makes me feel more confident that I'm making the right choice." This response reflects the phenomenon of social proof, where consumers look to the experiences of others to inform their own decisions (Daugherty et al., 2008). UGC was viewed as more credible and relatable than professionally staged images, as it provided a realistic portrayal of the product that was more relatable and trustworthy. The study's findings on UGC align with the research by Huang et al. (2021), which found that UGC increases consumers' trust by presenting authentic, user-driven perspectives. In the fashion industry, where fit and quality can vary widely, participants noted that UGC helped bridge the gap between online and physical shopping by

offering a realistic view of how items might look in real life. Many participants also commented on the importance of transparency in product reviews, indicating that brands that allow customers to upload honest photos were perceived as more trustworthy and reliable. This finding underscores the value of UGC as an effective visual marketing strategy for e-commerce, particularly in enhancing brand credibility and consumer confidence.

#### *4.3. Influence of Influencer Endorsements on Purchase Intentions*

Influencer marketing was another significant theme, as participants reported that endorsements from influencers strongly influenced their perceptions and purchase intentions. Participants explained that influencers' recommendations served as a form of "expert advice," particularly when influencers were seen as fashion authorities. For example, one participant stated, "When I see an influencer I follow wearing a brand, it gives me confidence that it's trendy and worth buying." This response supports findings by Abidin (2016) and Kim and Ko (2012), who found that influencers serve as intermediaries between brands and consumers, offering a sense of validation that appeals to followers' desires to align with trends and admired personalities. Interestingly, participants indicated that their purchasing decisions were often influenced by influencers' personal style and perceived authenticity. Many expressed that they were more likely to trust influencers who genuinely appeared to like the products they promoted, rather than those who seemed purely profit-driven. This observation aligns with Zhang and Benyoucef's (2016) research, which suggests that perceived authenticity is crucial for influencer marketing effectiveness. Furthermore, participants highlighted that influencers often provided practical styling advice, such as how to pair products or dress for certain occasions, making the purchasing process more accessible and relatable. These findings reveal that influencer endorsements contribute to consumers' decision-making processes by offering both aesthetic appeal and practical guidance.

#### *4.4. Integration of Visual Marketing Elements and Consumer Purchasing Behavior*

The results of this study illustrate the interconnected nature of various visual marketing elements in influencing consumer behavior within fashion e-commerce. High-quality visuals, UGC, and influencer endorsements collectively create a comprehensive visual marketing strategy that appeals to consumers on multiple levels—emotionally, socially, and practically. Thematic analysis shows that these elements reinforce each other; for instance, aesthetically pleasing images attract initial interest, UGC builds trust, and influencer endorsements provide additional motivation to purchase. This interrelated impact aligns with the Stimulus-Organism-Response model, which explains that visual stimuli from multiple sources affect consumers' emotional and cognitive responses, ultimately leading to purchasing behavior (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Moreover, the study reveals demographic variations in how visual marketing elements impact consumer behavior. Younger participants, who are typically more engaged with social media, displayed a stronger preference for influencer endorsements and UGC, which they associated with credibility and trendiness. In contrast, older participants emphasized the importance of product visuals and reliability over social proof, indicating a different set of priorities in visual marketing preferences. This finding suggests that brands can optimize their visual marketing strategies by tailoring content to the demographic characteristics of their target audience, thus enhancing relevance and appeal.

This qualitative study demonstrates that visual marketing has a significant influence on consumer purchasing behavior within the fashion e-commerce sector. Through the emotional impact of visual aesthetics, the trust-building role of UGC, and the motivational influence of influencer endorsements, visual marketing shapes consumer perceptions, enhances brand credibility, and encourages purchasing. The study's findings suggest that fashion brands should employ a holistic approach to visual marketing, integrating high-quality visuals, UGC, and influencer endorsements to create a comprehensive strategy

that appeals to diverse consumer motivations. These insights offer valuable implications for e-commerce practitioners seeking to refine their visual marketing techniques to drive engagement, trust, and conversion among fashion consumers. Further research may explore how cultural factors and emerging technologies, such as augmented reality, continue to shape visual marketing's impact on consumer behavior in the evolving landscape of e-commerce.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the significant impact of visual marketing on consumer purchasing behavior in the fashion e-commerce sector. Theoretically, it enhances understanding of how visual aesthetics, user-generated content (UGC), and influencer endorsements work to shape emotional responses, build trust, and influence purchase intentions. Visual marketing within e-commerce aligns with the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, where external visual stimuli activate emotional and cognitive processes that drive consumer decisions. This research highlights the importance of aesthetics in establishing brand identity and emotional appeal, with UGC providing a social proof mechanism that reassures consumers in online shopping's often impersonal environment. These findings reinforce the notion that visual elements are more than just product representations; they create experiential and relational cues that influence consumer loyalty and engagement. From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that brands should prioritize high-quality visuals, encourage authentic UGC, and strategically use influencer partnerships to maximize appeal and trust. Investing in professional product photography, using interactive visual features, and fostering UGC through customer incentives can create a visually engaging and credible brand presence. Additionally, selecting influencers whose values align with the brand can strengthen authenticity and relatability, particularly with niche audiences. Such a multi-layered visual strategy addresses consumer needs across emotional, social, and practical levels, creating a comprehensive customer journey that aligns with varying demographics and psychographics. Well-rounded visual marketing approach in e-commerce, especially in the fashion industry, proves essential for capturing consumer attention and fostering brand loyalty. Integrating high-quality aesthetics, credible social proof through UGC, and influential endorsements allows brands to construct a cohesive narrative that resonates with consumers and enhances purchase intentions. This study provides insights valuable to both academic inquiry and practical application, inviting further exploration into evolving technologies and cultural factors that may continue to shape visual marketing's role in consumer behavior across global e-commerce platforms.

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