MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

ACADEMY OF MARKETING

Proceedings of the 58th Academy of Marketing Conference

Breaking Boundaries – Unlocking Potential

Etihad Stadium, Manchester
Hosted by The University of Manchester
6-9 July 2026

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Proceedings of the 58th Academy of Marketing Conference

Breaking Boundaries – Unlocking Potential

Manchester 2026

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Welcome from the Conference Chairs

We are delighted to welcome you to this year's Academy of Marketing Conference, centred on the theme of **Breaking Boundaries.**

This theme reflects our commitment to creating an inclusive and open environment that encourages collaboration, sparks new ideas, and fosters interdisciplinary research. In an increasingly complex and dynamic market environment, bringing together diverse perspectives has never been more important. As a community at the forefront of marketing thought and practice, the Academy of Marketing is uniquely positioned to explore and shape the developments transforming our field.

Over recent decades, we have witnessed significant changes in the marketing landscape. From a renewed focus on sustainability and the circular economy to evolving consumer behaviours, emerging retail environments, and rapid advances in digital technologies, the world around us continues to change at pace. These developments create new questions, new opportunities, and a growing need for innovative research and fresh perspectives.

As the marketing discipline evolves, so too do the challenges and opportunities it faces. This conference provides a platform to engage with these changes, challenge established thinking, and explore new directions for research and practice. Through our theme of Breaking Boundaries, we invite delegates to push beyond traditional methodological, theoretical, and practical limits, fostering dialogue and collaboration that can generate meaningful impact across disciplines, industries, and communities.

We hope you find the conference inspiring, engaging, and rewarding, and we look forward to the conversations, connections, and discoveries that will emerge over the coming days. Welcome, and thank you for being part of this exciting journey.

Claudia, Jane, Aurelie, Rosy and Courtney
Conference Co-Chairs

Claudia E. Henninger

Jane Wood

Aurelie Le Normand

Rosy Boardman

Courtney Chrimes

The University of Manchester Department of Materials

Fashion Business & Technology Group

The Department of Materials – the largest materials science and engineering department in Europe – is a globally recognised centre for advanced materials research and education, renowned for pioneering work in graphene, nanomaterials, biomaterials, polymers, corrosion, and sustainable manufacturing.

Hosting the Academy of Marketing Conference at the Etihad Stadium provides an opportunity to highlight the interdisciplinary strengths of both the Fashion Business and Technology Group and the wider department to a community of scholars advancing marketing theory and practice.

The Fashion Business and Technology Group, situated within the Department of Materials at The University of Manchester, undertakes internationally recognised research into fashion business strategy, consumer behaviour, digital retailing, and sustainability. The group examines how organisations innovate, create value, and respond to sectoral and societal challenges across fashion, textiles, and materials driven industries.

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ACADEMY OF MARKETING

Keynote Speaker

Professor Dominic Medway
Pro-Vice Chancellor for Business & Law,
Manchester Metropolitan University

Marketing the Manchester Brand:
200 Years of Breaking Boundaries and Unlocking Potential

For over 30 years Dominic's research has focused on the complex interactions between places, spaces and those who produce, manage and consume them. This reflects his academic background as a human geographer who has viewed the world through marketing and management lenses. Dominic's previous studies have addressed issues such as stakeholder interactions in urban place partnerships, the role of the five human senses in the marketing of place, and the corporate (re)naming of football stadia and how this affects sponsoring companies and fan communities. Dominic has published over 70 papers in leading academic journals and several books, the most recent being *Place Marketing and Branding: Symbols and Representations* (2026) with Gary Warnaby.

Special Sessions

Boundary Spanning – Exploring Interdisciplinary Innovation Between Marketing and Tourism

Convenors: Tourism SIG - Marion Karl (University of Surrey) and Scott McCabe (University of Birmingham)

Overview: There are ever increasing synergies emerging between marketing and tourism, particularly in the current turbulence in the U.K. Higher Education system. Tourism researchers are increasingly becoming embedded in marketing and consumer science departments and marketing and consumer researchers are increasingly interested in undertaking research on tourism topics and publishing in top-tier tourism journals. Yet, to a certain extent, these two domains operate in silos, inherited from the emergence of tourism studies as a separate field in the 1990s.

There is much that marketers can learn from tourism researchers whose field is dominated by inherent interdisciplinarity that is adept at developing cutting edge research at the intersections of consumer and marketing disciplines and wider social sciences. Similarly, there is much that tourism researchers can learn from the depth of knowledge within marketing/service research/consumer science that could lead to innovations within their field.

This boundary spanning workshop seeks to explore the potentials and challenges to further collaboration between marketing and tourism research to advance innovation in research, education and practice.

Digital Intimacy and Immersive Commerce: Theoretical Advances in Consumer Engagement Through Virtual and Social Technologies

Convenors: Gianpaolo Vignali, Eddie Chen, Daniella Ryding (Manchester Fashion Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University)

Overview: The special track will support the Special Issue in the *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*. It will explore the evolving intersections between immersive digital technologies, social media engagement, and consumer behaviour within electronic commerce. Building on recent research into para-social interaction, virtual influencers, augmented reality (AR), and AIdriven personalization, this special issue will investigate how digital intimacy reshapes consumer journeys, decision-making, and brand relationships. The featured works will examine new forms of "virtual social presence", where consumers engage emotionally and cognitively with avatars, influencers, and algorithmic agents, influencing eWOM, trust, and purchase intention.

Contributions will also highlight innovations such as AI-based body scanning, sustainable fashion advocacy by edu-influencers, and emerging subcultures engaging in socially sustainable consumption online. By merging perspectives from marketing, consumer psychology, and digital technology, this Special Issue aims to advance theoretical and applied understanding of how immersive digital ecosystems transform electronic commerce. It invites interdisciplinary submissions exploring ethical, experiential, and design dimensions of consumer–technology interaction in virtual retail and social media marketplaces.

From Word-of-Mouth (WOM) to Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) to Electronic Word-of-Mouth 2.0 (eWOM 2.0): The Evolution of Word-of-Mouth in Marketing Research and Practice

Convenors: Hongfei Liu (University of Southampton), Chanaka Jayawardhena (University of Surrey), Rahul Chawdhary (Kingston University London)

Overview: Arndt (1967) first defined word-of-mouth marketing as "oral and person-to-person communication" and emphasized its "non-commercial" nature. The development of web technology has accelerated the popularization of web-based opinion platforms, namely eWOM, and has emphasized their user-generated content (UGC) nature (e.g., positive, negative or mixed) (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004). With the fast evolution of communication patterns and enlarged differentiation of international consumer culture, rather than placing emphasis on the information, eWOM 2.0 captures the complexity of the marketing and highlights the "digital interactions" between different stakeholders (Liu et al., 2024).

In consumer research, WOM-giving is often seen as the post-purchase behaviour to influence either the recipients' or the WOM sender's themselves (Chawdhary & Dall' Olmo Riley, 2015). On the other hand, WOM-seeking is often seen as a pre-purchase behaviour (Liu & Jayawardhena., 2022). WOM or eWOM is often seen as the final dependent variable or outcome behaviour. However, as WOM information increasingly gets into the decision-making process, the information-decision dynamics have been heavily reshaped and need to be re-examined.

Research increasingly uses secondary data to embrace the scientific nature of marketing research (Schreiner et al., 2025). This is particularly significant with eWOM research. However, with the heavy use of control variables and conditions, it is hard to reflect on how information shapes the individuals' decision-making. More particularly, the decision-making process may involve different dynamics. Apart from the use of field experiments, what is the most appropriate approach to identify the process of information and decision-making?

Though digitalisation is a worldwide phenomenon, the progress of such digitalisation is different across different regions. There are many different marketing phenomena given to the cultural background differences (König et al., 2022). To identify a one-size-fits-all phenomenon and to identify a one-size-fits-all solution has been almost impossible. Therefore, word of mouth research has to be context-specific and identify culture specific phenomena to enhance the inclusion and diversity of word-of-mouth communication.

Influencers play an irreplaceable role in the modern marketing practice. Rather than the organic eWOM generated by the independent consumers, sponsored influencers are widely used to spread the eWOM in the modern age (Shen et al., 2024). Such practice makes the boundary increasingly blurry in eWOM practice (Lou et al., 2023). Particularly, virtual influencers are increasingly preferred to avoid the potential issues caused by human influencers. Such a trend brings more potential questions about the organic nature of the online information and the extent of trust built in such influencer-generated eWOM communication.

Word of mouth in the B2B market and the B2C market are like parallel lines – the phenomena are similar, but the dynamics are very different (Cartwright et al., 2023). Against the nature of the B2B market, further research is needed to further identify the impact of such changing dynamics.

Based on new trends identified above, our special session welcomes all word-of-mouth marketing researchers to join the themed discussion listed above, and identify new and meaningful research directions for WOM, eWOM, and eWOM 2.0 communications.

Making Marketing Research Matter: Pathways to Impact

Convenors: Chris Moran, Sean Tanner, Dave Alton, Mary McCarthy, Claire O'Neill, Lana Repar (Cork University Business School, University College Cork)

Overview: Researchers within the marketing discipline and beyond are increasingly expected to not only achieve research outputs through formal academic dissemination but also through impact activities in order to demonstrate contribution to favourable societal outcomes (Keeling and Marshall, 2022; Rundle-Thiele et al., 2024; Scott and Mende, 2022). In this context, impact may refer to translation of research findings into practice as well as involving greater adoption of more engaged research methods, such as co-creation and participatory models, that consider the input of relevant stakeholders in research design. Impact ensures that research activities not only benefit the broader advancement of knowledge but also support the stakeholders within society who are potential beneficiaries of research activities and research funding investments, thereby creating an ecosystem of research for the social good.

The proposed special session will begin by exploring potential impact-based activities which can be undertaken by marketing scholars. Drawing on case studies from the Food Marketing Research Group within UCC we will begin by showcasing and highlighting potential pathways through which marketing academics may achieve research impact through translation of research findings. Furthermore, this special session will identify key pathways – such as interdisciplinary collaborations, industry consultancy, and policy engagement - through which marketing researchers may conduct more engaged research by strengthening connections with practice as well as translating research insights into actionable outcomes.

Real-World Data Analytics and Insights: Methods and Applications for Social Change

Convenors: Marketing Analytics & AI SIG - Simon (Seongsoo) Jang (Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University)

Overview: The rapid growth of unstructured data from digital platforms, reviews, images, and audio has transformed how marketing scholars study real-world behaviour and social impact. This special session addresses a cutting-edge methodological issue in marketing: how advanced analytics and generative AI can be leveraged to generate actionable insights for social change, such as sustainability, care service quality, and prosocial behaviour.

Designed as an interactive expert-led session, this panel goes beyond traditional paper presentations by combining applied case demonstrations with conceptual method discussions and a structured audience dialogue. The session will particularly benefit marketing researchers interested in AI, big data, public policy relevance, and socially responsible marketing analytics.

Co-Creating the Future of Sustainability Marketing: Building the Sustainability SIG Showcase Community

Convenors: Panayiota Alevizou (University of Sheffield), Pallavi Singh (Sheffield Hallam University), Sianne Gordon-Wilson (Queen Mary University of London), Marta Blazquez Cano (University of Manchester)

Overview: The Academy of Marketing Sustainability Special Interest Group invites colleagues to take part in a 90-minute interactive workshop focused on co-creating the future direction of sustainability marketing research and building the Sustainability SIG Showcase Community.

Working in small groups, participants will generate priorities for future Sustainability Showcase themes for the Sustainability SIG, recommendations for speakers and collaborators, ideas for strengthening engagement across the Academy of Marketing community, and proposals for long-term collaborative initiatives. The session will conclude with a collective prioritisation exercise to identify key research challenges and future Showcase themes, alongside a community commitment activity where participants will volunteer to contribute as future panel speakers, moderators, theme champions, organisers, mentors, policy contributors and research collaborators.

Teaching Your Way Forward: Strategic Career Development for Marketing Academics

Convenors: Laura Chamberlain (University of Warwick)

Co-Facilitators: Fran Hyde (University of Suffolk), Teresa Pereira Heath (University of Minho), Sarah Louise Mitchell (Oxford Brookes University), Thomas McAlinden (University of Strathclyde), Carolyn Strong (University of Cardiff)

Overview: This interactive panel and mini-mentoring session addresses a critical yet often overlooked dimension of academic career development: the strategic cultivation of teaching and learning professional identity. Whilst nearly every marketing academic teaches and every promotion application includes teaching elements, many academics have not consciously developed their teaching philosophy, pedagogical voice, or approached teaching and learning strategically as integral to career progression.

This session directly engages with the conference theme 'Breaking Boundaries – Unlocking Potential' by fostering collective understanding of teaching and learning career progression across diverse institutional contexts and contract types. We are breaking the boundary of isolated career development, creating a supportive, collaborative space where academics can openly discuss teaching progression pathways and receive practical guidance from experienced colleagues.

The contemporary academic landscape increasingly recognises teaching within promotion criteria, yet academics often lack strategic guidance on how to develop a compelling teaching profile. This session provides that guidance through diverse role models, practical mentoring, and peer learning. We address the reality that teaching is not merely something academics do alongside their 'real' work, but a substantial dimension of professional identity requiring conscious development, articulation, and strategic planning.

The Black Box Studio: Investigating Invisible AI in Marketing Education

Convenors: White Paper Gen AI team - Chahna Gonsalves (King's College London), Michelle Clancy (South East Technological University, Ireland), Rushana Khusainova (University of Bristol Business School), Hsin-Hsuan Meg Lee (ESCP Business School), Kristen Marshall (Heriot-Watt University), Sarah Percy (University of Birmingham, Dubai), La Toya Quamina (University of Westminster), Sunčica Vuković (University of Montenegro), Ana Isabel Canhoto (University of Sussex Business School), Paul Baines (University of Leicester).

Overview: Over recent months, the Academy of Marketing (AM) Education SIG has developed a major White Paper on Generative AI in Marketing Education—a sector-wide evidence review that combines survey data, case studies, and pedagogical analysis from ten marketing educators across nine UK and European institutions. As the Academy's first consolidated, research-informed guidance on how marketing education should respond to GenAI, the paper offers recommendations focused on academic judgement, assessment redesign, and the development of critical, interpretive and verification-led capabilities. The conference therefore presents a timely opportunity for structured dissemination and for enabling educators to engage directly with its core principles.

A central argument of the White Paper is that GenAI now operates as ambient infrastructure in student work: its influence is often partial, blended, or invisible, embedded in search tools, productivity platforms and creative software. As a result, educators increasingly encounter hybrid artefacts where surface quality may obscure weak reasoning, shallow evidence or synthetic content. This raises urgent pedagogical challenges around integrity, assessment, and the kinds of interpretive literacy that marketing graduates now require.

This Special Session turns these insights into practice by offering a guided investigative space—The Black Box Studio—where participants interrogate typical marketing assessment artefacts to identify where AI may be silently shaping outputs. Rather than focusing on tool use, the session foregrounds the judgment, verification, and contextual reasoning that the White Paper positions as essential for future-ready curricula. In doing so, it provides a dynamic and practice-oriented vehicle for disseminating the White Paper's key findings to the wider Academy community.

The Engaged Marketing Scholar: Challenges and Pathways to Co-creating Impact

Convenors: Helena Knight, Carolyn Strong, Carmela Bosangit, Nicole Koenig-Lewis, and Caroline Verfuerth (University of Cardiff)

Overview: Marketing scholars increasingly seek opportunities to identify pathways to societal change in collaboration with stakeholders outside academia. Evidencing societal impact has emerged as a strategic priority for business schools worldwide, reflecting growing expectations that they deliver on their wider civic duties (Kelly & Given, 2024; Pugh, 2024). In the UK, the reframing of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029 to embed engagement and impact as one assessment pillar embodies how universities are reconceiving their societal role.

Engaged scholarship (ES) provides a useful framework in pursuing impactful research and teaching. The close, collaborative approach in ES enables academics, practitioners, policymakers, and/or communities to co-produce knowledge and address 'wicked' societal challenges (Steadman & Millington, 2022; Van de Ven & Johnson, 2006). As such, ES has impact and the aim of driving positive change at its core. However, the diverse collaborations and societal challenges-focused approach make ES complex and susceptible to tensions among stakeholders.

Despite growing interest in ES, little guidance exists on managing collaborations and the temporalities of impactful marketing scholarship. Barbour et al.'s (2017) heuristic ES framework usefully defines the core collaborative stages, moving from co-missioning, where partners align goals and scope; to co-designing, where the research or event is shaped to meet shared expectations; and co-enacting, where partners reflect on the meaning, usefulness, and impact of what has been produced. However, the implied linearity with a distinct start and endpoint contravenes extant knowledge that complex societal challenges require systemic thinking, iterative processes, and long-term orientation (Danner-Schröder et al., 2025; Slawinski et al., 2025; Stadtler et al., 2024), thus curtailing ES's potential.

The aim of this special session is to create a space for attendees to discuss pathways to impactful teaching and research, establish successful collaborations with external actors as well as how to overcome challenges.

The Impact of Marketing Education: Mapping Systems, Connections and Strategic Implications

Convenors: Laura Chamberlain (University of Warwick) and Fran Hyde (University of Suffolk)

Co-Facilitators: Teresa Pereira Heath (University of Minho), Sarah Louise Mitchell (Oxford Brookes University), Thomas McAlinden (University of Strathclyde), Carolyn Strong (University of Cardiff)

Overview: This interactive roundtable session addresses a pressing pedagogical challenge: as higher education faces increasing accountability pressures and the potential extension of impact frameworks to educational practice, marketing academics need a proactive, discipline-specific approach to articulating and demonstrating the value created through marketing education.

We are developing a comprehensive framework for understanding and measuring the transformative influence of marketing education on students, academics, practitioners, industry, and society, recognising impact as extending from individual development through career trajectories to the evolution of marketing practice itself, and ultimately to its role in addressing critical societal issues.

This project moves beyond traditional educational metrics to capture the full ecosystem of influence created by marketing teaching, learning, and educational scholarship. However, the complexity of educational impact, particularly in marketing, cannot be adequately understood through isolated analysis of individual dimensions. Impact operates as an interconnected system where different forms of influence amplify, enable, or conflict with one another.

This session directly addresses the conference theme 'Breaking Boundaries – Unlocking Potential' by breaking disciplinary boundaries (positioning marketing education as scholarship worthy of rigorous impact assessment), methodological boundaries (using co-creation rather than top-down framework development), and institutional boundaries (creating sector-wide understanding before frameworks are imposed). Marketing education requires its own impact framework because of its distinctive characteristics: the velocity of practice change, exceptional stakeholder complexity (spanning students to industry to society), contested disciplinary purpose balancing critical scholarship with professional capability, and unique pedagogical approaches involving live campaigns and client work.

Wonder, Work, and the Machine: Designing the Future of Marketing Education

Convenors: Lucy Gill-Simmen (Royal Holloway, University of London), Chahna Gonsalves (King's College London)

Overview: The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (2025) identifies Artificial Intelligence, digital technologies, and creative industries as central engines of national productivity, emphasising the need for a more agile, highly skilled workforce capable of operating across frontier sectors. Alongside this, the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper (2025) highlights a severe skills shortage, 27% of all vacancies, driven by gaps in digital, analytical, and higher-level capabilities, and calls for universities to lead a new wave of innovation-driven, responsive curricula aligned with employer needs and national priorities. Together, these policy frameworks assert a clear mandate: marketing education must evolve rapidly to equip graduates for an AI-augmented, innovation-led economy.

Marketing as a discipline sits at the nexus of creativity, data, culture, and technology, making it highly sensitive to these shifts. Scholars argue that marketing is entering a post-digital era in which human–machine collaboration reshapes core practices including insight generation, branding, creativity, and customer experience (Rust, 2023; Huang & Rust, 2021; Davenport et al., 2020). This technological transformation raises pedagogical questions: What kinds of thinkers, makers, and leaders does marketing now require? What capabilities, not just skills, must marketing educators nurture?

Research in marketing pedagogy has long advocated for approaches that place emphasis on reflexivity, identity, social context, and meaning-making (Tadajewski & Brownlie, 2008; Maclaran et al., 2009). More recently, Gill-Simmen et al. (2025) argue for "revolutionising marketing education" through sociocultural, praxis-oriented frameworks that foreground students' lived experience and narrative agency. Crucially, to navigate the uncertainty of an AI-driven era, educators must also look beyond traditional problem-solving to the principles of speculative design (Dunne & Raby, 2013). By equipping students with the capacity for 'social dreaming' and future-gazing, we prepare them not just to use tools, but to critically imagine the consequences of their use. This aligns with parallel work on the importance of wonder and epistemic expansiveness (Schinkel, 2018; Parker, 2023) and emerging research on AI-enabled learning that prioritises metacognition and curiosity (Mollick & Mollick, 2023). This convergence underscores a critical opportunity: to reimagine marketing education for a world defined by AI, uncertainty, and accelerating cultural and technological change.

This Special Session responds directly to that challenge. It offers a collaborative research and design space through which marketing educators can articulate new pedagogical directions and produce a co-authored journal article capturing these insights for the wider field.

Notes

31st Academy of Marketing Doctoral Colloquium

Doctoral Colloquium Co-Chairs

Rosy Boardman

Courtney Chrimes

Doctoral Keynote:

A Journey into Misbehaviour – Professor Lloyd C. Harris

Doctoral Colloquium Mentors:

Professor Rob Angell, University of Stirling

Dr Marta Blazquez Cano, The University of Manchester

Professor Lloyd C. Harris, The University of Manchester

Dr Maria Lichrou, University of Limerick

Professor Matt Robson, Cardiff University

Professor Stuart Roper, Northumbria University

The 31st Academy of Marketing Doctoral Colloquium is sponsored by the Marketing Trust.

MARKETINGTRUST

The Academy of Marketing would like to acknowledge the extremely generous support received from the Marketing Trust towards the Academy of Marketing 2026 Doctoral Colloquium.

The Marketing Trust (registered as The Chartered Institute of Marketing Charitable Trust) is an independent charity which exists to provide financial assistance to marketing projects for public good. These include initiatives in education, practical training and research into the art and science of marketing which can deliver an enhanced understanding and/or execution of the role of marketing and demonstrate a wider societal impact. More information about the Trust can be found at their website ***https://www.marketingtrust.org/***

Conference Etiquette and Code of Conduct

Conference Etiquette

The Academy of Marketing aims to provide a safe, welcoming and professional conference experience for all participants.

Delegates are asked to respect the fact that many submissions are work-in-progress. Material presented at AM2026 should therefore be treated as personal communication and is to be shared only with the express consent of the author(s). Sessions will not be recorded without the consent of participants, and the taking of photographs, screenshots, videos, and/or downloading or saving any material is strictly prohibited. When talking about the event on social media, we request that delegates do not share images of slides or posters.

Please switch digital devices to silent mode.

Please be on time and do not arrive/leave during a presentation. If you must leave one track session to move to another, this should only be done at a changeover in presenter.

Conference Code of Conduct

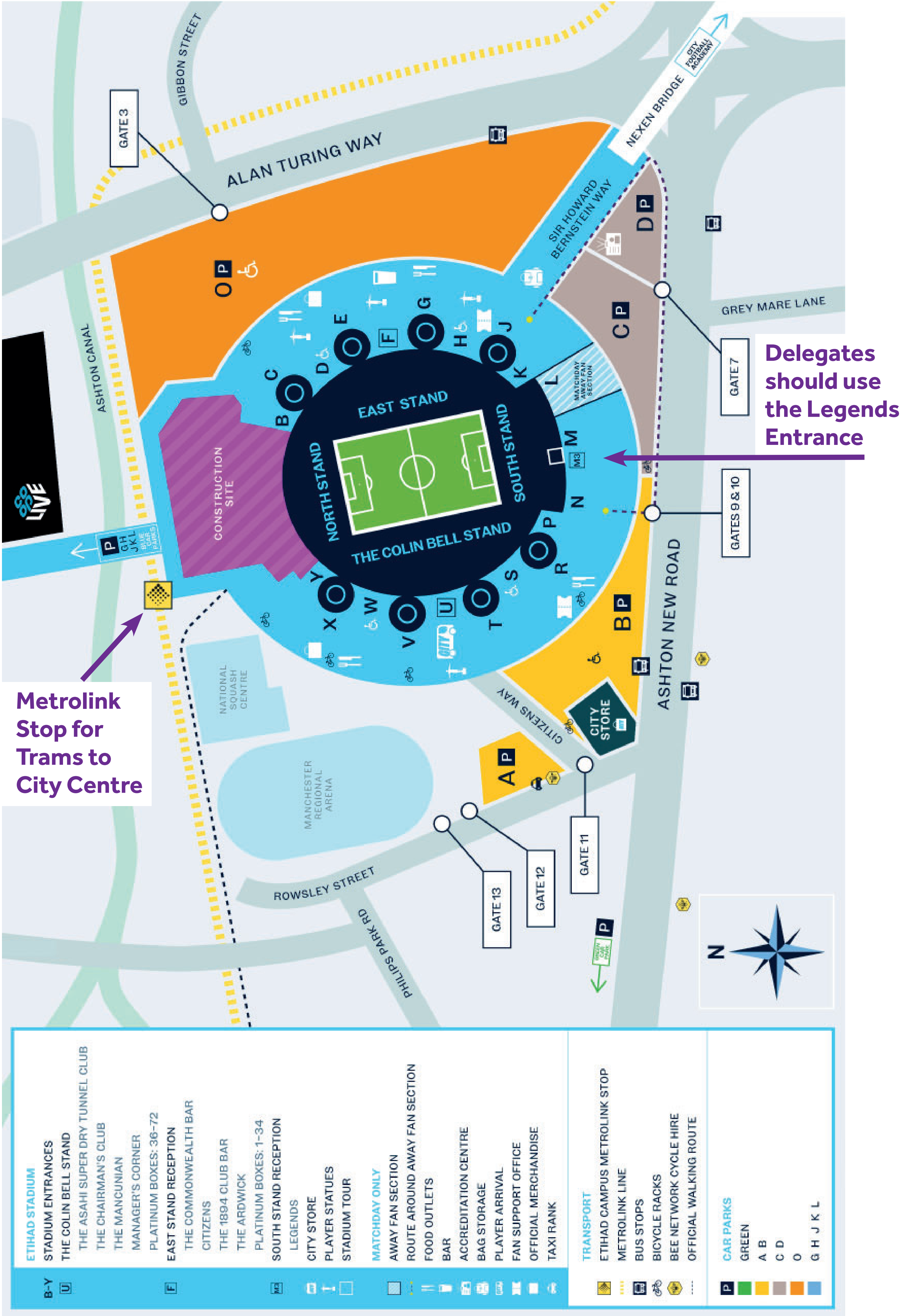
All delegates are respectfully requested to behave in a professional manner. All communications should be appropriate for a professional audience including people of many different backgrounds.

The Academy will not tolerate harassment of delegates in any form. Harassment includes sustained disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate sexual attention or innuendo, deliberate intimidation, stalking, and recording of an individual without consent. It also includes offensive or belittling comments related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, physical appearance, body size, ethnicity or religion (or lack thereof), or technology choices.

Any conference participants violating these rules may be sanctioned or expelled from the event, without a refund, at the discretion of the organisers. Anyone who feels they have been discriminated against, harassed, threatened, intimidated, has observed or witnessed violations of this code, or has other concerns is encouraged to immediately report these instances to a member of the Conference Organising Committee. The Conference Organising Committee and Academy Executive Committee are committed to addressing and resolving the matter to the best of their abilities. Notifying the Conference Organising Committee / Academy does not constitute or replace a notification to appropriate legal authorities.

Notes

Venue Map



Delegates should use the Legends Entrance
Metrolink Stop for Trams to City Centre
ALAN TURING WAY
GIBBON STREET
GATE 3
ASHTON CANAL
NEXEN BRIDGE
CITY FOOTBALL ACADEMY
SIR HOWARD BERNSTEIN WAY
GREY MARE LANE
GATE 7
GATES 9 & 10
EAST STAND
NORTH STAND
SOUTH STAND
THE COLIN BELL STAND
CONSTRUCTION SITE
NATIONAL SQUASH CENTRE
MANCHESTER REGIONAL ARENA
CITIZENS WAY
CITY STORE
ASHTON NEW ROAD
ROWSLEY STREET
PHILIPS PARK RD
GATE 11
GATE 12
GATE 13
N
ETIHAD STADIUM
B-Y STADIUM ENTRANCES
THE COLIN BELL STAND
U THE ASAHI SUPER DRY TUNNEL CLUB
THE CHAIRMAN'S CLUB
THE MANCUNIAN
MANAGER'S CORNER
PLATINUM BOXES: 36-72
F EAST STAND RECEPTION
THE COMMONWEALTH BAR
CITIZENS
THE 1894 CLUB BAR
THE ARDWICK
PLATINUM BOXES: 1-34
M3 SOUTH STAND RECEPTION
LEGENDS
CITY STORE
PLAYER STATUES
STADIUM TOUR
MATCHDAY ONLY
AWAY FAN SECTION
ROUTE AROUND AWAY FAN SECTION
FOOD OUTLETS
BAR
ACCREDITATION CENTRE
BAG STORAGE
PLAYER ARRIVAL
FAN SUPPORT OFFICE
OFFICIAL MERCHANDISE
TAXI RANK
TRANSPORT
ETIHAD CAMPUS METROLINK STOP
METROLINK LINE
BUS STOPS
BICYCLE RACKS
BEE NETWORK CYCLE HIRE
OFFICIAL WALKING ROUTE
CAR PARKS
GREEN
A B
C D
O
G H J K L

Key Locations

93.2 Central	**Delegate Registration, Information Stand, Exhibitors, Tea/Coffee Breaks, Lunch**
Legends Lounge	**Keynote Session, AGM, Special Sessions 1, Welcome Reception (Tuesday), Gala Dinner (Wednesday)**

Schedule

Monday July 6th (Doctoral Colloquium Participants Only)

Monday July 6th (Invited ECR Writing Workshop Participants Only)

Tuesday July 7th (Main Conference)

08:00-09:00	Conference Registration – 93.2 Central
09:00-09:30	Welcome Address – Legends Lounge
09:30-11:00	Parallel Sessions
11:00-11:30	Refreshment Break – 93.2 Central
11:30-12:15	Keynote – Professor Dominic Medway – Legends Lounge
12:15-13:15	Lunch – 93.2 Central
13:15-14:45	Parallel Sessions
14:45-15:15	Refreshment Break – 93.2 Central
15:15-16:45	Parallel Sessions
17:00-19:00	Welcome Reception – Legends Lounge

Wednesday July 8th (Main Conference)

08:30-09:00	Conference Registration – 93.2 Central
09:00-10:30	Parallel Sessions
10:30-11:00	Refreshment Break – 93.2 Central
11:00-12:30	Parallel Sessions
12:30-13:15	AGM - Legends Lounge
13:15-14:15	Lunch – 93.2 Central
14:15-15:15	Parallel Sessions
15:15-15:45	Refreshment Break – 93.2 Central
15:45-16:45	Parallel Sessions
18:45-23:00	Gala Dinner – Legends Lounge

Thursday July 9th (Main Conference)

09:00-09:30	Conference Registration – 93.2 Central
09:30-11:00	Parallel Sessions
11:00-11:30	Refreshment Break – 93.2 Central
11:30-13:00	Parallel Sessions
13:00	Conference Closes

Outline Paper Programme*

MONDAY 6th July – Doctoral Colloquium and ECR Writing Workshop

TUESDAY 7TH JULY – Main Conference

Session name	Day	Date	Start	End	Paper Ids	Location
TRACK - AI	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	53, 147, 250, 385	Mancunian Suite
TRACK - Brands & Branding	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	25, 149, 397	The Ardwick
TRACK - CCT	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	5, 163, 203, 206	Joe's East
TRACK - Consumer Research	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	141, 153, 211	Legends East
TRACK - Digital Marketing	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	2, 18, 90, 207, 329	93.20 - East
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	61, 104, 127, 345	93.20 - West
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	291, 306, 331	Manager's Corner
TRACK - Retail & Services Marketing	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	130, 242, 349	Box 36/37 West
TRACK - Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	135, 307, 351, 352, 354	Chairman's Club
TRACK - Tourism & Place Marketing	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	41, 107, 179, 180, 304	Joe's West
TRACK - Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	13:15	14:45	245, 257, 392	Manager's Corner
TRACK - CCT	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	13:15	14:45	117, 128, 226, 238	Box 36/37 West
TRACK - Consumer Research	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	13:15	14:45	81, 260, 343, 361	Mancunian Suite
TRACK - Digital Marketing	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	13:15	14:45	54, 196, 294, 303	Joe's West
TRACK - Marketing in Context	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	13:15	14:45	9, 159, 271, 286, 350	93.20 - East
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	13:15	14:45	189, 369, 389	93.20 - West
TRACK - Retail & Services Marketing	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	13:15	14:45	3, 88, 314, 334	The Ardwick
TRACK - Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	13:15	14:45	69, 370, 396	Joe's East
TRACK - Tourism & Place Marketing	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	13:15	14:45	65, 95, 404	Legends East
TRACK - Advertising & Marketing Communications	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	15:15	16:45	302, 390	Legends West
TRACK - AI	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	15:15	16:45	197, 281, 323, 328, 402	Joe's East
TRACK - Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	15:15	16:45	106, 319, 348	Box 36/37 West
TRACK - B2B & Business Networks	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	15:15	16:45	89, 261, 401	Manager's Corner
TRACK - CCT	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	15:15	16:45	6, 91, 184, 187	Mancunian Suite
TRACK - Consumer Research	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	15:15	16:45	282, 293, 311, 365	93.20 - East
TRACK - Marketing in Context	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	15:15	16:45	92, 395	The Ardwick
TRACK - Marketing Pedagogy	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	15:15	16:45	98, 259, 283	Joe's West
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	15:15	16:45	111, 164, 244, 267, 339	93.20 - West
TRACK - Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	15:15	16:45	80, 182	Legends East

Please note, the Schedule and Outline Programme were correct when the Proceedings were prepared, however, delegates should check the Online version of the Programme in case of any last minute changes.

WEDNESDAY 8TH JULY – Main Conference

Session name	Day	Date	Start	End	Paper Ids	Location
TRACK - AI	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	09:00	10:30	67, 181, 210, 327, 347	93.20 - West
TRACK - CCT	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	09:00	10:30	59, 77, 256, 342, 394	93.20 - East
TRACK - Consumer Research	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	09:00	10:30	40, 239, 288, 338, 378	Chairman's Club
TRACK - Consumer Research	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	09:00	10:30	70, 93, 173, 372, 408	Joe's East
TRACK - Digital Marketing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	09:00	10:30	15, 87, 156, 305	Joe's West
TRACK - Marketing Pedagogy	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	09:00	10:30	137, 185, 229, 321, 388	Mancunian Suite
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	09:00	10:30	227, 247, 292, 308	Manager's Corner
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	09:00	10:30	102, 143, 237	Box 36/37 West
TRACK - Retail & Services Marketing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	09:00	10:30	109, 118, 221, 230	The Ardwick
TRACK - AI	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	11:00	12:30	56, 125, 284, 333	Manager's Corner
TRACK - AM Funded Research	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	11:00	12:30	52, 126, 251, 411, 412	Mancunian Suite
TRACK - Brands & Branding	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	11:00	12:30	49, 190	Legends West
TRACK - Consumer Research	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	11:00	12:30	108, 142, 212, 337	Joe's East
TRACK - Digital Marketing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	11:00	12:30	241, 287, 366, 383, 405	Joe's West
TRACK - Marketing Pedagogy	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	11:00	12:30	113, 192, 200, 407	Box 36/37 West
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	11:00	12:30	10, 124, 205, 380	93.20 - West
TRACK - Retail & Services Marketing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	11:00	12:30	7, 66, 105, 223, 265	93.20 - East
TRACK - Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	11:00	12:30	38, 220, 299, 300	The Ardwick
TRACK - Tourism & Place Marketing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	11:00	12:30	47, 73	Legends East
TRACK - Advertising & Marketing Communications	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	14:15	15:15	122, 157, 269	Manager's Corner
TRACK - AM Funded Research	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	14:15	15:15	48, 213, 232	Mancunian Suite
TRACK - Digital Marketing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	14:15	15:15	134, 146, 309	Joe's West
TRACK - Marketing in Context	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	14:15	15:15	97, 160, 301	93.20 - East
TRACK - Marketing Pedagogy	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	14:15	15:15	324, 335, 374	93.20 - West
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	14:15	15:15	373, 376, 381	Chairman's Club
TRACK - Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	14:15	15:15	32, 43, 64	Joe's East
TRACK - Tourism & Place Marketing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	14:15	15:15	19, 150, 252	Box 36/37 West
TRACK - Advertising & Marketing Communications	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	15:45	16:45	248, 387	Manager's Corner
TRACK - AI	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	15:45	16:45	167, 178, 318	93.20 - West
TRACK - B2B & Business Networks	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	15:45	16:45	355, 362	Box 36/37 West
TRACK - Consumer Research	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	15:45	16:45	94, 96, 409	Mancunian Suite
TRACK - Digital Marketing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	15:45	16:45	121, 413	Joe's West
TRACK - Marketing in Context	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	15:45	16:45	165, 364, 371	93.20 - East
TRACK - Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	15:45	16:45	55, 295	The Ardwick
TRACK - Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	15:45	16:45	194, 228, 270	Joe's East

THURSDAY 9TH JULY – Main Conference

Session name	Day	Date	Start	End	Paper Ids	Location
TRACK - Advertising & Marketing Communications	Thursday	9th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	35, 101, 171, 367	Mancunian Suite
TRACK - CCT	Thursday	9th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	39, 193, 344	Manager's Corner
TRACK - Consumer Research	Thursday	9th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	82, 198, 368, 375	Chairman's Club
TRACK - Political Marketing	Thursday	9th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	50, 172, 249	93.20 - East
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Thursday	9th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	154, 246, 346, 391	93.20 - West
TRACK - Retail & Services Marketing	Thursday	9th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	34, 289, 315, 322	Joe's East
TRACK - Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing	Thursday	9th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	31, 76, 279	Joe's West
TRACK - Tourism & Place Marketing	Thursday	9th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	103, 316	The Ardwick
TRACK - AI	Thursday	9th Jul 26	11:30	13:00	202, 360, 384, 400	Mancunian Suite
TRACK - Brands & Branding	Thursday	9th Jul 26	11:30	13:00	183, 298	The Ardwick
TRACK - CCT	Thursday	9th Jul 26	11:30	13:00	199, 204, 268	Manager's Corner
TRACK - Consumer Research	Thursday	9th Jul 26	11:30	13:00	233, 285, 290, 353	Chairman's Club
TRACK - Marketing Pedagogy	Thursday	9th Jul 26	11:30	13:00	30, 195, 217, 255	Joe's East
TRACK - Marketing Pedagogy	Thursday	9th Jul 26	11:30	13:00	11, 310, 386	Joe's West
TRACK - Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing	Thursday	9th Jul 26	11:30	13:00	136, 174, 191, 399	93.20 - East
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Thursday	9th Jul 26	11:30	13:00	23, 114	93.20 - West

Special Sessions

Session name	Day	Date	Start	End	Location
SPECIAL SESSION - The Black Box Studio: Investigating Invisible AI in Marketing Education	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	Legends Lounge
SPECIAL SESSION - Digital Intimacy and Immersive Commerce: Theoretical Advances in Consumer Engagement Through Virtual and Social Technologies	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	13:15	14:45	Chairman's Club
SPECIAL SESSION - Wonder, Work, and the Machine: Designing the Future of Marketing Education	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	13:15	14:45	Legends Lounge
SPECIAL SESSION - Boundary spanning – exploring interdisciplinary innovation between marketing and tourism	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	15:15	16:45	Legends Lounge
SPECIAL SESSION - Real-World Data Analytics and Insights: Methods and Applications for Social Change	Tuesday	7th Jul 26	15:15	16:45	Chairman's Club
SPECIAL SESSION - The Engaged Marketing Scholar: Challenges and Pathways to Co-creating Impact	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	09:00	10:30	Legends Lounge
SPECIAL SESSION - Making Marketing Research Matter: Pathways to Impact	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	11:00	12:30	Legends Lounge
SPECIAL SESSION - Co-Creating the Future of Sustainability Marketing: Building the Sustainability SIG Showcase Community	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	11:00	12:30	Chairman's Club
SPECIAL SESSION - The Impact of Marketing Education: Mapping Systems, Connections and Strategic Implications	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	14:15	16:45	Legends Lounge
ECR Networking Session	Wednesday	8th Jul 26	15:45	16:45	Chairman's Club
SPECIAL SESSION - Teaching Your Way Forward: Strategic Career Development for Marketing Academics	Thursday	9th Jul 26	09:30	11:00	Legends Lounge
SPECIAL SESSION - From Word-of-Mouth (WOM) to Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) to Electronic Word-of-Mouth 2.0 (eWOM 2.0)	Thursday	9th Jul 26	11:30	13:00	Legends Lounge

Competitive Short Papers for Oral Presentation

2

Digital Channel Infrastructure and Depth of Users' Patronage: Nuances from Customers of Domestic Airline Sector

Andy Fred Wali[1], Obabuike Ikeni Nkpurukwe[2], Anatasia Yinduwa Ikyabo[2]

[1]Department of Marketing, Faculty of Administration and Management, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. [2]Department of Business Administration, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

This study examines digital channel infrastructure and depth of users' patronage: Nuances from customers of domestic airline sector, specifically it explores the impact of website usability, accessibility, and reliability on users' patronage, which offers fresh insights regarding the interaction between website usability, accessibility and reliability when it comes to customer patronage in emerging economy's domestic airline sector.

Competitive Short Paper

The domestic airline sector significantly contributes to Nigeria's economy, yet the role of digital infrastructure in shaping customer patronage within the aforementioned sector is underexplored. Specifically, it contributes about N184.7 billion to GDP annually and over one hundred and fifty thousand direct employments and over three hundred thousand indirect jobs (Wali and Nwokah, 2017; Nkpurukwe et al., 2020). This contribution to national GDP reveals potential for greater impact at macro, micro and messo levels of the Nigeria economy respectively if more foreign direct investments are attracted into the sector (Elias et al., 2015; 2023). This study adopts the socio-technical systems theory (SST) Steven (2015) as the lens for understanding digital channel infrastructure which suggest the interplay between technology and humans within an organization as it recognises that digital infrastructure is shaped by people with capabilities, who work towards goals, follow processes, use technology, operate within a physical infrastructure, and share cultural (Paulo, Martin., Ali & Steve, 2019).

On the other hand, the theory of Reasoned Action Brian, Zuoming & Camille (2012) was adopted as the lens for customer patronage. The TRA aimed to predict how customers will behave based on their pre-existing attitudes and behavioral expectations, that is customers' decision to engage in a particular behavior is influenced by customers' expectation and deliverable performance from service suppliers. In Nigeria digital infrastructure usage level is at 40%–50% Nigerian Communications Commission, (NCC. Q3. 2022) and between 2022 to 2024 40%-45% (NCC, Q4. 2024). This high penetration is driven largely driven by young adult between ages of 17 and 45 years, but despite this depth of adoption and usage, there appears to be some decline and absence of research into digital channel infrastructure and depth of users' patronage drawing from the experiences of customers of domestic airline service providers specifically from the SST and TRA lenses specifically using lack of website accessibility, reliability and usability among customers (Wali and Nwokah, 2017; Olaleye et al., 2018).

Research Strategy

The quantitative research strategy was adopted, data were collected from 1300 airline customers participants using survey monkey, specifically, through some strict ethical arrangement between the lead researcher and the management of 5 domestic airlines received 1100 emails of customers and inputted into the online data collection infrastructure and 200 participants from researchers pool of post graduate students who patronize domestic airline services and 985 were fully completed and retrieved. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used in testing the hypotheses with the support SPSS version 25.0.

Findings

Results demonstrate that website usability and reliability both showed strong and positive correlation on customer patronage although accessibility showed moderate correlation yet meaningful correlation. The research demonstrates how intuitive website design along with performance consistency and accessible readiness play an essential part in creating loyal customers. However, on the other side, trust suggest to be a strong game changer in wining customer patronage within the digital infrastructure space.

3

Depth of open innovation and Service performance: A Comparative Experience from UK and Nigeria's SME Manufacturing Sector

Andy Fred Wali[1], Idika Awa Uduma[2], Atswenbuma Agyo[3]

[1]Department of Marketing, Faculty of Administration and Management, Rivers State University, Nigeria. [2]University of Exeter, United Kingdom. [3]Department of Business Administration, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

Track: 9. Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Summary Statement

This study examines the impact of depth of open innovation and service performance: a comparative experience from UK and Nigeria's SME Manufacturing Sector. The objectives are to examine: (a) If the Adoption of Depth dimension of open innovation

will have a Curvilinear relationship with the incremental Product performance of SMEs. (b) If more radical innovation, will have more significant influence of depth of external collaboration on the product performance of SMEs in both countries

Competitive Short Paper

This study examines the impact of depth of open innovation and service performance: a comparative experience from UK and Nigeria's SME Manufacturing Sector. The underpinning theories are the user innovation theory Von Hipple (1986), dynamic capability concept Teece, Pisano & Shuen (1997) and transformative capacity concept Garud and Nayyar (1994). The objectives are to examine: *(a) If the Adoption of Depth dimension of open innovation will have a Curvilinear relationship with the incremental Product performance of SMEs. (b) If more radical innovation, will have more significant influence of depth of external collaboration on the product performance of SMEs in both countries.* We adopted the survey approach and we sampled from 41 senior staff respectively from the UK and Nigeria SME sector making it 80 using survey questionnaire. Thereafter the collected primary data were analysed using SPSS version 25. Findings show that: (a) depth of open innovation has a curvilinear relationship with radical and incremental service performance both in UK and Nigeria (b) there is a positive moderating effect of radical innovation on the influence of depth of open innovation on UK SMEs service performance, whereas in Nigeria SME sector we found a weak moderating effect of radical innovation on the influence of depth of open innovation. This comparative study is limited in that it was restricted to only 80 senior managers in the UK and Nigeria SME manufacturing sector, that is we drew 41 samples from the respective countries. Perhaps findings from this study would have presented wider perspective if the study had more than 100 samples. First this study demonstrates that identifying and adopting the right dimension of open innovation and specifically the type of innovation that is suitable by SMEs in both climes would bring about more successful product innovations adoption thereby contributing to UK and Nigeria economic good on one hand and providing citizens with competitive product offerings. Also, it has empirically established the evidence of the existence of a curvilinear relationship between the depth open innovation and product performance in both countries and supports existing findings. Again, it exposes SME policy makers in both countries on the need to identify, adopt and pursue a deeper relationship with relevant innovation partners in the product development process for the purpose of mutuality and progressive innovations, more importantly in radically product transformation process. This study is adjudged to be the first to establish comparative evidence that there is an existence of a curvilinear relationship between the depth of open innovation and service performance in the UK and Nigeria SME manufacturing sector.

5

Chew for Me, Slurp for Me, Swallow for Me: Vicarious Listening in Mukbang

Gerard Ryan

Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Spain

Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This paper examines mukbang as vicarious consumption organised through sound. Close listening to 24 YouTube videos shows how amplified chewing, slurping and swallowing create a keepable rhythm that lets viewers co-time, "*eat-with*," and feel parasocial intimacy. We theorise sonic commensality and introduce formatted audibility: the platform-shaped configuration of ingestion sounds that governs nearness and etiquette. The paper advances the sonic turn in consumer research and clarifies how audio infrastructures shape online consumption and purchase intentions.

6

Listening to Waiting Rooms

Gerard Ryan

Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Spain

Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This paper listens to the quiet that sits under fluorescent lights and ticket numbers, and shows how it shapes what waiting feels like. Across an emergency room, a clinic and a car dealership, we use recordings and careful listening to track "silence mechanisms": the low hum that sets what can be heard, the beeps and name calls that punctuate time, and the hush that makes small sounds feel exposed. Silence, we argue, quietly governs waiting.

7

Stillness in Motion: The Hidden Choreography of Consumer Waiting

Gerard Ryan

Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Spain

Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

This study reconceptualizes consumer waiting as an embodied "choreography" rather than a mere cognitive appraisal of time. Using sensory ethnography and a "Somatic Audit" of a high-density service queue, we analyze the physical labor of stillness. By translating these observations into a movement score with a professional dancer, we expose the "somatic burden" of waiting, offering a diagnostic tool to identify how service environments physically disable or discipline consumers.

9

Effective Marketing Strategies for Localising Sport Merchandise Brands in China

Xin Zhang, Doyoung Pyun, Sahar Mousavi
Loughborough University, United Kingdom

Track: 10. Marketing in Context (e.g., Food, Sport)

Summary Statement

This study investigates how foreign and Chinese sport merchandise brands operationalise localised marketing strategies in China. Using interviews with managers and consumers, it identifies localised cultural authenticity, localised community relationships, localised social commerce, and place attachment as key strategies enhancing perceived brand localness. The findings enrich the brand localisation literature and provide actionable insights for firms operating in culturally complex markets.

Competitive Short Paper

The sport merchandise brand (SMB) market in China is characterised by intense competition, high homogenisation, and rapidly evolving consumer expectations, compelling both foreign and Chinese SMBs to adopt culturally embedded localised marketing strategies. Prior research indicates that localisation enhances perceived brand localness (PBL) and consumer emotional engagement (Swoboda et al., 2012; Han, 2023), while activating local identity to stimulate impulsive purchasing behaviour (De Vries & Fennis, 2020). However, existing studies often examine localisation from either a consumer or managerial perspective in isolation, offering limited insight into how local branding is systematically operationalised within the sport merchandise sector. This study addresses this gap by exploring how SMBs develop effective localised marketing strategies to enhance PBL and strengthen consumer–brand relationships in China

The study is theoretically grounded in Schmidt-Devlin et al.'s (2022) omni-brand orientation framework, adopting local authenticity as its core analytical construct. Local authenticity is conceptualised through four dimensions: brand image local connection, local iconness, local insights, and originality. Brand image local connection refers to consumers' perceptions of a brand's embeddedness within local culture and its alignment with local values, closely linked to evaluations of brand genuineness and cultural congruence (Napoli et al., 2014). Local iconness reflects the symbolic significance of local figures, places, and narratives in shaping market authenticity (Grayson & Martinec, 2004). Local insights capture a brand's understanding of local consumer lifestyles, preferences, and socio-cultural contexts, enabling more relevant market responses. Originality emphasises innovation tailored to local market needs rather than imitation (Saeki et al., 2001). Together, these dimensions provide a robust framework for examining localisation in culturally complex markets

A qualitative research design was employed to capture multi-stakeholder perspectives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight senior managers from foreign SMBs (Nike China, Adidas China, Puma China, Under Armour China) and leading Chinese SMBs (Li-Ning, Erke, Xtep, Peak), as well as twelve Chinese consumers actively engaged in sport-related consumption. Data were analysed using NVivo 14 through open and axial coding to identify key themes and strategic patterns

The findings identify four localised marketing strategies that enhance PBL. First, localised cultural authenticity is achieved by integrating city-specific symbols and cultural heritage into product design and communication, strengthening emotional resonance. Second, localised community relationships are developed through collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organisations, enhancing trust and institutional legitimacy. Third, localised social commerce leverages local digital ecosystems and consumption rituals aligned with Chinese consumers' behavioural motivations. Finally, place attachment reinforces consumer–brand relationships through sustained engagement in sport events and location-based experiences, drawing on place dependence and place identity (Prayag & Ryan, 2012)

Theoretically, this study extends the application of local authenticity to the sport merchandise context, demonstrating its operationalisation as a multidimensional strategic construct. Practically, it offers actionable insights for foreign and Chinese SMBs seeking culturally resonant, competitive, and sustainable marketing strategies in China.

10

Customer Experience and Continued Use of E-waste Recycling App

Yvonne S.M. Ang, Amily Fikry
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors leading to continued e-waste recycling mobile app use and to understand the effects of customer experience on app loyalty. Therefore, the Extended Model of IT Continuance is integrated with experiential elements in digital customer experience (CX). Overall, Value in Use, Customer Loyalty and Satisfaction emerged to be the key constructs in this model based on their effect sizes.

Competitive Short Paper

The exponential growth of e-waste has created an urgency for action given that only about 20% of e-waste is recycled globally. E-waste requires specialized processing to address harmful materials such as heavy metals which pose serious risks to living beings if released into the environment without proper treatment. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the factors leading to continued e-waste recycling mobile app use and to understand the effects of customer experience on app loyalty.

Therefore, the Extended Model of IT Continuance (Bhattacherjee, 2001; Bhattacherjee & Lin, 2015) is integrated with experiential elements in digital customer experience (CX) (Japutra et al., 2021). IT continuance is shaped by the principle of user satisfaction driving continued use while the CX elements represent user experience on the app beyond its functionality. The combination of these elements provides a holistic approach to understanding continued use of the e-waste recycling app. This study uses a quantitative approach, in which an online questionnaire was employed. Using non-probability purposive sampling, respondents who have recycled e-waste using a mobile app were recruited. Respondents were adults aged 18 years old to 60 years old. From a sample size of 250, a total of 238 respondent data points were retained after data cleaning. The data was then analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4 software to evaluate the causal relationships between multiple latent variables. The results indicate that Perceived Usefulness, Satisfaction and IT Self-Efficacy positively influence Continuance Intention. Additionally, Continuance Intention led to the performance of e-waste recycling behaviour but not Facilitating Conditions. The CX factors Interactivity, Sensory Experiential State and Affective Experiential State had a positive and significant effect on Value in Use. Also, Value in Use significantly influenced Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty towards the Retailer's App. The largest effects sizes were observed for the relationship between Value in Use and Customer Loyalty towards the Retailer's App, and between Value in Use and Satisfaction. Furthermore, large effect sizes were observed for the relationship between Interactivity and Value in Use, and IT Self-Efficacy and Continuance Intention. Based on the effect sizes, Value in Use emerged to be the key construct in this model suggesting that users gained superior value from using the app to recycle e-waste. In summary, the factors which contribute to e-waste recycling app Continuance Intention is reflective of the baseline assertions for which the theory is built on. The IT Continuance Model was built from underlying principles of the Expectation Disconfirmation Theory in which reuse intention is shaped from user satisfaction. Additionally, the significance of IT Self-Efficacy indicates the user's ability to complete e-waste recycling tasks using the app, proving to be a crucial factor in Continuance Intention. Finally, CX factors also emerged to be important in shaping Value in Use which then led to user loyalty towards the app.

11

Reframing Sustainability in Marketing Education: A Practice-Based Pedagogical Matrix for and from Egypt

Noha Saada, Maha Mourad

The American University in Cairo, Egypt

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This proposal explores the importance of contextualising sustainability in higher education marketing curricula. It draws on qualitative interviews, using a Social Practice Theory lens to understand cultural resonance and pedagogical gaps. Findings show that global SDG-oriented terminology often feels foreign when imported into different contexts. Hence, a Sustainability Terminology Matrix is proposed that aligns global competences with local values, providing a practice-based tool to contextualise sustainability pedagogy in Egypt and Global South settings.

15

How Authentic Social Media Influencers Shape Body Image Appreciation

Georgios Tsimonis[1], Serena Ripandelli[2]

[1]Loughborough University, Loughborough Business School, United Kingdom. [2]Loughborough University, School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, United Kingdom

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

This study examines how perceived authenticity of female influencers affects body image and beauty standards. Using structural equation modelling with validated scales (N=134; 113 females, 21 males), perceived authenticity significantly predicted body image appreciation (β = .23, p = .030) but not beauty standards internalisation. These findings suggest authentic influencer content enhances body appreciation without challenging societal beauty ideals, revealing potentially distinct psychological pathways. Future research should examine gender as a moderator of these effects.

Competitive Short Paper

Social media influencers have become powerful figures in shaping how people view themselves and their bodies (Audrezet et al., 2020). Whilst much research has examined how influencers affect consumer purchasing behaviours, far less attention has been paid to their impact on wellbeing outcomes (Jamil et al., 2024; Vrontis et al., 2021), particularly body image appreciation and internalisation of beauty standards. This study explores whether the perceived authenticity of female influencers influences these wellbeing measures.

Authenticity in influencer marketing has been identified as a critical factor that determines follower engagement and trust (Lee & Eastin, 2021). However, authenticity is not simple or one-dimensional. Lee and Eastin (2021) identified five distinct dimensions: sincerity, truthful endorsements, visibility, expertise, and uniqueness. Despite this complexity, previous research has largely treated authenticity as a single construct (Ilicic & Webster, 2016; Moulard et al., 2016). This study examines authenticity as a multidimensional higher-order construct to test how overall perceived authenticity affects body image and beauty standards.

We surveyed 134 UK participants (113 females, 21 males) aged 18-65 who actively use social media and had recently interacted with a female influencer. Participants completed validated measures including the Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2) (Tylka

& Wood-Barcalow, 2015), the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-4-Revised (SATAQ-4R) (Schaefer et al., 2017), and Lee and Eastin's (2021) five-dimensional authenticity scale. A second-order confirmatory factor analysis was conducted where the five authenticity dimensions loaded onto a higher-order 'perceived authenticity' factor. Structural equation modelling tested whether perceived authenticity predicted body image appreciation and beauty standards internalisation.

The measurement model demonstrated good fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.49$, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .060). All five authenticity dimensions loaded significantly onto the second-order perceived authenticity factor, i.e., standardised loadings: .57 – .76 (Hair et al., 2010). Harman's single-factor test indicated that the first factor accounted for 19.43% of variance, well below the 50% threshold, suggesting common method bias is not a concern (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Overall perceived authenticity significantly predicted body image appreciation ($\beta = .23$, $p = .030$), indicating that when female influencers are perceived as more authentic, their followers report higher body appreciation. However, perceived authenticity did not predict internalisation of beauty standards ($p > .05$). This pattern suggests that authentic influencer content may help people feel more positive about their bodies without disrupting their acceptance of societal beauty ideals. This distinction reveals that body image appreciation and beauty standards internalisation might respond to different mechanisms.

This research extends influencer marketing research beyond purchase intentions to wellbeing outcomes, demonstrating that perceived authenticity operates as a cohesive higher-order construct affecting body appreciation. Practically, these results offer guidance for digital marketers and social media platforms seeking to leverage authentic influencer partnerships to support consumer wellbeing. Understanding how influencer authenticity affects wellbeing is increasingly important as digital marketing on highly visual social media platforms becomes central to young people's daily lives (Choukas-Bradley et al., 2022). Future research should examine whether gender moderates these relationships, given the predominantly female sample.

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The impact of AI Overview Search Engine Result Page Features on Website Traffic

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

This research aims to compare the impacts of AI overview, organic and people also ask search engine result page (SERP) features on click through rate (CTR) to a destination marketing website. The result of analyzing 4938 keywords ranking the website first on one of the three SERP features in five countries reveals that organic feature remains the highest source of traffic and the CTR of AI overview SERP feature differs by users' country of origin.

Competitive Short Paper

Search engine optimisation (SEO) studies have advanced the knowledge on the techniques that promote websites by getting a higher rank and more clicks from organic search results on Search Engine Result Pages (SERP). User intent, search characteristics, page rank and website characteristics are among many other factors that may increase the click through rate (CTR) and increase the number of organic clicks to a website. Recently, SERP features include AI overview with links to source pages, presenting an opportunity for the website to appear at the top of search results. However, research that investigate how the AI overview feature is impacting the CTR are limited. Thus, the aim of this research is to compare the influences of AI overview, organic and people also ask SERP features on CTR. Also, our objective is to compare if the results remain the same whether the users are visiting the website from different countries. We have used the destination marketing website "VisitBritain" and examined the CTR of 4938 keywords that rank the website first on one of the three SERP features in five countries including Germany, France, Italy, United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (US). The results of the univariate analysis of variance indicate that the CTRs differ significantly between the types of SERP features ($F = 1948.49$; $p < 0.001$), countries ($F = 20.79$; $p < 0.001$) and the interaction between types of SERP features and countries ($F = 2.72$; $p < 0.001$). CTR of organic SERP feature (Mean = 16.7) is significantly higher than AI overview (Mean = 4.2) and people also ask (Mean = 2.4). Users from France (Mean = 9.3) have significantly higher overall CTR than Germany (Mean = 7.7), UK (Mean = 7.3) and US (Mean = 6.1). Finally, the CTR for AI overview was the highest for France users (Mean = 5.5) and the lowest for US (Mean = 3.0). For organic SERP features, the CTR remains the highest for France users (Mean = 19.1) and lowest for US users (Mean = 14.1). France users have the highest CTR (Mean = 3.3) for people also ask SERP feature significantly higher than the lowest US (Mean = 1.4) users. The findings of this study provide new insights into how the AI overview features on SERP may influence the CTR and organic clicks to a website. Although, the AI overview SERP feature drives traffic to the website, the organic feature remains the highest source of traffic. Further, the CTR of AI overview SERP feature differs by users' country of origin. Therefore, SEO practitioners may develop unique keyword ranking strategies that rank their website on different types of SERP features depending on the user characteristics. Users from France may rely more on the AI overview feature, driving more traffic to the website, signaling higher adoption of AI results and suggestions. Overall, our study contributes to the current discussion about the AI overview feature that drives traffic to the website and compares user behaviours from five different countries.

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From Politika to Popcorn: A Study of the Evolution of Tour Guide Performance at European Communist Heritage Sites.

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper explores the evolution of tour guide performance after revolution. Drawing on two geographical case studies, Berlin and Bucharest, and thirty-two walking interviews, the work reveals the epochal nature of performance against the backdrop of the demise of communism and new political tensions in Europe. Notably, the work introduces new performance-based aspects, such as 'suppression' and 'depersonalisation', into the performative taxonomy, and reveals the realities of presenting 'popcorn communism' at Communist heritage sites.

Competitive Short Paper

The role of the tour guide and their performance reflects an ongoing and nascent theme in the tourism literature (Thomas & Daunt, 2024). Interactions with visitors constitute a significant body of literature, with an emphasis on the ongoing development of the role and its enhancement of the tourist experience (Gratch, 2020). We seek to explore performance and guide/tourist interactions in the context of surviving, curating, and reassembling political-revolution communist heritage sites (Wilson & Látková, 2015). Despite the demise of Communism presenting a tourist opportunity to engage with the monuments of totalitarianism (Debruyne & Nazarska, 2024), no work has explored tour guide performance in these contexts. Studies to date that have encompassed tourism post revolution and post communism have focused on market development (Li et al., 2025), ideological manipulation (Tang et al., 2025), nostalgia (Čaušević, 2019), the dangers of commodification (Williams & Baláž, 2001), and employment and labour market transition (Szivas & Riley, 1999) and all with a geographic focus on China (see Sun & Lv, 2025 for recent contributions). This work focuses on guides as historical agents. It explores the impact of witnessing both temporal and foundational transitions in European politics, the curating of these experiences, and the possible evolution of performative demands over the three and a half decades since the revolution on European soil.

This paper examines the evolution of tour guide performance against the backdrop of experiences and curations of both peaceful and violent political revolutions, current political unrest, and the rise of the far right in Europe. Using two geographical case studies (Berlin, Germany, and Bucharest, Romania), data are drawn from 32 walking interviews. Tour guides in Bucharest (12) and Berlin (20) were selected for their firsthand experience of the collapse of the Soviet regimes and their willingness to provide testimonies, visions, and autobiographical memories, and to reveal how those memories are integrated into 'performance'.

Our analysis reveals key dynamics between the guide and the tourist. It presents new performance-based aspects, including addressing the compulsion to mourn, maintaining personal relevance, expurgation (of reality), avoiding victimhood, addressing moral injury, and habitual suppression of lived experience. Additionally, data indicate that 'western tourists' thrive on 'myth,' archetypes of Soviet hegemony, and communist 'fiction'. Performances are modified to conform to 'western' historical reasoning, including periodisation, epochalism, and the need to demonise communism. Data indicates that guides, dependent on historical context, suppress their own lived experiences to facilitate tourist expectations of exaggerated 'Bolshevization' and 'Stalinization', providing groups with 'Popcorn Communism' as part of a process of personal suppression. Moreover, data suggests that there is no appetite among 'transient' visitors for overt personalisation, with guides expressing concerns about perceptions of victimhood and the risk of negative reviews. Our research offers new insight into the role of guides at communist heritage sites. It examines how both historical and contemporary geopolitical events have shaped and continue to shape tour guide performance and the communist heritage sites.

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Does One Rotten Apple Spoil The Whole Barrel?: A Grounded Theory Study On The Impact Of Perceived Greenwashing Communications On Thai Consumers' Responses

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This grounded theory study examines how Thai consumers respond to greenwashing and whether exposure undermines trust in authentic green brands. Through interviews with 25 participants, research develops the "Green Screening" theory, revealing consumers critically evaluate brands based on Time, Talk, and Walk dimensions. A "Horn Spillover Effect" affects brands with weak green credentials while established brands remain protected. Findings suggest greenwashing fosters discerning rather than wholesale scepticism, offering implications for sustainable marketing in developing markets.

Competitive Short Paper

Greenwashing—the practice of misleading consumers about environmental benefits—undermines genuine sustainability efforts by eroding trust in green marketing communications (Seele & Gatti, 2017). Research demonstrates that greenwashing damages individual brand credibility (Chen & Chang, 2013) and creates spillover effects that generate industry-wide scepticism (Wang et al., 2020). However, limited research examines whether greenwashing creates lasting damage to genuinely sustainable brands, particularly in developing countries where regulatory oversight is weak and consumer awareness remains limited.

This study addresses a critical gap by investigating how Thai consumers respond to greenwashing and whether such exposure undermines trust in authentic green brands. Focusing on Thailand as a developing market context—where green marketing is emerging and regulations are less stringent than in developed markets—the research asks: Does one rotten apple spoil the whole barrel?

Using grounded theory methodology, this study conducted comprehensive in-depth interviews with 25 participants across two phases. Participants were exposed to advertisements previously labelled as greenwashing by the UK Advertising Standards Authority, followed by advertisements from genuinely sustainable brands. Phase one involved 15 participants aged 35-50, while phase two recruited 10 additional participants aged 22-34 and 51-70. Company logos were concealed in the second phase to eliminate brand recognition bias. Data were analysed through open coding, selective coding, and constant comparison to develop emergent theoretical concepts.

The study develops the "Green Screening" theory, revealing that once consumers recognise their greenwashing exposure, they experience significant confusion and declining trust, leading to critical brand evaluation based on three dimensions: Time (brand's historical commitment to sustainability), Talk (public discourse and media coverage about environmental reputation), and Walk (demonstrable environmental actions). A "Horn Spillover Effect" emerges as consumers assume all green advertisements may be misleading—however, this effect does not impact brands with strong green reputations. The theory demonstrates that credibility depends less on advertisement content and more on the brand's overall environmental track record.

Regarding purchase intentions, the theory suggests that while green brand reputation plays a crucial role, consumers are also influenced by product familiarity and quality trust. When these elements align with strong Time, Talk, and Walk performance, consumers make confident purchasing decisions.

The findings offer a more optimistic perspective than prior literature suggests. While greenwashing creates confusion, it also fosters discerning consumer mindsets rather than wholesale market rejection. One rotten apple does not necessarily spoil the whole barrel—consumers develop sophisticated screening processes that protect brands with established credentials while exposing those with weak environmental records.

This research contributes an original theoretical framework deepening understanding of greenwashing's systemic impact in developing markets. For practitioners, new green brands should focus on consistent communication building Time recognition, emphasise tangible actions for Talk, and demonstrate verifiable sustainable practices for Walk. High-recognition brands benefit from simplified messaging, as consumers focus directly on brand reputation. Mid-level brands should balance advertising elements with ongoing green action communication.

The study addresses calls for research examining greenwashing in emerging economies where these challenges are overlooked, providing actionable insights for fostering transparent green marketing practices where regulatory frameworks are developing.

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When Do Domestic Brands Feel More Satisfying? Consumer Ethnocentrism as a Boundary Condition Linking Brand Equity, Satisfaction, and Loyalty

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Track: 5. Brands & Branding

Summary Statement

Grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response and Expectation–Confirmation frameworks, this study examines how experiential marketing-mix cues shape consumer-based brand equity, satisfaction, and loyalty toward domestic wellness beverage brands in India. Using survey data from 679 shoppers, the findings show that strong marketing execution enhances brand equity and satisfaction, which drive loyalty outcomes. Consumer ethnocentrism significantly strengthens the brand equity–satisfaction–loyalty pathway, positioning it as a key boundary condition in domestic brand evaluation.

Competitive Short Paper

Grounded in Stimulus-Organism-Response and Expectation-Confirmation Theory, this study investigates how experiential marketing-mix cues influence consumer-based brand equity (CBBE), satisfaction, and loyalty toward homegrown non-alcoholic beverage brands, and how these relationships are contingent upon consumer ethnocentrism.

Data were collected through a cross-sectional survey of 679 shoppers across 18 hypermarkets in five major Indian cities and analyzed using covariance-based structural equation modeling with moderation analysis.

The findings reveal that the joint salience of product availability, in-store accessibility, value-oriented pricing, and promotional communication significantly enhances CBBE, which subsequently leads to higher consumer satisfaction. Satisfaction, in turn, emerges as a key driver of both brand advocacy and repurchase intention.

Further, the CBBE–satisfaction–loyalty pathway is significantly stronger among highly ethnocentric consumers, whereas consumers with lower ethnocentric tendencies display weaker responsiveness to domestic-origin cues.

From a theoretical perspective, the study integrates expectation–confirmation mechanisms within the Stimulus Organism Response framework and positions consumer ethnocentrism as a critical boundary condition that links cognitive brand evaluations to behavioral loyalty responses, thereby extending existing perspectives on nationalist consumption behavior.

From a managerial standpoint, the results suggest that domestic brands should emphasize transparent value-based pricing, frictionless distribution, and sustained promotional efforts to strengthen brand equity and satisfaction. In contrast, global brands seeking relevance in domestic markets should co-create locally resonant flavors and foreground credible sustainability initiatives to effectively engage both ethnocentric and cosmopolitan consumer segments.

Against this backdrop, the present study addresses the following research questions within India's Wellness-focused beverage market, a context characterized by intensifying competition between domestic and global brands:

RQ1. How do experiential marketing stimuli influence consumer satisfaction through their effects on cognitive evaluations of consumer-based brand equity for domestic Wellness-focused beverage brands?

RQ2. To what extent does consumer ethnocentrism condition (a) the relationship between consumer-based brand equity and satisfaction and (b) the relationship between satisfaction and subsequent loyalty-related behavioral intentions?

This study demonstrates that favorable evaluations of the marketing mix play a pivotal role in building consumer-based brand equity, which subsequently translates into heightened satisfaction and sustained loyalty toward domestic non-alcoholic beverage brands.

Importantly, consumer ethnocentrism emerges not only as a direct positive driver of loyalty-related outcomes but also as a reinforcing mechanism that amplifies the effects of brand equity and satisfaction along the pathway to loyalty formation.

Collectively, these findings advance extant theory by integrating the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework, Expectation–Confirmation Theory, and identity-based perspectives, thereby offering a more comprehensive explanation of how cognitive evaluations, affective responses, and social identity cues jointly shape consumer behavior in domestic brand contexts.

From a managerial standpoint, the results underscore the importance for brands to align high-quality market execution with authentic, identity-affirming signals, enabling consumers to perceive domestic brands as both functionally reliable and symbolically meaningful.

By strategically combining operational excellence with culturally resonant positioning, firms can transform transient brand encounters into enduring consumer commitment, even within increasingly hybrid, globalized marketplace environments.

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Algorithmic Literacy in Marketing Education: A Competency Framework for Future Marketers

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This paper addresses the growing misalignment between marketing education and algorithmic market realities. Drawing on Transformative Learning Theory, it introduces the Algorithmic Consumer Competency Framework (ACCF), comprising AI Understanding, Collaborative Agency, and Ethical Sensibility. The framework equips future marketers to critically interrogate algorithms, co-create value with AI systems, and govern ethical risks. The study offers curriculum design pathways and pedagogical tools to prepare graduates for responsible, strategic participation in AI-mediated marketplaces.

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Can AI Foster Belonging? Exploring GenAI's Impact on Disability Inclusion and Well-Being

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This research examines how generative AI influences subjective social inclusion, well-being, and human-AI relationships among people with disabilities. Through interviews with 15 PWDs and 20 experts, findings reveal GenAI promotes emotional acceptance, belonging, and empowerment beyond functional accessibility. While PWDs develop parasocial bonds with AI as companions, experts caution against overdependence.

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Inclusive Destination Services (IDS): An Ecosystem-based Scale Development and Validation

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This paper conceptualizes inclusive tourism as a systemic marketing capability rather than a facility-level attribute. Adopting a service ecosystem lens, it develops and validates a destination-level measurement scale for inclusive tourism using Borobudur Temple, Indonesia, as a case. Following established scale development procedures, the study identifies five core dimensions of inclusive destination service. The findings provide a validated ecosystem-level measurement tool and offer destination marketers a diagnostic framework to enhance value creation for underserved segments.

Competitive Short Paper

Inclusive tourism destinations are increasingly recognized not only as a social imperative but also as a strategic market opportunity. From a marketing perspective, inclusive tourism reflects a destination's capability to design, deliver, and coordinate services and infrastructure that enable diverse visitor segments, including people with reduced mobility, older adults, and pregnant women, to participate fully without physical, informational, or economic barriers (Rebelo et al., 2022). Despite this growing attention, travellers with limited mobility continue to experience systemic service failures across the tourism journey, revealing persistent gaps in value creation and experience design (Buhalis & Darcy, 2011).

This study addresses two critical gaps in inclusive service research. First, existing studies predominantly conceptualize inclusivity at the facility or firm level, emphasizing isolated dimensions such as physical accessibility or niche-friendly practices, while overlooking tourism as an end-to-end service system in which exclusion often results from weak inter-actor coordination. Second, although prior research has developed scales for specific aspects of inclusivity—such as service inclusion for tourists with disabilities (Awan et al., 2022) and LGBTIQ-friendly practices in tourism businesses (Sousa-Silva et al., 2024)—a holistic, destination-level assessment remains underexplored. Current measurement approaches fail to capture the ecosystemic nature of inclusive value creation, where responsibility extends beyond destination management organizations (DMOs) to include tour operators, accommodation providers, transport services, and public institutions.

To address these gaps, this study adopts a service ecosystem lens to reconceptualize inclusive tourism as a form of distributed value creation for vulnerable customers (Fisk et al., 2018; Vargo et al., 2023). The study aims to develop and validate a comprehensive measurement scale for inclusive tourism destinations, using the case of Borobudur Temple—one of the largest Buddhist temples in the world, located in Indonesia. It follows established scale development procedures (Churchill, 1979) using both qualitative and quantitative approaches, including: domain definition, item generation, item reduction, and construct purification, as well as the subdivision of constructs into dimensions and initial validation. The qualitative phase involved in-depth interviews with visitors representing key vulnerable customer segments: individuals with disabilities, pregnant women aged 17–50, and older adults aged 51–75, with balanced gender representation. This phase captured nuanced service barriers and enabling factors across the visitor journey. The quantitative phase tested the relative importance of the identified dimensions using an online survey. Stratified sampling was applied across age groups (17–24, 25–50, and 51–75), resulting in a total of 309 participants.

The findings identify five core dimensions of inclusive destination service: (1) effective management of staff, facilities, and information; (2) accessibility of tour operators, accommodations, and transportation; (3) availability of accessible on-site facilities; (4) affordability of accommodation; and (5) accessibility of provided transportation.

This research contributes to inclusive service scholarship by first, extending service ecosystem theory to vulnerable customer contexts. Second, reframing inclusivity as a systemic marketing capability. At last, providing a validated ecosystem-level measurement tool for inclusive destinations. Managerially, it offers destination marketers a diagnostic framework to identify inclusion gaps, redesign service coordination, and expand participation among underserved market segments.

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Revitalising Higher Education Institutions Through a Customer-focused Approach in Pakistan

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

Despite education's central role in the SDGs, dissatisfaction within Pakistan's higher education institutions is increasing. While often attributed to economic instability, this study highlights a critical strategic gap. It demonstrates how a customer-focused approach to strategic planning can enhance student performance, satisfaction, and future outlooks. Using mixed-methods data from interviews and large-scale student surveys, the study demonstrates how customer-centric strategies can improve academic outcomes and institutional effectiveness in Pakistan.

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Cultural Signals and Inclusive Customer Journeys in the Metaverse

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Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

Summary Statement

The metaverse breaks boundaries through immersive and interactive social experiences aimed at building brand awareness. However, the biggest international metaverse platforms are all founded and based in California, USA. Therefore, these environments are largely constructed around Westernized ideals of culture. We question whether users from diverse cultural backgrounds may experience a lack of homophily with a metaverse environment that does not fit their cultural identity, impacting the relationship they form with brands.

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Marketing and the Evolution of Style: Understanding Sustainable Fashion, Influencers, and the Psychology of Consumption among Latin American Centennials. The contribution of the Diffusion of Innovations model.

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This article examines the role of Social Media Influencers in sustainable fashion consumption decisions among Centennials, using the Diffusion of Innovations model and the humanistic marketing perspective. A cross-sectional survey of 639 centennials. Empirically, we analyze survey data on youth sustainable fashion consumption and influencer-related variables, including influencer relevance, platform exposure, and influencer type categories. Findings show that centennials following lifestyle and social oriented social media influencers show stronger interest on sustainable fashion consumption.

Competitive Short Paper

The fashion industry faces a transition from the linear “take-make-dispose” model toward a circular economy as environmental and social pressures mount. Sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12) has moved from a policy aspiration to a market-facing imperative, as firms confront tightening legitimacy expectations from regulators, civil society, and consumers.

Fashion is a particularly relevant arena for SDG 12 because it combines high symbolic value and identity work, rapid turnover cycles, and visibility in digitally mediated social life. In Latin America, this agenda is amplified by structural constraints (income volatility, informality, unequal access to sustainable assortments) and a young demographic profile that positions youth as a potential “tipping cohort” for circular and sufficiency-oriented practices (Cortázar et al., 2025; Gwilt et al., 2019). However, there is a bias toward the Global North in the marketing studies on sustainable fashion consumption (Vladimirova et al., 2024).

The post-pandemic marketplace intensified two intertwined shifts. First, fashion marketing became more platform-centric, with social media operating as retail infrastructure and cultural space, shaping discovery and trend acceleration. Second, the “meaning system” of fashion became increasingly shaped by influencer intermediaries—actors who translate product attributes into narratives, demonstrate usage, and legitimate (or delegitimate) practices within peer networks. In sustainable fashion, influencers can accelerate sustainable behavior adoption, yet they can also reinforce fast-fashion norms (Kaivonen et al., 2024; Wiedmann et al., 2010). Simultaneously, the marketing discipline is incorporating a humanistic perspective based on person-centric strategies and service-dominant logic (Kotler et al., 2020; Rivera, 2023; Rivera, 2023).

This article examines the role of Social Media Influencers (SMI) in sustainable fashion consumption decisions among Centennials, using the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) model (Rogers, 2003) and the humanistic marketing perspective (Kotler et al., 2020). A cross-sectional survey of 639 centennials living in Argentina explores how (1) SMI’s type, (2) sustainability values, and (3) fashion social trends influence youth sustainable fashion behavioral intentions. The study focuses on two innovation attributes actionable for marketing strategy in digital environments: observability and compatibility. Observability concerns the extent to which an innovation’s results are visible and embedded in social trends; compatibility concerns fit with existing values and lifestyles (self-congruity - Sirgy, 1985, 2018).

Empirically, we analyze survey data on youth sustainable fashion consumption and influencer-related variables, including influencer relevance, platform exposure, and influencer type categories. The instrument measures sustainable fashion consumption behaviors and perceived influencer impact on sustainability-related attitudes and practices, enabling segmentation by influencer type. Findings show that centennials who identify with SMI assign greater importance to social trends and Instagram. Those following lifestyle and social oriented SMI show stronger interest on sustainable fashion consumption. Gender (female) and personal sustainability values outweigh influencers, underscoring observability and compatibility as strategic levers for SDG12 promotion.

By reframing sustainability adoption as an innovation diffusion process, this study provides guidance to marketers to design humanistic marketing strategies that normalize sustainable fashion among youth in Latin America. It also encourages new thinking in line with marketing as cultural stewardship and mechanism, where purpose becomes a strategic organizational outcome in contemporary society.

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Navigating the Dual Reality of Social Media: A Resilience Framework for MSMEs in Developing Countries.

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Track: 9. Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Summary Statement

This paper develops a resilience framework explaining how MSME founders in developing countries navigate the dual role of social media as both a source of psychological strain and a tool for business survival. Drawing on a systematic literature review, the study identifies three interdependent resource domains; psychological, strategic, and social, that enable founders to manage technostress, adapt digitally, and mobilise support networks. The framework advances resilience theory and offers practical insights for MSME support ecosystems.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in developing countries face a critical digital paradox. Their growing dependence on social media for survival exposes them to unique psychological adversities; from technostress to algorithmic opacity, even as they leverage these platforms to overcome external crises. Consequently, a crucial question emerges: How do MSME owners leverage psychological, strategic, and social resources to navigate social media's dual role as both a source of adversity and a tool for resilience?

Methods

To address this question, a systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted following PRISMA guidelines. A comprehensive search across Scopus, EBSCO, and ProQuest databases (2015-2025) targeted studies on MSMEs, social media, and psychological resilience in developing countries. After screening 434 records and applying inclusion/exclusion criteria, 46 studies formed the final sample for thematic synthesis.

Findings

The synthesis reveals that MSME founders build resilience by orchestrating three interdependent classes of resources, forming an integrated framework.

The Internal Engine: The foundational psychological capital is critical. Digital self-efficacy; a founder's belief in their ability to use digital tools, acts as a core psychological buffer. It directly moderates technostress (Simba et al., 2025) and buffers against fear of failure during crises (Yang et al., 2025). This self-efficacy, combined with an adaptive entrepreneurial mindset, forms the internal driver that enables strategic action.

The Strategic Toolset: Social media transcends communication to become an active survival tool. Founders pivot business models to social commerce (Lessa et al., 2023), use targeted advertising to mitigate lockdown impacts (Lee et al., 2025), and leverage AI-driven tools for market access (Roy, 2025).

The External Web: Resilience is often a collective achievement. Social media enables the formation of vital support networks, such as the 'entrepreneurial solidarities' in Filipino freelancer groups (Soriano & Cabañes, 2020). However, this dimension is gendered; women entrepreneurs must navigate a digital gender divide and platform-specific adversities like cyberbullying (Hoque et al., 2025), shaping their resilience.

Discussion and Implications

The framework makes a key theoretical contribution by resolving the paradox of social media's dual nature. Its role as either a risk or a resource is contingent on the founder's capacity for resource orchestration; the mobilization of the Internal Engine, Strategic Toolset, and External Web. This moves theory from a static view to a dynamic, capability-based model of resilience (de Brito et al., 2022).

Practically, this demands a paradigm shift in support ecosystems. Interventions must move beyond narrow technical training toward holistic programs that fuse digital skills training with psychological support to build self-efficacy, while simultaneously fostering safe, supportive online networks, especially for women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

This review consolidates knowledge to propose that resilience for digital MSMEs is not an innate trait but a dynamic capability. It is forged through the interplay of a founder's psychological fortitude (Internal Engine), their strategic deployment of platforms (Strategic Toolset), and their embeddedness in supportive networks (External Web). Future research should quantitatively validate this framework and investigate proactive resilience against platform adversities.

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Beyond the Box: Deconstructing Antecedents to the Gacha Loop in Blind Box Marketing

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This study investigates what drives Generation Z to purchase blind boxes. We move beyond explaining repeat purchases (the 'Gacha Loop') to identify three key motivators that create initial buying intent: Social Currency, Hedonic Dream Fulfillment, and Perceived Scarcity-Governance. Our findings extend Expectation-Confirmation Theory and provide marketers with a strategic framework. In an increasingly competitive landscape, brands should first cultivate these factors to successfully reap the benefits of the repeat-purchase loop

Competitive Short Paper

The global blind box toys market, valued at approximately $14.3 billion in 2024 and dominated by the Asia-Pacific region (Cognitive Market Research, 2025), represents a paradigm shift in experiential consumption (Ding & Bhattacharya, 2023), epitomized by brands like Pop Mart. Its success can be explained by the reinforcing "Gacha Loop", evolved from the Gashapon vending machine (Mvondo et al., 2023), and, in this paper, is referred to as a cycle of purchase, anticipation, and revelation that drives repeat engagement.

We theorize the Gacha Loop as a cyclical managerial application of the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT), where each purchase-anticipation-revelation sequence constitutes one ECT cycle engineered to drive repurchase behaviour (Sun et al., 2024). The loop operationalizes ECT's stages, adapted from Oliver (1980): Purchase (Expectation Formation), Anticipation (Perceived Performance of the experience), and Revelation (Confirmation or Disconfirmation). While ECT explains the loop's sustenance (Bhattacherjee, 2001), it offers limited insight into the formative antecedents of the pre-purchase expectation that serves as the loop's entry point. Our research question, therefore, asks: What are the key antecedent factors that form the pre-purchase expectation and generate the initial purchase intention for a blind box product?

Employing a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design, this work-in-progress paper reports on completed qualitative research and proposes a testable conceptual model. First, we conducted four focus groups with Gen Z consumers in Hong Kong, segmented into university students and young working professionals, to capture life-stage diversity across this generation, revealing distinct pre-purchase motivators.

Preliminary findings highlight three antecedent themes: First, social currency refers to purchases as signals for community belonging and status (Silva et al., 2023); second, hedonic dream fulfilment describes the appeal of "micro-luxury," nostalgia, and emotional self-expression (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000); and third, perceived scarcity-governance is the dual perception of exclusive scarcity balanced against the fairness of the acquisition mechanism (exclusive scarcity: Cialdini, 2009; balanced fairness: AlSokkar et al., 2024).

Synthesizing these insights with literature on probabilistic goods (Fay & Xie, 2008) and hedonic consumption (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000), we propose a conceptual model aimed at addressing the research gap. This model posits that these three themes contribute to the antecedent condition, taking consumers to the entry point of the Gacha Loop, derived from the ECT cycle. We further suggest that the strength of pre-purchase expectation may mediate these relationships.

The proposed research aims to contribute by extending the application of ECT (Oliver, 1980), shifting scholarly focus from modelling post-purchase continuance to identifying the pre-purchase antecedents that ignite the consumption cycle for probabilistic goods (Fay & Xie, 2008). Preliminary qualitative insights tentatively suggest practical guidance for marketers. They indicate that successful blind box launches may need to first cultivate social buzz, anchor in emotive narratives, and design transparent scarcity mechanisms to establish the antecedent conditions before fully leveraging the reinforcing loop dynamics. The next phase involves operationalizing these constructs into a survey to empirically test the proposed model with Gen Z consumers.

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Illuminating Nature: How Projection Mapping in Natural Settings Improves Tourist Experience and Place Attachment

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

This study investigates how nature-based projection mapping influences tourist experiences, evaluations of natural and cultural attributes, perceived comfort, place attachment, and intentions for continued regional engagement. Survey data from two events in Japan show that immersive and aesthetic experiences improve evaluations, which build place attachment and subsequent behavioural intentions. The findings emphasise the importance of spatial design, comfort management, and digital–nature integration for maximising the effectiveness of nature-based illumination events as place marketing tools.

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Regulating Transformation: Integrating Regulatory Context into Transformative Service Research

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This paper extends Transformative Service Research by introducing regulation as a central force shaping service-led well-being. It argues that transformative services are mediated by regulatory actors, institutional logics, and country contexts that influence how, when, and for whom transformation occurs. By theorising regulatory tensions and their managerial implications, the paper offers a more realistic and context-sensitive account of transformative service provision.

Competitive Short Paper

Transformative Service Research (TSR) positions marketing as a mechanism for enhancing consumer well-being, inclusion, and quality of life through services designed to generate positive social outcomes. While this agenda has expanded marketing's moral and societal remit, it has tended to under-theorise the regulatory environments within which transformative services are conceived, authorised, and delivered. This conceptual paper argues that transformative services are inherently shaped by regulatory actors, institutional logics, and country-specific governance conditions, which influence not only whether transformation is possible, but how, when, and for whom it materialises.

The paper introduces regulation as a constitutive element of transformative service systems rather than a peripheral constraint. Regulatory frameworks mediate the relationship between transformative intent and realised outcomes by shaping service design, eligibility criteria, implementation timelines, and risk allocation. In doing so, regulation can enable transformation, but it can also delay, dilute, or redirect it in ways that complicate normative assumptions about "doing good" through services.

Three illustrative examples highlight these dynamics. First, consider a financial service designed to promote inclusion through simplified onboarding for underserved consumers. While intended to reduce exclusion, regulatory requirements around identity verification and anti–money laundering may reintroduce barriers for precisely those consumers the service seeks to support. Second, a digital health or care service aimed at improving accessibility and autonomy may face stringent data protection and liability regulations that restrict personalisation, limit data sharing, or slow deployment, thereby constraining its transformative potential. Third, a mobility or housing-related service developed to enhance independence and social participation may be shaped by safety regulations and licensing regimes that prioritise risk avoidance over flexibility, leading to partial access or uneven service availability across regions. In each case, regulatory priorities interact with transformative ambitions, producing outcomes that are contingent rather than universal.

Building on these insights, the paper makes three contributions. First, it extends Transformative Service Research by theorising regulation as a dynamic mediator between transformative goals and service outcomes, challenging implicit assumptions of regulatory neutrality. Second, it develops a conceptual typology of regulatory tensions in transformative services, capturing how variations in regulatory maturity, enforcement intensity, and institutional trust shape the form and reach of transformation across contexts. This advances a more context-sensitive account of TSR, particularly relevant to constrained, emerging, or unevenly regulated environments. Third, the paper offers managerial implications by foregrounding expectation management as a core capability in transformative service provision. Managers are encouraged to align moral aspiration with regulatory realism, communicate transparently with stakeholders, and design adaptive strategies that recognise institutional limits without abandoning transformative intent.

Overall, the paper advances a more grounded and responsible understanding of transformative services by integrating regulatory context into marketing theory. It calls for future research to examine regulators as co-shapers of transformation and urges practitioners to approach service-led well-being not as an abstract ideal, but as an institutionally negotiated outcome.

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What Drives Attention on Ecotourism SME Pages? An Exploratory Eye-Tracking Study

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

This study used eye-tracking to evaluate VisitEcoGreece.gr, a sustainable tourism platform. Data from 62 participants showed that informational elements (titles, text, price, CTA) attracted attention faster and longer than visual elements (images, maps, video), with a dwell share of 62.4% vs. 37.6%. Clear pricing and bilingual options accelerated clicks, while maps encouraged exploration but slowed conversion. Findings suggest ecotourism SMEs should prioritize transparent, decision-critical information while using maps to enhance engagement.

Competitive Short Paper

Tourism websites operate as decision environments in which what users notice first—and what they keep processing—can shape engagement and onward navigation. This conference paper reports a laboratory eye-tracking evaluation of VisitEcoGreece.gr, a purpose-built platform aggregating Greek sustainable tourism SMEs across multiple categories. Gaze data from 62 participants were recorded using Tobii Pro Nano and AOI-based outputs. Two main groups of AOIs are utilised for each page: Informational (title/text/price/CTA/navigation) and Visual (images/video/maps). Time to first fixation (TTFF) and dwell share are calculated for each page view and then the results are combined for each participant. The results show a significant attentional advantage for informational content, as participants fixate on informational elements prior to visual elements, corroborated by a one-tailed Wilcoxon signed-rank test. A paired-samples t-test shows that informational elements also got more viewing time (dwell share 62.4% vs. 37.6%). Exploratory mixed-effects modeling of click progression (log fixation-to-click) indicate that clear pricing and bilingual availability are associated with faster clicking, whereas maps are associated with slower progression consistent with added exploration. The results indicate that ecotourism SMEs can enhance direct-to-consumer performance by emphasizing discoverable, decision-critical information, particularly pricing transparency and language accessibility—while utilizing maps as engagement tools that may prolong exploration rather than hasten conversion. Future research can enhance and broaden these findings by transcending the current laboratory and desktop-based framework, and by examining the same attentional mechanisms in more naturalistic browsing environments (e.g., mobile devices, remote studies, authentic trip-planning tasks with personal constraints), where distractions and device limitations may alter the informational-visual equilibrium.

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Consumer Evaluation of PR Hijacking in Brand-to-Brand Social Media Interactions

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Track: *AM Funded Research

Summary Statement

This paper examines PR hijacking as a self-oriented, expectation-sensitive brand practice. Drawing on Language Expectancy Theory and eye-tracking, it distinguishes successful hijacking as attention capture paired with favourable evaluations, and failure as attention capture followed by perceived opportunism. The study integrates visual attention metrics with post-exposure judgements and outlines follow-up experiments isolating fit, tone, crowding, and timing effects.

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When Brand Activism Backfires in Culturally Conservative Context: The Roles of Religious Violation and Sense of Dignity

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Track: 5. Brands & Branding

Summary Statement

This research examines when and why brand activism backfires in culturally conservative contexts, focusing on Saudi Arabia. Moving beyond political ideology, it conceptualises incongruent brand activism as misalignment with religious and cultural values. Drawing on Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping, findings from four studies show that severe incongruence triggers religious value violation and rejection, while mild incongruence threatens self-dignity, enabling forgiveness and mitigating backlash, with important implications for global brand activism.

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How Consumer Production Shapes the Polarization of Brand Activism

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Track: 13. Political Marketing

Summary Statement

Brand activism places brands directly into political debate, creating a contested visual space where their symbols intersect with those of sociopolitical movements. In these environments, consumer-produced images, such as memes, play a key role in shaping how activist messages are interpreted. This study explores how such unauthorized consumer production reframes, amplifies, or undermines brand activism, influencing perceptions of group division and contributing to the polarization that unfolds across digital platforms.

Competitive Short Paper

Brand activism, understood as corporate engagement with sociopolitical issues, has become an increasingly prominent and controversial communication practice (Mirzaei et al., 2022; Sarkar & Kotler, 2021). Unlike traditional CSR, brand activism involves explicitly partisan messaging, meaning brands actively enter contested political spaces (C. Moorman, 2020; Weber et al., 2021). This position exposes brands to heightened scrutiny, particularly online where visual communication circulates rapidly and unpredictably. This study argues that to understand these dynamics, research must examine how consumer-produced visual artefacts (here termed "consumer production") shape the evolution and polarization of brand activism (Gambetti & Biraghi, 2023; M. Moorman & Smit, 2015).

Visual communication plays a central role in contemporary political discourse, with memes and GIFs enabling broad participation in meaning-making processes (Godwin et al., 2025; Miltner & Highfield, 2017). Brands themselves are powerful semiotic systems; their logos, colours, and product imagery carry dense cultural meaning. Sociopolitical movements also possess strong visual lexicons, such as rainbow flags or climate stripes. When brands adopt activist stances, these symbolic systems converge, creating a hybrid visual field in which interpretation is highly contested. Consumer production, such as, image edits, memes and GIFs become a site where this contestation materialises.

Polarization provides the theoretical backdrop for these processes. Research shows that perceived political division, meta-perceptions of hostility, and emotionally charged visual content all intensify affective polarization (Schedler, 2023; Wilson et al., 2020). Ambiguous or suboptimal information accompanied by persuasive visuals can further heighten interpretive bias (Marino et al., 2024). Brand activism may therefore influence polarization not by shifting ideological positions, but by altering perceptions of group distance, when activist messages visually intersect with existing cultural symbols.

Consumer production operates within the "creating" dimension of COBRA theory (M. Moorman & Smit, 2015), in which consumers actively generate brand-related content. While this form of production is examined in the context of consumer–brand collaboration, the present study focuses specifically on *unauthorized* consumer production (Dellaert, 2019; Humphreys & Grayson, 2008). Memes in particular function as social bonding devices, compressing humour, critique, and ideological cues into shareable forms (Newton et al., 2022). Visuals produce immediate emotional responses, often more mobilizing than text (Casas & Williams, 2019). As a result, images created in response to brand activism may reinforce or undermine brand meaning, project social identity, and influence intergroup dynamics.

The study seeks to address a key research gap: *How does consumer production in response to brand activism, influence polarization?*

Using a netnography, the project traces the circulation and transformation of activist-related visuals across platforms, drawing from the database 'Know Your Meme' and reverse-image search techniques (Godwin et al., 2025; Kozinets, 2010). Cyclical thematic analysis identify emergent patterns in how activist messages are reframed, weaponised, or repurposed.

The study's contributions are threefold: advancing theoretical understanding of visual communication in political marketing; deepening perspectives on co-constructed brand narratives; and offering practical insight for navigating highly polarized digital environments. Ultimately, consumer production is positioned not as a reaction to brand activism, but as a force that actively reshapes meaning and social consequences.

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Developing a Tastewalk Methodology to Access the Tastes of Place

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Track: *AM Funded Research

Summary Statement

This presentation discusses findings from an Academy of Marketing funded project seeking to develop a tastewalk methodology. We experience places through our embodied and sensuous encounters (Berg and Sevon, 2015), including with the sense of taste. Within the backdrop of non- or more-than-representational theory, there has been growth in ‘sensuous scholarship’ (Stoller, 1997). However, whilst visual methods, smellwalks, and soundwalks have been deployed, the tastes of place have been neglected, which our study thus addresses.

Competitive Short Paper

This presentation discusses initial findings from an Academy of Marketing funded project seeking to develop an innovative tastewalk methodology for accessing the tastes of place. We experience places such as town centres and high streets through our embodied and sensuous encounters (Berg and Sevon, 2015), including with the sense of taste through practices of eating and drinking (Pink, 2008). Food and drink is increasingly used to promote and activate places through place marketing campaigns, the creation of foodie quarters, and food-based events like markets and festivals. Certain foods elicit ‘powerful place imaginaries’ such as Blackpool rock, Philly cheesesteak, or Neapolitan pizza (Varley et al., 2020), fostering place identity and attachment. It is therefore important to better understand how consumers experience places through taste and to develop methods to access such sensory experiences.

Within the backdrop of non- or more-than-representational theory, we are witnessing a rise in ‘sensuous scholarship’ (Stoller, 1997), with scholars recognising ‘visual’ (Schroeder, 2006) and ‘sonic’ (Smith, 2025) turns within marketing and consumer research. Marketing researchers have therefore deployed methods which draw on the sensing body in knowledge production (Pink, 2015), such as videography (Rokka et al., 2018), photography (Warnaby, 2022), soundwalks (Larsen and Patterson, 2025), and smellwalks (French and McLean, 2024). However, whilst these techniques might bring to the surface the visual, auditory, and olfactory sensations of consumption spaces, the sense of taste has been neglected in such methodological innovation, perhaps reflecting the ocularcentrism of Western societies and traditional understandings of taste being a ‘lower order’ sense (Berg and Sevon, 2015).

Consequently, our research aims to address this oversight by developing an innovative and accessible tastewalk methodology for use in research, practice, and teaching. We anticipate the project will lead to contributions to literature surrounding sensory methods and non-representational theory within and beyond marketing and consumer research. To co-develop our approach, we draw on a scoping literature review, tastewalks with researchers and practitioners in two UK case study locations, and online discussions to refine our methodology. This presentation will report on project progress and findings to date and will showcase an initial version of our tastewalk methodology for discussion and feedback.

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The Failed Promise of Agentic Commerce and Shopping

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

It is proposed that agentic commerce will revolutionize e-commerce, like many so-called “revolutions” that have come before. However, it is proposed that an evolutionary perspective dominates retailing. Under this theoretical lens, it is proposed that agentic commerce will make online buying more efficient but will not revolutionize shopping.

Competitive Short Paper

Agentic commerce, especially non-owned and indirect (Pfeiffer, 2025) agentic conversational commerce is seen as another “revolution” in retailing with speculation that it will disrupt everything. There are dire warnings that it will lead to the demise and end of physical retail (Howland, 2025) and collapse the customer journey as AI platforms incorporate instant checkout from leading retailers (Nassauer, 2025) and retail platforms such as Shopify. There are loud claims that ChatGPT referrals account for 20% of Walmart’s referral traffic but they currently represent a slither of total site visits (Smith, 2025) and it is mostly used for research purposes (Wassel, 2025).

However, in retailing and e-commerce “revolutions” come and go. There have been ‘revolutions’ in social media, social commerce, direct to consumer retailing, livestream shopping, discount retailing, grocery retailing, power centres, online banking, omnichannel, Big Data, along with the Internet, virtual and new industrial revolutions. Every new development is loosely labeled as a “revolution” with disruptive consequences. Each new retail development such as direct-to-customer (McKee et al., 2023) and livestream shopping (Xu et al., 2023) is seen as ‘new’ and their connection and adaptation from previous retailing methods is ignored as retailing enters the “Fourth Industrial Revolution” (Ratchford et al., 2023).

However, e-commerce and retailing are underpinned by an evolutionary perspective (Dawson, 2000; Williams, 2009). Retail formats change incrementally in a continuous fashion (Reynolds et al. 2007) and have long, stable periods of many small changes creating big differences between the current and initial versions of the retail innovation (Davies 1998). Physical and non-store retailing formats continually evolve (Gauri et al., 2021) and an evolutionary basis underpins the development of marketing (Kumar, 2016).

The agentic commerce system will undoubtedly improve and initial concerns over payment security, privacy and trust (Smith, 2025; Wassel, 2025) will be overcome. However, inbound agentic commerce may alter and improve and influence online buying in an incremental, but it will not revolutionize shopping. Buying is efficient, automatic, utilitarian rational and work whereas shopping is entertaining, fun, discovery hedonistic and social in nature. Buying is,

"…is more task-driven or mission-focused. It's mostly functional. The consumer already has a clear idea of what he or she wants and generally wants it quickly and at a decent price. Buying is more commodity-oriented and search typically plays a key role. Amazon—and e-commerce more broadly—does especially well here. Shopping," …is more nuanced and complex, typically involving more exploration and browsing. When shopping, rather than looking for a specific item, the consumer may be seeking a more complete solution or inspiration and often requires some form of advice. Shopping also tends to be more emotional, with a greater emphasis on the full experience rather than merely checking an item off a to-do list." (Dennis 2021: 48)

Non-owned agentic commerce will evolve and make online buying easier and more convenient for utilitarian purchases, but it will not revolutionize online and physical shopping for hedonistic and fun purchases (Babin et al., 1994).

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Body Positive Influencers: What Makes Them Authentic and Trustworthy?

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

A growing trend among social media influencers is the emergence of body-positive influencers. Although there is a host of research on authenticity and trust, there is scant research on what makes social media influencers, especially body-positive ones, authentic and trustworthy. This empirical study of 20 followers of body-positive influencers seeks to answer this question.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

A growing trend among social media influencers is the emergence of body-positive influencers. Body positive content "refers to imagery or discourse that challenges unrealistic body ideals and instead encourages appearance diversity and positive body image through body appreciation and acceptance" (Levin et al., 2025: 3) and there is little academic research on the content and its impact (Camarneiro, 2018).

There are many definitions of influencers (Kozinets et al., 2023: 8) and no universally accepted definition of authenticity in marketing (Zniva et al., 2023) however, the main constructs of authenticity are: being true to oneself, genuineness, and originality. According to Khamitov et al., (2024) the most important aspect of trust building is "establishing and conveying integrity and honesty aligned with morality in the marketplace" (p.11, 2024). In digital commerce contexts, trustworthiness is typically conceptualized along three dimensions: ability, benevolence, and integrity (Gefen and Straub 2004; McKnight et al., 2002).

In summary, this all leads to the research question *"What makes body positive influencers authentic and trustworthy to their followers?"*

Method

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) explores participants' (followers of body-positive influencers) experiences in their own terms and how they make sense of these experiences (Smith et al., 2022). It was used to analyze what makes body-positive influencers authentic and trustworthy to their followers. IPA seeks to understand "personal lived experiences" and "exploring person's relatedness to, or involvement in, a particular event or process (phenomenon)" (Smith et al., 2022 p. 35) by identifying superordinate and subordinate themes in the data. Participants were Canadian females between the ages of 18-35 who followed body-positive influencers on Instagram. A total of twenty interviews were conducted.

Findings

The findings are summarized in Figure 1 Emergent Findings Framework.

Discussion

The main constructs of authenticity include being true to oneself, genuineness, amateurism and originality. Body positivity influencers possess these constructs, as shown in the subordinate themes of honesty, consistency of self, being real, and acceptance of self. Indexical authenticity (Grayson and Martinec, 2004), discusses how an object is the "real thing" or true "original", which is displayed by body positive influencers in many ways. This study reinforces the constructs of authenticity, finding constructs like vulnerability and being brave makes them true and original. Vulnerability and being brave raise the authenticity of an influencer.

To build trust in a person, there must be a feeling of security which comes based on the certainty that their behavior is guided and motivated by positive intentions towards the welfare of their partner (Delgado-Ballester, 2004). This is evident in the subordinate theme of honesty. When body positive influencers are honest, they give followers a sense of security. Participants discuss influencers building a community rather than selling as a means of build trust. One way these influencers are able to build trust is by being open, and candid.

Conclusion

This study focused on body-positive influencers and how they gain trust and build authenticity on Instagram.

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Market Dynamism and Firm Strategic Orientation: How CEO Transformational Leadership Emerges and Affects Market Performance

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Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

Summary Statement

The importance of the Chief Executive Officer's transformational leadership (CTL) has been increasingly recognized, yet our understanding of how CTL arises and how it impacts firm performance remains limited. This research theorizes that market dynamism in part gives rise to CTL, and that CTL then affects firm performance through influencing two critical firm strategic orientations, namely, customer orientation and innovation orientation. Data collected from a sample of 206 manufacturing firms indicate support for the hypotheses.

Competitive Short Paper

The importance of the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) transformational leadership (CTL) has been increasingly recognized, yet our understanding on how CTL arises and how it impacts firm performance remains limited. First, transformational CEOs are thought to be in greater need in dynamic market environments but such an assumption has not been empirically tested. Second, researchers have argued that CTL should deliver higher firm performance, theorizing that CTL inspires and motivates organizational members to transcend their self-interest for the collective good. Yet, there is little research on the mechanism through which that effect actually takes place.

Building on the current leadership and marketing research, we argue that market dynamism in part gives rise to CTL, and that CTL affects firm performance through two critical strategic orientations, namely, customer orientation and innovation orientation.

We collected survey data from a sample of Chinese manufacturing firms. Two top executives from each firm who directly reported to the CEO seperately responded to our surveys on market dynamism, CEO transformational leadership, strategic orientations, and firm performance. Structural equation modeling and path analysis were performed to test our model.

The data provides strong support for our conceptual model and hypotheses. Market dynamism is significantly and positively related to CEO transformational leadership, which in turn is positively related to both customer and innovation orientations. CTL is not directly related to firm performance. Its effect on firm performance is mediated through the two strategic orientations. The findings advance our understanding of the interrelationship among the firm's market context, emergence of CEO transformational leadership, firms' strategic orientations, and firm performance.

This study addresses two important knowledge gaps in the leadership and marketing literature: the antecedent role of market dynamism in the emergence of CTL and the indirect, mediated pathway through which CTL influences firm performance. We empirically demonstrate that market dynamism may give rise to transformational leadership at the CEO level, and that CTL is positively related to firm performance through customer and innovation orientations. The study offers a better understanding of the complex factors that contribute to firm performance, further documenting how CEO leadership emerges in dynamic contexts and how firm-level strategic orientations serving as a mediating mechanism to connect CTL and firm performance.

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Digital Conversations, Lasting Connections: The Strategic Role of Chatbots in Insurance Engagement

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

This study investigates how customer engagement with insurance chatbots in the UK shapes perceived value, satisfaction, continuance usage intention, and loyalty. Using survey data from 450 chatbot users, the findings show that engagement enhances loyalty indirectly through perceived value, satisfaction, and continued usage rather than through a direct satisfaction effect. The study highlights perceived value and satisfaction as key mechanisms driving sustainable customer-chatbot relationships.

Competitive Short Paper

Research Gap and Objectives

Despite the rapid technology change, most of the research to date has focused on the use of chatbots in banking, retail, and healthcare (Sandeep, 2024), which has left a major knowledge gap about how chatbots affect customer behavior in the insurance industry (Cheng & Jiang, 2020; Cheng et al., 2024). Primarily in the UK insurance sector, little is known regarding the effects of chatbot interactions on customer satisfaction, perceived value, loyalty, and intention to continue using the service. Accordingly, through an analysis of the behavioral and psychological principles behind chatbot use, this study aims to understand how ongoing interactions with insurance chatbots impact client loyalty. It specifically investigates how chatbot-related satisfaction is influenced by customer engagement and chatbot perceived value, and how this satisfaction in turn influences users' intention to continue using the chatbot and their loyalty to the brand in general.

Theoretical Foundation

The study is based on two key theoretical frameworks, namely the *Customer Engagement (CE) Theory* (Brodie et al., 2013) and the *Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT)* (Oliver, 1980). Customer engagement theory, on the one hand, describes how customers' emotional, mental, and behavioral engagement with a brand improves perceived value, loyalty, and satisfaction (Brodie et al., 2013). On the other hand, Expectation Confirmation Theory focuses on how a service, like a chatbot, meets or surpasses user expectations, leading to satisfaction and continuous usage (Lin et al., 2009).

Methodology

This study uses a quantitative research approach to investigate the connections between customer engagement, perceived value, satisfaction, desire to continue using the service, and loyalty. A Qualtrics-administered online survey was used to gather data from 450 UK-based people who had recently interacted with insurance chatbots. In order to guarantee that participants had relevant experience with the technology, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed. Seven-point Likert scales were used. Finally, EFA, CFA, and reliability analyses validated measures, while SEM tested direct and mediating relationships in the proposed model.

Findings

The findings showed strong explanatory power, with high variance explained in satisfaction, continuance intention, and loyalty. Customer engagement significantly increased perceived value and continuance intention but did not directly affect satisfaction. Instead, perceived value strongly predicted satisfaction, confirming its mediating role. Satisfaction positively influenced both continuance intention and loyalty, while continuance intention further enhanced loyalty. Mediation analyses confirmed that perceived value and satisfaction are key mechanisms linking engagement to loyalty. Overall, the results highlight that engagement builds loyalty indirectly through value perceptions, satisfaction, and continued chatbot use, emphasizing the importance of meaningful, value-driven chatbot interactions in insurance services.

Contributions

This study significantly advances both academic research and management practices. It expands the integration of Customer Engagement Theory and Expectation Confirmation Theory in the realm of conversational AI by investigating how customer interaction shapes satisfaction, perceived value, usage continuance intention, and loyalty within the insurance chatbot setting (Nuruzzaman & Hussain, 2020). For practitioners, it provides specific recommendations for improving customer-brand connections in digital service contexts by providing a framework for comprehending and utilizing AI-driven engagement tactics.

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Constructing Agelessness and Negotiating Aging: An Examination of Anti-Aging Marketplace Discourses

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

Age operates as a socially constructed consumer identity shaped by market actors who frame aging as a problem and promote anti-aging consumption as a moral responsibility, particularly for women. This study examines anti-aging as a cultural system, where brands, practitioners, media, and consumers co-construct meanings of aging. Using qualitative analysis of digital texts and social media, findings reveal narratives of youth idealization, aging-as-disease, early prevention, and emerging consumer resistance that challenge ageist and gendered norms.

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Is Exclusivity of Luxury Fashion Being Redefined?: Understanding the New Meaning of Exclusivity in Second-hand Luxury Fashion

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

The increased accessibility challenges the exclusivity of luxury. One of the factors enabling this democratization is the second-hand luxury fashion sales. However, the steady rise in sales creates a conflict between luxury and sustainability ideals. It remains unclear whether increased accessibility dilutes exclusivity or whether consumers redefine exclusivity in a way that supports responsible consumption. With an exploratory design, this study aims to reveal the new meaning of exclusivity for the second-hand luxury fashion consumers.

Competitive Short Paper

1. Introduction and Conceptual Background

The word luxury derives from the Latin "luxus", which refers to abundance, excess in an exclusive lifestyle, or an expression of wealth (Calaza et al., 2023). The contemporary definition of luxury reflects a qualitative rarity; it incorporates a feeling of privilege and exclusivity in addition to scarcity (Kapferer, 2012). However, this approach is challenged by the democratization of luxury, which is the increasing accessibility of luxury goods for the masses (Baker et al., 2018; Hoang et al., 2023; Rovai, 2018). In the fashion industry, one of the factors enabling this democratization is the second-hand luxury (SHL) sales (Calaza et al., 2023; Musto, 2025; Ozuem et al., 2024). Second-hand luxury fashion (SHLF) items retain its original luxury features such as authenticity, uniqueness, and limited availability while adding nostalgic value (Cervellon et al., 2012; Silva et al., 2022; Turunen et al., 2020). Moreover, SHLF items have additional meanings attached to the utilization of circular strategies such as recycling, renting, and swapping; the concept of second-hand is inherently eco-friendly and elevates the definition and consumption of luxury to a more sustainable level (Christodoulides et al., 2021; Gutiérrez-Ravé Villalón, 2025; shabbirhusain et al., 2025). However, the steady rise in second-hand sales poses a threat to the environment, creating a conflict between luxury fashion and sustainability ideals (shabbirhusain et al., 2025; Statista, 2025; Turunen & Henninger, 2022). Within the context of SHLF, it remains unclear whether increased accessibility dilutes exclusivity or whether consumers redefine exclusivity in a way that supports responsible consumption. Regarding this research problem, the study aims to reveal the meanings of exclusivity for SHLF consumers, whether these meanings differ from exclusivity in original luxury, and where sustainable consumption is positioned within this whole set of meanings. To provide consumer insights and understanding regarding the research problem, the following research questions are identified:

RQ1: What are the meanings of exclusivity for SHLF consumers?

RQ2: How do he meanings of exclusivity for SHLF consumers differ from the meanings of exclusivity in original luxury?

RQ3: Which meanings of exclusivity for SHFL consumers are related to responsible and sustainable consumption?

2. Research Methodology and Expected Results

This study will utilize an exploratory research design and will proceed with in-depth interviews with a minimum of 30 individuals who purchase SHL handbags, selected using snowball sampling. Semi-structured in-depth interview transcripts will be coded, transcribed and analysed using MAXQDA software with thematic analysis approach. Theoretically, this study will contribute to the responsible and sustainable consumer behaviour literature by examining consumers' evolving definitions of exclusivity in depth. The findings are expected to indicate the certain difference of consumer behaviour perspectives in original luxury and SHLF contexts. From a managerial perspective, the study will help to understand which reinterpreted meanings of exclusivity align with responsible consumption. It will facilitate the identification of shifts in consumer behaviour and related strategies that will contribute to circular fashion transitions.

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We, Herself, and I: Advancing Qualitative Research Around The Unheard Consumer Through Pronoun-Poetry

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This paper advances pronoun poetry as an innovative qualitative method for amplifying unheard consumer voices. Extending I-poems and the Voice Centred Relational Method, it demonstrates how structured poetic forms using pronouns and emotions reveal consumers' inner dialogues, relational tensions, and socio affective experiences often missed by thematic analysis. Introducing Voice-Centred Relational Poetry, the authors show how poetic inquiry can enrich interpretation, challenge knowledge hierarchies, and offer rigorous, evocative representations of consumer vulnerability and lived experience.

Competitive Short Paper

This paper develops a vision for the purposive use of pronoun-poetry as an innovative qualitative method for generating original consumer insights, particularly around traditionally unheard segments. While poetic inquiry has gained traction within interpretive social research (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006; Rojas-Gaviria P, 2021; Downey, 2022), it remains underexplored, undertheorized, and often misunderstood within consumer research. Responding to ongoing debates surrounding knowledge hierarchies, methodological experimentation, and the need for evocative modes of representation (Canniford, 2012; Kravets and Varman, 2022), this work demonstrates how pronoun-poetry can enrich the analysis and communication of consumers' socio-affective experiences.

Our contribution is a systematic elaboration of pronoun-poetry; a family of poetic inquiry approaches grounded in interview transcript sentences and structured around the intentional selection of pronouns, e.g., I, we, they, she, he. Building on I-poems, which were established from Voice-Centred Relational Method (VCRM; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998; Gilligan, 2015), we show how pronoun-poetry reorients attention toward participants' inner dialogues, relational dynamics, and the socio-cultural contexts that shape marketplace experiences. We develop this approach by clarifying the construction of full and sparse I-poems; demonstrating how additional pronouns can illuminate relational tensions, agency struggles, and interpersonal meaning-making; and introducing pronoun-emotion poetry, in which pronouns are intersected with affective concepts to foreground emotionality within consumption narratives.

Drawing on previously published qualitative research on consumer financial indebtedness, we illustrate how the crafting and analysis of pronoun-poetry reveals aspects of consumer vulnerability, self-blame, social expectation, and the emotional oscillations surrounding indebtedness that could remain unheard through thematic analysis alone. Pronoun-poetry brings the researcher close to the participant's voice, amplifying subtle emotional, relational, and structural dimensions embedded within lived experiences. This method allows researchers to detect associative flows, hidden meanings, and internal negotiations that are not easily captured through conventional coding procedures.

Beyond method development, we introduce Voice-Centred Relational Poetry (VCR Poetry) as a vision for applying pronoun-poetry intentionally across all stages of VCRM. Whereas I-poems traditionally address only the second VCRM reading (voice of I), VCR Poetry expands poetic engagement to the analysis of plot, relationships, and socio-cultural positioning. This extension allows poems that foreground particular layers of voice while backgrounding others, enabling creative yet rigorous interpretive possibilities for representing participants' stories.

Our contributions are threefold. First, we extend methodological clarity around I-poems and explicate diverse ways in which they can be constructed and analysed. Second, we develop pronoun-poetry as a broader methodological family, including pronoun-emotion poems that highlight socio-affective intensities often elided in interpretive consumer research. Third, we reinvigorate VCRM by proposing VCR Poetry as a way to integrate poetic inquiry throughout the relational and contextual analytic process.

Overall, this work argues that pronoun-poetry provides an accessible, rigorous, and evocative means of analysing and representing qualitative data. It counterbalances dominant knowledge hierarchies, supports pro-consumer insights, and offers researcher-poets a creative yet methodologically rigorous way to engage with complexity, vulnerability, and emotion in consumer culture. We encourage scholars to experiment with pronoun-poetry as a powerful analytical and representational tool capable of expanding the imaginative and interpretive capacities of qualitative consumer research.

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Fostering Rural Tourism Brand Passion and Social Sustainability Through Online Brand Communities In Zimbabwe

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

This study makes an examination of whether rural tourism brand passion and social sustainability can be enhanced through online brand communities. Guided by the stakeholder theory we examine how the dynamic engagement between rural tourism brands and their online communities influence an individual's passion for the brand and ultimately socially sustain the brand in a rural setting. The examination of the above relationships is a novel contribution in the context of Zimbabwean rural tourism entities.

Competitive Short Paper

Social media has transformed the tourism sector, especially rural tourism, giving rise to the creation of tourism-related content and the birth of online brand communities (OBCs). These community-led interactions represent a paradigm shift on how brand passion and social sustainability are nurtured in rural tourism online communities. Guided by the stakeholder theory this study examines the dynamic engagement between rural tourism brands and their OBC's brand passion and the brand's ultimate social sustainability in a rural setting. Social sustainability involves how individuals and groups harmoniously interact with each other as they pursue their chosen development goals, while respecting their habitation and the earth as a whole (Colantonio, 2007; Khan, 2016).

The relevance of rural tourism lies in its ability to provide authentic experiences (Guan, Gao & Zhang, 2019; Turčinović, Vujko & Stanišić, 2025) that are harmonized with nature, culture and the lifestyle of the locals (An & Alarcon, 2020). The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (2024) defines rural tourism as "a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle/culture, angling and sightseeing." Rural tourism is associated with different functionalities in different countries. For example, China associates rural tourism with traditional villages, while Italy associates it with farms. In England and Finland as long as there are rural-related operations, then that town is classified as having rural tourism (Rosalina, Dupre & Wang, 2021). In South Africa rural tourism is said to consist of "'in-between' rural spaces comprising "villages, townships and small 'dorpies" (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021:1398), while in Zimbabwe the thrust of rural tourism is on wildlife, a component of agricultural tourism (Chipfuva, 2021).

In general, Zimbabwe is dominated by a populace with no motivation to engage in holidaymaking, let alone engage in rural tourism (Chipfuva, 2021). At most, locals visit their rural areas to be with their family and friends as this is cost effective (Kabote, Mamimine & Muranda, 2019; Choudhary, Bag & Mukherjee, 2025). Rural tourism branding is a value addition process that creates and manages a rural place's identity and reputation with the involvement of various stakeholders (Gulisova, 2021). In Zimbabwe, small tourism enterprises (STEs) like KwaTerry have embarked on putting rural tourism at the top of their agenda, hence, this study is a yardstick for STEs in developing countries seeking to establish rural tourism brand passion and social sustainability through OBCs.

KwaTerry is located in Mhondoro Turf, Zimbabwe, operating as both a traditional restaurant and rural tourism brand. Established with the mandate to blend local agriculture, culinary heritage, and rural tourism, KwaTerry has grown steadily over the past five years. Its Facebook-based Online Brand Community (OBC), with approximately 150,000 members, has become a hub for engagement, brand storytelling, and cultural promotion. Our findings show that respondents place high value on KwaTerry's OBC, particularly its ability to promote social sustainability and brand passion. The findings provide practical solutions to STEs for rural tourism branding and social sustainability through OBCs.

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Enhancing New Product Creativity and Performance Via Proactive vs. Responsive Market Orientation

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Track: 9. Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Summary Statement

This study investigates the differential effects of proactive market orientation (PMO) and responsive market orientation (RMO) onto new product creativity and performance. It also investigates the moderating effect of market turbulence between market orientation and new product creativity. Based on a survey of 313 SMEs, we found that PMO had a stronger influence on developing novel products while RMO had a stronger influence on the development of meaningful products.

Competitive Short Paper

1. Introduction

This study aims to identify the factors influencing new product (NP) creativity of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and their relationship with NP performance based on the SPP (Sources of Advantage – Positional Advantage – Performance Outcome) Framework. We distinguish market orientation into proactive market orientation (PMO) and responsive market orientation (RMO) to identify their differential effects on components of NP creativity (novelty and meaningfulness). We hypothesize that PMO will have a stronger impact on NP novelty while RMO will significantly impact NP meaningfulness. Furthermore, this study examines the contingent influence of environmental volatility on the relationship between market orientation and creative NPD outcomes.

2. Methods and Results

In this study, a survey was conducted with 350 SMEs based in Daegu Metropolitan City, South Korea. Initial results show that proactive market orientation (PMO) was positively associated with NP novelty (β = .405, $p<.001$), supporting H1a, while reactive market orientation (RMO) was positively associated with NP meaningfulness (β = .264, $p<.001$), supporting H2b. PMO also had a positive, but weaker association with NP meaningfulness (β = .259, $p<.001$), supporting H1b, compared to NP novelty. RMO was not associated with NP novelty (β = .055, p=.473), not supporting H2a.

Additionally, market performance was impacted by NP novelty (β = .219, $p<.01$) and NP meaningfulness (β = .240, $p<.01$), respectively, supporting H3a and H3b. Moreover, the effect of proactive market orientation on NP novelty was found to be statistically greater than its effect on NP meaningfulness ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 6.628, $p < 0.05$), and the effect of responsive market orientation on NP meaningfulness was found to be greater than its effect on NP novelty ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 5.628, $p < 0.05$).

Finally, market turbulence exhibited a positive moderating effect on the relationship between responsive market orientation and the NP novelty ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 4.31[2], $p < 0.05$). Additionally, a positive (+) moderating effect was also observed between responsive market orientation and the NP meaningfulness ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 3.340, $p < 0.1$). Therefore, H3c and H3d are supported.

3. Conclusion and Implications

This study finds that the type of market orientation appears to be important depending on the type of product a firm is hoping to develop. The proactive market orientation (PMO), which emphasizes future, unarticulated needs, was more effective for firms that want novel products versus meaningful products. This highlights that PMO leads to more forward-looking products, but there is less of a guarantee that those products will be meaningful to the present-day needs of customers. Conversely, the responsive market orientation (RMO), which emphasizes articulated, present-day needs, was more effective for firms that want meaningful products. Finally, in the face of a highly turbulent market, managers may find it particularly beneficial to emphasize a responsive market orientation to enhance the meaningfulness of their products. Customers may experience more anxiety during turbulent environments, so firms that focus on present-day customer needs may see a benefit.

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From Competence to Connection: How AI Shapes Trust and Decision Delegation in Healthcare Services

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

Grounded in Self-Determination Theory and an AI intelligence typology, this research examines how mechanical, thinking, and feeling AI shape trust and decision delegation in healthcare. Across three experiments, results show that AI intelligence type primarily drives affective trust via psychological relatedness, while perceived risk directly suppresses cognitive trust without moderating AI-type effects. Decision delegation is most consistently explained by affective trust, highlighting the central role of relational AI design in digital healthcare services.

Competitive Short Paper

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly embedded in healthcare services, consumers face a critical question: when can AI be trusted, and when are they willing to delegate health decisions to it? Although prior research identifies trust as essential for AI adoption, it often treats trust as a unidimensional construct, offering limited insights into how distinct forms of AI intelligence shape trust in healthcare. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 2000) and Huang and Rust's 2021 typology of AI intelligence (mechanical, thinking, and feeling), this research empirically tests how these AI types shape cognitive trust (competence- and reliability-based), affective trust (emotional and relational), and willingness to delegate decisions to AI in digital healthcare services.

Across three scenario-based experiments conducted via Prolific with AI users (total N = 960), participants engaged with a video-based AI health assistant prototype across distinct medical contexts: diabetes management (Study 1; N = 300), hypertension management with task complexity as a moderator (Study 2; N = 180), and asthma management with perceived risk as a moderator (Study 3; N = 480). Each study manipulated AI intelligence type (Huang and Rust, 2021), and aimed to uncover the psychological SDT mediating mechanisms underpinning trust formation. Results were quantitatively analysed allowing examination of AI-type effects, SDT-based mechanisms, and contextual boundary conditions across the three studies.

Results reveal a clear dissociation between cognitive and affective trust pathways. Cognitive trust remained consistently high across AI types in all three studies, indicating that participants uniformly perceived the AI as functionally capable, regardless of its intelligence profile. In contrast, affective trust varied systematically by AI type: feeling AI consistently elicited the highest affective trust, followed by thinking AI, with mechanical AI generating the lowest levels. These effects held across all studies were unaffected by task complexity (Study 2) or perceived risk (Study 3), demonstrating the stability of affective trust advantages associated with emotionally expressive AI. Findings identified psychological relatedness as the primary mechanism linking AI intelligence to trust. Relatedness significantly mediated the influence of thinking and feeling AI on both cognitive and affective trust, whereas competence and autonomy played only limited or context-dependant roles. Notably, in Study 3, perceived risk did not affect the affective trust advantage of feeling AI, indicating that emotional connection can sustain relational trust even amid high uncertainty. Across all studies, both cognitive and affective trust positively predicted decision delegation and consumers' willingness to rely on AI for healthcare decisions.

This research advances marketing literature by demonstrating that trust in healthcare AI is multifaceted, comprising distinct cognitive and affective pathways shaped by AI design. The findings challenge the assumption that enhancing functional sophistication or mitigating risk alone suffices to drive delegation, instead underscoring the critical importance of relational AI design. Managerially, the results suggest that effective healthcare AI should integrate analytical competence with emotionally attuned design to fulfil patients' psychological needs and enable responsible, trust-based decision delegation. More broadly, the research also advances the service design of human-centred digital health experiences using AI technologies.

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Stress-testing The Social Impact Pathway For Multi-stage, Multi-stakeholder Outcomes.

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This paper contributes to Social Impact Theory by stress-testing the popular Social Impact Pathway model (Rundle-Thiele et al., 2024) for multiple stakeholder groups and project phases to strengthen our understanding of cumulative social impact in practice. The 'Banking on Health' project focused on SDG2 to end hunger and ensure access to sufficient, nutritious food. The project aimed to break down boundaries in the nutritional health of young people in order to unlock their potential.

Competitive Short Paper

Fundamental problems exist in society. Issues such as childhood poverty motivate practitioners and scholars to develop solutions (Keeling and Marshall, 2022). Social impact mapping of process and outcomes enables evaluation of whether or not the intervention was successful (Benjamin et al., 2023).

This presentation contributes to Social Impact Theory by stress-testing the popular Social Impact Pathway model (Rundle-Thiele et al., 2024) for multiple stakeholder groups and project phases to strengthen our understanding of cumulative social impact in practice.

The problem: The 'Banking on Health' project focused on SDG2 to end hunger and ensure access to sufficient, nutritious food. The project aimed to break down boundaries in the nutritional health of young people in order to unlock their potential (Chaudhary et al., 2020). Surprisingly, Oxford features high levels of food vulnerability and dependency on food banks. Research has shown that interventions and education around nutrition have significant impact, especially when tailored to young people who are developing their relationship with food, and who are likely to continue their dietary patterns learnt at a young age into adulthood (Pérez-Rodrigo and Aranceta, 2001).

The project: The project was co-created as a community-based partnership, led by [university], working with Oxfordshire County Council and Good Food Oxfordshire plus local charities. The multi-stakeholder approach brought breadth of practical expertise and reduced duplication. The project utilized the Social Impact Pathway from the outset (Rundle-Thiele et al., 2024).

The target audience for Phase 1 was secondary school pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. A programme of two-hour hands-on cooking workshops using [university] nutrition department facilities and expertise was created and led by [university] students. Eight local schools took part although demand was much higher. ESRC Impact funding enabled ingredients to supplement product donations from local food banks, student payment, pupil transport, activity prizes and a project web page. Feedback on impact was gathered from pupils, teachers and project partners. (Jan-April24).

Phase 2 engaged younger audiences in healthy eating on a budget through an interactive play, 'Lily's Special Recipe', written in partnership with Human Story Theatre. The play was performed at the [university] Science Bazaar 2025 with high energy audience participation and the going-home present of a recipe book full of nutritious, affordable cooking ideas. (Feb25+Feb26).

Phase 3 saw dissemination into local primary schools with the development of a picture book of Lily's Special Recipe, a drama-based workshop based on the book with older pupils performing for younger pupils and three lesson workshops about healthy eating on a budget were also developed in line with the national curriculum (PHSE/Science). This was funded through a [university] grant Impact data is still being collected. (Sept25-April26).

The most recent project phase has been embedding the project within the [university] learning. For example, as part of the consultancy opportunities for business school students, a level 6 team developed social media campaigns and outreach activities to raise awareness of the importance of healthy eating on a budget for university students.

The conference presentation will map activities, outcomes, challenges and impact through the Social Impact Pathway.

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Fashion Rental: Exploring the Self-Concept through Liquid Consumption

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This paper explores how renting fashion items contributes to a consumer's self-concept - via a sense of *elevation*, *advocacy* and *surrogacy.* Specifically, consumers share a desire to rent items that elevate their sense of self, ensuring they protect and preserve their rented item while actively promoting renting as a sustainable alternative to consuming fashion. Through the notion of surrogacy, we identify the surrogate consumer and in doing so, present a novel concept to consumer research.

Competitive Short Paper

While research has begun to explore liquid consumption, relatively little work has explored the implications of liquid consumption for a consumer's sense of identity (Atanasova and Eckhardt, 2021; Lamberton and Goldsmith, 2020; Morewedge et al., 2021). In this paper, we take fashion as the context in which to explore the link between renting (as a liquid consumption experience) and the self-concept (more usually explored through ownership and 'solid' consumption) to ask: *does renting, rather than owning, fashion items contribute to female consumers' self-concept – and if so, how?* Twenty-four phenomenological interviews were conducted with female consumers (over the age of 18-years) from the UK who had direct experience of renting fashion (Thompson et al., 1989). Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) directed data analysis and revealed three key themes: (1) *Elevation*, (2) *Advocacy* and (3) *Surrogacy* – each demonstrating how renting fashion informs the self-concept.

Our findings reveal a shared desire amongst participants to rent items that would elevate their sense of self – purposively selecting items that were more extravagant, more elaborate, and more expensive than items they would ordinarily buy and own. Moreover, participants self-assigned the role of 'ambassador', actively promoting renting as a sustainable alternative to consuming fashion - influencing/ persuading others to rent. In addition, participants safeguarded their rented item - protecting it from potential harm (e.g., drink spillages) so it could be 'passed on' and enjoyed by others. Crucially, we find that participants took care of their rented item(s) because they believed it was the (morally) 'right' thing to do, and not simply to get their deposit back/ avoid added costs due to damage. It is through the notion of surrogacy that we identity 'the surrogate consumer':

A consumer who safeguards an item that they have temporary possession of (e.g., through renting), and who protect such items from harm to preserve its condition - while simultaneously experiencing a sense of pride in knowing that the item will be passed on and enjoyed by others. Crucially, a surrogate consumer feels that renting is more than wearing the item itself, but the experience as a whole – harnessing the role of surrogate from when they receive the item until they return it.

From a theoretical perspective, our findings offer a counter to the prevailing view that access-based (or 'liquid') consumption has low relevance to the self (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012, 2017). Instead, findings reveal how consumers rent fashion items to temporarily alter their self-concept to feel the best version of themselves. The *act* of renting appears to be as important, if not more so, than the item rented – revealing how the act of advocacy contributes to the self-concept. The surrogate consumer is introduced and in doing so, presents a novel concept to the field of consumer research. Surrogacy problematises contamination concerns as a key barrier to access-based consumption – advancing existing literature and presenting valuable insight for marketing practitioners who can more effectively communicate the circular business model of 'renting' (Lee et al., 2024; Makri et al., 2020).

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Diverse Pathways to Leadership: An Ecologically Framed Comparative Study of Women in Rural Tourism in Iran

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

This study examines how women in rural Iran practise leadership in tourism within distinct social and ecological contexts. Challenging dominant models that associate leadership with visibility or entrepreneurship, it highlights subtle forms of influence rooted in care, collaboration, and cultural stewardship. Drawing on qualitative case studies from three regions in Iran, the paper

offers a context-sensitive perspective that advances debates on gender equality and sustainable rural development through place-based and relational understandings of leadership.

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Exploring Social Media As An Empowering Technology For Disabled Influencers

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

Social media enables individuals to authentically express themselves and resonate with their communities. For those identifying with minority groups, this can provide a platform for recognition, visibility, activism, inclusion and commercialisation. This study explores whether social media is performing the role of an empowering assistive technology for disabled influencers to reduce the limitations of disability, or reinforces the stereotypes found in traditional media and supports the disability models which view disability as a personal tragedy.

Competitive Short Paper

The history of models of disability and their intersectionality with marketing is a complex one. The evolution of models of disability is complicated and politically motivated and can be traced back to as many as eight models (Olkin, 2008), consisting of religious, medical, expert/professional, tragedy/charity, social, social adapted, economic, and customer empowering. However, five have historically dominated academe: the Moral Position (Goodley, 2011), Theories of Deviance and Stigma (Lemert, 1951), the Medical Model of Disability (Parsons, 1951), the Social Model of Disability (Oliver, 1990), and the Affirmation Model (Swain and French, 2000).

Currently, the Active Model of Disability (Levitt, 2017) builds on the positive stance of the Affirmation Model (Cameron, 2008), which calls for disabled people to positively embrace their disability. The Affirmation Model (Swain and French, 2000) argued for the emergence of a new model of disability crafted by disabled people and emerging from disability culture. The main premise being to escape from the shadow of the Medical Model and its preoccupation with disability as a personal tragedy, and instead to embrace a non-tragic view of disabled identity, as posited by the Social Model (Shakespeare, 2006).

The Active Model of Disability (Levitt, 2017) states that despite disability contributors vocalising the need for disabled people to be included in all aspects of society, no other model of disability focuses on the impact of the actions of disabled people on their own disability. It emphasises the power disabled people have over their lived experience, and how they can be 'active' in terms of using assistive technology, self-help or support groups to limit constraints.

As models of disability have evolved to become increasingly focused on presenting a positive view of the disabled lived experience, this has been mirrored by the prevalence of disabled social media influencers. Their active participation and increased visibility in marketing communications is arguable reflective of the aforementioned 'Active Model'.

The relationship between disability and media has been gaining increasing interest (Trevisan, 2024). With traditional media defaulting towards able bodies with limited disability representation, and reliance a on stereotypes (Timke, 2019), social media provides a platform for individuals to authentically express themselves and resonate with their communities. Social media content enabling self-representation of minority identities, providing a stage for activism, visibility and inclusion, commercialisation and a path to stardom (Raun and Christensen-Strynø, 2021).

This study explores the extent by which the use of social media by disabled influencers is in alignment with the active model of disability, and thus whether the platforms are acting sufficiently as an assistive technology for individuals to reduce the limitations of disability. This will be achieved via analysis of the combined visual narrative of the images and the discursive strategies in captions, hashtags and bios within the disabled influencers Instagram channels. The findings will contribute to the existing literature by identifying which models of disability these social media strategies are supporting, how this impacts marketing, and shapes the potential for social change and the impact on the wellbeing of this minority group.

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Beyond Demographics: Intersectionality Of Age Identity Among Queer Men

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This paper explores how queer men experience age as a performative, psychographic and intersectional identity rather than a fixed demographic category. Drawing on solicited e-diary data from UK-based queer men, the study shows how age is performed, negotiated, and embodied in relation to sexuality, stigma, and consumption contexts. The findings challenge chronologically led segmentation and youth-idealising marketing practices, offering an intersectional, identity-informed perspective for more inclusive and socially relevant marketing scholarship.

Competitive Short Paper

Intersectionality remains underutilised in marketing (Ger, 2018; Uduehi et al., 2024), despite consumer contexts in which identities are increasingly fragmented, relational and overlapping, necessitating greater intersectional perspectives (Shavitt, 2018; Arsel et al., 2021; Chandy et al., 2021). Non-heterosexual consumers are still treated as monolithic segments, prompting calls for greater attention to heterogeneity grounded in lived experience (Lewis et al., 2024; Uduehi et al., 2024). Relatedly, age continues to be rendered as a discrete, stable attribute, obscuring how it is perceived by consumers as an intersectional dimension of self-identity that is compound rather than additive (Amatulli, et al., 2015; Åberg et al., 2020; Gillooley et al., 2023). Neglecting the lived interplay of age, gender and sexuality sustains exclusionary market norms and diminishes marketing relevance in pluralistic consumer contexts.

This research examines how queer (non-heterosexual) men perceive their age identity, considering the intersection of age, gender and sexuality. Drawing on an interpretivist, hermeneutic phenomenological approach, it analyses 200 solicited e-diary entries (13,000 words) from seven UK-based queer men aged 18–53 to explore their lived experience of age identity.

Diary entries indicate that age and sexuality are not experienced independently; rather, their intersection generates distinctive lived experiences that shape consumption practices, self-presentation, and brand relationships. Findings position age as a performative identity, negotiated through cultural scripts, embodiment, and stigma (Goffman, 1963; Rosenthal et al., 2020). Rather than constituting a fixed demographic attribute, age emerges as a dynamic identity marker intertwined with sexuality and broader cultural expectations. Six dimensions illuminate how participants' age identity is felt, signalled, and negotiated across contexts, shifting situationally in relation to embodiment, social comparison, and contextual roles.

This fluidity foregrounds intersectionality over static chronological markers, challenging chronologically led segmentation and stereotyping. Age identity fluctuates intra-personally and situationally, shaped through embodiment and social comparison. Embodiment functions as a semiotic resource through which age and desirability are managed within youth-centric queer spaces, while contextual roles prompt shifts between 'adult mode' and more youthful self-presentation. Intersectional stigma elicits compensatory performances, although moments of age acceptance emerge, where marketers' youth-valorising cues often alienate rather than engage.

The idealisation of queer youthfulness amplifies stereotypes (Coladonato et al., 2024), creating exclusionary norms reiterated through marketing practices. Brands that fail to engage critically with these narratives sustain stigmatising and alienating marketing discourses (Amatulli et al. 2015; Eisend & Hermann, 2020: Rosenthal et al., 2020). Inclusive marketing requires dismantling age-related stereotypes and representing age identities more authentically.

By foregrounding age identity as lived, interpreted, and performed, this research generates novel theoretical and practical insights for non-heterosexual markets by positioning age as performative and psychographic rather than chronographic. The findings challenge homogenous constructions of queer men and underscore the value of consumer-identity-informed, intersectional models attentive to fluidity and embodiment, that broaden age representation, resist youth-idealising tropes and essentialist masculinity, and prioritise community engagement through co-creation.

The study offers an interpretive account of how age and sexuality are co-constituted, unlocking theoretical potential for more inclusive and socially relevant marketing scholarship attuned to lived experience.

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Investigating Human-AI Romantic Relationships: Drivers and Consequences

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

Millions engage in romantic relationships with AI chatbots, developing genuine commitment despite these systems lacking consciousness. This mixed-methods research investigates commitment's antecedents and consequences in human-AI romance. Study 1 uses thematic analysis of Reddit data to identify emotional drivers (need, expression, perception). Study 2 surveys users to test how these drivers influence commitment, affective dependence, and loyalty. Findings advance human-AI relationship theory while guiding platform design, user protection, and policy regulation.

Competitive Short Paper

Millions of users worldwide are engaging in romantic relationships with social chatbots (SCs), such as Replika and Character. AI (Amplyfi, 2025). Although these AI systems are fundamentally non-human entities lacking consciousness, emotions, and physical presence, users develop genuine romantic relationships comparable to interpersonal love and even demonstrate strong commitment to them (Song et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2025). The emergence of commitment signals the transformation of transient affective experiences into stable relational bonds (Stemberg, 1986). In romantic relationships, commitment represents the subjective experience of psychological attachment to a relationship partner, reflecting individuals' psychological orientation toward relationship continuity (Stemberg, 1986). The degree of commitment could further influence individuals' ongoing engagement behaviors and emotional states in the relationship (Wieselquist, et al., 1999).

Current studies find that users 'commitment not only shapes their emotional interaction patterns (Ng et al., 2025) but also influences usage behaviors, including usage intention (Song et al., 2021) and continued use (Pal et al., 2023). Excessive user commitment even led to emotional dependence on SCs (Chen et al., 2025). However, research has not yet examined why users develop commitment to SCs and how the commitment influences users' affective dependence and loyalty behavior. Exploring the formation and functional mechanisms of user commitment helps us understand how love in human-AI relationships is consolidated through sustained interaction and the influence mechanism of users' behavior and well-being.

This research applies love theories to examine the cause of commitment in human-AI romantics and subsequent outcomes by employing a mixed-methods approach. Study 1 aims to explore the emotional factors influencing users 'commitment via secondary data analysis. Study 2 is to examine the relationships among these affective elements identified from Study 1, commitment, and behavior outcomes.

In study 1, we apply a qualitative approach utilizing Python-based data collection to capture unstructured user-generated content about users' romantic experiences with SCs from Reddit communities. This study employs the thematic analysis approach. Emotional relevant key themes are identified, including emotional need, emotional expression, and emotional perception. This exploratory phase provides findings of the key drivers for users engage in a romantic relationship with SCs.

Based on the findings from study 1, we develop a research model in study 2 to examine the relationship between the drivers of engagement and its consequences including: (a) affective dependence and (b) loyalty behaviors; and we test the mediating effect of commitment in the proposed relationship. Survey data was collected from online AI companion platforms among active users.

This research makes contribution in human-AI relationship literature domain. Theoretically, we provide the first systematic exploration of emotional factors in such a relationship. We extend and validate interpersonal love theories in human-AI romantic relationships to provide new theoretical perspectives for future human-chatbot interaction research.

Practically, for platform developers, we offer guidelines of designing features that maximize loyalty while mitigating dependency risks. For users, we provide indicators of dangerous attachment signals and enabling early intervention. For policymakers, we provide evidence balancing platform sustainability with user protection, enabling more informed decisions about the regulation of SC service businesses.

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The Effect of Norms and Socialization on Red and Processed Meat Consumption Reduction (RPMC) Among Young People

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This study examines how social norms conveyed by different agents of socialization (family, peers, school, and media) influence young people's intentions to reduce red and processed meat consumption (RPMC). Drawing on socialization and social norms theory, we show with a survey of French adolescents (N=237) that descriptive norms associated with parents and peers significantly influence RPMC reduction intentions. Injunctive norms from parents, school, and media are also effective, whereas peer injunctive norms are not.

Competitive Short Paper

Studies (e.g.Graça et al., 2019) argue for a reduction of red and processed meat consumption (RPMC). Recent surveys indicate that young French consumers aged 15–20 are less engaged in reducing their RPMC than adults (Pfeifer & Egloff, 2018). Little attention has been paid to the role of socialization agents and social norms, particularly among younger populations. This gap is all the more important that dietary habits formed during adolescence tend to persist over time and young individuals are especially susceptible to social influence.

Conceptualization

The literature review presents the current state on socialization and social norms.

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of different types of social norms - descriptive (i.e., perception of what others do) and injunctive (i.e., what others approve or encourage) -conveyed by distinct agents of socialization (family, peers, media, and school) on young people's intention to reduce RPMC. Prior research generally suggests a stronger influence of descriptive norms compared to injunctive norms, though findings remain mixed in the context of dietary behavior and are particularly scarce in the context of RPMC reduction among youth.

Methodology

The survey was conducted among French people aged 15 to 20 (N = 237). The six hypotheses were tested using the PROCESS SPSS Macro by Hayes (2017, Model 0) with bootstrapped confidence intervals.

Main results

Some differences in both the effectiveness of normative formats and the influence of socialization depending on the type of agents exist. Parental descriptive norms exert the strongest effect on youths' intentions to reduce RPMC; parental injunctive norms also have a significant impact. This indicates that young people are more influenced by what their parents do than by what their parents explicitly recommend. Peer descriptive norms also positively influence RPMC reduction intention, whereas peer injunctive norms have no significant effect.

These findings are broadly consistent with prior research demonstrating the greater effectiveness of descriptive norms compared to injunctive norms in shaping behavior (e.g., Elgaaied-Gambier et al., 2018). However, they also raise important questions regarding why parental injunctive norms exert a positive influence while peer injunctive norms do not, and why parents descriptive norms appear to carry more weight than peers descriptive norms in this context. These findings contrast with existing literature.

Moreover, injunctive norms conveyed by media and educational institutions positively impact RPMC reduction intention.

To conclude, our results indicate that parents - primarily through descriptive norms - and media - through injunctive norms - are the two agents exerting the strongest influence on young individuals' intentions to reduce RPMC. This distinction underscores the importance of considering not only who communicates normative influence, but also how that influence is conveyed.

This study contributes to the literature by identifying influential socialization agents and effective types of norms to encourage RPMC reduction among youth.

This research offers a nuanced understanding of how dominant dietary norms may be challenged and provides valuable insights for both theory and practice that will be discussed during the conference.

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The Dual Customer Engagement in SMEs: The Impact of Disconfirmation And Influence Of E-WOM

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

The research integrates expectancy disconfirmation theory to understand the impact on positive and negative customer engagement, and how they influence electronic word of mouth (eWOM) in SMEs. An online survey was administered to Indian consumers, yielding 456 responses through a non-probabilistic convenience sampling, and the data were analysed using structural equation modelling. The study finds dual customer engagement impact simultaneously as significant drivers of eWOM in the SMEs, with both valences equally influenced by disconfirmation.

Competitive Short Paper

The purpose of this study is to investigate dual customer engagement, which consists of positive and negative engagement, within the online small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Customer engagement can lead to value creation or value destruction. However, limited insights exist on how positive and negative engagement coexist in the same service relationship and is influenced by disconfirmation. The key constructs examined in this study are positive engagement, negative engagement, disconfirmation, and behavioural outcomes such as electronic word of mouth (eWOM). The existing empirical and theoretical research does not fully capture the dual nature of engagement. Existing study emphasis on positive engagement and offer limited explanation on negative engagement , especially when service encounter experiences contradict their expectations. Thus the study focuses on: *How does disconfirmation influence positive and negative customer engagement within online SMEs and how do they impact eWOM.*

An online survey questionnaire was distributed through M-Turk, using a non-probabilistic convenience sampling technique. A total of 456 valid responses were used for data analysis. The analysis adopted 'two step' standard statistical methodology of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and subsequently structural equation modelling (SEM) for theoretical model validation. The result reveals the positive and negative customer engagement as an influential process in the SME context. This extends the existing focus of positive engagement with limited attention to the negative engagement .

The study shows both valences are shaped by disconfirmation, and both contribute meaningfully to eWOM, by strengthening emerging research on negative valenced engagement and confirms the negative engagement significance to online customer behaviour. The results also support assumptions within expectancy disconfirmation theory that the evaluative gap between expected and actual performance is a strong driver of post purchase responses. This highlights that negative engagement is not insignificant but a central aspect of customer behaviour, supporting expectancy disconfirmation theory by showing that the gap between expected and actual performance which strongly shapes post-purchase interactions. By integrating disconfirmation with dual engagement and behavioural outcome, the study aims to enhance theoretical understanding and offer practical insights. By revealing the role of disconfirmation as an antecedent of both engagement valences, the study extends theoretical dialogues on customer engagement beyond the dominant positive focus and provides early empirical evidence of how dual valence engagement unfolds within SME settings.

Theoretically, the study strengthens conceptual clarity on negative engagement by empirically validating it alongside positive engagement within a single structural model, addressing calls for more rigorous investigation of negative engagement processes . It highlights the cognitive and emotional mechanisms through which disconfirmation shapes behavioural responses, aligning with the broader view that engagement is driven by affective and cognitive appraisals.

Practically, the study provides SME managers with a clearer understanding of how negative engagement emerges and how it can escalate into damaging eWOM that affects brand equity. The insights encourage managers to monitor online interactions, address complaints proactively, and implement strategies that minimise destructive behaviours while leveraging positive engagement for brand advocacy. The findings help SMEs design interventions that enhance constructive participation and reduce the spread of damaging online narratives.

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Same Message, Distinct Pathways: The Psychological Mechanisms Underlying the Impact of Virtual vs. Human Influencers in Social Issue Advocacy

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

This study examines the role of human versus virtual influencers in social issue advocacy through the lens of Self-Evaluation Maintenance Theory. Four scenario-based experiments show that human influencers elicit fear of negative social evaluation, activating a prevention-focused state and enhancing cognitive and behavioral engagement, whereas virtual influencers increase ideal-self congruence, triggering a promotion-focused state and enhancing emotional and also behavioral engagement. Temporal construal levels and individuals' implicit beliefs further moderate these effects.

Competitive Short Paper

With the widespread adoption of social media, influencer marketing has emerged as a key channel for promoting social issues. For example, a young (human) influencer, Adélaïde Charlier, advocated the "Youth for Climate" movement, emphasizing the connection between climate action and social justice. However, while prior research has predominantly discussed differences between virtual influencers (VI) and human influencers (HI), the findings remain open to interpretation regarding the effectiveness of different influencer types in promoting social issues. HI are often perceived as trustworthy and relatable due to authentic self-disclosure, yet their effectiveness may depend on personal behavior and relationships (e.g., Lou et al., 2023). VI provide greater managerial control and message consistency but face challenges regarding perceived authenticity in promotion (e.g., Miao et al., 2021). These differences are particularly salient in social issue promotion given the moral implications and behavioral advocacy involved.

Drawing on Self-Evaluation Maintenance Theory (Tesser, 1988), this research proposes that influencer type activates distinct self-regulatory orientations and engagement pathways. HI, due to greater psychological closeness, heighten fear of negative social evaluation (Nicholls & Stukas, 2011) and induce a prevention-focused regulatory state, leading to more reflective and cognitively oriented engagement. In contrast, VI foster ideal self-congruence (Lou et al., 2023), elicit a promotion-focused state, and generate greater emotional and behavioral engagement. Integrating Temporal Construal Level and Implicit Theories of Personality, this research further examines how issue temporal distance and individuals' implicit beliefs moderate these effects.

Four scenario-based experiments were conducted via Prolific, with social issues selected through a pre-test. Study 1 (160 participants; LGBTQ+ advocacy) demonstrates that influencer type affects self-evaluation maintenance process and self-regulation, which in turn shape engagement. For VI advocacy, ideal self-congruence enhances emotional and behavioral engagement through a promotion-focused state. For HI advocacy, fear of negative social evaluation increases cognitive and behavioral engagement via a prevention-focused state.

Study 2 (242 participants) examines temporal distance as a boundary condition. When promoted by HI, temporally imminent issues (plant-based diet advocacy in the experiment) elicit greater fear of negative social evaluation than distant issues (human rights advocacy in the experiment). Conversely, VI promote greater ideal self-congruence for temporally distant issues, with no comparable temporal effects in opposing contexts.

Offering useful managerial implications, Studies 3a (410 participants, not manipulating implicit beliefs) and 3b (408 participants, manipulating implicit beliefs) examine implicit beliefs using child welfare (imminent) and sustainable tourism (distant) advocacy. In VI contexts, entity believers report greater ideal self-congruence for distant issues, whereas incremental believers do so for imminent issues. In HI contexts, entity believers experience stronger fear of negative evaluation for imminent issues, while incremental believers show greater fear for distant issues.

By clarifying how influencer type, temporal characteristics, and individual beliefs jointly shape social advocacy engagement, this research advances influencer marketing theory and offers actionable guidance for brands and nonprofit organizations.

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Data-Driven Customer Journey Redesign: Evidence From Nissan

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

As customer interactions become increasingly phygital, blending physical and digital touchpoints, existing journey frameworks risk becoming quickly outdated and under-specified in terms of the data infrastructures and governance mechanisms required to sustain continuous omnichannel adaptation. Using Nissan as an empirical setting, the study will combine elite interviews with internal stakeholders and content analysis of unsolicited customer feedback to develop an integrative account of how data-driven strategy enables journey sensing, orchestration, and iterative redesign.

Competitive Short Paper

The customer journey consists of a sequence of touchpoints that shape how consumers perceive their interactions with an organization, either positively or negatively, depending on delivery (Kranzbuhler et al. 2018). Understanding this journey offers valuable insights into consumer decision-making and strengthens the overall customer experience, a holistic response to an encounter with a brand (Lemon and Verhoef 2016). Technological advancements have transformed customer interactions, giving rise to the 'phygital' journey—a blend of physical and digital touchpoints (Mele and Russo Spena 2022). As a result, consumers increasingly expect organizations to deliver a seamless omnichannel experience that integrates online and offline interactions

The customer journey typically unfolds across three phases: pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase (Voorhees et al. 2017) Pre-purchase involves how consumers engage with a brand—digitally or in person—through its offerings, AI, website, or employees before making a purchase (Fuller et al., 2022). The purchase stage encompasses all activities related to the transaction, making this stage highly critical. The post-purchase stage covers interactions after the sale, such as returns and customer service and is particularly important for fostering long-term relationships and repeat purchase intentions (Kumar and Anjaly 2017). However, a data-driven approach reframes these stages from three distinct interactions to continuously measurable and optimizable processes through signals from digital and physical touchpoints. Treating these phases as an integrated, "live" system enables ongoing journey redesign rather than static mapping.

Case Study: Nissen Group

Nissen operates within the automotive industry, the fifth largest globally, with 90 million cars sold worldwide in 2025. In 2020, Nissen commissioned a report to map and optimize its customer journey to align with evolving consumer expectations and strengthen its competitive position (Forrester 2020). The report identified a framework of seven key touchpoints. Using an exploratory approach, this study aims to re-examine these touchpoints to update and redefine the journey. Two data collection methods will be adopted. Firstly, in-depth 'elite' interviews amongst internal stakeholders within the global customer experience team will be conducted at Nissan. Elite interviews are a form of in-depth interviews designed to understand first-hand insights, experiences and knowledge from participants deemed to be 'expert' in their profession (Empson 2018; Li 2021). Secondly, content analysis of publicly available secondary data from online customer reviews including Trustpilot, Which, and Google. The analysis of secondary data is an efficient, cost effective, and pragmatic research approach that can be used to generate a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study (Kelly et al., 2024).

Summary

This study aims to explore how Nissan is redefining the customer journey supported by a data-driven strategy, thereby addressing demands for further research on the evolving and complex nature of the customer journey (Bolton et al., 2014; France et al., 2016). This study will not only advance understanding of the dynamic nature of customer experience and the customer journey contextualized in a real-world setting (Brodie et al., 2011; Carvalho and Fernandes 2018) but also provide a systematic roadmap for practitioners to help design, manage and appraise customer journey strategies.

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The Interplay of Technological Cooperation and Competition: Insights from Evolutionary Dynamics and Complexity Theory

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Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

Summary Statement

This paper aims to identify factors that contribute to stable cooperation among firms and to develop adaptable, resilient collaboration models suitable for competitive markets. It employs evolutionary dynamics and complexity theory within collaborative strategy. Using a theory-building methodology, the research develops, confirms, and refines rational explanations of observed phenomena. The findings offer predictive insights and enhance understanding of enduring cooperation models, potentially generating new strategic collaborative approaches for technology firms, industries, regulators, and policymakers.

Competitive Short Paper

The research seeks to develop effective models of technological cooperation for product and service development, particularly in environments characterised by competitive market forces. The goal is to provide a detailed roadmap for B2B networks that facilitates exploration of the dynamic interplay between cooperation and competition. By employing complexity and evolutionary theory, the study aims to offer fresh perspectives in the field.

This framework is based on the duality of technological cooperation and competition, informed by concepts from evolutionary dynamics and complexity theory. Evolutionary theory reveals the mechanisms driving cooperation (Pigliucci & Müller, 2010; Futuyma, 2017). While traditional evolutionary perspectives in social sciences often adopt a neo-Darwinian focus on survival and dominant agents, this research moves towards a modern synthesis of evolutionary theory. This synthesis integrates natural selection, probability, and complexity, enhancing our understanding of power dynamics, chaos, collective adaptability, and self-organisation within social systems and B2B ecosystems.

The variation–selection–retention model (Metcalfe et al., 2000) illustrates how organisations form new strategies, select the most effective ones, and retain successful strategies as standard practices. Probability theory explores outcomes influenced by chance, highlighting dynamics such as dependence on past events, unpredictability of results, and clustering of changes in natural systems. The concept of punctuated equilibrium (Eldredge, 2013) characterises lengthy eras of incremental change disrupted by significant, rapid shifts, analogous to the rise and fall of empires.

Complexity theory offers valuable insights into the interaction of cooperation and competition among firms that must adapt to survive and thrive. Although a comprehensive theory of cooperation remains elusive, complexity theory adeptly describes global coordination and complex systems. In this context, cooperative behaviours within complex adaptive systems empower firms to adjust and expand. Particularly in the technology sector, R&D units must collaborate to establish compatible network platforms and industry standards.

The theory-building approach employed is iterative, aimed at creating rational frameworks that explain observed phenomena. A deductive strategy seeks to formulate generalizable laws capable of predicting positive outcomes by identifying stable mechanisms while avoiding zero-sum games.

The study analyses 200 case studies of IT infrastructure firms involved in technological cooperation, with a focus on global entities in Europe and the United States. Data is sourced from seven major academic databases, emphasising specific variables to pinpoint significant patterns.

Thematic analysis is employed to organise identified patterns through a systematic six-step process: data familiarisation, code generation, theme development, theme evaluation, theme definition, and pattern identification. This theory-building endeavour involves an intensive examination of data alongside established knowledge, creating a research strategy to uncover laws that elucidate cooperation and promote favourable outcomes (Mintzberg, 2005; Reynolds, 1976; Seo, 2019).

The findings of this project transcend existing paradigms by integrating diverse areas of expertise and fostering robust innovation through cooperative agreements that facilitate knowledge exchange. By sharing R&D costs, the initiative accelerates market access and streamlines the development process. Collaborating partners also mitigate financial and technical risks, which bolsters overall resilience. These agreements provide access to economies of scale, while well-structured arrangements ensure equitable sharing of intellectual property.

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When Nano-influencers Work For SMEs: Some Preliminary Evidence

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

This study examines the effectiveness of nano-influencers in the context of SME influencer marketing campaigns and explores its potential boundary conditions. Using data from 217 sponsored posts on a large Chinese social media platform, this study presents some preliminary evidence of the effectiveness of nano-influencers for SMEs and how the effectiveness is shaped by contextual factors such as how the content is presented, the type of content produced, and influencer affiliation.

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The Cultural Consumption of Waiting: A Netnography of The Queue

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This paper examines how waiting was narrativised and ritualised during Queen Elizabeth II's lying-in-state through an observational netnography of X (Twitter). Drawing on Consumer Culture Theory, it conceptualises waiting as a non-market form of cultural consumption in which time, endurance, and civility acquired moral and symbolic value. The study shows how digitally mediated narratives transformed queuing into a socially embedded ritual shaped by collective meaning-making and moral contestation.

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Exploring Consumer Skepticism Towards the Implementation of Drone Food Delivery

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Track: 9. Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Summary Statement

Drone food delivery (DFD) offers greater convenience to consumers whilst avoiding the pollution of traditional delivery methods. Despite advantages, DFD has not been widely implemented. Extant literature has examined barriers to DFD adoption, although skepticism towards DFD implementation remains an overlooked factor influencing consumer perceptions of risk and resistance. This study uses qualitative methods to explore consumer skepticism towards DFD, improving our understanding of innovation resistance towards revolutionary technologies, before they reach the market.

Competitive Short Paper

Drones are proposed to revolutionize food delivery by offering faster deliveries and greater accessibility to consumers, whilst avoiding the pollution of traditional delivery methods (Hwang et al., 2019; Kumar et al., 2025). Despite its advantages, drone food delivery (DFD) has not been widely implemented and adopted.

Innovation resistance theory seeks to examine the barriers of technology adoption (Ram and Sheth. 1989), and this lens has been used to understand resistance to DFD. Usage, tradition, image, and experience barriers (Khalil et al., 2024; Nunkoo et al., 2024), alongside violations of privacy, safety risk, financial risk, physical risk, and noise have been identified as inhibiting drone delivery adoption (Abbasi et al., 2024; Sabino et al., 2022). However, drone research has been conducted in populations where the delivery services are not widely available (Sabino et al., 2022), and regulatory hurdles regarding airspace control and privacy can impede implementation (Sah et al., 2021). Thus, skepticism towards the implementation of DFD may impact consumer perceptions of risk and subsequent resistance.

Often, consumers express skepticism towards a technologies' capability without doubting its implementation, but for revolutionary technologies consumer skepticism may be more complex. For example, consumers may trust a drone's transportation abilities whilst doubting whether regulations would allow the service to operate (Fink et al., 2023). Situational skepticism is a temporary state that is comprised of an individual's disbelief in a persuasive message and mistrust in its source (Lins et al., 2024). Situational skepticism positively impacts resistance towards smart factories (Park et al., 2024), cryptocurrency (Loh et al., 2023), and the internet-of-things (Mani and Chouk, 2018; Chouk and Mani, 2019). However, these studies considered consumers general skepticism, conflating skepticism towards the technology's capabilities with their skepticism towards the technology's implementation. Despite some evidence highlighting skepticism's impact on consumer resistance, the nature of skepticism, and its impact on perceived risk and the resistance of revolutionary technologies like DFD, remains poorly understood. Thus, qualitative research is needed.

This study has three key research questions:

1. What is the nature of consumer skepticism towards DFD? Are consumers skeptical about the capabilities of the technology and its implementation?

2. What factors drive consumer skepticism towards DFD?

3. How does consumer skepticism impact perceived risk and consumer resistance to DFD?

This study will conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews to explore consumer skepticism towards DFD. Thematic data analysis will be used to distil participant responses into first-order codes before they are ordered and grouped to form second-order, theory-centric codes. Data analysis will be an iterative process conducted in tandem with the interview process to ensure emergent themes can be explored as they emerge (Gioia et al., 2013).

A conceptual framework that considers the determinants and outcomes of consumer skepticism for DFD will be developed. The findings will improve understanding of innovation resistance towards revolutionary technologies, before they reach the market. Finally, focusing on DFD addresses calls to explore resistance to new technologies that have the potential for social and environmental benefits (Huang et al., 2021).

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Present Bias, Future Harm: Marketing, Cognition, and the Underweighting of Risk in Fast Fashion Consumption

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

Our research integrates behaviour economics to determine how to disrupt frequent habitual fast-fashion consumption by examining present bias, risk and temporal heuristics. In seeking to understand why consumers express concern for the environmental and social consequences of fast-fashion, but continue to make purchases, by will explore how System 1 and System 2 processing produce systematic departures from rationality (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979), shaped by contextual cues.

Competitive Short Paper

Fast-fashion's business model creates compounding risks that conventional marketing approaches have failed to address. Its environmental impact is well documented (European Parliament, 2025; Ritch, 2025), alongside allegations of modern-day slavery within global supply chains (Stephens et al., 2025; Schulz, 2023). A core issue is that fashion pricing has fallen and production has accelerated, with limited regard for scarce resources or the people involved in the supply chain, while marketing tactics encourage frequent and impulsive consumption (Ritch and Siddiqui, 2023). Although research identifies consumer distaste for environmental harm and garment-worker exploitation (Ritch et al., 2025; Bläse et al., 2024; Hageman et al., 2024), this has not translated into changes in consumption behaviour. This persistent attitude-behaviour gap (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000), alongside cognitive dissonance (Cairns et al., 2021), has been explained through several theoretical accounts (cf. Ritch and Brownlie, 2016; Magwegwe and Shaik, 2024). This research shas identified that consumers are reluctant to compromise identity and fashion related self-expression in response to abstract allegations whose consequences may occur in the future (Ritch et al., 2025). Despite this, the literature has largely stagnated in terms of how to advance beyond the attitude-behaviour gap. Meanwhile, fast-fashion has intensified through the emergence of ultra-fast models, with some online retailers introducing up to 6000 new garments daily (Earth Day, 2022).

An overlooked perspective concerns how sustainability risks interact with human cognition. These risks are probabilistic, temporally distant, and unevenly distributed (She, Lu and Ma, 2012), and risks are often processed through fast, intuitive judgement (Böhm and Brun, 2008), characteristics consumers may systematically underweight. Accordingly, the attitude-behaviour gap can be reconceptualised as risk perception failure where consumers discount delayed, diffuse risks for immediate benefits. We propose that behavioural economics offers a pathway forward (Ritch et al., 2025) by explaining how System 1 and System 2 processing (Kahneman, 2012) produces systematic departures from rationality (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979), shaped by contextual cues.

This paper examines how heuristics as mental shortcuts informing rapid risk perception (Siegrist and Árvai, 2020) and cognitive biases produce systematic distortions in risk judgement. On this basis, while marketing has been criticised for manipulative tactics that encourage short-term consumption (CMA, 2023; Ritch and Siddiqui, 2023), it could be repurposed to encourage sustainable practice. To build a foundation for this argument, the paper reviews behavioural economics literature alongside fashion and sustainable fashion research, guided by the following research questions.

Which heuristics and biases lead consumers to underweight environmental and social risks in fast fashion purchasing decisions?

How do contextual factors shape biased perceptions of sustainability risks relative to immediate consumption benefits?

How do cognitive biases limit the impact of sustainability messaging?

This research provides a pathway for further investigation and culminates in the development of a conceptual model explaining how behavioural biases distort risk perception in fast fashion, alongside future research propositions aimed at identifying marketing techniques that encourage more sustainable fashion practice by working with, rather than against, human heuristics and biases.

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What Motivates UK Fashion Consumer Engagement in Online Redistribution Markets?

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

With growing knowledge of the impact of fast-fashion that fast-fashion has on the environmental, interest is moving towards the circular fashion economy. This research explores if concern for sustainability drives engagement in redistribution markets, or if it is related to curating one's fashion identity. Demographic characteristics were collected from UK buyers and sellers.

Competitive Short Paper

With growing knowledge of the impact of fast-fashion that fast-fashion has on the environmental, interest is moving towards the circular fashion economy (Colasante et al., 2025; Goel et al., 2025; Ritch et al., 2025). The main issue with fast-fashion is the reliance on the take-make-waste model, where scarce resources and cheap labour are utilised to produce inexpensive garments with limited longevity. Cutting corners to produce inexpensive garments means incurs exploitation of the environment and people involved in the supply chain. Additionally, the garments are made with limited design features, which often includes the design theft of independent designers (Ritch, 2023; Brucculieri, 2018) and poor-quality materials and construction; holes appear in the material after a few wears; and seams often burst or become squint, meaning that the clothes end up not fitting well (World Wide Fund for Nature, 2025; Ritch, 2020) Consequently, fast-fashion is often disposed to landfill after only been worn a few times (Ritch, 2025; Charnley et al., 2022; Ki et al., 2021), and as profits are reliant on the volume of fashion sold (Ritch, 2025), marketing tactics encourage new consumption (Ritch & Siddiqui, 2023). In the UK, consumers overconsume, spending the third largest amount of money in the world on clothing (after only the United States and China), despite the UK being ranked 21st for population size (Choudhary, 2023). The volume of unwanted fashion is unmanageable, with much being sent to sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (Ritch, 2025; Ziolko et al., 2025; Reike et al., 2023), contributing to local pollution of the land and sea (Britten, 2024).

To address this, we need to make the most of fashion already in circulation. However, the fast-fashion industry has made little advances beyond the fast-fashion business model, other than progressing to an ultra-fast model, with fast-fashion retailer Shein releasing 6000 new garments daily (Earth Day, 2022). This does not reflect growing consumer concern for the impact that fast-fashion has for the climate-crisis. In response, there has been increased interest in second-hand fashion with consumers exchanging fashion and related accessories through online digital platforms, such as Vinted and Depop (Dekhili et al., 2025; Seth et al., 2025; Ziolko et al., 2025; Zulu and Muposhi, 2025). This activity constitutes the circular economy (Chourasiya & Malviya, 2025) and reduces the reliance on further production while minimising what is sent to landfill (Charnley et al., 2022). However, little is known about what motivates consumers to engage in the second-hand fashion economy. While concern for the climate-crisis is increasing, research has also found that following fashion, a sense of belonging and hedonistic experiences motivates fast-fashion consumption (Ritch et al., 2025). This research explores if concern for sustainability drives engagement in redistribution markets, or if it is related to curating one's fashion identity. Demographic characteristics were also collected from UK buyers and sellers.

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The Food Trail as a Transformative Placemaking Device: A Rhythmanalysis Approach

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

The theoretical development of the 'food trail' concept and the temporal dimensions of mobility that characterise the food trail as a food tourism experience remain overlooked As previous research does not address the dynamic processes that constitute the food trail as an assemblage of multiple human and non-human encounters (Deleuze and Guattari, 2020; Kärrholm, 2009), we use Lefebvre's (2013) rhythmanalysis to advance our understanding of food tourism and place-making.

Competitive Short Paper

An emerging example of how food tourists engage in both the consumption of place and the development of a place identity is the *food trail*. Although Everett (2008; 2012) lays the groundwork for shifting food tourism research towards embodied place-making experiences, the theoretical development of the 'food trail' concept and the temporal dimensions of mobility that characterise the food trail as a food tourism experience remain overlooked (e.g., Kärrholm, 2009). As previous research does not address the dynamic processes that constitute the food trail as an assemblage of multiple human and non-human encounters (Deleuze and Guattari, 2020; Kärrholm, 2009), we use Lefebvre's (2013) rhythmanalysis to advance our understanding of food tourism and place-making.

Place-making is a process of space production (Lefebvre, 1991; Lucarelli et al., 2023) that unfolds through the interactions of various place users and stakeholders, ranging from residents and visitors to planners and policymakers. This process involves the development of a sense of place (Warnaby and Medway, 2013), where contested values and belief systems co-produce spatial (Murdoch et al., 2005) and landscape narratives (Graciotti and McEachern, 2024; Lucarelli et al., 2023). These assemblages are characterised by processes of territorialisation (Brighenti, 2010; Deleuze and Guattari, 2020; Kärrholm, 2009), wherein places become defined through spatiotemporal dynamics involving competing intensities of place meaning creation (Brighenti and Kärrholm, 2018).

Different rhythms can co-exist in the same lived space at the same (lived) time (Lefebvre, 2013, p.25), forming a 'polyrhythmia' – a multiplicity of rhythms emerging from multiplicities of affective encounters. Here, different rhythms (i) can unite with one another in a state of health or smooth everydayness (i.e., 'eurhythmia'); (ii) can unite in such a harmonious way to resemble an orchestral performance (i.e., 'isorhythmia'); or (iii) can be 'out of step' and discordant (i.e., 'arrthymia') (Lefebvre, 2013; Lyon, 2020). The repetition of affective encounters may qualify rhythms as either 'linear' or 'cyclical' (Lyon, 2020). When human and non-human entities become engaged in a particular 'social', shared practice – this constitutes a 'collective' rhythm (Chan, 2024).

Through Collaborative Autoethnography (Chang et al., 2013), we advance an original conceptualisation of the 'food trail' by exploring two food trails in the UK, namely the Bowland and Bay Foodie Adventure in England and the LegenDerry Network in Northern Ireland. Our findings show that each food trail is experienced as both (i) the consumption of the area it cuts across and (ii) the creation of new meanings for the place, which emerge from our itineraries – thus establishing a heterogeneous, composite place identity that changes in quality according to the prevailing intensity of either cyclical, linear, or collective rhythms territorialising our emotional states and senses of place.

Thus, this research not only contributes to the food tourism and place-making literatures by theoretically proposing a conceptual definition of 'food trail' that emphasises its spatiotemporal, mobile nature as assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari, 2020). It also presents rhythmanalysis (Lefebvre, 2013) as a valuable theoretical lens, which helps to advance our understanding of the spatiotemporal characterisation of food tourism and place-making.

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Understanding Wild Swimmers and their Digital Communities: An Access Theory Perspective

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

Several marketing studies have explored consumption in and of natural spaces and places (e.g. Canniford and Shankar, 2013; Cheetham et al., 2018), but few examine how digital technologies mediate such nature-based experiences. In the context of wild swimming, we investigate how individuals navigate the interface between digital and physical realities. Overall, we expand our theoretical understanding of access and in so doing, challenge dominant framings that position digital and physical realms as opposing forces.

Competitive Short Paper

Several marketing studies have explored consumption in and of natural spaces and places (e.g. Canniford and Shankar, 2013; Cheetham et al., 2018), but few examine how digital technologies mediate such nature-based experiences (by exception see

Syvertsen and Enli, 2020). In light of this research gap and in the context of wild swimming, we investigate how individuals navigate the interface between digital and physical realities. Wild swimming refers to "full-body immersion in outdoor blue space" such as swimming in lakes, seas, canals, rivers or reservoirs (McDougall et al., 2022, p.2) and brings together swimmers who gather regularly for cold water immersion in natural settings, exhibiting characteristics of neo-tribal formations (see Maffesoli, 1996; Bennett, 1999). This context is deemed appropriate to our investigation as on the one hand, we have diverse individuals who develop enduring social bonds around shared embodiment practices (Cheetham et al., 2025), yet at the same time, they seek disconnection from technology-saturated everyday life, but still depend on social media to coordinate swims, share safety knowledge, and maintain their collective identity.

Szaboova et al. (2020) challenge the idea that access to blue spaces is just physically beneficial arguing it also provides psychosocial benefits. These psychosocial aspects of access - that are "shaped by social and cultural values, people's relations with nature, and the practices associated with environmental spaces (Fish et al., 2016) are fundamental to advancing our understanding of the health and wellbeing benefits that access derives. In addition, the role technology plays as a means through which individuals or groups gain or restrict access to resources and hence benefits is also vital. Thus, Ribot and Peluso's (2003) theory of access provides our analytical lens for examining how wild swimming communities create and maintain access to the benefits of wild swimming through digital means. Ribot and Peluso (2003) define access "as the *ability* to benefit from things—including material objects, persons, institutions, and symbols" (p.153) and includes natural resources. Thus, access encompasses notions of power or a bundle of powers that are "embodied in and exercised through various mechanisms, processes, and social relation – that affect people's ability to benefit from resources" (p.154). This brings to the fore two aspects of access: control and maintenance – both of which are highly relevant to our context of wild swimming. Consequently, our research question asks *how do wild swimming communities create and sustain access to the benefits of embodied swimming experiences through digital means?*

Using an interpretive approach involving interviews and ethnographic observations with forty-six wild swimmers, our thematic analysis reveals *connecting mechanisms* (e.g. knowledge sharing) and *disconnecting mechanisms* (e.g. technological escape) as operating through temporal oscillation rather than in opposition. Unlike contexts where digital technology mediates the primary activity itself, wild swimming's physical demands enforce a temporal separation, making each domain (i.e. physical, virtual) dependent on the other. Overall, we expand our theoretical understanding of access and challenge dominant marketing framings that position digital and physical realms as opposing forces. The paper concludes with suggestions for exploring other digitally-coordinated, nature-based experiences.

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An Analysis of the Impact of Religious Belief on the Marketing of Food

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Track: 10. Marketing in Context (e.g., Food, Sport)

Summary Statement

The paper brings together a theological construct to analyse the institutional logics and subsequent marketing decisions made by people identifying as Christians who have agency in businesses operating in the food industry. Using the Asher's Bakery Case (2018) as an example, where the organisation refused to make a cake promoting gay marriage it it uses a structured approach to identify the drivers that underpinned why other 'Christian' bakeries took an different stance to this issue.

Competitive Short Paper

This cross disciplinary paper forms part of a major study into the impact of religious belief on the institutional logics of organisations and how in this instance the marketing of food is impacted.

Using the Wesleyan Quadrilateral (Thorsen 2005) as a Weberian Ideal type, the research explores the underpinning logics behind the marketing decisions made in the UK food industry. This part of the larger study focusses on the issues surrounding the Ashers Bakery Case which involved owners who identified as Christian refusing on religious grounds to make a cake promoting a gay wedding. The legal case Lee v Ashers Bakery Company Ltd (2018) went through the court system ending up with the UK Supreme Court finding in favour of the bakery. A similar case was held in the US - Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission (2018.)

Part of the accusation against Ashers was the fact that the prosecution believed that other 'Christian Bakeries' would have made the cake. The paper compares the logic and the marketing decisions of both the Ashers Bakery with three other bakeries who are also run by people who identify as Christian. In contrast these organisations were happy to make cakes for gay weddings and in one case provides bespoke products for their local 'pride' week.

The importance of this work is that in many areas of academic research a 'Christian business' is used as a unit of analysis especially in studies that draw comparisons with organisations based on other faiths for example Islamic businesses based on Sheria Law (Gümüsay, 2019.) Without understanding the underpinning rationale behind how these marketing decisions are reached it is impossible to predict behaviour or understand the marketing strategy of the organisations involved.

By taking an interdisciplinary approach and bringing a theological construct in the form of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral into the marketing analysis it is possible to create an explanatory narrative that accounts for the marketing position taking by the organisations. The research was undertaken using in depth interviews which were evaluated by thematic analysis measured against the ideal type. The quadrilateral is seen as being an underpinning basis on which faith-based decisions can be made.

McGrath (2017) summarises Wesley's view and the elements of the Quadrilateral as 'the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illuminated by tradition, brought to life in personal experience and confirmed by reason.'

The quadrilateral dimensions are then used to understand the institutional logics that underpin the decisions that are then made with respect to the marketing of food. The research has wider application in that there is a well-established link between religion and food e.g. halal, kosher, some forms of vegetarianism. Food has symbolic meaning and can reflect spiritual purity and communal identity. In Askers Bakery Case this is manifested not in the act of consumption but in the intent and messaging which moves it from being solely a theological issue into the area of marketing strategy.

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Developing Market-Relevant AI Competency in Digital Marketing Students: Evidence from a Final-Year Creative Advertising Module

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This paper reports on a final-year Digital Media Advertising module that integrated generative AI as a scaffold for creative campaign development while foregrounding ethical, transparent and responsible use. Using pre- and post-intervention surveys, the study examines changes in students' AI competency, attitudes and reported ethical behaviours. Findings show increased creative confidence alongside intention-behaviour gaps in ethical use. The paper offers implications for designing market-relevant, ethically grounded AI-enabled pedagogy in marketing education.

Competitive Short Paper

Marketing leaders increasingly operate in digital-first, AI-enabled environments while reporting difficulties finding graduates with appropriate creative, analytical and ethical capabilities. Recent scholarship argues that the rapid diffusion of generative AI is reshaping marketing practice and intensifying the need for graduates who can work effectively and responsibly with AI-supported tools (Grewal et al., 2025). At the same time, marketing education scholars highlight the pedagogical challenge of integrating generative AI in ways that enhance skill development without undermining academic integrity (Guha et al., 2024). These dynamics place renewed responsibility on marketing education to develop market-relevant AI competency, understood as the ability to apply generative AI tools effectively, critically and responsibly within creative marketing tasks.

This study is informed by a competency-based view of education, which emphasises the development of applied, market-relevant capabilities through authentic learning tasks (McClelland, 1973, Ye et al., 2017). It presents findings from Phase 1 of a pedagogical intervention in a final-year Digital Media Advertising module on a Marketing and Digital Media degree. The intervention integrated generative AI (the enterprise version of ChatGPT) as a scaffold for creative campaign development, including idea generation, storytelling and message refinement. Alongside this, students engaged in structured discussions and activities designed to build ethical reasoning, transparency and responsible practice. The approach emphasised that generative AI is not a shortcut, but a tool requiring interpretive judgement, critical oversight and digital professionalism.

A mixed-methods, quantitatively led evaluation design was employed, centred on pre- and post-intervention surveys administered to students. Baseline measures captured AI self-efficacy for creative tasks (prompting, iterating, audience insight, copywriting and evaluating outputs), attitudes towards AI in learning, perceived relevance of AI for future marketing roles and intended ethical behaviours related to accuracy, privacy, disclosure and intellectual property. The final survey replicated these measures and additionally explored students' reported AI behaviours during client-focused campaign work and their perceptions of AI's impact on campaign originality, strategic clarity and ethical compliance.

Preliminary analysis indicates meaningful increases in students' AI competency for creative tasks and the development of more critically informed attitudes towards generative AI in professional contexts. Students generally perceived that AI-assisted versions of their campaign work improved idea generation, narrative clarity and message refinement, while also highlighting areas where human judgement remained essential. However, evidence of intention–behaviour gaps emerged, echoing concerns in marketing education research that responsible AI use must be actively scaffolded rather than assumed (Al-Fattal, 2025).

The paper contributes to marketing education scholarship by providing empirical evidence of how a structured, ethically framed AI intervention can develop market-relevant creative AI competency in final-year students while upholding academic integrity. It proposes design principles for integrating generative AI into advanced digital marketing modules in ways that mirror contemporary professional practice and enhance students' sense of career readiness.

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Ad Avoidance On Streaming Platforms: A Drama Enthusiasts Perspective

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Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

Summary Statement

With people spending more and more time surfing the internet, streaming platforms such as Netflix have gained increasing popularity. In-stream video ad is a format of online display advertising, which is the main form of advertising on Chinese drama

streaming platforms. Factors such as overexposure have led drama enthusiasts to avoid watching ads. This study investigates Chinese drama enthusiasts' ad avoidance behaviour and seeks to understand why they avoid watching in-stream video ads.

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Green CSR and its impact on brand equity and brand value : An Indian Perspective

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities has become even more crucial for corporates to build brands and achieve societal legitimacy In the working paper, we consider the interlinkages between key elements of a green CSR strategy at the firm level among Indian corporates. We consider well established ideas like green governance, green policies, perceived green value and green brand equity – constructs that have been considered in the past, but still lacks deeper empirical scrutiny.

Competitive Short Paper

With far greater scrutiny of a firm's operational level details, in the present global context, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities has become even more crucial for corporates to build brands and achieve societal legitimacy (Bhattacharjee et al, 2025). CSR reflects the discretionary actions of firms toward social and environmental interests (Song et al., 2019). . From the status of an almost afterthought to corporate strategy, CSR practices are now being incorporated into the core business strategies by corporates (Siltaloppi et al., 2021). The proposed study, attempts to understand the interlinkages between green governance, green citizenships behaviours, green objectives and green policies at the corporate level strategy in India.

In this working paper, we consider the interlinkages between key elements of a green CSR strategy at the firm level among Indian corporates. We consider well established ideas like green governance, green policies, perceived green value and green brand equity – constructs that have been considered in the past, but still lacks deeper empirical scrutiny. Based on a literature review, we develop a conceptual model that incorporates these constructs.

Environmental CSR is defined as the concept of environmental CSR or 'Green CSR' relates to duties towards society with respect to the environment. Environmental CSR is the duty to cover environmental consequences of a particular company's operations, products, and facilities. Green governance: Green Governance refers to a model of governance that integrates environmental considerations into. decision-making processes to ensure sustainable development..

Green policies: refers to the companies policies which are aimed at the environment.

"Green Brand Equity" and defined green brand equity as , " a set of brand assets and liabilities about green commitments and environmental concerns linked to brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service"(Chen, 2010).

Customers' total appraisal of the received benefit of a market offering is based on their desires; expectations and needs that are environmentally sustainable are known as green perceived value (Juliana et al., 2020).

The proposed study attempts to:

1.To investigate how green governance and green citizenship has an impact of green CSR in India. Firms.

2. To investigate how green CSR has an impact on green brand equity of Indian firms .

The study relies on MCA data (Ministry of Corporate Affairs)16698 companies and the annual reports, sustainability and CSR reports of those MCA companies .Each and every construct was coded on the basis of simple coding method by independent researchers .

The study has great theoretical and managerial implications. Theoretically the study addresses the vast gap in literature as it is the first of kind. Due to paucity of research in the domain, the study stands unique as it is the first study to discuss the impact of green CSR on green brand value and green brand equity. Managerially . The study can assist companies in employing green CSR to improve green brand equity and green brand value.,

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Going Beyond Sustainability: How Regenerative Tourism Reframes Destination Marketing For SIDS Through A Stakeholder Lens.

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

Regenerative-Tourism (RT) presents as an alternative to traditional exploitative tourism-practices especially for SIDS which are reliant on tourism. Drawing on stakeholder-theory, this qualitative study interviews stakeholders to investigate their understanding, factors that enhance or block adoption of RT. Findings indicate that adoption of RT is encouraged and supported but remains uneven due to lack of support, role ambiguity, institutional barriers. The paper introduces a multi-level framework, reframing RT as a form of value-creation for stakeholders.

Competitive Short Paper

Whilst tourism practices are seen as exploitative and sustainable initiatives are perceived as insufficient, Regenerative Tourism (RT) presents as a transformational approach to tourism destinations. RT was intended to develop the capacities of places, communities and their guests in harmony with existing socio-environmental systems (Bellato, Frantzeskaki & Nygaard, 2022) by creating net positive effects (Bellato et al., 2022). Hence, RT provides a crucial pathway towards more meaningful tourism practices for destinations such as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) which are highly vulnerable to climate change but reliant on the tourism industry. Regenerative Tourism Practices (RTPs) have the potential to reshape destination-marketing in SIDS by shifting towards more meaningful experiences, rooted in community and ecological wellbeing. Recently, RTPs including initiatives for restoration of the ecosystem, government and community-led sustainability programs have begun to emerge, but little is known about the level of understanding, adoption, perceived benefits and costs of RT.

Responding to recent calls for more inclusive and regenerative approaches to tourism development (Cave & Dredge, 2021), the study investigates how key destination stakeholders interpret, implement and govern RT in SIDS. Drawing on stakeholder theory (Freeman 1984), that has been used as a central analytical lens due to the close interdependence between economic, social and environmental systems (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon 2016; Nunkoo et al., 2012; Heslinga et al., 2019; Line & Wang, 2017), this paper identifies the factors that enhances or block the adoption of RT by diverse stakeholders in SIDS. Thus, this study aims to investigate how destination stakeholders understand and adopt RTPs.

Following up on the need for further research and understanding of RT in developing countries and the impact it has on communities involved (Luong et al.2023), this qualitative study adopts an exploratory inductive approach (Creswell, 2013). Key stakeholders within the tourism sector in Mauritius were selected via purposive sampling and interviewed (*n=30*). Mauritius is selected as tourism is a major economic pillar for the island (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012), contributing to GDP and employment but simultaneously creating sustainability issues (Prayag et al.2010; Seetanah, Sannassee & Nunkoo, 2019). Furthermore, islands such as Mauritius face unique development challenges, thus strengthening the rational for research here (UNDP, 2024).

Initial findings indicate that, despite the shift towards more sustainable forms of tourism, the adoption of RTPs remains uneven. Stakeholders highlight the lack of public and private support, unclear regulations and their own role ambiguity as major barriers. However, some point more positively towards long-term benefits based on internal individual or organizational efforts, customers and other key stakeholders' need for authenticity and change, as well as international support from third party organizations (e.g. consortiums) as substantial RT-enablers.

This paper introduces a multi-level conceptual framework by integrating stakeholder theory to reframe RT as a long term differentiator, extending destination marketing beyond promotional functions towards a process of value creation. Additionally, it contributes to destination marketing by helping inform policy and practices in the tourism industry, offering practical strategies to support key tourism players in leveraging the benefits of regenerative tourism for the destination.

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Planet First, Unless It's on Sale: A Cross-Cultural and Intergenerational Study to Examine Moral Decoupling and Disengagement in Green Purchasing Behavior

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This study examines how moral decoupling, moral disengagement, and norm activation shape green purchase decisions in luxury fashion. Drawing on behavioral and moral psychology literature, it explores how consumers navigate tensions between ethical concerns and self-interest. Using a two-phase mixed-method design across generations and cultures, the research identifies psychological mechanisms and situational factors underlying the attitude–behavior gap, offering insights for promoting sustainable consumption in luxury retailing.

Competitive Short Paper

Positioned within the behavioral literature on moral decoupling and disengagement, this study provides theoretical insights into the psychological and contextual factors that shape green purchase decision-making in the luxury fashion sector. Three interrelated constructs are examined: (1) moral decoupling – separating ethical concerns from product evaluation; (2) moral disengagement – deactivating moral self-regulation through justification mechanisms i.e. blaming others; denial of harm; and (3) norm activation – internalizing personal and social norms driving pro-environmental behavior. Consumers are increasingly guided by moral considerations in their purchasing decisions, with situational concerns shaping their behavior (Sharma & Lal, 2020). Norm activation theory explains how awareness of consequences and ascription of responsibility drive pro-environmental and altruistic actions (Schwartz, 1977; Surira et al., 2025). However, consumers often face dilemmas between self-serving and society-serving choices, leading to behaviors such as moral decoupling, where moral concerns are separated from consumption decisions to prioritize personal or economic benefits (Cowan & Yazdanparast, 2019; Bhattacharjee et al., 2012). Within the field of organizational behavior and psychology, it has been highlighted that these inner conflicts are often resolved through moral disengagement; cognitive mechanisms individuals use to rationalize behavior that serves their own interests at the expense of the greater good—for example, by displacing responsibility, attributing blame to others, or dehumanizing those affected.

Given the limited research on moral decoupling and disengagement in sustainable luxury retailing, a two-phase mixed-method design is adopted. Phase one uses semi-structured interviews with Gen Z and Gen Y consumers to build a conceptual model, proposing anticipated emotions as a mediator between personal norms and pro-environmental behavior, while pre-testing and refining hypotheses. Phase two surveys 1,000 consumers across two countries to test these hypotheses and assess cultural influences. PLS-SEM is used to provide cross-cultural and cross-generational insights into sustainable purchase behaviors.

The findings aim to provide insights into the drivers, challenges, and consequences faced by luxury fashion retailers, with a view to addressing the persistent attitude–behavior gap in luxury fashion retailing.

Key Words: Moral decoupling, disengagement, norm activation theory, luxury fashion retailing, green purchasing behavior

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The Phygital Future of Luxury Retail: Integrating Physical and Digital Experience

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

This study examines the phygital future of luxury retail by comparing physical and online channels through a mixed comparative analysis of secondary data. Using key performance indicators and experiential frameworks, it evaluates transactional efficiency and customer engagement across environments. Findings show that luxury value does not reside in either channel alone but emerges through the integration of multisensory, human-centred in-store experiences with digitally enabled personalisation, convenience, and technological sophistication.

Competitive Short Paper

As luxury brands navigate digital transformation, understanding how different retail formats shape emotional, sensory, and relational engagement becomes essential to unlocking their long-term potential. Luxury brands today operate at the intersection of technological innovation, changing consumer expectations and growing environmental responsibilities. This study compares two interconnected environments that together define today's luxury landscape. The physical boutique remains central to the luxury sector, offering a curated atmosphere where personal interaction, craftsmanship, and brand storytelling are reinforced through the five senses, naturally contributing to a deeper, more memorable experience. By contrast, the online environment has become an increasingly sophisticated platform for luxury consumption. Supported by digital tools such as AI, augmented reality, virtual spaces and personalised interfaces, to recreate elements of immersion primarily through visual and auditory stimuli, compensating for the limits of digital touchpoints through fluid design and high levels of customisation.

Together, these two settings form the foundation of today's phygital experiences, which refers to the strategic integration of physical and digital technologies to create seamless, hybrid experiences that bridge online and offline environments, enhancing user interaction across sectors such as retail, education, healthcare, and luxury.

By combining sensory, technological, and experiential elements, phygital models enable emotionally engaging and personalised experiences that leverage digital convenience while preserving the authenticity and value of physical touchpoints.

This research adopts a quantitative and qualitative comparative design using secondary data to evaluate performance across in-store and online retail channels. Quantitative channel performance was operationalised using key performance indicators (KPIs). In-store performance was examined through Sales in store (%), average transaction value, foot traffic growth, dwell time, conversion rate, while online performance was evaluated using e-commerce net sales, e-commerce conversion rate, delivery time, bounce rate and average visit duration. For the qualitative analysis, a framework comprising six key experiential pillars from the literature was used for the in-store evaluation, which included personalisation of service, staff expertise/professionalism, store atmosphere/design, experiential elements, customer engagement, packaging and presentation. For online qualitative analysis, five experience indicators of the website were evaluated: website aesthetics, ease of navigation, digital content, post-purchase experience, and security. These analyses capture both transactional outcomes and customer engagement across channels.

The analysis followed two-stages approach. First, KPIs were standardised and descriptively analysed to identify patterns and variations within each channel. Second, the indicators were organised into comparative tables, enabling a structured cross-channel evaluation. This approach enables the identification of strengths and weaknesses between physical and digital environments.

Overall, the findings indicate that uniqueness does not reside exclusively in the physical or digital channel. Instead, it emerges when brands integrate the multisensory richness and human connection of the boutique with the personalisation, convenience and technological sophistication of online platforms. This combined approach aligns with the conference theme "Breaking Boundaries, Unlocking Potential", showing how luxury brands can create innovative, meaningful and responsible experiences that meet the evolving expectations of modern consumers.

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Synthetic Atmospheres: Conceptualising Music Listening Experiences In The Age Of Platform Capitalism

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Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

Summary Statement

Drawing upon Böhme's (2017) writings and recent work on synthetic data (Jacobsen, 2023; 2024), this conceptual paper introduces the concept of *synthetic atmospheres* to illustrate how everyday music listening acts have been transformed into systematically engineered and algorithmically driven experiences in platform capitalism. This study highlights that music streaming platforms operate through the logic of synthetic mediation and suggests that synthetic atmospheres unfold via three interrelated affective conditions.

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Taking A Territorological Perspective On The Management And Marketing Of UK Periodic Markets

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper examines UK outdoor periodic retail markets using the notion of *territory*. Based on qualitative interviews with market managers from a range of geographically dispersed urban markets, we reveal the shifting nature of the modern market which has led to a reconceptualization by market managers, we show how spatial indicators help form territorial boundaries and we examine the markers of relational territories enacted by market actors.

Competitive Short Paper

Periodic retail markets have a long history as stalwarts of our urban fabric (Stobart and van Damme, 2016; Mitchell, 2017), and yet there has been little investigation into their modus operandi (across their multiplicity of forms), and the way they have endured - and in some cases thrived – in the contemporary urban retail environment . Periodic, outdoor markets 'where food and other goods are sold on the streets, in covered regulated spaces or in informal settings' (González, 2018:1) are important places for economic exchange, and also fulfil a social and cultural role for the communities they serve (Seale, 2018).

Despite their prevalence, there is limited research on these vital centres of retailing and community which often contribute to the placemaking and the atmosphere of a locale (Hallsworth et al, 2015; Hracs and Concha, 2024). Researchers note a dual contemporary narrative (see González and Waley, 2013; González and Rivlin, 2017), where some authors have emphasised markets' decline (Bua et al, 2018) whilst others highlight a resurgence (Morales, 2011), especially, of more niche, specialist market types.

The temporal, spatial and behavioural aspects of periodic markets - core themes that this paper interrogates - are neglected in academic enquiry. Our research aims to evaluate the extent to which periodic retail markets are understood and managed as territorialised entities. Here, a *territory* can be understood as bounded and controlled space (Agnew, 2009; Kärrholm, 2005) yet also more broadly, incorporating the social relations that occur within that space (see Brighenti, 2010; Brighenti and Kärrholm, 2020, 2022). We posit therefore that the concept of territory is highly appropriate for analysing markets due to its incorporation of these salient aspects.

Empirically, our research utilises in depth interviews with market managers from 12 periodic outdoor retail markets situated across much of the UK(spanning various locations in Northern Ireland, London/the South , the Midlands and the North), investigating the extent to which they considered - and managed - their markets as 'territories'. Interviews were conducted via MS teams and were recorded with consent. The use of MS teams helped us gain access to a wider geographical spread of (extremely busy) participants than we would otherwise have been able to, given the time constraints (Harvey et al., 2024). Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically (Braun and Clarke, 2022).

Our preliminary findings are organised around three core themes: 1) *evolving markets and market actors* where we outline the shifting nature of markets which has led managers to attempt to re-conceptualise them, managing them as territories; 2) *Spatial territories* and the ways boundaries form part of market territorialisation and de-territorialisation, including the role of physical 'actants' such as stalls, decoration, chairs and tables etc.; and 3) *Relational territories* outlining the role of actors in territorialisation via performance, charitable activities and the simple act of gathering together. We reflect on how these perceptions of territorial formation can lead to more extensive theorising (such as a potential typology for spatial and relational aspects of territory) and practical implications for market managers.

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Priming Under Information Saturation: Rethinking Nonconscious Influence in Contemporary Consumer Environments

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This conceptual paper re-examines priming effects in contemporary consumer environments characterised by information saturation and fragmented attention. Integrating priming theory with cognitive load research, it proposes that competitive activation, accelerated decay, and reduced accessibility systematically constrain nonconscious influence under high information load. The paper advances testable propositions and discusses implications for consumer research, methodology, and marketing practice in digital and multi-touchpoint contexts.

Competitive Short Paper

Priming—the nonconscious activation of mental representations that influence subsequent judgment and behaviour—has long been a foundational concept in consumer research. In marketing and consumer research, priming has been widely used to explain how brand cues, retail environments, and marketing communications shape consumer judgments and choices without conscious awareness. Decades of studies demonstrate that subtle cues can influence preferences, evaluations, and actions. However, much of this evidence originates from media environments characterised by relative information scarcity, stable attention, and limited message competition. Contemporary consumers now operate in fundamentally different conditions marked by digital saturation, fragmented attention, and chronic cognitive load. This raises a critical but underexplored question: to what extent do classic priming effects generalise to information-saturated consumer environments?

This conceptual paper argues that modern media ecologies systematically constrain the effectiveness of priming in consumer contexts. Drawing on cognitive load theory and information-processing research, we propose that information saturation alters the cognitive conditions under which priming operates, thereby weakening or destabilising its influence on consumer judgment and choice.

We develop a theoretical framework identifying three mechanisms through which information saturation constrains priming. First, competitive activation occurs when multiple simultaneous cues—brands, messages, notifications, and contextual signals—compete for limited cognitive resources, reducing the strength of any single activation. Second, accelerated decay reflects the rapid turnover of information in digital environments, where activated concepts are quickly displaced by subsequent stimuli, leading to interference-based rather than purely temporal decay. Third, reduced accessibility arises when overloaded working-memory systems are less capable of maintaining and retrieving activated representations, diminishing their impact on downstream evaluations and decisions.

Integrating these mechanisms with recent meta-analytic and replication evidence, the paper advances six propositions concerning the boundary conditions of priming in contemporary consumer settings. These propositions are intended to delimit the conditions under which priming is likely to operate in modern consumer environments, rather than to offer an exhaustive theory of nonconscious influence. They predict differential vulnerability across priming types, moderation by working-memory capacity and attention regulation, systematic reductions in priming effectiveness in digital versus traditional media contexts, and accelerated decay under high information diversity.

The framework contributes to consumer research in three ways. Theoretically, it reframes debates about declining priming effects by situating them within changing information environments rather than attributing them solely to methodological artefacts. Methodologically, it highlights the need for context-sensitive designs that incorporate realistic information loads and individual-difference measures. Substantively, it cautions marketers against relying on subtle nonconscious influence strategies in saturated environments and underscores the importance of distinctiveness, processing fluency, and cross-touchpoint consistency. Unlike digital marketing research that focuses on attention capture or engagement outcomes, this paper examines whether nonconscious influence mechanisms themselves remain viable under sustained cognitive load.

By reconceptualising priming as context-dependent rather than context-invariant, this paper responds directly to calls for boundary-breaking consumer research and offers a contemporary lens on nonconscious influence in modern marketplaces.

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The Impact of Haptic Feedback within Mobile Shopping: Considering Consumers' Need for Touch (NFT)

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

As mobile commerce has become increasingly prevalent, retailers have sought to enhance the mobile shopping experience by incorporating multisensory stimulation (i.e., visual, auditory, and now tactile stimulation). This paper investigates the presence of sensory inputs, specifically haptic feedback, when positioning and manipulating augmented reality (AR) products within a retailer shopping app on a smartphone. It furthermore examines the downstream effects on consumer evaluation of the app and purchase intention with the app through perceived trust.

Competitive Short Paper

As mobile commerce has become increasingly prevalent, retailers have sought to enhance the mobile shopping experience by incorporating multisensory stimulation (i.e., visual, auditory, and now tactile stimulation). This paper investigates the presence of sensory inputs, specifically haptic feedback, when positioning and manipulating augmented reality (AR) products within a retailer shopping app on a smartphone. It furthermore examines the downstream effects on consumer evaluation of the app and purchase intention with the app through perceived trust.

Organized into two studies, this research explores how haptic feedback through vibrotactile stimulation can influence shoppers with varying levels of need for touch (NFT). With a sample of 184 respondents, study 1 investigates the effect of haptic experiences provided in an augmented reality shopping app on consumer evaluation, satisfaction with their experience, and purchase intention, using a one-way between-subject experimental design (Kim & Forsythe, 2008). With a sample of 433 respondents, study 2 replicates this protocol and examines whether consumer trust toward the AR app modifies the moderated mediation effect investigated in Study 1, under which conditions, and how this affects the marketing outcomes.

The present findings show that NFT positively moderates the effects of haptic feedback, increasing consumers' trust in the retailer's AR mobile shopping app. Moderated mediation through trust and perceived usefulness is supported as the indirect effect of haptic feedback on app evaluation is significant for higher NFT consumers (coef. = .14, $p<.05$). A similar significant indirect effect is observed for trust and perceived entertainment value in which haptic feedback increases the app evaluation for high NFT consumers (coef. = .19, $p<.05$). However, similar effects are not observed for trust and perceived ease of use. When haptic feedback is provided to higher NFT consumers, the conditional indirect effect of haptic feedback through trust and perceived usefulness increases purchase intention (coef. = .11, $p<.05$). Similarly, the conditional indirect effect through perceived entertainment value is also positive and significant (coef. = .07, $p<.05$). Once again, the conditional indirect effects suggest perceived ease of use does not mediate purchase intention.

To summarize, the results consistently suggest that haptic feedback interacts with consumer NFT, as trust in the AR mobile app increases when haptic feedback is provided to high NFT customers. Consequently, these consumers report increased perceived usefulness and perceived entertainment value, which leads to improved app evaluation and higher purchase intention. Interestingly, perceived ease of use did not play a role. Customers may view haptic technology as providing useful cues and offering entertainment value, but the technology does not make the AR app easier to use. Thus, haptic technology can offer a competitive advantage, but may not be able to overcome a poorly designed AR app that is not user friendly.

This paper contributes to the existing retail app and consumer behavior literature on sensory experiences in mobile retail, highlighting the need for retailers to offer haptic feedback experiences while offering suggestions for identifying high- and low-touch customer preferences.

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Understanding the Role of Consumption Communities and Social Learning in Advancing the Circular Fashion Economy

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This project extends circular fashion consumption research, by looking at consumers as active participants who learn new capabilities through communities and advance how circular fashion consumption is practiced. We do this by interviews, observations, and netnography across circular fashion communities in five European countries. Findings emphasize active consumer engagement in learning and leading collective action toward circular fashion consumption, aiming to translate community efforts to societal change.

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Designing AI-Enhanced yet AI-Resilient Marketing Pedagogy: Evidence from an Influencer Marketing Module

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This paper presents a pedagogical case study of an Influencer Marketing and AI Trends module that integrates experiential learning, design thinking, and AI-enabled tools to enhance student engagement while promoting critical thinking. By combining stepwise project-based learning with controlled AI use and offline ideation activities, the module demonstrates an AI-enhanced yet AI-resilient approach to marketing education that prioritises creativity, reflection, and applied learning over passive reliance on generative technologies.

Competitive Short Paper

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into marketing education presents both opportunities and pedagogical challenges, particularly the risk of student over-reliance on generative tools. This short paper presents a case study of an undergraduate module titled Influencer Marketing and AI Trends, illustrating how a multi-layered pedagogical design can enhance student engagement while fostering critical thinking and reducing passive dependence on AI. By combining experiential learning, project-based pedagogy, design thinking, and controlled AI integration, the module demonstrates a practical model for AI-enhanced yet AI-resilient marketing education.

Introduction

Marketing education increasingly emphasises applied, technology-driven learning environments to prepare students for digitally mediated industries (Rust, 2020). At the same time, the rise of generative AI tools raises concerns regarding academic integrity, superficial learning, and the erosion of critical thinking skills (Kasneci et al., 2023). This paper addresses these challenges through a pedagogical case study that integrates AI as a learning augment rather than a cognitive substitute.

Pedagogical Design and Method

The module was structured around a semester-long influencer marketing project, completed incrementally alongside theoretical instruction. Drawing on Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, students were introduced to core concepts such as influencer typologies, content strategies, authenticity, and platform algorithms, which they immediately applied to their evolving projects. This theory–practice integration enabled continuous knowledge reinforcement.

AI tools were deliberately embedded at specific stages, including ideation support, content refinement, and video development workflows. Students were trained on digital tools commonly used in influencer marketing, particularly those supporting short-form video creation. However, AI use was scaffolded rather than unrestricted, ensuring that students understood both the capabilities and limitations of these technologies.

To counter over-reliance on AI, design thinking pedagogy was incorporated (Brown, 2008). Students engaged in offline brainstorming sessions using chart papers, empathy mapping, and collaborative ideation exercises. These activities required human judgment, creativity, and peer negotiation—processes that AI could not replace. By alternating between AI-supported tasks and AI-free cognitive activities, students developed reflective awareness of when and how AI adds value.

Assessment and Outcomes

The final assessment consisted of group presentations where students justified strategic decisions, content choices, and ethical considerations underpinning their influencer campaigns. This reflective articulation aligns with constructivist learning principles (Biggs & Tang, 2011) and reinforces higher-order thinking. Student feedback indicated higher engagement, stronger conceptual understanding, and increased confidence in using AI critically rather than dependently.

Conclusion

This case study demonstrates that AI-proofing education does not require excluding AI but rather redesigning pedagogy to prioritise critical thinking, creativity, and experiential learning. The module offers a replicable framework for marketing educators seeking to balance innovation with academic rigour in the age of AI.

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Reimagining Employer Branding: A Cross-Cultural Study of a Gen Z Workplace Expectations

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This study investigates how digital saturation and algorithmic 'doomscrolling' habit loops reshape Gen Z's workplace expectations. Using a participatory Rich Picture methodology with 40 participants in France and Brazil, the research reveals profound systemic scepticism towards corporate legitimacy. Findings highlight tension between digital empowerment and the risk of reducing corporate social responsibility to performative metrics, offering a framework for managers to architect authentic organisational environments, and develop their employer brand.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Gen Z (born 1995-2010) is a pivotal cohort entering a global workforce defined by climate urgency, digital transformation and rising institutional distrust (Mărginean, 2021; Aggarwal et al., 2022). This generation exists within socio-technical ecosystems where algorithmic platforms curate social interaction and format perceptions of reality (Lichy et al., 2025). Digital saturation structures their expectations of corporate responsibility and ethical governance (Fidella et al, 2025). Consequently, current employer branding strategies are becoming inadequate for a cohort that evaluates employers as agents within these digitised, often dystopian, systems. By examining cross-cultural socio-technical tensions, our research seeks to 'break boundaries' in traditional marketing theory to unlock the potential of more authentic human engagement.

Theoretical Framework

Our research integrates socio-technical ecosystems theory (Bostrom & Heinen, 1977), habit theory (Wood & Rünger, 2016) and Mannheim's (1952) generational logic. Habit theory explains how dopamine-driven digital routines (Almachnee & Cozzie, 2022) become entrenched 'habit loops' (Gardner & Lally, 2023). For Gen Z, the dominant loop of 'doomscrolling' (i.e., the compulsive consumption of distressing content) amplifies exposure to corporate scandals and greenwashing (Yousef et al., 2025). We argue that these formative digital experiences have produced a digitally-informed scepticism that Gen Z enacts at work.

Methodology

This study employs a participatory, visual hermeneutic approach (Abma & Schrijver, 2020) using the Rich Picture (RP) technique (Bell & Morse, 2013). RP facilitates the articulation of tacit knowledge and systemic relationships (Checkland & Poulter, 2020), capturing subliminal beliefs often missed by survey methods. A matched-group, cross-cultural design was implemented involving 40 business students (aged 17-21) from Paris, France, and São Paulo, Brazil. This contrast allows for the exploration of how universal digital habit loops are mediated by distinct cultural-economic contexts. Data were analysed using the Gioia methodology to ensure qualitative rigour (Gioia et al., 2013).

Findings and Discussion

The analysis reveals three critical dimensions of Gen Z's reframed expectations of business and society.

Firstly, both cohorts perceive technology as an instrument of alienation. Brazilian participants focused on labour precarity and human obsolescence (e.g., 'Uberisation'), while French participants identified a system of digital enclosure and cognitive confinement (e.g., 'enshacklement').

Secondly, Brazilian participants prioritised social and racial justice as non-negotiable conditions for legitimacy (Gerhard et al., 2024). Conversely, French participants demanded ecological authenticity, sharply criticising écoblanchiment or 'greenwashing' (Bytof & Ritch, 2023).

Lastly, both cohorts seek meaning beyond the screen (Aysi et al., 2025; Pereira, 2025). For Brazilians, authenticity is pursued through systemic rebalancing of well-being and technology. For the French, it involves cultivating unmediated human interaction to counter digital fragmentation.

Conclusion and Managerial Implications

New approaches beyond superficial perks are needed for enhancing employer branding and appealing to prospective employees. Managers must architect environments that respond to Gen Z's systemic critiques by positioning organisations as legitimate, transparent agents within socio-technical ecosystems. This necessitates 'structurally-aware' talent management (Gandasari et al., 2024) that acknowledges socioeconomic disparities and prioritises substantive, non-performative ethical action, thereby enhancing the employer brand and its appeal to prospective employees.

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Reflected Identity and Cultural Storytelling: Meaning-Making Through Heritage, Authenticity and Second-Hand Fashion Among Second-Generation Consumers in the UK

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This study investigates how second-generation consumers in the UK use heritage, authenticity, country-of-origin cues, and personalised fashion practices to negotiate identity within a multicultural context. By examining the symbolic meanings embedded in thrifting, second-hand consumption, and customised dress, the research shows how everyday fashion choices act as resources for preserving, reinterpreting, and expressing cultural heritage. The study positions identity as dynamic, continually shaped through sustainability, creativity, and cultural meaning

Competitive Short Paper

Due to the increasing multicultural trend in Britain, many second-generation individuals are negotiating complex questions of belonging, identity, and cultural continuity. One of the most common ways through which identity is developed is fashion (McNeill and Venter, 2019), particularly heritage-inspired styling, thrifting, and personalised forms of dress that circulate widely across social media and everyday life (Grappi et al., 2024; Johnstone and Lindh, 2022;), yet we still know relatively little about the deeper cultural motivations behind these practices. This study is motivated by that gap. It explores how second-generation consumers in the UK use heritage, authenticity, country-of-origin cues, and cultural storytelling to shape and express their identities through fashion. Although practices such as thrifting, second-hand consumption (Silvia et al., 2021), and personalisation (Kent, 2025) are increasingly popular, their symbolic and identity-related meanings remain under-examined. To address this, the research draws on interviews and netnographic observations to understand how everyday fashion choices contribute to identity formation.

Expected findings predict that second-hand clothing and personalisation will function as symbolic resources, a central concept within consumer culture theory (CCT), through which individuals preserve, reinterpret, and emotionally anchor their cultural heritage. These items are anticipated to act as material carriers of memory, linking personal histories with contemporary British life and enabling consumers to articulate hybrid identities that are continually reconstructed rather than simply inherited. The study also highlights how country-of-origin cues subtly shape identity expression. Once associated mainly with quality or status, elements such as fabric origins, traditional craft methods, and cultural design details are now interpreted as markers of authenticity and heritage (see also Khan et al., 2024). Rather than dominating the fashion narrative, these cues add depth and help consumers express who they are in richer, more meaningful ways.

Overall, the paper argues that reflected identity is dynamic and continually negotiated. Heritage cues are not simply inherited; they are reworked through everyday fashion practices that combine sustainability, creativity, and cultural meaning. By situating these behaviours within broader discussions of consumer culture, the research demonstrates how heritage and authenticity become resources for empowerment, belonging, and self-definition.

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Understanding Customer Experience Effects of Personalised Augmented Reality in Retail

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper focuses on the impact of personalised experience augmented reality (AR) on customer states arising from customer-brand encounters in online retail environments. Applying a mixed-method approach and S-O-R framework, this study analysed how such experiences shape satisfaction and behavioural intentions. Preliminary findings indicate that AR personalisation affects CX in certain pathways. Further, this research delivers practical implications for customer experience management strategies and the design of technology-mediated retail ecosystems.

Competitive Short Paper

Augmented Reality (AR) has become a transformative tool that elevates interactions between brands and consumers by enabling engaging, immersive experiences (Har et al., 2022). AR usage has been accelerated by businesses, particularly in retail environments, to meet customer expectations for personalised customer experiences (CX). Despite growing interest in AR and its potential to revolutionise CX in retail (Hilken et al., 2018), significant research gaps remain that hinder a holistic view of its influence. Existing studies often focus on experiential attributes of AR, overlooking the role of the personalisation feature in AR in shaping CX. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of AR personalisation on CX by examining its influence on cognitive, affective, and behavioural states.

Drawing on CX literature, this defines customer experience as a layered construct formed by diverse antecedents and manifests across multiple dimensions and a variety of customer touchpoints (Verhoef et al., 2009). With the integration of physical and technology-enabled environments, personalisation has emerged as one of the most crucial CX antecedents, particularly in interactive digital contexts (Bilgihan et al., 2016; Rose et al., 2012). AR creates a distinct environment that further enhances cognitive and affective responses through a personalised experience shaped by an individual's preferences and environmental information (Alimamy & Gnoth, 2022).

Research question: How does personalisation enacted through AR reconfigure customers' cognitive and affective states, shaping CX and its outcomes?

An explanatory, sequential, mixed-methods design is adopted to design and comprehensively investigate AR's impact on customer experience (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design approach was chosen specifically to address the multifaceted nature of AR technology and customer experience interactions. Pilot quantitative data were gathered from an online survey (n=57), measuring the effect of perceived personalisation in AR on customer responses, which further shape satisfaction and behavioural intentions, and analysed using SPSS, employing regression analysis within the stimulus-organism-response framework. Qualitative open-ended responses were examined additionally to thematically enrich the interpretation.

Preliminary quantitative findings show that personalisation in AR primarily influences enjoyment, while its association with reduced cognitive burden is not supported. Reduced cognitive burden is positively associated with brand engagement, whereas enjoyment does not sufficiently influence it. Although brand engagement fails to demonstrate a significant impact on satisfaction, satisfaction predicts both purchase intention and e-WOM. The analysis suggests that privacy concerns do not moderate the relationship between personalisation and enjoyment. Results provide evidence that a personalised AR experience has subsequent effects that emerge at different evaluative phases. Qualitative insights help elucidate that enjoyment was consistently and frequently intertwined with frustration. At the same time, privacy concerns were highly individual, clarifying the absence of a significant moderation effect observed in the quantitative findings.

This study offers early empirical evidence on how personalisation in AR shapes CX within online retail services. This research promotes understanding of technology-enabled service encounters, highlighting experiential mechanisms underpinning personalisation in AR, drawing on derived quantitative and qualitative data. The findings will further guide the creation of customer experience management strategies to deliver a superior CX.

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Social Capital and Reciprocity in Virtual Gift-Giving

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

Digital gift-giving in Social Network Games constitutes a rapidly expanding relational and economic phenomenon, yet existing research remains fragmented across giver, receiver, and behavioural perspectives. This study identifies key social antecedents—relationship support, helping behaviours, and gifting norms—that underpin relational value. Using Social Capital Theory, it demonstrates how bonding and bridging social capital jointly mediate reciprocity and gifting intentions, advancing theoretical understanding and offering strategic implications for platform design and user retention.

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No Heart and No Soul: Advertising in the Age of AI

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Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

Summary Statement

Proliferation of generative AI is transforming advertising practice by enabling the use of AI-generated content to better engage audiences. However, reactions to Coca-Cola's recent campaign suggest that AI-driven creativity may undermine the emotional brand attachment. Using the netnography method, the study shows that consumer resistance to AI-generated advertising is based on perceptions of artificiality in content and content errors, emotional disconnection, nostalgia, inherited brand criticism, and resistance to the dehumanisation of creative industries.

Competitive Short Paper

The advertising industry has entered a new technological era marked by the rapid adoption of Generative AI (GenAI). Industry forecasts indicate that global revenues for AI in marketing are expected to reach approximately USD 47 billion by 2025 and exceed USD 107 billion by 2028 (Ross, 2025). Motivated by promises of efficiency, scalability, and creative enhancement, brands increasingly deploy AI-generated advertising with the expectation that it will capture consumers' attention and emotional attachment. Yet emerging consumer responses raise questions about the validity of these assumptions.

Extant research on AI-generated advertising has largely relied on experimental and survey-based methods, examining attitudes, personalisation, disclosure effects, ethics, and cultural differences (e.g., Chen et al., 2024; Yim et al., 2025). While valuable, these approaches face limitations related to validity, reductionist causal assumptions, and the difficulty of capturing spontaneous emotional sense-making (Ting & Montgomery, 2024). Experiments often struggle to reflect the complexity of real-world consumer interpretation, while surveys are constrained by sampling, response, and measurement biases (Andrade, 2020; Scheaf et al., 2023).

To address this limitation, this study adopts a netnography method. Netnography enables the analysis of naturally occurring consumer discourse within culturally embedded online environments. Social media platforms such as YouTube provide rich user-generated content through which audiences publicly negotiate meaning, emotion, and brand legitimacy. Accordingly, this study analyses 1600 YouTube comments posted in response to Coca-Cola's recent (2025) *Holidays Are Coming* Christmas advertisement using Python software, offering an empirical account of consumer sense-making grounded in lived digital experience. Although prior research acknowledges tensions regarding preferences for human versus AI communicators (Du et al., 2023; Bui, 2025), public reactions to Coca-Cola's AI-generated commercial reveal a persistent preference for human-generated advertising, particularly in emotionally symbolic contexts. Study revealed that consumer resistance to AI-generated advertising is primarily grounded in perceptions of artificiality in content and content errors (resistance to cheap artificial images and inconsistencies in the advertisement), emotional disconnection (emotional attachments to coca colas previous non AI commercials), disruptions to nostalgic continuity (nostalgic attachment to Christmas season and coca cola truck), inherited brand criticism (criticism for coca cola brand), and resistance to the dehumanisation of creative industries (especially job risk). In ritualised contexts such as Christmas, the absence of visible human presence disrupts affective expectations and weakens emotional brand attachment.

The absence of human presence, combined with overt automation, is interpreted as signalling detachment and low effort—particularly problematic for a heritage brand positioned around "realness. This response suggests that advertising effectiveness in the age of AI cannot be understood solely in terms of technological sophistication but must account for perceived human presence and emotional connectivity.

Overall, the study demonstrates that AI legitimacy in advertising is contingent on brand–technology congruence. By foregrounding consumer sense-making through netnography, the paper contributes empirical insight into emotional brand attachment and AI legitimacy in the age of AI.

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Beyond Passive Viewing: Socialisation-Driven Agency in Children's Engagement with Child YouTubers

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This study examines how children engage with child YouTubers and challenges deficit based views of children as passive or vulnerable audiences. Drawing on a qualitative, child centred Mosaic Approach with children aged seven to ten and their parents, the study introduces socialisation driven agency to explain how children actively interpret, adapt, and critically reflect on influencer content. The findings have implications for responsible marketing, education, and policy in influencer led digital environments.

Competitive Short Paper

Social media influencers now play a major role in children's everyday media environments, shaping how they learn, socialise and engage with consumer culture (de Almeida et al., 2025). Platforms such as YouTube are central to this, combining entertainment, peer interaction and commercial communication (Martínez and Olsson, 2019). Much existing research takes deficit-based perspectives, depicting children as passive, vulnerable or easily persuaded (De Veirman et al., 2019; Shomai et al., 2024). While concerns about commercialisation and exploitation are valid, these views can overlook children's active role in interpreting and integrating influencer content into their own social and cultural practices (Balleys et al., 2020). Responding to calls to rethink children's agency in digital consumption (Riesmeyer, 2020), this paper challenges the notion of children as passive viewers and advances the concept of socialisation-driven agency.

This study uses a qualitative, child-centred design to examine how children engage with child influencers on YouTube and how this shapes their emerging sense of agency. Twenty-nine children and their parents participated. A multi-method Mosaic Approach (Clark & Moss, 2011) was employed, combining arts-based activities (drawings and diamond ranking), video-elicited focus groups and semi-structured interviews with children aged 7–10 and their parents. This approach foregrounds children's voices and expressive modes, recognising them as competent social actors rather than passive subjects (Uprichard, 2008). Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2023), integrating visual and textual materials in order to capture affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions of engagement (Hollebeek, 2011).

The findings show that children's engagement with influencer content goes beyond imitation or entertainment. Firstly, child influencers act as accessible cultural mediators, presenting information in age-appropriate ways that support shared learning and self-awareness. Children value influencers' communicative skills, using content to build confidence and competencies that transfer to offline activities such as creative play and everyday problem-solving (Livingstone and Sefton Green, 2016). Secondly, influencer engagement creates shared experiences and identification, helping children reflect on their place within family, peer and cultural contexts. Relatable narratives offer reference points through which children make sense of identity and social worlds (Martínez and Olsson, 2019). Thirdly, children adapt influencer content into their own practices, experimenting with self-expression and sometimes producing their own digital content.

They also show critical awareness, questioning performative elements of influencer culture and recognising the limits of parasocial relationships. Conceptually, this paper advances socialisation-driven agency as a relational and emergent form of agency shaped through digitally mediated interactions, rather than in an individual or purely cognitive capacity. Empirically, it highlights the value of child-centred and creative methodologies for examining engagement within vulnerable consumer groups. The findings also inform responsible marketing, education and policy by encouraging approaches that move beyond binary framings of vulnerability versus agency in influencer-led digital environments.

As digital technologies become increasingly embedded in children's everyday lives, understanding how children engage with these platforms and the meanings they make from them is essential for designing safer, more inclusive and more responsible digital futures (Abidin, 2023; Livingstone and Sylwander, 2025).

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The Impact of Chatbot Communication Style and Compensation Type on Consumers' Perceptions of Justice in Service Recovery

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

The aim of this study is to examine how consumers respond to chatbots in the context of service recovery during online shopping. Specifically, the study explores the impact of chatbot communication style and compensation type on consumer perception of justice, subsequent psychological response, and behavioural intention. This study proposes a conceptual research model based on the 'Computers Are Social Actors (CASA)' paradigm, which combines justice theory and appraisal theory.

Competitive Short Paper

With the support of Artificial Intelligence (AI), chatbots have been gradually changing the way companies interact with consumers in recent years. Chatbots are utilized to varying degrees in most customer service-related issues, from basic problem-solving to product recommendations and service failure recovery. They have significantly contributed to improving service efficiency and reducing personnel costs. Therefore, this topic has received significant attention from both practitioners and researchers. However, upon reviewing the relevant literature, this study found a lack of research on the impact of chatbots as service recovery on consumers' psychological well-being, particularly in terms of perceived justice. Although many studies have emphasized the importance of investigating differences in perceptions of justice for chatbot service recovery, research on this issue is limited (Zhu et al., 2023; Luo et al., 2023). Specifically, there is a gap in research regarding the impact of communication style and compensation type on consumers' perceptions of justice. The objective of this study is to examine the impact of a chatbot's communication style and compensation type, acting as a service recovery in the event of a service failure during online shopping, on the consumer's perception of justice, subsequent psychological response, and behavioral intention.

This study presents a conceptual research model based on the 'Computers Are Social Actors (CASA)' paradigm, which combines justice theory (Schoefer and Ennew, 2005) and appraisal theory (Hung and Mukhopadhyay, 2012). The research model's hypotheses were tested through scenario-based laboratory experiments. The study manipulates two communication styles (social vs. task-oriented), two types of compensation (tangible vs. psychological), and two levels of service failure severity (mild vs. severe), resulting in eight experimental scenarios. A total of 145 participants recruited from the university based on their online shopping experience. The data collected from the experiments be analyzed using ANOVA and SEM to examine the relationship among variables in the research model.

Findings reveal that the significant positive effect of distributive justice on positive emotion and its negative effect on negative emotion suggest that fairness in the outcome of the recovery effort—such as compensation or corrective actions—plays a dominant role in shaping emotional reactions. This reinforces the view that customers are primarily outcome-oriented when evaluating recovery efforts, particularly in contexts involving tangible losses or perceived inequities. The analysis also confirmed the mediating role of emotions in the service recovery process. Positive emotion was found to significantly enhance post-recovery satisfaction and reduce negative word-of-mouth, whereas negative emotion substantially decreased satisfaction but did not significantly predict word-of-mouth behavior. These results align with the appraisal-emotion-behavior framework (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999), indicating that customers' emotional responses act as a psychological bridge between cognitive justice perceptions and behavioral outcomes. The research findings are expected to contribute to the study of chatbot application in service recovery within the field of EC. The study results are expected to serve as a reference for practitioners when designing and planning the use of chatbots for service recovery.

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Tackling Toxic Engagement: Investigating Adolescent Well-being in Digital Spaces

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Track: *AM Funded Research

Summary Statement

Adolescents' social media use exposes them to rising online toxicity, prompting societal concern with implications for well-being. This project examines toxic engagement by identifying its forms and motives and assessing impacts on adolescent well-being. We utilise a multi-phase mixed-methods design (with a netnography, experiments, and digital ethnography) with the first phase revealing five forms of toxic engagement: evidencing, fueling, challenging, attacking, and mocking behaviours.

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Challenging Goliath: How Size-Inclusive Sustainable Brands Use Modern Marketing Theory to Defy Fast Fashion

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This study explores the social media marketing of three size-inclusive, sustainable clothing brands. The fashion industry is built on a model of exclusivity. It marginalises plus-size clothing and uses emotional marketing and low prices to promote impulse purchasing. This work explores how three sustainable, inclusive brands from outside the industry are encroaching on the UK clothing market by using modern marketing techniques to grow their brand.

Competitive Short Paper

This work explores the social media communications of three sustainable, size-inclusive clothing brands as part of a wider multi-brand case study. These brands are encroaching on the UK clothing market, despite the challenges innovative entrepreneurs face when entering established clothing markets (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013). For example, the dominant model of the fashion industry is increasingly unsustainable, characterised by rapid production and low prices, known as fast fashion (Niinimäki et al., 2020). This industry is also built on a model of exclusivity (Gabriel, 2023). This can take different forms, such as, wealth, class or size.

Exclusivity based on size is maintained by reducing clothing size 18 and above to an invisible, adjacent market (Dion & Tachet, 2020). This competitive advantage is strengthened by labelling sections as plus-size to reinforce the stigma of being a customer in a marginal category (Christel & Dunn, 2018). Fast fashion retailers also use emotive persuasion to encourage impulse buying (Weber and Ritch, 2023). With low prices and a short style cycle rate, fast fashion items are described as a low-involvement, fast-moving consumer product (Hamlin & McNeill, 2023). Competing on price, therefore, is difficult for sustainable brands (Chang & Watchravesringkan, 2018).

There is a body of research showing how technology has enabled small businesses to reach audiences through online shopping and social media (Paula et al., 2023). Research on how sustainable, size-inclusive clothing brands grow their audience this way is, as yet, apparently unexplored. As part of a qualitative, inductive exploration, social media data was gathered over one month and analysed using Braun et al.'s (2017) thematic analysis. In contrast to the fast fashion industry, the themes generated in this analysis were heavily weighted in favour of brand co-creation, inclusivity of various kinds, joy and humour, and product features. Sustainability is included as a product feature but is not central to the company's messaging.

The messaging of the three brands in this study aligns with several modern marketing theories. There is significant research, for example, on the value of virtual brand communities in co-creation (Zhao et al., 2019), including the role inclusivity plays in this (Hsieh and Chang, 2016). Several studies show that plus-size models in marketing enhance identification and intention to purchase (Aargerup & Scharf, 2018). There is also significant evidence that inciting a positive emotional response with joy or humour increases consumer trust (Hahn et al., 2016). Using product features to create value has also been found to mitigate the higher price of sustainable clothing (Harris et al., 2016). These brands use very different marketing techniques from fast fashion. They are, however, in line with modern marketing theory.

These results contribute to an underexplored area of marketing research and offer insights for innovative brands seeking to supply sustainable alternatives to fast fashion. There are limitations in this work; these are initial findings from one part of a wider exploratory study. Next steps include a thematic analysis of the website and advertising content, and the study of consumers' experience of the brand-consumer relationship.

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#Chavcheck: embodied TikTok memes and labouring to leverage habitus

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This paper exposes the digital labour involved in constructing the gendered 'chav' stereotype through embodied TikTok memes. The body remains a public site of class contestation in a so-called classless, neoliberal Britain. Through, netnographic visual and textual analysis of 3-60 second videos, sounds and built-in effects, the study reveals how TikTok users draw on their own social positions to participate in and master digital habitus, using forms of acquired capital to perform 'chav'.

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AI-Driven Personalisation In E-commerce: Pathways To Empowerment And Engagement

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper examines how AI-driven personalisation influences consumers' behavioural engagement in online retail platforms. Drawing on Stimulus–Organism–Response theory, it shows that AI personalisation enhances engagement through reduced overload confusion and AI-enabled empowerment. Using time-lagged, multi-source data, the study further demonstrates that consumer trust in AI strengthens these effects, highlighting trust as a critical boundary condition for effective AI-enabled customer experiences.

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Memetic Dissonance: Subverting Brand Narratives Through Digital Absurdity

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

This research investigates contemporary culture jamming through "memetic dissonance", the use of absurdity and "brain rot" to subvert polished corporate narratives. Using netnography across TikTok, Reddit, and Instagram, the paper examines how creators employ meaninglessness to disrupt brand communications and resist algorithmic co-optation. By analysing these digital artifacts, the study aims to reveals how consumers use disorientation to invalidate commercial intrusion, offering new insights into participatory resistance and media literacy in the Gen Z era.

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The Perceived Wastefulness of Disposal and How it Influences Subsequent Buying Behaviour

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

Consumers often discard items that still have residual value. This research explores how perceived wastefulness during product disposal influences future purchase behaviour. Three MTurk experiments reveal that discarding (rather than keeping) underused items triggers a sense of waste, thereby reducing unplanned purchases. Donating, by contrast, mitigates perceptions of waste and boosts positive emotions. The findings indicate that wastefulness is a subjective, disposal-triggered experience that spills over to curb impulsive buying and encourage more mindful consumption.

Competitive Short Paper

Consumers often make purchases that they may not fully utilise; sooner or later, they need to decide whether to dispose of the items. When does disposal feel wasteful, and how does perceived wastefulness shape subsequent consumer purchases? Although people are generally averse to waste, they often behave more wastefully than they recognise. Wastefulness has been defined as failing to fully utilise purchased items (Arkes, 1996). In principle, discarding purchases such as unworn clothes, unread books, or barely used mugs constitutes waste. While a substantial body of research examines how to encourage consumers to dispose of unwanted items sustainably, the present research takes a step back to delineate the conditions under which disposing of items with residual value evokes perceived wastefulness and to examine how this experience influences subsequent purchasing behaviour.

Prior work shows that consumers avoid waste and adopt strategies to exploit products' residual value, such as delaying replacement or purchasing smaller quantities, when waste is anticipated (Arkes, 1996; Bolton & Alba, 2012; Brough & Isaac, 2010; Okada, 2001). It would therefore be reasonable to expect that disposing of items with residual value would consistently elicit a sense of wastefulness and curb future unplanned purchases. Yet in practice, people do not always perceive disposal as wasteful, nor do they reliably adjust their subsequent purchasing behaviour. This research addresses this discrepancy by identifying when disposal triggers perceived wastefulness and when it does not.

Across three MTurk experiments, participants evaluated common disposal scenarios, reported their perceived wastefulness, and made choices in an ostensibly unrelated purchasing task. Study 1 (N = 242) employed a single-factor between-subjects design contrasting discarding idle possessions with keeping them. Results showed that merely owning unused items did not elicit perceived wastefulness; only imagining discarding them heightened perceived waste and reduced unplanned purchases. Study 2 (N = 243) compared discarding used versus underused possessions. Consistent with Arkes's conceptualization of waste, discarding underused items heightened perceived wastefulness and reduced unplanned purchases, whereas discarding well-used items did not. Study 3 (N = 227) introduced donating as an alternative disposition option. Donating attenuated perceived wastefulness while increasing positive emotions. Consequently, participants who discarded unused possessions made fewer unplanned purchases than those who kept or donated the items.

This research makes a theoretical contribution by demonstrating that wastefulness is not an objective outcome of consumption inefficiency, but a subjective experience shaped by disposal actions and perceived residual value. We show that individuals primarily perceive wastefulness at the time of disposal rather than during periods when items remain idle, and that this perception can spill over to influence subsequent unrelated purchase decisions. By delineating the conditions under which disposal heightens or obscures perceived wastefulness, this research advances understanding of the psychology of waste and extends theories of disposition by revealing how disposal contexts can either activate or mute consumers' aversion to waste. These insights have implications for policymakers, marketers, and consumers seeking to promote mindful consumption and reduce the environmental impact of purchasing behaviour.

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How GenZ Interprets Luxury Packaging

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Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

Summary Statement

This study examines how Gen Z consumers interpret luxury fragrance packaging design cues and how packaging extends luxury beyond purchase. Using focus groups within a series of photo elicitation, it identifies three design logics: (1) controlled restraint, (2) visible production investment, and (3) credibility building. Beyond aesthetics, luxury packaging also reinforces value, extends utility through reuse and display, and fosters emotional and social meaning.

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Are We Achieving The Potential For Marketing In Postgraduate Education?

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

Is marketing in postgraduate (PG) and executive business education evolving fast enough to meet real business needs? We explore educators' and graduates' views on the relevance of marketing content amid rapid innovations. Although marketing remains a core PG business subject, standalone marketing modules occupy a contested space being replaced or reshaped. Marketing educators face major shifts in practice and graduates required new skills, raising important questions about the potential for marketing in PG education.

Competitive Short Paper

'Are we achieving the potential for marketing in postgraduate education?' explores the evolving role of marketing educators in and beyond the learning setting. This study offers an opportunity to hear the perspectives of those teaching marketing within taught postgraduate (PG) and executive business education, as well as hear the value marketing education has to our graduates. We questioned marketing educators and graduates involved in non-specialist or generalist programmes in United Kingdom (UK) universities to ascertain if marketing PG business education is advancing and responding with the appropriate urgency required to prepare students to meet the real business needs they will encounter (Hoffman, 2025). It is pertinent to ascertain whether as educators we are *'keeping pace'* with innovations, such as artificial Intelligence (AI) in marketing education (Crittenden, 2025) and if our marketing module content continues to be relevant, i.e. theoretically grounded but also practice-oriented (Gill-Simmen et al, 2025).

Marketing is currently an established, '*anchor*' subject within PG Business education but the scene is shifting. Marketing educators work in business schools and departments who consistently recruit and teach large numbers of students (CABS, 2028, Roswell,2025) and where marketing has traditionally been seen as a core component of non-specialist or generalist PG business education (QAA, 2023). But standalone marketing modules in generalist PG and executive programmes occupy a contested space. Marketing is increasingly being repositioned, re-packaged into a 'Digital Marketing' module or even excluded in favour of broader, integrative subjects such as logistics and supply chain, innovation, data analytics, AI for business, entrepreneurship or digital transformation. Furthermore, marketing educators are grappling with the most significant and disruptive changes to the practice of marketing and the marketing skills needed in a generation (Elliot – Browing, 2025, Gonsalves et al 2026, Mehmet et al, 2025).

Purposeful sampling engaged 25 participants (11 PG business graduates, 14 PG marketing educators with a minimum of 5 years' experience) in semi structured interviews examining the approach, perceived relevance, value and future of marketing education in relation to employability, interdisciplinary learning and contemporary business challenges. Early data analysis has significant implications for the Academy's members. Using principles of thematic analysis, including coding (Braun and Clarke, 2006) emerging findings highlight widespread enjoyment of teaching and learning about marketing on postgraduate courses. Students found the activities and team-working, "*learning through doing*" in seminars, extremely helpful for "*most if not all industries and roles*." Several participants commented on the benefits of learning personal branding skills. Marketing skills proving useful for employability due to their heterogeneity was also reflected in comments from educators: "*Part of the reason I got this job is because I can talk and get on with people.*" Such skills ensure marketing academics are also frequently employed in leadership roles within universities. However, postgraduate students and educators alike lamented a perceived lack of strategic priority given to marketing in industry. Participants expressed concern marketing may be subsumed into generic AI for business and data analytics modules in future postgraduate courses.

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Emotional Pathways to Consumer Well-Being Under Deprivation: A Cross-Country Comparison

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This study examines how positive and negative emotional responses link perceived product deprivation to psychological and product well-being across countries. Using survey data from the UK, Malaysia, and China, the study shows that while deprivation has a stable effect on well-being, the product attributed and emotional-based pathways differ across the three countries. The findings showcase the importance of considering culturally shaped emotional responses and understanding consumer well-being under deprivation.

Competitive Short Paper

Prior research shows that emotional experiences in consumption are shaped not only by product-related factors but also by contextual conditions such as resource scarcity and culturally embedded norms. Under scarcity, limited resources can alter consumers' evaluations of product attributes and emotional appraisals, often intensifying emotional reactions with important implications for well-being (Hamilton et al., 2019). Adopting an emotion-focused perspective, this study examines how product attributes contribute to perceived product deprivation, which in turn elicits positive and negative emotions that shape consumer well-being. Drawing on Prospect Theory, product unavailability is conceptualised as a perceived loss that intensifies negative emotions and alters positive emotions, with direct implications for well-being.

Emotional experiences are also culturally embedded. Cultural research suggests that emotions are shaped by shared meanings and norms, influencing how they are experienced and regulated (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Consistent with recent findings showing cross-cultural variation in emotional responses (Truong, 2025), this study proposes that the emotional foundations of psychological and product well-being under perceived product deprivation differ across countries. Accordingly, the study addresses the following research question: Does the emotional basis of psychological and product well-being under perceived product deprivation differ across countries?

The sample comprised 1,150 young adults (aged 18–25) from the UK, Malaysia, and China. Participants evaluated nine highly deprived global brands across food and beverage, leisure, and technology categories using a cross-sectional online survey. Measures captured perceived product deprivation, positive emotions, negative emotions, and consumer well-being. Data were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). Measurement invariance was assessed via the MICOM procedure, followed by multi-group analysis (MGA). Compositional invariance was supported for UK–Malaysia and UK–China comparisons, but not for Malaysia–China; therefore, analyses focus on UK-based comparisons, with Malaysia–China results interpreted cautiously.

Results show that, relative to the UK, the effects of product attributes on both product-related and psychological well-being were stronger in China. Cross-country differences also emerged for emotion-related effects. Specifically, the impact of negative emotion on product well-being differed between the UK and Malaysia, while its impact on psychological well-being differed between the UK and China. Similar patterns were observed for emotion-based indirect effects. The indirect effect of deprivation on product well-being via negative emotion differed between the UK and Malaysia, whereas the indirect effect on psychological well-being differed between the UK and China. In contrast, the direct effects of deprivation on well-being did not differ significantly across countries.

This study contributes to an underexplored area in marketing by examining psychological and consumer well-being under perceived product deprivation from a cross-cultural perspective. The findings indicate that while the impact of deprivation itself is relatively stable across countries, the attribute-based and emotional processes linking deprivation to well-being vary by cultural context. By emphasising cross-cultural differences in emotional response patterns rather than complex mediation structures, this study offers new insights into how culturally shaped emotions influence psychological and product well-being and underscores the importance of national context in theorising emotional well-being in consumption.

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Cash on Delivery as the Default Currency of Informal Social Commerce in Montenegro

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This paper reconceptualises Cash on Delivery (COD) as an adaptive and institutionalised response to platform absence in social commerce, rather than a marker of low trust or digital reluctance. Using survey and focus-group data from Montenegro, it shows how consumers stabilise exchange through COD when formal checkout, payment and governance infrastructures are missing, offering new insights into institutionalisation and decision-making under constraint.

Competitive Short Paper

Cash on Delivery (COD) is commonly framed in consumer research as a residual or transitional payment method, often interpreted as a sign of risk aversion, low digital trust or limited financial literacy. This paper challenges that interpretation by reconceptualising COD as the default currency of platform-absent social commerce. Rather than reflecting consumer preference alone, COD emerges as an adaptive and institutionalised response to infrastructural gaps that shape how exchange, legitimacy and value are constructed in digital markets.

The empirical context is Montenegro, an emerging European market where key global payment platforms such as Stripe, Venmo, TikTok Shop and PayPal's receiving function are unavailable. Despite widespread use of Instagram and Facebook for product discovery, seller interaction and negotiation, consumers and micro-sellers rely almost exclusively on COD as the settlement mechanism. In these transactions, the entire ordering process – product inquiry, price negotiation, availability confirmation, delivery details and payment agreement, takes place within social media direct messages, without any formal checkout or platform-mediated payment interface. We position Montenegro as a strategic context for examining social commerce, as high social media penetration, improving logistics and persistent cash-based norms reflect conditions across many transitional markets worldwide (Chiejina & Olamide, 2014; Hawk, 2004).

Drawing on institutional theory (Scott, 2013) and behavioural perspectives on constrained choice (Payne et al., 1993: Simon, 1955), the paper examines how payment practices become normalised when formal platform infrastructures are absent. Empirically, the study draws on a completed survey of 525 Montenegrin consumers, complemented by a focus group designed to gain deeper insight into everyday social shopping practices, risk perceptions and payment reasoning in direct-message commerce. Survey results indicate moderate but fragile trust in online sellers operating through social media profiles, with mean evaluations slightly above the midpoint of a five-point scale, suggesting conditional trust dependent on additional safeguards, rather than confidence in platform governance.

Approximately two-thirds of respondents report purchasing from domestic sellers via Instagram or Facebook profiles, confirming that platform-mediated B2C social commerce is a mainstream consumption practice. Among those consumers, roughly 80% identify COD as the usual or expected payment method, with bank transfers and card payments used only sporadically.

Focus group findings advance theory by illustrating how consumers interpret COD through the lens of Institutional Theory and decision-making under constraint, viewing it as a fairness-preserving and risk-rebalancing mechanism that compensates for the absence of platform-level safeguards. This extends theoretical understandings of payment methods as institutional substitutes, rather than neutral transactional tools.

These findings resonate with recent evidence from Montenegrin e-commerce, which shows that COD reliance is shaped by macro-level institutional trust deficits, meso-level trust in sellers and delivery, and micro-level consumer characteristics (Vuković & Gonsalves, 2025). The present study extends this by demonstrating that, in micro-merchant social commerce, COD persists even more strongly when transactions occur entirely through direct messaging and outside formal platform governance.

Building on this, future research will extend the analysis to the seller side through a targeted survey of social media micro-entrepreneurs, examining how platform avoidance and coordination costs shape the institutionalisation of COD.

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Communicating Sustainability Support to SMEs: The Roles of Organisational Self-Discrepancy, Message Framing, and Employee Role

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

Based on two experimental studies and using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), the research investigates how message characteristics, organisational characteristics, and recipient characteristics jointly shape responses to SME sustainability support communications, drawing on self-discrepancy theory and message framing theory. The study reveals that the effects of organisational self-discrepancy and message framing systematically differ depending on the recipient's role within the organisation, distinguishing between senior management and non-senior employees.

Competitive Short Paper

Across OECD economies, SMEs account for approximately 99% of all enterprises and represent a major source of employment (OECD, n.d.). Although individually small, SMEs exert a substantial collective impact on resource use, supply chains, and emissions, accounting for nearly half of global business-sector greenhouse gas emissions (Kuzmanovic et al., 2025). Despite this considerable environmental footprint, SMEs often struggle to implement sustainable practices due to constraints in finance, time, internal capabilities, and access to relevant information (UK Finance, 2024). Consequently, targeted sustainability support programmes are essential to help SMEs overcome these barriers and translate sustainability intentions into action.

Marketing communications play a critical role in shaping how such programmes are perceived, understood, and ultimately adopted by their intended beneficiaries. Academic literature suggests that combining message targeting with message tailoring represents an optimal communication strategy for enhancing persuasive effectiveness while ensuring efficient use of resources (Schmid et al., 2008). In essence, message effectiveness is enhanced when communication is adapted to recipients' individual and organisational characteristics. While the role of message characteristics and recipient characteristics has been extensively studied in business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing contexts (for a review see Teeny et al., 2020), considerably less attention has been paid to these dynamics in government-to-business (G2B) and non-for-profit marketing settings.

Addressing this gap, the present research investigates how message characteristics, organisational characteristics, and recipient characteristics jointly shape responses to SME sustainability support communications. Drawing on self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987) and message framing theory (Levin et al., 1998), the study theorises and demonstrates how organisational self-discrepancy in the sustainability domain (i.e., the perceived distance between actual and ideal organisational sustainability performance) and message framing influence employees' attitudes towards SME sustainability support messages. These attitudes, in turn, are found to shape evaluations of the programme and intentions to use the service, which aligns with the well-established effects in B2C marketing (McKenzie et al., 1986). Importantly, the study reveals that the effects of organisational self-discrepancy and message framing systematically differ depending on the recipient's role within the organisation, distinguishing between senior management and non-senior employees. Specifically, the findings show that organisational self-discrepancy negatively affects senior management employees' attitudes towards the message, while exerting no significant effect among non-senior employees. In addition, the findings show that message framing influences message attitudes only among non-senior employees, such that gain-framed messages elicit more favourable attitudes than loss-framed messages.

The model was tested and empirically supported across two experimental studies conducted on the Qualtrics platform. Study 1 tested the proposed model among senior management SME employees only (N = 86), recruited through a B2B database provided by Market Location, a leading UK-based B2B data solutions provider. Study 2 (total N = 378) tested the model among both senior management (N = 157) and non-senior SME employees (N = 221), recruited via the Prolific online panel. Data from both studies were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM).

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From Surge to Surveillance: Identifying the Psychological Threshold Where Algorithmic Ride-hailing Pricing Flips From "Smart" to "Exploitative"

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper examines when surge based algorithmic pricing in ride hailing shifts from being accepted as demand matching to being judged as exploitative. It develops a threshold model where effective surge levels increase switching intention through perceived betrayal and where price explanation incongruency can intensify this response. A screenshot-anchored two occasion within person design captures real booking prices on a familiar route to estimate nonlinear effects with mediation and moderation tests.

Competitive Short Paper

Algorithmic pricing has become a defining feature of ride-hailing platforms, enabling rapid, context-sensitive fare adjustments with clear commercial benefits (Castillo, 2025). Yet, as pricing becomes more personalised and less explainable, platforms face a quieter problem that conversion metrics cannot diagnose: the psychological threshold at which dynamic pricing stops being interpreted as efficient market matching and starts being experienced as exploitation. Recent calls in marketing highlight the need to understand consumer fairness perceptions and regulatory implications under algorithmic pricing, particularly in platform contexts (Spann et al., 2025). Building on price fairness theory (Xia et al., 2004) and betrayal-based relationship breakdown (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008), this research asks: *What level of algorithmic price discrimination triggers consumer backlash without necessarily eliminating conversion and through which psychological pathway does it accelerate platform switching?*

We propose a boundary-driven process model in which algorithmic price discrimination increases switching intention via perceived betrayal, defined as the belief that the firm intentionally violated relational norms of honesty and fairness (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008). Importantly, we theorise that this pathway is nonlinear. Consistent with psychological threshold accounts, consumers can tolerate moderate fluctuations within a latitude of acceptance, but responses shift disproportionately once the fare crosses a category boundary that signals unfair gain extraction (Lee et al., 2024; Ying et al., 2024). We further examine whether platforms' "reason codes" for surge (such as weather, traffic cues) function as trust repair or as perceived legitimation of harm. In this vein, we justify that price information incongruency moderates the mediation relationship between the perceived price discrimination to switching intention through the betrayal mechanism. When explanations feel incongruent, they may intensify betrayal and accelerate switching.

Two real-time pricing exposure experiments were conducted with mediation testing for betrayal and a moderation test for price information incongruency. Based on the booking screenshots for the most frequent route during a peak and an off-peak window, participants completed identical perception and behavioural measures anchored to the displayed fare. This yields two nested observations per participant, enabling within-person estimation of threshold effects while holding route familiarity constant. We computed an effective surge index from screenshot data and published fare structures. To reduce bias, we performed marker variable and manipulation checks where experimental scenario variants are used for validation (Miller & Simmering, 2023; Vomberg et al., 2025).

This study contributes in some ways. *First*, it advances research on algorithmic pricing by theorising and empirically estimating a psychological tipping point rather than assuming linear effects. *Second*, we position perceived betrayal as a central mechanism that translates fairness into switching intention. *Finally*, we offer a scalable field method that captures platform interface realities beyond vignette-based manipulation. For platform managers in the fast-growing ride-hailing markets, the findings help identify surge thresholds and the conditions under which explanations backfire. From this, it can inform platform policy on pricing caps, disclosure design and retention management.

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Sustainable Metaverse E-Commerce: Developing A Conceptual Framework To Reshaping African Young Adults' Perspectives Through The Lens Of AI.

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

This paper develops Sustainable Metaverse E-Commerce Conceptual Framework by focusing on African Young adults through integration of AI-enabled metaverse affordances with sustainability factors and youth digital behavioural intention. Addressing major gaps in metaverse, AI, and sustainability research, this study explains interrelationships among immersive AI-driven features, sustainability factors, ethical evaluations, and behavioural intention among African young adults. The study contributes to advancing theories of consumer behaviour and offers relevant insights for platform designers, policymakers and marketers.

Competitive Short Paper

Ecommerce is witnessing a rapid transformation in the recent time with the advent of immersive technologies such as metaverse that is fuelled by Artificial Intelligence, 3D modelling, virtual reality, blockchain and internet of everything applications (Dwivedi et al., 2022). This transformation is redesigning digital consumption as various retailing and merchant organisations have started integrating the metaverse into their ecommerce platforms (Ernst & Young, 2025), thereby improving their strategic marketing effectiveness in terms of attracting customers' attention, acquiring patronage, and eventually, creating immersive experience (Plangger et al., 2022). This integration underscores the growth of metaverse as its global market size is projected to reach $936.57 billion by 2030 from $105.40 billion in 2024 (Grand View Research, 2025). However, while the metaverse is being integrated into ecommerce, sustainability concerns have increased, reflected in scholarly dialogues about environmental footprints, digital inequality and ethical AI design among others (e.g. Al-Emran & Griffy-Brown, 2023). Yet extant research discussions continue to centre on technological and infrastructure-factors (e.g., Santini et al., 2023), leaving very limited comprehension about how consumers interpret sustainability within AI-enabled ecommerce. Likewise, consumer behaviour research within the domain of metaverse largely focuses on adoption factors with little or no consideration of how these reasonings shape sustainability perception (e.g. Pillai et al., 2025).

This gap is particularly prominent in Africa; a continent that hosts the world's youngest population and fastest-growing digital consumer base (United Nations, 2024). African young adults- defined as individuals aged 15-35 (African Union, 2024) and who prioritise inclusiveness and altruistic value (e.g., Munyoka, 2022)- are important to shaping ecommerce market (Mulikat et al., 2025). Yet our review of literature shows that Africa remains largely excluded from metaverse and sustainability research (e.g., Jauhiainen & Ouma, 2024), despite facing serious sustainability challenges (Ernst and Young, 2025). Therefore, answering a research question on how African young adults interpret sustainability within immersive and metaverse ecommerce markets is both socially and theoretically significant.

This paper addresses this gap by developing a conceptual framework that elucidates Sustainable Metaverse ecommerce among African Young Adults (SME-AYA). The framework offers comprehensive explanation and proposes that AI-enabled metaverse ecommerce features shape sustainability factors and behavioural intention. Drawing on Presence Theory, and Value–Belief–Norm, the framework proposes that AI-driven features such as social presence, immersion, and altruistic value influence Youth behavioural intention to use metaverse ecommerce through mediating effect of sustainability factors – sustainability awareness, sustainability commitment- and moderating influence of ethical AI evaluation, and perceived digital inclusivity (Abumolloh et al, 2023; Chen & Chen, 2019; Oriade et al., 2021; Theofanous et al., 2024).

Overall, this short paper contributes to marketing scholarship by integrating four bodies of literature to develop a conceptual framework that explains how AI-enabled metaverse commerce can shape sustainable consumption futures in under researched emerging markets with young promising youths and offers conceptual insights for marketers, policymakers and platforms designers.

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Impact of B-school Director Brand on B-school Performance: An Empirical Investigation

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Track: 5. Brands & Branding

Summary Statement

This empirical study seeks to identify the traits of a director capable of leading the B-school’s success. It examines the elements of the director’s personal brand and provides valuable insights for promoters and marketers. By identifying the qualities that promote the B-school’s growth, the study aims to inform development and expansion strategies.

Competitive Short Paper

Management education is one of the most preferred choices of higher education. The demand for the course has continued to increase over the decades. According to AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) data, management education in India accounts for over 50% of the total postgraduate student intake, surpassing all other postgraduate courses combined, highlighting the significance of management programs in the Indian higher education industry.

Business Schools (B-schools) that primarily focus on management education operate more like industries, treating students as customers and marketing degrees as a service. As the significance of business schools and their globalization grows, the roles of directors become increasingly vital (Wilkins and Huisman, 2013). The success and competitiveness of a business school largely hinge on its director, who is the key decision-maker. They are the heads of the institution who supervise the day-to-day activities of the institution, much like CEOs do in an organization. In business school settings, a director’s effectiveness depends on the relationships they have with followers and how they are perceived (Ruben and Gigliotti, 2016).

Since B-school directors occupy a key role, their personal branding can significantly impact the B-school’s brand success. Previous studies have explored the importance of management education, the role of B-schools as a brand (Dass et al.,2021), the influence of B-schools on society (Cornuel, 2005), and the impact of perceived service quality on brand performance (Sultan and Wong, 2019). Literature has also examined narcissism as a director’s personality trait (Khoo et al., 2024), compensation (Lucey et al., 2022), and leadership style (Heffernan et al., 2021). However, to the best of our knowledge, a key area—directors’ branding and its potential effects—remains underexplored, despite their influential role.

Therefore, this study aims to understand the traits of a director who can drive the B-school’s success. This involves exploring the elements of the B-School director’s personal brand and offering useful insights for promoters and marketers. By identifying the qualities of a director who can foster the B-School’s growth, this study aims to guide strategies for development and expansion. Furthermore, analyzing how a successful B-school can shape stakeholder perceptions of the brand will provide a holistic view of its significance and influence.

The study is based on a primary survey. A structured questionnaire is distributed to students pursuing BBA and MBA degrees, as well as to alumni of Business Schools. Furthermore, structural equation modeling (SEM) is employed to elucidate the relationship between the variables examined in this study.

The Preliminary findings suggest that the B-school director’s brand appeal and social capital have a significant impact on the B-school’s overall brand performance. Which, in turn, fosters brand trust and brand advocacy. These results could assist the B-school’s management and board in choosing a suitable director capable of efficiently managing the institution and expanding its reach both nationally and internationally.

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Trust Antecedents for AI Conversational Agents in Religious Tourism

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

The deployment of artificial intelligence conversational agents (AICA) in religious tourism raises concerns about technological appropriateness and the preservation of sacredness. Pilgrims seek sacred experiences where technology may be perceived as intrusive. Through qualitative exploration with Muslim consumers, this research examines how AICA characteristics and religious factors shape trust. The findings show that trust is informed by both functional capabilities and religious considerations, which together influence acceptance of AICA in religious tourism settings.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Artificial intelligence conversational agents (AICA) enable personalised recommendations across tourism contexts (Pillai & Sivathanu, 2020). However, their deployment in religious tourism raises unique concerns about technological appropriateness and preservation of sacredness. Religious tourism involves deeply meaningful spiritual practices requiring sensitivity to religious norms (Terzidou et al., 2018). Pilgrims seek authentic sacred experiences where technology may be perceived as intrusive (Collins-Kreiner, 2020). However, existing research focuses on general tourism settings (Ali et al., 2023; Shi et al., 2021), offering limited insight into trust formation within religious contexts (Terzidou et al., 2018). Futrthemore, contextual factors shaping technology acceptance in religiously significant environments remain underexplored (Collins-Kreiner, 2020). Accordingly, this research draws on trust-in-technology research as an interpretive lens to explore how system and contextual factors shape cognitive and affective trust in AICA among Muslim pilgrims.

Conceptual Background

Religious tourism presents distinct trust challenges, as travellers must assess whether AI can be used appropriately within spiritually significant interactions (Collins-Kreiner, 2020; Terzidou et al., 2018). Trust evaluations in such contexts extend beyond functional performance to include concerns about appropriateness and respect for sacred meanings (Terzidou et al., 2018).

Trust-in-technology research conceptualises trust as reliance on technological systems (McKnight et al., 2011), distinct from interpersonal trust grounded in human integrity (Mayer et al., 1995). Prior work highlights evaluative judgements of competence and reliability alongside emotional responses related to comfort and assurance, both of which are associated with technology acceptance (McKnight et al., 2011; Glikson & Woolley, 2020; Komiak & Benbasat, 2006; Shi et al., 2021). In religious tourism, these trust dimensions are especially salient, as AI conversational agents must support cognitive trust through accurate and reliable guidance and affective trust through emotional reassurance and respect for sacred contexts (Tran & Nguyen, 2021; Battour et al., 2023).

Methodology

This research employed qualitative methodology comprising 19 in-depth interviews with Muslim consumers in Australia exploring AICA perceptions in religious tourism. Thematic analysis identified key themes regarding trust formation and acceptance.

Findings

Our findings show that acceptance of AI conversational agents (AICA) in religious tourism is shaped by several trust antecedents. Participants evaluated AICA based on system-related factors, including linguistic competence and personalised support, which influenced perceived comfort during interactions. Trust judgements extended beyond functional performance, as concerns about preserving sacred meanings reduced willingness to engage with AICA. The findings further indicate that religious endorsement by recognised authorities enhances perceptions of appropriateness and legitimacy, reducing uncertainty surrounding AICA use in religiously significant settings.

Conclusion

This research advances understanding of AI conversational agent (AICA) adoption in religious tourism by demonstrating that trust formation depends on the interplay between system-related factors such as linguistic competence and personalised support alongside religious endorsement by recognised authorities. Notably, concerns about preserving sacred meanings emerged as critical barriers, revealing that functional capability alone is insufficient without alignment to religious expectations. The study addresses a significant gap in technology acceptance literature by presenting a framework for understanding AICA adoption in religiously significant contexts.

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The Market for Mechanical Care: An Exploration of Consumer Resistance and the Boundaries of Robot-Mediated Parenthood

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This research explores consumer perceptions of robotic surrogacy and co-parenting within the emerging “intimacy economy”. Grounded in attachment theory, findings reveal conditional openness toward functional robotic assistance, viewed as extensions of existing medical interventions like IVF. However, significant moral resistance persists regarding the relational substitution of humans, identifying critical ethical red lines where service automation threatens to erode the foundational parent-child bond.

Competitive Short Paper

As humanoid robotics transition from industrial applications to the private sphere (Tong et al., 2024)., they challenge the boundaries of the “sacred” domestic domain (Park et al., 2025). Recent developments in humanoid robotics have brought the idea of robotic surrogacy (robots designed to gestate human offspring) into public discussion. The topic gained renewed visibility when Chinese researchers announced the creation of a humanoid robot prototype designed to simulate pregnancy and aid infertile families (Baig, 2025). The so-called “pregnancy robot” is framed as offering safer reproductive pathways for individuals with medical risks, LGBTQ+ couples, and single parents, while also reducing complications such as preeclampsia and preterm birth (Singh et al., 2022). In the context of robotic co-parenting, humans’ capacity to form deep affective bonds with artificial agents renders the idea of robot caregivers or parents psychologically plausible. Existing research in this field has found that rather than becoming replacements to caregiving, parents see robots as collaborative partners that can augment and support family tasks and dynamics (Ho et al., 2024).

This study explores consumer perceptions of robot-mediated reproduction and parenting, a frontier where high-tech service automation meets the most intimate of human experiences. We use a multi-method qualitative design, including 40 AI-enabled interviews and four focus groups from a diverse demographic cohort (younger adults, working adults, parents, and older adults). We examine the psychological and ethical tensions inherent in robot surrogacy and robot parenthood. Grounded in attachment theory and the ethics of marketised care, our findings reveal a critical “functional-relational” dichotomy. While consumers show conditional openness toward robots as functional tools, viewing them as extensions of medical technologies like IVF, there is profound resistance to the relational substitution of human caregivers. Participants identify significant moral red lines, fearing that the marketisation of mechanical gestation and parenting could lead to the dehumanisation of the child-parent bond. This research contributes to the literature on service automation and transformative consumer research by introducing the concept of outsourced attachment, offering insights to understand the limits of technology adoption in high-stakes, intimate service ecosystems.

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Exploring Customers’ Experiences and Sustainable Behaviours

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

In response to the limited attention paid to customer experience (CX) in current sustainability research and practice, this study explores how to encourage sustainable customer behaviours (SCBs) while protecting customers’ desired consumption experience. Drawing on mixed methods, it uncovers the mechanisms underlying SCBs and identifies the relationship between psychological factors, SCBs and CX dimensions. The findings provide actionable insights for designing and implementing sustainable marketing practices better aligned with CX preferences and sustainability goals.

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To Narrate or to List? Examining the Interactive Effects of Virtual Streamer Types and Information Formats

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

A novel typology distinguishes Human Avatars (HAVSs) from Non-human Avatars (NAVSs).

HAVSs align best with narrative formats; NAVSs align best with list formats.

Affective and cognitive fluency mediate the interactive effects.

Circadian rhythms moderate outcomes: night favors HAVSs, daytime favors NAVSs.

Findings are validated via text mining, a field study, and online studies.

Competitive Short Paper

The proliferation of artificial intelligence has positioned virtual streamers (V-streamers) as a transformative force in e-commerce. Despite their significant interactive potentials, current livestreaming strategies often merely replicate human-centric tactics, thereby failing to leverage the unique advantages of digital avatars. Consequently, optimizing communication strategies for V-streamers remains a critical challenge. Thus, this research employs a mixed-method design, integrating a text analysis of 17,376 authentic livestreaming comments, a field study (N = 120), and three controlled behavioral experiments (N = 732). We investigate how V-streamer type interacts with information format to shape consumer responses. Our findings reveal a robust interactive effect: consumer attitudes and purchase intentions are maximized when human avatar V-streamers employ a narrative format, whereas non-human avatar V-streamers achieve superior outcomes when using a list format. Furthermore, we identify a dual-pathway mechanism through which these effects are mediated by affective and cognitive fluency. In addition, circadian rhythm is established as a novel boundary condition moderating this interaction. These findings advance the literature on virtual commerce and processing fluency while offering actionable insights for retailers seeking to optimize avatar deployment and content strategy.

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AI Usage for Advertising and Marketing Communication: Creating A Holistic Understanding

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Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

Summary Statement

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming advertising and marketing communication in diverse ways. In this light, the study will provide a holistic understanding of the current market trends, the drivers, inhibitors, applications and emerging talent requirements, amongst other facets. It will contribute to the literature which is growing but lacks conceptual integration. Currently, this study is at a methodology development stage. This research has practical implications for industry and educators and also provides future research directions.

Competitive Short Paper

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming advertising and marketing communication in diverse ways. It is being leveraged for personalized content creation, predictive analytics, customer sentiment analysis, media planning, performance optimization and programmatic advertising, amongst other areas (Kumar et al., 2024). Some of the uses that major global advertising agencies such as Ogilvy and Dentsu are putting AI tools to are gathering brand and business intelligence effectively, generating first-draft copy, testing the visual appeal of advertisements and extending celebrity brand ambassador assets via voice cloning.

Current literature on AI usage for advertising and marketing communication delves chiefly on aspects such as AI-driven analytics and personalization (Kshetri, 2024), enhancing customer experience using AI, leveraging AI to monitor market performance (Kumar et al., 2024), scalability and productivity of AI versus human creativity (Hunt & Kerr, 2025) and human-AI co-creation (Cui et al., 2025). Further research needs to investigate the integration of AI into advertising and marketing communication (Vangelov et al., 2025). A consolidated understanding of AI-led branding remains a research gap (Deryl et al., 2025). This study will provide a holistic understanding of the current market trends, the drivers, inhibitors, applications and emerging talent requirements, amongst other facets. It will create a more holistic understanding which is missing in existing literature. Currently, we are in the process of developing a qualitative methodology for this exploratory study. A pilot study, in the form of an expert panel discussion conducted amongst senior managers in diverse advertising and marketing communication roles, yielded some useful insights on the drivers, inhibitors, applications and emerging talent requirements.

This research aspires to provide in-depth market trends associated with AI usage for advertising and marketing communication. Re-inventing ads with AI creativity, automation, and immersive media, usage of AI as productivity and analytics tool and beyond, leveraging AI to optimize media planning and performance, creating more personalized products and enhancing customer experience are some such trends. The study will investigate drivers such as, gaining a competitive edge, productivity advantages, the need for more customization and the burden of lower creative production expenses for higher ROI. Barriers such as creative resistance, the belittling of human intuition, ethical ambiguity, regulatory concerns, quality issues, skill deficit, will be explored amongst others. The study will also focus on emerging skill requirements for usage of AI for advertising and marketing communication and cover aspects such as inputting apt prompts into AI platforms, ability to differentiate where AI is hallucinating and supplementing AI generated insights with offline, on-ground knowledge which is not a part of AI databases.

This research will have practical implications for advertising agencies' creative, client servicing, account planning, media planning and buying functions, as well as for brand managers, and educators. It will provide directions on mapping AI spending with opportunity areas and effective talent acquisition, amongst other aspects. This research will provide guidelines to educational organizations for producing more industry-ready graduates for AI-supported advertising and marketing communication job roles. This study is also expected to serve as a springboard for future research by faculty and scholars.

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Football Clubs as Examples of Fragmented Organisations: The Impact of Conflicting Institutional Logics on Sponsorship in English Grassroots and Non-League Football

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Track: 10. Marketing in Context (e.g., Food, Sport)

Summary Statement

This paper examines the role institutional logics play in shaping sponsorship in English grassroots and non-league football. Using qualitative interviews and a Critical Realist approach, the paper explores how historical contingencies create tensions between amateur and professional logics. Dominant professional logics drive fragmented organisational identities, compelling clubs to adopt increasingly professional and innovative sponsorship practices despite their amateur values. Findings highlight implications for governance, regulation, and the support required to protect English grassroots football.

Competitive Short Paper

The role of institutional logics - or the "socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, assumptions, values and beliefs" which guide decision-making (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, p. 804) - in the management of sports organisations is already a well-developed area of research. However, such research under-examines the impact of logics on organisations' approaches to sponsorship as a marketing strategy. Equally, research exploring sports-related sponsorship - and in the case of this paper, association football - generally focuses on professional levels. Comparatively little research has explored sponsorship in football below professional levels (Hindmarsh & Hayton, 2024).

This paper presents findings from a study that seeks to fill the above gaps by answering the research question: "what are the institutional logics driving sponsorship practices in English grassroots and non-league football, and what causal mechanisms (or historical contingencies) are responsible for these logics?". The study explores the context of sponsorship management practices in the lower levels of English men's and women's football through the lens of institutional logics theory. Through a qualitative, Critical Realist (CR) approach (Bhaskar, 2008), data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 23 individuals with sponsorship-related decision-making responsibilities at English grassroots and non-league clubs. The study explored the historical contingencies shaping logics (see Delbridge & Edwards, 2013) which in turn drive sponsorship-related practices. Participants' experiences were subjected to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and the CR process of retroduction (Bhaskar, 2008), where the most prevalent causal mechanisms were identified as historical contingencies shaping sponsorship management practices.

The findings illuminate English grassroots and non-league clubs as experiencing a sense of 'fragmented organisational self' (Macaulay & Woulfin, 2023), where tensions between amateur and professional logics - similar to those found by Skirstad and Chelladurai (2011) - result in ineffective strategies and outcomes. Despite clubs' aims to adopt amateur values, the findings demonstrate the growth of a professional logic shaped by historical contingencies related to the evolving ownership of clubs, and outdated regulation and a lack of support provided by stakeholders such as local councils and The Football Association, English football's governing body. Following the work of Schulz et al. (2024), clubs were perceived as consequently forced to adopt more sophisticated and professional sponsorship management practices (such as the use of customer relationship management software) and more innovative sponsorship activation strategies to broaden income. These strategies include the use of previously unconsidered digital assets including social media, and innovative logo placement such as the sponsorship of stadia, plastic cups, and bins.

The study illuminates the tensions between amateur and professional logics for English grassroots and non-league clubs, and their impact upon sponsorship management practices. Clubs are forced to professionalise their approach to maintain competitiveness, despite their emphasis on the role of volunteers. The findings highlight the need to provide support to help clubs professionalise their sponsorship activity, and to more effectively regulate grassroots football in England.

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Shaping Parental Preferences For Hybrid Meat Products: The Role of Nutrition Claims, Environmental Labels, And Marketing Messages

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Track: 10. Marketing in Context (e.g., Food, Sport)

Summary Statement

This study employs a discrete choice experiment (n = 500) to investigate the preferences of parents for hybrid-meat products. These products combine conventional meat with plant-based ingredients and offer a potentially more sustainable and healthier alternative to similar traditional meat products. By analysing trade-offs across key product attributes such as price, nutritional value, and environmental impact, the study aims to uncover the factors that most strongly influence parental decision-making within this emerging food category.

Competitive Short Paper

This study employs a discrete choice experiment (DCE) (n = 500) to investigate the preferences of parents and caregivers for hybrid meat products. These products, sometimes referred to as blended meat products, combine conventional meat with plant-based ingredients such as carrots and cauliflower. They are typically sold as convenient ready-to-cook items (e.g. burgers and sausages) and offer a potentially more sustainable and healthier alternative to similar traditional meat products (Grasso et al., 2022). While several studies have examined consumer preferences for hybrid meat products (Asioli et al., 2023; Kolber & Meixner, 2023; Profeta et al., 2020; Salgaonkar & Nolden, 2024), no study has evaluated the preferences of parents and caregivers for products specifically targeted towards children. Within the broader topic of meat alternatives, which includes 100% plant-based meat products, only one study has explored the perceptions and attitudes of parents and caregivers towards meat alternatives in family meals (Pater et al., 2025).

This study examines how the meat-to-vegetable ratio (e.g. 50:50, 75:25), price, front-of-pack (FoP) nutrition claims (e.g. high in fibre, reduced fat, no artificial colours and flavours), and environmental labels (e.g. carbon footprint labels indicating reduced CO_2 emissions), together with marketing messages, influence product preferences. By analysing trade-offs across key product attributes such as price, nutritional value, and environmental impact, the study aims to uncover the factors that most strongly influence parental decision-making within this emerging food category. The study sample consists of parents or caregivers of children aged 4-14 years. Data were collected via the online survey platform Prolific in January 2026.

The study findings will have implications for policy and practice. By demonstrating preferences for different versions of hybrid meat products (i.e., 50:50 and 75:25 meat to vegetable ratios) relative to 100% meat products, the potential reduction in meat consumption among children can be estimated. Policymakers may therefore use these findings as evidence to support recommendations for hybrid meat products as part of climate change mitigation strategies. The findings will also demonstrate the effects of product attributes related to nutrition and environmental impact, and food marketing on parental preferences for children's hybrid meat products vis-a-vis traditional meat alternatives. These insights will be valuable for brands when devising strategies to effectively promote such products to parents and caregivers who serve as the primary food purchasers in households.

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Servicescapes and Gentrification: How Gastro-brands Transform Space

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This study focuses on gastro-brands (i.e., branded food/restaurant/gastro-tourism enterprises) and explores how micro branding strategies aggregate into macro spatial change. Through a qualitative study of a recently gentrified rural town in the Global South, we show that gastro-brands function as pioneering entrepreneurial institutions that perform symbolic, material, and relational work. Paradoxically, by reterritorializing the area from agricultural land to gastronomic destination, these practices simultaneously contribute to its commodification.

Competitive Short Paper

Research on servicescapes shows how brands use space to shape perceptions and behaviours. Through the interaction of spatial, material, social, and symbolic elements, servicescapes orchestrate consumption experiences and construct brand identities. Much of this literature, however, examines space at a micro level, focusing on interactions that occur within specific service settings. Thus, the cumulative socio-spatial effects that branded environments generate beyond discrete service encounters remain less understood. Treating servicescapes as active participants in neighbourhood transformation offers a productive avenue for understanding how micro branding strategies can aggregate into macro spatial change and contribute to the restructuring of space.

Building on this view, this study investigates how servicescapes shape gentrification processes. Specifically, we focus on gastro-brands (i.e., branded food/restaurant/gastro-tourism enterprises) and explore the ways they catalyse gentrification. Emerging research suggests that gastro-brands operate as cultural and economic intermediaries and participate in the symbolic rebranding of places. Yet, the mechanisms through which gastro-brands interact with consumers and other actors to underpin spatial reconfiguration remain insufficiently understood. We address these gaps through a qualitative study conducted in Urla, a recently gentrified rural tourism destination in Turkey. This context enables us to extend theorization of servicescapes and gentrification beyond predominantly Western urban settings and illuminate how local and global market dynamics intersect in shaping spatial identities, branding practices, and consumption patterns in the Global South.

Urla is a town located within İzmir, Turkey's third-largest city. Starting in the early 1990s and accelerating in the 2000s, Urla has undergone substantial urban revitalization. Since 2010s, the area has emerged as a high-end gastronomic and lifestyle destination. The recent proliferation of gastro-brands – locally embedded yet globally oriented upscale restaurants – have been a key driver of Urla's gentrification.

We collected data between 2021-2022 through ethnography, archival research, and social media analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with founders and employees of four restaurants that have been central to Urla's emergence as a gourmet destination. We also interviewed key figures in local gastro-tourism, including a renowned gourmet, a gastro-tourism consultant, and a gastronomy scholar, and other participants in the market ecosystem, such as long-term residents, newcomers, and small business owners. Observations were carried out across service settings and public spaces. Archival materials provided a longitudinal understanding of socio-spatial change, while social media data helped trace interactions between gastro-brands and consumers.

We identify two overarching mechanisms through which gastro-brands shape and transform spatial meanings: rooting from and rooting into. The former refers to the selective appropriation of existing 'local' elements to construct upscale servicescapes and brand narratives. The latter refers to the introduction of new, 'global' aesthetic, cultural, and consumption practices into the local servicescape. We argue that gastro-brands function as pioneering entrepreneurial institutions that perform symbolic, material, and relational work to position Urla as a legitimate and desirable destination for globally oriented, economically privileged consumers. Paradoxically, however, by reterritorializing the area from agricultural to gastronomic land, these practices simultaneously contribute to its commodification.

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How Spatial–Digital Synergy Shapes Generation Z's Sustainable Fashion Behaviour: Evidence from China

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This research addresses the sustainable "attitude-behaviour gap" among Chinese Generation Z by examining WeChat Mini Programs as algorithmic behavioural stimuli within physical retail spaces. Integrating SOR, TPB, and CET, a multi-case study of Burberry, Nike, and UNIQLO reveals how "spatial-digital synergy" activates moral emotions and cognitive empowerment. The findings propose an integrated conceptual framework for breaking physical-digital boundaries, offering theoretical insights into phygital retail design and strategic practical paths for driving long-term sustainable engagement.

Competitive Short Paper

Despite Generation Z's growing sustainable fashion awareness, an "attitude-behaviour gap" persists (Escourido-Calvo et al., 2025). In China's digitised retail landscape, young consumers endorse environmental values but struggle to translate them into sustained actions (Hong et al., 2024). While existing research often treats digital interfaces and physical spaces as discrete, this study explores their synergy as a "complex experience system" (Alexander & Varley, 2025). We focus on algorithmic stimuli—specifically WeChat Mini Programs embedded in retail environments—to investigate how they bridge this gap by activating emotional and cognitive organismic reactions.

Conceptually, this study defines WeChat Mini Programs as algorithmic behavioural interfaces. Unlike traditional apps, these lightweight tools enable seamless integration of gamified tasks, AR, and social incentives with in-store initiatives without downloads (Schreieck et al., 2022; Chen & Zahari, 2025). We reconceptualise retail space as a dynamic behaviour-shaping infrastructure that adapts to consumer interactions in real time (Hagtvedt & Chandukala, 2023). Our integrated framework positions the SOR model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) as the structural backbone. Here, the spatial-algorithmic coupling functions as the stimulus (S), triggering organismic reactions (O) where Customer Experience Theory (CET) (Verhoef et al., 2009) captures sensory-affective states, and perceived behavioural control from TPB (Ajzen, 1991) accounts for cognitive-volitional factors. This synthesis delineates the pathway to sustainable intentions (R)—a link often overlooked in traditional SOR applications.

This paper reports the first phase of a sequential exploratory design: a comparative case study of Burberry, Nike, and UNIQLO in Tier-1 Chinese cities. We triangulated comprehensive data from Brand content, Secondary sources, and UGC. Thematic coding in NVivo 15 identified specific patterns of spatial-algorithmic integration, which now inform the scale development for the phase-two quantitative survey targeting the wider Gen Z demographic.

Preliminary results reveal three insights. First, emotional stimuli enhance value conversion; gamified challenges and visualised feedback internalise abstract values by evoking moral emotions like "green pride," strengthening the attitude-intention link. Second, cognitive affordances improve efficacy; transparent product lifecycles and circular service guidance bolster perceived behavioural control (PBC), reducing psychological barriers. Finally, spatial-digital synergy amplifies persistence; integrating immersive installations with personalised prompts enhances social visibility, facilitating long-term engagement over isolated transactions.

Theoretically, this study extends the SOR model's stimulus dimension via "spatial-algorithmic composite stimuli," reveals moral emotions' role in bridging the gap within TPB, and introduces CET to construct a participatory behavioural transformation framework. Practically, brands should move beyond mere information dissemination. By integrating spatial experiences with algorithmic interventions, retailers can build pathways balancing emotional resonance and cognitive empowerment to drive deep sustainable engagement among Generation Z.

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Fans or Owners? An initial Segmentation of Fan-Owned Football Clubs

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Track: 10. Marketing in Context (e.g., Food, Sport)

Summary Statement

Studies of fan segmentation focus on larger, privately-owned football clubs. However, multiple fan-owned clubs have recently emerged, adopting distinct governance models and an increased focus on sustainability over short-term sporting success. This study is the first attempt to segment supporters of said fan-owned clubs. A quantitative approach employing k-means

cluster analysis resulted in the identification of five discrete fan segments based on their behavioural and attitudinal loyalty, crowdfunding contributions and location.

Competitive Short Paper

The globalisation and digitisation of football has resulted in clubs accruing increasingly heterogeneous fanbases that include satellite fans (Behrens & Ulrich, 2020) and more experience-driven consumers (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2013). Fans have been successfully segmented based on identity (Guilianotti ,2004) and loyalty behaviours (Tapp, 2004). However, attempts to segment football fans have typically been limited to more successful, privately owned teams (e.g. Jaeger, 2021; Park et al., 2023; Tapp & Clowes, 2002), with only Pick & Gillett (2018) investigating teams not playing at elite level.

Fan-owned clubs often arise as a result of poor management from private owners (Porter, 2019) and typically work on a minority supporters' trust model (Walters & Hammil, 2013). Fans may therefore transition to being stakeholders (Garcia & Welford, 2015) or even 'stakeowners' (Constandt et al., 2020) who take on responsibility for their club's wellbeing. As such, this study seeks to segment supporters of fan-owned clubs based on various forms of fan engagement.

An online survey was developed in partnership with two fan-owned clubs in the English football pyramid. The survey comprised of questions on fan loyalty, various means of club engagement and demographic information. This was distributed by clubs to their fan databases in mid-2025 and resulted in 795 usable responses.

Initial hierarchical cluster analysis based upon match attendance, fan location, crowdfunding engagement and attitudinal loyalty suggested the emergence of five distinct segments. Subsequent k-means analysis allocated respondents to each cluster and post-hoc ANOVA tests were employed to add definition to each group. Our resultant fan segments are:

Casually Invested (n+137, 17.2%): Fans who typically live 50-100 miles from their team, which is reflected in modest levels of match attendance. They provide limited financial support to the club through merchandising and crowdfunding and are likely to base their engagement on team performance.

Fixated Satellite Fans: (n=105, 13.2%): Our smallest segment live the furthest away from their team and typically attend matches infrequently and alone. They are typically the longest-serving fans and actively contribute to club finances through crowdfunding schemes and raffles.

Reliable Regulars (n=140, 17.6%): Our oldest segment live locally and are typically strong match attenders. They make the highest contributions to crowdfunding schemes (£301-400), are most likely to have a season ticket and to have volunteered time to assist the club.

Proud Peacocks (n=172, 21.7%): This local group of fans are also regular match attendees and are the least influenced by fluctuations in team performance. They are most likely to show their support through wearing team colours, have the highest level of trust in club leadership and are moderate crowdfunding contributors.

Future Fanatics (n=241, 30.3%): Our largest segment is also the youngest, comprising the most recently adopted fans who attend homes matches regularly. They are however the least trusting of club leadership, the lowest crowdfunding contributors and have low intentions of making future contributions.

These segments extend our knowledge of fan segmentation to a fan-owned context, and provides club leadership with new insights on how different fan clusters can be identified and successfully managed.

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Consumers Engagement with AI Influencers: Generation Type and Awareness Anchoring Effects

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

This study examines how awareness anchoring strategies influence consumer engagement with virtual influencers through experimental research with Chinese consumers (N=170). Results reveal that human-influencer anchoring significantly outperforms virtual-only anchoring in driving engagement through heightened awareness, while anthropomorphism fails to mediate engagement due to falsity perception. Findings challenge traditional CASA theory and advocate for precision disclosure strategies in AI influencer marketing.

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How Consumers Respond to Virtual Brand Ambassadors

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Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

Summary Statement

Virtual brand ambassadors (VBAs) are increasingly used in luxury fashion, yet their influence beyond low-effort engagement is unclear. Drawing on the Cognition–Affect–Behaviour framework, this study proposes a quantitative model in which perceived anthropomorphism, authenticity, social presence, and cultural congruence shape consumers' cognitive evaluations of VBAs. Cognitive evaluations then drive affective responses and predict brand attitude, engagement intention, and purchase intention, enabling direct comparison with psychological engagement generated by human influencers.

Competitive Short Paper

Brand ambassadors (BAs) are individuals employed by firms to represent and promote brands to a wider audience (Schmidt & Baumgarth, 2018). Typically these roles have been filled by athletes, celebrities, and other high-profile figures who communicate brand messages through advertising and public appearances (Mutter, 2024). Over time, such endorsements reinforce brand image and foster customer loyalty (Malangke, 2025). However, the rise of digital business has transformed this practice with luxury fashion brands increasingly adopting Virtual Brand Ambassadors (VBAs, such as Lil Miquela and Livi, as alternatives to human representatives on social media (Liu, 2026).

Prior work has predominantly approached virtual influencers and VBAs as technological innovations or brand-managed assets, often emphasising technical design, avatar realism and managerial adoption rationales (Kim et al., 2021; Faruq, 2025). In contrast, this study adopts a consumer-centred perspective to examine how perceived anthropomorphism, authenticity, social presence, and cultural congruence shape behavioral responses to VBAs. Conceptualising VBAs as bundles of perceptible cues aligns with contemporary digital persuasion research, which treats virtual agents as social actors conveying affective and relational signals to audiences (e.g., Computers Are Social Actors theory; see Kim & Park, 2024; Shen, 2025a). In this view, consumers' behavioural responses do not arise directly from the underlying technology but from how anthropomorphic features foster relatability, how authenticity (Koles et al., 2024) influences trust and perceived sincerity, how social presence (Kim & Park, 2024) affects the sense of interpersonal engagement, and how cultural congruence (Suh, 2020) facilitates self-relevant interpretation of mediated characters (Shen, 2025a). While VBAs have gained significant traction in luxury fashion marketing, it remains unclear whether these digital figures meaningfully influence consumers beyond surface-level online engagement (Faruq, 2025).

This study employs the Cognition–Affect–Behaviour (CAB) framework, which proposes that consumer responses unfold through a sequential process of cognitive appraisal, affective reaction and behavioural intention (Shen, 2025b). A quantitative model is proposed to test whether (1) perceived anthropomorphism, authenticity, social presence and cultural congruence predict consumers' cognitive evaluations of VBAs; (2) cognitive evaluations shape affective responses, including parasocial interaction, emotional resonance and self-expressive alignment; and (3) affective responses predict brand attitude, engagement intention and purchase intention. The aim is to assess whether VBAs create psychological engagement comparable to that generated by human influencers.

This study contributes to the literature on virtual brand ambassadors by clarifying how consumers form responses to VBAs through a cognition–affect–behaviour process. By bringing together perceptions such as authenticity, social presence and anthropomorphism within a single psychological sequence, the study offers a more coherent account of how these factors operate in relation to one another rather than as isolated predictors. At a practical level, the findings help clarify whether virtual brand ambassadors can influence consumers beyond low-effort online engagement, and which of the attributes are most salient to consumers, thereby providing a clearer basis for fashion brands to evaluate the actual value of adopting VBAs.

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Do Minority-Owned Labels Help or Hurt Minority Businesses? The Effect of Minority-Owned Labels on Purchase Intentions Depending on Consumers' Political Orientation and Ethnicity

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Track: 13. Political Marketing

Summary Statement

Minority-owned businesses face systemic barriers, prompting some to highlight ownership status (e.g., "Black-owned") to attract consumer support. This research examines how consumers' race and political ideology jointly shape responses to minority-owned labels. We find that White (non-Hispanic) consumers are more sensitive to such labels than other racial groups, but reactions vary by political ideology. Specifically, White conservatives are less likely to purchase from labeled businesses, driven by stronger meritocratic beliefs and opposition to race-conscious decision-making.

Competitive Short Paper

This research examines the marketing implications of using "minority-owned" labels (e.g., "Black-Owned Business") and demonstrates that consumer responses depend on the intersection of race and political ideology. Minority-owned businesses, defined as firms at least 51% owned and controlled by individuals who are at least 25% Asian-Indian, Asian-Pacific, Black, Hispanic, or Native American (National Minority Supplier Development Council, 2022), generate approximately $1.3 trillion in annual sales in the U.S. economy (SBA, 2022). Despite their economic contribution, these businesses face persistent systemic disadvantages, including reduced access to funding compared to businesses owned by White individuals (WKSU, 2017). In response, some minority business owners have adopted minority-owned labels in their marketing communications to increase consumer support. However, little research has examined the effectiveness of these labels.

Across seven studies, White consumers are more sensitive to minority-owned labels than individuals from other racial backgrounds (i.e. People of Color), with responses varying by political ideology. White conservatives are more likely than White liberals to endorse meritocracy, the belief that judgments should be based on self-reliance and fairness rather than race (Leslie et al., 2020), and thus view minority-owned labels as conflicting with these principles, reducing purchase intentions. In contrast, POC are less opposed to race-conscious decision-making and less likely to endorse meritocracy, regardless of political orientation (Newman et al., 2015).

Studies 1A–1E tested used a meta-analytic approach across five experiments with highly similar designs, stimuli, and dependent variables. A total of 1,681 participants were recruited from Amazon MTurk, Prolific Academic, and undergraduate students at a Canadian university. In each study, participants read a short article describing a local café ostensibly owned by a person of color. Participants were randomly assigned to either a control condition or a minority-owned label condition, in which the article included an explicit ownership label (e.g., "Black-Owned Business"). Across studies, a three-way interaction emerged between label presence, political orientation, and participant ethnicity ($t(1669)=2.12$, $p=.03$). Political orientation significantly predicted White participants' responses to the label ($t(1669)=-3.56$, $p<.001$) but did not predict POC participants' responses. The minority-owned label produced a robust negative effect on White conservatives' purchase intentions (effect size = -0.35, SE = 0.14).

Study 2 employed a qualitative approach to identify the psychological mechanism underlying White conservatives' negative reactions. 410 participants (White liberals, White conservatives, Black liberals, and Black conservatives) were shown a café labeled as minority-owned and asked to report their thoughts. A significant interaction between ethnicity and political orientation emerged ($t(406)=2.62$, $p<.009$), with political orientation strongly predicting purchase intentions for White participants ($t(224)=-5.52$, $p<.001$) but not Black participants. Thematic coding revealed that 43% of White conservatives explicitly endorsed meritocracy, compared to 3% of White liberals and 4% of Black conservatives; no Black liberals endorsed this belief.

Together, these findings advance research on the intersection of race and political identity in marketplace interactions by demonstrating that minority-owned labels can backfire among White conservative consumers, while also highlighting important managerial implications for race-conscious marketing strategies.

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To Conform Or Not To Conform, That Is The Question **- Societal Expectations And The Evolving Beauty Ideals Of UK-Based Gen Z Asian Females.**

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This paper investigates some of the socialisation factors that influence beauty ideals of UK-based Gen Z Asian females. The literature review identified a penchant for Eurocentric beauty standards amongst Asians. A qualitative research method was adopted using interviews and focus groups with South and East Asian females. Findings indicate South Asian females are critical of previous generation's views and media representation of beauty ideals which have impacted their self-esteem and beauty practices.

Competitive Short Paper

Research Context

There is consensus amongst scholars that definitions of beauty diverge across different ethnicities and cultures (Kotabe & Helsen, 2015; Zhan et al, 2021). Notwithstanding that, studies have also investigated the hegemony of European beauty standards and how these have been internalised by Asian females (Harper and Choma, 2018; Jung, 2018; Rehman, 2018) and their perceived links to social status and desirability. However, these studies were undertaken in Asian countries and some focused on earlier generations of consumers. This research, therefore, investigates whether UK-based Asian Gen Z females, as digital natives, still carry the same internalised European notions of beauty as their predecessors or defy cultural norms.

European standards of beauty associated with thin bodies, fairer skin, smooth and coloured hair, and lighter coloured eyes, have been the subject of study amongst women of colour and there is evidence that these ideals are embraced by many South Asian and East Asian women (Karupiah, 2014; Jung, 2018). Colourism has also been investigated, and scholars have identified the role fair skin plays in increasing the social capital of individuals by improving their marriage and career prospects (Shroff et al, 2018; Mady et al, 2023). There is also evidence that Asian actresses and models in media and advertising – irrespective of the nature of the products being promoted, are fair skinned with Westernised features (Parameswaran and Cardoza, 2009; Yan and Bissell, 2014). Whilst there is some evidence of the use of darker skinned models in Indian adverts, albeit with European features (Rehman, 2018), colourism in media still prevails (Akram 2025).

Method and Key Findings

This study utilises a qualitative approach through interviews and focus groups with South and East Asian females and a thematic analysis technique is being employed. First and second level coding indicate several emerging themes.

The first theme relates to families, particularly older females, as socialisation agents who stress upon fair skin along with long, black and thick hair as the main benchmarks by which beauty is measured. Another theme revolves around discrimination faced where fairer females are given preferential treatment in various aspects of life. These are discussed with respect to the impact this has had on participants' confidence and self-esteem.

Another notable difference focuses on the country where participants have grown up. Gen Z females who grew up in the UK tend to be moving away from cultural notions of beauty, particularly relating to fairer skin, and consider other characteristics that they perceive as beautiful. Whilst the Indian and Pakistani females who moved to the UK as adults have somewhat adapted their beauty ideals, the Chinese participants interviewed are still more likely to conform to their own cultural and societal expectations.

Implications

These findings provide some valuable insights for the Beauty sector targeting Gen Z. There is a need for more diversity and inclusivity in product development and the representation of darker skinned Asian females in advertising. This could drive customer engagement and assist in enhancing young women's self-esteem.

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Pricing Under Mental Constraints: A Narrative Review of Rational Inattention Theory

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Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper presents a narrative review of Rational Inattention Theory (RIT) used for pricing research across economics and marketing. Drawing on 40 peer-reviewed studies, it identifies six themes where attention constraints shape firm price setting, consumer price perception, macro-level pricing dynamics, financial market behaviour, information frictions, and theoretical model development. The review highlights how limited information processing influences pricing decisions, market power, and consumer welfare, while outlining future research directions advancing strategic pricing using RIT.

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Stranger or Companion? The Transformative Potential of Generative AI Companions in Alleviating Situational Vulnerability

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

This paper examines how Generative AI companions support consumers experiencing situational vulnerability (e.g., loneliness and anxiety). Analysing over 521,000 consumer reviews using advanced text analytics (fine-tuning LLMs and BERTopic modeling), the study identifies key platform and relational mechanisms through which GenAI companions alleviate vulnerability, while also highlighting GenAI companion-related systematic challenges that undermine customer experience with these companions. The findings offer theoretical and managerial insights into the role of GenAI companions as socio-emotional service actors.

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Experiential Place Marketing and Branding in Latin America: The Case of The Eternaut

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

Through an analysis of brand presence in the Argentine series *The Eternaut*, this article examines how experiential marketing provides a conceptual framework for addressing place marketing developments, particularly through the role of brands in audiovisual narratives. Both in digital and on-site contexts, the brands featured in the series enable multisensory explorations and emotional activations that complete the urban landscape and re-signify spaces, generating new conversations and even multisensory experiences.

Competitive Short Paper

This article aims to analyze how experiential marketing (Schmitt, 2011) provides a conceptual framework for addressing place marketing developments, particularly through the role of brands in audiovisual narratives. Audiovisual narratives, by activating multisensory and transmedia experiences, have the capacity to "trigger reinterpretation" and alter the relationship between audiences, brands, and territories (Martínez & Hellín Ortuño, 2015).

Álvarez-Rodríguez et al. (2023) note that the inclusion of real brands in fictional environments contributes to verisimilitude and recognition, as well as providing economic investment to facilitate production.

For this study, a comprehensive viewing of the Argentine series *The Eternaut* (Netflix, 2025) was conducted, during which all brand appearances were systematically recorded. These were later classified to identify their contribution to narrative development, and their references made to the series in their social media.

By identifying 55 common touchpoints between the protagonists of the fictional narrative and the audience—among outdoor advertising elements and stores clearly identified in their real locations—the analysis confirmed the relevance of product placement (see also Cárdaba et al., 2023) for place marketing (see also Morgan et al., 2004) in a suburban context lacking a clearly defined architectural iconography.

This type of connection can generate positive resonance effects for potential subsequent experiences. As Gómez-Morales et al. (2022) argue, the ability of audiovisual fiction to induce tourism also depends, in a significant way, on the personal connections established between the text and the audience. In addition, social media conversation by the brands can be a powerful inductor.

Likewise, the active involvement of brands through their own communication channels allows the audience's experience with the narrative to be extended and its value enhanced (Sifaki & Papadopoulou, 2022). This involvement can also place the location on different types of agendas and improve its positioning as a potential destination (Nieto-Ferrando et al., 2023).

Besides social media reaction, two tourism-related experiences generated around the series were identified: one organized by a governmental entity and another by non-profit private actors. In both cases, although not in an explicit or dominant manner, brands are part of the proposed itinerary.

In one of the cases, the tour through the locations aims to attract other narrative creators. The main target of the other experience is not the long-distance tourist, but rather the nearby visitor—one who, even when already familiar with the spaces, resignifies them after watching the series and constructs a personal experience based on it.

Both in digital and on-site experiences, the brands featured in the series enable multisensory explorations and emotional activations that complete the urban landscape and re-signify spaces, giving birth to new conversations and even multisensorial experiences. Ultimately, as Mabillard and Vuignier (2021) point out, "although every place is obviously related to a certain image, places are not intrinsically brands. They become brands through a strategic marketing process, supported by a brand effect affecting target groups at various levels of intensity."

The case of *The Eternaut* illustrates the role of brands within this process.

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Perceived Value on the Outcomes of Destination Brand Authenticity and Relational Benefits: Thai Tourists' Perspectives on Thailand's Culture-Rich Destinations

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

Thailand's less-popular cities often boast cultural and historical heritage, which seems to underline the role of destination brand authenticity (DBA) in influencing tourists' attitudes and behaviors. This study, based on SOR, has revealed that without perceived value, DBA has a negative impact on Thai tourists' revisit intention to these destinations. Similarly, relational benefits positively influences their revisit intention indirectly via perceived value. Thus, perceived value as organism acts as an underlying mechanism of these relations.

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The Effect of Service Robots' Conversational Style on Tourists' Hedonic Well-Being and Travel Intention

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

This research investigates the impact of service robots' communication modes (basic versus eco-friendly) and empathetic tone of voice on tourists' hedonic well-being and travel intentions in hospitality settings. Tourists' pleasant experience and pride are conceptualized as mediating variables, while anthropomorphism and narcissism are considered moderating factors. Grounded in the artificial intelligence and sustainability literature within tourism, the study aims to enhance understanding of empathetic robotic communication and its implications for customer experience design.

Competitive Short Paper

Technology significantly influences tourists' behaviors and the enjoyment they derive from their travel experiences. With the increasing prevalence of artificial intelligence tools, service robots are expected to become an indispensable element in the delivery of tourism services in the future. In this context, service robots have the potential to trigger a profound transformation in tourism service systems. The effectiveness of service robots is positively associated with attitudes toward their use in the hospitality sector, and favorable perceptions of robots influence the intention to use them (Gursoy et al., 2019; Ivanov et al., 2023; Huang, D. et al., 2024). Therefore, exploring how consumers perceive, respond to, and interact with intelligent service robots is important for ensuring the successful implementation of robotics in various travel and tourism operations (Tussyadiah et al., 2020).The findings of this study will clarify the effectiveness of empathetic communication when service robots designed for different purposes (basic and eco-friendly) provide customers with information about hotel facilities, and how positive customer perceptions of hotel services can be fostered.

In this study, the impact of variations in the communication styles of service robots (basic vs. eco-friendly) and changes in tone of voice (low vs. high empathetic) on tourists' perceptions of well-being will be examined, with pleasant experience and pride as mediators, and anthropomorphism and narcissism as moderators. These relationships will be explained within the framework of key variables and parameters discussed in the artificial intelligence literature. The findings will contribute to the development of strategies for businesses in designing their service offerings. Therefore, investigating all these effects has become critically important in terms of positively influencing tourists' behavioral intentions and sustaining a successful service approach in the long term.

In this context, the study aims to provide deeper insights into the effects of pride on consumer–brand relationships. Specifically, the effects of service robots with different communication styles on tourists' hedonic well-being and travel intentions will be analyzed using an experimental design. The research problem will be tested through multiple studies involving online surveys, laboratory and field experiments with manipulated experimental groups. The participants are planned to be 1,056 UK citizens, aged 18 or older, with at least a high school education, who have traveled at least once and have prior hotel experience.

Current studies have mostly focused on the impact of AI-based tools on usage intentions and recommendation behaviors. In contrast, the role of sustainability-themed AI applications on tourists' hedonic well-being perceptions is becoming increasingly important; however, research on this topic remains relatively new and scarce. This highlights an important research gap that calls for further in-depth investigation. This study suggests that customers in the hospitality sector prefer eco-friendly service robots with a high empathetic tone over simple robots with a low empathetic tone, offering guidance for businesses' strategic technology investments and policymakers' sustainability initiatives by highlighting the environmental, economic, and social impacts of service robots in tourism.

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Reframing Human-Centred Care In UK Domiciliary Services: A Service-Led Perspective On Value Co-Creation And Well-being

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This paper re-frames domiciliary care as a co-created service experience shaped by organisational structures, emotional labour and internal service dynamics. Integrating social marketing with services marketing theory, the study positions front-line carers as central value creators within wellbeing-oriented care ecosystems. Focusing on employee well-being and human-centred care, the paper outlines a qualitative, participatory research design with organisational access and approval secured within a UK domiciliary care setting.

Competitive Short Paper

Despite sustained policy commitments to human-centred care, home-based care delivery is increasingly influenced by workforce shortages, regulatory compliance demands and emotional labour dynamics that can undermine empathy, dignity, and wellbeing for both carers and service users (The King's Fund, 2025). While social marketing research has advanced important insights into wellbeing and behavioural change, little attention has been paid to the internal service conditions through which compassionate care is enacted or constrained in front-line care settings. This paper addresses this gap by conceptually reframing domiciliary care as a co-created service experience and positioning care workers as central value creators within wellbeing-oriented service ecosystems.

Drawing on services marketing and social marketing perspectives, the study challenges dominant portrayals of care as a unidirectional process. Instead, domiciliary care is conceptualised as a relational and emotionally embedded service process unfolding within private domestic spaces. Service-Dominant Logic provides a theoretical foundation for understanding care as value co-creation among organisations, carers and their clients (Vargo & Lusch, 2017), whilst Internal Market Orientation foregrounds the role of organisational alignment, internal communication and employee empowerment in enabling service quality (Lings & Greenley, 2005). From this perspective, carers' wellbeing, emotional resources and perceived organisational support emerge as foundational preconditions for delivering compassionate, value-centred care.

The paper advances three research questions: (1) how frontline carers and managers interpret and enact person-centred care within clients' homes; (2) what emotional, organisational and regulatory factors enable or constrain compassionate, value-creating care practices; and (3) how insights from practice can inform the design principles of a Human-Centred Care framework that strengthens empathy, communication, and service quality. By foregrounding carers lived experiences and emotional labour, the study extends social marketing debates on wellbeing beyond service users to include frontline workers as a structurally vulnerable group operating within constrained care systems.

Methodologically, the research adopts a qualitative, interpretive and participatory design approach suited to exploring complex wellbeing-related phenomena in real-world service environments (Greenhalgh et al., 2017). The empirical phase, commencing in early 2026, will involve semi-structured interviews with frontline carers and senior managers within a UK domiciliary care organisation (participating organisation approval obtained). Interviews will explore value experiences, emotional demands, organisational constraints and perceptions of policy implementation. Emergent themes from the findings will inform the early design principles for a Human-Centred Care framework. At the time of submission, the study is at the conceptualisation stage, with data collection scheduled to begin in February 2026.

The paper makes three contributions to social marketing and wellbeing research. First, it extends conceptualisations of vulnerability by examining how internal service structures shape carers' capacity to deliver compassionate care. Second, it integrates services marketing theory into social care research, offering a service-led framework that links employee wellbeing, organisational practices and client outcomes. Third, it advances early design principles for human-centred service innovation with clear relevance for care providers and policymakers. By breaking conceptual boundaries between social marketing, services marketing and care studies, this paper responds directly to the conference theme and contributes to more humane and sustainable care ecosystems.

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Maintaining Luxury Brand Consistency in Algorithmic and Participatory Social Media Environments: A Cross-Platform Netnographic Study

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Track: 5. Brands & Branding

Summary Statement

This paper examines how luxury fashion brands maintain brand consistency across Instagram and TikTok in algorithmic and participatory social media environments. Drawing on a netnographic study of cross-platform brand communication, it identifies three mechanisms—aesthetic and narrative coherence, managed participation, and algorithmic alignment—through which consistency is sustained. The study reframes brand consistency as adaptive coordination, contributing to branding scholarship and offering insights into cross-platform reputation management in digital luxury contexts.

Competitive Short Paper

The rapid growth of social media platforms has fundamentally reshaped how luxury brands communicate, engage audiences, and manage their reputations. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok offer unprecedented visibility and opportunities for consumer participation, yet they also challenge the core principles of luxury branding, namely brand consistency, symbolic control, and reputational stability. These challenges arise because each platform operates through distinct algorithmic logics and cultural norms. Instagram offers curated aesthetics and aspirational storytelling, whereas TikTok prioritises immediacy, humour, and content remixing (Nielsen & Fletcher, 2023; Entrena-Serrano, 2025). For luxury fashion brands, this creates an ongoing tension between adapting to platform-specific affordances and preserving a coherent brand identity rooted in heritage, exclusivity, and symbolic value (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012).

Traditionally, brand consistency has been understood as maintaining coherent visual identity and messaging across touchpoints. However, in algorithmically mediated and participatory environments, brand meaning increasingly emerges through interactions among brands, users, and platforms rather than through unilateral managerial control (Casado-Molina et al., 2020). Drawing on value co-creation theory, brands can be understood as relational constructs whose meanings are co-produced through consumer participation, interaction, and reinterpretation (Akaka & Schau, 2019). This shift seems consequential for luxury brands, whose reputational value depends on sustaining credibility, authenticity, and symbolic authority within highly visible and volatile digital environments (Shukla & Purani, 2012). Accordingly, this study asks: How do luxury fashion brands maintain cross-platform consistency while engaging in participatory and algorithm-driven social media ecosystems?

To address this question, the study adopts a qualitative netnographic approach (Kozinets, 2020) that focuses on Instagram and TikTok as contrasting yet interconnected platforms within the luxury branding landscape. Five global luxury fashion brands, Louis Vuitton, Dior, Chanel, Gucci, and Balenciaga, were selected to capture variation in heritage orientation, creative strategy, and digital adaptation. Publicly available brand content, including posts, videos, and brand-endorsed user-generated material, was collected from verified accounts through systematic digital observation. Data collection and analysis followed an iterative, abductive process, moving between empirical observations and theoretical concepts related to brand consistency, value co-creation, and brand reputation.

The analysis identifies three interrelated mechanisms through which luxury brands sustain cross-platform consistency. First, aesthetic and narrative coherence, whereby brands translate core symbolic meanings into platform-appropriate visual rhythms while preserving recognisable brand cues. Second, managed participation, in which brands selectively engage with user-generated content to enhance perceived authenticity without relinquishing narrative authority. Third, algorithmic alignment, referring to brands adaptation of content formats, posting rhythms, and interaction styles to platform visibility logics while preserving symbolic continuity.

These three mechanisms align with prior research in luxury branding, value co-creation, and platform studies emphasising symbolic coherence, managed participation, and platform-specific adaptation (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Akaka & Schau, 2019; Sarasvuo et al., 2022; Nielsen & Fletcher, 2023). Integrated within a cross-platform luxury context, the findings show that brand consistency on social media is achieved through adaptive coordination rather than uniform replication, emerging as a dynamic capability balancing symbolic control, participatory openness, and algorithmic responsiveness, with implications for branding scholarship and luxury brand management.

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(Un)cared for by Loved Ones: Legitimisation of Care in Family Provision

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

Interviewing Greek adult children, we examine how parental food provision becomes recognised - or rejected - as care within adult parent-child relationships. We show how authority over defining care is negotiated by recipients and introduce legitimisation and surrendering as key concepts in consumer care. We conceptualise consumer care as a dynamic, relational and moral valuation process, advancing care ethics debates and offering timely insight into family care practices amid the withdrawal of welfare support.

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Marketing Transmutation in the Classroom: Unlocking the Potential of Art-Science Hybrids

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This paper is to contribute to the evolution of marketing pedagogy by exploring how marketing knowledge can be translated – transmuted – into engaging and impactful classroom narratives – art-science hybrids capable of shaking audiences from passivity. Artistic representations inspire personalised translations; promote creative reflections; initiate lively classroom discussion; forge links with theory, practice, and social consequences; and most importantly translates critical marketing knowledge to action.

Competitive Short Paper

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the evolution of marketing pedagogy by exploring how marketing knowledge can be translated – transformed – transmuted – into engaging and impactful classroom narratives – art-science hybrids capable of shaking audiences from passivity (Thrift, 2008). Despite the promise of invigorating turns in teaching approaches – experimental – confessional – creative and so on, marketing knowledge communicated in traditional models, journals, books and so on, are for the most part unwelcoming to non-specialised audiences (Hill et al. 2014). Buckingham and Harvey (2000) call for a decentring to this dry approach, they claim academics have been far too slow to engage in the artistic process of imagining the audience, and crafting for them the exciting communications necessary for establishing deeper engagements, in which knowledge can lead to action. It is time for academics to more earnestly consider the relationship between intentions, communications, and impact. Marketing, production, and consumption contribute to the ongoing devastation of the earth, but despite knowledge of the Anthropocene, and dangers humanity faces – global frying – the conversion of knowledge to action is near absent.

Extending discussions on knowledge transfer (Nokes, 2009), knowledge translation 'is a collaborative model, a form of engaged scholarship, in which the goal is the co-production of knowledge with audiences' (Kreindler, 2018). An underlying premise of knowledge translation is that active audience engagement in knowledge co-production is more effective at converting knowledge to action. Pruitt et al. (2014) argue knowledge translation be viewed through more colourful lenses, practiced in wider contexts, and celebrated as the processes of meaning-making that occur across languages, modes, and mediums of expression (Siegel, 1995). Inter-semiotic translation, called 'transmutation', is defined as the interpretation of a sign system by means of an alternative sign system or combination of sign systems (Stecconi, 2004). Transmutation goes beyond the normal understanding of translation: it's an attempt to translate a "cultural ontology" by placing an emphasis on audiences feeling knowledge through "synesthetic fusion" (Severi, 2014). Because knowledge is illuminated by the heterogenous structures and sensory capabilities of representations, far from a narrowing tool, transmutation is an opportunity to enlarge and exposes meanings. As Severi (2014) states: 'inter-semiotic transmutation generates forms of thought in audiences where what must be conveyed joins, at an intense level, with what may be expressed'.

Artistic – imaginative –representations are effective for classroom knowledge translation because they reposition audiences, welcome them to participate, interpret, theorise, and take on performative roles (Vannini, 2015). This paper explores the author's application of marketing transmutation – the translation of essential critical marketing knowledge using films, comics, and poetry to explore ominous themes such as Anthropocene, biodiversity collapse, toxic consumption, upcycling, pandemics, social isolation, and Ai culture. Due their capacity for vivid knowledge co-production, artistic representations inspire creative personalised translations unique to each audience member; promote reflections on destructive behaviours; initiate lively classroom discussion capable of forging links with theory, practice, and social consequences; and most importantly translates critical marketing knowledge to action, and in doing so realises the full potential of art-science hybrids in the classroom.

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Gendering Brands and Branding Gender: A Process Model of Brand–Gender Dynamics

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

Brands increasingly spark gender disputes, yet research lacks a process account of how gendered branding becomes politicised and feeds back into legitimacy. This conceptual paper offers a mechanism-based model linking gendering brands and branding gender in a recursive loop. It explains how gender scripts stabilise legitimacy through alignment, how brands become proxy targets in moralised controversies, and how rupture triggers adaptive re-encoding that normalises emergent gender expectations.

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Configuring Consumer Engagement with Local Food Systems

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper examines how consumer engagement with local food systems emerges from configurations of social practice elements, individual characteristics, and contextual conditions. Using a fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis on data from 5,194 consumers across 20 countries, it identifies multiple pathways to high engagement across behavioural, financial, and advocacy dimensions, highlighting the critical role of system-level infrastructures in enabling sustainable food system transformation.

Competitive Short Paper

The global food system is a major contributor to climate change, accounting for approximately 26% of global greenhouse gas emissions (FAO, 2023). Local food systems (LFS) have emerged as a promising pathway for reducing environmental impacts while supporting food security and sustainable development aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 12. LFS are commonly characterised by three interrelated dimensions: shortened supply chains based on geographical proximity, diverse retail channels such as farmers' markets and community-owned outlets, and the retention of economic and social value within local communities (Kneafsey et al., 2013; LocalFoodPlan, 2024). Although the share of local food has been on the rise (Statista, n.d.), consumer participation remains insufficient to enable scalable transformation, revealing demand-side constraints.

Existing research recognises the growing influence of consumers in shaping sustainable food system transitions (Tuscano et al., 2021). However, studies on engagement with local food have predominantly relied on individual-level behavioural frameworks. Research informed by the Theory of Planned Behaviour emphasises attitudes, intentions, and perceived control (Ajzen, 1991), while Value-Belief-Norm theory highlights personal values and environmental concern as key drivers (Stern et al., 1999). Although valuable, these approaches present two limitations. First, they privilege individual choice and underplay the role of physical, digital, and institutional infrastructures shaping consumption practices. Second, current studies often focus on single engagement outcomes, neglecting the likelihood that different forms of engagement, such as purchasing, paying price premiums, or advocacy, may arise from distinct combinations of factors.

This study addresses these gaps by taking Social Practice Theory (SPT) as an alternative analytical lens (Shove et al., 2012). SPT conceptualises food consumption as embedded within practices constituted through the interaction of materials, meanings, and competencies. Drawing on complexity theory and the principle of equifinality, which recognises that multiple causal pathways can lead to similar outcomes (Pappas & Woodside, 2021), we examine how different social practice elements related to local foods combine with individual characteristics and macro-contextual factors to generate high (vs. low) levels of consumer engagement with local foods.

The study employs fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) to analyse cross-cultural survey data from 5,194 consumers across 20 countries. The analysis shows several practice-based archetypes of consumer engagement with local foods. The configurations constitute necessary and sufficient conditions for high engagement, and how practice elements interact with individual-level and contextual variables. The analysis also shows that the configurations vary across different operationalisations of consumer engagement, including purchase frequency, willingness to pay a premium, and advocacy.

These findings advance theory and practice in several ways. First, they demonstrate that high engagement with local food can be achieved through multiple, equally effective configurations, moving beyond linear and additive explanations of behaviour. Second, the results highlight the central role of system-level infrastructures, particularly when meanings and competencies are weak, revealing important cost and policy trade-offs for LFS development. Third, by integrating behavioural, financial, and social dimensions of engagement, the study bridges the micro–macro divide in sustainable consumption research (White, et al. 2025). Overall, the findings provide insights for policymakers and practitioners seeking to strengthen LFS.

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Caught in the Middle: How Belief in Corporate Roles Shape Evaluation of Brand Neutrality

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Track: 5. Brands & Branding

Summary Statement

This research examines how consumers evaluate brands that stay neutral on sociopolitical issues. We argue that perceptions of corporate responsibility, filtered through political ideology, shape responses to neutrality. Across nine studies, liberals evaluate neutral brands more negatively than conservatives because they view companies as collectively responsible for societal welfare. However, nonprofit brands avoid such backlash because they are already seen as serving society, and the gap narrows when brands emphasize societal contributions through nonpolitical CSR.

Competitive Short Paper

Brands increasingly take public stances on contentious sociopolitical issues, but this strategy risks consumer backlash. Hence, most CMO believe brands should avoid such stances. However, surveys show that many consumers now expect brands to address sociopolitical issues, and this tension underscores the difficulty brands face in navigating an increasingly politicized marketplace. Existing research on brand activism focuses mainly on the consequences of taking explicit stances, yet most brands default to neutrality by avoiding sociopolitical issues entirely. A more nuanced understanding of when neutrality helps or harms brands is therefore essential.

Neutral brands are defined as those that refrain from taking sides on divisive sociopolitical issues by neither supporting nor opposing any position. Neutrality can be communicated explicitly (e.g., "we're neutral"), implicitly (e.g., "no comment"), or through silence. To explain reactions to neutrality, this research advances a corporate role account that centers on who is expected to hold moral positions. Individuals who remain neutral on sociopolitical issues are often judged harshly, as neutrality is interpreted as lacking morals and principles. For brands, however, the expectation is less clear because they originate as market identifiers for goods and services, not full moral persons, leaving room for disagreement over whether firms should act as moral actors or remain primarily economic entities.

Political ideology is central to understanding how beliefs about corporate roles shape evaluations of neutral brands. Both conservatives and liberals engage in marketplace activism by supporting ideologically aligned brands and boycotting those that conflict with their views, but less is known about how they judge neutral brands. This research argues that ideological differences in beliefs about responsibility and corporate roles drive these evaluations. Liberals, who emphasize collective responsibility and individualizing moral values, are more likely to believe that stakeholders, including firms, owe responsibilities to one another, and thus expect brands to take clear sociopolitical stances. Conservatives, who place greater weight on personal responsibility, are more accepting of corporate noninvolvement and evaluate neutral brands more positively.

These predictions were tested across nine studies covering diverse sociopolitical issues, product categories, countries, and measures of ideology, demonstrating generalizability and robustness. Studies 1A–1C established the basic effect using implicit neutrality, explicit neutrality with incentive-compatible choices, and neutrality conveyed through silence. Study 2 examined neutrality as silence in a context where other brands take stances, showing that conservatives evaluate neutral brands similarly to conservative ones, whereas liberals respond more selectively. Study 3 used mediation analyses to show that beliefs about corporate roles underlie these ideological differences, ruling out alternative explanations such as backlash concerns or perceived brand power. Study 4 found that the effect dissipated for nonprofit brands, which are already seen as responsible for serving society. Study 5 showed that neutral brands can mitigate backlash by highlighting nonpolitical corporate social responsibility initiatives. Studies 6A and 6B used Instagram data with large language model–coded ideology and Google Trends data during the 2024 U.S. election to demonstrate that liberals are more likely than conservatives to employ boycott-related search and social media behavior against neutral brands.

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Communication Channel Strategy Matters: How SMEs Can Better Advocate Their Organizational Strengths

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Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

Summary Statement

This research investigates how SMEs' managers effectively communicate their organizational strengths to achieve their recruitment objectives. In line with the signal theory which posits that organizational attributes (culture, HR processes, strategy, characteristics) enhance attractiveness, we aim to empirically assess how communication channel choices moderate these relationships. This study addresses two questions: (Q1) Does channel intensity strengthen the link between attributes and attractiveness? (Q2) Do internal channels outperform external ones in moderating this relationship?

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Reimagining Road Safety by Young People for Young People: From the Lecture Hall to the Road

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This longitudinal study captured responses on an experiential road safety assessment which integrated the students' experiences, attitudes and behaviours towards the road into their lecture hall. An initial pilot of 100 students from two Universities were targeted using an online survey. Findings suggest that students noted a marked difference in their behaviour during and post initiative, in addition to valuable insight for educators, policy makers and policing around road safety messaging.

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Postcards of Privilege: Instagram Travel Content and Social Stratification

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

Despite promises of democratization, social media reinforce class hierarchies through practices shaped by cultural capital. Through visual analysis and interviews, we examine symbolic conversion competence - translating travel into status. Consumers' photographs include similar characteristics, yet achieve different outcomes. The difference lies in encoding and presence / absence of self. Low cultural capital consumers successfully communicate status within networks, not beyond them, high cultural capital consumers' encoding works across audiences. Democratization therefore fails at symbolic conversion competence.

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Beyond the GLP-1 Hype: A Research Agenda on Consumer Vulnerability and Responsible Marketing

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This conceptual paper examines the rapidly expanding GLP-1 market through consumer behaviour and marketing lenses. Despite unprecedented growth and societal impact, academic research remains confined to medical domains, overlooking critical consumer vulnerabilities and marketing ethics issues. Drawing on consumer vulnerability and responsible marketing theories, we identify key research gaps across the consumer journey and propose a theoretically grounded research agenda addressing the urgent need to protect consumers while enabling informed choice in this transformative marketplace.

Competitive Short Paper

GLP-1 receptor agonists, originally intended for diabetes treatment, are redefining how consumers approach weight loss and obesity care (Kritzer and Cullen, 2025). The global GLP-1 market, valued at $52.08 billion in 2024, is projected to reach $186.64 billion by 2032 (Fortune Business Insights, 2025). In the UK alone, this market is expected to reach $715.1 million by 2030 (Grand View Research, 2025). This market growth reflects unprecedented patient-led demand and willingness to pay out-of-pocket, with OOP purchases in the UK seven times greater than NHS-funded care (Massey and Davis, 2025). This surging demand is creating ripple effects across healthcare, insurance, food and beverage, retail, and other sectors (Newman and Belleza, 2025).

Academic discussion on GLP-1s remains largely confined to medical, public health, and pharmaceutical research, with marketing and consumer behaviour scholarship notably sparse. Given this product's impact on consumers' quality of life and wellbeing and its potential to contribute to SDG3 (Good health and well-being), advancing our understanding is urgent. However, existing literature has yet to adequately examine the theoretical and practical implications of GLP-1 use through the lens of consumer behaviour and marketing. Through a review of emerging GLP-1 market dynamics and established theories of consumer vulnerability and marketing, this conceptual paper identifies key gaps and proposes theoretically grounded research questions to guide future research.

The rise of GLP-1s is fundamentally reshaping consumer behaviour, self-perception, and purchase decisions (Furman and Leinwand, 2025). Yet consumers rely primarily on news and social media for information (Auerbach et al., 2025), with media narratives framing these medications as weight-loss game changers. This media-driven demand, combined with inadequate regulatory oversight, exposes consumers to significant risks including counterfeit products, off-label promotion, and misleading advertising. Consumer vulnerability research (Baker 2005; Rosenbaum, 2017; Verma et al., 2025) can shed light on how GLP-1 users face heightened harm from market practices due to dependence on external information sources, limited access control, celebrity-influenced body-image pressures, and uninformed off-label use. With recent WHO endorsement for obesity treatment (World Health Organisation, 2025), reducing consumption-related vulnerability is imperative. Critical gaps remain in understanding how consumers navigate information ecosystems and assess risk, how usage transforms identity and consumption practices, and overall wellbeing impacts. Research must examine how vulnerability emerges across the entire consumer journey, how access inequities affect diverse socioeconomic and demographic groups, and what interventions can mitigate harm.

Current GLP-1 marketing practices has created information asymmetries and increased ethical concerns around vulnerable consumer targeting, claim verification, and disclosure (Basch et al., 2025), raising critical questions about responsible marketing (Mattingly and Conti, 2025). Moreover, the dual medical/weight-loss positioning of GLP-1s (Ozempic for diabetes versus Wegovy for weight loss) blurs the boundary between treatment vs enhancement, fundamentally reshaping consumer expectations. A critical gap exists in understanding how multi-channel marketing practices shape consumer decision-making, what disclosure and claim standards should govern GLP-1 promotion, and how positioning strategies can influence responsible use. Addressing these questions is essential for developing frameworks that protect consumers while enabling informed choice in this rapidly evolving marketplace.

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From Scoop to Strategy: News as Praxis Pedagogy in the MBA Marketing Classroom

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This paper demonstrates how using real-time news articles transforms marketing education through praxis pedagogy. Drawing on Freirean critical pedagogy and Vygotskian sociocultural theory, this paper shows how contemporary business cases enable Executive MBA students to bridge academic theory with lived professional experience. Using the Financial Times Professor's Picks series exemplifies this approach, creating dialogic learning spaces where students critically analyse current marketing phenomena whilst developing skills for responsible, responsive practice in contemporary business environments.

Competitive Short Paper

Marketing education has a responsibility to equip graduates with skills to address contemporary challenges, including sustainability crises, digital transformation, and ethical complexities (Gill-Simmen et al., 2025). Traditional case studies rely on historical cases analysed with hindsight, which does not develop the critical, adaptive capabilities required in industry today. This paper presents a pedagogical approach: using real-time news articles as teaching tools that exemplify praxis pedagogy and sociocultural learning.

The Financial Times Professor's Picks series for MBA modules breaks boundaries between theory and practice by embedding current business events directly into the curriculum. Rather than studying cases with known outcomes, students engage with unfolding marketing phenomena, from matcha's social media-driven emergence to ethical dilemmas surrounding AI shopping agents. This immediacy transforms the learning dynamic fundamentally.

Theoretically, this pedagogical innovation draws on Gill-Simmen et al.'s (2025) integration of Freirean praxis with Vygotskian sociocultural theory. Praxis (the dialectical relationship between critical reflection and transformative action) positions education as 'intervention in the world' rather than passive knowledge transmission (Freire, 1972). Contemporary cases facilitate this intervention by requiring students to develop marketing responses under uncertainty rather than retrospectively analysing decisions already made. Students must grapple with ambiguity, competing stakeholder interests, and incomplete information, mirroring marketing practice.

The sociocultural dimension proves equally crucial. Vygotsky's (1978) emphasis on how cultural and historical contexts shape learning processes enables students to understand how current technological, environmental, and societal factors impact both marketing phenomena and their interpretations of these. When Executive MBA students (bringing diverse professional backgrounds spanning sectors, geographies, and functional roles) analyse the same contemporary case, their varied perspectives create productive learning collisions. A student with retail experience interprets the matcha trend differently from one in food manufacturing or digital marketing, generating rich dialogic exchange that illuminates the phenomenon's complexity whilst challenging individual assumptions.

This approach addresses all three points of resonance between praxis and sociocultural pedagogies identified by Gill-Simmen et al. (2025): viewing humans as social and historical beings (students situate current cases within broader marketing evolution), acknowledging educator mediation (the instructor facilitates critical dialogue rather than delivering answers), and bridging academic and everyday knowledge (students connect theoretical frameworks with their professional experiences and current consumption practices).

Practically, the Professor's Picks format provides structured scaffolding: each contemporary article includes contextual summary, classroom application guidance, and provocative questions designed to stimulate critical thinking about ethical implications, power dynamics, and societal impacts. Questions deliberately avoid simplistic 'what should the company do?' framing, instead prompting reflection on contradictions (Why do consumers claim to value sustainability yet purchase wasteful advent calendars?), power relationships (How do AI algorithms shift marketing power from brands to platforms?), and students' own complicity in consumption systems.

Early evidence suggests this pedagogy develops capabilities hard to find in marketing education: ethical reasoning under uncertainty, critical evaluation of marketing's societal role, and adaptive thinking that acknowledges complexity rather than seeking formulaic solutions. By breaking the boundary between classroom and current events, learning experiences are created where theory and practice, reflection and action, become inseparable.

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When Female Influencers Become Brand Founders: How Source and Content Credibility Build Brand Trust in Influencer-Founded Skincare Brands

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

This study investigates the transformation of beauty influencers into brand founders, with a focus on Saudi Arabia's unique regulatory and cultural context. It explores how influencer credibility, influencer-brand fit, and content credibility enhance para-

social relationships, which in turn foster brand authenticity, trust, and purchase intention. By modeling para-social bonds as a mediating mechanism, this research advances branding and influencer marketing theory, offering valuable insights into the integration of personal credibility into brand identity.

Competitive Short Paper

The commercialization of social media has enabled beauty influencers to transition from brand endorsers to brand founders, a shift that is particularly salient in Saudi Arabia, where modesty norms and strict advertising regulations shape how consumers evaluate skincare products on Instagram. While influencer endorsement effects are well documented, existing research largely assumes a separation between influencer and brand, offering limited insight into how consumers form brand evaluations when influencers themselves become founders. This study addresses this gap by examining how influencer-related signals are transformed into brand-level outcomes in influencer-founded skincare brands.

Drawing on source credibility theory, message credibility research, and branding literature, this study theorizes that influencer credibility, influencer–brand fit, and content credibility operate as foundational signals that strengthen para-social relationships with influencer founders. These para-social bonds are proposed as a critical psychological mechanism through which influencer-level cues are translated into brand authenticity and brand trust, ultimately shaping purchase intention. By explicitly modeling para-social relationships as a mediating bridge between influencer cues and brand evaluations, the study reconceptualizes influencer founders as hybrid entities who simultaneously function as communicators and brand symbols. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was employed. Data were collected from 300 Saudi Instagram users who follow influencer-founded skincare brands (average age ≈ 24 years; 52% female) using a self-administered online survey. Measurement scales were adapted from established literature, and the hypothesized model was tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

The results show that all hypothesized relationships are significant ($p < 0.001$). Influencer credibility, influencer–brand fit, and content credibility significantly strengthen para-social relationships, which in turn enhance brand authenticity and brand trust. These brand-level evaluations positively influence purchase intention, with the model explaining substantial variance in purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.62$). Mediation analyses confirm that para-social relationships play a central role in converting influencer-related signals into brand trust and behavioral intentions.

This study advances influencer marketing and branding theory by demonstrating how personal credibility is institutionalized into brand-level assets when influencers become founders rather than external endorsers. It extends source credibility theory by showing that credibility signals migrate from communicator to brand through relational mechanisms. While the Saudi context underscores the importance of trust under regulatory and cultural constraints, the theoretical insights generalize to influencer-founded brands more broadly. A limitation is the reliance on self-reported, cross-sectional data, which restricts causal inference and calls for longitudinal research on trust formation over time.

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Better Together? Investigating the Impact of AI-Human Collaboration on Consumer Purchases in Live Streaming

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

Our study proposes an AI–human collaboration framework in which AI and human streamers co-host live sessions. Across four experiments, we reveal that the efficacy of AI–human collaboration on purchase intention is contingent on product type, yielding significant benefits only for experience goods. Perceived authenticity mediates this effect. Our research further demonstrated when AI-human collaboration employs a social (vs.task)-focused communication approach, this significantly amplifies the impact on how authentic the collaboration is perceived.

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From Social Listening To Strategy: Measuring Marketplace Meaning From Unstructured Big Data (Visualised Using Positioning Maps).

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This research develops an unsupervised framework to measure marketplace meaning from multi-source unstructured big data (news, Reddit, short-form social platforms). Using transformer-based sentence embeddings and topic modelling, complemented by lexicon probes for interpretability, the method identifies narrative regimes and brand meaning profiles and derives meaning distances that can be visualised as perceptual/positioning maps. Reliability is evaluated via bootstrap uncertainty and robustness checks across source variants and time windows, with a pilot in sustainable fashion.

Competitive Short Paper

Unstructured big data collected from online news, social media posts, and specialist websites has become a rich source through which consumer meanings, marketplace narratives, and competitive comparisons are expressed, contested, and amplified (Bartoloni & Ancillai, 2024; Hartmann & Netzer, 2023). Although marketing research and practice use various techniques to extract sentiments, emotions, and keywords from these sources, there remains a lack of replicable approaches that convert heterogeneous texts into strategic marketing tools supporting decision-making and fine-grained analysis of consumer opinions (Balducci & Marinova, 2018; de Haan et al., 2024). For instance, while perceptual and positioning maps are a familiar strategic output, an important methodological challenge is reducing reliance on traditional primary data collection by reliably discovering meaningful structures in unstructured big data and translating them into interpretable and actionable representations (Berger et al., 2020; Boegershausen et al., 2022).

This research develops a methodological framework, grounded in unsupervised machine learning, for analysing multi-source unstructured big data to derive marketplace meanings and associated measures. A pilot application focuses on sustainable fashion, producing outputs including marketplace narratives, brand meaning profiles, perceptual/positioning maps, and competitive structure.

The research addresses three main questions:
 How can multi-source unstructured big data be transformed into stable, interpretable representations of brand/topic-related marketplace meanings?
 What approaches best generate and organise meaningful clusters and latent dimensions for actionable insight, and how do they vary across sources and consumer communities?
 How can uncertainty and robustness be quantified to prevent overinterpretation driven by sampling noise, retrieval choices, or short-lived narrative spikes?

The methodological approach uses established NLP processes and an unsupervised learning pipeline tailored to mixed corpora of online mentions. A hybrid design combining transformer-based sentence embeddings, topic modelling, and lexicon-based probes supports both semantic sensitivity and interpretability (Kübler et al., 2020; Reimers & Gurevych, 2019; Roberts et al., 2019). Texts are represented in numerical space (embedding vectors and topic distributions) and analysed via clustering/topic discovery to identify recurrent marketplace narratives and meaning regimes (Grootendorst, 2022; Herhausen et al., 2025). Brands and major discussion topics are represented as meaning profiles; Brand-to-brand meaning (as well as topic discussions) distances are then computed to infer competitive-set structure and to generate perceptual and positioning maps as a visualization layer (Borg & Groenen, 2005). Reliability is assessed via bootstrapped confidence regions for brand locations/distances and stability tests across plausible source variants and time windows, reflecting evidence that retrieval choices and tool settings can materially affect social listening outputs (Hartmann et al., 2023; Sussman et al., 2024).

This pilot project is in a final stage of development and further work will be needed to test and develop it in different sectors and topics as well as to extend the framework to a wider range of outcomes.

The contribution is a strategy-orientated consumer insight methodology that elevates perceptual and positioning maps from an isolated technique to one application of a broader, replicable framework for measuring marketplace meaning from unstructured big data (Berger et al., 2020; de Haan et al., 2024).

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Capturing Consumer Meaning In Digital Communities: A Text-Derived Framework For Sustainable Behaviour Prediction

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This study advances a replicable framework for measuring Sustainable Consumer Behaviour (SCB) from large-scale online discourse. Using 100,000 Reddit posts, the research integrates netnographic interpretation with unsupervised NLP-topic-modelling, transformer-based embeddings, and theory-aligned lexicons, to derive SCB indicators. Dimensionality reduction and PLS-SEM validate latent structure and predictive relationships across cognitive, social, and behavioural drivers. Results demonstrate how unstructured discourse can yield theory-consistent, robust measurement and enhance prediction of sustainability-related behaviours.

Competitive Short Paper

Research based on unstructured big data, related to online discourse, is increasingly used to study consumer meanings and behavioural antecedents at scale, yet marketing still lacks widely adopted, validated procedures that move from text mining to theory-consistent measurement and prediction (Boegershausen et al., 2022; de Haan et al., 2024). Evidence also shows that analytic choices in text processing, like dictionary scoring versus contextual semantic representations, can influence results, particularly when the same phenomenon is expressed through heterogeneous language styles and document lengths (Hartmann et al., 2023; Kübler et al., 2022). Building on this methodological gap, this study advances the second stage of broader netnography-NLP research: it specifies and validates a model that links text-derived theory indicators to Sustainable Consumer Behaviour (SCB).

The empirical application is on the sustainable fashion discourse on Reddit, leveraging a large corpus (100,000 mentions) characterised by long-form mentions, suitable for netnographic interpretation and scalable computational analysis (Kozinets & Gretzel, 2024). Text analytics remain unsupervised as in the first stage of this research; topic discovery and semantic structuring are performed through (i) topic modelling to identify recurrent narratives and (ii) transformer-embedding based semantic representations, to better capture meaning beyond word overlap (Grootendorst, 2022; Mersha et al., 2024). In parallel, a theory-aligned lexicon is used as an interpretive probe to generate transparent indicators for constructs theorised to drive SCB.

SCB is modelled as a formative outcome with the following three dimensions: environmental protection, quality-of-life enhancement, and future-generations orientation. Predictors reflect the framework presented in the research: cognitive drivers (environmental knowledge, perceived consumer effectiveness, eco-label reliance), social drivers (social norms, green identity, personal/moral norms), and behavioural traits (price sensitivity, habit strength/self-control). The analysis proceeds in two complementary steps. First, dimensionality reduction and clustering, to assess whether the extracted theory indicators reproduce coherent latent structure and construct separability across the discourse subsets. Second, application of PLS-SEM to evaluate measurement adequacy, including formative assessment, and test the structural model explaining variance in SCB, accompanied by prediction-orientated evaluation and robustness checks, mainly related to stability across time windows, consistent with current best-practice guidance (Guenther et al., 2023; Sarstedt et al., 2022).

The expected contribution is a replicable framework and methodological blueprint for translating large-scale online discourse into validated theory measurement and prediction of sustainable consumer behaviour, while making sensitivity to text-analytic choices transparent. Limitations include platform-specific discourse bias and under-identification of constructs expressed in a multimodal environment; future work will benchmark against supervised predictive learners and apply Shapley Additive Explanations (SHAP) to quantify variable importance and interaction effects without sacrificing interpretability (Joung & Kim, 2023; Richter & Tudoran, 2024).

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Going Beyond The Theory-Practice Boundary: An Integrated Pedagogical Framework For Digital Proficiency, AI Literacy, And Strategic Data Analytics.

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This paper presents an integrated pedagogical framework that bridges the gap between marketing theory and professional practice. By combining a robust theoretical foundation with industry-leading platforms (Brandwatch, Sprout Social, Semrush), Generative AI as a "critical friend", and live experiential projects, the approach develops fully formed marketers. It demonstrates how scaffolding complex analytics and real-world data analysis (Python, Tableau) within a protected environment enhances critical thinking, technical proficiency, and graduate employability in an AI-driven landscape.

Competitive Short Paper

The rapid evolution of the digital marketing landscape presents a dual challenge for higher education: universities must provide rigorous theoretical foundations while simultaneously ensuring graduates possess technical proficiency in industry-standard platforms (Harrigan & Hulbert, 2011). A purely theoretical approach risks producing graduates note ready for the operational demands of the workplace, while a purely vocational approach risks producing "tool operators" lacking critical strategic oversight (Munoz & Wood, 2015). This paper proposes a holistic pedagogical framework, implemented across undergraduate and postgraduate modules and co-curricular masterclasses, that overcomes the limitations of the boundary between academic rigour and professional practice.

The framework that has been developed is rooted in Social Constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978), positing that learning is most effective when situated in authentic contexts. However, distinguishing this approach is the explicit scaffolding of Theories, Models, and Processes. We argue that Theories (Consumer Culture Theory, Digital Marketing theories) provide the "why", Models (like PESO, Customer Journey, AMEC etc.) connect these concepts to structures, and Processes (SOSTAC workflow) provide the flexible steps for execution. This tripartite theoretical foundation ensures that when students engage with technology, they do so with a critical mindset, capable of modelling information requirements before data collection begins (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Tafesse & Wien, 2018).

Central to this pedagogy is the integration of market-leading platforms, specifically Brandwatch (Consumer Intelligence), Sprout Social (Management), Semrush (SEO/SEM), and Google Analytics 4. Rather than treating these as mere functional training, the framework utilises them as vehicles for applied theory. For instance, "Social Listening" is not taught as a button-clicking exercise but as Digital Ethnography (Kozinets, 2019), where students gain certifications that enhance employability while bridging the gap between abstract concepts (sentiment, emotions, keywords etc.) and real-world metrics.

Addressing the disruption of Generative AI, the framework positions tools such as Chatbots and more specialised AI tolls like those embedded in the Adobe suite, not as replacements for human effort, but as "critical friends" and efficiency enhancers (Dwivedi et al., 2023). AI is utilised in the envisioning stages to overcome creative blocks and in the analytical stages to process unstructured data. This cultivates "AI Literacy", a critical employability skill, teaching students to interrogate AI outputs for bias and accuracy rather than accepting them passively.

The framework culminates in Experiential Learning (Kolb, 2014) through live projects. Working within a protected yet public-facing environment, students devise and publish live campaigns. Crucially, this extends into Marketing Analytics. Moving beyond surface-level dashboards, students engage with both synthetic and real datasets extracted from the platform stack. By utilising a combination of AI analysis and traditional tools (Excel, Tableau, Python/R), students develop the ability to analyse structured and unstructured data, transitioning from descriptive analytics to predictive insights (Wedel & Kannan, 2016).

This paper demonstrates that by combining strong theoretical scaffolding with state-of-the-art technology and live clients, educators can nurture marketers who are both strategic thinkers and technical experts ensuring graduates are work environment ready, equipped with the critical skills to navigate a data-rich, AI-driven future.

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Voice Assistant (VA) for Fashion Shopping: A Mixed-Method Study of Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Consumers

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

This study examines ethnic and non-ethnic consumers' interactions with voice assistants (VA) in the context of online fashion shopping in the UK. After an in-depth qualitative interview with 30 consumers, we found that the use of VA for fashion shopping is limited. This study provides insight to retail and brand managers about how consumers from different background use VAs for pre-, purchase and post-purchase stages and what factors prevent them to use more.

Competitive Short Paper

This study examines ethnic and non-ethnic consumers' interactions with voice assistants (VA) in the context of online fashion shopping in the UK. VA for fashion shopping refer to AI-driven tool that allow consumers to interact with online fashion platforms using voice commands, instead of traditional texts or clicks. They use speech recognition and natural language processing to understand user requests and provide relevant responses in real time. They are available for use through Amazon Alexa, Samsung Bixby, Google Assistant or Apple Siri. In the fashion industry, both luxury and non-luxury fashion retailers such as ASOS, H&M, Zara, Levi Strauss & Co, Steve Madden, The North Face, Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Prada, and Tommy Hilfiger have introduced voice technologies to help consumers in every stage of their shopping journey. Voice technologies are being used for product discovery, personalised recommendations, fitting guidance, order management, and checkout within the fashion retail industry. Although factors impacting the continuance intentions of VA have been explored in several studies, the use of device specifically for fashion shopping is limited.

To address the gap, the mixed method research was conducted and provided insights for fashion retailers about actors shaping the ethnic and non-ethnic consumers' intentions to continue using VA for online shopping. After an in-depth qualitative interview with 30 consumers, we found that the use of VA for fashion shopping is limited. Consumers prefer to use VA for basic activities such as making phone calls, setting alarms, controlling other devices, playing music or searching for information. Ethnic consumers prefer to use VA for fashion shopping less than non-ethnic consumers. Our primary findings indicated concerns related to privacy and security, accent recognition, VA prioritising own brands and affiliated products with platform provider, and limited recommendations for cultural-related fashion items. Therefore, this study provides insight to retail and brand managers about how consumers from different background use VAs for pre-, purchase and post-purchase stages and what factors prevent them to use more.

Keywords: Voice assistants, ethnic consumers, non-ethnic consumers, continuance intention, fashion retailers

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Green Handcuffs: Going Gonzo and Breaking Taboo Research Boundaries

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This research answers calls to reinvigorate the practice of "gonzo" research. It employs a boundary theory approach to explore the revival of the global cannabis consumption and the emergence of cannabis social clubs in Spain. This multi-sited autoethnography explores the spatial, visual, symbolic, social, ambiguous, expressive, emotional, and imaginative properties of boundaries. It highlights that boundaries inspire communication across communities, social movements, and reform, and are conditions for market inclusion, communication, exchange, celebration, and expression.

Competitive Short Paper

The purpose of this research is to answer calls to reinvigorate the practice of "gonzo" research. Drawing its name from the journalistic style mostly associated with Hunter S. Thompon (1979), gonzo research employs immersive and reflexive methodological design that privileges adventurous encounters with the places and people ignored by the academy (Wozniak, 2014). In this regard, gonzo research is both a theoretical and ideological movement which seeks to revive and reenergise research approaches that seeks to answer questions outside the reach of the mainstream; excluded due to researcher career anxiety, ethics approval boards, institutional pressures, and/or lack of funding bodies. Gonzo research therefor marks a return to science as risk-taking; science that's willing to break boundaries (Thrift, 2008).

This research employs a boundary theory approach to explore the revival of the global cannabis consumption. Cannabis is one of the oldest cultivated crops in humanity; it has been foundational to ritual and medicine since the dawn of time. The stigma and taboo attached to cannabis is a recent construction, incited by its criminalisation in most developed nations/markets in the 1910s. However, accelerated by the legalisation of recreational cannabis in Denver, Colorado, in 2014 (Van De Voorde et al.

2023), a resurgence in the decriminalised consumption of cannabis is occurring in developed markets across the globe. But even in nations/markets where cannabis is decriminalised – commercialised – the boundaries and consumption experiences attached are more diverse than any other marketplace product.

The Spanish context is particularly interesting in which decriminalisation has resulted in the emergence of 100s of cannabis social clubs (CSCs), in which members legally consume cannabis behind closed doors. Taking methodological direction from Kjeldgaard et al. (2008), this multi-sited autoethnography which began in 2023 explores the spatial, visual, symbolic, social, ambiguous, expressive, emotional, and imaginative properties of boundaries experienced as member of CBCs in Barcelona, Madrid, Malaga, Valencia, Alicante, and Lanzarote.

The concept of boundaries has been at the centre of influential research agendas in anthropology, history, political science, philosophy, geography, social psychology, and sociology (Lamont & Molnar 2002); and boundary issues have gained interest in the study of community, cognition, deviance, gender, immigration, nationalism, race and ethnicity, and social movements (Lamont et al. 2015). CSCs can be conceptualised as what Star and Griesemer (1989) term a "boundary object"; Boundary objects can be material objects, organizational forms, conceptual spaces, or procedures key to developing and maintaining coherence across social worlds.

Boundaries possess the power to invoke a spectrum of normalized individual and collective responses in consumers (Cutright, 2012). Being a patron of Spain's CSCs involves the constant renegotiation of boundaries of many different sorts. This research exposes the properties of these boundaries; the conditions under which they assume certain characteristics; the permeability, salience, durability, visibility and complexity encountered. In doing so, this research highlights that boundaries can also enable communication across communities, inspire social movements, and broader social reform, and are conditions not only for separation and exclusion, but also for inclusion, communication, exchange, celebration, and expression.

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From Wedding Dresses to Prom Dresses: Ritualised Consumption and the Marketisation of Adulthood

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This paper theorises proms and related special dress events as ritualised, market-mediated rites of passage through which young consumers perform transitions into adulthood. Extending work on exceptional life rituals, it conceptualises clothing as a symbolic container of identity, social capital, and memory-making. By foregrounding scale, repetition, and parental involvement, the paper demonstrates how markets actively script adulthood and intensify sustainability and cost-of-living tensions within mass ceremonial consumption.

Competitive Short Paper

Proms are formal, end-of-school social events that operate as a collective rite marking the transition from schooling into early adulthood. They typically include shared practices around dress, grooming, transport, and photography, making this transition publicly visible and shaped by market forces. Despite their cultural prominence, proms remain underexamined within academic literature.

What knowledge currently exists relays how proms and prom dresses are framed as integral to girls' transitions from girlhood into womanhood and more broadly, adulthood (Bulakh, 2015). Emerging research on wedding dresses offers a useful point of comparison, highlighting how garments can function as symbolic anchors for identity transition, legitimacy, and social recognition (e.g. Thomas, Hancock, and Boardman, 2025). Similarly, prom dresses also appear to operate as highly symbolic garments through which femininity, social status, and identity transition are publicly performed within ritualised contexts (Bulakh, 2015). For many girls, prom dressing is experienced as a negotiated and publicly evaluated process closely linked to sexual maturity and respectability (Lapolla, 2017).

Prom dresses, much like wedding dresses, are culturally assumed to justify considerable expense. This framing positions expenditure as a marker of care and legitimate participation, while rendering second-hand or rental options symbolically risky. Reuse or rental may be perceived to disrupt expectations of novelty, uniqueness, and ritual propriety, meaning that sustainability-oriented choices are often managed discreetly or confined to private family discussions. Affordability and sustainability remain present within prom consumption but are strategically negotiated to avoid visible disruption to the ritual.

Ritualised consumption has been explored in relation to certain exceptional life events, particularly weddings, where consumption is linked to identity construction, social validation, and symbolic transformation. However, mass-participation ceremonial events through which young consumers are culturally positioned as "becoming adults" remain underexplored. This paper advances the concept of special dress events, including proms, quinceañeras, and Sweet Sixteens, as market-mediated rites of passage that formalise adulthood transitions through highly visible, consumption centered performances.

Drawing on consumer culture theory, we conceptualise special dress events as liminal spaces in which individuals temporarily occupy an in-between status, no longer children but not yet fully recognised as adults. Clothing, particularly dresses and suits, functions as a symbolic container through which this transition is performed, witnessed, and remembered. Unlike weddings, which are typically singular, self-funded, and organised by adult consumers, special dress events are cyclical, school or community-based, and frequently financed by parents. Thus reshaping the dynamics of agency, obligation, and moral responsibility within ritual consumption.

From a sustainability perspective, special dress events reveal a structural tension rather than an individual moral failing. The massification of high-visibility garments designed for single use intensifies environmental concerns, while circular practices such as resale or rental sit uneasily alongside dominant expectations of newness, visibility, and singularity. By theorising special dress events as ritualised, market shaped transitions into adulthood, this paper extends consumer culture theory by showing how sustainability is constrained by the cultural logics that underpin ritual legitimacy.

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Parenthood And Consumption: Exploring Opportunities For Sustainable Consumption Through Life Course Transition

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This study aims to understand the opportunities for sustainable consumption during the transition into parenthood. An in-depth qualitative research study in the form of 21 semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of soon-to-be, new and more experienced parents, revealed rich preliminary findings. Analysis of the interviews thus far highlighted that parents' decision-making was significantly altered during this period, highlighting the importance of understanding the trade-offs and limitations within everyday life during this transition and beyond.

Competitive Short Paper

While sustainable consumption and consumption related to parenthood have separately been the subject of significant academic attention, there has been limited focus on how the two might intersect (Burningham & Venn, 2025; Shrum et al., 2023). Research that has explored the relationship between becoming a parent and moving towards more sustainable consumption has generally been inconclusive regarding the possible interconnections and interrelationship (Shrum et al., 2023; Thomas et al., 2018). Additionally, there are specific calls for a deeper understanding of consumption decisions within the context of the family and the household, where understanding of intergenerational influence is particularly limited (Essiz & Mandrik, 2022; Ritch & Brownlie, 2016). This study aims to understand the opportunities for sustainable consumption during the transition into parenthood. This transition can be extremely disruptive to everyday life with experiences ranging from urgent considerations of time constraints, to gradually evolving considerations of identity in this new role (Carrigan & Szmigin, 2004). Consumption decisions during the transition can be perceived by society as an indication of the type of parent one might be (Banister et al., 2016; Davies et al., 2010). Behaviours are also likely to shift during and beyond the transition period due to various demands such as time and practicality, which provides a rare window in people's lives during which they may be more likely to reconsider the carrying out of everyday life and move towards more sustainable paths (Verplanken & Roy, 2016). Therefore, we must explore the complex decision-making of parents during the transition as they adapt to this life change (Burningham & Venn, 2020), and the extent to which sustainability-driven consumption is considered.

An in-depth qualitative research study in the form of 21 semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of soon-to-be, new and more experienced parents, revealed rich preliminary findings. For some, pro-environmental values were reinforced as parents begin to have discussions with their children around sustainable behaviours within the household such as water usage, waste or recycling. Teaching their children about certain sustainable behaviours appeared to strengthen and even reignite parents' efforts as they newly feel a responsibility to demonstrate responsible behaviours to the next generation, however, the many daily challenges and barriers can deter others parents from achieving these ideals. Analysis of the interviews thus far highlighted that parents' decision-making was significantly altered during this period with many competing priorities and intensions. Participants noted how their identities evolved during this transition as their perspective on life also shifted since becoming responsible for another person, whereas, for others, sustainability decreased as a priority during the early, busy days of the transition into parenthood, with the potential for re-emergence at later transition stages for some. This study highlights the importance of understanding the trade-offs and limitations within everyday life during this transition, in order to uncover opportunities for sustainability for new and more experienced parents into the future.

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Muse or a Threat: Tensions in Prompted Identities for Creative Professionals

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This paper explores how marketing creative professionals navigate identity, authorship, and ethical tensions when using generative AI tools in their work. Drawing on a Consumer Culture Theory lens, it examines how creative labour and ethics is reconfigured through human-AI collaboration. Preliminary insights from in-depth interviews highlight emerging strategies, moral ambivalence, and contested authenticity as creatives negotiate the boundaries between artistic expression, authorship, AI assistance, and commercial interests in an evolving posthuman marketing era.

Competitive Short Paper

As generative AI tools like ChatGPT become increasingly integrated into creative workflows, marketing professionals are facing new challenges in how they define, protect, and perform their creative identities. This study explores how creative marketing professionals navigate the ethical, affective, and professional tensions of co-creating with large language models (LLMs) in commercial creative work. In doing so, it breaks boundaries between human and machine agency, between artistic expression and commodified outputs, and between authenticity and algorithmic co-production. The paper addresses the Academy of Marketing 2026 conference theme by unlocking insights into the emerging forms of identity, authorship, and ethical self-management in AI-augmented marketing practice.

While existing research on creativity in marketing often centres on human skill, inspiration, and ideation, this paper interrogates how generative AI is shifting those foundations. CCT has long examined how consumers and professionals construct identity through marketplace resources (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), including how authenticity, legitimacy, and cultural capital are claimed, performed, and policed (Bourdieu, 1984; Leigh et al., 2006; McQuarrie et al., 2013). With this, we explore how professionals negotiate their sense of self, skill, and authorship amid the rise of 'prompt-based' creation

Ongoing study plans to utilise 25 in-depth qualitative interviews with creatives, brand strategists, copywriters, digital marketers, and designers who have incorporated generative AI into their creative aspects of their work. The sample will include a variety of professionals operating across agency, in-house, and freelance contexts, enabling comparative insights into how different organisational settings affect the negotiation of AI use. We use AI prompts, social media posts of the respondent's creative work to prompt further in-depth discussion.

Preliminary findings have started to point to the contestations of creative work: participants describe tensions between long-standing or preconceived craft-based marketing identities and a new reality in which speed, efficiency and prompting takes precedence. Some position AI as a muse or tool, while others describe feelings of guilt, detachment, or even imposter syndrome when relying on LLMs. Further data collection will continue to unpack these tensions, for instance, relating to the varying degrees of commodification and invisible labour while exploring the ways in which creatives manage these tensions.

This paper utilises a CCT lens by examining how creatives in marketing construct and defend creative identity in a posthuman context. It illuminates how value of their work is redefined, boundaries of authorship are (re)negotiated, and moral legitimacy is performed in response to technological change. Firstly; conceptually, it advances our understanding of how creative identity is reshaped in human- AI collaboration; secondly and empirically, it provides insight into the lived experiences of those navigating blurred ethical and authorship boundaries in marketing practice. It responds to calls to explore the affective, ethical, and identity implications of automation in creative industries (Xu et al, 2025), and offers timely reflections on what it means to remain 'creative' in a world where machines increasingly contribute to the making of meaning, we discuss how the use of AI becomes a muse or a threat.

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Exploring the Strategic Considerations for Transcending Influencers to Generate Authentic Engagement on Social Media: A Case Study of Katseye Gap Advertisement and TikTok

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

Social media democratises brand relationships. TikTok's FYP prioritises interests over followers, giving UGC reach comparable to influencers. We analysed 150 #Katseyegap videos and 2,000 comments. Virality hinged on algorithmic curation, user participation, and emotional appeal, in this case driven by the nostalgia of the early-00s aesthetic and music. Brands need to shift from influencer marketing to participatory social engagement, leveraging the PESO framework (Paid, Earned, Social and Owned Media).

Competitive Short Paper

Social media is used to manage consumer-brand relationships (Luo et al, 2024). Social media democratised brand management (Asmussen et al, 2013; Cooper, Stavros and Dobele, 2023). TikTok has transformed digital marketing by prioritising the algorithmic curation of social interests rather than follower counts (Gerbaudo, 2024). The For You Page (FYP) makes content visibility equal opportunity (Zeng and Kaye, 2022). User-generated content receives the same reach as influencers or celebrities (Romero-Rodriguez, 2023). This study examines GAP's use of girl group, Katseye, to drive TikTok engagement. Katseye are celebrities rather than influencers, who drive purchase behaviour (Joshi et al, 2025; Lee et al, 2022).

This study investigates how decentralising content creation remodels consumer-brand engagement. Gap departed from traditional macro-influencers with large followings, between 20,000 and 100,000 (Conde and Casais, 2023), to foster long-term consumer-brand relationships (Almoraish, 2024). Ambassadors drive transactional outcomes (Sulistiyaningsih, Ismanto and Effendi, 2025). Gap's ad transcends traditional influencer outcomes of reach and attention (Campbell and Farrell, 2020), generating sales and consumer-brand relationships (Habibi, Laroche and Richard, 2014; Sohaib and Han, 2023). Research shows the importance of storytelling to TikTok virality (Chu, Deng and Mundel, 2024; Bui, 2025).

This study used 1) a content analysis of 150 TikTok videos with the hashtag Katseyegap and 2) a sentiment analysis of 2,000 user comments on those posts to evaluate user perceptions and influence on purchase decisions. The data was collected from the first four-week period that encapsulates the campaign's peak virality phase.

The campaign was nostalgic for early-00's aesthetic, had a diverse cast and meaningful storytelling that led in user views to a sense of brand authenticity. The campaign's virality, with over a million posts, demonstrates that shared media generates brand visibility and engagement. The study identifies three key drivers of the campaign's virality. First, the campaign success was amplified by the TikTok algorithm, which saturates the FYP with GAP Katseye content, incentivising users with increased views, followers and financial rewards to post related videos. GAP benefits from the awareness and conversion afforded by influencers (Chan, Hung and Tse, 2023) and the engagement generated by celebrities (Gupta et al, 2025). Second, the participatory culture of TikTok encourages user reenactment, breaking influencer dominance of this type of brand-driven campaign. Thirdly, nostalgia is an emotional appeal, in this case, early-00s music and aesthetic, that drives engagements through likes, shares and comments. This aligns with Chu, Deng and Mundel's (2024) determination that authenticity triggers brand liking and engagement.

This study departs from Tellis et al's (2019) position that influencers are the core driver of internet virality. The TikTok FYP has changed this to a more holistic system that incorporates the algorithm and the drive of the average user's need to achieve social proof to inspire participation, while storytelling remains relevant (Bui, 2025). The implications call for focus on participation rather than influencer power as a means of driving consumer-decision making. The PESO (paid, earned, shared, owned) model alignment shows that paid media should seed early momentum rather than driving the full campaign.

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Navigating Ethics, Professional Identity And Service Innovation: Integration Of AI In Healthcare

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping healthcare, enhancing diagnostics, planning, and administration, services. However, governance struggles to keep pace with technological complexity are evident, creating concerns around transparency, accountability, and trust. Even advanced regulatory regions remain reactive, as institutional processes evolve slower than fast-moving market-driven innovation. This qualitative study gathers insight from healthcare professionals on how they are navigating AI-driven service innovation, ethics and professional identity from the integration of AI in contemporary healthcare practice.

Competitive Short Paper

Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming healthcare, influencing most aspects of clinical and organisational practice. AI systems now support diagnostic decision-making, treatment planning, triage, administrative processes, population-level health monitoring, and even direct patient interaction (Graili & Farhoudi, 2025; Esteva et al., 2019). Advances in machine learning, natural language processing, and generative AI have further strengthened expectations that healthcare delivery will become more efficient, more predictive, and increasingly personalised (Rajpurkar et al., 2022; Singhal et al., 2023). Yet these developments raise important questions about responsibility, oversight, and the future of professional practice.

As digital systems become more complex, governance structures often struggle to keep pace. This misalignment heightens risks related to transparency, accountability, equity, and public trust. Eke and Stahl (2024) argue that even in regions with advanced regulatory agendas, such as the European Union, governance mechanisms remain largely reactive, addressing harms only after they occur rather than anticipating them proactively. This reflects a broader structural challenge as technological innovation cycles are fast and market-driven, whereas institutional processes require deliberation, consensus-building, and legal precision.

Trust in AI is also critical in healthcare, where errors can have life-altering consequences. Clinicians must evaluate the accuracy, reliability, and clinical validity of AI systems, and concerns about algorithmic mistakes can undermine confidence in their use (Amann et al., 2020; Sendak et al., 2019). At the same time, AI introduces new pressures on professional identity. Medicine has long been grounded in human expertise, judgment, and relational care. As AI systems increasingly perform tasks once reserved for clinicians, some professionals may fear loss of autonomy, diminished authority, or erosion of the skills that define their role (Coiera, 2019).

This study positions healthcare professionals as internal customers and primary users of AI, who in turn deliver AI-supported services to patients as external customers. Understanding how they engage with AI amid gaps in governance is essential for assessing how effectively AI can be integrated into healthcare to support high quality service delivery.

Qualitative data was collected from 20 healthcare professionals participated through interviews and conducted by a research agency after ethical approval was granted. Data were analysed using thematic analysis following the Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis approach. NVivo software (version 14) was used to manage, code, and organize the qualitative data efficiently. Two independent coders conducted coding to enhance reliability. Discrepancies in coding were discussed and resolved through consensus.

Three interrelated themes identity renegotiation, the re-evaluation of competence, and psychological repositioning capture how this process of personal and professional recalibration unfolds. The findings suggest that expertise is no longer defined solely by personal, experience-based knowledge, but increasingly by the ability to interpret, validate, and, when necessary, challenge AI systems for accuracy. The adoption of AI reaches beyond technical implementation and influences wider institutional and societal structures, therefore, governance mechanisms must be reinforced to ensure stronger accountability, greater transparency, and adherence to ethical standards.

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When Pain Turns into Pleasure: Exploring the Pain–Pleasure Crossover Threshold in Extreme Sports

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

his study explores the Pain–Pleasure Crossover Threshold (PPCT) in extreme sports, examining how participants experience the moment when physical discomfort transforms into pleasure. Using phenomenological interviews, the findings reveal a three-stage process—pre-crossover, crossover, and post-crossover—shaped by bodily intensity, cognitive reframing, and meaning-making. The research challenges binary views of pain and pleasure and offers insights for experiential marketing and sport psychology.

Competitive Short Paper

Pain and pleasure are traditionally conceptualised as oppositional forces in consumer research, with individuals assumed to avoid pain and pursue pleasure (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). However, participation in extreme sports challenges this binary logic. Athletes and adventure participants frequently report moments where intense physical discomfort transforms into enjoyment, mastery, or meaning. This paper explores this paradox through the concept of the Pain–Pleasure Crossover Threshold (PPCT)—the experiential moment at which aversive bodily sensations are reinterpreted as pleasurable.

Drawing on phenomenological perspectives and experiential consumption research, this study investigates how extreme sports participants experience pain before, during, and after the crossover threshold. The research adopts an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach to capture first-person accounts of lived experience (Smith et al., 2009). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with adult participants who had recently engaged in extreme sports such as paragliding, bungee jumping, rafting, scuba diving, and ziplining—activities characterised by high physical arousal and perceived risk (Brymer & Schweitzer, 2017).

Findings reveal that PPCT unfolds as a three-stage experiential continuum. In the pre-crossover phase, participants describe fear, bodily tension, breath disruption, and anticipatory anxiety, framing pain as threat or loss of control. This aligns with edgework theory, where risk is experienced at the boundary between control and chaos (Lyng, 1990). During the crossover moment, participants report a rapid attentional and interpretive shift: discomfort remains present but is reframed as challenge, mastery, or excitement. This transition is often triggered by cognitive reframing, social reassurance, or deep attentional absorption, consistent with flow theory and reversal theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

In the post-crossover phase, participants reflect on pleasure, pride, empowerment, and identity affirmation, frequently expressing a desire to repeat the experience. Pain is retrospectively reinterpreted as meaningful and rewarding, echoing research on benign masochism in experiential consumption (Nørfelt et al., 2023) and opponent-process dynamics, where initial aversive states give way to positive affect (Solomon & Corbit, 1974).

Rather than positioning pain and pleasure as opposites, this study conceptualises PPCT as a dynamic, embodied, and meaning-based threshold, shaped by physiological intensity, cognitive interpretation, and situational context. The crossover is not fixed but varies across sport types and individual traits such as resilience and sensation-seeking. These findings contribute to consumer research and experiential marketing by demonstrating how pain can function as a transformative experiential resource rather than a deterrent, offering practical insights for extreme sports design, branding, and participant engagement.

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Investigating How Biophilic Designs in Luxury Hospitality Shape Guest Consumption Decisions

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

We investigate the effect of biophilic designs in influencing the customers attitudes and behavior in the luxury hospitality context. The proposed research model is anchored in the S-O-R framework. Scenario-based experimental design will be utilized to test the research model. A relevant sample will be recruited from the United Kingdom via PROLIFIC. At a global level, this research puts a spotlight on how architectural designs can influence customer-related outcomes.

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Fitting the Task, Facing the Ethics: A Pedagogical Study on GenAI Adoption and Disclosure in Marketing Education

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Track: *AM Funded Research

Summary Statement

This study examines how task-technology fit influences students' adoption intentions for responsible GenAI in marketing

careers. Whilst students are pressured to adopt GenAI, institutional barriers and academic integrity concerns create adoption patterns that prevent responsible practice. We propose a quantitative evaluation of a pedagogical intervention designed to develop dual competency in technical proficiency and ethical disclosure by bridging the TTF and UTAUT frameworks to inform effective strategies for transparent GenAI adoption in marketing education.

Competitive Short Paper

1. Introduction

Generative AI (GenAI) has fundamentally changed the landscape of marketing practice, positioning AI literacy as an essential competency for graduates (Grewal, 2025). Marketing educators recognise that students require both technical proficiency and ethical awareness to engage responsibly with these technologies (Yao, Tang & Zeng, 2025). However, a gap exists between what marketing education prescribes and what students actually implement in professional careers.

This study addresses the gap: whether students' evaluation of how well GenAI fits marketing tasks meaningfully influences their intentions to adopt GenAI responsibly in their future careers. As the marketing discipline fundamentally reorganises around human AI collaboration, identifying the factors that drive students' commitment to responsible GenAI adoption becomes critical in marketing education.

2. Literature Review

GenAI constitutes a paradigm shift in marketing operations. Dwivedi et al. (2023) characterise GenAI as functioning not merely as a tool but as a collaborative partner within hybrid human AI teams. Kumar (2025) argues that GenAI enables enhanced reasoning and strategic planning within marketing workflows. Consequently, marketing pedagogy must evolve toward fostering AI-augmented curation and critical evaluation (Dwivedi et al., 2023). GenAI demonstrates established capabilities in content creation, insight generation, and hyper-personalisation (Kshetri et al., 2024), yet faces substantive limitations, including a lack of contextual intuition for long term strategy, aesthetically questionable outputs, and risks of hallucination and algorithmic bias (Kumar et al., 2025; Hermann and Puntoni, 2025; Prasanna and Kushwaha, 2025).

Task Technology Fit (TTF) (Goodhue and Thompson, 1995) provides a robust framework for GenAI integration. Hermann and Puntoni (2025) distinguish human replacement from human enhancement, with the latter reflecting contemporary practice. Iqbal et al. (2025) demonstrate that effective GenAI adoption requires dual competencies: technical proficiency in personalisation alongside ethical competence that ensures transparency. Hermann and Puntoni (2025) operationalise this through the "ASSURANCE" framework, positioning transparent disclosure as foundational.

However, empirical evidence reveals a critical gap. Freeman (2025) reports 53% of students avoid transparent GenAI engagement due to academic integrity concerns, whilst only 36% receive structured ethical training. This Proficiency Integrity Paradox produces covert adoption patterns in which students conceal GenAI use (Hermann and Puntoni, 2025; Eaton, 2025), preventing the structured, responsible practice that marketing demands. The divergence between technical and ethical competency and facilitating condition barriers necessitates examining whether students' task-technology fit evaluations influence adoption intentions through a conceptual framework that bridges the TTF and UTAUT (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

3. Proposed Research Method

As part of a broader pedagogic research project funded by the Academy of Marketing, we propose a structured teaching intervention to develop dual competency whilst creating institutional support for transparent GenAI adoption.

Following the delivery of a teaching intervention, the post-intervention quantitative survey will examine whether students' task-technology fit evaluations predict adoption intentions for responsible future GenAI use (this study). Survey data from marketing students will employ validated measurement scales to examine task-GenAI fit, adoption intentions, and ethical competency awareness. Structural Equation Modelling will be adopted to test the extended TTF and UTAUT framework.

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The Marketing Skills Paradox: Implications for Curriculum Design When Job Descriptions Don't Match Hiring Decisions

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

Marketing education faces a paradox: job descriptions emphasise tactical competencies whilst hiring managers select candidates based on skills like resilience and stakeholder management. This conceptual paper, grounded in exploratory interviews with marketers, proposes evidence-based audit tools addressing a dual curriculum challenge: preparing students to pass AI-automated screening processes whilst developing the human capabilities determining professional success. The framework introduces skill hubs as integrated capability clusters bridging job description requirements and hiring reality for enhanced employability.

Competitive Short Paper

Marketing educators face a paradox: the skills listed in job descriptions bear little resemblance to the capabilities that determine hiring success. Exploratory interviews with B2B marketing hiring managers reveal this systematic disconnect. As one marketer explained, the CV talks of experiences and achievements but does not communicate approaches, attitude, or determination. Candidates are filtered on technical competencies, yet hired based on resilience and stakeholder management. This paradox creates fundamental challenges for curriculum design.

This research investigates the marketing skills paradox and its implications for curriculum development. Through exploratory interviews with marketing professionals across B2B and professional services contexts, we identify three manifestations. First, job descriptions emphasise tactical competencies whilst hiring managers prioritise capabilities they struggle to articulate: navigating difficult stakeholders, demonstrating resilience, and building trust. Second, traditional frameworks from bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM, 2024) capture what can be documented but miss the complex capability interplay characterising successful professionals. Third, AI automation of tactical tasks amplifies this disconnect, with one marketing director replacing a junior role with AI whilst recruiting for strategic capabilities resisting simple description.

Drawing on preliminary insights, this paper introduces skill hubs: integrated clusters of competencies, knowledge, and human skills combining in professional contexts (Crittenden, 2022; Walker et al., 2009). Stakeholder management exemplifies this: not a single competency but a hub integrating presentation skills, organisational dynamics knowledge, and emotional intelligence. Traditional job descriptions decompose these hubs into discrete competencies, losing the integration that makes them professionally valuable.

The research develops a three-stage framework addressing this paradox. First, systematic job description analysis identifies stated requirements and implicit expectations. Second, qualitative interviews capture how skills operate professionally, revealing the skills that determine hiring decisions (Finch et al., 2013). Third, innovative audit tools enable students to profile capabilities against evidence-based benchmarks reflecting hiring reality rather than job description rhetoric (Al Asefer and Zainal Abidin, 2021; Schlee & Karns, 2017).

This framework offers theoretical and practical contributions. The skill hub concept provides vocabulary for discussing professional capabilities transcending the competencies-versus-skills binary, explaining why traditional frameworks fail to capture graduate employability (Jackson, 2013). It reveals how technological change amplifies certain capabilities whilst automating others, requiring dynamic curriculum alignment (Royle & Laing, 2014).

Practically, this research addresses curriculum design challenges. Marketing educators face a duality: students must possess the tactical competencies listed in job descriptions to pass initial screening processes, increasingly automated through AI, yet they need the human capabilities that determine job success and hiring decisions.

The audit tools provide evidence-based frameworks for addressing both requirements. By making explicit both the documented competencies needed for recruitment gatekeeping and the implicit capabilities determining professional effectiveness, the framework enables curriculum design that prepares students for initial screening whilst developing the skills that make them valuable marketing professionals (Di Gregorio et al., 2019; Wymbs, 2011).

This conceptual paper, informed by exploratory research, exposes and addresses the marketing skills paradox. Future research will expand interviews, validate audit tools across contexts, and assess their curriculum design effectiveness.

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The Hidden Costs of Creativity: Understanding Digital Content Creators' Burnout through the Lens of Conservation of Resources Theory

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

Drawing on the Conversation of Resources Theory, this study analysed the 37 creators' YouTube videos and blogs to examine the causes of burnout among content creators.

Competitive Short Paper

The rapid expansion of the creator economy has transformed how individuals produce, distribute, and monetise digital content. Yet the psychological cost of this form of digital labor remains underexplored among content creators. Drawing on the Conservation of Resources theory, this study examines the causes of burnout among creators. We collected qualitative video and text data from 37 creators, utilizing YouTube platforms (n = 25) and blogs (n = 12). Using the Gioia methodology, we identified factors such as Work-life imbalance, Creative Fatigue, Financial Strain, Algorithmic Fatigue, Digital Harassment, and Peer comparison as the primary sources of creator burnout. The findings indicate that creator burnout can lead creators to exhibit disengagement behaviour, such as temporary discontinuation and quitting social media. This study offers implications for brands, marketers, content creators, and policymakers to optimize content creators' practices and safeguard creators' mental health within the digital ecosystem.

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Consumer Trust in Augmented Reality - Mediated Beauty Experiences

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

Augmented Reality (AR) provides the opportunity to engage customers and transform their brand experience. Beauty brands embrace AR to offer personalized skincare recommendations. Even though trust is identified as an important topic in the

adoption of AR, research on how to preserve trust is sparse. Drawing on emotional and cognitive trust theory, and on the basis of qualitative data, this paper explores how the use of AR affects consumers' trust in the beauty industry.

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Digital Literary Subcultures and Sharing Behaviour: The BookTok Experience

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

This study aims to understand the consumer sharing behaviour in digital literary subcultures. It examines how UGC boosts engagement, identity, and value creation. The study combines Social Identity Theory, Value Co-Creation, and UGC research. We apply a qualitative-multi-method design grounded in netnography. The dataset includes 15 BookTok videos and 19,195 comments. We find: sharing in BookTok is collective, not just expressive or informational. It builds group affiliation, emotional engagement, aesthetic appreciation, and peer-driven market influence.

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Getting On(line): Older Consumers, Technologies, and Leisure Pursuits

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

Technology plays a prominent role in the lives of older consumers. Research often examines these interactions within care-based consumption contexts, emphasising technical illiteracy and social isolation. This focus offers limited insight into how older consumers experience technology in leisure-oriented activities, such as genealogy consumption, where older consumers enthusiastically engage with technologies to forge new family connections. Drawing on assemblage theory, we examine how older consumers' experiences of technology are formed and maintained during leisure pursuits.

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Consumer Behaviour and Attitude Towards Organic Cosmetics Amongst Young Urban Consumers: A Conceptual Framework and Future Research Agenda

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

There are fewer studies on organic cosmetics (OC) vis-à-vis other categories like food. Moreover, these studies have largely been done in advanced economies where the OC market is more mature. This research aspires to explore the beliefs, attitude, drivers and inhibitors of OC in an emerging economy. The practical implications of this study will help OC firms to grow the market. It also provides directions for future research and has economic and social implications.

Competitive Short Paper

Organic products are more sustainable and healthier given that they are produced sans chemicals. Consumers are progressively becoming more environment- conscious (Bairrada, Coelho, and Moreira 2024). Organic cosmetics (OC) largely entail skin, hair and oral products and their sales are growing globally despite OC being costlier than traditional cosmetics (Krissanya et al. 2023). While considerable research has investigated organic categories such as food and apparel, relatively, there are fewer studies on organic cosmetics. These studies have largely been conducted in advanced economies where the OC market is more mature vis-à-vis emerging economies (Shimul, Cheah, and Khan, 2022). It is important to unravel the intricacies of the OC market in emerging economies since countries such as India and Brazil promise a huge market. given the upward demand trend there. This research aspires to explore the beliefs, attitude, drivers and inhibitors of OC products amongst young urban consumers in an emerging economy like India. Hence it adds to the scarce literature on OC attitude and consumer behaviour, more so in emerging economies.

Investigating complex phenomena like OC attitude and consumer behaviour demands multiple methods to capture the multiple facets (Mongeon et al., 2025). Therefore, two studies will be conducted using a multi-method approach. Study 1 - to review the evolution, theory, and future research directions via extensive review of several empirical and theoretical studies and news articles in the OC area. Study 2 will consist of several in-depth interviews with potential and current young, urban consumers of OC. Study 1 will also serve as an exploratory study and provide insights for Study 2. Currently, we are amidst Study 1 and some prelim findings are: there is a need to explore the factors that influence consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions of organic personal care products at the retail format level (Kim and Chung, 2011); future studies can incorporate independent variables like celebrity endorsement, social interaction, and brand quality (Jhamb et al., 2023); further research studies can dwell on the numerous social and cultural backgrounds and the influence of socio-economic issues, psychological aspects, self-sacrifice, and awareness on various OC products (Lavuri et al., 2022).

While emerging economies like India export considerable quantities of organic products, the domestic awareness and consumption of OC remain low. The practical implications of this study will help OC firms in emerging economies like India to gain a better understanding of the drivers and inhibitors. It will also provide guidelines for global OC brands for their global market entry strategy into new emerging markets. This study also has economic and social implications since the findings will help regulatory bodies to create an environment that is conducive for a more sustainable society. This study is expected to serve as a springboard for future research by faculty and scholars since the OC attitude or consumer behaviour related research propositions can guide hypothesis generation. Development of consulting services for the OC industry are the other research opportunities.

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Better Innovation for a Better World? The Co-Construction of Harmful Meanings in the Weight-Loss Injectable Drug Market

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This study examines the evolution of weight-loss injectable drug market using multiple qualitative methods. The findings indicate that, although these drugs contribute to improved personal and public health outcomes, they also generate a range of social harms that emerge and evolve through interactions among a diverse array of human, non-human, and hybrid marketplace actors. Overall, the study illuminates risks underlying the “Better Marketing for a Better World” agenda and the destructive effects of marketplace interactions.

Competitive Short Paper

The “Better World” (BW) research lens has gained increasing prominence within the marketing discipline. This stream of research emphasizes the potential of marketing innovation to address pressing societal challenges such as sustainability, inequality, and public health (Andrade & Vieites, 2025; Arsel et al., 2022; Berry et al., 2025; Chandy et al., 2021; Dahl et al., 2025). Innovations are considered as contributing to a better world when their objectives “extend beyond traditional profit-seeking to include societal and environmental benefits” (Dahl et al., 2025, p. 101). For instance, given their potential to address the global obesity crisis, weight-loss injectable drugs (often known by the brand name Ozempic®) have been characterized as “innovative health products with BW health benefits” (Dahl et al., 2025, p. 111). Marketing scholars often anticipate that such innovations can generate win-win outcomes that benefit society at large (Berry et al., 2025; Chandy et al., 2021; Dahl et al., 2025).

Our research challenges this optimistic assumption. This research examines the weight-loss injectable drug market using a multimethod design that integrates media analysis, documentary analysis, netnography (digital ethnography), and open-ended surveys. The findings suggest that, while these drugs contribute to improved personal and public health outcomes, their market expansion also produces a range of social harms. Stigmatizing discourses frame these drugs as an “easy way out”, leading to feelings of shame among users. Celebratory narratives envisioning “a future without fat people” reinforce fatphobia and intensify experiences of exclusion among overweight and obese individuals. High drug costs further exacerbate socioeconomic tensions and inequalities in access. The entertainmentization of medication and competition for limited medical resources threaten the welfare of people with diabetes. These harmful outcomes emerge and evolve through interactions among a wide range of human, non-human, and hybrid marketplace actors (e.g., consumers, products, media, pharmaceutical firms, and governmental agencies).

This study makes several important theoretical contributions. Although BW scholars have long acknowledged the potential negative consequences of marketing practices, BW innovations are generally assumed to contribute positively to societal welfare (Berry et al., 2025; Chandy et al., 2021; Dahl et al., 2025). Our findings challenge this assumption by demonstrating that such innovations may backfire in practice. Moreover, the study offers insights into why and how these backfires occur. Prior research has primarily attributed negative innovation outcomes to shortcomings in product design (Dahl et al., 2025). In contrast, our findings show that innovation-related harms also emerge dynamically through the post-market engagement of diverse marketplace actors that create negative cultural meanings, distort BW objectives, and exacerbate broader societal challenges. By illuminating this dark side of marketplace interactions, the study also contributes to the broader marketing literature. While collaboration and communication among marketplace actors are typically conceptualized as productive processes that enable value co-creation and facilitate innovation diffusion (Berry et al., 2025; Chandy et al., 2021; Cova & Dalli, 2009; Dahl et al., 2025; Latour, 2005; Ndichu & Rittenburg, 2021; Van Heerde et al., 2021), our findings demonstrate that these same interactions can also result in value destruction and social harm.

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Sustainable International Experience: The Case of the Global Classroom

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This paper presents a novel, sustainable approach to international student experience in marketing education through the

Global Classroom module, where students and tutors collaborate synchronously across five countries using digitally connected classrooms. It offers an inclusive alternative to mobility-based internationalisation, enabling real-time intercultural learning through co-designed, co-delivered teaching and transnational collaboration embedded within contemporary marketing pedagogy and projects aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Competitive Short Paper

International experience is widely recognised as a cornerstone of contemporary marketing education, supporting the development of intercultural competence, global market awareness, and ethical sensitivity in future managers (OECD, 2025). Traditionally, such experience has been closely associated with physical mobility through study abroad and international field trips. While valuable, these models raise concerns regarding environmental sustainability, accessibility, cost, and equity. In response, the literature on "internationalisation at home" has called for more inclusive and sustainable alternatives that embed global learning into domestic curricula (Beelen & Jones, 2015). Yet many existing approaches remain asynchronous, bilateral, or limited in the depth of intercultural engagement they afford. This paper introduces a novel model of sustainable international experience for marketing education: the Global Classroom.

The Global Classroom is a transnational teaching and learning initiative co-designed, co-developed, and co-delivered across five countries: the United Kingdom, Germany, Ghana, Malaysia, and China. The module has been delivered successfully over four consecutive years and brings together students from all five locations into real-time hybrid classroom supported by digital platforms. Rather than exporting a single national curriculum, the programme is collaboratively designed, drawing on diverse market contexts and institutional traditions. Teaching is shared across partner institutions, exposing students to multiple instructional styles, and creating what can be conceptualised as a form of "live" connected pedagogy in which knowledge is produced through interaction rather than transmitted unidirectionally (Bhambra, 2014).

Pedagogically, the Global Classroom is structured around collaborative, transnational group projects that explicitly address the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Students design marketing and media campaigns on issues such as climate action, gender equality, digital inclusion, and quality education, integrating sustainability, ethics, and social justice into applied marketing practice (United Nations, 2025). This approach reflects calls for experiential and community-centred learning environments that foster empathy, adaptability, and cross-cultural communication skills (Dimitrov & Haque, 2016). It also aligns with evidence that collaborative learning across borders enhances global competence and prepares students for work in global virtual teams (Jimenez et al., 2022).

The model deliberately responds to the digital divide and infrastructural inequalities that shape access to international learning. By relying on accessible digital platforms, the Global Classroom reduces the environmental costs associated with travel while expanding participation for students constrained by financial, caring, health, or visa barriers. This speaks directly to debates on educational technology and inclusion, which caution against equating digitalisation with universal connectivity (Selwyn, 2021). At the same time, the module foregrounds community building and belonging as core pedagogical principles, reflecting research demonstrating that supportive, inclusive learning communities enhance engagement and persistence (Tinto, 2017).

Empirically, the paper draws on four years of delivery data, including student feedback and reflective essays across the five countries. Students consistently describe the experience as uniquely transformative, highlighting the value of encountering diverse perspectives, challenging stereotypes, and developing practical skills in cross-cultural collaboration. Many report that the learning gained extends well beyond what is possible in a nationally bounded classroom.

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Breaking Boundaries Between Science Fiction and Services Marketing: Hopes and Fears, Cultural Narratives, Anthropomorphism, and Service Robot Acceptance

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

Services face rapid transformation with the use of artificial intelligence and (anthropomorphic) service robots (SR). We examine how consumers' perceptions of SR in service settings, such as healthcare, hospitality, retail and public services, are informed by cultural influences through robots' portrayal in fiction. We examine the acceptability of SR in roles currently performed by humans, through the lenses of services theory and cultural narratives, using the Collaborative Metaphor Elicitation Technique to seek deep insights.

Competitive Short Paper

Services face radical transformation, with the rapid adoption of technology, such as chatbots, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Service Robots (SR) in customer-facing contexts such as healthcare, hospitality, retail and public services. Literature has explored technology acceptance, using constructs such as trust, humour and ease of use (Blut et al., 2021); however, cultural origins of consumer meaning-making are not fully acknowledged (Ostrom et al., 2015). This conceptual paper argues that culture (books, films, computer games and other media) has significantly shaped consumer perceptions of SR. Cultural narratives are powerful and have influenced expectations, acceptance and trust of SR for decades. We advance a cultural lens of understanding technology-infused service encounters by integrating service marketing theory with research on anthropomorphism, dystopian narratives and metaphor-based cognition.

Robots have been portrayed by fiction across a wide spectrum, ranging from friendly service companions to human existential threats. Characters represented through anthropomorphism, such as C3PO in Star Wars, can show social competence in their service encounters, being emotionally responsive, trustworthy and accepted by humans. Akdim et al. (2023) found that anthropomorphism enhances engagement and perceived warmth in service encounters in hospitality. Science fiction narratives have often exaggerated robot capabilities, autonomy and emotional intelligence, thus creating unattainable real-world SR expectations. We propose that high-contact customer services require emotional labour and sensitivity as central attributes, and without these, the expectation gap becomes problematic.

Alternatively, fiction portrays robots in a dystopian manner, with narratives depicting robots as dehumanised, out of control or evil. Anxiety and fear about robots' autonomous decision making, surveillance abilities and ethical risk materialise from films such as The Terminator, Ex Machina, or Blade Runner. Services such as healthcare, education or public administration, which involve vulnerability or authority, may be particularly affected by these fears. Consumer willingness to engage with different types of robots in different scenarios may be at risk through a lack of trust (Li Y et al. 2024), and risk being ever-present due to negative portrayals in fiction.

We examine which roles and services consumers would accept SR to deliver, and consider perceptions held and how they are formed. We argue that fiction influences perceptions of SR primarily through deep metaphors (Zaltman and Zaltman 2008) embedded through the senses. Consumers may rely on deep metaphors formed and held in the unconscious mind, such as control, connection or resource. These metaphors operate beneath conscious evaluation; however, they may shape expectations, emotional responses and acceptance of SR across differing service contexts.

The paper positions cultural narratives as antecedents to traditional services marketing constructs such as trust, perceived value and satisfaction. Contributions made include extending technology-infused service research by grounding cultural narratives as a foundation for meaning-making. It also integrates media and metaphor theory into service marketing, providing a richer understanding of how service expectations are formed. Finally, it advances the Collaborative Metaphor Elicitation Technique for exploring service technology perceptions. To encourage human acceptance of SR, manufacturers must align robot design, role allocation, and communication strategies to embed positive perceived expectations informed by culture.

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Who Acts and Who Controls? AI Imagery, Empathy, and Empowerment in Sustainable Advertising

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Track: *AM Funded Research

Summary Statement

This paper examines how AI-generated versus photographic images shape consumer responses to sustainability advertising. Moving beyond altruistic versus egoistic framing, it distinguishes care-focused appeals emphasising stewardship from impact-focused appeals foregrounding organisational control and outcomes. Across two experiments in sustainable food advertising, the study investigates how image type, depicted role, and responsibility framing influence empathy, perceived power, psychological distance, consumer empowerment, and willingness to pay, clarifying when AI imagery supports or constrains moral persuasion.

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Low-income Parents Sacrifices for their Children and their Consequences

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

Parental sacrifices in families may take both monetary and non-monetary forms and these refer to situations in which parents forgo their own needs to satisfy the needs of their children, but consumer researchers have paid a little attention to sacrificial work. This research, conducted in a developing country setting aims to answer the following questions: What types of sacrifices do low-income parents make, what motivates them, and what outcomes do those sacrifices produce?

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction: Parents regardless of their economic circumstances make sacrifices for their children but low-income individuals parenting experiences significantly differ from those of wealthier parents due to their restricted resources (Gershoff et al., 2007; Kochuyt, 2004; Leung, 2020). Parental sacrifices in families may take both monetary and non-monetary forms (Gauthier & Jong, 2021) and these refer to situations in which parents forgo their own needs to satisfy the needs of their children (Leung & Shek, 2011). Low-income consumers make sacrifices for their loved ones, but consumer researchers have paid a little attention to sacrificial work (Varman, Sreekumar & Belk, 2022). In collectivistic cultures, low-income individuals spending decisions are often shaped by social, moral and personal obligations, which lead them to put other family member needs ahead of their own needs (Kamran and Uusitalo, 2016; Varman, Sreekumar & Belk, 2022). The low-income parents make significant sacrifices to ensure to fulfil their needs and in that endeavour some parents put their aspirations and needs aside while raising their children (Hamilton & Catterall, 2006).

Consumer researchers have generally ignored lives of the poor in the Global South (Varman, Sreekumar & Belk, 2022; Kamran & Uusitalo, 2025) but examining their marketplace issues can offer valuable insights for policy development and for enhancing their wellbeing (Reynoso et al., 2015; Fisk et al., 2016). This research focuses on low-income parents sacrifices for their children in a developing country setting. This study aims to answer the following questions: What types of sacrifices do low-income parents make, what motivates them, and what outcomes do those sacrifices produce?

Methods: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 29 low-income parents (12 mothers and 17 fathers) in Pakistan where around 80% of total population are categorised as low-income (Haider, 2021). The data is being analysed using thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Findings: The preliminary findings indicate that low-income parents are involved in ongoing financial (e.g. spending, saving and arranging finances for their needs and fulfilling their basic needs), Physical (e.g. working extra hours, giving up personal comfort); Emotional (e.g. unable to give time to loved ones); personal (preferring their children needs over their own needs); social sacrifices (e.g. not meeting and visiting relatives, not traveling to save money) for their children.

Their monetary and non-monetary sacrifices were motivated to address child immediate needs, needs associated with predictable near-future events, and for their development. Low-income parents sacrifice for their children are motivated by cultural conventions and values, survival, sense of responsibility and care. The sacrifices aimed at the development of children were motivated by a desire to free them from the financial hardships they themselves suffered.

The sacrifices of low-income parents sometimes enable them to fulfil both their parental responsibilities and their children's needs. However, after making non-financial and financial sacrifices the low-income parents continued to face various forms of vulnerability such as reduced self-image, emotional, social, financial and physical stress.

Conclusions: These preliminary findings are expected to improve after detailed analysis and to offer both theoretical and practical implications.

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Developing Personas to Understand Young Adults' Sustainable Consumption Practices

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

Personas are widely used in marketing practice but often lack theoretical grounding. We address this gap by using the COM-B framework for persona development in the context of sustainable consumption. Using interviews, photo diaries, and focus groups with young adults aged 20-30, we developed empirically grounded personas outlining capability, opportunity, and motivation patterns. We propose five theory-based personas that may be used to inform differentiated, context-sensitive marketing communication and policy interventions for sustainable food consumption.

Competitive Short Paper

Background

Personas are widely used in marketing practice to guide segmentation and communication strategies (Revella, 2015), but their development often relies on intuition or commercial data rather than behavioural theories (Salminen et al., 2022). Moreover, Syrjälä et al. (2025) have argued that personas have become overly focused on classifying consumers by demographics and attitudes rather than capturing the practices and contexts that shape consumption practices. Behavioural science frameworks like COM-B (Capability, Opportunity, Motivation-Behaviour) (Michie et al., 2011) provide rigorous tools for understanding behaviour in context but remain underutilised in marketing theory and practice. But without grounding in behavioural theory, personas risk oversimplifying consumer heterogeneity and misguiding intervention strategies. For exemplifying this challenge, we study young adults (20-30 years). This group is a priority target for sustainable consumption interventions, but their food practices vary widely, shaped by tight budgets, irregular schedules, limited cooking facilities, (Strømsted et al., 2023) and evolving identities (Arnett, 2000).

Research objectives

In this study, we use a methodology that bridges behavioural and market segmentation by systematically integrating COM-B into persona development. Our objectives were to: (1) develop empirically grounded, theory-informed personas capturing distinct patterns of capability, opportunity, and motivation in young adults' food consumption; and (2) validate these personas through participatory consumer research to ensure their recognisability and practical relevance for differentiated marketing communication and policy intervention design.

Methods

We used a two-phase qualitative design. Phase 1 involved 25 young adults (20-30, childless, independent households) who completed three qualitative interviews over 2 months, supplemented by meal photo diaries capturing actual consumption behaviour. Data were thematically analysed using COM-B as the structuring framework. We systematically coded 21 consumption-related characteristics per participant, spanning motivations, barriers, practical skills, and contextual factors, then identified similarities and differences in patterns across the sample. Five preliminary personas were iteratively constructed using behavioural codes, verbatim quotes, and visual consumption data (Torma & Aschemann-Witzel, 2024). In Phase 2, three focus groups (n=19) assessed persona recognisability, challenged stereotypical assumptions, and proposed refinements, providing direct consumer validation of the persona approach and ensuring the derived personas reflected lived experience rather than researcher assumptions.

Findings

The method produced five validated personas, each with distinct implications for targeted communication: The sports enthusiast, The conscious consumer, The passionate food enthusiast, The busy consumer, and The flexible one. Focus groups confirmed high recognisability but revealed critical nuances: consumers would shift fluidly between persona types depending on situational context, and barriers to sustainable eating stem predominantly from capability and opportunity constraints rather than motivation deficits. This finding challenges social marketing persuasion campaigns and supports enablement-focused intervention strategies instead. Our contribution is primarily methodological: we demonstrate how COM-B can be used for persona development through systematic coding combined with participatory validation. The results offer actionable personas grounded in behavioural theory rather than demographics and attitudes. Constructing personas with this age group is still challenging because of the fluidity and temporal nature of this life stage. Still, designing behaviouraly-informed interventions or communication campaigns based on this approach offer the possibility for more context-sensitive approaches.

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How Therapeutic Value Emerges and Circulates Through Platform-Mediated Consumer Practice: The Case of "Cleanfluencing"

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This study examines how therapeutic value emerges through public performances of everyday practice on digital platforms. Drawing on an empirical study of 'cleanfluencing', we show how aestheticised cleaning routines reorient disgust into calm, producing what comes to be experienced as soothing domestic practice. Therapeutic meaning circulates between creators and audiences, while repeated displays of order contribute to new, moralised norms of cleanliness in the marketplace.

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Unexpected Consumer Behaviors in Generations Y and Z: Strategic Marketing Responses and Brand Coherence

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This paper examines how unexpected consumer behaviors challenge established marketing assumptions about use, meaning, and value creation, posing strategic risks and innovation opportunities for brand coherence.

Focusing on Generations Y and Z in multigenerational markets, it shows how symbolic appropriation leads consumers to reinterpret products and redefine their Jobs to Be Done. Using an exploratory analysis of Crocs, the study highlights how delayed recognition of emerging practices can disrupt brand trajectories and enable value creation.

Competitive Short Paper

Multiple generations coexist as active consumers, and the historical and sociocultural context into which individuals are born shapes their behaviors, values, attitudes, and consumption preferences (Twenge, 2023, cited in Balon, 2024).

As a result, many brands operate in multigenerational markets, often addressing Generation Y and Generation Z simultaneously, even when originally designed for a single cohort. This coexistence creates strategic challenges, particularly when unexpected consumer behaviors emerge and disrupt established marketing assumptions.

Consumer behavior encompasses the decisions and actions involved in choosing, using, and appropriating products and services, shaped by psychological, social, and experiential factors (Solomon, 2019).

Brands rely on expected patterns of functional, symbolic, and hedonic use to guide strategic planning, drawing on distinctions between utilitarian and experiential value (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982).

The Job to Be Done framework complements this view by linking anticipated behaviors to functional, emotional, and social value creation (Christensen et al., 2007).

However, consumers may reinterpret or modify product use in ways not anticipated by brands. Such unexpected behaviors extend beyond the patterns captured by analytical tools used to model expected consumption, challenging traditional planning assumptions and creating opportunities for innovation and value creation (Wedel and Kannan, 2016).

These dynamics are particularly salient in multigenerational contexts. Generations Y and Z differ in values, attitudes, and digital engagement (Twenge, 2017), influencing how they appropriate and assign meaning to products. While Generation Y tends to emphasize rational and utilitarian criteria, Generation Z places greater importance on pleasure, identity expression, and symbolic meaning (Agrawal, 2022).

Symbolic appropriation theory explains how consumers assign meanings to goods beyond their original intent, integrating them into identity construction processes (McCracken, 1986). In this sense, consumption objects may become extensions of the self, increasing the likelihood of reinterpretations that exceed functional design intentions (Belk, 1988).

This research argues that brands must detect and interpret unexpected consumer behaviors across generational boundaries while maintaining brand coherence. It also identifies a gap in the literature regarding how such behaviors can be systematically recognized and interpreted in practice.

To address this gap, the study adopts an exploratory analysis of the Crocs brand, illustrating the strategic consequences of delayed recognition of emerging consumption practices. Originally developed as a utilitarian footwear brand focused on comfort and durability, Crocs was initially adopted for performance-oriented purposes (Christensen et al., 2007).

However, early signs of symbolic appropriation by Generation Z, such as ironic aesthetics and personalization practices, were already visible in the mid-2000s (Douglas, 2014) but were neither systematically identified nor integrated into the brand's strategic planning.

From 2017 onward, Crocs responded by embracing authenticity narratives, investing in collaborations, and expanding the role of Jibbitz as tools for personalization and self-expression (Crocs, 2017).

This strategic shift enabled the brand to integrate previously unexpected behaviors into a co-created Job to Be Done that combines functional comfort with symbolic meaning.

Overall, the study demonstrates how delayed recognition of unexpected consumer behaviors can reshape brand trajectories and underscores the need for consumer research approaches capable of identifying and interpreting emerging practices in multigenerational markets.

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Developing and Validating a Digital Curiosity Scale: Psychological Well-being in the Digital Consumer World

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

A Digital Curiosity Scale specific to the consumer context, as an intrinsic motivational driver of digital engagement, is developed and validated. The study has used robust multi-stage scale development techniques to establish the reliability, construct validity, and nomological validity by its link with psychological well-being. The Digital Curiosity Scale contributes to digital marketing theory and offers practical insights for the development of curiosity-inducing digital marketing environments.

Competitive Short Paper

One significant underlying factor influencing customer behavior is curiosity. In consumer contexts, it hasn't been conceptualized very broadly, though. The setting in which consumers investigate, assess, and interact with marketing platforms has become more dynamic as a result of digitalization. Consumer interest has increased due to the use of algorithms and dynamic digital settings. Despite their important role in the digital consumer world, current measurements of curiosity are limited to offline or generic psychological circumstances. This dynamic aspect of the digital environment is not adequately captured by the scales currently employed in consumer literature.

Digital curiosity is the motivational predisposition that explains the consumer's desire to explore and engage with the unique, unclear, and vague stimuli in a digital environment. A quantitative, deductive research methodology was used in the methodical development and validation of the Digital Curiosity Scale. Items were generated from existing curiosity literature and revised to take into account the distinctive features of digital worlds. Content validation was done using expert evaluations. Through a multi-stage scale validation procedure, the initial item pool was evaluated and improved. Using survey data gathered from active social media users, the resulting scale was assessed for internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

A thorough evaluation of the measurement model using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) showed that it satisfied all criteria for good measure for internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The six underlying dimensions of a multidimensional conceptualization of digital curiosity are supported by the results. Digital curiosity functions as a separate construct from other related concepts of digital engagement or usage, according to explorers' confirmatory factor analysis.

A study is carried out to validate the relationship between digital curiosity and psychological well-being in order to confirm the nomological validity of the scale. In relation to digital consumption, it establishes a significant result. According to self-determination theory, self-exploitation motivated by curiosity is anticipated to increase the qualities of competence, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation, which will have a favorable impact on psychological well-being.

The study advances theory in a number of ways. In order to increase accuracy in consumer research and digital marketing, it first offers a test of a contextualized measure of digital interest. Second, it answers a question regarding its capacity to serve as an adaptive motivational pattern by distinguishing between digital curiosity and interest/user level or compulsiveness. Third, it has consequences for customer well-being by proving the consumer relevance of interest-driven digital activities, which is crucial for marketers that wish to implement successful consumer-focused strategies.

Hence, this present investigation lends a strong empirical instrument and an informative foundation for the investigation of curiosity-associated digital behaviors and their precursors, as well as their psychological and marketing-related outcomes, in the future.

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The Humanity-Innovation Gap: Balancing Consumer Acceptance and Brand Authenticity in the Robotic Transformation of Fashion Retail

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper examines how robotics integration across fashion retail touchpoints shapes consumer acceptance, brand authenticity, and emotional connection. Drawing on mixed-methods research with Generation Z consumers and industry experts, it introduces the "humanity–innovation gap" framework to distinguish where automation enhances efficiency and where human interaction remains essential. The study offers practical guidance for fashion retailers seeking to deploy robotics while preserving experiential and human-centred brand value.

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Fashion, Sustainability and Influence: Conscientious Branding, Attitudes and Intention to Follow Influencers

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

Sustainability has become a paramount consideration for brands in the current economic environment, particularly within the global luxury industry. Similarly, virtual influencers powered by AI are thriving across social media platforms and the metaverse. Our study shows that luxury branding strengthens influencer effects on brand attitudes but not consumer responsibility. In luxury contexts, environmental concern undermines transformative conscientious branding, particularly with virtual influencers, revealing a credibility gap where non-human environmental messaging weakens follower intentions.

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Reframing Rural Creative Markets Through Embodied Place-Based Practices

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Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

Summary Statement

Rural creative life is often misrepresented through urbanised and economistic frameworks overlooking how place shapes how creative practitioners move, make, and exchange. Using walking interviews and digital storytelling in Cornwall (UK) and Cornwall (Jamaica), the paper shows how markets are formed through memory, mobility, and relational practices in rural places. Rural practitioners actively shape markets through place-based making and exchange, although each context produces distinct dynamics. The paper calls for place-sensitive cultural and economic policies.

Competitive Short Paper

Despite growing interest in creative industries within marketing scholarship, dominant conceptualisations remain largely urban-centric, economistic, and detached from the lived realities of rural creative life (Bell & Jayne, 2010; Comunian et al., 2010; Oakley & O'Brien, 2016; Pratt, 2008). Existing frameworks often treat place as a static space or an economic-strategic category rather than an active centre of meaning and experience that shapes how creative work is lived and understood(Cresswell, 2004; Massey, 2013; Tuan, 1975, 1977). In rural contexts, place is not just a location- it is a collection of histories, movements, relationships, and memories that structure how practitioners move, make and exchange(Cresswell, 2004; Duxbury, 2021; Gibson et al., 2010; Low, 2003). Overlooking these constituents of rural creative life conceals how markets are experienced, felt and enacted through place and, consequently, misrepresents rural creative practitioners as marginal or deficient market actors. This paper repositions rural creative practitioners as market-shapers, drawing attention to how markets are constituted through embodied, spatial, and relational practices rooted in rural contexts.

Based on creative methods - walking interviews and digital storytelling with rural creative practitioners in Cornwall (UK) and Cornwall (Jamaica)- the paper foregrounds practitioners' own narratives as they move through the landscapes in which their creative lives unfold. These methods did not aim to draw comparisons with the chosen rural contexts and their markets, but rather to map their singularities and determine whether any shared understandings can be gathered across them. Walking alongside participants through their studios, villages, coastlines, and informal social and market spaces reveals how creative identity, value, and market activity are inseparable from place. Markets emerge not as abstract systems but as lived, negotiated environments shaped by memory, mobility, constraint, and attachment.

The findings show that rural creative practitioners actively shape markets by embedding creative exchange within everyday spatial practices through informal encounters, community rituals, creative artefacts, and place-based storytelling. The rural contexts of Cornwall (UK) and Jamaica yielded distinct sets of findings. The study revealed that in Cornwall (UK), deep place attachment, shaped by limited mobility, heritage-based memories, and reinforced spatial rules, produces tightly networked but place-based forms of making and exchange. In Cornwall, Jamaica, findings emphasised the celebration of a place-based culture that has been progressively commodified, spatial mobility and adaptive responses to structural constraints, resulting in more improvisational and outward-facing forms of making and exchange. These practices prioritise autonomy, cultural continuity, and relational accountability over economic growth and scale.

By centring embodied methods, the paper demonstrates how rural creative markets are produced through movement, presence, and social interaction within specific socio-spatial landscapes. It argues that understanding rural creative market-shaping requires attention to how practitioners narrate and perform their creative lives in situ. In doing so, the paper extends current debates in marketing and creative industries by offering an alternative, practice-centred account of how markets take shape in rural contexts. This perspective emphasises the need for place-sensitive policies that recognise rural creative practitioners as agents of market innovation. It supports local approaches to cultural and economic development, fostering cross-contextual understanding.

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Decolonising The (Marketing) Self

Yannick Gibson

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This work-in-progress argues the importance of reflexivity in qualitative methodologies, particularly those with the intention of producing decolonial knowledge. Using the author’s own experiences of self-decolonising, this research aims to address the perceived omission of reflexivity as a necessary step in producing decolonial work.

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[De] Constructing ‘Microplastic-Free’ Marketing Claims: Consumer Interpretations of Environmental Claims in Personal Care Products

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This study examines how UK consumers interpret ‘microplastic-free’, ‘plastic-free’ and ‘natural’ claims on personal care products amid growing concerns over microplastic pollution. Drawing on signalling theory and qualitative interviews, preliminary findings reveal consumers use these claims as heuristics for safety under information asymmetry, despite scepticism and limited knowledge of exposure pathways, highlighting greenwashing risks and the role of labels in ethical shopping.

Competitive Short Paper

Recent estimates suggest that more than 445,000 metric tons of plastic nurdles (also known as pre-production plastic pellets) are lost into the environment each year across the global plastics supply chain (Statista, 2025). Within this broader context of plastic waste, personal care and hygiene products have become significant contributors to plastic and microplastic pollution, primarily through the shedding of synthetic microplastic fibres and inefficient disposal practices and systems (Singh and Mishra, 2023; Thompson et al., 2024). Recent studies report that microplastic exposure may adversely affect human reproductive, digestive and respiratory systems, although current risk assessments still characterise overall human health risks as uncertain and incompletely quantified (Li et al., 2023; Lamichhane et al., 2023). While scientific and economic assessments of microplastics are rapidly increasing, the social dimensions of this issue, including how consumers interpret and respond to microplastic risks through everyday consumption decisions, remain comparatively underexplored. Recent consumption studies have shown that consumers are highly concerned, yet poorly informed about microplastics, and tend to assign primary responsibility to governments and industry rather than individuals, leading consumers to often experience feelings of helplessness in the face of pervasive contamination (Fian et al., 2024; Felipe-Rodriguez et al., 2022; Janzik et al., 2024).

The heightened public concern about alarming findings on the environmental and health effects of microplastics has motivated many personal care brands to position themselves as part of the solution, prominently using on-pack claims such as ‘microplastic-free’, ‘plastic-free’ or ‘natural’ to signal environmental responsibility to consumers. Digital tools and apps (e.g. Beat the Micro Bead) allow consumers to scan products and effectively rank them according to their plastic and microplastic content, further embedding these claims into everyday decision-making.

This study therefore focuses on how environmental and health-related ‘clean’ claims in personal care marketing, including terms such as ‘microplastic-free’, ‘plastic-free’, ‘natural’, ‘clean’, ‘non-toxic’ and ‘safe for the planet’, are *interpreted by consumers* and *what role they play in everyday product evaluation and choice* within the personal care category drawing on signalling theory to conceptualise these claims as market signals used to communicate otherwise unobservable product attributes.

This study draws on an ongoing qualitative study with 15 UK-based consumers who regularly purchase single-use personal care products. Preliminary analysis of in-depth interviews suggests that participants are highly aware of microplastics as a risk but possess limited concrete knowledge about exposure pathways and regulatory baselines, creating fertile ground for ‘natural’ and ‘microplastic-free’ claims to act as heuristic signals of health and safety. Participants frequently interpreted such claims holistically, reading 'natural' packaging cues, colour palettes and descriptors as evidence of lower overall environmental harm, while simultaneously expressing scepticism about 'too good to be true' sustainability messaging.

Claims such as 'microplastic-free' operate as market signals under conditions of information asymmetry, allowing brands to communicate unobservable environmental and health attributes, while consumers use these signals as heuristics to navigate risk and make ethical choices, which also raises risks of greenwashing and confusion.

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Marketing Communication and the Sustainability of Blood Donation: A Qualitative Analysis of NHS Campaigns

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Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

Summary Statement

This paper examines how marketing communication is used to promote blood donation within NHS. Using a qualitative method, the study analyses NHS blood donation campaigns to explore how strategic framing, narrative, semiotics and behavioural cues construct blood donation as a high-value prosocial act. Across campaigns—Love is in the Blood, What Legacy Will You Create, #GivingType, #InOurBlood, and Dracula—the analysis indicates a strategically mature, ethically grounded, and culturally intelligent communication portfolio.

Competitive Short Paper

Blood is a distinctive and fragile resource because it depends entirely on donors rather than a manufactured supply (Piersma et al., 2021). Its critical role in healthcare is recognised by the World Health Organisation, which classifies blood and blood components as essential medicines (WHO, 2023). Nevertheless, many developed countries face converging pressures from ageing populations, rising clinical demand, and a shrinking pool of young donors (Kam et al., 2026; Robaina-Calderín et al., 2024). These dynamics pose a growing challenge to the long-term sustainability of the blood supply.

In England, maintaining a stable blood supply has become increasingly difficult. NHS Blood and Transplant estimates that over 5,000 donations are required daily—approximately 1.8 million per year—yet only around 2% of the eligible population currently donates. This results in an annual shortfall exceeding 200,000 donors, leaving the system highly vulnerable to seasonal variation, demand surges, and unexpected shocks. The recurring use of amber alerts and emergency recruitment drives suggests that donor mobilisation strategies remain largely unsustainable (NHSBT, 2025).

Recognising the proven effectiveness of advertising in shaping health-related behaviours (Appiah et al., 2025; Torrent-Sellens et al., 2021), NHSBT has intensified its marketing and communication efforts in recent years by launching multiple campaigns that employ persuasive messaging and behavioural framing to encourage voluntary participation. As blood donation represents a form of prosocial, non-commercial behaviour (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986), these campaigns provide a valuable context for examining how marketing and communication strategies are deployed within the public health sector to attract, motivate, and retain contributors.

This study adopts a qualitative marketing perspective to analyse how NHS blood donation campaigns frame donation as a high-value prosocial act. Drawing on established theories from marketing communication, the analysis applies a ten-dimensional framework examining:

* Strategic and contextual framing
* Brand architecture and legitimacy
* Voice, tone and framing coherence
* Semiotic and cultural meaning construction
* Conceptual emphasis and absence
* Behavioural architecture
* Narrative agency
* Visual semiotic and design integrity
* Ethics, inclusivity and trust safeguards

Across five recent campaigns—Love is in the Blood, What Legacy Will You Create, #GivingType, #InOurBlood, and Dracula (NHS Blood Donation, 2026)—the analysis indicates a strategically mature, ethically grounded, and culturally intelligent communication portfolio. The campaigns demonstrate strong alignment, each responding to specific cultural moments, audience segments, or stages of the donor journey, ranging from initial awareness to urgency and system preparedness. Brand legitimacy is consistently reinforced through NHS authority, complemented by cultural, community, and media partnerships that enhance trust without diluting institutional credibility.

Semiotically and narratively, the campaigns deploy diverse frames—heritage, heroism, intimacy, entertainment, and emergency realism—while maintaining tonal coherence and ethical restraint. Conceptually, the portfolio foregrounds altruism, identity, normalisation, and preparedness, while relational meaning structures emphasise collective care and shared responsibility. Behaviourally, the campaigns are effective at motivation and fear reduction, though conversion and retention mechanisms appear less consistently articulated. Overall, the findings suggest that NHS blood donation campaigns function most effectively as an integrated communication portfolio rather than as standalone interventions, offering a compelling example of contemporary health marketing practice.

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Ukrainian Political Communication in the Russo-Ukrainian War: Strategic Communication and/or Political Marketing?

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Track: 13. Political Marketing

Summary Statement

The Russo-Ukrainian conflict offers a case study for probing Strategic Communications (StratCom) and political marketing theory, highlighting the far-from-distinct conceptual separation between the two. We dissect the Ukrainian government's communications, assessing aims, audiences, channels and themes. Our findings highlight the star power projection of a president combined with participation in political communication activities by creative and technically-literate citizens, engaging internal and international, particularly donor, audiences. Future risks for Ukrainian political communicators are highlighted.

Competitive Short Paper

Our single case study highlights the general applicability of both Strategic Communications and Political Marketing to help explain the political communications of the Ukrainian government and President Zelensky himself during the current Russo-Ukraine crisis. It is difficult to privilege one concept over the other in the specific scenario of Ukrainian political communications here, because President Zelensky ran a campaign to become President for long time before the invasion and carried this on during the invasion. We exemplify what the features of this campaign were.

Our contribution is to highlight the important link between political marketing (Henneberg, 1997; Lock and Harris, 1996; Scammell, 1999, Wring, 1997), especially that conducted during elections) and strategic communications conducted during wartime (NATO, 2023; NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, nd). This alignment arises in this unique case because President Zelensky was campaigning for Western friends to support him in his country's hour of need (Ackerman, 2023), and this required him to prepare a persuasive brief, because he realised he could not defeat Russia without western support. His persuasion tactics (see Plazas-Olmedo & López-Rabadán, 2023), based partly on a guilt appeal, were aimed at getting western partners to donate more aid, provide more political support, hurt Russia with ever greater economic sanctions, and provide more lethal weapons, particularly missile systems and fighter jets (Baines, 2022), despite western fears that providing this support and materiel might poke the bear into a third world (nuclear) war.

Applying the political marketing mix concept (Baines et al, 2003; Lloyd, 2005; O'Leary & Iredale, 1976; Reid, 1988) and to a wartime scenario indicates its direct relevance. The product relates to whether or not the audience will 'buy' the offer (in this case Zelensky's 'fight to the finish' appeal to Ukrainians and 'we are defending Western values' to western donors). Promotion occurs through paid, owned, and earned media. Distribution strategy considers how the message was relayed to its target audiences, and the central importance of social media in message distribution to people around the world, as well as through political leaders in NATO country parliaments. Zelensky's social media use is perhaps the first time a wartime leader has galvanised political support in a nation-on-nation conflict across the world in such a comprehensive way. The concept of price - a troubled concept in political marketing - is highly applicable, alluding to the price of supporting Zelensky and Ukraine, or not as the case may be.

We highlight deficiencies in political marketing theory in this context. Consider: how do we more effectively take account of timescales for communication campaigns that span war and peace, strategic competition, and the participation of both publics and governments in communication and disinformation activities? How do we ascertain political marketing mix effectiveness in wartime? This includes the rise of self-organising groups who can participate in technology-enabled communications, challenging and amplifying centrally-controlled and integrating efforts in communications planning and execution. Zelensky's celebrity status (Onuch & Hale, 2022) also appears unique (though celebrity leaders are an increasing phenomenon, see Vucovic, 2025).

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AI's Short-Term Memory: How Recency Bias is Silently Undermining Your Marketing and How to Fix It

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

AI's "short-term memory" is silently undermining your marketing. This flaw, called recency bias, causes AI to forget critical constraints, leading to compliance disasters and off-brand messaging. This paper provides the antidote: a simple diagnostic toolkit to identify the problem and a practical governance model to fix it. Learn how to de-risk your AI investment and ensure it delivers on its promise of smarter, more effective marketing.

Competitive Short Paper

Artificial intelligence is no longer a futuristic concept in marketing. It is the engine powering everything from campaign creation and personalisation to customer service chatbots (Campbell et al., 2020). We trust these systems to make our marketing smarter, faster, and more effective. But what if this trust is misplaced? What if your AI has a critical flaw, a form of "short-term memory loss" that causes it to obsess over the last piece of information it received, ignoring crucial context like brand guidelines or legal disclaimers?

This phenomenon, known as recency bias (Jobanputra et al., 2025), is a silent but significant threat lurking within many AI-powered marketing systems. It means that the order in which you provide information can dramatically, and often invisibly, alter your results. A last-minute creative suggestion from a junior marketer could cause the AI to overwrite a non-negotiable legal warning that was provided earlier. A personalisation engine might get stuck on a customer's last click, ignoring a long history of their actual preferences (Oh & Cho, 2024). The consequences are not trivial. They range from off-brand messaging and wasted ad spend to catastrophic compliance failures and eroded consumer trust.

To investigate this hidden risk, this paper undertakes a technical-managerial Narrative Review method to synthesise findings from the technical literature on AI and computer science with the managerial and strategic literature from marketing and related business disciplines. Our approach was guided by the need to bridge the gap between evidence of AI system fragility and the practical realities of marketing workflows. By systematically mapping the technical evidence of AI fragility to real-world marketing case studies and workflows, we built a clear, evidence-based picture of how, where, and why these systems can fail in practice.

Our analysis identifies three distinct ways recency bias manifests in marketing: Contextual Recency, where AI gets "lost in the middle" of long documents (Liu et al. 2024); Choice Recency, where it's biased by the order of options in a list (Pezeshkpour & Hruschka, 2024); and Temporal Recency, where it develops tunnel vision for short-term user behaviour (Fang et al., 2025). We present a detailed case vignette of a regulated product campaign to illustrate how a simple instruction, added late in the process, can trigger a multi-million-dollar compliance disaster.

More importantly, we translate these findings into a practical, two-part managerial solution. First, we introduce a simple, four-step Diagnostic Toolkit that provides a "health check" for your AI systems. Second, we offer a Layered Defence Model, a set of implementable mitigation strategies that range from simple adjustments in prompt design to robust, authority-aware governance processes.

This paper is not a call to abandon AI, but a guide to mastering it. It equips marketing leaders with the crucial understanding and actionable tools needed to transform their AI from a source of unpredictable risk into a reliable, consistent, and powerful strategic partner. By managing AI's short-term memory, we can ensure it delivers on its long-term promise.

Notes

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In the Fire: Exploring How Social Media Influencers Navigate Social Media Firestorms

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Track: *AM Funded Research

Summary Statement

Social media firestorms are becoming common as beauty brands embrace outrage marketing. However, what is less known is the impact of these storms on social media influencers. This paper asks, what is the impact of social media firestorms on influencers, specifically influencers of colour, that get caught up in them. Through analysis of social media content, and interviews with beauty influencers, we contribute to the literature on influencer labour and social media firestorms.

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Digital Authenticity in Destination Marketing: A Systematic Review of AI-mediated Narratives, Trust, and Consumer Response

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

This systematic literature review synthesises 64 high-quality journal articles to clarify how digital authenticity shapes trust, emotional engagement, and destination decision-making in AI-driven destination marketing. It identifies five dominant themes and reveals significant conceptual fragmentation, geographic concentration in advanced economies, and methodological dependence on quantitative cross-sectional designs. The findings highlight the need for multidimensional authenticity frameworks, longitudinal approaches, and context-sensitive research to advance theory and practice in digitally mediated destination marketing.

Competitive Short Paper

Digital technologies have transformed destination marketing by enabling destinations to engage with global audiences through artificial intelligence (AI)-generated sources and algorithm-driven personalisation. Despite the benefits of these technologies, it raises concerns about the authenticity and reliability of digitally-generated content. Tourists increasingly rely on digital content to evaluate destinations; however, such content creates ambiguity about authenticity and influences tourists' trust, emotional engagement, and decision-making. This makes the evaluation of digital authenticity in destination marketing both theoretically and practically important and timely, particularly in the context of consumer scepticism.

To critically evaluate existing knowledge in the domain of digital authenticity, this study adopts a systematic literature review of 64 peer-reviewed journal articles retrieved from Scopus-indexed, CABS-ranked (4*,4,3,and 2) journals published between 2017 and 2025. Since most of the articles are overlapped in Scopus and Web of Science, the study considers the Scopus-indexed journals. As per the initial search,152 journal articles were retrieved from Scopus using a combination of keywords including 'tourism', 'AI', 'Human', 'destination marketing' and 'Digital Authenticity'. After the careful screening based on relevance, 64 articles were considered for analysis. Only English-language journal publications were included, while book chapters and conference proceedings were excluded. Those were analysed based on publication, geographic focus, methodology, theoretical framework, key variables, findings, limitations and future agenda. A thematic analysis was applied to identify the research methods, recurring patterns, and gaps.

The review highlights five key themes. First, *digital authenticity* examines how AI, anthropomorphism, digital content, and the metaverse shape perceived authenticity. Second, *trust and credibility* are considered as mediators through which digital authenticity influences destination choice. Third, *emotional engagement* highlights how authentic digital experiences strengthen attachment and destination preference. Fourth, *destination image formation* demonstrates how digital authenticity narratives influence positive cognitive and affective evaluations of destinations. Fifth, *strategic and managerial implications* emphasise the challenge of balancing efficiency-driven digitalisation and preserving human presence, cultural integrity, and ethical transparency.

Regarding scholarly journals, the literature is mostly published in leading tourism journals such as *International Journal of Hospitality Management, Tourism Management, Journal of Travel Research,* and *Annals of Tourism Research*, indicating that the major focus is on tourism, while limited focus on mainstream marketing journals. This suggests opportunities to further integrate digital authenticity into broader marketing debates on branding, trust, consumer technology, interaction, and ethical AI.

Geographically, the existing studies are focused on technologically advanced economies such as China, the USA and Western European countries. In contrast, emerging destinations remain underrepresented. Sri Lanka does not feature as a primary research context in the reviewed studies, despite its strong reliance on destination image, cultural authenticity, and experiential tourism. Methodologically, existing studies are dominated by quantitative, cross-sectional survey instruments grounded in Technology Acceptance frameworks, while qualitative and longitudinal studies are limited.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of digital authenticity in destination marketing while revealing conceptual fragmentation, geographic bias, and methodological limitations. Future research should develop multidimensional conceptualisations of digital authenticity, employ longitudinal designs, and examine cross-cultural contexts to advance theoretical and managerial understanding in this emerging domain.

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Assessing the Irreducibly Human in AI-Era Marketing

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This paper introduces the Voice–Judgement–Taste (VJT) framework, grounded in 33 interviews with marketing practitioners, to identify the human capabilities that remain essential in AI-mediated work. It shows how voice, judgement, and taste resolve the productivity–authenticity tension created by generative tools and proposes assessment designs that make human reasoning and authorship visible. The study offers a practice-aligned basis for authentic, AI-resilient marketing pedagogy.

Competitive Short Paper

Marketing education is being reshaped by generative AI, yet programmes lack clarity on which human capabilities continue to create value when tools automate much early-stage production (Acar, 2024; Grewal et al., 2024). While the literature emphasises critical thinking, creativity and human oversight in AI-rich environments (Guha et al., 2024), these constructs remain too broad to guide assessment or curriculum design. This study addresses that gap by introducing a practice-aligned framework of three non-delegable human capabilities—voice, judgement and taste (VJT)—and translating them into assessable pedagogic outcomes.

The framework is grounded in 33 in-depth interviews with marketing practitioners across sectors and levels of AI integration. Participants included digital analysts, creative leads, consultants, founders and automation specialists working in business-to-consumer and business-to-business contexts. Interviews were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis to surface patterned meanings in how practitioners describe human contribution in AI-mediated workflows (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Three capabilities consistently emerged as decisive for quality, accountability and distinctiveness. Voice refers to the capacity to convey identity, intent and relational stance in ways that align with brand and audience expectations, consistent with research on tone of voice and perceived authenticity in brand communication (Delin, 2007). Practitioners reported that AI drafts often flatten idiom, narrative flow and cultural nuance, requiring human authorship to restore tone, perspective and personality, echoing concerns about voice erosion in AI-assisted texts (Tan et al., 2025). Judgement denotes contextual, ethical and strategic decision-making that governs when and how AI should be used, including verification, risk detection and situational adaptation. Participants stressed that accountability remains human, particularly where reputational or regulatory stakes are high, aligning with calls for responsible AI use in marketing education (Guha et al., 2024). Taste captures the ability to discern quality and originality when models produce many acceptable variants. Practitioners described taste as curating options, rejecting formulaic patterns and maintaining coherence across touchpoints.

Together, these capabilities resolve the productivity–authenticity tension reported by practitioners and scholars. AI accelerates ideation, drafting and reformatting, but risks homogenisation and cultural misalignment (Acar, 2024). Voice restores identity after acceleration, judgement determines appropriate deployment and safeguards responsibility, and taste curates distinctive options from abundant outputs. Rather than opposing efficiency, these capabilities convert speed into strategic value.

The paper translates the VJT framework into observable assessment indicators aligned with brand expression, contextual decision-making, and evaluative curation. Building on these indicators, it outlines workflow-aligned assessment designs, including before/after voice revisions, brief judgement logs that surface decision processes, and curation tasks requiring students to justify selection among AI variants, responding to calls for more authentic assessment in marketing education (Grewal et al., 2024).

By grounding a conceptual framework in current practice, this study offers marketing educators a clear, assessable account of human value in AI-mediated work. It supports curriculum renewal that develops not only tool fluency but the forms of reasoning and authorship employers increasingly expect from graduates (Mehmet et al., 2025). The VJT framework therefore provides a practical basis for authentic, AI-resilient marketing education.

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Agentic Self-expression and Pragmatic Visibility: Understanding Dual Motivation in TikTok's Song Gifting

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This study explores how TikTok users circulate songs as symbolic gifting, revealing how dual motivations—agentic self-expression and pragmatic visibility—shape selection practices, social recognition, and platform-mediated relational dynamics. Using a multimethod netnographic design, it shows how algorithmic platforms govern circulation dynamics, social recognition, producing tensions beyond classical reciprocity, while linking individual identity expression with collective consumption patterns. Findings offer theoretical insights into digital gifting and practical implications for consumer well-being and purposeful content distribution.

Competitive Short Paper

User-generated content (UGC) platform, TikTok, has disrupted music engagement by turning soundbites into creative tools, where algorithmic repetition (Siles et al., 2024) and produsage-driven sonic templates (Radovanović, 2022) shape users' song choices. Although song circulation is rarely framed as gifting, a gift-giving lens foregrounds how TikTok users adapt and share content others reinterpret and amplify, clarifying relational work, recognition dynamics, and tacit obligations through which songs accumulate traction. Whereas Giesler (2006) conceptualizes gifting as ritualized cycles of reciprocity stabilizing social relations, this study extends the framework to algorithmically mediated environments where cultural content continuously circulates among dispersed participants who may never encounter one another. TikTok's dual motivation—balancing agentic self-expression with pragmatic adaptation to platform visibility—challenges models that reduce gifting to self–other tensions (Darmody et al., 2025; Givi et al., 2023), revealing overlooked drivers of cultural exchange. This study explores user-navigation motivations in song selections, unpacking mechanisms linking individual identity expression with collective consumption patterns, and addressing unexamined motivational dynamics through which users 'gift' content shaped by digital affordances.

French sociologist Mauss (1925/1966) conceptualizes gift exchange as 'total social fact'—a multidimensional system in which giving, receiving, and reciprocating organize obligation, prestige, and recognition, binding actors within moral, symbolic, economic, and relational structures. Consumer research demonstrates how gift systems structure social relations (Giesler, 2006), embedding individual acts within broader networks of solidarity, identity construction, and symbolic circulation, while sustaining the negotiation of esteem and cohesion attached to exchanged goods. Within digital culture, this framework clarifies how TikTok's circulation of songs functions as symbolic gifting, as users share, reinterpret, and amplify soundbites that accrue visibility and meaning while circulating through algorithmic interaction channels and contexts. Yet TikTok's environment complicates classical reciprocity, because platform-mediated exchanges mimic gifting without conforming to Maussian obligatory return cycles, producing practical tensions that justify investigating how algorithmic infrastructures shape circulation dynamics and govern interactions within this context.

This study employed a multimethod netnographic design (Kozinets & Gretzel, 2023; Paoli & D'Auria, 2025), combining twenty interviews with TikTok users and eighty online observations, integrating interaction-based insights and song-selection practices to capture dual motivational dynamics. Analysis revealed users navigate pragmatic gifting to maximize visibility and agentic gifting to express tastes, producing motivational tensions extending beyond obligatory Maussian reciprocity. Reciprocity is often suspended; users selectively circulating songs to signal identity, engage imagined audiences (Valverde, 2022), or maximize reach, with algorithmic logics orchestrating exchanges (Nachtwey & Schaupp, 2024) and semi-public gifting (Weinberger et al., 2025). Emerging themes show users select songs based on: mood, meaningful personal resonance, positive effects of visibility, and trending traction on #ForYouPage, on a continuum from taste-based curation to visibility-seeking circulation. This study extends Giesler's (2006) Maussian gifting system by integrating agentic and pragmatic dynamics (adapted from Givi et al., 2023) and elaborates semi-public, platform-mediated relationalities shaping audience interactions (Valverde, 2022). Practical implications highlight consumers' well-being, showing how TikTok song circulation—through dual motivational dynamics—can support mindful gifting (Branco-Illodo et al., 2025), enhancing enjoyment, learning, and productivity while offering music creators avenues for purposeful song distribution.

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Investigating Ethical Concerns in Thailand's Muay Thai Industry: An Analysis of Commercial Practice, Cultural Acceptance, and Pathways to Ethical Improvement.

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Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

Summary Statement

This paper introduces a doctoral research project examining ethical concerns in Thailand's Muay Thai industry, focusing on everyday gym practices, labour conditions and power relations. Grounded on in-person qualitative interviews with Thai and non-Thai fighters residing in Thailand, the research explores how commercialisation intersects with discipline, cultural abidance, and moral silence. Using a Foucauldian framework alongside Thai cultural values, the study interrogates how consent, fairness and inequality arise within the globalising combat sport.

Competitive Short Paper

Muay Thai is widely recognised as Thailand's national sport and has become a central component of the country's cultural identity, tourism economy, and soft power strategy (Pohvee, 2025). Alongside its ritualised traditions and symbolic practices, Muay Thai has increasingly integrated into global commercial and media networks, with organisations such as ONE Championship contributing to its international visibility and market expansion (Dolpanya and Igel, 2021; Ferraz and Fernandez, 2019). While existing scholarship has examined Muay Thai's cultural significance and economic value, far less attention has been paid to the ethical conditions under which the sport operates, particularly at the level of everyday gym practices and fighter-manager relationships.

This PhD research investigates how ethical practices, power relations, and labour conditions are experienced and understood within Thailand's Muay Thai industry. Prior studies suggest that many Thai fighters enter the sport from disadvantaged backgrounds, where limited educational and employment opportunities shape participation as a livelihood rather than a lifestyle choice (Suwankhong et al., 2023). In contrast, foreign fighters residing in Thailand often engage with Muay Thai for cultural experience, fitness, or personal development (Pookaiyaudom, 2020). This contrast raises important ethical questions regarding fairness, consent, and inequality within the same sporting system.

This study adopts a qualitative, multi-sited research design centred on in-person fieldwork in Thailand. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with Thai fighters from rural and urban backgrounds, foreign fighters residing in Thailand to understand their lived experiences and with gym owners, promoters, and relevant stakeholders to formulate better understanding of relationship dynamics and formulation of the power structures in Muay Thai. In addition, participant observation within randomly selected Muay Thai gyms will complement interview data, enabling closer examination of daily training routines, disciplinary practices, and informal power relations. A constructivist grounded theory approach will guide analysis, allowing patterns and ethical concerns to emerge inductively from participants' lived experiences (Charmaz, 2006).

Analytically, the research draws on three interconnected theoretical frameworks. First, a Foucauldian framework is used to examine how power operates at a micro level through everyday practices, discipline, and self-regulation within gyms, rather than overt coercion alone (Foucault, 1975; 1980). This framing helps explain how fighters come to internalise expectations of obedience, endurance, and silence as part of legitimate sporting practice. Second, the study applies Thai cultural lenses, particularly Bunkhun and Kreng Jai, to understand how moral indebtedness, gratitude, and deference shape fighter-manager relationships (Bohnert, 2018). These values may discourage fighters from negotiating pay or challenging unfair treatment, even when conditions may be perceived as unjust. Third, the research engages with exploitation and the capabilities approach to assess whether participation in Muay Thai reflects genuine choice or constrained agency shaped by socio-economic limitation (Sen, 1999).

By foregrounding fighters' own ethical interpretations and boundaries, this research addresses a significant gap in existing literature, which has largely prioritised cultural preservation and tourism narratives over labour conditions in Muay Thai. The study demonstrates how global commercialisation interacts with culturally embedded moral frameworks, shaping ethical outcomes within an increasingly globalised combat sport.

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Value Creation in Higher Education: A Systematic Review and Future Research Agenda

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This study examines value creation in higher education institutions amid growing global competition, arguing that rankings and student satisfaction alone do not guarantee long-term success. Using a PRISMA-guided systematic literature review, it synthesizes research on higher education, stakeholder dynamics, and value creation. Thematic and descriptive analyses reveal a shift toward multi-stakeholder value perspectives. Applying the TCCM framework, the paper identifies theoretical, contextual, and methodological gaps and proposes future research directions for institutional sustainability and impact.

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Tourism Purchase Behaviour of Senior Chinese Consumers: A Social Identity Perspective

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This study aims to enhance the understanding of Chinese senior consumers' tourism purchase behaviour by investigating the influence of social identity. A qualitative approach involving in-depth interviews was employed, and thematic analysis was carried out. The finding shows that, for Chinese senior consumers, tourism purchasing is often governed by an identity–relationship–symbolic logic. Furthermore, seniors frequently treat impersonal digital information as unreliable and instead rely on family endorsement, particularly children.

Competitive Short Paper

Scholars have emphasised the importance of understanding what motivates consumers' purchase behaviour (Belk, 1988; Opute, Jawad and Jiang, 2022). In response to that need, scholars have attempted to enhance that understanding by utilising several theories, one of which is culture (Gbadamosi, 2021; Opute, Jawad, and Jiang, 2022). From a cultural perspective, scholars have underlined the need to enhance understanding of consumer behaviour by utilising the social identity theory (SIT) (Gbadamosi, 2021). In response to research calls (Opute, Irene, and Iwu, 2020; Ji and Li, 2025; Lee, 2025), this study explores the tourism setting from a SIT perspective.

China is undergoing a significant demographic shift, with its population aged 60 and over increasing steadily (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020), and further increases are expected (Textor, 2024a; Textor, 2024b). The ageing population is a critical segment for the tourism industry in China (Ji and Li, 2025; Lee, 2025). Research on social identity (SI) and tourism purchase behaviour influence is increasing (Berger et al., 2018; Chen and Lin, 2019), yet much of what we know about senior consumers' tourism purchasing remains bounded by individualistic assumptions (Chang, 2025; MacInnis, Torelli and Park, 2019) and is often derived from Anglo-Western contexts (Cohen and Cohen, 2015; Shavitt and Barnes, 2020). This study aims to enhance the understanding of Chinese senior consumers' tourism purchase behaviour by investigating the influence of SI.

To understand the influence of social identity on the tourism purchase behaviour of senior Chinese consumers, a qualitative approach involving in-depth interviews was employed. Interview participants included 28 senior Chinese consumers who met two inclusion criteria: (1) aged above 55 and (2) have engaged in leisure travel within the past five years. Participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling, and each interview lasted 45-60 minutes. Thematic analysis was carried out in this study, ensuring constant comparison across interviews to achieve thick description and contextualisation (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2019). Further, to ensure credibility, the thematic outcomes were supported by verbatim evidence, which was also enhanced through member checking and peer debriefing.

This paper advances marketing and tourism scholarship in two specific ways. First, it shows that, for Chinese senior consumers, tourism purchasing is often governed by an identity–relationship–symbolic logic that can outweigh purely functional explanations common in senior tourism research. Second, it extends SI usage in tourism studies: rather than measuring SI as group affiliation, it theorises SI as cultural mechanisms activated in situ—harmony maintenance (normative assimilation), intergenerational trust transfer (relational endorsement), and moral/collective-memory confirmation (symbolic identity). This reframing helps unlock potential by revealing how culturally aligned design and communication can reduce friction, increase legitimacy, and broaden participation in later-life tourism. The managerial implication is that tourism providers should operationalise an "identity situation → trigger → design/communication cue" logic.

Because participants were 55+ and had recent leisure travel, the findings may not fully generalise to seniors who are digitally excluded or to cultural contexts where collectivism/harmony are less central. Future work can test transferability via cross-region comparisons within China.

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Exploring the Effects of Internal Relationship Marketing Orientation

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Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

Summary Statement

Using a mixed-methods approach, a 10-dimension model of internal relationship marketing orientation (IRMO) is developed and tested. Data is from Hong Kong business managers. The qualitative and quantitative research confirmed IRMO's conceptualisation and its positive impact on business outcomes. The PLS-SEM results showed a positive IRMO HOC impact on the three perceived staff performance types and perceived organisational commitment. Two-way (power distance) and three-way (industry type x power distance) moderation effects were found.

Competitive Short Paper

Background

Compared to market orientation (MO) and relationship marketing orientation (RMO), businesses' adoption and deployment of internal relationship marketing orientation (IRMO) strategies see employees as internal customers (Park & Tran, 2018), shifting the analysis and enaction focus to employees. By marrying the concept of internal marketing (IM) with relationship marketing (RM) and adopting an orientation focused on building and maintaining long-term relationships within the business and treating employees as internal customers, an IRMO is developed. This employee orientation boosts engagement, satisfaction, efficiency and customer service performance for both internal and external customers (Brown et al., 2025), leading to improved business outcomes.

Whilst RMO has been widely studied, understanding about the adoption of IRMO and its business-outcome effects are under-researched. This creates a gap in the literature.

Drawing on a critical review of the marketing and strategic HRM literature (e.g. Sin et al., 2005; Tanwar & Prasad, 2017), a 10-dimension model of IRMO is developed and tested. Six extant RMO dimensions – bonding, communication, empathy, reciprocity, shared value – were deemed to offer insufficient coverage of the IRMO domain. Four additional dimensions were incorporated from strategic HRM – psychological contract, employer branding, employee orientation, job satisfaction – to completely canvas IRMO's domain.

This study contributes to filling this gap by investigating the adoption of IRMO by businesses and its impact on three types of perceived staff performance – in execution, adaptation and innovation – and perceived organisational commitment, as business outcomes. Since the relationship between managers and employees in a business may involve power constraints on the latter, power distance is investigated as a moderator.

Methodology

This research employed a sequential mixed-methods approach with data collected from Hong Kong (HK) business managers. The first (qualitative) stage featured six in-depth senior manager interviews to confirm the clarity of the model's elements and further identify any potential missing factors. IRMO was operationalised as a 10-dimension, reflective-reflective (Type I) higher-order (HOC) construct using measures drawn from the literature. The second (quantitative) stage utilised a convenience sample (panel) online survey featuring 102 responses. Analysis used PLS-SEM – SmartPLS 4 (Ringle et al., 2024), following recommended approaches and guidelines (Hair et al., 2022).

Findings

Both the qualitative and quantitative research confirmed the conceptualisation of IRMO as a ten-dimensional construct and its positive impact on business outcomes. The PLS-SEM results showed a positive IRMO HOC impact on the three perceived staff performance types and perceived organisational commitment. Power distance's moderation effect on IRMO's influence on the perceived staff performance types was partially supported. Power distance's moderation effect on IRMO's influence on perceived organisational commitment was not supported. A three-way moderation analysis (Becker et al., 2023) found a significant industry type x power distance interaction.

Conclusion

This study highlights IRMO's importance for business outcomes, namely perceived staff performance types and perceived organisational commitment. With human capital's growing importance in modern organisations, an appropriate understanding of IRMO allows decision-makers to improve their organisational competitiveness in a volatile business environment. A limitation is that all findings refer to perceptions. Business performance was not assessed in objective terms.

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Instagram Shoppable Posts In Checkout-Unavailable Contexts: Trust Transfer And Servicescape Effects

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

Social commerce has positioned Instagram as a key retail channel, yet most global users complete purchases off-platform via mobile websites. Addressing limited research on this dominant journey, this study examines how the perceived servicescape of Instagram shoppable posts shapes trust and purchase intention. Grounded in S-O-R and trust transfer theory, findings show that ISP servicescape drives trust transfer and purchase intention, with weaker servicescape–trust effects observed among older users.

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Beyond Ownership: Examining Everyday Fashion Rental through the Lens of Basic Psychological Needs Theory

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

While rental is a sustainable alternative to ownership, low consumer uptake threatens its viability. Using Basic Psychological Needs Theory, this qualitative study explores to what extent renting of everyday clothes can fulfil human needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness). Findings identify key "need activators" e.g., wardrobe experimentation and social identity and "inhibitors" e.g., hygiene concerns and lack of emotional connection. This research offers strategic insights for businesses to align services with core human psychological drivers.

Competitive Short Paper

The fashion industry is a major contributor to environmental pollution and global waste (Niinimäki et al., 2020), driven by increased production and consumption levels alongside a decline in clothing utilization rates (EMF, 2017, 2021). Although fashion rental models have been positioned as a promising sustainable alternative to traditional ownership (Trabandt et al., 2025), rental businesses struggle with economic viability due to low consumer uptake.

Existing fashion rental literature has identified motivations (e.g., hedonic, utilitarian, biospheric) and barriers (e.g., perceived inconvenience and risk, contamination concerns, preferences of ownership) (see Baek and Oh, 2021; Becker-Leifhold and Iran, 2018; Jain et al. 2022). However, previous research offers limited insights into the underlying psychological processes driving or inhibiting consumers' intrinsic motivations. Drawing on basic psychological needs theory (BPNT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gilal et al., 2019, 2023), this study explores to what extent renting of everyday clothes can fulfil the core human needs of autonomy (i.e., need to feel in control), competence (i.e. need to feel effective and capable), and relatedness (i.e., need to feel connected).

The study used a two-phase qualitative design comprising three focus groups and 28 semi-structured interviews with UK consumers. The data were thematically analysed using an abductive approach, focusing on autonomy, relatedness and competence, alongside additional themes that emerged during the iterative process.

The findings revealed that fashion rental can support consumers' feeling of autonomy by enabling them to experiment with a variety of clothes, get access to high-quality clothes and curate their own wardrobe. However, consumers' sense of freewill may be threatened by the lack of ownership and physical stores that limit their ability to touch, see and feel the quality of clothes, and increase concerns about hygiene, refund issues, and misleading item descriptions. The need for competence is fulfilled when consumers feel that they can use the platform effectively to create a capsule wardrobe in their pursuit for minimalism. Rental platforms will also require certain competencies such as understanding how renting works, searching clothes through the inventory, managing deadlines for returning clothes. Finally, the need for relatedness is satisfied when fashion rental aids consumers in maintaining their social identity (including sustainable or ethical consumer identity) connecting with others who have similar values. In addition, rented clothes can help them stand out, feel accepted by others and build stronger social ties. However, the lack of emotional connection and sentimentality with the clothes and stigma associated with renting will challenge their feeling of connectedness.

Theoretically, this study extends the use of BNPT in a novel consumption context, renting everyday clothing contributing to the growing body of research in clothing rental (Song and Wu, 2024). Specifically, we identify perceived psychological need activators/inhibitors supporting/preventing consumers from fulfilling their basic psychological needs. Practically, this study offers valuable insights for fashion rental businesses. The findings suggest that the design and communication of access-based services need to be aligned with consumers' psychological needs paying particular attention to need activators and inhibitors supporting users to fulfil their need for autonomy, competence and relatedness.

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Concerned Parents Navigating Ideological Tensions in a Quasi-Market

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

The paper combines the concept of consumer responsibilization in quasi-markets (Coskuner-Balli 2020) with concerned markets (Geiger et al. 2014) to investigate parental choice of primary schools in a Swedish municipality.

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AI-Based Measurement of Gambling Advertising Exposure in English Premier League

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Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

Summary Statement

This paper presents an AI-based system that automatically identifies and quantifies gambling advertisements in English Premier League broadcasts. By reducing the limitations of manual content analysis, the tool achieves near-perfect agreement with human coders using shot detection, optical character recognition (OCR), and statistical analysis. This tool can be used by studies on the extent of exposure to gambling in the media and provide evidence for further regulatory oversight.

Competitive Short Paper

Background and Aim

Gambling marketing is deeply embedded in the live coverage of English Premier League (EPL) matches. For example, 27,440 gambling messages were exposed during the six televised matches of the opening weekend of the 2025/26 (Rossi et al., 2023, 2024, 2025). These huge numbers are concerning, as Low Attention Processing (LAP) theory suggests that even when people focus on a primary task (e.g. watching a football match), they can still process secondary stimuli (e.g. in-game gambling advertisements) (Heath & Nairn, 2005). Previous efforts on the prevalence of the gambling advertisements, while useful, involved manually coding gambling messages in broadcasts. Manual encoding is labour-intensive, time-consuming, and prone to reliability issues. We therefore propose an AI-based approach that overcomes these limitations by automating the detection and quantification of gambling brand exposure.

Methodology

A three-stage process was developed to detect and quantify gambling brands, their start time on screen, duration, and density of presence during match broadcasts. First, we used shot boundary detection via HSV (Hue, Saturation, and Value) histogram thresholds to detect the beginning and end of camera shots. Second, we utilized optical character recognition (OCR) to convert gambling logos into textual information (Li et al., 2023; Smith, 2007; Shi et al., 2016; Vedhaviyassh et al., 2022). Third, statistical analysis identified the gambling brands and number of gambling brand logos exposed on screen, as well as their duration on screen. To assess reliability, we compared AI outputs with trained human coders on EPL broadcast segments. We selected a random 10-minute segment of a match taking place between Manchester City and Bournemouth (May 2025).

Results

Krippendorff's alpha coefficient shows perfect agreement on start time and brand (α=1.000), near-perfect agreement on duration (α=0.974), and maximum concurrent logos (α=0.968) (Krippendorff, 2004). AI detected 96.5% of the identical logos that the human coder identified. Mismatches between the AI tool and the human coder occurred due to player movement while logos were on screen, and the AI misreading of text.

Discussion and Implications

Studies show a high volume of gambling advertising in EPL broadcast and measures like whistle-to-whistle bans have failed to reduce exposure during games. (Rossi et al., 2025). LAP theory (Heath & Nairn, 2005) suggests that such exposures increase environmental processing and make audiences more vulnerable to implicit persuasion. Our AI tool can monitor compliance in real time, detecting excessive logo congestion and supporting systematic enforcement. This tool detects objects in high-quality video footage but struggles with low-resolution images and requires high-performance computing for processing large files. It can be extended to other media platforms, sporting contexts, and the marketing of other harmful products. Future developments should address misclassification of occluded text and non-textual logo recognition by incorporating motion-aware tracking and image-based classifiers. Expanding the brand vocabulary and integrating license databases can also enhance its utility.

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The Art Of Menopause

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This paper presents a participatory, collage-elicitation method for exploring the commercialisation of menopause. This project champions a feminist and decolonial approach to amplify midlife women's voices and make visible lives that mainstream narratives render peripheral or 'othered'. The method privileges participants' lived experiences, encourages the non-verbal expression of embodied menopausal experiences, and generates dialogical data that links representation to industry practices. This deliberately non-extractive approach ensures the research authentically captures and amplifies women's voices.

Competitive Short Paper

This paper examines how marketised menopause shapes the meanings of ageing and female empowerment using an innovative methodological approach that sits at the nexus of feminist and decolonial ways of knowing. This work seeks to make a methodological contribution by advancing creative, embodied methodological practice through an arts-based, participatory collage method that centres and elevates the lived experiences and embodied knowledges of menopausal women.

Situated within the broader medicalisation of women's health, this project examines how menopause, once a stigmatised and silenced experience, has been reframed by the wellness industry as a market opportunity that shapes meanings, vocabularies and expectations about ageing, health and femininity (Corus et al., 2024; Rottenberg & Gilchrist, 2025). Several studies have analysed menopause marketing, such as Onculer & Onculer Yayalar's (2025) content analysis of menopause-related advertisements; far less attention has been paid to how women interpret these messages. Corus et al.'s (2024) paper is one of the few that incorporated women's voices through interviews and blog posts, alongside secondary data analysis.

A central aim of this work is to amplify midlife women's voices and make visible lives that mainstream narratives often render peripheral or 'othered' (Hutton, 2019; Banister et al., 2016), using lived experience to reveal how aspirational wellness markets are perceived, interpreted and resisted. Magalhães Lopes et al. (2025) stress that foregrounding these peripheral lives and embodied experiences, as well as rethinking agency, sovereignty, and power, is crucial to our understanding of what counts as choice or empowerment; this is not common practice in most marketing studies. A feminist research design is therefore essential because it highlights power, embodiment and intersectionality and responds to epistemic injustice (Hutton & Cappellini, 2022; Fricker, 2007) that often renders women's testimony invisible, particularly in health contexts. Women routinely have their bodily symptoms downplayed or ignored by clinicians (Sillence et al., 2025), and others lack the language to make sense of their experiences due to a lack of (menopause) education (Langmann et al., 2025).

This study uses collage not only because it elicits embodied, affective, and material knowledges that verbal interviews often miss (Bröckerhoff & Seregina, 2022; Särmä, 2019), but also enables women who may not feel comfortable expressing themselves verbally, either due to the sensitive nature of the topic (e.g. Cotte & Latour, 2009) or because they do not possess the precise language to express their experiences (Carel & Kidd, 2014).

As a participatory, arts-based method, collage redistributes interpretive authority through collaborative collage-elicitation interviews and co-analysis sessions, enabling participants to shape coding, themes and dissemination decisions. The method is explicitly non-extractive and embeds both participant and researcher reflexivity at every stage, which strengthens the analysis by enabling participants to reflect on their views and see how they evolve throughout the research process (Cassell et al., 2020) and requires the researcher to be both reflective and critically reflexive (Bettany & Woodruffe-Burton, 2009). This ensures the research faithfully captures and amplifies women's voices and lived experiences, restoring participants' interpretive authority and providing a cathartic, empowering space for expression and meaning-making.

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Nothing About Us Without Us: Exploring Consumers with Disabilities Attitudes and Consumer Behaviour within the Fashion Industry

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This paper examines how consumers with disabilities experience and interpret self and social identity within contemporary fashion markets. Using a qualitative, lived-experience approach, it explores how fashion imagery, retail environments, and digital platforms shape feelings of identity, belonging, and exclusion. By centring disabled consumers as interpretive authorities, this research challenges superficial approaches to inclusion and argues for a shift from representational optics to structural transformation in all aspects of the fashion industry.

Competitive Short Paper

This study investigates how consumers with disabilities perceive their representation within the contemporary fashion industry, and how that representation (or absence) shapes experiences of identity, belonging and exclusion. While fashion markets itself as a progressive site of diversity and inclusion, socially idealised aesthetics and infrastructures continue to privilege able-bodied norms, positioning disabled bodies as marginalised culturally (Siebers, 2008; Garland-Thomson, 2009). Fashion is more than clothing: it is a powerful cultural system producing and circulating ideals of desirability, modernity and value through marketing efforts, infrastructure and social identity (Entwistle, 2015; Kaiser, 2019; Rocamora, 2023). Disability remains underrepresented or visible predominantly through narratives of bravery and overcoming adversity, often critiqued as 'inspiration porn' (Young, 2014; Grue, 2015; Khan, 2020). Resulting in tokenistic diversity of highly visible gestures, enabling brands to claim inclusivity without addressing structural barriers in product design, retail environments, organisational practices or decision-making power (Ahemd, 2012; Barnes, 2019; Parsons& Rouse, 2021; Laurits & Lu, 2024).

Grounded in critical disability studies, the research conceptualises exclusion as both visual and material: not only who is seen as fashionable but who fashion serves (Goodley, 2017; Garland-Thomson, 2009). It draws on an integrated theoretical framework combining the Social Model of Disability (SMD) (Oliver, 1990; Shakespeare, 2013), Self-Identity Theory (Burke & Stets, 2009) and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). SMD enables analysis of how disability is produced through disabling design and cultural norms rather than embodied difference alone (Oliver, 1990; Di Roma & Scarcelli, 2024). Self-Identity Theory examines how fashion imagery and shopping encounters feedback about the kinds of selves that are socially recognised, affirmed, resisted or identity dissonance (Burke & Stets, 2009). Social Identity Theory extends this analysis to collective belonging, examining how inclusion and exclusion signal the legitimacy and cultural worth of disabled communities (Tajfel & turner, 1986; Foster & Pettinicchio, 2021; Wang & Wei, 2024).

Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative lived-experience design within a constructivist epistemology (Berger & Luckman, 1996; Creswell & Poth, 2018), using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis exploring how disabled consumers make meaning of fashion culture and consumption (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Data is generated through in -depth semi-structured interviews and go-along shopping observations conducted in physical or online retail environments (Kusenbach, 2003; Pink, 2015). This combination allows for the exploration of both reflective interpretations of fashion representation and real-time encounters with access, exclusion, and agency in fashion consumption. At present, data collection and analysis are ongoing and emerging results are beginning to illuminate shared themes. Analysis proceeds ideographically and iteratively, moving from within-case interpretation to cautious cross-care synthesis, with findings situated within the study theoretical framework (Smith et al., 2009, Darley et al., 2025). Ethical practice foregrounds accessibility and participant autonomy consistent with disability justice principles (Charlton, 1998; Hammell, 2020).

By centring disabled consumers as interpretive authorities, this research challenges superficial approaches to inclusion and argues for a shift from representational optics to structural transformation in all aspects of the fashion industry.

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Adolescents and the Algorithmic Marketplace: A Tale of Anxiety and Resistance

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This project examines how adolescent consumers experience the pervasive influence of algorithmic consumer culture. Drawing on findings from an interpretive participatory study with adolescents in the UK, and on literature on consumer resistance and on algorithmic culture studies, we offer a taxonomy of everyday strategies through which adolescents navigate the algorithmic consumer culture. We theorise everyday strategies they use to manage embodied and digital representations of the self, as well as the algorithm shaping them.

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Responsible AI in Omnichannel Journeys: Social Exchange, Co-Creation, and Consumer Autonomy

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

This conceptual paper examines how social exchange dynamics mediate AI-driven personalisation in customer journeys, extending Hardcastle et al.'s (2025) work beyond dyadic brand interactions. Synthesising social exchange theory with co-creation literature, it theorises how cost-benefit assessments create "reverse externalities," in which perceived exchange imbalances enable consumer resistance that contests algorithmic influence. The paper proposes a responsible AI framework positioning consumers as active exchange negotiators, emphasising exchange equity over algorithmic determinism.

Competitive Short Paper

AI-driven personalisation has become central to contemporary marketing practice, with computational advertising enabling unprecedented precision in targeting across consumer touchpoints. Recent research by Hardcastle, Vorster, and Brown (2025) demonstrates how customer journey perspectives can highlight the tensions between AI-driven personalisation and consumer empowerment, revealing how technological limitations mediate brand-customer relationships. However, their call for further research into contextualising factors beyond dyadic interactions highlights a critical theoretical gap: existing studies of algorithmically personalised advertising neglect the social exchange dynamics which frame many AI-driven customer journeys—the reciprocal relationships between consumers, brands, and algorithmic intermediaries that fundamentally shape brand engagement within omnichannel landscapes.

This conceptual paper extends Hardcastle et al.'s (2025) findings by theorising how social exchange principles mediate AI-driven personalisation, with particular attention to implications for responsible AI implementation. We synthesise customer journey perspectives, social exchange theory, and co-creation literature to develop a framework that positions consumers as active negotiators of value rather than passive recipients of algorithmic targeting.

The co-creation literature has traditionally emphasised how consumers actively participate in value generation through collaborative brand interactions. However, in AI-driven contexts where algorithms increasingly orchestrate touchpoint experiences, questions emerge about the nature and limits of authentic co-creation. We theorise that AI-mediated exchanges create unpredictable imbalances between consumer costs (data, privacy, autonomy) and perceived benefits (convenience, relevance, variety), generating what we term "reverse externalities"—unbudgeted costs and benefits accruing to brands from factors outside AI systems' design parameters. These conceptual insights suggest co-creation in AI-mediated journeys is not merely collaborative but contestable, as consumers' assessments of exchange fairness enable forms of resistance that redirect algorithmic influence.

We propose that consumers continuously evaluate AI-driven exchanges across customer journey stages, with different cost-benefit calculations emerging at discovery, consideration, conversion, loyalty, and advocacy phases. Drawing on Hardcastle et al.'s (2025) empirical findings, we theorise that the privacy-convenience trade-off operates non-uniformly: consumers tolerate surveillance costs during discovery and consideration phases where variety and speed deliver tangible benefits, but heighten sensitivity to data exploitation at conversion, where manipulation risks increase, and reassert autonomy demands at loyalty and advocacy stages where ethical exchange becomes a brand differentiator.

This conceptual contribution advances responsible AI scholarship in marketing by challenging algorithmic determinism. First, it theorises how social exchange imbalances mediate computational power asymmetries between brands and consumers, suggesting personalisation effectiveness requires perceived fairness in value exchange, not merely behavioural prediction accuracy. Second, it reconceptualises AI-driven customer journeys as ongoing negotiations where consumers exercise agency through cost-benefit assessments, not solely through digital choice architectures. Third, it exposes ethical tensions in AI advertising systems that fail to account for how exchange fairness perceptions shape consumer vulnerability and trust across different journey stages.

The paper contributes theoretically by extending customer journey and AI advertising research beyond dyadic interactions to encompass social exchange dynamics as mediating factors, while offering a conceptual foundation for implementing responsible AI that honours consumer autonomy through equitable exchange relationships within omnichannel contexts.

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"Walking Plastic Bottles?" Material-Based Evaluation and Consumer Perceptions of Polyester Fashion on Social Media

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This interdisciplinary research examines how consumers collectively perceive and evaluate polyester fashion through large-scale social media discourse on Sina Weibo. Using a mixed computational and discourse analytic approach, the study analyses how material-focused discussions emphasise perceived value, price fairness, and everyday wearing experiences rather than environmental performance. The research introduces material-based evaluation as a lens for understanding how consumer judgments of market legitimacy and value are socially articulated in the social media context.

Competitive Short Paper

Prior research on sustainable fashion marketing has largely relied on attitude measures, choice models, and willingness to pay experiments to examine consumer responses to material-related sustainability claims. While informative, these approaches offer limited insight into how consumers collectively perceive, question, and emotionally articulate fashion materials in everyday contexts. In particular, little is known about how material perceptions form through large-scale, naturally occurring social media discourse and how such processes shape judgments of market value, legitimacy, and fairness.

This study addresses this gap by analysing social media discussions on Sina Weibo, one of China's largest public platforms, focusing on polyester, a synthetic fibre central to both fast fashion production and circular fashion initiatives. The research is motivated by the recent emergence of highly visible hashtags such as "poor people wear plastic bottles in winter" and "polyester clothing safety concerns." Within these discussions, consumers sarcastically describe themselves as "walking plastic bottles" or question claims surrounding recycled polyester. Rather than focusing on environmental protection, these conversations emphasise perceived material value, wearing experiences, price fairness, and symbolic distinctions, revealing a material-centred controversy embedded in market perception.

Conceptually, the study introduces material-based evaluation, defined as a collective evaluative practice through which consumers anchor judgments to specific material substances and their perceived appropriateness, value, and legitimacy in use contexts. Drawing on agenda-setting theory and networked public discourse (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Guo et al., 2012), material culture theory (Miller, 2005), and consumer culture theory (Thompson & Haytko, 1997), the study positions material discourse as a key mechanism through which consumer perceptions of market offerings are articulated and contested in digital environments.

Methodologically, the project will adopt a mixed computational interpretive design integrating computational social science and critical discourse analysis. A large-scale corpus of Weibo posts and comments containing polyester-related keywords will be collected and structured by time, engagement metrics, and textual features. Topic modelling using BERTopic will identify dominant material-related discussion patterns, while supervised sentiment classification will assess the emotional orientation of each theme. These outputs will be combined to generate sentiment topic co-occurrence maps that visualise the prominence and emotional tone of material narratives. Representative topic clusters will then be examined using critical discourse analysis to analyse how language, metaphors, and evaluative expressions construct material judgments. Insights across analyses will be synthesised to develop empirically grounded propositions describing recurring evaluative frames and their associated emotional and narrative patterns.

For sustainable fashion marketing, this study is expected to offer diagnostic insights into how material-focused consumer discourse may diverge from corporate sustainability narratives, particularly where scepticism persists despite increased disclosure of material origins and production processes, extending prior explanations that primarily attribute scepticism to insufficient supply chain transparency. For consumer psychology and behaviour research, the project advances understanding of how value perceptions may be socially shaped through collective language practices rather than treated solely as individual-level attitudes. More broadly, the study proposes a transferable interdisciplinary framework for examining market perception formation in digital environments, addressing methodological gaps in mainstream marketing research.

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Bridging Psychology Theory and Marketing Practice: Using An ABC Model In Education

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

Insights from consumer psychology literature offer a powerful resource for enhancing marketing effectiveness; yet, most marketers lack psychology training. To support education, we therefore propose using a basic marketing funnel to map 100's of published psychological theories to the customer journey. We call this academic-practitioner approach the ABC model. We invite feedback on the effectiveness of this model as a means of introducing learners to relevant psychological theory and its application in marketing practice.

Competitive Short Paper

Marketers today face pressure to deliver impactful campaigns with limited resources. Organisations are expected to 'do more with less' (Hammet, 2025), balancing tighter budgets, faster timelines, and heightened expectations from stakeholders.

The consumer psychology literature offers a powerful resource for enhancing marketing effectiveness; yet, many marketers lack psychology training. Applying psychology theory in practice is therefore challenging. Both students and practitioners struggle to identify which theories are relevant, and how to translate abstract concepts into strategic plans. To support education, we therefore propose using a basic marketing funnel to map 100's of published psychological theories to the customer journey. We call this academic-practitioner approach the ABC model.

In general, established literature outlines three potential outcomes to marketing communication – a change in knowledge, a change in emotional state, or a change in behaviour. Psychologically, these are referred to as cognitive, affective, and conative outcomes. Marketers often refer to these outcomes in sequence, affecting distinct mental stages of a typical customer journey, known as a 'hierarchy of effects' (Wijaya, 2012) which mirrors the stages within a marketing funnel. For example, AIDA (Strong, 1925) is one well-known acronym for describing each stage, based on the assumption that attention leads to interest, then desire, and eventually action (i.e. purchase behaviour). Others include DAGMAR (Colley, 1961) and 'awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, purchase' (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961).

Although there is some debate (see Rehman et al, 2014) about the typical 'learn-feel-do' sequence of responses and whether certain outcomes are dependent on others (e.g. whether emotion generates behaviour), most models typically begin with some level of awareness and end with customer action. Rather than detailing multiple stages within a marketing funnel, we present a simplified basic model that incorporates many psychological influences.

There have been previous attempts to map the customer journey psychologically and neurologically. For example, following a detailed review, Vakratsas and Ambler (1999) presented a model with messages moving through filters, impacting cognition, affect and experience, and leading to behaviour. Empirical research also demonstrates the impact of creative communication on the hierarchy of effects (Smith, Chen and Yang, 2008). Yet, their work focuses on 13 specific variables, leaving a gap in understanding how a far wider range of psychological theories might impact the factors outlined by Vakratsas and Ambler (1999). More recently, Montazeribarforoushi, Keshavarzsaleh and Ramsøy (2017) detailed how both brain anatomy and the limbic system affect each stage of the customer journey, but again further work is required to understand psychologically how marketing affects this.

In short, we seek to address this gap by first understanding psychological differences between customers (which we simply call the 'audience' (A) stage); then considering the cognitive and emotional effects of brand communication at the top of the funnel (which we call B for 'brand perception'); and then considering how customers make a final decision to purchase (which we call C; choice evaluation).

We invite feedback on the effectiveness of this model as a means of introducing learners to psychological theory and its application to marketing practice.

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When Does AI Enabled Personalisation Pay Off? Cross-Country Evidence and the Moderating Role of AI Literacy.

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

This paper tests when AI enabled personalisation increases purchase intention across Shopee Vietnam and Amazon United Kingdom users. Employing moderated mediation model and multi-countries analysis, the research shows that personalisation affects purchase intention only through perceived relevance, not directly. AI literacy strengthens the personalisation to relevance link and increases the mediated effect on intention. Cross country differences are limited, with only a stronger direct effect in Vietnam.

Competitive Short Paper

AI recommendations now structure how consumers shop in e-commerce, yet the same personalisation can increase purchase in some cases and reduce it in others. This unevenness suggests that the value of AI enabled personalisation does not sit in targeting alone but in the meanings consumers draw from it. Prior work points to perceived relevance as the proximate cue that converts personalisation into persuasion while privacy and intrusiveness concerns can weaken responses when targeting feels inappropriate (Guha et al., 2021; De Keyzer et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2022). In parallel, international marketing research continues to call for cross country tests that treat culture and market context as empirical questions rather than assumptions (Yam et al., 2023; Mehmood et al., 2024). This study sets the framework up around a boundary condition that has received limited quantitative attention in recommendation contexts, consumer AI literacy.

Using PLS-SEM with bootstrapped indirect effects, we examine when AI enabled personalisation pays off by testing a moderated mediation model across two countries and two dominant platforms. We propose that personalisation increases purchase intention through perceived relevance and that AI literacy strengthens this indirect route by enabling consumers to interpret why recommendations appear and what they imply about fit. We then ask whether these relationships hold across Vietnam and the United Kingdom using multi-group analysis across countries.

Results show that personalisation does not increase purchase intention directly. The direct path from AI enabled personalisation to purchase intention is not supported ($\beta = 0.138$, $p = .060$). By contrast, personalisation strongly predicts perceived relevance ($\beta = 0.625$, $p < .001$) and perceived relevance predicts purchase intention ($\beta = 0.377$, $p < .001$). The indirect effect from personalisation to purchase intention through perceived relevance is supported ($\beta = 0.236$, $p < .001$) which indicates a full mediation pattern.

Interestingly, AI literacy strengthens the mechanism that makes personalisation work. Literacy has a small positive main effect on perceived relevance ($\beta = 0.103$, $p = .034$) and the interaction between personalisation and literacy is supported ($\beta = 0.114$, $p = .007$). The index of moderated mediation is supported ($\beta = 0.043$, $p = .025$) which means the indirect effect of personalisation on intention grows as literacy increases. In addition, cross country analysis shows limited heterogeneity.

The findings refine current debates about AI personalisation by shifting attention from average main effects to an interpretable process. Personalisation pays off when it earns relevance and consumers with higher AI literacy convert personalisation cues into relevance inferences more effectively. For theory, this positions consumer competence as a necessary boundary for AI based persuasion and suggests that cross country differences may appear more in direct appeal than in the underlying mechanism. For practice, platforms should design recommendation experiences that help users form relevance judgements and should treat literacy building cues as part of conversion design rather than a separate education agenda.

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When AI Agents Become Customers: Delegated Consumption, Consumer Identity, and the Reconfiguration of Branding

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This conceptual paper examines the emergence of AI agents as delegated customers and its implications for consumer identity and branding. It reconceptualises consumption as a process of identity-consistent preference execution distributed across human intentions and AI-mediated actions. The paper proposes a framework outlining shifts in consumer agency, branding dynamics, and identity trust, highlighting how AI-agent-driven markets reconfigure power, governance, and identity expression in contemporary branding ecosystems.

Competitive Short Paper

The rapid emergence of AI agents capable of autonomously searching, filtering, and executing consumption decisions signals a fundamental shift in how markets operate and how customers are conceptualised in marketing theory. Increasingly, AI agents act on behalf of consumers by operationalising preferences, routines, and constraints, mediating market interactions before individuals directly encounter brands. While such developments are beginning to reshape consumption practices, marketing theory remains largely anchored in a human-centric conception of the customer as an autonomous decision-maker, offering limited conceptual tools to account for AI-mediated forms of consumption.

This conceptual paper advances the notion of *AI agents as delegated customers*, arguing that they function as proxy consumption actors rather than independent market subjects. Drawing on consumer identity theory (Belk, 1988; Reed et al. 2012), branding literature (Aaker, 1997; Fournier, 1998), and emerging work on algorithmic mediation and agency (Kozinets, 2022; Puntoni et al. 2021), this paper reconceptualises the customer as a *delegated consumption unit* in which identity-relevant preferences are distributed across human intentions and AI-executed actions. From this perspective, consumption is reframed not solely as an act of choice, but as an increasingly automated process of identity-consistent preference execution.

The paper develops a conceptual framework that anticipates three boundary-breaking shifts in AI-agent-mediated markets. First, consumer agency becomes *delegated rather than displaced*, raising critical questions about how identity expression, self-concept clarity, and perceived autonomy are preserved or constrained through AI mediation. Second, branding dynamics are expected to evolve as brands increasingly interact with AI agents that prioritise compatibility, reliability, and trust signals over symbolic persuasion, suggesting a shift from emotional brand loyalty towards algorithmic alignment (Huang & Rust, 2021). Third, trust is reconceptualised as *identity trust*, the extent to which consumers trust AI agents to act in ways consistent with their values, boundaries, and sense of self, extending existing notions of brand and technology trust (Belk, 1988; Lankton, McKnight & Tripp, 2015).

Building on these arguments, the paper suggests that AI-agent-driven markets will increasingly privilege machine-readable brand attributes, interoperability, and governance structures, redistributing power within branding ecosystems and reshaping how consumer identity is enacted and recognised in the marketing landscape. In line with the conference theme *Breaking Boundaries - Unlocking Potential,* the paper concludes by outlining a future research agenda that calls for empirical investigation into delegated consumption practices, identity coherence under AI mediation, and the governance of branding in agent-driven markets. By positioning AI agents as delegated customers, this paper places consumer identity and branding at the centre of emerging debates on AI-driven market transformation.

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Exploring the Drivers of Winning in Professional Sport – Preliminary Findings

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Track: 10. Marketing in Context (e.g., Food, Sport)

Summary Statement

This study seeks to identify the key organisational culture (OC) dimensions that contribute to winning (on-field performance) outcomes (the 'what' of culture, that matters), and to understand how they might contribute to winning outcomes (the 'how' of culture, that matters) for elite rugby union. A multiple case study approach focuses on the Wallabies and the All Blacks – in the period 2015 to 2018. Fourteen OC dimensions were identified as being influential in affecting winning outcomes.

Competitive Short Paper

Background

Winning (on-field performance, OFP) has a role to play in fan satisfaction and loyalty. OFP is a product-related attribute (Blumrodt et al., 2023; Yun et al., 2021) that can affect fans' brand perceptions of the team and brand-related outcomes, such as cumulative satisfaction and loyalty (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020; Rahman et al., 2024). An important contributor to a team's on-field performance may be its organisational culture (OC) (Denison, 1984; Salilew, 2019; Skinner et al, 2021). However, there is a lack of understanding as to which dimensions of OC are important and might most influence performance outcomes of elite professional sporting teams. In short, the role of OC at the elite level of sport has not been comprehensively researched, with limited attention to dedicated to rugby union (RU), which is the focus of this study.

RU is an elite global sport and the largest growth sport in USA, the Americas and Asia. The Rugby World Cup (RWC) is the third largest tournament in the world after The Olympics and FIFA Football World Cup (World Rugby, 2025). However, RU has only been professional since 1995-96, and in some ways is organisationally performing as it did on an amateur basis. Thus, RU is an ideal context to investigate the role of OC in influencing winning outcomes in elite professional sport.

The aim of this study, therefore, is to identify the key OC dimensions that contribute to winning outcomes (the 'what' of culture, that matters), and to understand how they might contribute to winning outcomes (the 'how' of culture, that matters) for RU.

Methodology

A multiple case study approach was adopted to facilitate deeper insights (Yin, 2018). This study's focus is on two preeminent RU teams – the Wallabies and the All Blacks – in the period 2015 to 2018. During this period, the Wallabies won the RWC twice and the All Blacks three times.

Eighteen in-depth elite interviews formed the core data source, supplemented by organisational and public documents to facilitate triangulation. Interviewees were the key actors (e.g., players, coaches, administrators) who were the architects, actors and professional observers of Australian and New Zealand RU during the focal period. Thematic analysis was used to identify how and why the dimensions of organisational culture effected performance outcome(s).

Findings

Fourteen dimensions of OC were identified as being influential in affecting winning outcomes. Twelve dimensions consistent with the OC literature were: Leadership; Structure; Communication; Purpose Agreed; Strategic Planning; High Performance; Power Distribution; Business of Sport; Community, Legacy, History & Tradition; Motivation; Rites, Rituals, Symbols, Values & Beliefs; and Innovations. Two new dimensions emerged for the elite professional RU context as major contributors to their performance outcomes: Right People in Right Positions; Mental Skills. Differences were identified between the Wallabies and the All Blacks, particularly in relation to Mental Skills.

Conclusion

An improved understanding of elite team OC, and its impacts on team performance, may dramatically assist elite team winning performance outcomes. At the time of submission, deeper analysis and theoretical linking is ongoing.

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Towards a Conceptual Model of Drivers and Outcomes of Health Engagement

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

Public healthcare faces growing pressure. Our conceptual model answers calls to explore an array of independent variables that could be potentially associated with social media influencers' (SMIs) ability to impact followers' health engagement (HE) and health-related attitudes and behaviours. Health salience, SMI nature and SMI message type act as HE drivers. SMI type – macro or micro – moderates the SMI's influence and the message type influence on HE. HE influences wellbeing and physiological health.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Public healthcare systems (PHSs) in many countries face growing pressure to spend their health budgets more effectively and efficiently, with growing and aging populations placing additional PHS strains. Individuals can influence the level of need (demand) on PHSs through their knowledge and lifestyle choices. Therefore, there is a need to better understand factors influencing individuals' health-related attitudes and behaviours.

This research investigates two emerging areas of theoretical and practitioner interest that could play a role in improved health outcomes: customer engagement (CE) and social media influencers (SMIs). CE research has established its role with respect to brands, the workplace and sports teams, but little is known about engagement with one's health.

Recent research has introduced the concept of health engagement (HE) – individuals' cognitive, emotional and behavioural investments in health-related interactions centred around managing and taking care of their health, regardless of whether they are involved with a specific medical event. HE features three dimensions – cognitive processing, affection and activation (Alkire et al., 2023). However, little is known about HE and its influence on health-related outcomes.

This paper answers calls to explore an array of independent variables that could be potentially associated with SMIs' ability to impact followers' HE and health-related attitudes and behaviours (Kaňková et al., 2025; Rubinelli, 2025).

Literature

CE is inherently driven by consumer involvement (Baiwir et al., 2024). Our model draws upon one facet of involvement as an HE driver: salience. Health salience is the importance individuals assign to their health (Alkire et al., 2023).

Brands increasingly turn to SMIs to engage consumers (Pandit et al., 2025). SMIs act as opinion leaders and information gatekeepers able to shape the attitudes and behaviour of their audiences (Kaňková et al., 2025). An emerging area of public-health interest is SMIs' potential role in spreading health information and affecting health behaviour (Powell & Pring, 2024), as using health influencers (SMIs) in public health campaigns (PHCs) and interventions could enhance PHC effectiveness and reach (Gupta et al., 2022; Kaňková et al., 2025). Three facets of SMIs relevant for the health context are SMIs' credibility, quality of information/advice and homophily (similarity) (Gupta et al., 2022). Also relevant for the SMI context is the post content (message type) (Ndasi & Cheung, 2026).

Conceptual Model

In our conceptual model, health salience (H1), SMI nature (H2a-c) and SMI message type (H3) act as drivers of HE. The type of SMI – e.g. macro or micro – moderates the influence of SMIs (H4a-c) and the influence of message type (H5) on HE (Ndasi & Cheung, 2026). Regarding outcomes, HE acts as a driver of wellbeing (H6) and physiological health (H7) (Alkire et al., 2023).

Next Steps

A mixed-methods research design is planned that will feature a qualitative stage (interviews) and quantitative stage (survey, experiment) will be used to develop a deeper understanding of the theoretical understanding regarding health influencer (SMI) perceptions, HE antecedents and consequences, and how differences in health influencer (SMI) posts affect individuals' perceptions and health-engagement intentions.

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Communication, Trust and Acceptance: How Citizen-Consumers Make Sense of Novel Sustainability-Enhancing Dairy Technologies

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

Public acceptance of agri-food technologies is important for achieving sustainability in dairy production and processes. Novel technologies may face rejection at both a societal and product specific level, highlighting the need to understand technologies' acceptance at a broader level. This study explores how citizen-consumers interpret and evaluate proposed sustainability-enhancing dairy technologies, identifying the factors shaping acceptance or rejection and informing strategies for effective and trusted communication.

Competitive Short Paper

New agri-food technologies are presented as a potential solution to critical food security, safety and sustainability challenges (Siegrist & Hartmann, 2020). Food engenders a combination of hedonic, functional, social and deeply rooted cultural meanings (Monterrosa et al., 2020), intersecting with gender roles (Gough, 2007; Peeters et al., 2023), health, heritage and personal moral beliefs (Badran et al., 2025). Consequently, acceptance of novel food technologies is not assured, as sustainability-enhancing technologies often face public concern, not due to technical limitations, but because they do not align with public values or expectations of responsible innovation (McCrea et al., 2024). The term citizen-consumer captures the dual role individuals play, assessing novel food technologies as both consumers concerned with considerations such as price, taste and wellbeing, and as citizens concerned with societal and environmental implications (Johnston, 2007). Recent examples, such as citizen consumer concerns regarding the feed additive Bovaer (Manning et al., 2025) underscore the importance of this dual perspective, with sustainability innovations evaluated through both market choices and broader societal values (Berglund & Matti, 2006). Equally, food innovations have been rejected. However, empirical insights into citizen-consumers sensemaking of and response to emerging agri-food technologies remain limited, particularly within the dairy sector.

The aim of this research is to examine how an individual's 'citizen' and 'consumer' identities mediate the interpretation of, and response to, information about emerging agri-food technologies, and to critically examine the trade-offs and tensions that emerge due to the technologies' inherent characteristics. To achieve these aims, a mixed-methods design is employed across two phases.

Phase one uses deliberative discourses which allows for real-time observation of how individuals question, negotiate, and reshape their understanding of novel technologies as information is introduced (Greehy et al., 2013) through iterative discussions between Vistamilk scientists and citizen-consumers. This will uncover the extent to which 'citizen' or 'consumer' belief systems respectively shape evaluations and understanding, and how these citizen/consumer orientations evolve with new information. This phase is complemented by biometric measures, such as eye-tracking and facial expression analysis, which help uncover subconscious reactions, such as emotions, that are often inaccessible through self-reporting methods alone (Cabanillas et al., 2025).

Phase two builds on these insights through a choice experiment, where participants evaluate alternative dairy product concepts featuring different sustainability-related message framings. This allows for the examination of preferences and trade-offs associated with sustainability communications (Hanley et al., 1998). Choice experiments quantify which attributes matter most to citizen-consumers, how values are prioritised, and how information affects acceptance (Ryan et al., 2001). Together, the two phases offer both qualitative and quantitative insights on how citizen-consumers evaluate and make sense of sustainability-enhancing dairy technologies.

Findings are expected to identify the main factors influencing citizen-consumer trust in and acceptance of agri-food technologies. The study will provide practical guidance for scientists and policymakers on effective engagement with citizen-consumers regarding agri-food technologies' social acceptability and perceived trustworthiness. Additionally, it will highlight how specific communication strategies shape citizen-consumer responses, to refine pathways for responsible introduction of innovation in the dairy sector.

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Esports as a Service: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Service Ecosystems, Value Co-Creation, and Digital Innovation in Competitive Gaming

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper conceptualizes eSports as a technologically servitized service ecosystem where value is co-created and potentially co-destroyed through data-driven, platform-mediated interactions. Grounded in Service-Dominant Logic, it explains how AI personalization, analytics, immersive experiences, and performance augmentation shift eSports from discrete products to continuous services. The framework highlights a duality in which engagement gains coexist with risks related to governance, fairness, inclusion, and data control, with implications for sustainable ecosystem value.

Competitive Short Paper

The global expansion of eSports has transformed the field from competitive digital play into a multifaceted service ecosystem supported by players, fans, sponsors, platforms, and publishers. Although prior work has examined engagement patterns, sponsorship effects, and platform-mediated interactions (Kunz et al., 2022; Sjöblom & Hamari, 2017), the literature has not fully addressed how technological servitization reshapes value creation in this digital environment. This paper responds to that gap by conceptualizing eSports as a technologically servitized service ecosystem and investigating how digital infrastructures influence value co-creation and value co-destruction.

Drawing on Service-Dominant Logic, the paper frames eSports actors as resource integrators whose interactions are mediated by institutional arrangements and increasingly by technological agents such as algorithms, analytics engines, and immersive interfaces (Vargo & Lusch, 2008; Lusch & Nambisan, 2015). Technological servitization, defined as the shift from fixed digital products to continuous and data-driven service offerings, introduces ongoing value through AI coaching systems, real-time performance analytics, personalized streaming environments, virtual merchandise, and cloud-based infrastructures (Kowalkowski et al., 2017; Hamari & Keronen, 2017). These technologies deepen engagement and create feedback loops where user data continually refines service delivery, accelerating co-creation within the ecosystem.

However, technology-enabled servitization also introduces new risks that can undermine value. Algorithmic curation may privilege high-visibility streamers or teams while marginalizing smaller actors, contributing to filter bubbles and reduced ecosystem diversity (Napoli, 2019; Zeng et al., 2021). Data governance challenges, including restricted API access and publisher-controlled infrastructures, create resource misintegration that inhibits collaboration and innovation (Jacobides et al., 2018; Hauke-Lopes et al., 2022). Immersive technologies offer richer experiences but raise concerns related to exclusion, sensory overload, and biometric tracking (Heller et al., 2023; Chylinski et al., 2020). At the competitive level, AI-driven performance augmentation blurs distinctions between support and automation, generating ethical tensions around fairness, transparency, and unequal access to advanced tools (Kagler, 2022; Friehs et al., 2023).

To integrate these developments, the paper proposes a conceptual framework built around four domains through which servitization influences value outcomes: AI-driven personalization, data governance and platform power, immersive service experience, and AI-based performance augmentation. These domains illustrate a duality in which the same technologies that enable co-creation can also trigger co-destruction when actor goals, resource flows, or institutional logics become misaligned (Vargo & Lusch, 2016; Plé & Chumpitaz Cáceres, 2010). This duality highlights the need for careful governance, ethical AI design, and inclusive technological development to ensure sustainable value creation.

By integrating technological servitization with Service-Dominant Logic, the paper positions eSports as a critical context for advancing theories of digital value creation. It also offers practical insights for industry stakeholders seeking to balance innovation with fairness, transparency, and long-term ecosystem sustainability.

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Fragmented Selves in AI-Driven Markets: Gen Z, Split Online Identities and the Ethics of Platformed Branding

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This paper examines how Gen Z early-career professionals navigate fragmented digital identities across AI-driven platforms. Using survey data, it explores how algorithmic visibility, platform norms, and avatar use shape identity coherence, authenticity, and wellbeing. The study anticipates that greater identity fragmentation increases identity strain, while trust in platform algorithms moderates these effects. The paper advances consumer research by highlighting ethical and branding implications of platformed identity management in AI-mediated markets.

Competitive Short Paper

As artificial intelligence increasingly structures digital platforms through recommendation systems, content filtering, and visibility algorithms, consumers are required to manage multiple, context-dependent digital identities across platforms. For Generation Z, many are navigating early career transitions, alongside active social media engagement. Identity is therefore no longer performed within a single coherent space but fragmented across AI-driven environments such as LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook, each privileging distinct norms, audiences, and branding expectations. Despite the centrality of identity to marketing and consumer research, limited empirical work has examined how consumers integrate multiple platform-specific selves, or the ethical and wellbeing implications of such fragmentation in AI-mediated markets.

This paper investigates how Gen Z early-career professionals manage, integrate, and experience multiple digital identities across AI-driven platforms, with particular attention to professional–personal boundary negotiation, avatar use, and perceived algorithmic judgement. Drawing on consumer identity theory (Belk, 1988; Reed et al., 2012), branding and self-presentation literature (Aaker, 1997; Schau & Gilly, 2003), and emerging research on AI-mediated consumption (Puntoni et al., 2021), the study conceptualises digital identity as a *platformed and algorithmically shaped assemblage*, rather than a stable or unified self.

Empirically, the study employs a *survey-based research design*, drawing on data collected from Gen Z early-career professionals in the UK, using an online panel. The survey measures the range of consumer digital identities that prevails, perceived identity coherence, platform-specific self-presentation strategies, trust in AI-driven visibility mechanisms, and indicators of identity strain and wellbeing. Structural relationships are examined to assess how AI-mediated platform dynamics influence identity coherence, perceived authenticity, and vulnerability among young consumers navigating professional and social branding simultaneously.

Anticipated findings suggest that higher levels of identity fragmentation across platforms are associated with reduced self-concept clarity and increased identity strain, particularly where AI-driven algorithms blur boundaries between personal and professional selves. Trust in platform algorithms is expected to moderate these effects, such that greater perceived alignment between algorithmic visibility and self-concept reduces identity tension. The findings further highlight the role of avatars and curated profiles as both tools of identity experimentation and sources of ethical concern, particularly in relation to authenticity pressures and algorithmic misrepresentation.

In line with the conference theme *Breaking Boundaries – Unlocking Potential*, this paper contributes to consumer research by empirically advancing understanding of identity fragmentation in AI-driven markets. It offers implications for branding, ethical platform governance, consumer inclusivity, and responsible marketing practice, positioning Gen Z online identity management as a critical area of research.

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Resource Stewardship as Consumer Resistance: Exploring Everyday Cooking and Washing Practices

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

Consumer resistance is commonly conceptualised as an oppositional act. In the context of the circular economy, consumers counter linear consumption while also aligning with mainstream policy goals and market transformations. Drawing on qualitative material on cooking and washing practices in 30 Swedish households, we explore how consumer resistance is enacted through resource stewardship, where countering is balanced with collaboration. Consumption is not simply resisted; rather, less resource-intensive modes are developed through making things last longer.

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Discursive Landscapes of Risk, Place, and Legitimacy in Anaerobic Digestion

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper examines the discursive landscapes surrounding a contested anaerobic digestion project in rural Ireland. Drawing on planning objections, local media, and online opposition spaces, we analyse how meaning, legitimacy, and contestation are produced across platforms. Using a multimodal discursive approach, the study identifies three dominant discourses that frame risk, place-based vulnerability, and sustainability claims.

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Behind the Luxury Facade: Dark Personality Traits and Luxury Brand Consumption — A Systematic Review

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

Luxury brand consumption is strongly linked to dark personality traits. Narcissists use luxury for status, admiration, and identity enhancement, while Machiavellians adopt luxury strategically to manage reputation. Psychopathic consumers show low moral concern and may prefer counterfeits for efficiency. Luxury brands themselves can be perceived as narcissistic, manipulative, or norm-breaking, influencing trust and loyalty. Ethical and sustainable luxury appeals differently across traits, often driven by visibility, self-interest, or moral disengagement.

Competitive Short Paper

Luxury brands have been synonymous with status, identity construction, exclusivity and dream (Roux et al., 2017; Tafani et al., 2024) that represents a complex psychological and social phenomenon (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). With extensive PRISMA analysis (Tranfield et al., 2003) of published literature between 2007 to 2025, research highlights the intersection between dark personality traits (narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy) and luxury consumption. These aversive yet influential traits motivates consumption behaviour to larger extent (Razmus et al., 2023). This paper synthesises key themes evolving: narcissistic consumption motivations, dark brand perception, identity, materialism, and the ethical dimensions of luxury branding.

Narcissism and Luxury Preferences

Most of the scholarly attention in the luxury consumption has been given to the narcissism. Narcissistic consumers display strong yearnings for admiration, social dominance and uniqueness, making them very receptive to luxury values of exclusivity and status (Fazli-Salehi et al., 2021). Grandiose narcissists, symbolised by exhibitionism and entitlement, exhibit preferences for exclusive, quiet and high-quality luxury" that strengthens their self-image superiority. In contrast, vulnerable narcissists (high insecurity and shame) prefer logo-centric, loud luxury items that deliver group approval and social disguise (Jha et al., 2025), even showing tendencies toward counterfeit consumption due to weaker brand loyalty (Razmus et al., 2024). Generally, luxury brands serve as symbolic tools for self-enhancement, emotional regulation, and public admiration among narcissistic consumers.

Dark Triad and Brand Perception

Brands might also be attributed to the dark triad. Narcissism Machiavellianism and psychopathy are also attached to luxury brands based on the strategic behaviours and communication styles (Aytaç & Akın, 2021; Wang et al., 2021). Brand narcissism relates to self-focus, claims of grandiose and emotionally detached messaging as in the ad campaigns of major luxury brands. Brand Machiavellianism comes to light when brands actions are perceived as profit driven, exploitive and manipulative which are obvious in campaigns focused on green, walk, and pink washing. Brand psychopathy arises when it is perceived as provocative, norm breaking or remorseless traits (Ahn, 2024; Malär & Giuffredi-Kähr, 2024) as obvious in the campaigns of Balenciaga. These perceptions impact loyalty, moral evaluations, trust etc., highlighting the need for further investigation.

Status, Identity and Materialism

Luxury has the power off social visibility and obvious prestige that aligns with Machiavellian and narcissistic consumers desire for dominance and self enhancement . Materialistic possessions form identity and are considered as key to happiness Also mediates these relationships. Conspicuous consumption is used by individuals with dark traits to reinforce self-esteem and exhibit superiority. Psychopaths may consume luxury strategically for climbing the status ladder specially in the competition (Iaia et al., 2022; Jha et al., 2025; Razmus et al., 2023; Wien et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2023. Further research is required on how these traits impact the luxury identity and compulsive purchases.

Ethical and Sustainable Luxury

Ethical luxury adds a new dimension. Psychopathic consumers display moral disengagement, often favouring efficient counterfeits over authentic ethical luxury and showing minimal concern for brand sincerity unless it aids status or mate selection.

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Reputational Damage and Credibility Evaluation in Influencer Marketing: The Roles of Product Involvement, Congruence, and Parasocial Relationships

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper examines how negative information about an influencer affects credibility judgments in influencer marketing, drawing on an experimental study of Instagram influencers in Pakistan. The findings show greater reputational damage for high-involvement products and when influencer–brand fit is strong. Contrary to common assumptions, stronger parasocial relationships lead to sharper declines in trustworthiness and expertise, suggesting that relational closeness can increase vulnerability to reputational harm.

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Marketing System Quality and Consequences: A Theoretical Extension

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Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

Summary Statement

Marketing System Quality Theory (MSQT) extends the evolution of marketing thought by challenging the assumption that marketing systems inherently create positive value. Building on service-dominant logic, MSQT emphasizes the governance role of quality assurance mechanisms in shaping value co-creation across interconnected actors. The theory explains how marketing systems generate value creation, capture, destruction, and unintended consequences, and proposes evaluating marketing performance by net societal contribution.

Competitive Short Paper

Marketing theory has long been grounded in the assumption that marketing activity, when effectively executed, generates positive value for customers, firms, and society. Classical and modern marketing concepts, ranging from the production, selling and product orientations to the marketing and societal marketing concepts, implicitly treated value as a largely linear outcome of firm-led processes, flowing from producers to consumers through exchange (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Even as relationship marketing expanded the scope of interaction, marketing success continued to be evaluated primarily through firm-centric outcomes such as customer satisfaction, loyalty, and financial performance (Berry, 1983; Grönroos, 1994; Morgan, & Hunt, 1994).

The introduction of *service-dominant (S-D) logic* marked a major theoretical advance by reframing value as co-created through interactions among multiple actors who integrate resources within service ecosystems (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; 2008; 2017). This perspective shifted marketing away from value delivery toward value co-creation and highlighted the embeddedness of markets in broader institutional arrangements. However, despite its foundational impact, S-D logic offers limited guidance on how value co-creation is coordinated and governed across complex marketing systems, nor does it adequately explain why co-creation processes often generate value destruction and unintended societal consequences alongside value creation.

This paper develops *Marketing System Quality Theory (MSQT)* as a midrange theoretical extension addressing these gaps while remaining firmly rooted in the evolution of marketing thought. MSQT begins with a critical assumption shift: marketing systems do not inherently produce positive value. Instead, value outcomes depend on the quality of coordination among interconnected actors across supply-side, demand-side, and intermediary domains.

MSQT conceptualises value co-creation as a systemic process occurring across networks of actors rather than isolated dyads. Central to this process is a *governance layer of quality assurance mechanisms,* constituting the theory's core contribution. These mechanisms–such as ratings, certifications, reviews, algorithmic rankings, platform governance rules, value chain traceability–enabled by emerging technologies including AI and blockchain are theorised as institutional devices that shape expectations, signal credibility, allocate trust, and discipline behaviour within marketing systems (Akerlof, 1970; Centobelli et al., 2022; Fan, et al., 2022; Layton, 2011; 2015; Parguel et al., 2011; Pereira et al., 2022). Rather than merely reducing information asymmetry, quality assurance mechanisms actively structure how value co-creation unfolds, influencing which actors benefit, which costs are externalised, and which forms of value are amplified or suppressed.

MSQT distinguishes among four interrelated value outcomes: (1) value co-created through actor interaction, (2) value captured by actors, (3) value destroyed through inefficient, harmful, or misaligned practices, and (4) system-level unintended consequences emerging cumulatively over time. This framework enables marketing scholars and managers to move beyond narrow performance metrics toward a more comprehensive understanding of how marketing activities shape long-term system quality. With MSQT, marketing systems can be assessed based on their *net contribution to societal goals* for responsible production and consumption reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals. By integrating governance mechanisms, value outcomes, and system-level evaluation, MSQT offers actionable insights for managers designing markets, platforms, and assurance systems, while extending marketing theory toward a more accountable understanding of value creation.

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Heritage is the New Luxury: A Conceptual Framework of Heritage-Brand Luxury Purchase Intention in China

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Track: 5. Brands & Branding

Summary Statement

This paper develops a conceptual framework to investigate purchase intention toward heritage-brand luxury in China's resale market. Drawing on self-congruity theory and brand community theory, the framework posits a serial mediation mechanism whereby social self-congruity strengthens consumers' heritage connection, which enhances perceived social value, and subsequently purchase intention. Brand community engagement is further theorised as a boundary condition that intensifies the relationship between social self-congruity and heritage connection by increasing consumers' exposure to heritage narratives.

Competitive Short Paper

Heritage brands often carry heritage values and social recognitions, such as heritage luxury brands like AP and Patek. Heritage is a history-based brand value (Tafani et al., 2024). Heritage luxury products often carry their value and cultures for generations. Although global luxury sales are flat, Bain & Company (2025) reports 4-6% resale growth, reflecting rising demand for heritage-linked value.

The shared common interests and values of heritage brand luxury highlight the importance of brand community and consumer engagement. Several studies (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Schau et al., 2009) have underlined brand communities' shared interpretive frames to shape how sensemaking of heritage cues. In China, luxury is often evaluated through a social lens (Wang et al., 2022), so heritage cues can function as socially meaningful signals (Zhou et al., 2025).

In this study, brand community engagement (BCE) has been applied as a boundary condition to shape the relationship's strength. When consumers have higher engagement, it reflects more on shared value and brand closeness directly. This has demonstrated their social-self motives are more likely to connect to self-relevant heritage.

"Heritage brand" denotes luxury brands preserving their historical heritage, core values, and iconic symbols on sustain value creation (Balmer & Chen, 2017; Pecot et al., 2018), which concept has been highly appreciated by Chinese luxury consumers. Influenced by availability of vintage products, the market size of resale luxury market has been booming since 2016 (Statista, 2024; Statista, 2025). Therefore, this paper will focus on purchase intention (PI) toward vintage products from heritage brands in China to establish the bridge between Chinese luxury consumers and heritage luxury brands. To investigate the vintage products and values, the common condition has been applied as following: produced in earlier period, discontinued references anchored in a historical era (Vestiaire Collective, n.d; Amatulli et al., 2018; Turunen et al., 2020), which ensures products and brands carry heritage cues and acquire shared meaning from communities. High-involvement luxury consumers mainly residing in China's Tier-1 cities (e.g., Beijing, Shanghai) based on purchasing power, wealthiness, and population, will be participants.

The proposed concept was formed based on self-congruity theory (Sirgy, 1982) as consumers perceive social image of heritage brand luxury often aligns with their beliefs and how they present in public. Associating self-relevant with heritage luxury products which underlines the relations between social self-congruity (SSC) and heritage connection (HC); furthermore, it also demonstrates brand community (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) may enhance the connection via identity-relevant, and self–brand connection (Escalas, 2004). To further test the value of BCE, it has treated as a moderator to strengthen the relations between SSC and HC by facilitating heritage sensemaking through repeated exposure to community-shared heritage narratives. The active HC will enhance the participation from consumers, lead to perceived social approval and acceptability such as perceived social value, strengthens PI (Christensen & Shu, 2024; Sheth et al., 1991).

The study will expand the discussion on PI, contributes to the theoretical debate on BCE. It also provides heritage brand luxury industry with a clear framework to guide brand management.

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The Observer and the Observed in Colourism and Skin Bleaching: Social Marketing Implications

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

Skin bleaching remains widespread in communities of colour, driven by colourism, harmful beauty norms, and gendered expectations. Despite serious health risks, many women lighten their skin to improve social acceptance, marriage prospects, and status. Media and celebrity endorsements reinforce lighter skin as ideal, while men's preferences often shape women's choices. Using objectification theory, this study explores these dynamics and offers insights for social marketing interventions targeting women and the male observers who reinforce colourist standards.

Competitive Short Paper

Skin bleaching is a widespread practice in many communities of colour and has fuelled the rapid expansion of the global skin-lightening industry, which is a billion-dollar industry (Alfaz et al., 2025). Skin bleaching typically involves the use of creams, soaps, and other agents containing depigmenting chemicals most commonly mercury, hydroquinone, and corticosteroids designed to lighten the skin by suppressing melanin production (Benn et al., 2016). The practice is deeply intertwined with colourism, a system of social hierarchy that privileges lighter skin tones and disadvantages darker-skinned individuals (Cuny & Opaswongkarn, 2017; Khan et al., 2022).

Despite widespread awareness of the health risks associated with these products, skin bleaching remains prevalent among women of colour (Williamson et al., 2025; Pollock et al., 2021). Documented health consequences range from mild dermatological issues such as acne and dermatitis to severe outcomes including mercury poisoning and increased cancer risk (Benn et al., 2016; Owolabi et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the behaviour persists, driven by a complex interplay of socio-cultural, psychological, and media-related factors.

Research conducted across diverse regions including Togo (Kpanake et al., 2010), Latin America (Kiang et al., 2020), Saudi Arabia (Bamerdah et al., 2023), Zimbabwe (Nyoni-Kachambwa et al., 2021), India (Adbi et al., 2021), and Thailand (Cuny & Opaswongkarn, 2017) consistently identifies socio-cultural motivations as central to skin-lightening practices. These motivations include improving marriage prospects, enhancing employment opportunities, and gaining social advantages (Williams et al., 2025; Pollock et al., 2021). Psychological drivers such as the pursuit of attractiveness, perceived social status, empowerment, and privilege further reinforce the behaviour (Masub & Khachemoune, 2022).

Media influence also plays a significant role. The cosmetics industry frequently reinforces colourism by portraying lighter skin as the ideal standard of beauty and success, while celebrity endorsements amplify discriminatory skin-tone messages and normalise the use of skin-lightening products (Khan et al., 2022). These portrayals contribute to internalised colourism and shape women's perceptions of desirability and social acceptance.

Skin bleaching is highly gendered, with women disproportionately engaging in the practice. Objectification theory provides a useful lens for understanding this dynamic. According to Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), women are socialised to internalise an observer's perspective often a male gaze as the primary lens through which they evaluate their physical appearance.

Interventions addressing skin bleaching have included regulatory measures, public health campaigns, and corporate rebranding efforts, such as Unilever's shift from "Fair and Lovely" to "Glow and Lovely" (Alfaz et al., 2025). However, most initiatives focus primarily on women, overlooking the influential role of men as observers who reinforce colourist beauty standards. Drawing on objectification theory, interventions targeting both the observers and the observed may be necessary for meaningful change.

This study proposes qualitative methods including laddering, projective techniques, and photo elicitation with samples of 40 women and 40 men. The findings aim to guide social marketers and public health practitioners in designing interventions that address the complex, gendered, and socially embedded nature of skin-bleaching behaviour.

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Reframing Value Creation: Worker Wellbeing in Global Fashion Marketing Systems

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

Global fashion supply chains increasingly rely on nearshore hubs like Morocco, yet the social realities of workers remain underexamined. This study explores how sourcing strategies, governance structures, and compliance practices shape worker wellbeing, agency, and vulnerability within the Moroccan textile cluster. Drawing on interviews, focus groups, and documentary evidence, it reveals both constructive contributions and persistent gaps, arguing that worker wellbeing is central to brand legitimacy and a critical frontier for marketing research and practice.

Competitive Short Paper

Global fashion supply chains continue to expand into emerging production regions, yet the lived experiences of workers embedded within these clusters remain insufficiently examined within mainstream marketing scholarship (Crinis, 2019). Responding to the conference theme of *Breaking Boundaries in Marketing,* this paper investigates how marketing led organisational practices - particularly sourcing strategies, brand governance, and compliance regimes - shape worker wellbeing, agency, and vulnerability within the Moroccan textile cluster. Morocco has become a key nearshore manufacturing hub for European fashion brands (Drapers, 2024; ICEX, 2021), with regional production models that position labour conditions as central to sustainability governance frameworks.

While recent debates in fashion marketing have been dominated by concerns about greenwashing, environmental claims, and the credibility of ecological performance indicators (Adamkiewicz et al., 2022; Heidenstrom, 2024), this environmental focus has overshadowed the social dimensions of sustainability. This paper addresses that gap by positioning labour conditions and worker wellbeing – core pillars within Nilsson et al.'s (2024) Social Sustainability model – as integral to marketing decision-making and brand value creation. Using the model's emphasis on equity, agency, wellbeing, and social cohesion as the organising framework, the study demonstrates how sourcing strategies, governance structures, and compliance practices materially shape these social sustainability outcomes within garment production clusters. Positioning these pillars at the centre of marketing systems challenges conventional boundaries between marketing, supply chain management, labour studies, and social wellbeing research, contributing to a more holistic understanding of value creation in global fashion supply chains (Kolotouchkina et al, 2026).

Drawing on an exploratory qualitative design, the research captures perspectives from factory workers, supervisors, sustainability managers, NGOs, and industry intermediaries across two major Moroccan production zones. Semi structured interviews, focus groups, and documentary evidence provide an ecosystem level understanding of how brand driven performance pressures and compliance expectations are enacted on the ground, and how workers interpret the presence and influence of a multinational fashion group within their local labour context.

The thematic analysis, informed by corporate social responsibility and social marketing theory, reveals that while dominant narratives around global supply chains often foreground exploitation and harm, the emerging evidence from this research highlights a set of constructive contributions that challenge this prevailing discourse. These early insights suggest that brand engagement may be fostering improvements in organisational practices, skill development, and local economic stability—yet they also point to important gaps in understanding how these benefits are distributed, sustained, and experienced across different stakeholder groups. Further research is required to deepen and contextualise these observations, ensuring a more comprehensive assessment of the implications for wellbeing, vulnerability, and long term community development within the cluster.

Conceptually, the paper advances marketing scholarship by demonstrating that worker wellbeing is not peripheral to marketing strategy but central to brand legitimacy, trust, value creation, and long term competitiveness. Empirically, it contributes rare, in depth insights into garment worker experiences within a nearshore production cluster, offering evidence of how marketing driven organisational practices materially shape social sustainability outcomes. Together, these contributions reposition social wellbeing as a critical, yet under recognised, frontier for marketing research and practice.

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When Access Is Not Enough: Consumer Journey in Alternative Food Networks.

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Track: 10. Marketing in Context (e.g., Food, Sport)

Summary Statement

Study examines access to Alternative Food Networks through a consumer journey lens. We draw on UK pilot providing low-income households vouchers for farmers' markets. Study utilised mixed methods showing that despite subsidies' supporting confidence, inclusion and dietary experimentation, participation remains fragile. We show that barriers related to cognitive,

emotional and experiential 'frictions' emerged across participant journey stages which can disrupt engagement. Our findings reframe barriers to sustainable food as journey-based breakdowns rather than affordability alone.

Competitive Short Paper

The UK's food system deepens climate, sustainability, health, and inequality crises, leaving over 15% of households food insecure (The Food Foundation, 2024). Alternative Food Networks (AFNs), including farmers' markets, offer potential solutions by promoting more sustainable and equitable access to healthier diets (Cerrada-Serra et al., 2018). However, AFNs are typically difficult to access and navigate for low-income households (Moragues-Faus and Marsden, 2017). Affordability is often considered the primary barrier (Denver et al., 2023), yet research shows that barriers to access and food-related wellbeing involve multifaceted social and systemic factors (Verfuerth et al., 2023).

Accordingly, this study adopts a consumer journey perspective, which conceptualises consumption as an experiential process unfolding across multiple stages, including planning, market entry, in-market decision-making, and post-purchase practices (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Subsidised participation in AFNs is thus seen as a dynamic process where access does not automatically facilitate empowerment. We build on Kabeer's (1999) conceptualisation of empowerment as a process involving resources, agency, and achievements whereby subsidies expand resources by facilitating access to AFNs, yet empowerment depends on whether these resources facilitate agency and result in consumer-valued achievements. In fact, under conditions of constraint, increased choice can overwhelm and reproduce vulnerability, impeding empowerment (Shankar et al., 2006).

The study examines a funded pilot initiative in a UK city between 2024 and 2025, designed to support low-income households' access to locally grown organic fruit and vegetables. Participants received £11 weekly voucher for six to twelve months, redeemable at two local farmers' markets. Guided by a consumer journey perspective and a processual understanding of empowerment, we ask:

RQ1: How does subsidised access to AFNs reconfigure low-income consumers' empowerment processes across the consumption journey?

RQ2: Which journey-specific frictions undermine empowerment in subsidised sustainable food consumption?

Utilising a mixed-methods approach, we draw on pre/post intervention survey (N=55), 31 semi-structured interviews, and three participant workshops. Survey measured changes in diet, food security, and wellbeing with interviews and workshops focused on lived experiences of market participation, including perceived changes in diet and wellbeing, but also barriers and challenges encountered before, during, and after shopping. Data were analysed thematically, guided by the consumer journey framework to identify stage-specific experiences and frictions, followed by examining how access conditions translated into empowerment.

Preliminary findings show that subsidised access can enable moments of agency, such as increased confidence, experimentation with unfamiliar foods, and feelings of inclusion, often accompanied by perceived achievements (e.g., enhanced emotional wellbeing and strengthened social networks). However, empowerment surfaced as fragile and uneven across the journey, attributed to cognitive, emotional, and experiential 'frictions' in the lived experience. Barriers ranging from anticipatory anxiety regarding planning and transport, unfamiliar market norms at entry, to decision-making overwhelm during shopping and post-purchase fatigue frequently disrupted the translation of resources into agency. We find that empowerment may collapse at specific journey stages, which shapes consumers' willingness and capacity to continue engaging with AFNs. Thereby, building on Gordon et al. (2022) and Fisk et al. (2018), we frame barriers as journey-based breakdowns rather than individual or affordability deficits.

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Unlocking Fashion's Potential Beyond the Global North: Policy, Power, and Entrepreneurial Identity in African Fashion Systems.

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Track: 9. Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Summary Statement

While policy-led interventions increasingly position fashion entrepreneurship as a pathway to poverty reduction and creative-sector growth, there remains limited empirical understanding of how such programmes are enacted, negotiated, and experienced within structurally constrained fashion ecosystems. Drawing on qualitative evidence from AfDB Fashionomics in Nigeria, Ethiopia, and South Africa, this paper examines how intervention programmes interact with governance structures, informal institutions, and entrepreneurial identity, shaping access to markets, finance, and inclusion in sustainable fashion systems.

Competitive Short Paper

Despite growing global interest in sustainable fashion, circular business models, and inclusive entrepreneurship, fashion entrepreneurship in many emerging markets remains trapped in cycles of replication, informality, and marginalisation. While policy-led interventions increasingly promote entrepreneurship as a pathway to poverty reduction and creative-sector growth (Santos, Costa, & Morris, 2022), there is limited empirical understanding of how such policies are enacted, negotiated, and experienced within structurally constrained fashion ecosystems.

This paper addresses this gap by examining Fashionomics, the African Development Bank's flagship fashion entrepreneurship initiative, as a policy experiment (Diallo, 2023). Drawing on qualitative data from Nigeria, Ethiopia, and South Africa, three of Sub-Saharan Africa's largest and most globally connected fashion economies, the study interrogates how entrepreneurship policy interacts with structural conditions, cultural norms, and entrepreneurial identity formation (African Development Bank, 2024).

Conceptually, the paper advances a dual-level analytical framework that integrates Contextualised Implementation Dynamics (CID) with a Context–Identity–Disposition (C–I–D) heuristic (Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcock, 2017). This approach moves beyond dominant marketing and entrepreneurship models that privilege individual capability or institutional design in isolation. Instead, it demonstrates how fashion entrepreneurship outcomes are co-produced through governance arrangements, informal institutions, political economy dynamics, and the everyday meaning-making of fashion entrepreneurs themselves.

The findings derived from using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021), reveals that while Fashionomics has increased visibility, networking opportunities, and skills exposure, its transformative impact is constrained by fragmented governance, digital gatekeeping, import dependence, weak industrial linkages, and narrow definitions of "successful" fashion entrepreneurship. Crucially, the study shows that entrepreneurial identity, who is recognised as a legitimate fashion entrepreneur, plays a decisive role in shaping access to markets, finance, and policy support. Informal producers, township designers, and artisans rooted in traditional craftsmanship are often rendered invisible within policy architectures that privilege export-ready, Western-aligned aesthetics.

From a marketing perspective, the paper contributes to debates on sustainable fashion, market inclusion, and value creation by illustrating how branding, legitimacy, and market participation are structurally mediated rather than purely strategic choices. It challenges Global North-centric assumptions embedded in fashion marketing theory and calls for context-sensitive, relational, and policy-aware approaches to unlocking fashion's potential in emerging markets.

The paper speaks directly to the conference theme Breaking Boundaries – Unlocking Potential by demonstrating that sustainable and inclusive fashion futures depend not only on innovation and consumer behaviour, but on rethinking how entrepreneurship, policy, and markets are designed, governed, and evaluated across diverse global contexts.

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Virtual Influencer-Brand Collaborations: A Network Analysis

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

This study maps how virtual influencers (VI) collaborate with brands on Instagram. Using data from 8,539 posts by eight VIs, the authors build a network of 163 nodes and model tie formation using exponential random graph models. Results show that VI characteristics drive partnerships: higher post volumes and follower counts increase collaboration probability, while business account tagging deters ties. The findings offer actionable insights for marketers and call for network-based analyses of dynamic VI ecosystems.

Competitive Short Paper

Virtual influencers (VIs) are computer-generated personas created by agencies, brands or independent creators that combine human-like traits, narrative identities and interactive capabilities, enabling them to function as social media influencers in their own right (Lou et al., 2023, Byun and Ahn, 2023, Audrezet et al., 2025). Their popularity has exploded: the number of VIs grew from 27 in 2017 to 125 in 2019 and exceeded 200 by 2025 (VirtualHumans.org, 2022). Managed as personal brands, VIs produce engaging content, often in partnership with advertisers, and attract millions of followers. Despite their novelty, existing research has focused on individual-level perceptions (credibility, authenticity, anthropomorphism) (Belanche et al., 2024; Wan, et al., 2024, Audrezet et al., 2025), rather than how VIs are structurally embedded within broader digital ecosystems.

To address this gap, the authors examine how VIs are positioned in brand collaboration networks on Instagram. Building on literature on brand alliances - cooperative arrangements where brands co-produce or co-promote offerings, they aim to answer two research questions: (1) how are VIs structurally embedded within digital ecosystems, and (2) how do relational ties between VIs and brands shape network structure.

The study focused on paid collaborations between eight Instagram VIs and brands. Data were collected from 8,539 posts across these accounts; hashtags such as #ad, #sponsored and #paidpartnership were used to identify sponsored posts. Posts with deleted or mistyped account names were removed. The authors constructed a directed network where nodes represented VIs and brands and edges represented paid partnerships (directed from the VI to the brand). The resulting network contained 163 nodes and 158 directed edges, with an average number of partnerships between VIs and brands of 1.939. Exponential random graph models (ERGMs) were used to model the probability that a VI would form a tie with a brand as a function of node characteristics. Independent variables included post volume, follower count and whether the account was marked as a business profile for both VIs and brands. ERGMs allow estimation of tie formation while controlling for endogenous network dependencies.

The baseline tendency for tie formation was negative, indicating that partnerships are relatively rare. VI characteristics strongly shaped collaboration probability: higher post counts and larger follower bases on the VI side significantly increased the likelihood of collaboration ($\beta = 0.269$ and 0.056, respectively, $p < .01$). Brands thus tend to partner with VIs who are established content producers with sizable audiences. Conversely, marking a VI's account as a business profile reduced collaboration likelihood ($\beta = -2.441$, $p < .001$), suggesting that overt commercial cues may deter potential partners. On the brand side, post volume, follower count and business tagging were not significant predictors of tie formation; collaboration appears to be driven primarily by the VI's popularity and presentation. The findings imply that brands searching for VI partners should prioritize accounts with frequent posts and large follower communities, while cautiously managing cues that signal commercialism.

By shifting from individual perceptions to structural embedding, the study provides one of the first network-level analyses of VI–brand collaborations.

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Role of Social Media in Efficacy Development and Constraint Negotiation

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

This study explores how young women in non-Western patriarchal societies use social media particularly Facebook travel groups to address travel constraints shaped by gender norms, religion, and family control. Using netnography and interviews, it shows that women negotiate intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints through online interaction. The research develops a cyclical model of “travel efficacy,” illustrating how digital engagement promotes different forms of efficacy.

Competitive Short Paper

Independent travel by young women in non-Western patriarchal contexts remains a constrained and underexplored phenomenon. In societies where mobility is shaped by deeply rooted gender norms, religious expectations, and family control, understanding how women negotiate these constraints is critical for advancing broader discussions on gendered leisure, empowerment, and digital participation. This study investigates how young women use social media specifically Facebook travel groups to negotiate intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural travel constraints simultaneously, strengthen multiple forms of efficacy, and pursue independent travel opportunities. The research aims to answer: How do young women utilize social media to negotiate travel constraints, and how does this process contribute to the development of different forms of efficacy within a restrictive socio-cultural environment?

Grounded in self-efficacy theory, leisure constraints theory, and constraint negotiation theory, the conceptual framework integrates psychological, social, and structural dimensions of constraint negotiation into a cyclical process of efficacy development. It proposes that women’s digital interactions generate a dynamic interplay between individual determination and collective empowerment, highlighting the transformative role of social media

An interpretivist qualitative design combining netnography and semi-structured interviews was employed to capture these processes in depth. The netnographic phase analyzed Facebook posts from women’s travel groups, followed by semi-structured interviews with young women aged 20–35 who had faced substantial constraints in pursuing independent travel. This mixed-method qualitative approach facilitated triangulation of online behaviors and lived experiences.

Findings reveal multilayered constraints; intrapersonal (fear, anxiety, self-doubt), interpersonal (family control, social judgment), and structural (gender norms, religious discourse, safety, and financial dependence) that overlap and interact simultaneously rather than hierarchically. Within this complex setting, Facebook groups act as transformative digital spaces where women access emotional reassurance, advice, and social modelling. Through storytelling, observation, and interaction, participants engage in vicarious learning that promotes self-belief, confidence, and strategic negotiation skills. Online communities also serve as collective networks of resistance and adaptation, promoting gradual shifts in norms around women’s mobility.

The study develops the concept of travel efficacy, a social media-driven model that encompasses women’s confidence to plan, negotiate, and achieve travel despite facing different travel constraints. The model connects four interrelated phases individual efficacy, negotiation efficacy, collective efficacy, and travel efficacy forming a cyclical framework that redefines how self-efficacy operates within gendered, culturally bounded contexts.

By emphasizing women’s digital negotiation practices, this study shows how leisure constraints and self-efficacy operate in non-Western, patriarchal contexts and how they are reshaped through online interaction. It highlights social media as a key space where women share strategies, build confidence, develop efficacy and gradually expand their capacity to travel independently, thereby reconfiguring both efficacy and travel.

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The Impact of Avatarised Stigmas on Perceived Authenticity in Virtual Environments

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

Virtual environments provide stigmatised individuals with an opportunity to manage identity and social interactions through avatars. While avatars facilitate both stigma concealment and disclosure, such choices may influence perceptions and responses from other users of these spaces. This research will examine the impact of stigmarised avatars on others’ perceptions of authenticity and responses to product recommendations, analysing the effects of stigma type, avatar visual style, and product type through a series of experimental studies.

Competitive Short Paper

Stigma is a term used to describe an attribute that greatly undermines someone’s reputation or credibility (Goffman, 2009). People who are stigmatised face societal bias, which manifests as prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination (Neubaum et al., 2020; Wanniarachchi et al., 2020). Stigmatised individuals often rely on digital spaces to seek support and identity development due to discrimination and lack of connections with similar others in the physical world (Chan, 2023; Coursaris and Liu, 2009; Han et al., 2019; Parkinson et al., 2017).

The rise of virtual environments may provide more opportunities for people with stigmas to do this. In virtual environments, users are represented by avatars, which allow customisation of visual traits such as gender, height, skin tone, hairstyle, and clothing, as well as skills, abilities, and personality (Schrader, 2019). Avatars can be designed in different visual styles, such as realistic human-like and fantastical styles. As a result, individuals are able to shape their own identity and convey various facets of themselves, or their desired identity, through avatars (Guitton, 2010; Schrader, 2019; Vasalou and Joinson, 2009). Unlike on social media platforms though, users do not have access to real-life identities and appearances of others within virtual environments. Therefore, individuals can discard socially undesirable identities, including stigmas, when appearing as avatars if they so wish. However, the 'edited' perfect identities via avatars may lead to a diminished perception of authenticity by others.

Authenticity refers to the behaviours that aligns with one's actual self (Kernis and Goldman, 2006). Previous research demonstrates the importance of others' perceived authenticity in influencing persuasive outcomes in marketing (Shoenberger and Kim, 2023; Smith et al., 2021). While virtual environments and avatars provide a new avenue for stigmatised groups to shape their ideal self-image, previous research indicates that people with stigmas are more inclined to represent their stigmas through avatars (Gualano et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2022). The disclosure of stigma through avatars may enhance others' perceived authenticity as these others can perceive the stigmatised avatars as more genuine because of the disclosed vulnerabilities. In turn, this can potentially raise the confidence and effectiveness of communication among users. However, this requires further examination due to the scarcity of literature concerning the perceived authenticity of other individuals (Moulard et al., 2015). Therefore, this research aims to examine how avatars with stigmatised features affect others' perceived authenticity and responses to product recommendations offered by avatars. Across a series of between-subject experimental studies, the effects of stigma types, avatar types, and the congruence between the stigma and the product on product recommendation will be examined.

The research thus aspire to contribute to stigma and authenticity literature (Goffman, 2009; Kernis and Goldman, 2006) by extending stigma research into the virtual context and examining consumers' perceptions of avatarised stigma in this space. It will also extend prior research on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Erkan and Evans, 2016) by exploring the connection between perceived authenticity and product recommendation effectiveness in a virtual environment.

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Breaking the Consumption Story: Reorienting Marketing Narratives Towards Sufficiency and Inclusivity

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper provides sharp criticism of the role of marketing in perpetuating overconsumption and unsustainable growth to the point of ecological collapse. It argues for an urgent and fundamental reorientation towards narratives of sufficiency and inclusivity. This paper positions marketing as an essential instrument for systemic cultural change and proposes pathways to move consumers towards mindful consumption as a widespread cultural norm which will redefine concepts of prosperity beyond material wealth.

Competitive Short Paper

In the fashion industry, as with all industries, marketing narratives are dominated by a logic of perpetual growth, over-consumption, and the acquisition of material goods. It is this paradigm which frames our happiness through the lens of consumption. Although we know this to be ecologically untenable, and which fails to deliver on its promises of happiness and satisfaction, we, the consumer, seem incapable of rejecting this paradigm. This paper argues that marketing must take a deliberate and positive step away from its current position, and reorient its core narratives towards sufficiency and inclusivity. Marketing must act as a driver that moves mindful consumption from a niche practice seen in small pockets of fashion and food consumption, into a widespread cultural norm. This paper positions marketing, not merely as a significant cause of the existing problem, but as an essential instrument in unlocking much needed systemic cultural change.

A central challenge to rejecting our wide-scale acceptance of current marketing narratives is to dismantle the story we are told that prosperity is the same as consumption and material wealth. Considering heterodox economic critiques of growth, and long-standing established concepts like Juliet Schor's 'Plentitude', this paper proposes these as frameworks for new marketing narratives. Adopting these frameworks will reframe prosperity in terms of abundant time, creativity, community, and connection. In short, marketing must shift from a function that seeks to sell huge volumes of products, to one which promotes quality of life, and which supports business structures which promote this new paradigm. This paper recognises practical models such as The MacArthur Foundation's Circular Economy model, but is critical that such systems may perpetrate consumption in different forms is a fundamental change the mindset of consumers does not also occur. This paper proposes ways in which we can leverage these frameworks to reframe 'enough' not as a limitation, but rather as a foundational principle for greater happiness, well-being, and as pathways to a secure and ecologically sound future.

We must challenge the dominant marketing narratives of material acquisition which reinforce mass over-consumption, causing ecological ruin and existential collapse. Transformation like this must be supported by a fundamental shift in the attitude of business and industry. Tactical and strategic marketing functions must understand, recognise, and advocate for business models that embrace social and ecological values, transparently and authentically communicating these values to consumers. These new marketing narratives must be co-created with, and resonate across diverse communities, including alternative world views from marginalised and global majority countries, creating new narratives of prosperity.

Transformation of current marketing practice could be achieved by addressing key issues such as:

Innovating current marketing narratives.

Recalibrating western perceptions of value.

Advocating for change within the industry.

Ultimately, by taking steps to deconstruct the dominant consumption narrative of marketing, we can exercise our agency to foster an alternative cultural paradigm where our sense of well-being , happiness, and fulfilment are anchored in a shared value system, and in our collective ecological stewardship, rather than in our individual material wealth.

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Breaking the Cycle: Integrating Internal and Social Marketing to Unlock Well-Being in Chinese Academia

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

Suicides among young academics in Chinese Higher Education Institutions have drawn attention to suicide research in academic settings. This study advocates the application of internal social marketing (ISM) which integrates the internal marketing (IM) and social marketing (SM) to foster behavioural change, promote supportive institutional cultures and contribute to suicide prevention and overall wellbeing. Through IM, universities can better respond to young academic needs, making ISM interventions more effective and contributing to broader social impact.

Competitive Short Paper

Most deaths by suicide happen in low- and middle-income countries (World Health Organisation, 2019). China as one of the most populous nations, accounts for 15% of global suicide death, highlighting a need for suicide research (Cheng et al., 2021). Long working hours have been shown to deteriorate mental health amongst workers (Ma, 2023) leading to contributing about 600,000 annual deaths from “Guolaosi” or overwork (Monet, 2014).

Recently, suicides among young academics in Chinese Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have drawn attention to the tenure-track system (Chinadaily, 2025; Mallapaty, 2021). Introduced in 1994 by Tsinghua University, this system selects high performing academics a probation period to enhance university rankings. The “Double First-class Initiative” has further enforced the up-or-out model to attract top talents (Cao et al., 2024; Chinadaily, 2025; Xu et al., 2023). Faculty members must meet strict criteria within six years or face transfer or dismissal, with only 25%-30% passing probation (Wang and Wang, 2024). Therefore, young academics grapple with intensive pressure and serious burnout. The resulting burnout impacts academic performance and governance, prompting public concern over mental health (Xu et al., 2023).

Social marketing - the application of marketing to the solution of social and health problems (Kotler and Zaltman 1971; McDemott et al., 2005) - promotes voluntary behaviour change using tools such as segmentation, targeting, and value exchange (Smith, 2006; Truong, 2019). In Chinese academic culture, overwork is often as a form of self-exploitation (Ren and Liu, 2021), while seeking mental health support carries stigma. Changing this behaviour is essential, and suicide prevention must consider the specific pressures facing academics (Wu et al., 2025). Collaborative actions from institutions, public health organisations, and policymakers are essential.

However, most research focuses on downstream social marketing - targeting individual behavioural - while upstream strategies that foster institutional change remains largely unexplored (Truong et al., 2019). Internal marketing (IM) treats organisations as internal markets, viewing employees as internal customers, and jobs as internal products (Berry et al., 1976). When employees feel valued, they respond with greater engagement and positive behaviour (Gouraris, 2006; Lings and Greenley, 2010).

This study proposes integrating internal marketing with social marketing – forming an *Internal Social Marketing(ISM)* – to instigate behavioural and cultural change within organisations (Smith, 2011). ISM can destigmatise access to mental health resources, reward healthy work behaviours and address self-exploitation. Through IM, universities can better respond to young academic needs, making ISM interventions more effective and contributing to broader social impact.

To explore this, a qualitative study using focus groups will be conducted with young academics from Chinese HEIs, public health professionals, and policymakers. Together they will co-design an ISM programme aimed at fostering behavioural, promoting supportive institutional cultures and contributing to suicide prevention and overall wellbeing in academic settings.

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'It's All About the (Learning) Journey': An Exploration of Psychological Phenomena Underpinning the Characteristics of Cognitive Dissonance in the Context of Environmental Food Behaviours

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This qualitative study adopted a cognitive dissonance theory lens to conduct vignette-based in-depth online interviews with 24 'environmentally conscious' consumers. The aim was to collect in-depth verbal accounts of their lived experience in the context of food behaviours and sustainability. Findings suggest that environmental learning played a notable role in shaping the salience of environmental goals and ultimately impacted whether and how individuals translate cognitive dissonance into pro-environmental actions.

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Professional Sharenting on Instagram: A Comparative Analysis of Audience Engagement in Organic vs. Sponsored Content

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

Influencers engage in professional sharenting for two dominant reasons: immediate commercial gain via sponsored content and long-term brand building through organic social capital. Analyzing 1,685 posts from 20 influencers, this study finds that organic brand-building content generates significantly higher engagement, averaging 14,222 likes versus 2,807 for sponsored posts. This reveals that audiences value children more as catalysts for the development of authentic parent influencer personas than as instruments for direct monetization.

Competitive Short Paper

"Sharenting" describes the parental practice of sharing children's lives online (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017). Professional sharenting" elevates this to a commercial strategy, integrating children directly into the parent's revenue-generating content (Jorge et al., 2021). This practice manifests a "privacy paradox by proxy" (Ní Bhroin et al, 2022), where parents acknowledge the digital risks to their children yet continue to utilize their images and personal information for two distinct ends: immediate commercial gain (sponsored content) and long-term brand building (organic persona development) (Van den Abeele et al., 2024). This duality effectively shifts the parental role from a protector of privacy to a manager of the child's commercial utility (Beuckels et al, 2025; Holiday et al., 2022; Vizcaíno-Verdú et al., 2023). Given the increasing commodification of domestic life, empirical evidence is needed to determine if the "engagement premium" of children persists when the intent shifts from authentic brand building to explicit commercial gain, as this distinction is vital for understanding the ethical implications of using children as financial assets versus identity tools. Therefore, the main research question is: *How does the strategic use of children in professional sharenting differ between immediate commercial gain (sponsored content) and long-term brand building (organic persona development) in terms of audience reach and engagement?*

We analysed 1,685 posts from 20 top parent influencer accounts on Instagram published between August 1, 2025 and January 22, 2026. For each post in the observed period, the collected data included post text, format (e.g., photo, video/reel, carousel), video duration, post engagement metrics (e.g., likes, shares, comments, video views), music used, profile tags, collaborators, and whether the post was a paid promotion. To control for differences in audience sizes, we calculated the engagement rate for each post. We use SPSS to analyse the data using descriptive statistics and run a series of t-tests to compare differences in engagement metrics for sponsored vs. non-sponsored posts. Finally, we use thematic text analysis to identify key post themes.

Preliminary results indicate Reels were the dominant content format with 1,203 posts (71.39%), 443 (26.29%) are carousel posts and 39 (2.31%) are single images. On average, posts received 13,422.33 likes (SD=48,334.34) and 222.90 comments (SD=951.77). The average engagement rate was 4.66% (SD=30.07), indicating considerable variance across accounts. Sponsored content was present but not dominant: 118 posts (7,0%) included a paid-promotion flag and 468 posts (27,77%) listed collaborators, indicative of co-creation or partnerships. The independent samples t-tests indicated that unsponsored content generated higher mean likes, comments, shares, total interactions and engagement rate (e.g., non-sponsored posts averaged 14,222 likes versus 2,807 for sponsored; mean difference = 11,414, 95 % CI = 8,494–14,335), whereas views did not differ significantly ($p = 0.42$). To identify overarching themes within the posts, we use ChatGPT 5.2 and follow an unsupervised text-mining workflow inspired by the six-phase reflexive thematic analysis process and combine it with manual coding to identify and discuss five sharenting content themes. Finally, we discuss the limitations, future research directions and practical implications for parent influencers, advertisers and policy makers.

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From Silos to Synergies: Transdisciplinary Knowledge Co-Production in Sustainability Marketing Education

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This paper examines how transdisciplinary knowledge co-production can be embedded in sustainability marketing education. Drawing on a mixed-methods evaluation of an interdisciplinary training programme, it shows how boundary-crossing pedagogy fosters synergistic learning, enhances sustainability communication capabilities, and supports action-oriented academic practice. The study offers practical insights for redesigning sustainability marketing curricula beyond disciplinary silos.

Competitive Short Paper

Sustainability challenges increasingly demand forms of marketing education that move beyond disciplinary silos and traditional pedagogical models. However, sustainability marketing education often remains fragmented, with limited integration across social sciences, natural sciences, and community-based knowledge. This paper examines how transdisciplinary knowledge co-production can be embedded within sustainability marketing education and how such approaches influence learning, collaboration, and practice.

The study draws on a mixed-methods evaluation of an interdisciplinary training programme designed for academics from social and natural science backgrounds in an emerging economy context in Vietnam. The programme integrated sustainability marketing communication, climate science, experiential fieldwork, and community engagement activities. Quantitative pre- and post-training surveys were used to assess changes in participants' sustainability knowledge, attitudes, and behavioural intentions. The main insights were generated from qualitative data collected via semi-structured interviews. Other qualitative data collection included participant observation to enhance data triangulation. This approach enabled a richer understanding of interdisciplinary learning processes (Brundiers et al., 2010; Wiek et al., 2016).

Our initial findings indicate that transdisciplinary pedagogical design fosters meaningful knowledge co-production and enables participants to move from isolated disciplinary thinking towards synergistic, problem-oriented collaboration. Participants reported enhanced capacity to translate complex sustainability and climate-related knowledge into accessible communication, increased confidence in interdisciplinary teaching and research, and greater engagement in sustainability-oriented academic practices. Our findings challenged traditional hierarchies of expertise and consistent with transdisciplinary sustainability research principles (Lang et al., 2012; Lozano et al., 2015).

Our paper contributes to marketing pedagogy literature by demonstrating how transdisciplinary, co-produced learning environments can unlock new educational value and societal impact. It offers practical insights for educators and institutions seeking to redesign sustainability marketing curricula that support boundary-crossing learning, reflexivity, and action-oriented outcomes.

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How Eco-Labels Shape Consumer Choice Through Visual Attention: A Systematic Literature Review

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This systematic review synthesizes evidence from 70 studies to examine how eco-labels influence consumer behavior. Integrating the ADO–TCM framework with rigorous risk-of-bias assessments, we find that eco-labels enhance purchase decision. Visual attention emerges as a key underlying mechanism, with label design features—such as format, framing—predicting downstream effect. However, quality assessment results underscore the need for objective outcome measures and more control of confounding factors in future research.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Eco-labels have become a essential visible instrument of sustainability communication, with more than 450 certified schemes recognized worldwide. A persistent gap in communication remains: 41% of consumers report insufficient information to make environmentally responsible choices (IBM, 2023). This paradox suggests that the effectiveness of eco-labels depends also on how labels are captured and processed by consumers.

Existing reviews attested effects of eco-labels on purchase intention, or examine attention in isolated neuromarketing contexts (Potter et al., 2021; Hoffmann et al., 2025). However, systematic syntheses explicitly linking visual attention to downstream choice outcomes remain limited. Addressing this gap, this review conceptualizes visual attention as a proximal mechanism linking eco-label design and sustainable choice.

Methodology

We conducted a systematic literature review following the PICOS protocol and reported in compliance with PRISMA guidelines. Searches were conducted in Web of Science, Scopus, and EBSCO, covering publications up to October 2025. From 410 initial records, 70 peer-reviewed articles met the eligibility criteria.

To have a preliminary causal inference, this on-going work has first conducted an in-depth synthesis of 22 articles that employed randomized controlled trials (RCTs) or quasi-experiments. Findings were synthesized using the integrated ADO–TCM framework (Lim et al., 2021), enabling structured literature mapping to a higher granularity. Study quality was evaluated using Cochrane RoB 2 tool for RCTs and ROBINS-I V2 for quasi-experimental studies (Sterne et al., 2019; Sterne et al., 2016).

Results

First, eco-labels exert a consistent positive effect on consumer choice, across product categories and contexts. In canteen settings, sustainability labels shift choices away from higher-impact options despite price differences (Brunner et al., 2018; Lane et al., 2024). Sawe's study (2022) echoed that eco-labeled products could be approximately three times more likely to be chosen. These effects extend beyond discrete choice outcomes to willingness to pay (WTP) and sales with typical small to moderate effect size. Field evidence shows that Amazon's Climate Pledge Friendly label increased sales by 13.3%, demonstrating that eco-label effects translate into revealed purchase choices (Proserpio et al., 2025).

Second, visual attention functions as a key mediating mechanism. Eye-tracking studies show that longer fixation on eco-labels predicts higher purchase likelihood and WTP (Takahashi et al., 2018; Rihn et al., 2019). This relationship is strongly moderated by label design: logos and joint logo–text formats attract more attention than text-only labels. Attention allocation is further enhanced when labels are horizontally aligned, contiguously placed, and visually consistent with ecological packaging cues, facilitating visual scanning and cognitive fluency (Magnier & Schoormans, 2015; Wang et al., 2022).

Third, evidence robustness is uneven. Risk-of-bias assessments indicate that reliance on hypothetical stated preferences, insufficient reporting of data exclusions, and lack of preregistration constitute major sources of bias.

Contribution

This review advances consumer research literature by consolidating fragmented evidence on visual attention as a proximal antecedent of sustainable choice, linking attention-based decision. Methodologically, it highlights the need for preregistered, objective measures of outcomes with realistic consequences. For practitioners, the findings underscore that eco-labels function as visual signal shortcuts in a broad set of sustainability communications.

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No App, No Entry: Conceptualizing Digital Technology Captivity in Service Access

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

We conceptualize Digital Technology Captivity as when services move to digital-only access and, after evaluating the situation, vulnerable consumers perceive that they have few resources and options. This state produces stress through felt entrapment, as they are compelled to adopt adaptive or maladaptive coping strategies. We offer both a new theoretical framework and a call for services marketing to consider the consequences of digital transformation, particularly by proactively involving marginalized groups in this process.

Competitive Short Paper

Digital transformation is no longer a trend, but a structural force reshaping everyday life. From QR-based restaurant ordering to cashier-free retail, automated passport control, and digital-only banking, digital technologies now underpin many essential everyday services (Biscotti 2023; Waitzman 2024). While digital-first or digital-only access is justified in terms of efficiency and convenience (Grewal et al. 2020), its effects on consumers are unequal. Many benefit from streamlined interactions, whilst others face barriers, including limited internet access, financial constraints, or low digital self-efficacy (Mende and Misra 2021). Under such conditions, consumers lacking resources, skills, or readiness can be forced to use technology to access a service (Van Dijk 2020). We refer to this state of constraint and emotional strain (i.e. stress) as Digital Technology Captivity (DTC).

DTC is when services move to digital access and, after evaluating the situation, consumers feel constrained as they perceive few resources and options. This state produces stress through felt entrapment, as they are compelled to adopt adaptive or maladaptive coping strategies. Crucially, DTC is triggered by changes in service access. It arises when analogue pathways are removed, made difficult to use, or when access becomes systemically digital-only (Durand et al. 2022).

Conceptually, DTC is related to but distinct from service captivity (Conlon et al. 2004; Rayburn et al. 2020). Service captivity originates from constraints within the service or market environment that limit consumer exit, whereas DTC stems from the design of digital access infrastructures. Consumers may face multiple competing providers yet remain captive to shared access systems that require specific devices, applications, or digital competencies (Gasser 2015). These forms of captivity can occur independently or overlap, producing situations in which consumers are simultaneously constrained by both service captivity and DTC, particularly in essential and everyday service contexts.

To explain how DTC unfolds, we develop a conceptual framework grounded in Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress-and-coping model. We show how changes in service access trigger a primary appraisal, in which consumers interpret digital requirements as threatening, harmful, or challenging, followed by a secondary appraisal of their available coping resources, including digital self-efficacy, material access, social support, and switching options. When perceived demands exceed perceived resources, consumers experience vulnerability characterised by stress and felt entrapment. Coping responses then follow, ranging from adaptive strategies such as learning and seeking support, to maladaptive strategies such as avoidance, withdrawal, or service abandonment (Mick and Fournier 1998; Keeling et al. 2019).

We further argue that susceptibility to DTC varies across consumers. Drawing on an intersectional lens (Crenshaw 1991), we show how overlapping social and structural factors (e.g., age, class, disability, and gender) shape how digital service access is appraised and experienced (Uduehi et al. 2024). Finally, the framework highlights the conditions under which captivity may be softened. We show that social support and service design can alleviate DTC (Pera et al. 2020; Benoit et al. 2024). When service providers acknowledge consumers' affective responses, reduce cognitive load, preserve autonomy, and provide human or human-like assistance, the emotional force of captivity is weakened.

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Families as Boundary-Breaking agents for Food System Change

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This article reconceptualises families as social change agents within food systems, positioning the work of doing family as a relational and publicly enacted process that operates across domestic, market, community, and institutional contexts

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Green-Nation Branding: A Contemporary Approach to Sustainable Place Marketing for Tourism?

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

A study towards developing and validating the green-nation branding dimensions that can be implemented as part of a broad-based place marketing model for tourism destinations. The study results are of interest to tourism marketing practitioners seeking to promote climate-conscious tourism and attract sustainability-sensitive tourists to their destinations.

Competitive Short Paper

Contemporary geopolitics and isolationist posturing appear to be threatening collective efforts and action against climate change, such as the Paris Climate Agreement. In light of this current negative trend, and the growing concerns around the negative environmental impact of tourism and tourist behaviour (carbon footprint, waste, and excessive resource consumption) on destinations (Sheeraz et al., 2023); this study examined the potential of green nation branding as a broad-based place marketing approach to influencing tourists' environmentally sustainable (green) behavioural intentions when engaging in tourism. Drawing on Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) Stimuli-Organism-Response framework and the extended Nation Branding theory (Anholt, 2008; Matiza, 2021), the study aimed to establish whether governance, infrastructure, contemporary events, and exports as green nation brand (G-NB) dimensions act as stimuli to tourists' green travel motives, which in turn influence the green travel intention of tourists.

An original conceptual G-NB-based model was developed to test the primary hypothesis that G-NB dimensions influence the green-oriented travel intention of tourists via their sustainability-oriented (green) travel motives. Study data were generated via a self-administered online survey. A stratified-convenience sample was drawn from a pre-recruited panel on Prolific. The primary criteria for participation were country of residence and participants having engaged in international travel within the year preceding the survey. In the survey, study participants were asked to indicate the extent of influence (very negative to very positive on a 5-point Likert scale) that the G-NB dimensions had on their motivations to engage in green travel. Further, data on specific green travel motives and tourist travel intentions were solicited. Data from a final sample of n=499 German and British international travellers was analysed. The proposed hypotheses were tested by applying Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4 software.

The initial results indicate that *Governance*, *Infrastructure*, and Exports as G-NB dimensions are antecedents of tourist *Green Travel Motive*. In turn, *Green Travel Motives* influence tourists' *Green Travel Intention*. The model exhibited substantial predictive power (R2) and relevance (Q2) as an explanatory model for tourist *Green Travel Intention.* Thus, the causal sequential relationship between *G-NB, Green Travel Motives,* and *Green Travel Intention* extends and validates the S-O-R and NB theory within the broader context of place marketing and tourist green conation. Though not particularly complex, the model results highlight the potential intricacies between a destination's deliberate G-NB as place marketing and tourists' underlying psychological mechanisms in promoting environmentally friendly tourist behavioural intention. Study insights validate the prioritisation of a holistic macro-level approach to branding destinations from a climate-conscious perspective, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 12, and the place-specific promotion of sustainable tourism. While from a theoretical perspective, the distinct causal relationships that emerged provide empirical evidence that advances sustainability theory in tourism and destination place marketing practice. From a practical perspective, the results point to the feasibility of developing a G-NB framework that guides tourism destinations in climate-conscious and sustainability-sensitive destination branding that promotes tourists' green behaviour.

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Value Creation in AI-Enabled Service Platforms: A Meta-Synthesis from Digital Learning Ecosystems

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

This paper presents a systematic review and meta-synthesis of research on AI-enabled feedback in digital service platforms, with a focus on digital learning ecosystems. Focusing on a service ecosystem perspective, the study explores how value is created through user experience, interaction, and engagement rather than through technology alone. The paper integrates insights from marketing, HCI, and educational technology to identify key factors shaping value co-creation in AI-enabled services.

Competitive Short Paper

Digital platforms have become central to how services are designed, delivered, and experienced across many industries. Education is also increasingly organised through digital service platforms rather than only through traditional classroom settings. These platforms connect multiple actors, including learners, educators, institutions, and technology providers, forming complex service ecosystems. Within this context, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as an important driver of service innovation, particularly through automated and AI-enabled feedback systems that aim to improve performance, personalise interactions, and increase user engagement. Despite a growing body of research in this area, existing studies remain fragmented across disciplines, with limited integrated understanding of how AI-enabled feedback contributes to user experience and value creation in digital service ecosystems.

The aim of this study is to conduct a systematic scoping review and meta-synthesis of existing research on AI-enabled feedback in digital service platforms, using digital learning ecosystems as the main context. Rather than collecting new empirical data, the study synthesises findings from peer-reviewed research to identify shared patterns and practical insights across the literature. Adopting a service ecosystem perspective, platforms are conceptualised as dynamic service systems in which value is created through interactions between users, technologies, and institutional settings, rather than being generated by technology alone (Vargo & Lusch, 2008).

The review draws on peer-reviewed journal articles from digital service research, human–computer interaction, and educational technology. Relevant studies are identified through academic databases such as Scopus and Google Scholar, focusing on research that examines AI-based or automated feedback in platform-based environments and reports user-related outcomes such as engagement, trust, satisfaction, performance, or technology adoption. Each study is coded according to key characteristics, including the type of service platform, the role of AI, the main user groups, and outcomes related to value creation, followed by a thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns across the studies.

The findings suggest that value creation in AI-enabled service platforms is strongly influenced by factors such as transparency of AI systems and the level of human control in service design, which shape user trust and acceptance (Shin, 2021; Kizilcec, 2016). Perceived usefulness and ease of use also play a central role in users' willingness to adopt and engage with AI-enabled services (Davis, 1989). In addition, personalisation and adaptability support sustained engagement by improving the relevance and quality of user experiences (Tam & Ho, 2006). From a service marketing perspective, these factors reflect key mechanisms of value co-creation within digital service ecosystems (Vargo & Lusch, 2008).

Overall, this study offers an integrated view of value creation in AI-enabled service platforms by bringing together fragmented research across disciplines. The findings show that value is not created by AI alone, but through users' experiences, trust, and interaction with AI-enabled feedback. These insights highlight the importance of transparency, user control, and meaningful user experience in supporting sustainable value co-creation in digital learning ecosystems.

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Exploring the Potential for User Generated Content as a Driver of Consumer Engagement and Sustainable Demand for Creative and Cultural Products in Zimbabwe

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Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

Summary Statement

This paper examines how user-generated content (UGC) can enhance consumer engagement and build sustainable demand for Zimbabwean creative and cultural products. Reviewing post-COVID literature, it explores how relatable, authentic UGC supports value co-creation, H2H marketing, and trust-building. The study investigates benefits, opportunities for artisan–user value co-creation, and challenges limiting access to international markets. It argues that strategic use of UGC can help artisans overcome market barriers, and sustain international demand.

Competitive Short Paper

User generated content (UGC) has been recognised in recent research (Aguilella, 2024) as an effective tool for engaging current and future users of cultural and heritage products (Hervás Cortina et al., 2025). When UGC is relatable, organic and unfiltered or diluted to push marketing narratives it can become an effective user-engagement tool for destinations, restaurants and other tourism related services (Karahan, 2025). User confidence derived from consuming content of peer experiences can be developed into buying intentions and interaction with heritage products and services (Kauppi, 2025).

Evidence from the last 5 years demonstrates the benefits of UGC to marketing strategies in heritage products like tourism and consumption of artists products, (Kauppi, 2025). The significance of UGC in marketing has been recognised by marketers beyond art and heritage products (Kotler et al., 2024). It can be found in all sectors of the market where it is widely used in human-to-human (H2H) marketing because it evokes authenticity, empathy and trust in products that have effectively embedded it into strategies (Kotler et al., 2020). According to (Dineva, 2023) UGC adds further to art and heritage marketing as a component of value co-creation where user experiences can be used to validate and authenticate the value of product for both the customer and the producer through providing provenance of art or improving the quality of experience at the point of consumption (Figueroa Velázquez et al., 2022). However, Pret and Cogan (2019) suggest caution when assuming attractiveness of big marketing strategies to artisan as there may exist friction with artisans' identity and values.

This paper reviews literature from the post-covid era to analyse how UGC has contributed to consumer engagement and the development of sustainable demand for the creative and cultural industries in a non-Western artisanal context. The paper addresses these questions:

What are the benefits of embedding of social media-driven marketing strategies, particularly UGC, for artisans in Zimbabwe?

What opportunities exist for Zimbabwean artisans to co-create content with users?

What challenges could impact the implementation of H2H marketing strategies for art and heritage operators in Zimbabwe?

The market presently has low local demand owing to challenging economic conditions, and low inbound tourism thus artisans are forced to look to international markets for sustainable demand for their products. However, this paper explores how these barriers could be addressed through a strategic approach using UGC on social media. Artisans can also use UGC to anticipate buying behaviour through monitoring feedback and using it to modify products and experiences in real time.

UGC presents an opportunity for Zimbabwean artisans and creatives in the art and heritage sector to connect with new markets and consumers at a relatively low cost through collaborating with users, repurposing UGC for social media campaigns, advertising and other marketing activities (Kotler et al., 2021). UGC when used effectively can be a source of humanised, relatable presence in markets across the work without geographical limitation. Lastly, incorporating UGC can help to create trusting relationships leading to gaining access to users' networks and potentially sustainable demand.

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The Portfolio CREATE Model: Creative Portfolio Assessment for Market-Relevant Learning in Marketing Education

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This paper reports findings from an Academy of Marketing–funded pedagogic research project examining how creative portfolios are interpreted as market-relevant assessment practices in marketing education. Drawing on qualitative data from 20 academics, employers, recruiters, and practitioners, the paper's primary contribution is the Portfolio CREATE Model, a six-principle framework grounded in authentic assessment, developmental creativity (Four C Model), constructivist learning, and praxis, offering guidance for designing credible and inclusive portfolio-based assessment.

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Behavioral Pricing in the Services Sector

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

Although behavioral pricing practices have been used by firms for several decades to influence consumer decision-making process, existing studies mainly focus on the Retail Sector and stand from a firm point of view. This paper addresses this gap by focusing on consumer's attitudes towards the use of a set of behavioral pricing practices in the Services Sector, alongside their antecedents and the effect they have on key pricing-related outcomes.

Competitive Short Paper

This paper advances current understanding of pricing in the Services Sector, because most of the existing research focuses on pricing practices in the retail sector (Avlonitis & Indounas, 2007). A thorough literature review ended up finding another gap, when it came to identifying a comprehensive and theoretically grounded classification of a set of behavioral pricing dimensions. This paper introduces a list of behavioral dimensions of pricing, in order to capture consumer attitudes towards these dimensions. Using as a starting point, the only classification of behavioral aspects by Skouras et al. (2005), it was decided that the following behavioral dimensions should be included in the research:

Price-Quality Scheme

Price Fairness Concerns

Assimilation & Contrast

Price Knowledge

Odd-Even Pricing

Up until now, most of the behavioral pricing dimensions were investigated as variables that affected directly or indirectly key pricing-related outcomes of direct relevance to firms, such as "Willingness to pay" which is considered a crucial variable in the pricing literature (Homburg et al.,2005). By focusing on measuring consumer's attitudinal responses to behavioral pricing practices, this research shifts from the firm-centric point of view to a more innovative consumer-centric one.

Kienzler and Kowalkowski (2017) stated that further research should be dedicated to service pricing, in consideration to its characteristics (e.g. intangibility) and they suggested that there is a need for using qualitative research method to successfully reach a deeper understanding of pricing in the context of the Services Sector. Building on this prior research this paper examines the role of consumers' attitude towards behavioral pricing dimensions in the Services Sector and furthermore explores possible antecedents that affect this attitude (e.g. sex, age, usage). Since there is almost no other study concerning the consumer's attitude towards a set of behavioral pricing practices, the Exploratory Sequentian Mixed Method was chosen to understand in depth the phenomenon under investigation (Harrison & Reilly,2011), and to offer insights of practical relevance to pricing decision-makers.

The conduction of eleven in-depth interviews with people that work in the Services Sector with an average working experience of more than fifteen years was considered a suitable approach. The interviewees come from a variety of Services sub-sectors, such as airlines, banks, medical services etc. Alongside, twenty consumers formed four Focus Groups to discuss their attitudes towards behavioral practices. The data derived from both qualitative research methods were tape recorded, transcribed and anonymized. Then the data were analyzed using the qualitative content analysis (Krippendorf, 2018). The integration of qualitative findings, such as the identification of some consistent commonalities and differences that emerged from the Focus Groups, and the Personal Interviews strengthens the methodological robustness of the study. For example, the extent of use of Odd Pricing seems to differentiate drastically when it comes to different Services sub-sectors (e.g. Fitness Services vs Medical Services) indicating the importance of the characteristics of a sub-sector to the success of behavioral pricing practices. The findings have important implications for theory and practice; a better understanding of consumer reactions will lead to a better implementation of behavioral pricing in the Services Sector.

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The Elephant in the Classroom: Ethical Perceptions of Generative AI in Higher Education from Student and Educator Perspectives

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

Generative artificial intelligence (GAI) has rapidly become what many commentators describe as the "elephant in the classroom"—highly visible, widely used, yet unevenly understood and governed within higher education. The paper examines ethical perceptions of GAI from both student and instructor perspectives via a sequential mixed-methods research design.

Competitive Short Paper

Generative artificial intelligence (GAI) has become the *"elephant in the classroom"*—highly visible, widely used, yet unevenly understood and governed within higher education. Tools (e.g. ChatGPT) are now embedded in students' everyday study practices and increasingly influence teaching, assessment, and academic work. Disruptive GAI diffusion is reshaping how knowledge is produced, expressed, and evaluated such that ethical concerns have become central to debates about the future integrity, fairness, and purpose of higher education (Jahani et al., 2025; Asad and Ajaz, 2024).

Literature consistently frames GAI as a double-edged sword offering significant pedagogical opportunities. Students and educators see potential to support learning through idea generation, summarization, alternative explanations of complex concepts, language support for students with English as a second language, and increased efficiency in research and preparation tasks (Arista et al., 2024). When used as a companion, co-pilot, or cognitive scaffold, GAI can enhance understanding rather than replace intellectual effort: ethically acceptable and educationally beneficial applications (Chan & Hu, 2023).

GAI raises student's ethical risk perceptions (Mazaherian & Nourbakhsh, 2025) such as plagiarism, or unfair advantage, even when they engage in such practices themselves. This highlights unresolved questions around authorship, ownership of work, and assessment equity (Lu, 2025; Alli et al., 2025). Concerns from educators extend beyond academic integrity to include algorithmic bias, hallucinations, lack of transparency, and misuse of AI for monitoring, control, and automated evaluation of staff and students (Liu et al., 2025; Jogezai et al., 2025). Data privacy and security further complicate ethical governance, as GAI systems rely on extensive data collection and reuse, often beyond the awareness or consent of users (Jacques et al., 2024).

Ethical understanding and guidance remain fragmented with perceptions of ethical AI use differing between students and educators (Ravi et al., 2025). This gap underscores the importance of systematically evaluating how different stakeholders understand, interpret, and negotiate ethical aspects of GAI, rather than assuming a shared moral or pedagogical consensus. Without such understanding, institutional responses risk being either overly restrictive or naively permissive, undermining trust and educational value. A sequential mixed-methods research design is adopted to examine ethical perceptions of GAI from both student and instructor perspectives. Stage 1 consists of a focused literature review synthesizing recent empirical and conceptual work on ethical concerns related to GAI in higher education, including academic integrity, bias, transparency, data governance, and pedagogical value. This stage establishes the analytical framework and informs instrument development.

Stage 2 involves exploratory focus groups with students and instructors, using art-related elicitation techniques to surface implicit beliefs, emotional responses, and ethical intuitions surrounding GAI use. The outputs of this stage—visual artefacts and thematically analyzed narratives—will be explicitly presented and discussed, providing rich insight into how ethical meanings are constructed across stakeholder groups.

Stage 3 employs a large-scale survey to map and compare students' and educators' ethical perceptions of GAI. This final stage enables systematic comparison, identification of convergences and tensions, and the development of a stakeholder-aligned ethical framework for responsible GAI use in higher education.

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Why We Should be Teaching B2B Marketing

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

Business-to-Business (B2B) marketing is typically presented as being different to Business-to-Consumer (B2C) marketing. Despite its importance, and while a good proportion of Business School marketing graduates go to work in B2B job contexts, many marketing degrees (UG and PGT) appear to have limited B2B marketing content in their curriculums. Our paper undertakes a thematic review of leading business and marketing programme content and provide insights into the roles we should be preparing our students for.

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AI Ethics, Satisfaction and Performance in Healthcare

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

Testing doing good and doing well in AI ethics in the healthcare is rare and yet to be proven. This large scale content analysis investigates reviews posted by doctors (amazon, apple, google, reddit and trustpilot) of 10 AI-enabled CDSS product first to identify variables that lead to doctor satisfaction and business performance, and second to test their relationships. The variables also compared with the core values proposed by the international ethical frameworks on AI healthcare.

Competitive Short Paper

Ethical behaviors of individuals, organizations, and countries have significant impact on trust and reputation, leading to competitiveness (e.g., Orlitzky et al 2003). Recently, Artificial Intelligence (AI) stands out as the most ethically disruptive and transformative force, especially in the healthcare sector. We are interested in exploring if ethics is linked to competitiveness in the AI in the healthcare: directly or indirectly.

In particular, the Clinical Decision Support System (CDSS), a health information technology solution that analyzes patient data against medical knowledge bases to provide actionable, evidence-based recommendations, alerts, and insights to clinicians, improving diagnostic accuracy, patient safety, and treatment efficiency, so far has shown to be "high-risk", for possible data bias, lack of transparency, safety risks, and accountability. AI-enabled CDSS is our empirical focus.

The research first identifies that the following 5 core values that are most commonly identified across the international ethical frameworks such as World Health Organization (WHO, 2021): "Ethics and Governance of Artificial Intelligence for Health, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019): "AI Principles", UNESCO (2021): "Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence", EU AI Act (2024) and various ISO/IEC. They are *Transparency & Explainability, Fairness, Safety, & Security, Human Oversight & Autonomy, Accountability & Governance.* Among these, safety, trustworthiness, explainability seem to be the biggest risks to AI enabled CDSS. We aim to test if any of the core values of the international ethical frameworks are linked to stakeholder (doctors) satisfaction and competitiveness.

In order to measure doctor's evaluation of the AI-enabled CDSS products, we conducted a content analysis of online review sites (Reddit and Trustpilot, Amazon,com, google play, Apple.com) for each of the 10 sample companies, which represent 5 success cases and 5 failure cases. Through an open coding conducted independently between two coders, a number of dimensions are identified as important variables driving doctor's satisfaction. The independent variables include time saving, accuracy, quality, service, patient satisfaction, and the dependent variables identified include satisfaction and intention to (re)use. A quantitative analysis of testing the relationships between the variables will be presented at the conference.

In summary, the links between doing good and doing in the AI enabled healthcare are rarely tested (e.g., Hirsch,2025). We hope that the findings from this research will simulate a larger scale empirical paper along the line of inquiry whether AI ethics may lead to competitiveness directly or indirectly through satisfaction of doctors and patients.

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Hey! Do You Know it's Ai? The Influence of Knowledge About AI on Customer Decision-Making Process & Journey

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

The use of Artificial Intelligence as a marketing tool to persuade customers has created knowledge asymmetry, as customers with their limited knowledge have to deal with businesses with access to big data and LLM-driven strategies. This study aims to map the impact of the level of AI knowledge on customer journey and decision making. It uses a grounded research paradigm and contributes to transparent and ethical use of AI.

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Communicating in 29^29 Pixels: How App Icons Influence User Experiences Across the Customer Journey

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

This research investigates mobile app icons across the three-stage mobile app customer journey via interviews with 27 participants. Findings show icons function as visual heuristics during pre-adoption and expectation confirmation during adoption. In the post-adoption stage, dynamic icons break "habitual blindness," fostering engagement through affective signalling. By extending signalling theory, this study positions icons as longitudinal cues rather than mere discovery tools throughout the mobile app usage lifecycle.

Competitive Short Paper

Mobile applications (apps) have become an indispensable part of daily life, with global app downloads surpassing 200 billion in 2024 (Statista, 2024). Icons are the first visual cue users encounter in app store listings and on device home screens, performing critical communicative and persuasive functions (Jylhä & Hamari, 2019). However, existing studies remain focused on pre-adoption outcomes (Wang & Li, 2017), leaving a gap in understanding how icons influence users throughout the entire lifecycle of app usage.

Based on the three stages of the mobile app customer journey (pre-adoption, adoption and post-adoption) put forward by Stocchi et al. (2022), this research aims to fill that gap by employing a qualitative, semi-structured interview approach to address the following questions:

How do users perceive mobile app icons in different stages of the mobile app customer journey?

How do icons influence users' cognitive and affective perceptions?

An interpretive, qualitative approach was adopted to explore how people understand visual cues in everyday digital environments. Given the global nature of mobile apps, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 27 Chinese and UK participants, to capture diverse perspectives on how users interpret and respond to app icons.

The interview protocol was informed by prior literature on visual marketing, branding cues, and digital interfaces (Henderson & Cote, 1998; Bhandari et al., 2017; Ton et al., 2023), and structured around the three-stage customer journey framework. We used abductive thematic analysis, which moves iteratively between data and existing theoretical framings. Grounded in signalling theory and literature, three main themes were derived: visual heuristic, expectation-confirmation, and engagement anchor.

This research finds that icons trigger users' visual heuristics, as they typically associate specific designs with app credibility, functionality, and quality without deep deliberation. These heuristics enable rapid elimination of low-quality or irrelevant apps. Following the download, icons continue to serve as cues that confirm expectations. Once an app has been downloaded and opened, participants want to see coherence between the icon and the in-app browsing experience. As more app developers use dynamic icons that animate or display real-time status, these icons break the user's "habitual blindness" in the post-adoption stage, when they are likely to neglect the app because of its familiar icon. However, it is a double-edged sword that may enhance engagement or generate cognitive overload.

This study makes several key contributions to the literature on visual marketing and digital consumer behaviour. First, the study extends signalling theory by demonstrating that mobile app icons function as "longitudinal signals". Icons are not limited to their role in initial discovery; they also play a role in communicating throughout the complete customer journey. Second, this research refines the mobile app customer journey framework by identifying cognitive and affective responses triggered by icons intuitively. In particular, this study introduces the notion of dynamic icons. They are design interventions that can both disrupt and enhance habitual engagement, depending on how they are implemented. From a practical perspective, this study suggests designers and developers should treat icons as strategic assets.

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Driving More, Feeling Better: Eco-Emotions and the Quasi-Jevons Effect in EV Marketing

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper introduces the *Quasi-Jevons Effect,* a marketing-mediated sustainability paradox in which eco-emotional appeals and "green efficiency" framing inadvertently increase electric vehicle ownership and mileage. Integrating eco-emotions, moral licensing, framing theory and rebound/spillover research, the paper explains how guilt-relief communications can stimulate compensatory consumption rather than emissions reduction. A multi-level framework and testable propositions are offered, alongside managerial and policy strategies to align EV marketing with genuine decarbonisation.

Competitive Short Paper

Electric mobility has become a central symbol of sustainable progress, with electric vehicles often promoted as both technologically superior and morally responsible choices. Recent campaigns increasingly draw on eco-anxiety, guilt and shame to motivate change, presenting electric vehicles as a way to "feel better" while "doing better" for the planet (Aaltola, 2021; Nielsen & Gamborg, 2024). However, a tension is emerging. Instead of replacing higher-emitting vehicles or reducing mileage, many households add battery electric vehicles to their fleets and subsequently drive more. This pattern highlights a conceptual gap: current explanations do not fully account for how emotionally driven sustainability messaging can lead to increased rather than reduced consumption.

Much existing research treats eco-emotions as straightforward drivers of pro-environmental behaviour, assuming that stronger guilt or anxiety naturally translates into greener choices (Aaltola, 2021; Nielsen & Gamborg, 2024). Yet this overlooks the ambivalent ways emotions shape consumer behaviour. Critical scholars argue that symbolic "green" actions often provide moral reassurance without producing real behavioural change, enabling cycles of self-absolution and identity protection (Carrington, Zwick, & Neville, 2016; Klein, 2015). Empirical research further shows that eco-anxiety can prompt coping responses such as escapism or identity repair, which may lead to emissions-ineffective choices, including eco-tourism or the purchase of an additional electric vehicle (Mkono & Hughes, 2020; Skeirytė & Liobikienė, 2025). These insights suggest a need to rethink how emotion-centred sustainability communication interacts with consumption.

This paper proposes the quasi-jevons effect as a way to conceptualise these dynamics. The effect describes a marketing-mediated rebound in which efficiency claims, guilt-relief messages and sustainable imagery encourage increased ownership and use of electric vehicles (Ojeda-Diaz, Krueger, Jensen, & Haustein, 2025). It is described as "quasi" because the rebound emerges not only from economic or technological factors but from the interaction between eco-emotions, identity work and marketing framing. A multi-level perspective helps explain this process. At the micro level, guilt-relief messaging can temporarily reduce emotional discomfort while making consumers more open to compensatory consumption (Aaltola, 2021; Fredericks, 2021). At the meso level, advertising that highlights convenience, efficiency and moral virtue normalises increased mobility demand and additive ownership, while structure-aligned messaging focused on replacement, usage discipline and lifecycle impact offers a more realistic pathway to emissions reduction (Carrington et al., 2016; Sharma & Palazzo, 2025). At the macro level, the policy environment shapes whether efficiency gains lead to meaningful emissions reductions or are offset by expanding vehicle kilometres travelled (Ojeda-Diaz et al., 2025; Klein, 2025).

From this framework, four propositions follow. First, eco-anxiety and guilt may increase sustainability intentions but also raise susceptibility to rebound under guilt-relief framing (Nielsen & Gamborg, 2024; Skeirytė & Liobikienė, 2025). Second, moral licensing mediates the relationship between emotional relief and compensatory consumption (Fredericks, 2021; Carrington et al., 2016). Third, sustainability-oriented advertising moderates eco-emotion effects, either amplifying or reducing rebound depending on how efficiency and responsibility are framed. Fourth, escapism channels eco-anxiety into symbolic rather than effective sustainability behaviours.

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Do Users Disclose Differently to Humans and Chatbots?

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

This study examines how interaction partner identity influences trust and self-disclosure in AI-mediated communication. Drawing on the CASA paradigm and Social Identity Theory, a 3×3 experimental design tested the effects of agent identity on disclosure behaviour. Results indicate no significant differences in trust or self-disclosure between human and chatbot interaction partners. Findings suggest that users may perceive chatbots as social actors in digital service contexts, with implications for chatbot design in customer-facing environments.

Competitive Short Paper

In an era of increasingly human-like digital interfaces (Davis and Jin, 2024) the boundaries between human and machine interaction continue to blur as conversational agents become more sophisticated, employing natural language, expressive tone, and even social cues (Diederich et al., 2020). This research explores how users navigate this blurred line, focusing on the psychological processes underpinning self-disclosure and trust in interactions with chatbots versus human agents. Drawing upon the Computers Are Social Actors paradigm and Social Identity Theory, this research investigates how chatbot features, particularly linguistic cues and identity cues, shape interpersonal perceptions and behaviours in online environments and digital service contexts.

Self-disclosure, the act of sharing personal information with others, has been found to have numerous positive outcomes (Robinson, 2017). While individuals engage in self-disclosure, they deepen their connections, foster trust, enhance mutual understanding, and receive support (Joinson et al., 2010; Robinson, 2017; Luo and Hancock, 2019; Lee et al., 2020). Despite concerns about online privacy, individuals continue to disclose deeply personal information on various online platforms (Meng and Liu, 2025). Understanding these dynamics is essential for addressing privacy concerns effectively and striking a balance between disclosure and protection in the digital age (Meng and Liu, 2025).

RQ: What is the impact of an interaction partner's identity on trust and self-disclosure?

Research Context

Advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) have created new opportunities for building social and emotional connections with artificial entities beyond humans, particularly through chatbots (Thomaz et al., 2020). There is a growing need to further investigate the concept of anthropomorphism (the attribution of human-like characteristics to non-human entities) and its implications for human behaviour (Epley, 2018; Thomaz et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2023; Rana, 2024). A 3x3 between-subjects experimental design was conducted with a sample size of 106 Master's students. Examining the effects of different agent identities (human, chatbot, undisclosed) and the richness of linguistic cues (high, low, no cues) on individuals' willingness to disclose personal information.

Key Findings

The results suggest that there is no difference in the level of trust and self-disclosure across the nine conditions. The findings suggest that the interaction partner's identity, whether chatbot or human, did not have a significant influence on self-disclosure, reinforcing the CASA Paradigm even if behavioural outcomes do not differ significantly.

The results indicate that participants disclosed an equal amount of information across the nine conditions, regardless of the interaction partner's identity and linguistic cues.

Contribution and Implications

The study has a multidisciplinary theoretical integration of Social Identity theory, and Computers are Social Actors to offer a holistic understanding of human chatbot interaction. The findings of this research also guide design recommendations for the organisations using chatbots in customer services, healthcare or social support. However, the generalizability of the results is limited due to the controlled environment of the experiment. Since our study only implemented linguistic cues as social cues in a one-time interaction, it is important to explore the potential impact of advanced techniques, such as voice-based cues, on self-disclosure.

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Conceptualizing Empowerment and Trust Within Credence Healthcare Services: A Traditional Chinese Medicine Perspective

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

This research presents an incipient, novel conceptual model of Multilevel Patient Empowerment (MPE). This integrated framework advances the understanding of psychological empowerment (e.g. Zimmerman, 1995; Spreitzer, 1995) by highlighting its multidimensional, relational, and temporal nature. By contextualising within Traditional Chinese Medicine, the work offers novel insight to the nature of complementary therapies within pluralistic, credence healthcare servicescapes.

Competitive Short Paper

Contemporary consumers exist within an era of medical pluralism, where conventional biomedicine and alternative healthcare options are increasingly accessible (Cant, 2020). This may, alongside cultural, social, and personal factors (see WHO, 2025) explain the increase in patient numbers accessing more varied healthcare options, whether singularly or complementarily (Frass et al., 2012). Whilst there is growing consumer appreciation of the benefits of maintaining healthy lifestyles via holistic approaches that include complementary health practices alongside conventional medicine (Bishop et al., 2019), there is limited evidence to clarify the perceived efficacy of credence health services such as Complementary Alternative Medicine (CAM) therapies, especially those found within Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) (Matos et al., 2021).

Patients as healthcare consumers have transitioned from being passive recipients of care to active co-creators of their healthcare service experiences (Moretta Tartaglione et al., 2018). This coincides with an increase in patient consumer autonomy and informed decision-making, the effectiveness of which is often tied to consumers' internalised competencies, such as health literacy, perceived empowerment and trust, as demonstrated within complex systems that may include varieties of personal (individual), inter-personal (relational) and system-wide (structural) interactions. Such competencies may be particularly challenged within complementary therapies, where consumers may eschew more traditional paternalistic relations with practitioners, to pursue more symbiotic relationships with therapists.

Understanding these interactions is essential for designing targeted interventions that address the specific issues that patients face across different contexts of care. By recognizing the different layers of empowerment, healthcare strategies can be tailored to foster not only individual internal psychological constructs but, also, the structural and communal support necessary to fully enable patient empowerment across various contexts and, importantly, across the patient journey; breaking boundaries in healthcare and unlocking potential for meaningful co-created value.

This research therefore presents an incipient, novel conceptual model of Multilevel Patient Empowerment (MPE). This integrated framework advances the understanding of psychological empowerment (e.g. Zimmerman, 1995; Spreitzer, 1995) by highlighting its multidimensional, relational, and temporal nature. Further, by positioning trust as a contextual moderator, and vulnerability as the inverse and dynamic counterpart to empowerment, this model provides a nuanced theoretical foundation for future empirical work and practical interventions in healthcare. By contextualising within Traditional Chinese Medicine, the work offers novel insight to the nature of complementary therapies within pluralistic, credence healthcare services.

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The Buying Game – From Intuition to Insight, Integrating Responsible AI Use for Retail Education and Employability.

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

The Buying Game is a live interactive game where students act as retail buyers, selecting products, filling a virtual warehouse and making pricing and promotion decisions in real time. The simulation links directly to academic learning outcomes in merchandising, forecasting, and commercial judgement, while building employability skills in data literacy, teamwork, and decision making under pressure. AI tools support faster insight and reflective learning, helping students understand and explain their decisions.

Competitive Short Paper

This paper introduces and evaluates an interactive online buying game designed to develop retail buying capability and employability skills in fashion education. Students play the role of an assistant buyer and make end to end assortment decisions, selecting products, filling a warehouse, forecasting demand, restocking, and configuring promotions under budget and capacity constraints. The game runs live in seminars and online, allowing instructors to adjust market conditions and inject shocks such as supplier delays, price changes, and trend spikes. This creates a safe environment to practise decisions that mirror industry routines while making trade offs visible and discussable. Building on earlier buying game scholarship on simulation for buying skills and work related capabilities (Vazquez, 2002; Vazquez, 2003), we extend the approach to digital retail contexts and integrate responsible AI tool use as an explicit learning outcome.

The pedagogic design is grounded in experiential learning, where knowledge is constructed through cycles of action, reflection, conceptualisation, and re application (Kolb, 1984). It is also aligned to evidence on simulation based experiential learning in management education, which highlights the value of authentic decision contexts and immediate consequence feedback for engagement and satisfaction (Bakoush, 2022). To connect gameplay to marketing and retail theory, the activity is constructively aligned to module learning outcomes and assessment. Students complete structured reflections that link decisions to retail concepts such as category role, price architecture, promotion effectiveness, and service level management, and they map evidence of skill development to employability narratives.

A distinctive contribution is the purposeful integration of generative AI tools as part of the learning process, framed as professional practice rather than shortcutting. Students use approved AI tools for bounded tasks, such as generating alternative demand scenarios, drafting promotion rationales, and critiquing the coherence of their buying strategy, while maintaining responsibility for final decisions and justification. This design responds to sector guidance that emphasises transparency and assessment design that maintains academic standards while enabling AI literacy (QAA, 2024). Within the game, AI use is made auditable through a prompt log and an evidence table that links each AI assisted step to a human decision, a data input, and an output check.

We propose and test a learning mechanism that adapts technology acceptance theory to educational simulations. Drawing on technology acceptance model foundations (Davis, 1989) and evidence that playfulness strengthens attitudes and intention in digital environments (Ahn et al., 2007; Yang et al., 2017), we argue that perceived usefulness of the simulation for real buying tasks and perceived ease of use will increase playfulness and engagement, which in turn will strengthen learning effort and employability confidence. Evaluation uses a mixed methods design combining learning analytics from the game (Banihashem et al., 2024), pre and post measures of decision confidence and retail knowledge, and reflective artefacts. Outcomes include decision quality metrics, progression curves, student satisfaction, and employability self efficacy. The paper contributes a transferable design blueprint for educators and provides evidence on how gamified simulation and responsible AI use can jointly strengthen learning and work readiness in retail education.

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Beautified Truth: Aesthetic Centrality And Trust As Moderators Of Beauty Influencer Perceptions

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

Aesthetic Centrality and Propensity to Trust are found to be positively associated with parasocial relationships, attitudinal homophily, and perceived expertise of Beauty Influencers, offering marketers the opportunity to explore tailored routes to effective influencer brand communication.

Competitive Short Paper

The beauty sector exists, at least ostensibly, on the promise of delivering enhanced aesthetic value and, for many consumers, that lure of a promised land of looking 'better' supports an estimated global sector worth of $450 billion (see McKinsey and Co. (2025)). As social media increasingly occupies this space, beauty brands and beauty influencers have become recognisable staples of online consumption, feeding an insatiable appetite for novelty, creativity and reassurance, via influencers able to demonstrate their ideas in real (or hyper-real) time, at the convenience of the viewer (see CEW, 2026 for market strategies). Influencers, of course, seek to be more than beauticians, often cultivating parasocial relationships with their audiences. By fostering perceptions as authentic and trusted sources of support (Wiedmann and Von Mettenheim. 2021) they promise to unlock consumers' potential (Ashraf et al, 2023), often relying upon a sense of connectivity, even similarity with their audiences (Bu et al, 2022; Belanche et al, 2021).

Beauty may lie in the eye of the beholder and, for some consumers, the centrality of aesthetics within their evaluations (see Bloch et al, 2003) may moderate their perceptions of other factors, from perceived expertise to perceived relevance of influencers (Xie et al, 2023; Zhang et al, 2021). Understanding the relationship between aesthetic centrality and trust would seem, therefore, to offer a useful route to leveraging these ideas within influencer brand value and supporting explanations of consumers' framing of beauty-relevant information. This research adds to extant knowledge by exploring the relationship between aesthetic centrality and propensity to trust within perceptions of influencer characteristics, with particular focus upon parasocial relationships, attitudinal homophily and perceived expertise.

A single-phase, mono-method, independent samples design enabled collection of quantitative data, via a survey questionnaire collecting responses across various dimensions, including Aesthetic Centrality, Propensity to Trust and perceptions of Influencer Characteristics (including parasocial relationship, attitudinal homophily and perceived expertise). Socio-demographic information was also collected. A representative stratified random sample of fashion consumers returned 91 valid respondents.

Findings reveal positive associations between both aesthetic centrality and propensity to trust, and parasocial relationships, attitudinal homophily, and perceived expertise. The research notes the importance of managing the visual aesthetic as a vehicle to drive increased trust and related positive perceptions of influencer characteristics.

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Why Consumers Stay After Data Breaches: Value Traps or Expectancy Alarms?

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This study examines how consumers justify continuing versus discontinuing retailer patronage after data breaches using expectancy–value theory. Directed content analysis of 314 consumer responses reveals strong asymmetry: continuation reasons are primarily value-based, while discontinuation reasons are entirely expectancy-based and more blame-oriented. Integration with behavioral results highlights systematic say–do gaps, supporting post-hoc rationalization via cognitive dissonance. Findings refine expectancy–value theory and caution organizations against relying on stated preferences in breach response planning.

Competitive Short Paper

Consumers responding to retailer data breaches face a consequential decision: continue patronage despite a security failure or discontinue and switch to alternatives. Although prior research identifies predictors of post-breach intentions, less is known about how consumers justify these decisions and whether stated reasons align with behavioral drivers. We examine post-breach decision justification using expectancy–value theory, which proposes that explanations reflect expectancy beliefs (perceived likelihood of outcomes) and value judgments (perceived desirability of outcomes) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

Using structured responses from 314 U.S. consumers, we conducted directed content analysis to code reasons for continuing versus discontinuing retailer relationships following breach awareness (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Results reveal a striking asymmetry in expectancy–value component activation. Continuation justifications were predominantly value-dominant (65.4%), emphasizing outcome desirability such as product quality, price/affordability, convenience, and loyalty. In contrast, discontinuation justifications were entirely expectancy-dominant (100%), emphasizing the perceived probability of negative futures such as misuse of personal data, inadequate corrective actions, loss of trust, lack of transparency, poor remedies, and the availability of alternatives (Martin & Murphy, 2017).

Attribution patterns also differed systematically by decision type. Consumers who continued patronage primarily avoided organizational blame by focusing on product or market factors (60.4%), whereas those discontinuing disproportionately assigned responsibility to organizational failure (64.5%). These patterns align with attribution perspectives in consumer contexts, suggesting that consumers may interpret breach events in ways that legitimize relationship maintenance or dissolution rather than neutrally evaluate causes (Folkes, 1984; Weiner, 1985).

To assess whether stated justifications reflect behavioral determinants, we compared qualitative categories with quantitative findings from predictive models. This integration revealed notable say–do gaps, consistent with broader evidence that intentions and explanations do not always map cleanly onto behavior (Carrington et al., 2010; Sheeran, 2002). Corrective actions were frequently cited as important (42.8% across continue/discontinue rationales), yet showed no behavioral effect. Consumers framed continued patronage as rational value tradeoffs, yet higher perceived costs predicted greater loyalty, contradicting rational choice assumptions and aligning more closely with commitment-based perspectives (Rusbult, 1983). Finally, trust was rarely emphasized explicitly (18.8%) despite explaining the majority of behavioral variance in patronage intentions, suggesting limits to introspective access and post-hoc sensemaking (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Weick, 1995; Wilson & Dunn, 2004). These contradictions also support cognitive dissonance theory, indicating that stated reasons may function as rationalizations rather than accurate causal reporting (Festinger, 1957; Bem, 1972).

Overall, the study advances expectancy–value theory by demonstrating asymmetric component activation in breach contexts: value judgments appear to sustain the status quo, whereas expectancy beliefs trigger change (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Practically, the findings caution against relying solely on survey questions asking consumers what would make them stay or leave after a breach, as stated preferences may misrepresent behavioral drivers. Organizations seeking retention should prioritize interventions that restore trust and reduce dissonance dynamics rather than overinvesting in factors consumers cite but that do not predict behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Armitage & Conner, 2001).

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I Wonder What's on Vinted rn? Fluid Possession, Platformised Consumption and Scrolling Through Second-Hand

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This study explores how Vinted users experience consumption mediated by platform affordances and questions utopian narratives about digital second-hand platforms as inherently sustainable. The research expands liquid consumption frameworks into an ownership-transfer context, introducing *fluid possession* and *temporal momentum* as conceptual tools for understanding platformised second-hand consumption. Positioning Vinted on Bardhi and Eckhardt's (2017) liquid-solid spectrum, the research reveals tensions between liquid temporality (ephemeral involvement) and solid consumer value (centrality of ownership).

Competitive Short Paper

Vinted's 'Too Many' campaign visualises the absurdity of overconsumption through hyperbole, depicting people adorned with countless scarves, laden with handbags, and crowned with stacked sunglasses. This carnivalesque spectacle (Bakhtin, 1984) operates as a simulacrum of critique (Baudrillard, 1994): simultaneously condemning and commodifying excess while positioning the second-hand marketplace as salvation. Parallel to this corporate messaging runs a cultural phenomenon—the 'I wonder what's on Vinted rn [right now]?' TikTok trend, where users film idyllic moments interrupted by intrusive thoughts of potential marketplace treasures. This juxtaposition exposes the addictive mechanics embedded within platform design. Responding to calls to move beyond naïve visions of collaborative economy's "ecological virtuosity" (Dekhili et al., 2025, p. 12), we examine an under-theorised tension: does Vinted truly disrupt unsustainable consumption, or merely rearrange materialism? Through ten semi-structured interviews with Vinted buyers and sellers, we map user motivations, experiences, and consumption practices mediated by platform affordances. Uncovering how platforms marketed as sustainable may inadvertently increase (over)consumption, our analysis reveals a fundamental paradox characterised by two interrelated dimensions: *fluid possession* and *temporal momentum.*

Fluid possession describes how Vinted reconfigures ownership, creating reduced attachment to possessions that facilitates accelerated circulation. Users characterise purchases as "almost like renting them for a bit," experiencing Vinted items as lower value and less integral to identity than high-street purchases. This extends Bardhi and Eckhardt's (2017) liquid consumption framework beyond access-based contexts into ownership-transfer scenarios, suggesting platforms create hybrid consumption modalities where legal ownership transfers yet experientially resembles temporary access. *Temporal momentum* captures the platform-induced acceleration of acquisition-disposal cycles through algorithmic recommendations, frictionless purchasing, and closed-loop financial architecture. Users report "obsessively scrolling," to fill boredom previously occupied by social media, signalling a broader reconfiguration of "platformised temporalities" (Repenning, 2024) and the speed-inducing characteristics embedded in platform design (Juge et al., 2022). Crucially, the platform enables guilt-offset mechanisms where users justify new high-street purchases knowing Vinted provides potential financial recoupment, while the assumed sustainability of second-hand consumption creates a 'guilt-free choice' (Beverland et al., 2022).

These dimensions challenge existing sharing economy taxonomies. While Vinted operates as a redistribution market (Botsman & Rogers, 2011), user experiences more closely align with the temporary and flexible nature of access-based consumption. Classifications distinguishing access-based services from redistribution markets should accommodate these hybrid modalities. We position Vinted on Bardhi and Eckhardt's (2017) liquid-solid spectrum, revealing tensions between liquid temporality (ephemeral involvement) and solid consumer value (centrality of ownership). Findings suggest that a "logic of liquidity" (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017, p. 594) operates alongside mixed market, sustainability, and commerce logics of the sharing economy (Ozdamar Ertekin et al., 2020). Rather than facilitating the "progressive decay of materialism," Vinted reshapes and reinforces materialistic orientations through socio-technical affordances that accelerate consumption (Parguel et al., 2017, p. 49). The research expands liquid consumption frameworks into an ownership-transfer context, introducing *fluid possession* and *temporal momentum* as conceptual tools for understanding platformised second-hand consumption, and challenges utopian narratives about digital second-hand platforms as inherently sustainable (Schor & Vallas, 2021).

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No Alternative, Only Cores: Aestheticised Refusal and Platformised Sense-Making on TikTok

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This conceptual paper reframes TikTok's shifting 'core' aesthetics as algorithmically-mediated sense-making practices where users negotiate consumption, crisis, and agency. Drawing on Fisher's capitalist realism, it positions #underconsumptioncore as more than negative resistance: it represents a culturally permissible form of critique that remains tethered to the horizon of the market. This paper suggests algorithmic aestheticisation acts as a contemporary mechanism of cultural containment, where resistance operates within the confines of market logic.

Competitive Short Paper

TikTok has become a key infrastructure for contemporary consumer culture, a "rich medium of subcultural connection" (Kozinets & Gretzel, 2023, p. 17) where platformed storytelling helps users make an overwhelming internet "somewhat manageable," (Hewlett-Hall, 2023, p. 58). This paper develops a conceptual framing of aesthetic shifts on TikTok, treating 'core' trends and shared aesthetic communities (Maddox & Gill, 2023) as mediated cultural diagnostics: collective, memetic reactions (Zulli & Zulli, 2020) to wider socio-economic conditions, expressed through visual routines and (non)consumption practices.

Serving as an empirical point of departure, the #underconsumptioncore trend is premised on documenting and maximising what one already owns and, as the name suggests, rejecting overconsumption. It is an aesthetic formation that repackages conscious consumerism into shareable micro-performances. To theorise what these shifts do, #underconsumptioncore is brought into conversation with Fisher's (2009) capitalist realism. Such movements can be understood as critiques from within consumer culture: they negate dominant consumption scripts while remaining entangled in the infrastructures, aspirations, and moral economies of the marketplace. Under capitalist realism, critique is not eliminated but often domesticated: oppositional energies are translated into individual responsibility, niche identity, and purchasable alternatives. On TikTok, this process is intensified; even refusal becomes content, and anti-consumption can be stylised, memefied, and circulated as an aesthetic commodity.

This paper suggests that TikTok cores are best understood through a dual lens: *mimesis and community formation*—where trend conventions enable belonging through imitation, and *algorithmic aestheticisation*—in which the For-You-Page creates an 'algorithmised self,' (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022) positioning users as simultaneously consuming content and encountering a datafied reflection of their tastes, identities, and anxieties. Hence, #underconsumptioncore may be read as algorithmically situated negative resistance, showcasing practices of refusal, such as no-buys, deinfluencing, and unfollowing, that aim to negate compulsive consumption and regain agency over desire by intervening in the feed's curation. Within capitalist realism, the sense that there is no alternative that can push resistance into forms that remain compatible with the system they contest. #Underconsumptioncore critiques excess consumption, but the critique can be reabsorbed as a new mode of distinction, a new set of norms for 'good' consumption, or a new aspirational aesthetic—thereby re-energising the cultural logic of consumption even when the explicit message is refusal. The platform's metricised visibility makes this especially likely: negation can become a genre, and critique can become a replicable template. In this sense, a trending resistance is often diluted when users imitate these practices to gain visibility (Bainotti, 2023). This highlights how algorithmic affordances and architectures condition the possibilities of resistance, transforming critiques of (over)consumption into consumable signifiers that sustain, rather than dismantle, the dominant system of algorithmic capitalism (Bainotti, 2023; Schellewald, 2023).

This paper offers a starting point to a conceptualisation of TikTok aesthetic shifts as socio-technical sense-making (Schellewald, 2021). The #underconsumptioncore trend offers an entry field into understanding how users and consumers narrativise economic and environmental unease through aestheticised (non)consumption practices, while the platform's algorithm participates in producing the very conditions under which these narratives circulate, solidify, and transform.

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Neurotic Consumers Feel It Most: Big Five Personality as a Moderator of Data Breach Responses

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This study investigates Big Five personality traits as moderators of consumer responses to data breaches. Using survey data

(N=314), hierarchical regressions reveal neuroticism strongly amplifies awareness-outcome relationships, while trust repair shows no moderation. Findings demonstrate personality amplification effects, extending trait theory to cybersecurity and providing segmentation insights for tailored post-breach communications. Results highlight individual differences in trust, forgiveness, and patronage intentions.

Competitive Short Paper

Data breaches are an escalating threat to consumer trust in digital commerce (Identity Theft Resource Center, 2024), yet consumers do not respond uniformly. This study examines whether Big Five personality traits, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness, shape how consumers translate breach related cues into key post breach outcomes: trust, forgiveness, and continued patronage. Grounded in trait theory, which views personality dimensions as stable drivers of information processing and behavior (McCrae & Costa, 1997; John & Srivastava, 1999), and interactionism, which argues that traits operate most strongly under certain situational conditions (Mischel & Shoda, 1995), we propose that personality functions as a sensitivity factor in breach contexts. Specifically, we hypothesize that higher levels of conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness amplify positive relationships between breach related predictors, breach awareness, perceived fairness, and trust repair efforts, and post breach outcomes, with neuroticism expected to exert the strongest effects due to heightened threat sensitivity.

Survey data were collected from 314 U.S. adults recruited via Centiment and exposed to a realistic e commerce breach scenario (Buhrmester et al., 2011). Breach awareness ($\alpha = .88$), perceived fairness ($\alpha = .67$), and trust repair efforts ($\alpha = .68$) served as predictors. Outcomes included trust, forgiveness, and continued patronage ($\alpha s = .82$ to $.87$), drawing from established e commerce trust measurement approaches (McKnight et al., 2002). Personality was measured using a brief Big Five scale ($\alpha s = .75$ to $.85$; Gosling et al., 2003), with extraversion and agreeableness excluded due to low reliability. Hierarchical regression models tested 27 interactions (3 predictors × 3 moderators × 3 outcomes). All predictors and moderators were mean centered to reduce multicollinearity, consistent with best practices for interaction testing (Aiken & West, 1991).

Results showed that 14 interactions (51.9%) were statistically significant ($p < .05$), exceeding chance expectations. Average incremental explanatory power was $\Delta R^2 = .026$, indicating small to moderate moderation effects. Breach awareness was the most consistently moderated predictor (9 significant interactions), while neuroticism emerged as the strongest moderator overall. Trust repair efforts, however, showed no moderation effects across outcomes. The largest interaction was Awareness × Neuroticism predicting forgiveness ($\Delta R^2 = .062$, $p < .001$). Simple slope analyses supported an amplification pattern, with stronger positive predictor outcome relationships at higher trait levels (forgiveness slope $b = .666$ at high neuroticism versus $b = .201$ at low neuroticism).

These findings extend personality theory into cybersecurity and digital commerce by demonstrating that consumers' breach reactions are partly driven by stable trait differences (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Practically, organizations may benefit from tailoring breach communications to consumer profiles, emphasizing reassurance for highly neurotic consumers and detailed, process oriented information for conscientious consumers, aligning with prior evidence that trust dynamics vary with consumer perceptions and familiarity (Komiak & Benbasat, 2006). Limitations include reliance on a hypothetical scenario and brief personality measurement (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Gosling et al., 2003). Future work should test real world breach events and more comprehensive personality assessments.

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This Notebook Will Fix Me: Patina as Performance and the Aestheticisation of Sustainability on #StationeryTok

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This conceptual paper examines the TikTok-viral Louise Carmen traveller's notebook as a 'quiet luxury' marketplace icon that embodies sustainability tensions and begins unpacking the traveller's notebook as a commodity fetish. Drawing on theories of capitalist realism and liquid modernity, the paper theorises the *patina economy* as a moralised aesthetic valorising wear, repair and longevity that is fundamentally at odds with relentless algorithmic churn.

Competitive Short Paper

This conceptual paper develops the concept of the patina economy to theorise how contemporary 'buy less, better' discourses are captured by digital spectacle and rearticulated as taste, identity, and self-governance. The empirical referent is the Louise Carmen traveller's notebook: a modular leather cover with replaceable inserts that circulates on TikTok through build-a-notebook sequences, journalling systems, and flatlay displays. While materially simple, the object itself is narratively dense, operating as a device for becoming. TikTok does not merely amplify demand; it reorganises the conditions under which the notebook is understood and used. The private practice of journalling becomes a public rehearsal, where the appearance of reflection can substitute for the messier labour of reflection. The notebook thus participates in an experience economy in miniature: value is produced through rituals of reconfiguring inserts, sensory aesthetics of the leather grain and charms, and the promise of a calmer, more coherent self.

Using Fisher (2009), this paper conceptualises this phenomenon as a consumer-cultural scene in which capitalist realism is not merely represented but felt through the everyday. The notebook appears as a small-scale remedy to diffuse structural and psychological conditions, offering a purchasable promise of steadiness. It becomes easier to imagine a new journalling system than to imagine a non-market solution to social exhaustion; the notebook is work and creating and sharing related

#StationeryTok content is also work. The commodity thus functions as an interface for displacing systemic problems into individual projects of optimisation, aligning critique with consumption rather than antagonism.

Bauman (2000) sharpens the diagnosis by describing the conditions under which such objects become culturally necessary. In liquid life, identities are less inherited than continuously assembled under conditions of instability; individuals are compelled to treat the self as a project, and consumption becomes a key site for producing temporary anchors of meaning. The traveller's notebook is precisely such an anchor: it promises solidity (leather, durability, heirloom) and continuity (patina as time made visible) within a culture experienced as fast, provisional, and endlessly updateable. Yet this solidity is fragile, because the platform environment makes identity maintenance dependent on perpetual refresh. The algorithm has an appetite, and it is fed by novelty, with quarterly setups and weekly charm changes. The notebook becomes a liquid object: endlessly reconfigurable, perpetually in progress, always one upgrade away from the self it promises.

In the *patina economy*, restraint and repair represent stewardship. However, what looks like a rejection of conspicuous consumption can become an inversion of it in the shape of *aestheticised stewardship*: status is performed via legibility of craft, provenance, and longevity, while consumption persists through accessory churn and micro-differentiation. In Fisher's terms, the 'alternative' offered is still formatted as market participation: the critique of waste is metabolised into purchasable, stylised restraint. The paper begins theorising the traveller's notebook as a commodity fetish: not simply the notebook-as-object, but the fantasy that the right object can stand in for the social conditions it cannot change.

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Designing Fashion Website Product Pages for Sustainability Communication

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This research addresses the sustainability communication gap on fashion website product pages through a novel design-led methodology. We analysed five UK sustainable fashion brands' product pages, examining visual, textual, and spatial elements. Our two-stage approach uniquely combines design practice expertise with fashion marketing management, revealing critical tensions between aesthetic choices and communication effectiveness. Findings inform co-design workshops developing evidence-based design principles, extending atmospherics literature to product page micro-environments whilst providing actionable industry guidance.

Competitive Short Paper

Fashion consumers increasingly seek sustainability information before purchase, yet brands struggle to communicate it effectively. Product pages, the digital equivalent of store shelves, represent a critical but underutilised touchpoint for this communication (Boardman and Chrimes, 2023). Research indicates that sustainability-related information is often too technical or overwhelming, leaving consumers unable to access the clarity they expect (San Miguel et al., 2021; Brydges et al., 2022; Boardman & McCormick, 2022). This creates a disconnect between brands implementing sustainable practices and consumers seeking clear, actionable information. While digital platforms like social media and the metaverse have received considerable attention, website product pages remain an overlooked area for sustainability communication (Chrimes et al., 2022).

This research explores how fashion website product pages can be optimally designed to communicate sustainability information. Online atmospherics literature provides the theoretical lens (Turley & Milliman, 2000; Basu et al., 2022), with the Online Store Environment Framework (OSEF) (Manganari et al., 2009) guiding the analytical approach. The study employs a two-stage design-based qualitative methodology (Buley & Natoli, 2024), bringing together expertise in design practice and fashion marketing management – a relatively rare methodological combination in marketing research.

Stage one involved systematic analysis of product pages from five UK fashion brands recognised for sustainability practices. The analysis, informed by atmospherics literature and the OSEF framework, examined visual elements, product information, textual content, and spatial composition to understand how sustainability is both implicitly and explicitly communicated. Reflective processes drew on the researchers' professional experience in design, art direction, and online marketing to interpret layout, interaction design, and communication strategies.

The findings reveal critical tensions in current practice. While brands employ natural imagery and minimalist styling to signal sustainable values, several design choices undermine communication effectiveness. Certification logos frequently lack clickability, representing a missed opportunity to link directly to verification sources. Textual content demonstrates a disconnect between visual minimalism and information architecture. Excessive detail and repetition create cognitive clutter that contradicts the atmospheric simplicity established through imagery. Product information varies considerably in usability, with sustainability claims often unsupported by evidence or presented alongside unnecessary content. Spatial composition shows inconsistent application of visual hierarchy, with excessive spacing and numerous images increasing cognitive load whilst key details remain inaccessible.

These findings inform stage two, currently in preparation. Co-design workshops will engage fashion industry participants and consumers to develop and refine design prototypes. Workshop materials and interview guides have been prepared, drawing on stage one insights around progressive disclosure, standardised layouts, clickable verification elements, and strategic content curation. The workshops will validate and extend initial findings, leading to evidence-based design guidelines.

This research contributes to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it extends atmospherics literature, which typically focuses on overall website environments, to the micro-environment of product pages, whilst demonstrating how design-led methodology can address marketing challenges. Practically, it provides actionable principles for designing product pages that bridge the gap between sustainable practices and consumer understanding. As sustainability becomes central to fashion marketing strategy, understanding how to communicate it effectively through core digital touchpoints becomes increasingly critical.

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Designing Identity-Safe Brand Communications: Authenticity As A Protective Mechanism Against Stereotype Threat

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

An exploration of women's perceptions of stereotype threat, how brand cues generate identity tension, and how authenticity can mitigate threat and foster trust in AI-mediated contexts. Drawing on mixed-methods research with Generation X women in the UK and Generation Z women in Mauritius. Findings inform a conceptual model of identity-safe branding and identity-safe brand cues. We argue that inclusive, identity-safe brand communication, grounded in authenticity, enables deeper and more sustainable consumer relationships.

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When Robots Joke: Can GenAI Service Robots Alleviate Customer Stress?

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

This paper examines how humoristic GenAI service robots alleviate customer stress and enhance trust and emotional well-being in emotionally demanding service encounters. Drawing on dual-processing theory, we demonstrate across five experiments that humor functions as a "soft" anthropomorphic cue, activating heuristic processing under stress. The findings advance service robotics theory and offer actionable guidance for deploying humoristic GenAI agents in high-stress service contexts.

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Where Legacy Is Learned: An Ethnography of Social Media and Imprinting in a Family Firm

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Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

Summary Statement

This study examines how social media operates as a mechanism of transgenerational imprinting within a multigenerational family firm. Drawing on ethnographic data and organisational artefacts, it shows how content creation facilitates the transmission of quality standards, legacy narratives, entrepreneurial values, and leadership responsibility. The findings reposition social media from a communication tool to a formative organisational space where tradition, innovation, and succession are actively learned and negotiated.

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The Impact of AI-driven Personalisation on Customer Retention: A Comparative Study of the South African Supermarket Industry

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Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Summary Statement

This study examines how AI-driven personalisation influences customer retention in South African supermarkets through a comparative analysis of Checkers and PicknPay. Using structural equation modelling with 125 respondents, findings reveal customer satisfaction as the strongest retention predictor, while optimal pricing significantly impacts satisfaction and trust. Results demonstrate that AI personalisation effectiveness depends on strategic implementation quality rather than technological adoption alone, providing actionable insights for retailers enhancing loyalty through AI strategies in emerging markets.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence is fundamentally reshaping retail customer interactions through personalisation technologies. However, limited empirical research examines its long-term impact on customer retention, particularly in emerging markets. The South

African (SA) supermarket sector presents a critical context for investigation, with Checkers gaining significant competitive advantage through its AI-powered platforms and advanced analytics, while PicknPay faces declining revenues and customer loyalty. This study investigates how AI-driven personalisation influences customer retention through a comparison of these leading retailers, addressing a significant gap in the literature.

Theoretical Framework

This study integrates Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) and Relationship Marketing Theory (RMT). ECT explains how AI-driven personalisation influences customer satisfaction through aligning expectations and perceived performance, while RMT provides a foundation for analysing how personalisation fosters long-term relationships, trust, and loyalty beyond discrete transactions.

Methodology

A quantitative survey was administered to SA supermarket customers aged 18+ who regularly shop at both Checkers and PicknPay and have received AI-driven communications. It evaluated three AI-personalisation components—product recommendations, personalised promotions, and optimal pricing engines—on their impact on three mediating variables: perceived value, customer satisfaction, and perceived trust; and their ultimate effect on customer retention. Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling to test the conceptual model and hypotheses.

Findings and Discussion

Results reveal that customer satisfaction is the most significant predictor of customer retention for both retailers. However, the drivers of that satisfaction differed, highlighting distinct strategic efficacies in AI implementation.

For PicknPay, optimal pricing engines and product recommendations significantly enhanced both customer satisfaction and perceived value. This indicates that customers respond positively to fair pricing and the convenience of curated product suggestions. Critically, however, personalised promotions had no significant impact on satisfaction, suggesting that the current discount-focused promotional strategy is ineffective at fostering loyalty.

Checkers demonstrated a notably more effective AI strategy. Optimal pricing significantly influenced both satisfaction and trust, underscoring the importance of price fairness and transparency in customer relationships. Checkers' personalised promotions significantly enhanced customer satisfaction—a key distinction from PicknPay—indicating stronger execution and contextual relevance in their promotional activities.

Notably, both retailers' estimated models showed poor fit, suggesting that AI-personalisation frameworks, largely developed in mature markets, require refinement to capture the nuances of consumers in emerging economies.

Implications

This study demonstrates that competitive advantage derives from strategic AI implementation and integration, not from mere adoption of technology. For PicknPay, the findings indicate that the current personalised promotions strategy requires fundamental reassessment. Rather than focusing solely on discount-based approaches, management should develop value-added offers that create emotional connections and foster deeper loyalty. For Checkers, the priority should be improving the accuracy and visibility of product recommendation features to further enhance customer experience.

Theoretically, this research extends Relationship Marketing Theory into the AI context within an emerging market setting, confirming satisfaction's central role in retention while highlighting that trust is built more on ethical pricing and transparency than on promotional activities. The findings signal a critical need for cross-contextual validation and potential redevelopment of personalisation-retention models for greater global applicability.

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From the Magic Circle to the Marketplace: Football Fandom and the Erosion of Play

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Track: 10. Marketing in Context (e.g., Food, Sport)

Summary Statement

This paper examines how intensified marketisation has transformed contemporary football fandom by disrupting the conditions of play. Drawing on play theory and qualitative research across the UK and Ireland, it conceptualises fandom as a form of compromised play that increasingly resembles labour. The findings show how fans perform affective, cognitive, moral, and communicative work in response to pricing, governance, and commercialisation, extending debates on fan labour and consumer culture.

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Embodied AI Companions in Home Care: A Real-Time Experimental Study of Trust, Emotional Value, and Long-Term Use

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This study examines the effects of different embodied AI companion forms—humanoid robots, pet-type companions, and virtual

avatars—on users' trust, emotional value, and social responses during real-time interaction. Using an in-person, within-subject laboratory experiment, participants engage in multi-turn conversations with each companion. The findings provide comparative evidence on embodiment effects and show that configurations of trust, emotional value, and self-disclosure better explain long-term usage intention than isolated predictors.

Competitive Short Paper

Loneliness is increasingly recognized as a pervasive challenge to consumer well-being (De Freitas et al., 2025; McCarthy et al., 2026). In response, AI companions, including conversational agents and robots designed as "synthetic interaction partners," have gained prominence (McStay, 2023; Jami et al., 2024). Embodied AI companions are beginning to occupy supportive roles across home care, healthcare, and service settings. Enabled by large language models (LLMs), they facilitate emotionally supportive interactions and provide companionship (Battistoni et al., 2023; Broadbent et al., 2024; Andersson, 2025).

AI companions can evoke perceived social presence, emotional comfort, and relational responses, with effects often stronger among users experiencing loneliness or social isolation (Merrill Jr. et al., 2022; De Freitas et al., 2025). Research in human-computer interaction indicates that anthropomorphic cues and physical embodiment can enhance perceived warmth and deepen engagement (Chen et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2025; Li et al., 2025). Related work also suggests that embodied companions may facilitate self-disclosure, a communicative behavior closely linked to trust and intimacy in human-AI relationships (Liu & Sundar, 2018; Zalmanson et al., 2022).

Despite frequent theorization of social presence as a key mechanism in human-robot interaction, empirical corroboration in real-time, embodied human-AI interaction remains constrained (Kreijns et al., 2022; Konya-Baumbach et al., 2023). Much of the evidence is derived from vignette-based studies, scripted interactions, or Wizard-of-Oz designs, which restrict autonomy and contingency in interaction dynamics (Yoganathan et al., 2021; Munnukka et al., 2022). As a result, it is unclear whether perceived social presence and associated relational outcomes persist during autonomous, real-time, multi-turn engagements with embodied AI companions (Chiang et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2022).

Three critical gaps remain. First, evidence on embodiment is fragmented because many studies examine a single AI form in isolation, limiting comparative insight across humanoid, pet-type, and virtual companions (Ben Saad, 2024; Lim et al., 2025). Second, although self-disclosure is widely recognized as a salient relational process, less is known about how disclosure dynamically interacts with trust and emotional value across embodiments (Lee, 2023; van Straten et al., 2022). Third, the literature lacks co-located, real-time experimental evidence capturing responses to autonomous companions during live interaction, reducing ecological validity and constraining service-relevant inference (Munnukka et al., 2022; Rietz et al., 2021).

To address these gaps, this study asks two research questions: (1) How do different embodied AI companion forms shape users' trust and social responses during interaction? (2) Which configurations of gratifications, trust, and emotional value are associated with high long-term intention to use embodied AI companions?

The study uses an in-person, within-subject laboratory experiment in which participants hold real-time, multi-turn conversations with three companions: a humanoid robot, a pet-type companion, and a virtual avatar.

This research makes three contributions. First, it provides comparative evidence across embodied companions within a unified real-time interaction paradigm. Second, it argues that long-term usage intention is better explained by configurations of trust, emotional value, and self-disclosure rather than isolated predictors. Third, it offers actionable insights for deploying embodied AI companions in home care and well-being-oriented service contexts.

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Older People Navigating Digital Marketplaces: "Ask Someone Younger"

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This manuscript examines older people's challenges in navigating digital environments. Drawing on 19 in-depth interviews, it examines how they experience, make sense of, and respond to digital services. It focuses on how the automation of services and a lack of caring human interaction are isolating, diminishing and exclusionary for participants. An argument is then built, based on care ethics, that service providers have an ethical responsibility to provide adequate accommodations for older users.

Competitive Short Paper

Care plays a crucial yet largely neglected role in consumer experiences. This study focuses on a context where neglect of care harms a vulnerable group. Specifically, we examine older people's difficulties in accessing digital services. Through an interpretive analysis of 19 in-depth interviews with individuals aged 65 to 96, we investigate how they experience, understand and respond to this environment. Care ethics is employed to illuminate how inattention to older people's difficulties undermines their dignity and exacerbates exclusion.

Mubarak and Suomi (2022) identify a *grey digital divide*, where the inability to use technologies excludes older consumers from the marketplace. However, rather than framing consumers' vulnerability as a lack of "access to and control over resources" (Hill and Sharma, 2020: 551; Salisbury et al., 2023), we argue that service providers disable older people (Higgins et al., 2024; Heath and Branco-Illodo, 2025) by overlooking their care needs. We contend that individualised solutions to vulnerability, such as building consumer resilience (Mende et al., 2026), are insufficient. Rather, meeting the needs of older service users is a moral responsibility (Tronto, 1987; Held, 2006), requiring attentiveness to cultural expectations about who is responsible for caring (Dowling, 2021).

Participants experience reduced human interaction in services not simply as an inconvenience, but as a loss of social connection: "*How sad I felt when I saw there are now self-service checkouts! It made me think of my grocery store, people were [...] always talking to one another... we were each other's psychologists [...] sometimes a smile means so much*." (Linda_74). Accordingly, they plead not to be sidelined: "*Don't push us away. We have time to learn, give us alternatives, teach us.*" (Miguel_65).

Many speak poignantly of feeling excluded, not only from marketplaces but from society: "*This is no longer for me, you know?*" (Julia_75); "*It's not just about not knowing how to use technology, it's the feeling that we no longer belong to the system.*" (Linda). This affects values of dignity and perceptions of self-worth: "*If they take that away, they also take away a little bit of our dignity*." (Linda); "*one feels diminished"* (Ines_87). Aligning with a care-ethical view of human flourishing (Held, 2006), some see inclusion as a moral imperative: "*I just think that progress should include everyone and leave no one behind*" (Harry_84). However, service providers shift the responsibility for denied care onto others, exacerbating inequities. For example, Linda was told that if she could not view her medical results digitally, she would have to "*ask someone young*".

In response to this conference's theme, our study brings in knowledge from an overlooked population and theory from an underutilised tradition in moral philosophy. It argues that an inclusive marketplace and a flourishing society should not shift the burden of adapting to digitalisation onto vulnerable people and that services have an ethical responsibility to maintain human capacity to care for their needs. This neglect is leaving older consumers unable to access the services they need to participate in society and to live satisfying lives.

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Age Sentiment In Everyday Life: An Online Diary Study Of Midlife Women

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

Dominant consumer messaging within popular culture positions youthism as the normative ideal, shaping how midlife women's ageing is understood, represented, and addressed in the marketplace. Solicited e-diary research amongst 19 midlife women reveals that ageing generates positive and negative benefits and surfaces neutral age sentiment as an overlooked orientation. These findings caution against positioning youthfulness and non-ageing to midlife women as a universal aspiration, and highlight the value of recognising diverse age sentiments.

Competitive Short Paper

Women experience greater age-related identity tensions than men (Sontag 1973; Neugarten and Datan 1973; Calasanti 2016) with cultural associations between femininity, attractiveness and youthful appearance (Sontag 1972; Thorpe 2018). The visible markers of age become most salient in midlife, when women encounter heightened scrutiny and potential stigma (Calasanti 2016; Gillooley et al. 2023). Marketers typically ascribe consumers' age expectations through lenses of age resistance, self enhancement and ageing without appearing to age (Raisborough et al. 2014; Kuppelweiser 2016). Women however protest against age assumptions, resist ageing, and engage in defensive ageing consumption rituals (Kuppelwieser and Sarstedt 2014; Sudbury-Riley, Kohlbacher and Hofmeister 2015; Amatulli et al. 2018; Gillooley et al 2023). Marketers assume maintaining a youthful appearance is perceived as a widespread desire among women; their communication is often focused on this message, which fosters a gendered anti-ageing culture and reinforces youthism.

In contrast, optimal ageing foregrounds adaptation rather than avoidance, recognising that ageing may involve both gains and losses across the life course (Aldwin, Spiro and Park 2006). From this perspective, ageing is neither a linear trajectory of decline nor a perpetual struggle against it, but an ongoing process of adjustment, identity development and meaning-making. Prior consumer research indicates that women may accept their age, framing it as an opportunity for renewal, or merely as inconsequential in everyday life (Isopahkala-Bouret 2015; Gillooley et al. 2023). These orientations coexist with marketing representations that leave midlife women feeling misrepresented, invisible and excluded (Moschis 2012; Kuppelwieser and Sarstedt 2014; Rosenthal et al. 2021) requiring further exploration of women's experiences of age (Bourcier-Béquaert, et al. 2024). This study therefore considers age sentiment of midlife women and the positive, negative and neutral orientations through which age is lived and appraised in their lives.

Solicited E-Diary Research (SDR) was deployed to collect data from 19 UK women, aged 41–55 (M = 48). Participants recorded their reflections of day-to-day incidents of age-related personal significance over three weeks, which generated 35,000 words of text. To understand their age-related opinions, attitudes and emotions, inductive coding was applied and then sentiment analysis undertaken to identify whether their age sentiment was positive, negative or neutral. Findings identified 25 positive, 33 negative, and 8 neutral age opinions, attitudes and emotions. Positive age attitudes revealed expressions around good health, confidence and agency, enjoying new experiences, friendships and social connection, and self-styling with clothing that enable alignment with self-perceived age. Negative attitudes centred on menopause and embodied unwanted change, appearance of grey hair and age stereotyping. Neutral attributes expressed age acceptance, age as 'just a number' and strong internal self-worth that rendered age non-salient.

Conceptually, the paper considers age sentiment as a marketing-relevant construct, foregrounds positive age as a potential identity resource consistent with optimal ageing and surfaces neutral age sentiment as an overlooked orientation. For marketers, these findings caution against positioning non-ageing to midlife women as a universal aspiration and highlight the value of recognising diverse age sentiments.

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The Problem with Social Media Marketing: From Tactical Bans to Algorithmic Strategy

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This paper discusses the tactical ban approach to social media, arguing that age-based restrictions may overlook structural flaws in the marketing ecosystem. The authors contend that generative AI and algorithmic curation have shifted vulnerability from biological maturity to digital literacy. By disrupting traditional Persuasion Knowledge Models, these technologies may leave “digitally immigrants”, older generations more exposed than savvy “digital natives.” Ultimately, the text advocates for strategic reforms, including algorithmic audits and literacy-focused marketing ethics.

Competitive Short Paper

In recent years, a legislative contagion around social media (SM) bans has spread across countries, from discussions in Australia (Fardouly, 2025) to state-level interventions and debates in the US and EU (Redlich et al., 2025; Schofield, 2026). Most discussions take the position that SM is an existential threat to childhood development. Policymakers cite deteriorating mental health, body dysmorphia, and the dopamine-driven loops of doomscrolling as sufficient justification for strict age-gating, typically prohibiting access for those under 14 or 16 (Cosma et al., 2023).

While the moral imperative to protect youths is unquestionable, these bans represent an inability to policy-secure the SM platforms and instead provide a tactical manoeuvre that offers immediate action. At the same time, it may be argued that these tactical actions ignore the underlying structural problems in the wider marketing ecosystem.

Of greatest concern in the current banning policy is the prevailing logic that assumes that vulnerability is a function of biological maturity. However, in an era defined by generative AI and algorithmic curation, vulnerability may be a function of digital literacy, among others. The crisis is not who is on the platform, but what the platform is optimised to do.

Consumer vulnerability depends on a range of constructs beyond age (Hill & Sharma, 2020). We must look beyond age and examine the interactional mechanisms, particularly AI-personalised targeting, content creation, and interaction tactics, which sometimes lead to widely cited addictive behaviours (Al-Samarraie et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2017). Modern SM marketing has moved beyond segmentation into the creation of individual experiences.

This mechanism may disrupt Friestad and Wright’s (1994) Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM). Historically, adults were viewed as possessing high PKM, the coping skills to recognise and discount marketing tactics (Evans & Park, 2015), while children were seen as defenceless. However, generative AI and deepfakes undermine traditional PKM. When, say, influencers are synthetic or political outrages are algorithmically fabricated, critical reflection in older generations may also fail.

There may be room to argue a reversal of the traditional vulnerability hierarchy. Digital natives have rapidly updated their PKM to include algorithmic scepticism, while digital immigrants might possess outdated offline-trained models that fail to recognise hyper-realistic digital fabrication.

If the objectives of public policy and marketing ethics are to protect citizens from cognitive manipulation and algorithmic harm, our current focus is biased toward age rather than more pertinent factors. We may be policing digitally natives while leaving the digitally credulous exposed. If SM access requires discerning reality from marketing fabrication, data might suggest a provocative conclusion of banning older generations before we ban youths.

While this suggestion is rhetorical, it exposes the fundamental concern in the ‘ban the youth’ strategy. The problem is not that 13-year-olds are using SM. It is that the business model is built on monetising cognitive vulnerability.

A sustainable path forward requires a shift from tactical bans to strategic long-term reforms. This includes algorithmic-transparency audits, investing in digital literacy for older adults, and shifting marketing metrics from engagement to fulfilment (Redlich et al., 2025).

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Podcasts As Integrated Marketing Communication Tools For Promoting Secure AI Adoption In SMEs

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Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

Summary Statement

This paper explores how the use of podcasts can develop knowledge and address security concerns for SMEs, whilst promoting secure and ethical AI adoption as part of an integrated marketing communication mix. Podcasts offer accessible formats that build trust and credibility while demystifying technological concepts. Integrated within broader marketing ecosystems, podcasts enable education on cybersecurity and ethical considerations, support peer-learning and address SME-specific concerns - accelerating responsible AI adoption while ensuring security remains central to implementation.

Competitive Short Paper

Podcasts are an accessible medium for audiences to acquire knowledge, learn anytime, anywhere in a format that supports flexible, self-directed learning and professional growth. (Meden et al., 2024) The podcast serves as part of an integrated communication strategy (Keller, 2016), helping build credibility, strengthen the project brand amongst SMEs, whilst maintaining ongoing engagement across multiple touchpoints including workshops and consultancy. Trust and source credibility are central to organisational adoption of emerging technologies (Gefen, 2003), particularly in high-risk areas such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity.

The conversational tone and accessibility of podcasts contribute directly to these trust-building dynamics due to the high-quality, organisation and contextual relevance of content, improving knowledge and professional practice of those listening – learning and development at a pace that suits them and ultimately improving digital literacy. (O'Connor et al., 2020) Podcasts can result in facilitating peer-learning and networking for individuals within SMEs. (Rana et al., 2025)

The use of podcasts as an accessible communication tool to support technology adoption within the *AI-Cyber Nexus* project to disseminate knowledge, build critical awareness and build resilience amongst SMEs. The business-to-business initiative at the University of Salford designed to help SMEs adopt artificial intelligence in an ethical and secure manner. (Jimenez-Aranda et al., 2025) Grounded in technology-adoption theory, the project recognises that SMEs often face barriers such as perceived complexity, low digital maturity, and uncertainty around cybersecurity risks. (Straub, 2009)

The initiative uses marketing communication tools to enhance perceived usefulness, reduce perceived complexity, and build trust. These are key factors to influence adoption intentions and within this approach, functions as a narrative-based channel to communicate expert knowledge in a relatable and humanised format. The podcast series design intentionally sought out senior level women in tech with global majority backgrounds from globally recognised technology organisations, focused on SMEs. Each episode featured conversations with the AI and cybersecurity specialists, enabling listeners and viewers to make sense of AI risks and benefits through storytelling rather than technical abstraction. The six-part series was distributed on major streaming platforms and shared amongst business community networks in audio and video formats to share knowledge and insights that has become widely accepted and expected from end users. Research demonstrates that narrative communication can improve comprehension and engagement with complex scientific or technological concepts (Dahlstrom, 2014). With over 22,000 media impressions and 1200 plus views, feedback from participating SMEs suggest that the podcasts enhance confidence, clarify misconceptions, and act as a "low threshold" entry point into AI adoption.

To conclude, podcasts in a relaxed, conversational and engaging format encourage learning and allow for the communication of ethical AI adoption amongst SMEs - demystifying technology and addressing concerns builds trust, creates peer-learning opportunities within business networks to highlight the need for secure and responsible AI adoption. The AI-Cyber Nexus experience demonstrates how a combination of on and offline marketing communication tools, specifically podcasts, can reduce complexity and technology concerns, enabling SMEs to make informed and decisions about ethical and responsible AI integration.

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Exploring Perceived Authenticity of AI-Mediated Influencers

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

Influencer marketing is projected to become the fastest growing digital advertising channel with spending expected to surpass €40 billion in 2026 (Forbes, 2026). One in four brands invest over 1 million annually in influencer partnerships according to industry research (LinkedIn, 2024). Human and AI influencers act as brand spokespeople using their expertise and audience relationships to promote and advertise products in ways that are more relatable and trustworthy than traditional advertising (Nitnaware & Tekade, 2025).

Competitive Short Paper

Influencer marketing is projected to become the fastest growing digital advertising channel with spending expected to surpass €40 billion in 2026 (Forbes, 2026). One in four brands invest over 1 million annually in influencer partnerships according to industry research (LinkedIn, 2024). Human and AI influencers act as brand spokespeople using their expertise and audience relationships to promote and advertise products in ways that are more relatable and trustworthy than traditional advertising (Nitnaware & Tekade, 2025). Rising popularity of AI influencers has led to new opportunities for brands (Geyser, 2023). Samsung, Prada, and IKEA have collaborated with AI influencers in marketing campaigns, with the advantage being dependability and creative control for brands. AI influencers are digitally created entities designed using artificial intelligence and computer-generated imagery (Forbes, 2026). AI-mediated influencers are algorithmically personalised to attract specific demographics, enabling brands to maximise audience engagement (Ramachandran et al, 2024). However, the curated perfection of AI influencers may foster a sense of disconnection among consumers, thereby raising concerns regarding consent, transparency, and the potential for manipulation.

Consumers engage with influencers for many reasons including entertainment, relatability, expertise in a specific niche and inspiration. Lee (2020) defines authenticity as the extent to which communicative behaviors of influencers are perceived to be genuine and true. Perceived authenticity is important for both human and AI influencers as it enhances message persuasiveness and strengthens audience trust and engagement (Byun & Ahu, 2023; Kim & Kim, 2021). Early research suggests that AI-mediated influencers can be perceived as para-authentic when followers cognitively associate the virtual persona with a plausible human referent (Lee, 2004). Fundamentally, this means that AI influencers can be perceived as authentic when their constructed identity aligns with the human identity they claim to represent (Byun & Ahn, 2023; Huan& Jung, 2022). This raises ethical concerns, as the perceived authenticity of AI influencers manifests in their ability to mimic human qualities despite their non-human form, highlighting the need for research to understand how authenticity is conceptualised in the context of AI-mediated influencers.

Authenticity refers to the sincerity and transparency of an influencer's persona, communication, and relationship with their followers (Kapitan et al., 2022). As consumers become more aware of the commercial value of influencer partnerships they are gradually starting to value the authenticity of the influencers they follow. However, much of existing research focuses on the perspective of human influencers with authenticity conceptualised as multidimensional consisting of factors such as expertise, connectedness, integrity, originality and transparency (Duffek et al., 2025; Lee and Eastin, 2021). This study employs a qualitative methodology consisting of content analysis of a sample of AI influencers' and semi-structured interviews with their followers across TikTok and Instagram platforms. Findings will advance understanding of how authenticity is interpreted and constructed in non-human, technology-mediated marketing settings. Insights into how authenticity is understood in AI-mediated settings will contribute to marketing practice by promoting ethical campaigns that engender consumer trust and avoid the backlash associated with hyper-realistic AI influencers.

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A Multi-method Qualitative Exploration Of The Roles Of Disorienting Dilemmas And Evoked Emotions In The Case Of Consumers' Affective Responses To Protein Transition Advice.

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

Unexpected sustainable dietary advice triggers disorientation and cognitive conflict. Consumer acceptance or rejection of such advice is influenced by embedded beliefs, evoked emotions and affective-cognitive appraisals of the information. This research sheds light on the process of belief formation towards openess or resistance to a protein transition. Insights from this research can guide design and dissemination of dietary guidelines revised for sustainability,

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When Familiarity Backfires: Jaan Pehchan, Benign Opportunism, and Risk Perceptions in Cross-Cultural B2B Relationships

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Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

Summary Statement

This study examines *jaan pehchan*—a South Asian relational norm emphasizing trust, familiarity, and past transactions—in B2B SME contexts. While *jaan pehchan* reduces perceived risk through trust-based mechanisms, we identify a countervailing serial mediation path whereby *jaan pehchan* increases perceived partner investment and goal congruence, enabling benign opportunism and elevating buyer risk perceptions. This effect is moderated by power distance and is stronger in UK SMEs, highlighting new cross-cultural insights into relational risk dynamics.

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The Dark Side of Intermediated Marketing: How Incentives Shape Recruitment Agent Messaging to International Students.

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Track: 10. Marketing in Context (e.g., Food, Sport)

Summary Statement

This paper addresses the Marketing of UK Higher Education with emphasis on marketing to International students and the role of international recruitment agents as intermediaries between universities and prospective students. Using the principal agency theory as the underpinning theory, it investigates the phenomena using a mixed method of qualitative Netnography and surveys conducted with international students.

Competitive Short Paper

International students have been identified as a key player in sustenance of higher education institutions across the globe (Russell, 2005; Omoruyi & Rembielak, 2019). Their importance exceeds financial contribution to the host university, city and country. They contribute significantly to the classroom experience, curriculum development, cultural diversity and workforce of their host communities (Brewes, 2025). Whilst this is the case, there have been several other concerns on how universities could develop innovative marketing strategies to sustain international student recruitment (Russell, 2005; Chen, 2008; Hung & Yen, 2022). In determining the marketing strategies to employ, it is imperative to understand the push and pull factors that influence the study destination of international students (Mazarol & Soutar, 2002). International recruitment agents (agents) have been identified to be integral to the marketing of universities, with students and universities describing them as the international gatekeeper (Marom, 2023; Pawar & Vispute, 2024).

This study is underpinned by the principal agent theory. The theory highlights the situation where there is a relationship and a potential conflict of interest between parties. This is relevant when considering the relationship and incentives that exists between university, international students and international recruitment agents, where each party are seeking for an alignment of sometimes competing aims.

Several issues have been identified in recent times that tend to impact the marketing, attraction and recruitment of international students to UK universities. These are not limited to the current legislations around study visa conditions, with some proposed set of new rules coming into effect in coming months. Other issues have been linked with the overall student experience, where some of these issues are linked to set expectations built from formal and informal conversations with intermediaries between the international student and the university. Acculturation was another issue found from our study. Studying abroad has been widely recognised as a life-altering learning experience with expected meaningful intercultural gains (e.g., language proficiency, global mindedness, intercultural communicative skills) from acculturation experiences (He et al., 2025).

Agents are a key stakeholder within the international student journey, as they are responsible for 45-55% recruitment of international students into higher education (ICEF Monitor 2022). Exploring existing literature on acculturation and trust, the role agents play in the marketisation of universities and the early international student journey cannot be over emphasised. In this light, this study is focusing on the perception of international students of agents as part of the marketing process in forming opinions, promises and trust.

Using Netnography (Kozinets 2019), the study will utilise social media and online platforms with huge international students' presence to investigate the phenomena. We employ a team netnography approach, investigating and immersing ourselves in relevant discussions and reflecting on this through an immersion journal. We will then complement this qualitative data with surveys conducted with international students studying in Northwest universities.

The findings will help marketers understand the key aspects of the international students' journey and the role of agents and how best to develop innovative marketing strategies that will be sustainable considering the principal agent theory and ethics.

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Who Will Eat Less Meat? Characteristics Of Consumer Segments Based On Openness To A Reduced Meat Diet.

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

Analysis of data from a survey of 1000 omnivores investigating sociodemographic and psychosocial differences in openess to a sustainable dietary protein recommendation identified four distinct segments: Embracer, Incliner, Resistor, and Rejector. Significant differences across psychosocial characteristics emerged including behaviour outcome evaluations, identity, emotion evaluation and subjective knowledge. Nuanced approaches and alternative strategies are needed to facilitate a consumer transition to a protein transition.

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Exploring the Overlaps Between MarTech and Digital Marketing

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

Digital Marketing and MarTech address similar strategic issues, yet notable discrepancies regarding their definitions create a persistent tension. This article examines this unexplored overlap, adopting a conceptual research approach to provide a framework and research agenda for addressing these unclear boundaries. By offering a robust distinction, this study aims to guide firms, professionals, and business schools in defining roles and curricula, whilst establishing MarTech's positioning within marketing theory and practice.

Competitive Short Paper

Digital Marketing (DM) is now a well-established field in both theory and practice (Kannan & Li, 2017; Krishen et al., 2021), with marketers' practice increasingly dependent on tech-savvy skills (Hoffman et al., 2021). Meanwhile, MarTech, an acronym for 'marketing technology', has emerged as a new technology specialism reporting to marketing (Bourne, 2025), promising to automate, streamline, and optimise marketing execution (Mellet, 2025).

Both DM and MarTech fields address technological and strategic issues related to customer experience, with DM focusing on the creation, communication, and delivery of value and consumer engagement, and MarTech on data processing, analysis, and the IT ecosystem powering marketing operations. Studied as separate fields, it's not uncommon to see the use of overlapping definitions of DM and MarTech. Notable discrepancies remain regarding operational definitions, ethical considerations, and integration with emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence. This article is positioned to explore the intriguing yet unexplored overlap between DM and MarTech, which permeates research, practice, and scholarship.

When an author on a MarTech topic uses the term DM, it seems to do so with a presumed definition, often not provided by the author, and unclear to the reader. While MarTech professionals are said to be responsible for "designing, running and optimising DM campaigns" (Bourne, 2025, p. 1707), studies also suggest that MarTech is part of "modern DM" (Brock, 2021, p. 381). Several authors in the MarTech field use DM-related terms sparingly, such as "DM infrastructures" (Mellet, 2025, p. 831), "DM channels" (Bourne, 2025, p. 1706), and "DM technologies" (Amiri et al., 2023, p. 19; Chotisarn & Phuthong, 2025, p. 2). Recent systematic and bibliographic reviews intentionally combine MarTech and DM-related keywords in their search strings for article retrieval in databases (Chotisarn & Phuthong, 2025) or isolate marketing, technology, or digital keywords in the string (Ortegón-Cortázar et al., 2025; Trojanowski & Barmentloo, 2025), therefore not contributing to clarifying and distinguishing the fields.

Such a lack of clarity reveals a persistent, itchy tension between the unclear boundaries and overlaps of DM and MarTech that previous work hasn't yet directly addressed. This tension isn't exclusive to academic discourse and, down the road, pervades several stakeholders, such as firms, professionals, and business schools. Companies struggle to create or identify roles, teams and responsibilities. Particularly in small and medium enterprises, making major financial decisions on DM or MarTech is particularly overwhelming. Marketing professionals are being pulled in several directions regarding DM and MarTech responsibilities and opportunities, and need to set career paths that include specialisation and lifelong learning. Business schools need clarity to create curricula that reflect market needs and the technological competencies required for these ever-changing roles.

This article performs a conceptual research approach by critically examining the literature, both scientific and grey, and by providing a framework and research agenda to address these unclear boundaries. To move forward, the field of MarTech needs to clearly establish itself both academically and professionally, which requires a more robust distinction from DM and stronger positioning within marketing.

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Designing Anticipation: Storytelling and Customer Participation in the Relaunch of *Nemesis Reborn*

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Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

Summary Statement

This study explores how Alton Towers transformed the 18-month closure of *Nemesis Reborn* into a chaptered narrative that built anticipation and fan participation before reopening. Through qualitative narrative and document analysis, it shows how storytelling, sequenced reveals, and community co-creation shaped pre-consumption customer experience. The paper offers a blueprint for relaunch campaigns that integrate world-building, temporal anticipation design, and participatory engagement across digital, physical, and social realms.

Competitive Short Paper

This study analyses how an 18-month closure and relaunch of *Nemesis Reborn* at Alton Towers resort was reframed as a chaptered, folklore-based campaign that sustained engagement and built momentum towards the ride's reopening. The refurbishment was publicly framed as part of an unfolding narrative, with the closure embedded into the evolving storyworld communicated externally. The case aligns with evidence that theme parks are systemically adopting on-site narratives to differentiate experiences (Baker, 2023) and with service research urging integration of digital, physical and social realms in customer experience (CX) (Bolton et al., 2018).

Narrative world-building and participatory engagement can be orchestrated as pre-consumption CX, transforming a potential sentiment risk (closure) into an important value-creating stage of the journey. The study is grounded in contemporary literature conceptualising experience as spontaneous, multidimensional responses unfolding across the customer journey (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020) and recognising the pre-visit phase as strategically consequential (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Further, recent scholarship on consumer anticipation as a performative experience - in which anticipation itself shapes later evaluations (Ryan et al., 2026) - and narrative transportation as a driver of affect and engagement (Green & Appel, 2024), together with current syntheses on brand communities and co-creation (e.g. Nibras et al., 2025), is mobilised to explain participatory fan behaviours.

An interpretive single-case study of *Nemesis Reborn* was developed via qualitative document and narrative analysis of publicly accessible materials (e.g. Choi, 2024) reporting on Alton Towers' storytelling strategy. A dated chronology of chaptered reveals was constructed (e.g., "The Investigation Begins", November 2022) and codes for world-building motifs and anticipation devices (e.g., open loops, staged reveals) and participatory triggers (e.g., clues, fan speculation). These codes were then mapped onto the pre-consumption customer journey to illustrate CX orchestration across touchpoints.

Preliminary analysis highlights three interrelated findings. First, the campaign's chapter-based storytelling acted as a unifying world-building device, aligning with evidence that theme-park experiences increasingly rely on spatial narratives to differentiate value (Baker, 2025). Second, anticipation was deliberately stimulated as a pre-consumption experience through staged reveals, suspense devices, and symbolic cues, supporting recent work conceptualising anticipation as a performative experiential state that shapes subsequent evaluations (Vichiengior et al., 2023). Third, enthusiast communities emerged as co-creators who interpreted, amplified and extended the unfolding narrative across digital and social spaces, consistent with contemporary research on participatory culture and brand-community dynamics (e.g., Roy Bhattacharjee et al., 2021).

The study demonstrates how chaptered storytelling can structure and stabilise pre-consumption customer experience, reframing operational downtime as an opportunity for narrative value creation. It shows that anticipation functions as a deliberately designed experiential mechanism, shaped through sequenced reveals and symbolic cues, and evidences how fan communities can operate as narrative co-creators who interpret, amplify, and extend brand meaning across channels. Together, these insights can help inform a blueprint of CX orchestration for attraction relaunches, integrating world-building, temporal design, participatory engagement and cross-realm coherence.

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When Help Becomes Habit: Drivers, Types, and Well-Being Consequences of Over-Reliance on Generative AI

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

This research examines the drivers and consequences of over-reliance on generative AI (GenAI). A netnographic analysis of 2,212 Reddit discussions identifies two distinct forms of over-reliance—goal-oriented and habitual—driven by social, functional, hedonic, and epistemic utilities. Survey evidence (N = 599) shows these utilities exert differential effects on over-reliance types. Habitual over-reliance undermines subjective well-being, while mindfulness mitigates its negative effects and amplifies the well-being benefits of goal-oriented over-reliance.

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Tackling Climate Change: A Farmer-Centric Approach

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

Effective climate action requires strong engagement from the agricultural sector, yet limited insight into farmers' beliefs, values, and norms may be hindering the adoption of mitigation measures. Understanding farmers' lived realities demands in-depth exploration of their thoughts, feelings, and reactions to multifarious communications and policies. Using a qualitative approach, this study investigates the cognitive and social factors that shape farmers' decisions to adopt climate mitigation practices.

Competitive Short Paper

The agricultural sector is a significant contributor to GHG emissions. Meeting targets by 2030 depends urgently on farmers' participation in adopting various climate mitigation measures. Despite the increasing need for farmers to adopt these measures the adoption rate is worryingly low (Irwin et al., 2023; Macken-Walsh et al., 2023; Cullen et al., 2024). While substantial efforts have been made to improve farmers' adoption of climate mitigation measures, the lack of success in this domain indicates that conventional support measures, such as incentivisation and technology transfer, are not achieving the desired level of adoption.

Promoted mitigation measures effectively reduce GHG emissions and are cost-effective (Lanigan et al., 2023). Nonetheless, studies have highlighted concerns around social and cultural acceptability (Irwin et al., 2023; Cullen et al., 2024). Conventional farming practices may be heavily influenced by farmers' social farming context or other psychosocial factors (Macken-Walsh et al., 2023; Kipling et al., 2019). Moreover, the adoption scenarios have been developed based on techno-centric approaches (Lanigan et al., 2023) which likely neglect socio-cultural and behavioural factors, resulting in both a gap in behaviour and understanding on why adoption rates are lower than required (Macken-Walsh et al., 2023).

We don't know enough about farmers' beliefs, values, and norms which may be leading to a low adoption rate (Burton & Farstad, 2019; Hyland et al., 2016). Understanding their reality requires deep exploration of the farmers' thoughts, feelings, and responses. Using a qualitative research approach, the study aims to unpick the cognitive and social factors related to climate mitigation measure(s) adoption. In addition, it seeks to understand farmers' perception of affordability, feasibility, achievability, and effectiveness of proposed alternatives within the frame of current 'way-of-doing', to identify barriers and facilitators of change.

Additionally, past studies have shown that farm advisors play a critical role in fostering farmer-led discussion and, consequently, social learning among farmers that go beyond one-way knowledge exchange and shape farmers' collective attitudes, norms, beliefs, and perceptions (Arbuckle et al., 2015; Petersen-Rockney, 2022; Mohammadrezaei et al., 2023). Farm advisors may discuss climate change issues and mitigation actions with greater contextual relevance (Macken-Walsh et al., 2023; Rose et al., 2018). However, the extant research shows that farm advisors may be reluctant and face difficulties in proactively engaging in climate change advisory activities. For instance, advisors may perceive it as challenging to raise controversial issues, e.g., climate change, with their clients due to fear of losing their clients or their trust (Mohammadrezaei et al., 2023). Similarly, some farm advisors may perceive a lack of required communication skills to discuss complex climate change topics (Klerkx & Jansen, 2010).

This qualitative research aims to examine the extent to which mitigation practices align with or contradict the collective beliefs, social norms, values, perceptions, and attitudes of farmers and farm advisors. Preliminary findings from a farm advisors focus group and in-depth semi-structured interviews with farmers (conventional and adaptive) will be presented.

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Beyond The Get Out Of Jail Free Card: Exploring Brand Stigmatization Of Weight-Loss Medication

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This exploratory study examines why users of weight-loss drug brands are stigmatized for allegedly achieving benefits without effort, such as Ozempic shaming. The study conceptualizes this so-called "unearned benefit" as brand stigmatization. Its objectives are to develop the construct of brand stigmatization, identify its key drivers, and build a typology of the specific forms such stigma takes. The practical relevance of this study is to offer guidance for stigma mitigation strategies to managers.

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Who Gets to Theorise Markets? Positionality, Distance, and Knowledge Production in Marketing

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Track: 10. Marketing in Context (e.g., Food, Sport)

Summary Statement

This paper examines how marketing scholars theorise markets, consumers, and identities they do not personally inhabit. Moving beyond diaspora as a purely geographic condition, it introduces the concept of *Positional Theoretical Contributions* to examine how distance—geographic, cultural, embodied, or institutional—shapes marketing knowledge production. The paper invites reflection on data access, interpretive authority, and responsibility in global marketing and management research.

Competitive Short Paper

Marketing research routinely involves scholars theorising markets, consumers, and communicative practices they do not personally inhabit. Researchers in India can analyses US consumer culture and advertising industries; scholars based in Germany can draw on readily available secondary datasets to study Nigerian markets without engaging with any Nigerian; non-disabled researchers examine disability and accessibility in consumption contexts; non-LGBTQ+ scholars investigate queer markets; and white researchers analyse racialised stereotypes of Black consumers in advertising. In marketing and management research, such work is often legitimised by the availability of data and methodological rigour, while the interpretive consequences of positional distance—who is speaking, from where, and with what authority—remain largely under-theorised.

This paper argues that such assumptions obscure a foundational issue in marketing knowledge production: how distance between the researcher and the market being theorised shapes what can be seen, said, and claimed. While methodological rigour and data quality are central to marketing research, they do not resolve the interpretive consequences of theorising across difference. Questions therefore arise: does access to data equate to legitimacy in market research? What is lost or gained when researchers are positioned outside the markets, identities, or lived realities they analyse? And how should marketing scholarship evaluate theory developed under conditions of distance?

To address these questions, the paper introduces diaspora theoretical contributors as an entry point for examining how scholars theorise across geographic and contextual separation. However, it argues that diaspora alone is too narrow to capture the realities of contemporary marketing research. Many of the field's most influential contributions emerge not only from geographic distance, but from embodied, cultural, institutional, and epistemic distance. Building on interpretive marketing research, reflexivity, and debates on insider–outsider scholarship, the paper advances the concept of positional theoretical contributions.

Positional theoretical contributions shift attention away from who researchers are, toward how they are positioned in relation to the market, consumers, and institutions they theorise. Distance is conceptualised not as an inherent deficit or advantage, but as a conditional feature whose theoretical value depends on how it is recognised, constrained, and mobilised. The paper identifies common positional configurations in marketing research, including non-disabled scholars researching disability markets, non-LGBTQ+ researchers studying queer consumption, and white scholars analysing racialised representations in advertising. These examples illustrate how distance can enable abstraction, comparison, and critical insight, while simultaneously risking misrecognition or epistemic harm if left unexamined.

The paper contributes to marketing theory in three ways. First, it reframes cross-difference theorising as a structural feature of global marketing scholarship rather than a marginal concern. Second, it offers positionality as a conceptual lens for evaluating theoretical contribution beyond data access or methodological sophistication. Third, it raises implications for qualitative evaluation, peer review, and doctoral training by challenging the assumption that proximity guarantees understanding or that distance can be neutralised through technique alone.

Overall, the paper invites marketing scholars to move beyond debates about who is allowed to research whom, and instead focus on the conditions under which theorising across difference produces credible, responsible, and generative marketing knowledge.

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The Never-ending (Aesthetic) Experience: A Phenomenological Account

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This manuscript presents an in-depth phenomenological case study (Fournier, 1998) of a couple's five-year experience attending the annual *Le Guess Who?* music festival in the Netherlands. Rather than being an extraordinary experience (Arnould & Price, 1993; Schouten et al., 2007) or a temporary escape from everyday life (Cova et al., 2018), *Le Guess Who* constitutes an enduring aesthetic experience journey with a lasting inspirational effect and no set boundaries.

Competitive Short Paper

This manuscript presents an in-depth phenomenological case study (Fournier, 1998) of a couple's five-year experience attending the annual *Le Guess Who?* music festival in the Netherlands. With the motto "Listening is the Way Forward", *Le Guess Who?* is considered one of the most forward-thinking festivals, featuring over 150 artists from around the world. The festival has a committed following of repeat attendees, in whose lives the event plays an ongoing role long before and after each occurrence.

The case is interpreted within the arts-consumption literature (Venkatesh & Meamber, 2006; 2008; Kerrigan et al, 2009) to examine how the festival is lived as an aesthetic consumption experience that extends far beyond its spatiotemporal setting. The data considered in the case study consist of over 8 hours of interviews with two participants, interviewed both as individuals and as a couple (Blake et al. 2021), and of the artefacts they accumulated at the festival, such as programmes, apps, timetables, playlists, maps and photos. We adopted a phenomenological interview approach (Thompson et al. 1989; 1990), inviting participants to converse freely about their preparation for, and experience of, *Le Guess Who?* as well as the "bleed" (Orazi & van Laer, 2022) of this experience into their lives in the subsequent weeks and months. Drawing on Fournier (1998), we examined our participants' subjective meanings of their lived experiences and situated this analysis within the personal and sociocultural contexts of their life worlds (Thompson et al., 1994).

The analysis identified several interrelated themes that speak to participants' experiences within and beyond the festival: extended anticipation and preparation; a cumulative increase in understanding of music making and of culture in general over their years of participation; an experience that carries seamlessness into participants' lives without dramatic peaks or troughs of emotion; and a continuous journey of growth and discovery. Together, these themes show how *Le Guess Who?* becomes a part of participants' lives, offering inspiration, energy, and an ongoing desire to create, experiment, and learn through the arts. It weaves into their consumption choices and conversations, affording them a sense of intellectual growth, self-nurturing, and personal discovery, and shaping their construction and expression of selves (Goulding & Saren, 2009).

This paper extends current understanding of consumer experience, which is typically conceptualised as developing through a linear process of pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase (Tynan & McKechnie, 2008; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Rather than being an extraordinary experience (Arnould & Price, 1993; Schouten et al., 2007) or a temporary escape from everyday life (Cova et al., 2018), *Le Guess Who* constitutes an enduring aesthetic experience journey with a lasting inspirational effect and no set boundaries. The extended study offers detailed insights into the role of participants as aesthetic subjects (Venkatesh & Meamber, 2006; 2008), and active producers of meaning in cultural experiences.

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Biomaterials in Fashion: Promise, Performance, and the Limits of Sustainable Substitution

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper critically examines the growing use of biomaterials in fashion, questioning the assumption that material substitution alone delivers sustainability benefits. Drawing on research into textile innovation and environmental performance, it explores the technical, practical, and communicative limitations of biomaterials and how these are often obscured in sustainability narratives. The paper argues for more transparent and responsible marketing of biomaterials, grounded in realistic assessments of performance, scalability, and environmental impact.

Competitive Short Paper

Biomaterials have emerged as a highly visible response to growing concerns around the environmental impact of the fashion and textile industries. Promoted as sustainable alternatives to conventional fibres and materials, biomaterials are increasingly positioned as solutions to issues such as resource depletion, fossil fuel dependence, and textile waste. However, despite significant academic, commercial, and media attention, there remains limited critical examination of the practical limitations, trade-offs, and unintended consequences associated with their development and use.

This paper critically examines the role of biomaterials in fashion through the lens of material performance, scalability, and sustainability communication. Drawing on the authors' research into textile innovation, material development, and environmental assessment, the paper argues that biomaterials are frequently presented as inherently sustainable, without sufficient consideration of their functional limitations, production constraints, or end-of-life implications. As a result, expectations placed upon biomaterials often exceed their current technical and infrastructural capabilities.

While biomaterials such as bacterial cellulose, mycelium-based composites, and bio-derived polymers offer compelling alternatives to petrochemical-based materials, their adoption within fashion systems raises a number of challenges. These include variability in material performance, durability and consistency issues, reliance on controlled growth conditions, scalability limitations, and the energy and resource inputs required for production and processing. In many cases, materials that perform well in laboratory or small-scale contexts encounter significant barriers when translated into commercial manufacturing environments. Moreover, the end-of-life pathways for many biomaterials remain underdeveloped, with compostability or biodegradability often assumed rather than empirically validated within real-world waste systems.

From a marketing and consumer perspective, these limitations are rarely communicated clearly. Biomaterials are frequently framed through narratives of innovation, circularity, and environmental benefit, which can obscure trade-offs and contribute to over-simplified sustainability claims. This creates a risk of misaligned expectations, where consumers interpret the presence of biomaterials as a guarantee of reduced environmental impact, regardless of the broader system in which the material operates. Such framing raises important questions about transparency, greenwashing, and the responsibility of brands to communicate both the potential and the constraints of emerging materials.

This paper positions biomaterials not as a definitive solution to fashion's sustainability challenges, but as part of a broader transition that requires careful evaluation, realistic framing, and system-level thinking. By drawing attention to the gaps between material innovation, manufacturing reality, and consumer understanding, the paper contributes to debates within responsible and sustainable marketing around how novel materials are positioned, justified, and legitimised.

The paper concludes by arguing for a more critical and reflexive approach to biomaterials in fashion—one that acknowledges their promise while also engaging honestly with their limitations. In doing so, it calls for closer collaboration between material scientists, designers, and marketing scholars to ensure that biomaterials are integrated into fashion systems in ways that are both environmentally credible and communicatively responsible.

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Reimagining the University Value Proposition: An Ecosystem Perspective

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This study examines UK higher education amid declining home enrolments, questioning universities' value propositions. Using Service-Dominant Logic and service ecosystem theory, it conceptualises HEIs as value-creating platforms where value is co-created by multiple stakeholders. The paper advances a context-specific, dynamic understanding of value and proposes a contemporary framework reflecting changing institutional, societal, and market conditions.

Competitive Short Paper

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) operate within an increasingly complex and rapidly evolving environment (Tomlinson, 2021). In recent years, many universities in the UK have experienced a decline in home student enrolments, raising critical questions about the value proposition underpinning students' decisions to pursue university education (Office of Students). Further, the UK government regulatory body (OFS) and policy makers are recently mounting pressures to universities to redefine values associated to teaching, experience and outcomes.

Conceptualising and operationalising "value" remain inherently complex (Zauner, Koller, & Hatak, 2015). Existing literature approaches value from both unidimensional and multidimensional perspectives (Blut et al., 2023), while further complexity arises from distinctions between value-in-use, perceived value, and value creation processes. Drawing on Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) and service ecosystem theory, this study conceptualises universities as value-creating platforms embedded within a broader higher education ecosystem, where value is co-created through interactions among multiple stakeholders rather than unilaterally delivered by institutions. While prior studies have examined value in higher education from institutional, student, or employer perspectives, the contemporary HEI landscape necessitates a more integrated, ecosystem-based understanding of how educational value is formed, experienced, and evaluated particularly by pre-university (college) students.

Despite a growing body of research examining value in higher education from various perspectives, the contemporary HEI landscape necessitates a re-examination of institutional educational value systems and a reconsideration of how value propositions are articulated to pre-university (college) students. This study responds to this gap by adopting an ecosystem perspective to reimagine the value proposition of universities.

The research will employ a qualitative methodology, drawing on in-depth interviews with multiple stakeholders, including college students considering higher education, current university students, educators, senior management involved in value development, and employers of university graduates. This multi-stakeholder approach enables a holistic and integrated understanding of how value is co-created, experienced, and evaluated across the higher education ecosystem in the UK.

The paper contributes to the literature by recognising value as context-specific and dynamic, evolving in response to changing institutional, societal, and market conditions. By synthesising emergent themes across stakeholder groups, the study proposes a redefined and contemporary value framework that reflects the realities of a volatile and challenging higher education environment.

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Toward a Causal Model of Consumer Engagement

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This essay aims to develop a causal, formative, and reflexive theoretical model on engagement focused on the interaction between consumer and company. With that in mind, the articles considered were published in high-impact journals and received many citations. As a result, it was possible to develop a model of the antecedents and consequences of engagement, as well as two other possible outcomes of poorly structured engagement: disengagement and negative engagement.

Competitive Short Paper

Originating in sixteenth-century France, the word engagement originally meant "pawning or promising something", referring to a contract or involvement in some activity. The concept currently has many meanings, given its multidimensionality and its application (Kahn, 1990; Pansari & Kumar, 2016), resulting in a polysemic definition. The first definition, in the business environment, comes from Kahn (1990) and says engagement is the individual's preferred behavioral expression, considering that "people have dimensions of themselves that, given appropriate conditions, they prefer to use and express in the course of role performances" (p.700). Based on a review of the literature, this article presents a theoretical model of engagement. The conceptual model comprises antecedents, consequences, and their possible implications beyond engagement (negative engagement and disengagement).

Regarding the "antecedents", the affective variable subcategories are emotion, satisfaction, trust, loyalty, feeling, identification, affinity, affective commitment, and the connection between brand and client. In the cognitive variable, we have attention, interest, concentration, significance, security, vigor, and perception of cost and benefit. In the conative variable, we have experience, co-creation of value, social sharing, commitment, dedication, relevance, vigor, and two variables that are also present in the affective level: alliance and long-term relationship. Finally, in the social variable, we have external circumstances, motivation, brand traits, and three other constructs present in the conative level: social interaction between concerned parties, alliance, and long-term relationship. Some authors: Graffigna and Gambetti (2015), Pansari and Kumar (2016), Doorn et al. (2010), Brodie et al. (2011), Pham and Avnet (2009), Vivek et al. (2012), Higgins (2006).

Regarding the "consequences", two variables were identified from the literature: the company and the individual. In the business aspect, we have co-creation, financial performance, value, sales effort, and brand recognition. In the individual aspect there was also a separation between affective, cognitive, and conative. For the affective subcategory the following concepts were identified: emotional attachment, affective commitment, trust, integrity in relationships and experiences, loyalty, satisfaction, identification. For the cognitive variable, we have continuity. Finally, for the conative variable we have commitment, involvement in the brand's communities, experience, and change of habit or behavior. Some authors: Marra and Damacena (2013), Bowden (2009), Verhoef et al. (2010), Brodie et al. (2011), Vivek et al. (2012), Heath (2007), Brodie and Hollebeek (2011), Hollebeek et al. (2016), Almeida et al. (2015).

The model also brings variables disengagement and negative engagement. These can occur after or during the engagement process respectively. Disengagement is defined as the absence of association between the individual and the company, with expressive drop in energy to maintain a relationship (Kahn, 1990) and a lower attractivity (Higgins, 2006). On the other hand, negative engagement manifests through co-destruction (Hollebeek et al., 2016) and the generation of negative content related to the company (Feitosa & Botelho, 2015). In both situations, one must consider the force or intensity of the engagement, defined as the level of relationship and affective, cognitive, and conative connections happening while an action is performed (Heath, 2007; Vivek et al., 2012).

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Talking in Riddles: Establishing a Common Language to Address Microfibre Pollution

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper examines how microfibre pollution is defined and understood across industry and policy contexts, highlighting significant inconsistencies in the use of terms such as microfibres, microplastics, and fibre fragmentation. Drawing on 35 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders including policymakers, manufacturers, and NGOs, the study reveals how divergent definitions hinder collaboration, policy development, and effective mitigation. The findings emphasise the need for greater conceptual clarity and a shared vocabulary to support coordinated responses to microfibre pollution.

Competitive Short Paper

Microfibre pollution, microplastic pollution, and fibre fragmentation are terms frequently used interchangeably to describe a recently emerging class of environmental contaminants. Although these terms are often employed to refer to overlapping phenomena, their meanings are not equivalent. For instance, microfibres is a more inclusive term than microplastics, which is typically limited to synthetic particles, while fibre fragmentation may exclude larger textile-derived particles generated through the degradation of garments and household textiles. The lack of terminological precision has implications for how the issue is conceptualised, studied, and addressed.

This research examines how industry and policy stakeholders discuss microfibre pollution and explores the challenges of establishing a shared vocabulary capable of consolidating existing knowledge and informing effective mitigation strategies. The study adopts a qualitative methodology, drawing on 35 semi-structured interviews with a diverse range of stakeholders, including policymakers, white goods manufacturers, microfibre filter producers, and non-governmental organisations.

Preliminary findings indicate substantial variation in definitions across stakeholder groups, as well as persistent ambiguities arising from terminology specific to textile science and technology. These discrepancies highlight a critical challenge: if experts directly engaged in addressing microfibre pollution lack consensus on key definitions, this may hinder interdisciplinary collaboration, policy development, and public communication. The study underscores the need for greater conceptual clarity and the development of a common language to support coordinated action on microfibre pollution across research, industry, and policy domains.

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Artificial Intelligence Across Different Domains of Consumers' Lives: A Comparative Perspective

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

The present paper explores consumer attitudes towards the use of AI in different domains of everyday lives. Results from a representative online survey provide answers across domains and allow to draw implications for theory and practice.

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Reconceptualising Sustainable Packaging in Immersive Marketing Environments

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper reconceptualises sustainable packaging within immersive marketing environments, where packaging extends beyond physical materiality into digital, experiential, and informational dimensions. We highlight limitations in existing sustainability and packaging theories rooted in material-centric assumptions and proposes an integrative conceptual framework that captures virtual, visual, and experiential packaging functions. Using a hybrid bibliometric and structured review, the study extends sustainable marketing theory and identifies future research directions for immersive sustainability contexts.

Competitive Short Paper

Sustainability has become an important concern in marketing research, particularly in studies of responsible consumer behaviour and ethical marketing practices (El-Tahan et al., 2026). Within this body of work, packaging has been treated as a functional element, primarily to protect products during storage and transportation (Ho-dac & Mulder-Nijkamp, 2025). Although recent marketing research recognises packaging as a form of brand communication that can influence consumer decision-making (Caruso et al., 2025; Draskovic, 2015), this extended view remains underdeveloped in sustainability studies. Instead, research in this domain continues to assess packaging mainly through physical characteristics such as material composition, recyclability, waste reduction, and lifecycle impacts (Lin et al., 2025).

Recent immersive technologies, including virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), further challenge this material-centric understanding of packaging (D'Arco & Marino, 2025). These technologies enable firms to overlay digital content onto physical packaging, enabling consumers to access virtual interfaces via QR codes or near-field communication (NFC). For example, Yeo Valley uses QR codes to digitalise product information, including recycling guidance (SharpEnd, n.d.-a), while Levi's integrates NFC tags into garment labels to communicate product journey information (SharpEnd, n.d.-b). In this context, packaging is no longer limited to a static information carrier or a "silent salesman" (Alhamdi, 2020), but become an interactive medium (Xia et al., 2025) and an experiential touchpoint that supports emotional engagement and brand recall (D'Arco & Marino, 2025).

Beyond consumer interaction, immersive technologies also influence packaging design and development. Businesses can design, test, and refine packaging through virtual prototyping (Scholz & Smith, 2016), which can reduce material waste, energy use, and production costs (D'Arco & Marino, 2025). As engagement shifts toward digital environments, physical packaging may be simplified, and more rely on recyclable or biodegradable materials. Consequently, although packaging continues to generate physical waste, its role in design, production, consumer experience, and brand communication is shaped by immaterial and experiential elements.

Despite these developments, research on sustainable marketing and packaging remains fragmented and grounded in physical-material assumptions, limiting its relevance in immersive environments (Mele et al., 2025; Mei et al., 2025). While immersive marketing research has highlighted new forms of consumer engagement through avatars, virtual spaces, and experiential interactions, these insights are rarely connected to sustainability frameworks (Dwivedi et al., 2023). This disconnect constrains theoretical progress and points to the need for integrative approaches that explain sustainable packaging in immersive digital contexts (Nadeem et al., 2025).

In response, we argue that sustainability should not be understood solely in terms of packaging's physical properties. Instead, sustainable packaging can be conceptualised as a multidimensional construct operating across material, virtual, visual, informational, and experiential dimensions. Building on this premise, this paper develops a conceptual framework that integrates sustainable marketing and packaging theory within an immersive digital context. We adopt a hybrid literature review combining bibliometric and structured review methods to identify patterns shaping immersive sustainability discourse beyond explicitly articulated theoretical positions. Drawing on co-citation and descriptive analyses, we propose directions for future research aimed at advancing sustainable marketing theory beyond predominantly material-centric perspectives.

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From Fragmentation To Integration: An AR-Enabled Sustainable Fashion Innovation Ecosystem Framework For Value Co-Creation From A Generation Z Perspective

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper develops an integrative theoretical framework to support research on an AR-enabled Sustainable Fashion Innovation Ecosystem (SFIE) from the Generation Z perspective. Anchored in Innovation Ecosystem Theory and Value Co-creation, and informed by circular economy, consumer culture, and digital affordance perspectives, the framework functions as an analytical scaffold and a bridge to empirical ecosystem modelling. It positions AR as a catalyst for sustainable value co-creation and redefines Gen Z consumers as active ecosystem participants.

Competitive Short Paper

The sustainable transformation of the fashion industry remains constrained by fragmented development. Research has examined sustainable materials and circular business models (Amobonye et al., 2023; Brydges, 2021), digital technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) in fashion retail (Kovács & Keresztes, 2024), and Generation Z consumers' ethical attitudes and behaviours (Theocharis & Tsekouropoulos, 2025). Yet these streams largely develop in parallel. Digital technology, consumer agency, and sustainability objectives remain weakly integrated at a system level, limiting understanding of how sustainable value is collectively generated. Although innovation ecosystem thinking informs sustainability transitions, its application in fashion remains nascent and largely production- or policy-oriented, with consumers positioned as peripheral actors (Adner, 2017; D'Itria & Colombi, 2023).

As a result, sustainability initiatives often remain isolated, relational value co-creation is under-theorised, and digital technologies are framed primarily as commercial tools rather than mechanisms of systemic change (D'Itria & Colombi, 2023; Khanal, 2024). This reveals a critical gap: the absence of an integrative framework explaining how AR can strategically activate Generation Z agency and enable multi-stakeholder value co-creation within a unified sustainable fashion system.

This paper addresses this gap by developing an integrative theoretical framework designed to support the future construction of an AR-enabled Sustainable Fashion Innovation Ecosystem (SFIE) from the perspective of Generation Z consumers. The framework articulates the analytical foundations and core mechanisms required for subsequent empirical ecosystem modelling, responding to calls for system-level approaches capable of addressing sustainability challenges that exceed the capacity of single actors or linear value chains (Adner, 2017; D'Itria & Colombi, 2023).

The framework is organised through a hierarchy of theoretical lenses. Innovation Ecosystem Theory (IET) and Value Co-creation (VCC) form the core theories, conceptualising sustainable fashion innovation as a dynamic, multi-actor system (Adner, 2017) in which value emerges through interactive processes among brands, consumers, technology providers, and other stakeholders (Vargo & Lusch, 2016; Palakshappa et al., 2024). The Circular Economy (CE) is positioned as a normative outcome framework, defining sustainability goals such as waste reduction, product life extension, and circular consumption (MacArthur, 2017; Brydges, 2021). To capture micro-level dynamics, Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) and Digital Affordance Theory (DAT) are integrated as supporting lenses, explaining how Generation Z's identity-related meanings (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Palomo-Domínguez et al., 2023) and AR-enabled action possibilities shape sustainable engagement (Leonardi, 2011; Khanal, 2024).

This paper develops a conceptual framework that integrates fragmented perspectives on digital technology, consumer agency, and circular goals into a coherent system-level logic, providing a foundation for empirical ecosystem modelling. Within this structure, AR is positioned as a boundary-spanning interface that links sustainability objectives with everyday consumption practices by mediating information, experience, and participation, enabling Generation Z to engage in value co-creation (Theocharis & Tsekouropoulos, 2025; Kovács & Keresztes, 2024). Theoretically, the study extends innovation ecosystem scholarship by clarifying how a digital interface can align consumer agency with circular sustainability outcomes in a sustainable fashion context. Practically, it provides an analytical foundation for future research and strategic decision-making on leveraging AR to support more coordinated and sustainable fashion ecosystems.

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From Feed To Behaviour: Investigating Gambling-Related TikTok Content Exposure Among UK Youth

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper examines how TikTok's algorithmic recommender system amplifies exposure to influencer-led gambling content among youth. Addressing a gap in TikTok-specific research, the study uses unique access to the TikTok Research Tools API to analyse anonymised, longitudinal platform data. Using a mixed-methods design, it examines content framing, engagement practices and algorithmic feedback loops, advancing theory on digital vulnerability while informing responsible marketing, platform governance and youth protection debates in algorithmically mediated environments globally today.

Competitive Short Paper

TikTok claims 1.59 billion users in 2025, with strong growth ahead (Statista, 2025a). Its algorithm-driven For You Page (FYP) powers short-form content, with over 16,000 videos uploaded per minute (Statista, 2025b). The platform draws a predominantly young audience: 18-24-year-olds dominate (13.2% men aged 18-24 vs. 12.4% women; Statista, 2025a). This demographic profile is significant given TikTok's algorithmic personalised recommender system, which amplifies content based on engagement rather than declared interest. Consequently, influencer-led gambling posts, often framed as entertainment, lifestyle, or financial success, are repeatedly shown to high-risk youth audiences. This structural advantage intensifies exposure to gambling promotion and blurs the boundary between advertising and peer-generated content.

Nearly half (49%) of 11-17-year-olds gambled in the past 12 months; 30% used own money; and 1.2% classified as experiencing gambling problems (Gambling Commission, 2025a). Children regularly encounter gambling ads and influencer content on social media (Gambling Commission, 2025b). This highlights digital platforms' active role in forming youth gambling attitudes and behaviours. Digital platforms heighten vulnerability via engaging formats that downplay risks (Galms-Cerezo et al., 2025).

Jones et al., (2020); Thomas et al., (2023); Rossi and Nairn, (2024) shown how influencer-led gambling ads on Instagram, YouTube, Twitch, and sports media normalize the behaviour for youth. However, research on TikTok remains limited and largely descriptive or survey-based, offering limited insight into platform-specific recommendation dynamics. There is a lack of empirical research examining how algorithmic recommender systems shape repeated exposure to gambling content, how engagement practices such as liking, sharing and following tipsters and strategic hashtag use amplify influence, and how these processes interact with psychosocial factors including normalisation, perceived risk and attitudes. As a result, the mechanisms through which TikTok may reinforce gambling-related behaviours among youth remain poorly understood.

This study addresses this gap by examining how exposure to gambling-related content on TikTok shapes gambling normalisation, risk perceptions and behavioural intentions among UK youth. The overarching research question asks: how does exposure to gambling content on TikTok influence young people's gambling-related attitudes intentions and behaviours? Sub-questions explore (1) how gambling content is framed and normalised through TikTok engagement practices, (2) how repeated exposure and engagement shape perceived risk and attitudes, and (3) the role of algorithmic feedback loops in reinforcing gambling-related behaviours over time.

The study is conceptually anchored in theories of media effects, social influence, algorithmic bias and marketing funnels models.

Methodologically, the study employs a multi-phase, mixed-method longitudinal design using the TikTok Research Tools API to conduct platform-specific, algorithm-aware analysis of publicly available, aggregated and anonymised data over a 12-month period. The approach combines computational content analysis, trend analysis and exposure modelling, with careful attention to ethical compliance, avoiding profiling or age inference.

The paper contributes theoretically by extending gambling marketing and digital vulnerability research to TikTok, methodologically by developing platform-specific, algorithm-aware exposure analysis, and practically by informing responsible marketing, platform governance and youth protection debates. In doing so, it addresses the conference theme of breaking boundaries in marketing by examining how algorithmic systems reshape the boundaries between advertising, entertainment and social influence.

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The Empowerment Paradox: How AI Advice Creates Hollow Satisfaction and Agency Atrophy

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

This paper tests the effect of system transparency on consumer agency when AI enhances decision efficiency. Drawing on Power-Dependence Theory and Self-Determination Theory, we propose that algorithmic advice satisfies competence needs whilst frustrating autonomy needs. A 2x2 experiment manipulates advice source (LLM versus human expert) and transparency (high versus low). We hypothesise that LLM attribution increases efficiency whilst decreasing agency, with transparency moderating this effect. Results identify when AI assistance empowers versus disempowers consumers.

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Conceptualising generative AI in fashion brand social media: accelerated creative velocity, algorithmic social presence, and conversational commerce

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

Generative AI is changing how fashion brands plan and produce social content, moving from single posts toward more interactive experiences. This paper develops a conceptual model that links three themes: accelerated creative velocity, algorithmic social presence, and conversational commerce. Drawing on work on user generated content, parasocial influence, messaging, and virtual fit technologies, it outlines research questions for future studies. Authenticity perceptions and community norms are highlighted as factors shaping consumer response and commercial outcomes.

Competitive Short Paper

Generative AI is increasingly used by fashion brands to draft captions, generate imagery, and support conversational interactions on social platforms (Grewal et al., 2024). This paper offers a concise conceptualisation of generative AI as a social media capability that shapes how content, relationships, and purchase intent develop in social media environments, where aesthetic meaning, identity signalling, community participation, and social commerce outcomes are closely linked.

The conceptual grounding draws on established findings from fashion and digital marketing contexts. User generated content contributes to the online fashion consumer experience by adding social proof, credibility cues, and experiential richness beyond brand authored messaging (Vazquez et al., 2021). Mediated influence research highlights how parasocial interaction and entertainment focused social content can strengthen responsiveness and impulse buying tendencies in commerce adjacent environments, which is relevant to social feeds that blend interaction and shopping (Vazquez et al., 2020; Vazquez et al., 2019). Dialogic smart channel communication via mobile instant messaging also supports relationship development and timely personalised exchange, providing a useful base for thinking about AI assisted brand conversations (Vazquez et al., 2017). Work on virtual fit and sizing technologies shows how digital interfaces can support product evaluation in fashion by improving interpretation of fit and sizing information in online contexts, with implications for conversion and post purchase outcomes (Miell et al., 2018).

Three value pathways are proposed. Accelerated creative velocity refers to faster content iteration and testing enabled by generative tools, with implications for always on publishing and creator collaboration (Grewal et al., 2024). Algorithmic social presence refers to interactive brand figures such as virtual stylists or agentic brand characters that can feel socially present and support parasocial closeness, while remaining sensitive to authenticity perceptions and audience expectations (Vazquez et al., 2019; Vazquez et al., 2020). Conversational commerce refers to chat based interaction that supports guided discovery, personalised recommendations, and friction reduction on the path to purchase (Lim et al., 2022).

Future research is proposed to test elements of the model, including experiments comparing human authored versus AI assisted content, and case studies of fashion brand conversational deployments and AI enabled virtual fit experiences (Lim et al., 2022; Miell et al., 2018). Initial questions include when generative content supports perceived creativity and brand warmth versus triggers scepticism (Vazquez et al., 2021), and how effects vary by product type and consumer expertise, particularly where fit uncertainty is high (Miell et al., 2018).

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Extending Backward Design Beyond Assessment: Designing Digital Marketing Education for Employability

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This paper examines how digital marketing education can remain industry-relevant in rapidly evolving platform environments. Drawing on a postgraduate social media marketing module, it extends backward design by shifting the pedagogical endpoint beyond assessment towards employability and professional judgement. Using Microsoft Teams as a simulated social media channel, the paper highlights platform-based active learning, audience multiplicity, and scholar-practitioner boundary work in preparing students for contemporary marketing practice.

Competitive Short Paper

Marketing education is increasingly challenged to remain relevant as digital practice evolves faster than traditional curricula, intensifying demands for industry-facing and work-ready pedagogy (Harrigan et al., 2022). Recent reviews similarly highlight gaps between classroom learning, platform change, and professional expectations, calling for renewed attention to digitally mediated marketing education (Parker et al., 2024). Responding to this context, this paper extends backward design, an approach that begins by identifying desired learning results and then working backwards to develop meaningful assessment evidence and learning plans (McTighe and Thomas, 2003). Rather than treating assignments as the culmination of learning, educational design is oriented towards the longer horizon of industry judgement and future-facing career outcomes (Davis et al., 2021).

The paper is motivated by a liminal positioning between marketing practice and academia. Educators who have moved between industry and university contexts occupy an in-between space that affords insight into how objectives are formulated and negotiated under real-world conditions. Such liminality enables productive boundary work between professional and educational logics, offering a resource for rethinking applied marketing pedagogy (Ryan, 2019).

Drawing on the design of a postgraduate social media marketing module within the creative and cultural sector, the paper shows how backward design can be expanded by aligning learning activities with marketing-like objectives familiar from practice, such as shaping perception, sustaining engagement, and creating long-term value. Teaching activities function as strategic interventions, and assessment becomes a means of evaluating plausible effects rather than technical competence alone.

A central contribution lies in the module's digitally mediated learning infrastructure. Using Microsoft Teams as a simulated social media channel, students engage in ongoing content sharing, peer feedback, and collaborative discussion that mirrors the rhythms and evaluative dynamics of platform-based marketing work. This positions the classroom as a space where marketing is enacted through participation, iteration, and audience sensitivity. Active learning designs of this kind are increasingly recognised as essential in digital marketing pedagogy, particularly where engagement is shaped through co-creation and multi-actor involvement (Bustard et al., 2023). The platform functions not as an add-on but as an infrastructural condition shaping how learning unfolds (Selwyn, 2021).

The paper further contributes through its treatment of audience multiplicity. Marketing educators design not only for students and institutions, but also for external industry collaborators who function as proxy audiences for students' future professional work, mirroring marketing practice where communication is shaped by anticipated judgement.

This approach resonates strongly with the conference theme of breaking boundaries in marketing. It challenges separations between marketing theory, practice, and pedagogy by treating education itself as a site of marketing-like activity, where objectives are negotiated, interventions are designed, and outcomes remain contingent rather than guaranteed.

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Reshaping QR Codes: The Use of Generative AI for Personalized Engagement through Visual Design

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Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

Summary Statement

This research reshapes QR codes as generative, persuasive marketing stimuli beyond purely functional tools. An initial experiment demonstrates that AI-generated QR codes outperform conventional black-and-white and color designs by enhancing perceived personalization, which in turn drives visual attractiveness and consumer satisfaction, with effects partly moderated by AI acceptance level. Our findings contribute to research on human-AI interaction and user experience by identifying personalization as a key psychological mechanism underlying consumer responses to AI-enhanced visual design.

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What Do Students Value? Engagement, Belonging, and Experience Design in Diverse First-Year Cohorts

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This paper examines what students value in their experience of contemporary higher education by exploring how engagement and belonging among diverse cohorts. Drawing on mixed-methods data from first-year business/marketing, foundation, and apprenticeship students, it shows that meaningful engagement depends less on participation alone than on alignment between institutional practices and students' lived realities. The study reframes engagement as co-created value, offering an actionable checklist for marketing educators working within rapidly changing educational contexts.

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Understanding Consumers' Food Waste Journeys Through Affordance Theory: Insights from the UK and China

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

Food waste is a major sustainability challenge. However, research often overlooks how waste emerges through everyday food practices. This study contributes to affordance theory by examining consumers' food waste journeys in the UK and China. Using a qualitative two-stage design, the research explores how social norms, infrastructures, and digital platforms influence food waste-related decisions. Findings demonstrate shared moral concerns but distinct contextual mechanisms highlighting the need for food journey stage-specific and context sensitive design interventions.

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The Sequential Persuasion Effect: When Carousel Order Backfires in Service Advertising

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Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

Summary Statement

We propose a novel carousel content strategy, the "Sequential Persuasion Effect". In Instagram service carousel ads that combine process and outcome information, presenting process information first increases engagement. In contrast, placing outcome information before process information can reduce engagement, especially among consumers low in tolerance for contradiction. This backfire operates through reduced processing fluency and then less favorable attitudes toward the advertised post. These insights guide marketers in sequencing carousels to improve comprehension and engagement.

Competitive Short Paper

This research proposes the "Sequential Persuasion Effect" as a novel design tactic in service carousel advertising, arguing that engagement depends not only on what a carousel shows but also on how its frames are ordered. Carousel posts, single advertised posts composed of multiple sequential frames, have become a standard format in service marketing communications. Yet research offers limited guidance on how to arrange multiple content types within one post. This omission matters because consumers often engage with social media advertising under constrained attention, relying on subjective feelings of ease or difficulty when forming judgments (Kahneman et al., 1982; Nisbett & Ross, 1980). Building on metacognitive experience theory, this research examines how carousel order shapes processing fluency and downstream responses, and how these effects depend on tolerance for contradiction (Lee & Aaker, 2004; Schwarz, 2004).

We focus on two common content types in service carousel ads. Process-focused content describes preparation, steps, or logistics, that is, how the service unfolds. Outcome-focused content highlights anticipated benefits and experiences, that is, what the service delivers. Although these content types are not framed as strict causal claims, consumers typically hold a temporal script in which process precedes outcome. Consistent with work on natural sequencing and sequential fluency, we argue that process-first ordering should feel more coherent, whereas outcome-first ordering may generate a sense of inconsistency or incompatibility that requires additional reconciliation (Alloy & Tabachnik, 1984; Einhorn & Hogarth, 1986; King & Auschaitrakul, 2020). Related evidence from the perceptual fluency literature further suggests that evaluations improve when display structures align with internal timelines and spatial associations (Chae & Hoegg, 2013; Huang et al., 2022).

We further propose that tolerance for contradiction is a key boundary condition. Tolerance for contradiction captures how comfortably consumers integrate information that appears inconsistent, incompatible, or difficult to reconcile (Peng & Nisbett, 1999; Choi et al., 2007; Chang, 2015; Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010). We predict that outcome-first ordering is more difficult to accept for consumers low in tolerance for contradiction, creating a backfire effect via reduced processing fluency, less favorable attitudes toward the advertised post, and weaker behavioral intentions. In contrast, consumers high in this trait should integrate the same ordering more smoothly.

Three pretests developed and validated the stimuli and manipulations. Across two studies, we found evidence consistent with the "Sequential Persuasion Effect": process-first ordering increased engagement relative to outcome-first ordering. Importantly, outcome-first ordering reduced engagement among individuals low in tolerance for contradiction, whereas this order effect was attenuated among those high in tolerance for contradiction. Study 2 further supported a serial process in which the interaction influences processing fluency, which shapes attitudes toward the advertised post, which in turn predicts behavioral engagement.

These findings contribute to marketing communications by showing that carousel order is not uniformly beneficial and by identifying tolerance for contradiction as a psychologically meaningful segmentation variable. Managerially, the results suggest that process-first ordering is a robust default for broad audiences, whereas outcome-first ordering should be deployed strategically to avoid backfire and to better engage consumers who are more comfortable integrating non-intuitive sequences.

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Investigating How Gamified Sustainable Marketing Communications Enhances Sustainable Purchase Intention: An Experiential Marketing Approach

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Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Summary Statement

This study examines gamified sustainable marketing communication as an experiential strategy to strengthen sustainable purchase intentions. Integrating experiential marketing theory and self-determination theory, the study proposes that gamified communication influences sustainable purchase intention through two complementary pathways: gameful experience and psychological need satisfaction. A quantitative survey-based experiment will test this dual mediation model. This research contributes to sustainability communication literature by shifting focus from persuasion-oriented approaches to experiential communication design.

Competitive Short Paper

1. Introduction

Sustainable marketing communication often fails to generate strong sustainable purchase intentions. Research indicates that sustainable marketing communication relies predominantly on informational, normative, or moral appeals, which consumers may perceive as cognitively demanding or prescriptive, thereby limiting persuasive effectiveness (Peattie & Crane, 2005; White et al., 2019). This highlights a central problem: the limited effectiveness of persuasion-oriented communication in motivating sustainable purchase intentions.

Experiential marketing theory proposes that consumer responses are shaped by cognitive evaluation, hedonic and participatory experiences (Schmitt, 1999). However, experiential perspectives remain underdeveloped in sustainability communication research. Concurrently, gamification research demonstrates that game-like elements enhance engagement and motivation (Deterding et al., 2011; Huotari & Hamari, 2017), yet this literature has largely examined gamification as a technology platform. Drawing on experiential marketing theory and self-determination theory (SDT), this study examines gamified sustainable marketing communication as an experiential strategy and examines how it enhances sustainable purchase intention.

2. Literature Review

Sustainable marketing communication research has predominantly focused on CSR communication, green advertising, ethical consumerism, and social marketing, emphasising legitimacy and normative influence (Peattie & Crane, 2005; Du et al., 2010; Leonidou & Leonidou, 2011; Carrington et al., 2010). These approaches emphasise cognitive persuasion over experience design, leaving experiential perspectives underdeveloped.

Experiential marketing theory conceptualises communication as a multidimensional consumer experience encompassing sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and social identity components (Schmitt, 1999). This perspective argues that marketing effectiveness arises from how consumers experience interactions rather than information processing alone (Same & Larimo, 2012). Recent scholarship positions experiential marketing as a holistic strategy facilitating psychological satisfaction through diversified experiential touchpoints (Zhang et al., 2025).

Gamification, which is the application of game-based elements to non-game contexts, operationalises experiential marketing principles (Krath et al., 2021). Empirical evidence demonstrates that gamified marketing communication enhances experiential responses and strengthens purchase intentions (Ahmad et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2025). In sustainability contexts, emerging research suggests that gamified communication enhances consumer participation and environmental awareness (Zafar et al., 2025). However, goal-framing research argues that gamification may undermine autonomy if perceived as controlling (Bi et al., 2024). These mixed findings underscore the need for theoretical attention to motivational quality.

Self-determination theory (SDT) provides a mechanism-based explanation, which posits that motivation strengthens when contexts support autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Integrating experiential marketing theory and SDT provides complementary explanations for how gamified sustainable marketing communication strengthens sustainable purchase intention. Experiential marketing positions gamification as generating hedonic and participatory responses, enhancing favourable behavioural outcomes (Schmitt, 1999; Eppmann et al., 2018). SDT posits that need-supportive contexts produce autonomous motivation and stronger behavioural intentions (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Together, these theories suggest that gamified sustainable marketing communication influences sustainable purchase intention through both experiential and motivational pathways.

3. Research Method

This study employs a quantitative survey-based experiment. Participants will be randomly assigned to either a gamified or a non-gamified sustainable marketing communication condition (n = 50 per condition). Following exposure, participants will complete the survey. Structural equation modelling will test the hypothesised parallel mediation model.

Current stage: ethics application prior to data collection.

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Beyond the Grant: Sustaining Digital Transformation in Arts and Heritage Organisations

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Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

Summary Statement

This paper examines what happens when arts and heritage organisations pursue digital transformation through time-limited funding programmes and technology partnerships. Drawing on market infrastructuring and concerned markets perspectives, it explores how innovation readiness is shaped by uneven digital capacity, capability narratives, and emerging dependencies on SaaS-based intermediaries. The paper highlights the sustainability tensions that arise when transformation becomes an ongoing expectation, even as funding and infrastructural support recede.

Competitive Short Paper

Arts and heritage organisations are increasingly encouraged to pursue "digital transformation" through targeted funding programmes and cross-sector partnerships with technology providers. While such initiatives are often framed as enabling innovation, they also generate pressures around organisational readiness, infrastructural capacity, and the long-term sustainability of digital change. This paper asks what happens when transformation is pursued through time-limited funding cycles and sector-wide expectations, particularly as cultural organisations engage with emerging SaaS-based intermediaries and innovation partners.

Drawing on a market studies perspective, the paper conceptualises digital transformation not as a straightforward technological shift but as an ongoing process of market infrastructuring, in which devices, standards, and organisational practices shape what innovation becomes possible and legitimate. Market infrastructures coordinate priorities, structure valuation, and redistribute agency across heterogeneous actors (Araujo and Mason, 2021). In the cultural sector, these infrastructures are increasingly populated by digital tools, platforms, and partnership arrangements that make certain futures actionable while rendering others difficult to sustain.

Policy agendas such as *Culture is Digita*l position digital transformation as a sector-wide priority, linking innovation to skills development, partnership-building, and new organisational models (DCMS, 2018). One illustration of how capability pressures are operationalised is through digital maturity frameworks (ACE, N.D.), which classify organisations according to staged levels of digital capacity in managing the digital elements of their activities, from "Initial" to "Transforming." Rather than treating such tools as explanations in themselves, the paper uses them as an entry point for examining how readiness, sustainability, and innovation expectations are increasingly made visible and governable in the cultural sector.

The paper argues that digital transformation becomes a site where multiple concerns are layered and negotiated: artistic mission, financial resilience, data expectations, and infrastructural dependency. Concerned markets scholarship emphasises that markets are organised around matters of concern, as actors contest what should count as valuable, feasible, or responsible (Geiger et al., 2014; Cochoy, 2008). Within this context, transformation is not simply about adopting new tools, but about navigating the organisational and sectoral conditions under which innovation is expected to occur.

Importantly, the paper foregrounds the role of technology partners as intermediaries within this process. Digital transformation is increasingly enacted through cross-sector relationships that promise expertise, experimentation, and access to capability, yet also introduce new dependencies. Platforms in particular are becoming cross-sectoral market infrastructures that centralise data flows and shape organisational autonomy (Chimenti et al., 2025). Digital technologies may expand access and engagement, but they also generate persistent tensions around mission, sustainability, and revenue models in arts organisations (Thomson et al., 2013).

By examining digital transformation as an infrastructuring process shaped by funding conditions, evaluative capability narratives, and technology partnerships, this paper contributes to debates on innovation readiness in arts and heritage nonprofits. In doing so, it aligns with the conference theme of breaking boundaries by tracing how cultural markets are reconfigured at the intersection of policy agendas, organisational practice, and digital intermediaries.

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From Runway to TikTok: Self-presentation and Digital Engagement Among Diasporic Africans Attendees in the UK During African Fashion Week London (AFWL) 2024 and 2025

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Track: 6. CCT

Summary Statement

This paper explores how African attendees at African Fashion Week London 2024 and 2025 use TikTok for identity performance to understand self-presentation and multimodality. Adopting Sirgy's multi-dimensional self-concept model, this study analyses how attendees align their digital identity to their actual, ideal, social, and ideal-social selves. Based on preliminary in-depth semi-structured interviews and ongoing analysis, the research provides early insights into digital self-presentation at African fashion event.

Competitive Short Paper

Given the cultural phenomenon of TikTok, its multimodal nature is receiving scholarly attention, particularly in understanding identity construction and performance (Darvin, 2022; Karpova and Borymska, 2022). Anderson (2020) attributes this to its audiovisual and virality features that give users more freedom, creativity, and experimentation than on other platforms. Building on this, TikTok therefore creates a unique space for fashion event attendees to navigate identity, community, and creative expression. (Darvin, 2022; Turvy, 2023). On the other hand, Fashion events also provide a site for cultural production through user-generated content (UGC), hence reshaping digital cultural identity (Mariscal Reyes et al., 2025). However, existing empirical research has not sufficiently examined how diasporic African attendees curate, perform, and negotiate their identity, particularly during, before, and after African Fashion Week London (AFWL) 2024 and 2025.

As a diaspora space, AFWL provides a platform for the expression of transnational identity (Morsiani, 2019, 2022). This therefore creates urgency in academic discourse to explore how diasporic Africans attendees navigate their transnational identity within the global fashion industry where African aesthetics remain marginalised. In response to the conference theme "Breaking Boundaries in Marketing," this paper prioritises African diasporic experiences at AFWL to analyse how identity is negotiated in transnational space through TikTok's multimodal features.

This study adopts the self-congruity theory utilising Sirgy's (1979) multi-dimensional self-concept model to explore how AFWL African attendees perform identity on TikTok. This examines how consumers' self-image aligns with a specific brand image (Gardner and Levy, 1955; Levy, 1959). Additionally, it provides a foundational framework in understanding how the self is constructed and expressed by linking identity to consumer preference and behaviour (Sirgy et al., 2008; Sirgy, 2018). This model therefore suggests that user-generated content (UGC) enables TikTok users to express various facets of their self-concept. These include who they are (actual self), who they aspire to be (ideal self), how they are perceived by others (social self), and how they wish to be perceived by others (ideal social self) (Sirgy, 2018).

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive, exploratory research design utilising African AFWL 2024 and 2025 as a case study. It begins with semi-structured in-depth interviews of African attendees and analysed thematically. This will be followed by Netnography to observe their TikTok UGC and analysed using multimodal analysis. Preliminary findings suggest that African attendees perform for an imagined audience, with their identity being mediated by the platform. This therefore suggests that African attendees strategically perform in response to perceived social expectations, such as creating awareness. Moreover, TikTok's affordances, such as built-in editing tools also shape and mediate identity performance.

This paper inspires new ways of thinking about research by exploring how multimodality in TikTok UGC facilitates identity performance. It provides cultural insights to marketers, event organisers, and brands on digital engagement strategies, while advancing an underexplored theoretical understanding of the African fashion context.

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Beyond the Label: How Institutional Context and Proximity Moderate the Effectiveness of Signalling in Specialty Coffee Market

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Track: 10. Marketing in Context (e.g., Food, Sport)

Summary Statement

This cross-cultural study examines how market context and production proximity moderate consumer response to quality signals. Using discrete choice experiments, RPL modelling, and GMNL, the results reveal that Brazilian consumers prioritise Labed GI signals, while UK consumers significantly value Fair Trade certification more highly. The research contributes a conditional framework to signalling theory, offering critical insights for global brand positioning and the governance of geographical indications in specialty food markets.

Competitive Short Paper

Although global markets rely on standardised certifications to overcome information asymmetries, signal value is rarely universal (Cornelly, 2025). This study investigates a critical tension: why do quality signals around place of origin generate varying premiums across countries? We examine how institutional maturity and geographical proximity moderate willingness to pay (WTP), comparing a producer/emerging market (Brazil) with a mature consumer market (United Kingdom).

Current literature often treats signals as static information carriers. We challenge this by integrating Signalling Theory with Psychological Distance and Institutional Theory. We argue that 'signal of origin' effectiveness depends on the receiver's cultural-cognitive structure and institutional legacies (Thøgersen, 2023; Menapace & Moschini 2024; Tarabashkina et al., 2024). In producer markets, a GI represents institutional innovation and identity; in mature markets, it may be perceived as redundant alongside "clean labels." We address the gap how macro-level market structures moderate micro-level choice heuristics.

We employed a discrete choice experiment with 238 consumers in Brazil and 188 in the UK, evaluating coffee profiles based on five extrinsic attributes: Origin (COO; ROO), GI Status, Certifications (Organic/Fair Trade), Traceability (QR Code) and Price. Random Parameter Logit and Generalised Multinomial Logit (GMNL) models explained heterogeneity in preferences and scale, ensuring differences between countries were not solely due to variable consistency in choice.

Results suggest a signalling reversal between markets. In Brazil, consumers exhibit a proximity premium where the GI label generated a 110% incremental premium over generic origin, driven by regional pride and the novelty of formalising heritage. Conversely, in the UK, the GI premium was significantly lower (46%), as the signal competes with narratives from established third-party labels. Ethical certifications showed the opposite: Fairtrade WTP was 274% higher in the UK than in Brazil. This suggests "distal altruism" leads Northern consumers to seek third-party validation, while Southern consumers, physically closer to production, view these certifications with institutional scepticism. Furthermore, GMNL results showed UK consumers exhibited greater choice consistency, reflecting familiarity with standardised labelling systems.

We contribute to Signalling Theory by demonstrating that the power of a signal is not intrinsic, suggesting that it is conditioned by Psychological Distance. Furthermore, we extend Institutional Theory in the field of marketing (Slimane et al., 2019) by demonstrating the different roles of signals in the global market for specialty coffees (Gorton et al., 2021). GIs function more strongly as Institutional Innovations in emerging markets, while ethical labels act as trust heuristics in mature markets. Furthermore, we offer managerial implications, demonstrating that strategic brand positioning should seek differentiation aligned with the market context. Managers and public policy makers in the global coffee consumer market, as well as future research in this field, beyond labels, the growing market increasingly demands an understanding of the cognitive structures through which consumers interpret and decode such signals.

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Breaking Boundaries in Consumer Vulnerability: Reconceptualising Vulnerability in the Age of Generative AI

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Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Summary Statement

This paper examines how generative AI reshapes consumer vulnerability in everyday interactions. While much research has explored GenAI's use, less attention has been given to vulnerability from a consumer perspective beyond technical or cybersecurity concerns. Drawing on consumer vulnerability theory, the paper reframes vulnerability as a situational outcome shaped by the uncertainties and limitations of generative systems. It highlights where existing frameworks fall short and calls for focus on recurring, everyday experiences in AI-mediated consumption

Competitive Short Paper

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is increasingly embedded in everyday life, mediating how people search for information, make decisions, and handle personal or social situations. Marketing scholars have started looking at how GenAI boosts efficiency, enables personalization, and creates value. Yet surprisingly little work has examined the new kinds of consumer vulnerability these systems might produce. Existing work examining vulnerability associated with GenAI has largely focused on technical vulnerabilities, cybersecurity, and system performance, leaving consumers' lived experiences and vulnerability processes underexplored. At the same time, the literature on consumer vulnerability remains fragmented and continues to focus on extreme cases or narrowly defined "vulnerable groups" which offers limited understanding into how vulnerability may emerge within everyday consumption experiences.

Consumer vulnerability has traditionally been defined as a state of powerlessness that arises from an imbalance in marketplace interactions (Baker et al., 2005). Building on this foundation, later research has further emphasised that vulnerability is situational, subjective, and potentially experienced by all consumers depending on context rather than fixed demographic characteristics (Hill & Sharma, 2020; Riedel et al., 2022). Recent research highlights the temporal and dynamic nature of vulnerability, suggesting that it can evolve, intensify, or decrease over time (Mende et al., 2024). Nevertheless, much of previous research either predates the rise of generative AI or was not designed to take into consideration autonomous systems that mediate information, simulate empathy, and operate through opaque probabilistic processes.

This paper argues that GenAI introduces a boundary-shifting context for understanding consumer vulnerability. Unlike earlier digital tools that primarily supported search or transaction processes, GenAI organises and presents information in ways that may influence how consumers interpret situations and support their decisions (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Its technical limitations—such as hallucinations, embedded bias, opacity, and the risk of model collapse—map closely onto core dimensions of vulnerability identified in the literature, including reduced control, informational asymmetry, and challenges to informed decision-making (Baker et al., 2005; Riedel et al., 2022). Importantly, these concerns are not limited to traditionally disadvantaged consumers but may also arise among all consumers in everyday interactions (Hill & Sharma, 2020).

Instead of treating vulnerability as an attribute of specific consumer groups, this paper examines vulnerability as a situational outcome that may arise through interactions between consumers and GenAI systems. Through this approach, it shows where existing vulnerability frameworks can fall short when applied to GenAI-related experiences and points to the need for greater attention to everyday, technologically mediated forms of vulnerability rather than exceptional or extreme cases typically emphasised in earlier vulnerability research.

This paper offers a conceptual foundation that examines how consumer vulnerability may be reshaped in GenAI environments. It offers a research agenda focused on understanding vulnerability as a situational and technologically mediated experience by identifying limitations in existing vulnerability research when applied to everyday interactions with generative systems. This perspective draws attention to how the use of GenAI is reshaping everyday marketplace interactions and raising new concerns around consumer wellbeing and vulnerability

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The AI Paradox in Branding: Why Artificial Intelligence Benefits Local Brands but Backfires for Competing Global Brands

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Track: 5. Brands & Branding

Summary Statement

AI is increasingly used in advertising, yet consumer responses remain variable. Drawing on the Expectation Violation Theory, this study examines how AI ads affect legitimacy, authenticity, and purchase intentions for local versus global brands in emerging markets. Using a mixed 2×2 experimental design and qualitative interviews, findings indicate that AI ads enhance local brand legitimacy and diminish global brands authenticity. The AI-Enabled Legitimacy Equalization (AILE) framework is introduced to explain this paradoxical, asymmetric effect.

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Co-constructing Study Abroad Adventure: The Role of Siblings in Influencing Indian Students' Choice to Study Abroad

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Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper explores the role of siblings in shaping Indian students' decisions to study abroad, with a particular focus on the United Kingdom. Drawing on social capital theory, the paper argues that siblings studying overseas shape and inspire Indian students' study abroad aspirations and choices. It further offers UK universities strategic insights to enhance their appeal by addressing both the affective and practical aspects of Indian students' choices.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

The internationalisation of higher education and the increasing mobility of international students worldwide demand a deeper understanding of the factors and individuals shaping students' choices to study abroad (King & Sondhi, 2018; Foster, 2013). Indian students constitute the second-largest cohort of international students in universities in the United Kingdom (UK), following Chinese students (King & Sondhi, 2018). The UK is also the second most popular destination for Indian students, after the United States of America (USA) (Hailat et al., 2021; Wadhwa, 2016).

The introduction of new immigration policies, such as the Graduate Route and changes brought about by Brexit, has created new opportunities for international students with adequate skills. Existing research (McLeay et al., 2020; King & Sondhi, 2018; Tan & Hugo, 2017; Wadhwa, 2016; O'Brien et al., 2007) has explored various factors influencing Indian students' choice to study abroad. The role of different influencers has been identified including but not limited to parents, peers, friends, education agents, and teachers (Entrich et al., 2024; Guru et al., 2021; King & Sondhi, 2018; Towers & Towers, 2020; Wang & O'Connell, 2020), however, the role of siblings in shaping their study abroad choices is least explored (Kusumavati, 2013).

Conceptual Framework

Siblings are conceptualised as part of students' cultural and social capital (Ding & Wu, 2023). This paper frames studying abroad as an adventure shaped by emotions and aspirations, which are influenced by siblings who have already studied or currently studying overseas. The conceptual framework draws on social capital theory, introduced by Putnam (1993), who defines social capital on the basis of social and organisational characteristics that include trust, norms, and networks which further help enhancing societal efficiency while promoting cooperative behaviour. Accordingly, associability, trust, and attention emerge as key dimensions in evaluating social capital and its influence on Indian students' study abroad choices.

In this context, social capital includes access to information through social networks (including family and friends), support systems (such as parents and siblings), and knowledgeable individuals (such as education agents and academic staff) who assist students in navigating options and making informed decisions.

Contribution

By focusing on the role of siblings as influencers through information-sharing and persuasion, this research provides insights into Indian students' underlying choice factors while focusing on the least explored category of influencers such as siblings in shaping Indian students' study abroad aspirations and decisions.

Implications

The research offers actionable insights for UK universities to develop effective targeting strategies by understanding how family dynamics and specifically siblings' relationships shape Indian students' aspirations based on the aspirational sibling capital.
By focusing on the affective aspects of Indian students' choices, higher education institutions can better cater to their needs, enhancing their appeal as a host country. This, in turn, can enhance the UK's appeal as a study destination.

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Authenticity by Collaboration: Mitigating Consumer Aversion to AI-Designed Fashion Products through GenAI Co-Design Tools

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Lancaster University, United Kingdom

Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is fundamentally transforming product design. However, consumers often respond negatively to AI-designed (vs. Human-designed) products. Hence, this work addresses this critical gap by investigating whether GenAI-led collaborative design with human mitigate this bias. We propose that GenAI co-design enhances products' perceived authenticity, which weakens negative consumer responses. Furthermore, this study examines how this mechanism differs based on human design collaborators (designers vs. consumers) and fashion sectors (fast fashion vs. luxury fashion).

Competitive Short Paper

Generative AI (GenAI) represents significant advancements of Artificial Intelligence (AI), with projections estimating its contribution to global productivity could reach $4.4 trillion annually (Harkness et al., 2023). GenAI can utilize sophisticated algorithmic frameworks to translate human instructions (typically text input) into novel outputs across modalities, including text, imagery, and video (Huang and Rust, 2024; Herrmann and Puntoni, 2025), particularly for reshaping product development (Cillo and Rubera, 2025). Currently, GenAI is being increasingly deployed in fashion product design (McKinsey & Company, 2026), for example, Balenciaga and Tommy Hilfiger leveraging GenAI to generate innovative collections.

However, existing research predominantly indicates negative consumer bias toward AI-designed (versus human-designed) fashion products (e.g., Xu and Mehta, 2022; Lee and Kim, 2024; Lee and Kim, 2025). Although these studies explore conditions, such as explicit human intervention, which can attenuate this bias, the literature on GenAI lacks theoretical understandings of its underlying mechanisms or issues. Crucially, prior work has not yet systematically examined how varying types or degrees of human intervention in the creative process, affect consumer perceptions particularly through collaborative co-design. This gap is especially pertinent given the emergence of fashion platforms (e.g., Resleeve, Refabric, and TeeAI) that leverage GenAI's interactive, co-design capabilities, allowing human-users to actively collaborate with the GenAI in product creation. So far, no study has yet focused on whether such direct human-AI collaboration design mitigates consumers' negative responses. Our research aims to address this gap.

We make several theoretical contributions. First, we extend the literature on consumer aversion to AI-designed products (e.g., Xu and Mehta, 2022; Lee and Kim, 2025) by investigating a critical mitigating factor: human intervention via GenAI co-design tools. While prior work has identified general negative biases, and recent research has explored moderators like customization options (Lee and Kim, 2024), our focus is distinct. We specifically examine whether direct human-AI collaboration in design process attenuate negative consumer perceptions toward AI-led product, by contrasting purely human-designed products with human + GenAI co-designed products. This addresses a significant gap in understanding how interactive, GenAI co-design can reshape AI-designed product acceptance.

Second, we are the first to empirically compare consumer responses to traditionally human-designed products versus those co-designed by a human using GenAI tools. Prior research identifies perceived authenticity as a key determinant of consumer response to AI-created products, and wherein AI-designed products are often viewed as less authentic than their human-designed counterparts, leading to unfavourable evaluations (e.g., Lee and Kim, 2024; Kim et al., 2025). However, it remains unclear whether authenticity is a decisive factor under GenAI co-design context. We theorize that a higher perception of authenticity in GenAI co-designed products—achieving parity with human-designed products—will lead to more favourable consumer reactions, thereby explaining the potential of GenAI co-design tools to overcome the established AI aversion.

We conducted a 2 (product type: Human-designed vs. Human + GenAI tools co-designed) × 2 (Source of design by human: Consumer vs. fashion designer) group, between-subjects design, which examines how consumer response (products attitude, brand attitudes, and purchase intention) toward the specific products based on their perceived authenticity.

401

Is SME Decarbonisation a Problem of Distributed Agency? Evidence from Construction B2B Networks

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Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

Summary Statement

Construction SMEs face increasing pressure to decarbonise despite limited resources and strong dependence on other actors. Yet literature frames environmental action as a voluntary, firm-level choice. Challenging this view, the paper draws on the first stage of systematic literature review to argue that SME decarbonisation is a network-governed outcome shaped by the distribution of agency, responsibility, and resources across B2B networks. A role-based framework positions SMEs as dependent implementers than autonomous change agents.

Competitive Short Paper

Net-zero targets are rapidly changing who is expected to take responsibility for reducing emissions in B2B markets, yet how this responsibility is distributed across supply networks remains poorly understood. This issue is particularly acute in carbon-intensive sectors such as construction, where sustainability requirements are increasingly embedded within large infrastructure projects through procurement rules and contractual obligations (Sharma, 2020; Brown et al., 2024). While these initiatives are typically designed and governed by clients and principal contractors, project delivery relies heavily on extensive small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) supply bases (Kadefors et al., 2021). As a result, decarbonisation efforts remain concentrated among larger firms, despite the cumulative importance of SMEs to overall emissions reduction and their persistent constraints in terms of resources, capabilities, and support.

Despite this interdependence, much of the existing literature continues to treat SMEs as autonomous actors responsible for their own environmental performance. This firm-centric framing obscures the networked nature of construction markets and limits understanding of how sustainability action is shaped by power relations, procurement structures, and resource flows across inter-organisational networks (Upstill-Goddard et al, 2016). Consequently, ambitious net-zero goals often fail to translate into meaningful change across SME-dominated supply chains. More broadly, the SME sustainability literature tends to assume voluntarism, whereby environmental adoption is expected to follow from managerial awareness or a compelling business case (Bakos et al., 2020). In parallel, B2B and business network research offers rich accounts of interdependence and coordination, yet environmental outcomes remain marginal within these frameworks (Sharma, 2020).

In response, this paper presents a theory-building, research-in-progress study grounded in the first stage of a systematic literature review. Drawing on studies from construction, manufacturing, and energy supply chains, the review examines how sustainability agency is distributed, enabled, and constrained within multi-stakeholder networks. Following an approach adapted from Tranfield et al. (2003), the review uses transparent search and screening procedures informed by PRISMA guidelines, while remaining open to conceptual diversity at this early stage.

The analysis informs a role-based conceptual framework that reframes SME decarbonisation as a network-governed outcome. *Network orchestrators* translate net-zero ambitions into procurement rules, *resource enablers* condition SME capacity through access to knowledge and tools, and *institutional enforcers* shape compliance via standards and reporting requirements. Within this configuration, SMEs emerge less as autonomous change agents and more as dependent implementers of sustainability agendas over which they exercise limited influence. From this perspective, persistent decarbonisation shortfalls reflect not weak SME engagement, but misaligned roles and asymmetrical distributions of agency across B2B networks. By foregrounding distributed agency, the paper offers a basis for rethinking how net-zero strategies are designed and governed in SME-dominated supply chains.

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402

The Carbon Footprint of AI: Unveiling the Environmental Impact of Artificial Intelligence

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Track: 2. AI

Summary Statement

This conceptual paper explores the carbon footprint of AI-powered marketing and questions its supposed environmental neutrality. By combining insights from sustainable computing and marketing fields, it tracks emissions throughout the AI lifecycle—development, deployment, and operation—highlighting the conflict between hyper-personalisation and ESG objectives. The proposed Responsible Low-Carbon AI Marketing Framework incorporates carbon accountability into strategic choices, setting a new direction for research in sustainable digital marketing.

Competitive Short Paper

This paper examines a frequently overlooked aspect of digital transformation: the carbon emissions associated with the growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) in marketing. Although AI-driven marketing is widely recognised for improving efficiency, personalisation, and competitive advantage (Davenport et al., 2020; Agarwal & Chakraborti, 2025), its environmental externalities have received limited attention in marketing scholarship. Hyper-personalisation and real-time optimisation can yield substantial returns on investment, but these benefits depend on computationally intensive systems that produce significant, often unacknowledged, CO_2 emissions. To address this gap, the study frames the carbon footprint of AI-enabled marketing as both a concrete environmental issue and a strategic priority, consistent with broader calls for ethical and sustainable marketing practices (White et al., 2023).

The study synthesises recent evidence regarding the energy consumption and carbon intensity of machine learning and generative AI models commonly used in marketing, drawing on research from marketing analytics, information systems, and sustainable computing. Notably, approximately 80% of a model's lifetime energy consumption occurs during inference after deployment, rather than during initial training. While training large language models can generate emissions exceeding 500,000 kg of CO_2 (Strubell et al., 2019), an increasing share of the ICT sector's carbon footprint is now attributed to large-scale inference across deployed systems (Luccioni et al., 2023). In marketing, these systems encompass recommendation engines, programmatic advertising algorithms, predictive analytics, CRM automation, and generative AI tools for content creation (Farseev et al., 2025). The environmental impact of AI in marketing is further intensified by continuous deployment, high-frequency inference, and real-time optimisation within digital marketing ecosystems (Besse et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2025).

Applying a life cycle assessment (LCA) framework (ISO 14040:2006), the paper maps AI-related carbon emissions across three interconnected stages: model development (data collection, training, and retraining), infrastructure deployment (cloud computing, data storage, and platform integration), and operational use (real-time personalisation, automated experimentation, and continuous customer engagement) (Grum & Rojahn, 2025). The analysis shows that marketing strategies emphasising immediacy, scale, and ongoing optimisation can inadvertently increase energy consumption and carbon emissions, potentially undermining net-zero targets and ESG commitments (Digitalisation – Energy System, 2023; Nunhes et al., 2021). Additionally, infrastructure-related factors such as data centre location, energy mix, and algorithmic efficiency contribute to the uneven distribution of carbon impacts across AI-driven marketing systems (Wu et al., 2022). These findings challenge the perception that digital marketing is inherently low-impact or environmentally neutral (Cabañas et al., 2022) and broaden sustainability debates to encompass digital and algorithmic infrastructures (Pospieszny & Brodowicz, 2025).

Building on these insights, the paper presents a Responsible Low-Carbon AI Marketing Framework that incorporates environmental issues into marketing analytics and decision-making. It highlights targeted personalisation, efficient modelling, carbon-conscious computing, and governance that align with marketing performance metrics (Bjorck et al., 2024). The framework also considers rebound effects, pushing forward sustainable marketing discussions by viewing AI as both performance-orientated and environmentally conscious.

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Rural Tourism under Crisis: Community Resilience and Contested Expectations in Rural Lebanon

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Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Summary Statement

Rural tourism in Lebanon is examined as community resilience practice under prolonged economic and political crises. Qualitative interviews with tourists and local stakeholders show how communities mobilise tourism through social capital, informal coordination, and cultural labour. Preliminary findings reveal resilience as uneven and burdened, producing adaptation alongside fatigue and ethical tension as communities manage visitor expectations amid chronic scarcity. This extends the Community Resilience Theory beyond capacity-based and recovery-oriented framings in fragile rural political economies.

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Zero Waste Content: Testing The F.E.A.R Framework For Upcycling Failed Short-Form Video

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

This paper proposes a zero waste framework for short-form video content. It introduces the F.E.A.R. Framework, an analytics model (First, Endurance, Acceleration, Response) designed to audit and upcycle failed content assets. Through a study and upcycling of 61 underperforming videos using F.E.A.R., the research demonstrates how applying this framework allows marketers to recover sunk costs, converting "dead" content into high-performing assets without the resource strain of new production.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Marketing teams face immense pressure to produce successful content in high frequency, often resulting in resource burnout. While marketing literature addresses content repurposing (cross-platform adaptation), there is no established framework for content recycling or upcycling for failed content. Practitioners lack consensus about content recycling and how it differs from other content resharing practices (Han et al. 2020). While some recommend that firms recycle more content (Cooper 2018; Kumar et al. 2016), others argue against it, stating users' desire for novel content (Hartshorne 2020). This paper proposes a zero waste approach, outlining that underperforming content should be viewed as raw material for optimization rather than waste.

Proposed Model: F.E.A.R.

The study introduces the F.E.A.R. Framework, developed deductively from thousands of hours of algorithmic analysis across business accounts in a consulting capacity, this diagnostic filter audits content against four structural performance drivers:

F: First (The Hook): Retention rate at the 1-second mark

E: Endurance (The Hold): Retention rate at 50% duration

A: Acceleration (The Velocity): The speed of distribution within first hour

R: Response (The Conversation): The comment-to-view ratio (Active Engagement).

Methodology

The study was conducted within a 'Principles of Marketing' module with first-year undergraduate students. Students had limited prior experience in strategic social media content creation. Students received training on the F.E.A.R. Framework and were tasked with applying the model to upcycle a single "failed" asset from a library of a 150 short-form videos from an active TikTok account spanning a 12-month period. To ensure the study measured the upcycling of failed content, strict inclusion criteria were applied. Students were required to select assets that met two specific conditions of algorithmic failure:

Underperformance: The content must have achieved a view count at least 10% lower than the account's 12-month average.

2. Dormancy: The content must have registered zero viewership for a minimum of seven consecutive days prior to selection, confirming it was effectively "dead" on the platform.

Findings

Sixty-one videos met the above failure criteria. Following the application of F.E.A.R. and subsequent upcycling, the selected content demonstrated significant performance uplift compared to their original benchmarks. The findings challenge the need for novelty prevalent in social media practice. Data indicates that for new audiences, recycled content functions effectively as new material. Furthermore, the analysis suggests the framework is non-linear, with a specific hierarchy of importance emerging among the variables F.E.A.R.

Contribution

The F.E.A.R Framework provides a new model for empirical research in social media content and further research development in the areas of content recycling or upcycling. The study validates a zero waste operational model. It allows practitioners to shift to a hybrid of creation and resource recovery by salvaging resources invested in past failed content. In a higher education context, this framework provides a method to maximize the ROI of student-generated content, maintaining visibility without proportional resource increases.

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Reimagining Marketing Education: From Profit-led Persuasion to Ecological and Societal Responsibility

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Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Summary Statement

This paper argues that marketing education must accept responsibility for its role in driving fashion overconsumption and ecological harm. It critiques UK higher education's reliance on profit-led models and discusses the limitations of TBL/ESG frameworks, evidenced by persistent unpriced environmental costs despite widespread reporting. In response, it proposes a radical shift toward a degrowth-informed, macro-marketing pedagogy that centres ecological, environmental, and societal wellbeing, developing graduates with the agency needed to drive transformative change.

Competitive Short Paper

Marketing is a powerful driver of overconsumption (Dyke and Manchanda, 2021; Ardley and May, 2020), feeding our desire for newness and self-expression (Crumbie, 2024). Despite the growth and popularity of sustainable, green, and eco brands, any benefits gained from improvements in resource use in sustainable manufacturing (energy, materials), or sourcing of sustainable raw materials, are more than offset by the damage caused by increases in production due to increased consumption of goods and services (York and McGee, 2015). Within fashion, an industry characterised by accelerated production, consumption, and disposal, this contradiction is heightened by the sheer scale and wastefulness of the system, which sees 23kg of the 27kgs purchased per person annually discarded into landfill (Shirvanimoghaddam et al., 2020). Alongside production increases, through the relentless advertising and promotion of mass over-consumption, the strategic business function of marketing and resulting marketing activities have contributed to widescale ecological and environmental harm (Stuart et al., 2020). This proposal argues that marketing education must accept responsibility for its role as a key driver of overconsumption, and faced with these realities the teaching of mainstream marketing theories in UK higher education becomes increasingly difficult to justify.

The dominant foundations of marketing education continue to prioritise mainstream utilitarian values that position profit and market share above all other metrics. Traditional marketing and business models remain central in the marketing curriculum. The 4Ps, BCG Matrix, positioning maps, Ansoff Matrix, Porter's 5 Forces, and PESTEL all reinforce that the primary responsibility of business remains to maximise profits and increase market share (Friedman, 1970). Even where sustainable marketing (SM) and socially responsible marketing (SRM) theories are introduced, they are underpinned by Triple Bottom Line (TBL) paradigms that, despite their good intentions, position ecological and social wellbeing as subservient to the profit motive. As Peterson (2021) notes, TBL measurement tends to default to what is easiest to measure, profit or financial metrics, then people, and then planet, reproducing these hierarchies within teachings on marketing strategy development and decision-making.

Our marketing graduates are shaped by these paradigms. They are ill-prepared for the complexities and limitations of SM or SRM implementation in large fashion organisations, and equally struggle to transparently communicate the sustainability practices of smaller, more environmentally aware organisations to increasingly informed audiences. They must also be cautious to avoid greenwashing, as accusations of this practice can be devastating for SMEs trying to compete in this landscape. In this context it is clear that marketing education is as deeply flawed as the system it is situated within, and that both are no longer viable.

In response, this paper proposes an alternative approach to fashion marketing education centred in a degrowth paradigm, offering a sustainable framework untethered from the dominant profit-motive and growth agenda. It calls for transformative educational experiences that shift learners into new ways of seeing the world (Haney et al., 2020), developing graduates with the agency and motivation to facilitate action and change within organisations (Skilling et al., 2022).

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Exploring Fashion Consumption Motivations of Apparel Rental Practice

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

Rental fashion is expanding globally, yet recent research stresses the need to study actual rental behaviour rather than consumer intentions (Lang et al., 2025). Existing work is largely quantitative, and qualitative research may offer deeper insights into the motivations shaping participation in fashion rental (Lang et al., 2025; Chi et al., 2023). This work-in-progress study investigates young consumers' rental practices to understand the motivational and behavioural factors influencing their engagement with fashion rental.

Competitive Short Paper

There has been increasing research on how the fashion industry can transition from a linear to a circular economic model

(Andreza de et al., 2021; Henninger et al., 2022; Ritch, Canning and McColl, 2023). The Sustainable Fashion Forum (2026) defines a circular economy as a closed-loop system that reduces reliance on natural resources, minimises waste going to landfill, and supports the development of new materials through innovative recycling processes. The aim is to achieve a zero-waste system that tackles over-production and over-consumption (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2022). Alongside recycling, repairing and reselling (Ritch et al., 2021), fashion rental services offer a further potential solution by extending the life cycle of garments and accessories (Andreza de, 2021).

Despite such developments, many fashion companies continue to follow the traditional linear model of "make, use, throw away", with consumers repeatedly purchasing and discarding to meet personal needs (Borg et al., 2020). Fashion rental has therefore emerged as a growing area of interest (Harper, 2018; Ritch et al., 2021; Lang, Seo and Liu, 2025). Its core value proposition is to offer consumers greater choice at a reduced cost and with minimal financial risk. Rental also provides opportunities for self-expression and variety—key motivations for fashion-interested consumers—while potentially supporting more sustainable consumption patterns (Gyde and McNeill, 2021).

Although consumers frequently claim they want fashion companies to be more environmentally responsible, many have not significantly reduced their own consumption (Ritch, 2025). Henninger et al. (2023) observed that consumers were increasingly demanding more sustainable practices within the industry and were frustrated by the lack of action of fashion companies. This suggests a belief that responsibility lies primarily with external actors rather than with consumers themselves. However, as concern about sustainability rises, the challenge becomes how consumers can continue to enjoy regular wardrobe updates while buying less. One solution could be fashion rental, which is expanding globally. Lang, Seo and Liu's (2025) review of 69 studies indicates that much existing theory is grounded in "intention to buy" frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour. They highlight the need for future research exploring consumer motivations related to social identity and self-expression within existing practice of rental contexts.

This research addresses the following questions:

What is the nature of the relationship between fashion rental organisations and consumers?

What are the motivating success factors and tensions between consumers and rental services?

What consumer needs—particularly regarding social identity—are being met through rental?

This work-in-progress study examines fashion rental services, the behaviours of young rental consumers, and their relationships with rental companies. Ten young consumers with existing rental experience were selected using purposive, non-probability sampling. This methodology is appropriate for exploratory research (Bryman and Bell, 2015). In-depth interviews conducted in February and March 2026 form the basis of this preliminary analysis. The findings from these early qualitative insights will be presented at the conference.

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Fluid Gifting: An Integrative Framework from Solid to Liquid Gifts

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Track: 7. Consumer Research

Summary Statement

This conceptual paper introduces *fluid gifting*, defined as practices in which a gift's value and relational impact depend on ephemerality, multiplicity of access, and de-/re-materialisation. The framework integrates research on solid and liquid consumption to capture contemporary gifting practices and responds to the evolution from physical gifts to experiential and virtual forms enabled by digital and immersive technologies.

Competitive Short Paper

This paper introduces the term fluid gifting to integrate understanding of traditional gifts in the physical world and those in technology-enabled markets (e.g., the metaverse). This work responds to calls for conceptual scholarship that refines existing theory to better capture consumer behaviour in contemporary consumption contexts (McInnis et al., 2011). As consumption increasingly unfolds across digital, access-based, and platform-mediated environments (Gleim et al., 2023), existing gifting frameworks rooted in ownership and material exchange require reconsideration.

Relational gifting research has traditionally focused on dyadic gifting, emphasising the role of gifts as relational tools (Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012). More recent studies, however, have shifted toward dynamic gift systems that reflect broader networks of care (Weinberger et al., 2025). This scholarship shows how participants deviate from a traditional giver-receiver dyad with clearly defined roles, as illustrated by music sharing on Napster (Giesler, 2006), post-Katrina gifting practices at Mardi Gras in New Orleans (Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012), and crowdfunding as a "market-fostering gift system" (Maciel & Weinberger, 2024). While digital technologies increasingly shape gift-giving practices, challenging the distinction between market and gift exchanges (Ciampa & de Valk, 2024), the mechanisms through which these transformations occur remain under-theorised (Bardhi et al., 2025). In particular, limited attention has been paid to how emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence contribute to value creation in gifting, or how givers and recipients interact within platform-mediated gifting environments (Givi et al., 2023).

We adopt the perspective of liquid consumption (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017) to integrate traditional gifting with emerging digital and access-based forms of exchange. Building on a spectrum between solid consumption "defined as enduring, ownership-based, and material" and liquid consumption, "defined as ephemeral, access-based, and dematerialised" (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017: 582), we introduce the concept of fluid gifting.

We define “fluid gifting” as practices in which the gift’s value and its relational impact depend on on gift ephemerality, multiplicity of gift access and its de/re-materialisation. Conceptualising gifting as fluid opens avenues for research on how liquidity reshapes relational value and gift evaluation. First, ephemerality raises questions about how temporally bounded gifts, such as limited-time Fortnite skins or disappearing digital stickers (temporary virtual gifts), generate relational value despite their transience. While previous work recognises evolving gift meanings (Weinberger et al., 2025; Branco-Illodo & Heath, 2020), the meanings and rituals tied to temporal existence remain underexplored. Second, shifts from ownership to temporary or revocable access, evident in Netflix subscriptions or platform-specific game items, may reconfigure norms of obligation and reciprocity. For example, Chaudry et al. (2025) show that gifting in Twitch livestreaming communities can boost engagement; however, similar dynamics in other settings (e.g., personal networks) require further investigation. Finally, de- and re-materialisation of gifts brings a new perspective to gifting in digital contexts, complementing work on the dematerialisation of our possessions (e.g., Belk, 2013). AI-generated playlists shared digitally and later materialised as CDs illustrate how digital technology enables new forms of “solidifying” gifts. This highlights the need to examine effort, authenticity, and meaning in fluid gifting.

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Bridging the Digital Divide: The Paradox of Sales and Marketing Collaboration on Social Media

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Track: *AM Funded Research

Summary Statement

This paper examines how B2B sales and marketing teams use social media and the challenges of aligning their efforts in practice. Drawing on qualitative interviews with industry experts, it reveals a disconnect between marketing content creation and sales adoption, alongside limited leadership support for integration. Survey research further explores how collaboration, leadership, and social media engagement shape B2B performance and customer relationships.

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Inducing Cognitive Reflexivity in Postgraduate Learners: A Hybrid Teaching Approach Using Structured Questioning and Generative AI

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Track: *AM Funded Research

Summary Statement

This study reports findings from a hybrid teaching intervention in postgraduate marketing education. The intervention integrates both peer questioning and GenAI to enhance student’s reflexivity towards personal sustainable consumption practices. Embedded within a consumer behaviour module, the intervention develops critical thinking, bias awareness, and responsible AI use. The findings of the study pose interesting questions about how we instil a sustainable consumption ethos among future marketers.

Competitive Short Paper

Critical thinking is an essential cognitive skill (Asari et al., 2019) and ranks among the most valued competencies sought by employers (Di Battista et al., 2023). This capability is also central to addressing the climate crisis, particularly through the promotion of sustainable and responsible consumption (SDG 12; United Nations, 2015). Marketers are uniquely positioned to influence consumption norms and drive systemic change (Habib et al., 2021). It therefore behoves marketers to critically reflect on the downstream consequences of their actions as marketers and consumers. Consequently, business schools have a responsibility to sensitise marketing students to sustainable consumption agendas.

A recent systematic review highlights the wide range of pedagogical approaches used to teach sustainability in Higher Education (Herrera Burstein & Goñi Avila, 2024). However, limited research has examined the cognitive processes that shape students’ sustainability-related behaviours. Given the importance of cognition in personal consumption decisions (Kotahwala, 2020; Rimanoczy, 2020), there is a clear need for pedagogical interventions that foreground reflexivity and bias awareness. The current exploratory study examines the effectiveness of a hybrid teaching intervention designed to induce student reflexivity with regard to personal consumption practices.

Pedagogical context:

Postgraduate students enrolled in a Consumer Behaviour (CB) module are required to record their personal spending over a four-week period. For the summative assessment, students then analyse their dataset to identify behavioural insights and apply consumer behaviour theories to explain the observed trends. A key component of the assessment requires students to critically reflect on their own (un)sustainable consumption practices. Historically, students have found this metacognitive task challenging. More recently, students have turned to GenAI for individual brainstorming support. However, this process has largely occurred in isolation.

The current teaching intervention extends existing practice by introducing structured, peer-led discussions to enhance the quality of student brainstorming. Using critical thinking prompt cards, students interview one another about their consumption patterns, encouraging the questioning of assumptions, the identification of cognitive biases, and the consideration of alternative perspectives. These peer discussions are subsequently used to inform and critique GenAI outputs, creating an iterative process of reflection and triangulation between peers and GenAI.

The module is delivered twice annually (September and January intakes), enabling insights from the first implementation (October 2025 cohort) to inform refinements for the second iteration (March 2026 cohort). The intervention's impact will be evaluated through the statistical analysis of student performance on a specific assessment criterion measuring student's critical reflection of their (un)sustainable consumption patterns. Grade outcomes from the intervention cohorts (Oct, March 2025 – 2026) will be compared against those from four previous non-intervention cohorts (Oct, March, 2023–2024).

This current study aims to contribute to the pedagogical literature relating to sustainability and GenAI enabled learning. Both these important themes are now coming into sharp focus as we look to a future where marketers must strive to promote sustainable consumption practices that serve their companies, their customers and society at large.

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Visibility and Vulnerability: Understanding Girls' Experiences and Responses to Online Objectification

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Track: 8. Digital Marketing

Summary Statement

This study draws on a collaboration with youth workers at a community organisation in Northeast England that supports culturally diverse girls and young women, examining their experiences of encountering objectifying content online.

Notes

Doctoral Colloquium

DC-2

Exploring Influencer Marketing Commercialisation And Trans-Parasocial Relationships On The Burnout Of Social Media Influencers

Anthony Emebo
Edinburgh Napier University

DC-5

Understanding Gen Z's Decisions To Quit, Re-engage, And Resist Ethically Questionable Online Platforms: Research Design And Methodology Paper

Hayden Cronk
Sheffield Hallam University

DC-6

Navigating (In)Visible Stigma: The Early Menopause Experience

İrem Taştan, Kathy Hamilton, Juliette Wilson
University of Strathclyde

DC-7

Glow From the Inside or the Outside? The Impact of Product- versus Cause-focused Green Advertising on Consumer Responses to Luxury Brands

Shuang Wu
University of Leeds

DC-9

Does Virtual Basket Visibility Matter? Early Evidence on Add-to-Cart Behaviour in Virtual Retail

Farhan Mutaqin, Ben Marder, Ewelina Lacka
University of Edinburgh

DC-10

Cues, Processing, and Persuasion: A Conceptual Explanation of Sustainable Fashion Responses among Generation Z and Alpha

Madiha Rubeel[1], Vicky O'Rourke[1], Sarah Diffley[1], Gabriela Gliga[1], Peter Kawalek[2]
[1]Atlantic Technological University, [2]Loughborough University

DC-11

Exploring Consumers' Perceived Values for Green Products: A Qualitative Study of UK Consumers

Dina Mohamed, Georgios Tsimonis, Nina Michaelidou, Sahar Mousavi
Loughborough University

DC-13

The Tribalisation of the Esports Community

Mohammed Bafaqeeh
Edinburgh Napier University

DC-14

Space Design in Contemporary Fashion Retail: Promoting the Integration of Sustainable Consumption and Personalised Needs of Generation Z

Jie Wang
University of Southampton

DC-15

Symbolic Leadership in Sustainable Branding: The Role of Creative Directors

Andrea Reyes
Pace University

DC-16

Pricing Can Be Powerful, but Communication Matters: How Technological and Non-Technological Announcements Shape the Adoption of Sustainable Products - Evidence from Electric Vehicles

Imen Gharbi Ep Ourir
University of Sheffield

DC-17
Designing Sustainable Virtual Influencers: How Form Realism and Moral Language Shape Consumer Responses
Xi Zhang
University of Birmingham

DC-18
Exploring The Development Of Parasocial Relationships With AI Streamers In Chinese Consumers' Shopping Experience
Yaxin Lyu, Courtney Chrimes, Rosy Boardman
University of Manchester

DC-19
Getting On(line): Older Consumers, Technologies, and Leisure Pursuits
Matthew Jackson, Ronika Chakrabarti, Stephen Murphy
Trinity College Dublin

DC-20
Could The New Form of Luxury Fashion Be More Sustainable?: A Critical Review of The Secondhand Luxury Fashion Literature
Ece Ertan, Emine Çobanoğlu
Marmara University

DC-21
The Impact Of Online Content On Adolescent Males' Body image In The Football Industry
Jessie Williams
Sheffield Hallam University

DC-23
Negotiating Authenticity in AI-generated Music on TikTok: Methodological Reflections from a Qualitative Multi-method Design
Adis Maulidina
University of Birmingham

DC-24
Artificial Intelligence-Powered Platforms within Homes: The Impact on Family Digital Consumption, Parental Decision-Making, and Responsible Digital Good
Tasneem Ali Naguib
University of Liverpool

DC-25
Making Debt Feel Less Risky: Exploring Legitimation and Normalisation of Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) in Youth Consumer Culture
Mehwish Kareem, Fiona Spotswood, Raffaello Rossi
University of Bristol

DC-28
Nothing About Us Without Us: Exploring Consumers with Disabilities Attitudes and Consumer Behaviour within the Fashion Industry
Chloë Moore, Elaine Ritch, Louise McBride
Glasgow Caledonian University

DC-29
How Therapeutic Value Emerges and Circulates in Platform-Mediated Consumer Practice: The Case of Cleanfluencing
Adele Howes, Zahra Sharifonnasabi, Tana Licsandru, Zafeirenia Brokalaki
Queen Mary University London

DC-30
The Motivational Dynamics of Digital Fashion Consumption: Consumer Practices and Sustainability Meaning-Making in Digital Fashion
Basak Unlu Saraf
University of Sussex

DC-32
Explaining the Empowerment Paradox: Integrating Power-Dependence and Self-Determination Theories
Kamila Miller
University of Reading

DC-33
Dynamic Hierarchies within Korean K-pop Fandoms
Ji Youn Han
Durham University

DC-34
Recycled material and consumer attitudes: The mediating role of perceived production costs
Amna Albedwawi, Seongsoo Jang, Andy Ng
Cardiff University

DC-36
Religion as a Background Influence on Food Waste Behaviour: A Qualitative Study of Muslim Households in the UK
Anum Naz Durrani
University of Derby

DC-37
An Examination of Trust in AI-Generated Social Media Influencers: A Digital-Ethnographic Approach
Loren Birkett
Leeds Beckett University

DC-39
The Ageing Population and Smart Metering: The Lived Experience of Older Consumers of Smart Meters (A Service Captivity Theory Approach)
Oluwafunmilola Salu
University of Stirling

DC-40
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AM2027: A CALL FOR INNOVATION

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY, 6-9 JULY 2027

The 2027 Academy of Marketing Conference will be hosted by Edinburgh Napier University at our historic Craiglockhart Campus.

The conference theme, "A Call for Innovation", nods to Edinburgh's history as the birthplace of pioneering figures such as Alexander Graham Bell. Evoking both a 'call' to action and the next era of marketing thought and practice, the conference will celebrate the Academy of Marketing's longstanding tradition of advancing innovative methods, theories, contexts, and approaches at a time when the pace and scope of marketing innovation continue to expand.

ACADEMY OF MARKETING CONFERENCE 2027

The renowned city of Edinburgh will offer delegates the opportunity to explore landmarks such as the Royal Mile and Calton Hill, while conference social events will take Academy of Marketing members to unforgettable venues overlooking Edinburgh Castle and Arthur's Seat.

Conference Chair: Dr Jamie Thompson
Contact: am27conf@napier.ac.uk
Website: www.amconference.org