



Visual storytelling and digital marketing in Ghana's fashion industry: The influence of photography on consumer engagement

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to explore the functions of digital marketing and photography in advancing Ghana's fashion industry. It also examined how customers made online purchases and how they reacted to fashion-related content on social media. Data from 152 respondents were collected using a quantitative study design with a closed-ended questionnaire. The study found that 78% of customers were significantly influenced by visual fashion content on social media, with YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok being the most effective platforms for interaction. Remarkably, 96.1% of the respondents agreed that photography increases their engagement with fashion brands, and about 95% agreed on the crucial role of photography in establishing the narrative and identity of Ghanaian fashion brands. Additionally, the survey found that consumers preferred companies that consistently produced aesthetically pleasing, culturally relevant material, and that digital marketing increased consumer trust and brand loyalty in addition to increasing visibility. This study highlights the significance of visual storytelling in consumer decision-making. Furthermore, it offers a distinctive perspective on how effective digital marketing and photography may boost brand engagement and sales in Ghana's apparel industry. The study argues that the strategic use of digital platforms and high-quality visual material is essential to attract customers, tell brand stories, and increase sales. Recommendations have been offered to expand the space of policy and practice for the creative fields of photography, digital marketing, and fashion design. Contributing to the academic discourse on digital marketing at the intersection of photography and consumer behaviour, this research not only conceptualises photography as a core mechanism of visual storytelling and brand identity within digital fashion marketing but also offers some comparative insights for researchers in the creative industry of Ghana.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Photography, Fashion Industry, Social Media

INTRODUCTION

The dynamic nexus of innovation, cultural legacy, and entrepreneurship has propelled Ghana's fashion industry's recent notable expansion and change. As the sector grows, digital marketing and photography have emerged as crucial tools for establishing corporate identity, increasing customer engagement, and

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connecting with a larger local and international audience.¹ More importantly, digital channels, particularly, offer worldwide exposure to previously unheard-of opportunities, and excellent photography is essential to showcase the vivid inventiveness of Ghanaian fashion designers.² At the same time, photography has become a potent tool for creating compelling brand narratives and showcasing products.

In 2022, Ghana's fashion industry was estimated to be worth over \$500 million, and further expansion is expected in the years to come. This growth is mainly due to the growing demand for local designs and Ghanaian fashion's expanding appeal abroad. Furthermore, fashion companies' investments in digital marketing have increased by 20% a year, with estimates that they will reach \$15 million by 2025.³ Notwithstanding these encouraging developments, many designers still struggle to sell their goods to customers throughout the world, with difficulties that are frequently caused by a lack of understanding of digital marketing techniques.⁴

Although global research on fashion marketing and digital platforms is extensive, there is a noticeable gap in studies that specifically examine the role of photography in emerging markets such as Ghana. Much of the existing literature focuses on advanced economies where digital infrastructures are more developed and widely adopted.⁵ Moreover, earlier research on fashion marketing in Ghana has highlighted the shortcomings of traditional advertising techniques and the growing significance of digital platforms.⁶ Nevertheless, few studies have examined the quintessential function of photography in strengthening brand identification and opening markets. Thus, by demonstrating how photography, when carefully employed alongside digital marketing, can increase awareness of Ghanaian fashion designers and foster stronger emotional bonds with customers, this study sought to bridge this knowledge gap. It also provides practical insights for local designers, marketers, and content creators aiming to enhance brand presence and consumer engagement. Apart from its practical significance, this research makes a theoretical contribution to the convergence of digital consumer engagement, brand identity building, and visual communication, especially in emerging economies. The study seeks to investigate how photography functions as a visual language within digital marketing frameworks by drawing on theories of media aesthetics, visual branding, and consumer psychology.⁷ Understanding how technology and visual culture alter consumer-brand relationships in non-Western fashion marketplaces requires an awareness of these viewpoints.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Photography in Fashion Marketing

As the primary medium for conveying brand identity, aesthetic appeal, and product tales, photography remains a crucial element in fashion marketing.⁸ Images in the fashion industry provide a virtual experience that connects physical and online retail by communicating fit, fabric texture, and context. So, great visuals may evoke feelings, communicate style, and grab attention in everything from upscale

¹ Oluwaseun Abiola Ajiva, Onyinye Gift Ejike, and Angela Omozele Abbulimen, "The Critical Role of Professional Photography in Digital Marketing for SMEs: Strategies and Best Practices for Success," *International Journal of Management & Entrepreneurship Research* 6, no. 08 (2024): 2626–36.

² Sukhvir Singh, *Fashion Marketing* (LWRN, 2023).

³ Frederica Brooksworth, Emmanuel Mogaji, and Genevieve Bosah, "Fashion Marketing in Emerging Economies: An Introduction," in *Fashion Marketing in Emerging Economies Volume I: Brand, Consumer and Sustainability Perspectives* (Springer, 2022), 3–20.

⁴ Michael G Luchs, K Scott Swan, and Mariëlle E H Creusen, "Perspective: A Review of Marketing Research on Product Design with Directions for Future Research," *Journal of Product Innovation Management* 33, no. 3 (2016): 320–41.

⁵ Thandeka Ngcobo, "The Use of Instagram as a Communication Tool in the Durban Fashion Industry" (Durban University of Technology, 2023).

⁶ Bright Senanu, Thomas Anning-Dorson, and Nii Nookwei Tackie, "Social Media Insights for Non-Luxury Fashion SMEs in Emerging Markets: Evidence from Young Consumers," *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal* 27, no. 6 (2023): 965–87; Joana Akweley Zanu, Alfred Amisah Junior, and Samuel Kwabena Donkor, "Fashion and Social Media: Investigating the Role of Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook Platforms in Shaping Consumer Behavior among the Youth in Tamale," *ADRRJ Journal (Multidisciplinary)* 34, no. 2 (11), April, 2024-June, 2024 (2024): 1–25.

⁷ Joanne Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory* (John Wiley & Sons, 2023); Rowles Daniel, "Digital Branding A Complete Step-by-Step Guide to Strategy, Tactics, Tools and Measurement" (Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data, 2018)..

⁸ Magdalene Keaney, *Fashion Photography Next, (No Title)* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2017).

fashion editorials to online product displays.⁹ To create powerful images that connect with their viewers, professional fashion photographers employ a variety of lighting, composition, and style approaches.¹⁰

Digital photography and editing tools have also made content creation more accessible, enabling influencers and small fashion firms to produce high-quality images at a lower cost. In e-commerce, photography has a significant impact on customer choices. Similar research has also established that visual signals increase purchase intention, reduce uncertainty in online purchases, and clarify product details.¹¹ It implies that subpar photography will lower brand trust, increase return rates and decrease engagement. Additionally, photography serves as a storytelling tool that helps brands communicate their identities and values. Customers are emotionally engaged, and their brand loyalty is increased by carefully chosen visual storytelling.¹² Fashion photography provides immersive brand experiences, whether it is to showcase craftsmanship or aspirational lives.¹³ By conveying lifestyle cues that speak to particular customer groups' cultural sensibilities, these narratives serve as symbolic extensions of the brand.

There is also research that shows the use of photography in fashion advertising has increased due to the popularity of visual-focused social media sites like Instagram and Pinterest.¹⁴ In effect, high-quality photos are essential for visibility and interaction on social networks. To draw attention and increase traffic, fashion brands purposefully create content that complements platform aesthetics.¹⁵ Notably, TikTok videos and Instagram Reels are examples of short-form visual content that use algorithm-driven discoverability to further expand reach. As a result, photography is increasingly used in fashion promotion as a kind of digital money and creative expression.

Theoretical Foundations of Photography and Decision-Making

The influence of photography on customer choice is rooted in concepts from cognitive psychology and visual perception. The Dual Interpret Theory states that people interpret visual information, including pictures, both automatically and consciously.¹⁶

Although more meticulous, cognitive processing evaluates functional aspects such as fit and fabric, whereas automatic processing evokes emotional reactions and impressions based on visual aesthetics. According to this dual approach, photography is a particularly powerful tool in online fashion marketing, as it can both immediately appeal to consumers and cognitively validate their purchase decisions. Furthermore, according to visual communication theory, photography functions as a semiotic system, expressing meaning through style, framing, and cultural standards in addition to the item being photographed.¹⁷ This means that in fashion marketing, photography does more than just showcase clothing; it places it in cultural narratives or aspirational lifestyles that affect consumers' emotional investment and brand associations.¹⁸

The notion that the form and composition of images, colour, lighting, and angle can improve the perception of product quality and reliability is also supported by media aesthetics theory.¹⁹ Before any logical thought occurs, these factors promote emotive engagement by stimulating systems processing. For instance, warm-toned editorial photos evoke a sense of genuineness or nostalgia, whereas vivid, high-contrast fashion photos arouse feelings of urgency and enthusiasm.

⁹ Sau Wai Athena Choi, "The Value of Fashion Photography in the Culture of Social Media" (Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 2017).

¹⁰ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977).

¹¹ Tun-Min Jai et al., "Seeing It Is like Touching It: Unraveling the Effective Product Presentations on Online Apparel Purchase Decisions and Brain Activity (an fMRI Study)," *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 53, no. 1 (2021): 66–79.

¹² E. Shinkle, *Fashion Photography: The Story in 180 Pictures* (Munich: Prestel Publishing, 2017).

¹³ William J Sutherland et al., "A 2018 Horizon Scan of Emerging Issues for Global Conservation and Biological Diversity," *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 33, no. 1 (2018): 47–58.

¹⁴ Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, "Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media," *Business Horizons* 53, no. 1 (January 2010): 59–68, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>.

¹⁵ Nawaz Ahmad, Atif Salman, and Rubab Ashiq, "The Impact of Social Media on Fashion Industry: Empirical Investigation from Karachiites," *Journal of Resources Development and Management* 7 (2015).

¹⁶ Keith Frankish and JSBT Evans, "The Duality of Mind: An Historical Perspective," *In Two Minds: Dual Processes and Beyond*, 2009, 1–29.

¹⁷ R. Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*. (London: Fontana Press, 1977).

¹⁸ Malcolm Barnard, *Fashion Theory: A Reader* (Routledge, 2020).

¹⁹ Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

Additionally, the Elaboration Likelihood Model describes the two central and peripheral pathways by which consumers process persuasive information.²⁰ When combined with compelling brand tales, photography may elicit deeper, central processing in the context of fashion images. Still, it also serves as a peripheral cue, particularly when users are scrolling rapidly on platforms like Instagram.

Collectively, these ideas imply that photography in digital marketing is more than just illustrative; rather, it is a multi-layered persuasive weapon that shapes engagement, brand impression, and purchase decisions by influencing both affective and rational consumer pathways.

Evolution of Digital Marketing and the Role of Social Media Platforms in Fashion Promotion

Fashion marketing has transformed thanks to digital technology, which has replaced print-based tactics with dynamic, data-driven platforms.²¹ These days, fashion firms employ social media, mobile applications, and websites to reach a wider audience, customize messaging, and turn interaction into sales.²² Direct-to-consumer business models have become more popular as e-commerce has grown, enabling companies to interact with customers directly and without middlemen.²³ Furthermore, audience segmentation, real-time campaign testing, and customized product suggestions are made possible by data analytics and AI-driven technologies.²⁴ In today's digital world, photography remains essential. Studies in the United States, Europe and Asia showed that visually rich platforms have a major impact on consumer preferences.²⁵

In South Korea, for example, Jia et al. discovered that superior fashion photography increases consumer trust.²⁶ In Italy, graphically optimized retail interfaces lower cart abandonment.²⁷

Similarly, the fashion experience is constantly changing due to technological advancements. While artificial intelligence (AI) improves customer service through virtual assistants, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) produce immersive product trials.²⁸ These solutions strengthen the importance of excellent visual presentation in customer touchpoints by enhancing personalisation and emotional connection.

In contextualising the role of social media platforms in the fashion industry, it is established that fashion promotion relies heavily on social media platforms, especially Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.²⁹ These platforms provide real-time interactivity, storytelling capabilities, and visibility.³⁰ To expand their reach and relevance, brands work with creators and influencers to enable users to actively search for trends, inspiration, and product recommendations on Instagram, which has become a visual fashion hub.³¹ Similarly, more genuine consumer-brand relationships are made possible by influencer partnerships and user-generated content, which blur the lines between traditional marketing strategies.³² Again, dynamic engagement and immediacy are made possible by features such as Instagram Stories, Reels, and Live Streams.³³

²⁰ Richard E Petty and John T Cacioppo, "The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion," in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. 19 (Elsevier, 1986), 123–205.

²¹ Simon Kingsnorth, *Digital Marketing Strategy: An Integrated Approach to Online Marketing* (Kogan Page Publishers, 2025).

²² Mark Tungate, *Fashion Brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara* (Kogan Page Publishers, 2008).

²³ Charlene Li, "Groundswell. Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies," *Strategic Direction* 26, no. 8 (2010).

²⁴ Andrew N. Smith, Eileen Fischer, and Chen Yongjian, *Understanding Digital Marketing: Marketing Strategies for Engaging the Digital Generation* (London: Kogan Page Publishers, 2012).

²⁵ Iris Vermeir and Gudrun Roose, "Visual Design Cues Impacting Food Choice: A Review and Future Research Agenda," *Foods* 9, no. 10 (2020): 1495; M. Mooij, *Consumer Behavior and Culture*, 3rd ed. (SAGE Publications, 2019).

²⁶ Xinzhong Jia et al., "Impact of Perceived Influence, Virtual Interactivity on Consumer Purchase Intentions Through the Path of Brand Image and Brand Expected Value," *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (July 28, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.947916>.

²⁷ Tatiana Alexandra Castelblanco D  az, "Innovative Tools for the Prevention of Product Returns in E-Commerce," 2020.

²⁸ Ji In So and Sun-Hee Kim, "The Effects of Augmented Reality Fashion Application on Pleasure, Satisfaction and Behavioral Intention," *The Research Journal of the Costume Culture* 21, no. 6 (2013): 810–26; Chih-Wen Wu, "The Impact of Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality Service Technologies on Consumer Purchase Intention for Fashion Brands," July 20, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202307.1408.v1..>

²⁹ Kaplan and Haenlein, "Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media," January 2010.

³⁰ Alice E Marwick, *Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity, and Branding in the Social Media Age* (Yale University Press, 2013).

³¹ S. Lindgren, *Instagram as a Medium for Fashion Communication*, 2019. (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2019).

³² Marijke De Veirman, Veroline Cauberghe, and Liselot Hudders, "Marketing through Instagram Influencers: The Impact of Number of Followers and Product Divergence on Brand Attitude," *International Journal of Advertising* 36, no. 5 (2017): 798–828.

³³ Tracy Tuten, *Social Media Marketing* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2018).

Additionally, direct social media shopping is currently a big trend in social commerce. From inspiration to purchase, Instagram Shopping and Facebook Marketplace facilitate smooth transitions.³⁴ In-app checkouts, product tags, and shoppable posts all reduce friction and convert interaction into sales.³⁵ These platforms' mix of community and commerce yields useful behavioural data that helps firms to improve their marketing and visual strategies over time.³⁶

However, scholarship on fashion marketing remains scarce in Ghana, although it is growing steadily. While Anim et al. investigated performance and innovation among women-led fashion enterprises, Danso et al. delved into marketing issues faced by fashion businesses in Ho.³⁷ Related to that, Appiah-Kubi and Mensah evaluated the effects of globalisation on Ghana's fashion market, while Boadu and Akporyo examined brand development in Kumasi's apparel business.³⁸ The results broadly emphasise the necessity of unique approaches and international branding initiatives. There are also comparable research findings at the subregional and international levels. In line with this, a Kenyan study by Gatobu and another by Sharma et al. in India demonstrated how digital marketing and visuals influence customer interaction and trust. These results highlight the crucial role of digital fluency and culturally appropriate imagery in developing nations.³⁹

Notwithstanding these findings, empirical research on photography and digital marketing in Ghana's fashion industry is severely lacking. By providing context-specific information on how photography and digital marketing improve brand awareness, consumer engagement, and purchase intent in Ghana, this study seeks to close the gap in literature and educate both industry practice and scholarly conversation.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive survey, which is a quantitative research design, was used to investigate the role of digital marketing and photography in advancing Ghana's fashion industry and to explore how customers made online purchases and responded to content about fashion on social media. Descriptive survey design is noted to rely on data collection techniques such as questionnaires, attitude scales and observations.⁴⁰ One of the advantages of using the descriptive survey is its multifaceted approach to data collection, thereby providing information through multiple perspectives. This design was chosen to uncover the quintessential role of photography and digital marketing in the fashion industry by gathering measurable data on the efficacy of photography and digital marketing in promoting fashion items. The research instrument was a standardised questionnaire that contained only closed-ended items. The use of closed-ended questions enabled efficient quantification of specific variables and easier data analysis.

Population

The target population of the study involved Ghanaian fashion customers who actively use the internet/digital marketing channels. The emphasis was on participants who had interacted with fashion

³⁴ W. Glynn Mangold and David J. Faulds, "Social Media: The New Hybrid Element of the Promotion Mix," *Business Horizons* 52, no. 4 (July 2009): 357–65, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.03.002>.

³⁵ Robert Allen King, Pradeep Racherla, and Victoria D Bush, "What We Know and Don't Know about Online Word-of-Mouth: A Review and Synthesis of the Literature," *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 28, no. 3 (2014): 167–83.

³⁶ Lisette De Vries, Sonja Gensler, and Peter S H Leeftang, "Popularity of Brand Posts on Brand Fan Pages: An Investigation of the Effects of Social Media Marketing," *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 26, no. 2 (2012): 83–91.

³⁷ Patrick Amfo Anim et al., "Market Orientation, Innovation and Business Performance: Insight from Womenpreneurs in the Fashion Industry in Ghana," *Journal of Creativity and Business Innovation* 4 (2018); Daniel Kwabena Danso et al., "Challenges Facing the Marketing of Fashion Products in Ghana: Case Study of Fashion Businesses in Ho Municipality," *European Journal of Social Sciences Studies*, 2018.

³⁸ R. Appiah-Kubi and I. Mensah, "Globalization and the Fashion Industry in Ghana: Challenges and Prospects.," *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*, 2020; Priscilla Kyei Boadu and Beauty Awusi Nyavor Akporyo, "Contemporary Approach to Brand Consciousness and Development among Selected Garment Manufacturing Industries in Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana: Evidence from a Developing Country.," *Journal of Marketing Studies* 6, no. 1 (November 17, 2023): 25–42, <https://doi.org/10.47941/jms.1510>.

³⁹ Janerose Nkirote Gatobu, "Digital Marketing Strategies and Performance of Fashion Industry in Nairobi City County, Kenya" (Doctoral dissertation, Kenyatta University, 2018); Anshuman Sharma et al., "A Multi-Analytic Approach to Predict Social Media Marketing Influence on Consumer Purchase Intention," *Journal of Indian Business Research* 14, no. 2 (May 17, 2022): 125–49, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIBR-08-2021-0313..>

⁴⁰ F. K. Amedahe and E. A. Gyimah, *Introduction to Educational Research* (Cape Coast: CCEUCC, 2003), 149-150.

photography through social media, e-commerce, or other digital marketing channels. On that basis, the convenience sampling technique used yielded a sample size of 152 respondents. These respondents were fashion aficionados and consumers who routinely accessed online fashion content.

Data Collection

The researchers used Google Forms as the primary tool for data collection. The forms were distributed to the respondents through their respective WhatsApp platforms, requesting their valuable input and insights for the research. Using WhatsApp as a distribution platform allowed efficient and direct communication with participants, enhancing the chances of a higher response rate. Out of the 200 forms that were sent out, 152 responses were returned by the respondents.

Ethical Consideration and Consent

Participants were informed of the study's goal, assured of their anonymity and confidentiality, and given the option to give informed permission. Consent was obtained electronically through a Google Form, in which the individuals agreed to participate before starting the questionnaire. There were no minors in the study; thus, all participants were adults aged 18 years or older.

Data Analysis

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics with frequency counts and percentages to synthesize responses that offer an overview of the findings and ultimately answer the overarching questions that guided the study. The descriptive analysis was carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics 27. This provided clearer insights into the phenomenon of consumers' extent of engagement with fashion photography and purchasing behaviour.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The results section presents the findings from the field data, beginning with the participants' demographic data, followed by insights on the frequency of participants' engagement with social media platforms and the dynamics of consumer engagement with fashion brands. It further delved into the frequency of use of digital marketing strategies and the types of digital marketing platforms considered effective for promoting fashion brands, and explored the impact of digital marketing on consumer purchasing behaviour and the influence of photography and digital marketing. Finally, the need to incorporate digital marketing strategies into fashion marketing from the viewpoints of the respondents was provided.

Table 1: Summary of Demographical Data of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	56	36.8
Male	96	63.2
Educational Background		
Bachelor's Degree	63	41.4
HND	47	30.9
Masters	23	15.1
Ph.D. or equivalent	5	3.3
Senior High School	14	9.2
Total	152	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2024

From the data presented in Table 1, the total number of participants who took part in the study was 152. Of these, 96 (63.2%) were males whilst 56 (36.8%) were females. This shows that the majority of the respondents were males. The study also assessed the educational background of respondents, which revealed that 14 (9.2) respondents were senior high students, 63 (41.4%) were Bachelor's degree

students, 47 (30.9%) also had HND, 23 (15.1%) were master's holders, whilst 5 (3.3%) were PhD or equivalent holders. Clearly, most of the respondents were Bachelor's degree holders, followed by HND.

Frequency of Engagement with Social Media Platforms

The frequency of use of social media platforms shapes media use. Data from the study (see Fig. 1) reveal how frequently respondents engage with fashion content on various social media platforms to stay abreast of current fashion information.

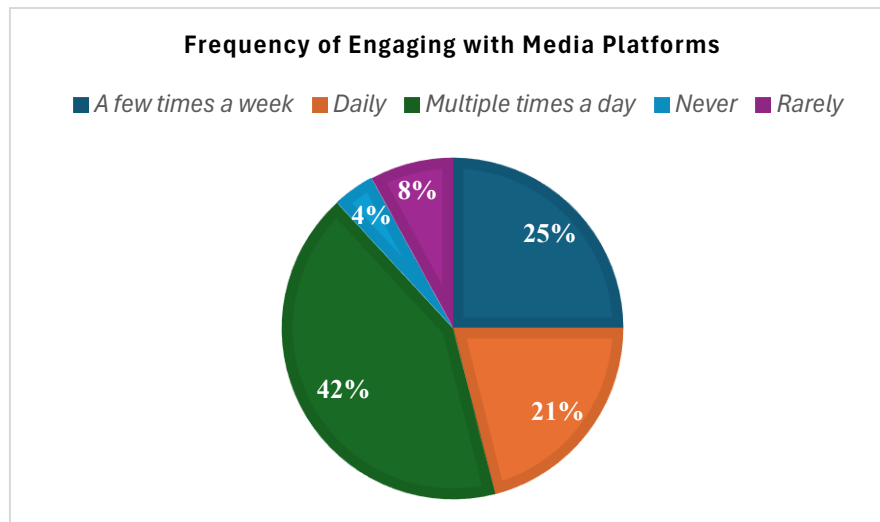


Figure 1: Graphical Representation of the Frequency of Respondents' Engagement With Fashion Content on Social Media Platforms
Source: Field Data, 2024

From Fig. 1, the majority of respondents (42.1%) engage with fashion content multiple times a day, showing a high level of daily connection with such information. Furthermore, 21.1% indicated that they engage with social media daily, with 25.0% of the respondents reporting a few times each week. Conversely, a smaller fraction engages less regularly, with 8.0% of the respondents reporting rare involvement with social media engagement and only 4.0% who reported having never connected with fashion information on social media sites. This distribution demonstrates the large visibility and influence of fashion information on social media, with a significant part of the respondents actively interacting with it daily, and thus, highlighting the importance of these platforms in determining consumer preferences and trends within the fashion industry.

Consumer Engagement with Fashion Brands and their Notions of the Importance of Photography in Establishing the Narrative and Identity of Ghanaian Fashion Brands

The data gathered from the responses strongly suggest that participants believe high-quality photographs increase consumer interaction with fashion brands or businesses. As shown in Table 2 below, most of the respondents (96.1%) agreed that high-quality photographs promote greater consumer engagement. In contrast, only a small percentage 6 (3.9%) expressed doubts about this topic. This high degree of agreement reinforces the widely held view that engaging and visually appealing photography is critical for attracting customer attention, building brand connection, and ultimately increasing engagement in the fashion business.

Table 2: Consumer Engagement with Fashion Brands

Variable	Frequency	Percent
I agree that High-quality photography enhances consumer engagement with fashion brands.		
Unsure	6	3.9

Yes	146	96.1
Total	152	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2024

Further, the results clearly show that photography plays an important role in establishing the narrative and identity of Ghanaian fashion brands. Inferring from Fig. 2, a large majority of respondents either strongly agree (62%) or agree (33%) with this statement, indicating a high level of agreement about photography's crucial role in shaping the image and story of Ghanaian fashion brands. However, only a small minority expressed neutrality (4%) or severe disagreement (1%) with the statement. The overwhelming agreement emphasises the critical importance that photography plays not only in visually depicting Ghanaian fashion brands but also in communicating their unique tales and identities to consumers, thereby significantly contributing to their entire branding efforts and market positioning.

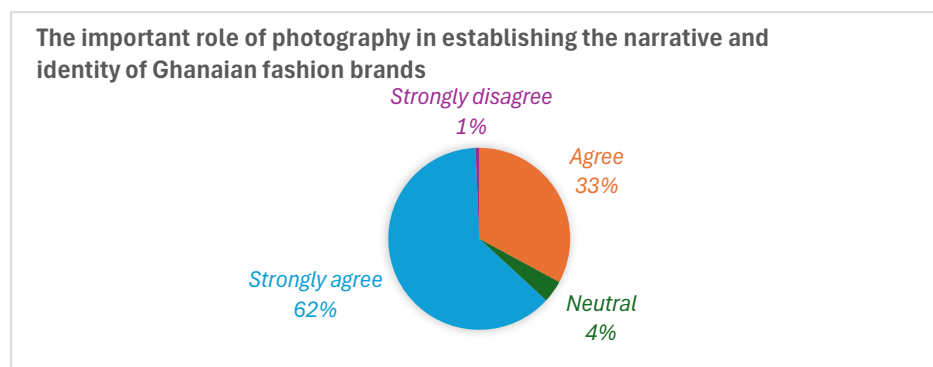


Figure 2: The Role of Photography in Establishing Ghanaian Fashion Brands

Source: Field Data, 2024

Frequency of Use of Digital Marketing Strategies and Types of Digital Marketing Platforms Used to Promote Fashion Brands

The data in Figure 3 provides insights into how frequently individuals are exposed to the digital marketing methods used in the fashion industry. A significant proportion of people use these methods regularly, 17.1% reporting daily exposure and 35.5% encountering them numerous times per day. Furthermore, 21.7% engage with digital marketing methods multiple times a week. On the contrary, a smaller percentage engages less regularly, with 7.9% encountering them once a week, 16.4% rarely, and only 1.3% never. This distribution indicates a wide range of familiarity and exposure to digital marketing strategies in the fashion industry, with a sizable proportion engaging with them regularly, indicating their significant presence and influence in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviours within this sector.

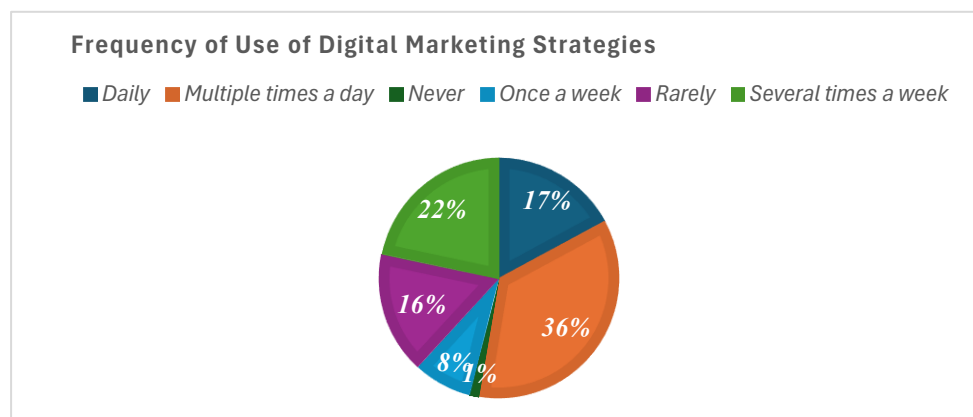


Figure 3: Frequency of Use of Digital Marketing Strategies in the Fashion Industry

Source: Field Data, 2024

Regarding the types of digital marketing platforms, the data in Figure 4 illustrate a diverse array of digital marketing platforms believed to be effective in promoting fashion brands in Ghana. Without a doubt, Instagram emerged as the most prominent choice, either alone or in combination with other platforms - with various combinations including Facebook, TikTok, Pinterest, Snapchat, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Brand Websites. TikTok was also identified as a significant platform, both independently and in conjunction with others, representing 10.5% of the responses. Additionally, Facebook appeared frequently and often paired with other platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, comprising 14.5% of the responses. Pinterest, YouTube, and WhatsApp were mentioned as well, albeit less frequently, accounting for 4.3%, 2.6%, and 1.3% of the responses, respectively. This extensive range of platforms underscores the multifaceted approach taken by respondents, recognising the importance of leveraging multiple channels to effectively promote fashion brands in Ghana. Figure 4 presents a graphical representation of the digital marketing platforms that respondents believed had effectively promoted fashion brands in Ghana.

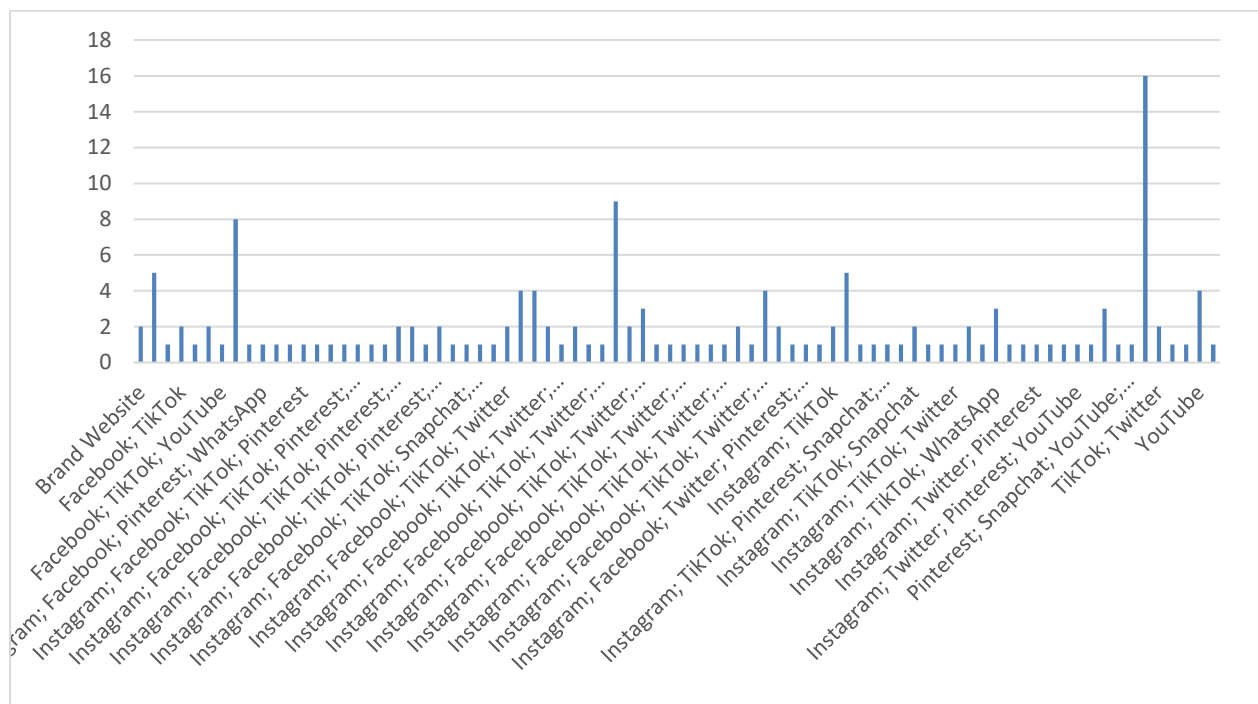


Figure 4: Types of Digital Marketing Platforms for Promoting Fashion Brands in Ghana
Source: Field Data, 2024

Impact of Digital Marketing and Photography on Consumer Purchasing Behaviour

The results presented in Table 3 indicate that digital marketing has a significant impact on customer purchase behaviour in the apparel business. Specifically, the majority of respondents (47.4%) strongly agreed that digital marketing significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions, followed by 45.4% of respondents who agreed that digital marketing has an impact on consumer purchasing behaviour, demonstrating a high level of agreement on the impact of digital marketing methods in affecting consumer choices, while a small proportion (7.2%) remains neutral. The overwhelming majority agreed that digital marketing initiatives, such as social media campaigns, influencer collaborations, and online advertisements, have a significant impact on driving consumer engagement and, ultimately, influencing purchasing behaviour in the fashion industry.

Table 3: Impact of Digital Marketing on Consumer Purchasing Behaviour

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Do you think that digital marketing has a significant impact on consumer purchasing behaviour in the fashion industry?		
Agree	69	45.4
Neutral	11	7.2
Strongly agree	72	47.4
Total	152	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2024

Similarly, the data in Table 4 show that photography and digital marketing materials have a substantial influence on consumer behaviour in Ghana's fashion business. Specifically, while most of the respondents (80.3%) have purchased from Ghanaian fashion firms after seeing their content on social media sites such as Instagram Shopping, TikTok, or Facebook Marketplace, it should be noted that the remaining respondents in the minority (19.7%) did not. This shows that although digital marketing plays an important role in driving customer engagement and transactions, there is still a segment of the audience that may not be convinced by these platforms or content formats. The minority's inability to make purchases on these platforms could also be attributed to their inability to access digital marketing platforms to see information on various fashion brands. It stands to reason that fashion firms looking to expand their marketing strategy find useful strategies using digital marketing to provide useful information to prospective clients.

Table 4: Making a Purchase from a Fashion Brand in Ghana after Seeing their Photographs

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Have you made a purchase from a fashion brand in Ghana after seeing their photographs on social media?		
No	30	19.7
Yes	122	80.3
Total	152	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2024

More so in Table 5, the data provides respondents' perceptions on the impact of photography and digital marketing methods on the growth of Ghana's fashion sector. The data in Table 5 show that, while only 0.7% have a negative opinion about the growth of the fashion industry in the future through digital marketing and photography, a sizable proportion (10.5%) is neutral on the subject matter. However, the overall perception is largely favourable, with most expressing a good (44.1%) or extremely positive (44.7%) outlook. This demonstrates considerable consensus among respondents about the significant impact of photography and digital marketing methods on promoting growth in Ghana's fashion sector. By implication, there is a universal acknowledgement of the critical roles of photography and digital marketing methods in defining Ghana's fashion industry.

Table 5: Influence of Photography and Digital Marketing

Variable	Frequency	Percent
How do you perceive the influence of photography and digital marketing on the growth of the fashion industry?		
Negative	1	0.7
Neutral	16	10.5
Positive	67	44.1
Very positive	68	44.7
Total	152	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2024

Finally, the respondents provided a nuanced view on the necessity of incorporating digital marketing methods into Ghanaian fashion firms' overall marketing efforts. As noted in Table 6, a little over one-third of the respondents (36.2%) recognizes its significance, a smaller percentage (3.3%) held a neutral view, whereas an even smaller minority (0.7%) believed it was not very important to incorporate digital marketing methods into Ghanaian fashion firms' overall marketing efforts. In contrast, the majority of the respondents (59.9%) strongly supported the need to integrate digital marketing into promoting fashion products. This demonstrates a significant agreement on the importance of digital marketing methods in improving Ghanaian fashion marketing efforts.

Table 6: Incorporating Digital Marketing Strategies into Fashion Marketing

Variable	Frequency	Percent
How do you perceive the incorporation of digital marketing strategies into Ghanaian fashion brands?		
Important	55	36.2
Neutral	5	3.3
Not very important	1	0.7
Very important	91	59.9
Total	152	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2024

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate the important influence that digital marketing techniques and photography have on Ghana's fashion industry. These findings support previous research on how effective visual content and digital outreach can raise brand awareness, customer engagement, and eventually purchase behaviour. Respondents' demographic profile, which is dominated by men with Bachelor's degrees, is consistent with trends noted in Anim et al.'s study, which highlighted the increasing participation of young, tech-savvy, educated people in Ghana's fashion industry.⁴¹ It is possible that digital marketing initiatives can find a highly responsive audience in this group.

Again, the importance of social media channels in contemporary fashion promotion is confirmed by the high frequency of engagement with fashion-related content on these platforms. This is in line with Marwick and Kaplan and Haenlein, who emphasise how social media has revolutionised fashion marketing.⁴² The prevalence of social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok supports research by Lindgren that shows these channels are essential for connecting with and influencing fashion-forward audiences.⁴³

The study's findings complement Keaney and Entwistle, who stress the value of visual appeal in conveying brand identity and drawing attention, by showing that excellent photography dramatically increases customer engagement.⁴⁴ This research also supports Sontag's argument that photography shapes consumers' perceptions of brands and products by influencing their emotions and perceptions.⁴⁵ In line with that, most of the participants concurred that photography is essential in defining the identity and story of Ghanaian fashion brands. This emphasizes how crucial visual storytelling is as a branding tactic. To Shinkle, photography is a storytelling tool that stimulates cultural connection and immersion.⁴⁶ Furthermore, other research stresses that visual storytelling is used to convey legacy, craftsmanship, and hybrid cultural identities, especially in the Ghanaian context.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Anim et al., "Market Orientation, Innovation and Business Performance: Insight from Womenpreneurs in the Fashion Industry in Ghana."

⁴² Marwick, *Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity, and Branding in the Social Media Age*; Andreas M Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, "Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media," *Business Horizons* 53, no. 1 (2010): 59–68.

⁴³ Lindgren, *Instagram as a Medium for Fashion Communication*.

⁴⁴ Keaney, *Fashion Photography Next*; Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory*.

⁴⁵ Sontag, *On Photography*.

⁴⁶ Shinkle, *Fashion Photography: The Story in 180 Pictures*.

⁴⁷ Tungate, *Fashion Brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara*.

The varied levels of engagement of the respondents with digital marketing tools show that many of them use them many times a day, thus highlighting how ubiquitous these platforms are in the fashion sector. This aligns with the findings of Tungate and Kingsnorth, who in their research show how digital tools are disrupting fashion marketing.⁴⁸ Relatedly, the most effective avenues for promoting fashion were found to be Instagram and TikTok. This is consistent with the findings of Ahmad et al. and Lindgren, who emphasize the platforms' wide reach and visual-centric design.⁴⁹ The need for fashion firms to have comprehensive digital strategies is shown by respondents' preference for an integrated, cross-platform approach. Using a variety of platforms increases audience reach, broadens interaction, and strengthens brand identification in digital ecosystems. To maximise engagement and conversion, brands are urged to use YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok concurrently.

Further, the majority of respondents concurred that digital marketing had a major impact on customer purchase decisions. This supports the research work of Mangold and Faulds.⁵⁰ These academics emphasise how effective tailored messaging and targeted advertising are at influencing customer behaviour. Clearly, their study has been further confirmed by this study, which demonstrates that visually appealing material frequently influences consumers' decisions to buy. Similar results were observed by De Vries et al., who connected image-based content to increased conversion rates.⁵¹

Meanwhile, this study has some implications. Clearly, digital marketing makes it possible to create highly customized customer journeys by customizing material to each person's tastes and habits. For example, brands can use data-driven targeting in conjunction with emotive imagery on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. This combination of algorithm and art improves interaction and raises the possibility of a purchase.

Again, due to its simplicity, accessibility, and aesthetic appeal, digital marketing is quickly taking the lead as the preferred way to interact with fashion. Thus, fashion designers must receive training in digital tools and platforms. More so, incorporating photography and internet marketing into technical and vocational fashion education programmes would equip designers with useful marketing techniques. An admirable example is the Campaign for Female Education's (CAMFED) programme to teach young people in ICT and photography. In fact, Ghana's Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CTVET) might grow it, particularly in clothing-making programs for apprentices without formal schooling. Nonetheless, for small-scale designers, obstacles like implementation costs, platform monetization, and content sustainability still exist. Therefore, relevant stakeholders in education and policy must explore strategies to support adoption, such as training incubators, shared content hubs, or subsidies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the scope of the study was the Ghanaian environment, its significance extends beyond the national context. As such, other African nations should be included in future studies to allow comparative analysis. Additionally, more research is required to determine whether particular digital marketing strategies and content kinds in Ghana produce the highest levels of engagement and conversion.

Further research should also be directed at examining the obstacles encountered by fashion entrepreneurs who do not use digital platforms, as this may provide useful insights to implement strategies that promote inclusivity and lessen the digital gap. Ultimately, the findings from this study would inform and expand both the policy and practice frontiers of the creative fields of photography, digital marketing and fashion design in their efforts to create more inclusive and successful marketing ecosystems.

⁴⁸ Tungate, *Fashion Brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara*; Kingsnorth, *Digital Marketing Strategy: An Integrated Approach to Online Marketing*.

⁴⁹ Ahmad, Salman, and Ashiq, "The Impact of Social Media on Fashion Industry: Empirical Investigation from Karachiites"; Lindgren, *Instagram as a Medium for Fashion Communication*.

⁵⁰ Mangold and Faulds, "Social Media: The New Hybrid Element of the Promotion Mix."

⁵¹ De Vries, Gensler, and Leeftang, "Popularity of Brand Posts on Brand Fan Pages: An Investigation of the Effects of Social Media Marketing."

CONCLUSION

The study has shown that there is support for the revolutionary potential of digital marketing and photography in Ghana's fashion industry. That notwithstanding, it is clear that the strategic use of digital platforms and high-quality visual material is essential for drawing in customers, telling brand stories and increasing sales. The findings further support the importance of photography and digital tools in a world that is becoming more image-driven and technology-mediated, which is consistent with larger research on fashion marketing and visual communication.

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