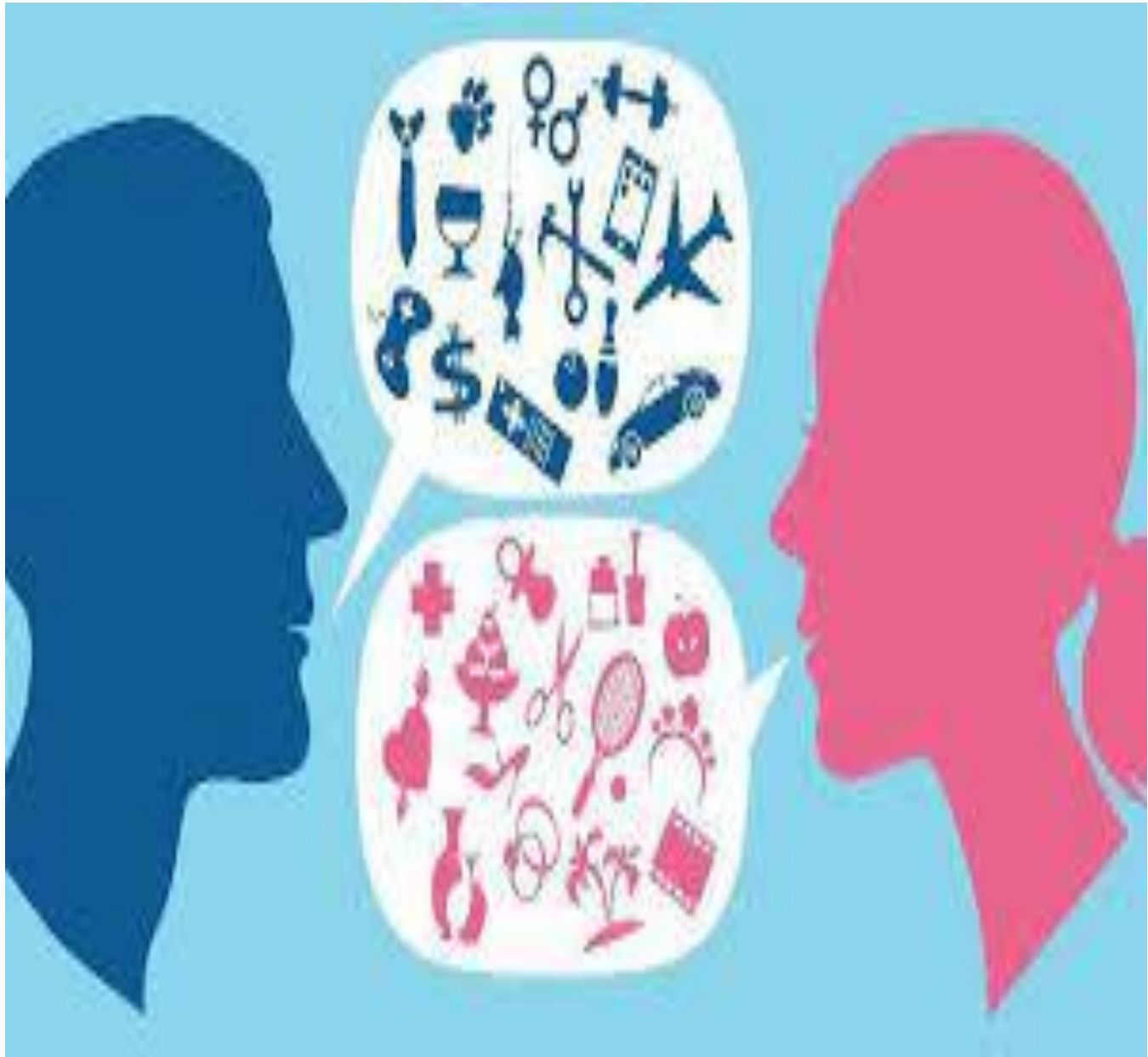


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## Virtual Fashion Shows and Digital Marketing: Qualitative Insights from Industry Case Studies

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The digital transformation of the fashion industry has accelerated the adoption of virtual fashion shows as a strategic tool for marketing and consumer engagement. This study examines the role of virtual fashion shows within digital marketing frameworks through a qualitative analysis of secondary data, including academic literature and industry case studies. Drawing on theoretical perspectives such as Experiential Marketing Theory, the Technology Acceptance Model, and Uses and Gratifications Theory, the research explores how immersive technologies reshape consumer-brand interactions. The findings indicate that virtual fashion shows enhance global accessibility, interactivity, and narrative-driven brand communication, while also enabling new commercial opportunities such as digital fashion assets and integrated e-commerce models. At the same time, challenges related to technological accessibility, user experience, and perceived authenticity remain significant. The study highlights the importance of designing user-centred, immersive, and strategically integrated digital experiences to maximise engagement and brand value. It contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digital fashion by providing a comprehensive understanding of how virtual fashion shows function as experiential marketing platforms in an increasingly digitised consumer landscape.

**Keywords:** virtual fashion shows, digital marketing, consumer engagement, experiential marketing, metaverse, digital fashion, immersive technology

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## 1. Introduction

The fashion industry has historically functioned at the intersection of creativity, culture, and commerce, with fashion shows serving as a central mechanism for communicating brand identity and seasonal collections. Traditionally, runway shows were exclusive, invitation-only events held in major fashion capitals such as Paris, Milan, New York, and London. These events were designed not only to present garments but also to construct symbolic narratives around brands, appealing to buyers, media professionals, and elite consumers. However, the rapid advancement of digital technologies, coupled with shifts in consumer behaviour and global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, has catalysed a fundamental transformation in how fashion is produced, presented, and marketed (Noris et al., 2020).

Virtual fashion shows have emerged as a significant innovation within this evolving landscape. Defined as digitally mediated presentations of fashion collections using technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), computer-generated imagery (CGI), and 3D animation, virtual fashion shows represent a departure from the physical constraints of traditional runway formats. These digital events can take place across various platforms, including brand websites, social media channels, and immersive virtual environments often associated with the metaverse (Abdalla & Nasr, 2023). By eliminating geographical and logistical limitations, virtual fashion shows allow brands to reach a broader and more

diverse audience, thereby democratizing access to fashion content.

The increasing prominence of digital platforms in fashion marketing reflects broader changes in consumer expectations. Contemporary consumers are no longer passive recipients of brand communication; instead, they actively seek interactive and personalised experiences. This shift has prompted brands to adopt experiential marketing strategies that emphasise engagement, immersion, and emotional connection (Schmitt, 1999). Virtual fashion shows align closely with these strategies by offering dynamic, multisensory experiences that extend beyond the visual spectacle of traditional runway shows. Through interactive features, such as clickable garments, virtual showrooms, and avatar-based participation, consumers can engage with fashion content in novel and meaningful ways.

Moreover, the integration of virtual fashion shows into digital marketing strategies has significant implications for brand communication and consumer engagement. Digital platforms, particularly social media, have become essential channels for disseminating fashion content and fostering real-time interaction. Livestreamed fashion shows, for example, enable audiences to watch events as they unfold, comment on them, and share content across networks, thereby amplifying reach and engagement (Tawk, 2022). This convergence of fashion and digital media has blurred the boundaries between content, commerce, and community, creating new opportunities for brands to connect with consumers.

Another critical dimension of virtual fashion shows is their role in supporting new business models and revenue streams. The rise of digital fashion-encompassing virtual garments, NFTs (non-fungible tokens), and in-game fashion items-has expanded the scope of fashion marketing beyond physical products. Virtual fashion shows serve as platforms for showcasing these digital assets, enabling brands to tap into emerging markets within the metaverse and gaming environments (Anuar & Jumrah, 2024). This development reflects a broader trend toward the virtualisation of consumption, where digital goods and experiences hold increasing value for consumers.

Despite these opportunities, the transition to virtual fashion shows also presents several challenges. One of the primary concerns is the loss of physicality and sensory experience associated with traditional runway shows. Fashion is inherently tactile, and the inability to physically experience garments may limit consumer perception and appreciation. Additionally, technological barriers, such as access to high-quality devices and internet connectivity, may restrict participation for certain audiences. High production costs and the need for specialised technical expertise further complicate the adoption of virtual formats (Ahn et al., 2023).

Furthermore, questions of authenticity and brand identity arise in digital environments. While virtual fashion shows offer unprecedented creative freedom, they also risk diluting the authenticity that is often associated with physical craftsmanship and heritage. Brands must therefore navigate the tension between innovation and tradition,

ensuring that digital experiences remain aligned with their core values and identity.

Given these developments, there is a growing need for scholarly research that examines the role of virtual fashion shows within digital marketing frameworks. While existing studies have explored aspects of digital fashion and consumer engagement, there remains a lack of comprehensive analysis that integrates theoretical perspectives with empirical insights from industry practices. This study seeks to address this gap by employing a qualitative research approach based on secondary data, including academic literature and industry case studies.

The primary objectives of this research are threefold: first, to explore the evolution and characteristics of virtual fashion shows; second, to analyse their role in enhancing digital marketing strategies; and third, to identify key opportunities and challenges associated with their implementation. By situating virtual fashion shows within broader theoretical frameworks, such as experiential marketing and technology adoption, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of their impact on the fashion industry.

In conclusion, virtual fashion shows represent a transformative development in fashion marketing, reflecting the convergence of technology, creativity, and consumer engagement. As the industry continues to evolve, understanding the implications of this shift is essential for both academics and practitioners. This study contributes to this understanding by offering qualitative insights into the strategic use of virtual fashion shows in digital marketing.

## 2. Literature Review

Fashion shows have long served as a critical medium for presenting new collections and communicating brand narratives. Historically, these events were exclusive and highly curated, targeting a limited audience of buyers, journalists, and industry insiders. Early fashion presentations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were intimate salon shows, where garments were displayed to select clients in controlled environments. Over time, these presentations evolved into large-scale runway events characterised by theatrical staging, elaborate set designs, and celebrity participation.

The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries witnessed the globalisation of fashion shows, with major fashion weeks emerging in cities such as Paris, Milan, London, and New York. These events became integral to the fashion calendar, attracting international attention and media coverage. However, despite their global influence, traditional fashion shows remained constrained by physical limitations, including venue capacity, geographic location, and high production costs.

The advent of digital technologies has fundamentally altered the nature of fashion shows. Livestreaming, social media, and digital content distribution have expanded the reach of these events, allowing global audiences to access them in real time. This shift has paved the way for fully virtual fashion shows, which transcend the limitations of physical space and enable new forms of creative expression (Noris et al., 2020).

### 2.1 Digital Fashion and Virtualisation

Digital fashion represents a paradigm shift in the production and consumption of fashion. It encompasses the creation of virtual garments, digital avatars, and immersive fashion experiences that exist entirely within digital environments. According to Noris et al. (2020), digital fashion has emerged as a significant area of innovation within the fashion industry, driven by advances in 3D design, computer graphics, and interactive technologies.

Virtual fashion shows are a key manifestation of this trend. Unlike traditional runway shows, which rely on physical garments and models, virtual shows utilise digital representations and simulated environments. These shows can take various forms, ranging from simple video presentations to fully immersive VR experiences. The use of CGI and animation allows designers to experiment with unconventional aesthetics and narratives that would be difficult or impossible to achieve in physical settings.

Ahn et al. (2023) highlight the importance of user experience in virtual fashion shows, emphasising the role of interactivity and immersion in enhancing audience engagement. Their study demonstrates that interactive elements, such as navigation controls and real-time feedback, significantly improve user satisfaction and perceived value. This finding underscores the potential of virtual fashion shows to create engaging and memorable experiences.

## 2.2 Virtual Fashion Shows as Marketing Tools

Fashion shows have always functioned as marketing tools, shaping brand image and influencing consumer perception. In the digital era, virtual fashion shows extend this function by integrating with broader digital marketing strategies. They serve as content hubs that generate engagement across multiple platforms, including social media, websites, and e-commerce channels.

One of the key advantages of virtual fashion shows is their ability to reach a global audience. Unlike physical shows, which are limited by location and capacity, virtual events can be accessed by anyone with an internet connection. This expanded reach aligns with the goals of digital marketing, which seeks to maximise visibility and engagement.

Moreover, virtual fashion shows enable real-time interaction between brands and consumers. Features such as live chats, comments, and social media integration allow audiences to participate actively in the event. This level of engagement fosters a sense of community and enhances brand loyalty (Tawk, 2022).

Another important aspect of virtual fashion shows is their integration with e-commerce. The “see now, buy now” model allows consumers to purchase items immediately after viewing them, reducing the gap between exposure and consumption. This seamless integration of content and commerce represents a significant advancement in fashion marketing.

## 2.3 Consumer Engagement and Experience

Consumer engagement is a central concept in marketing, referring to the degree of interaction and emotional connection between consumers and brands. Virtual fashion shows offer unique opportunities to enhance engagement through immersive and interactive experiences.

Experiential marketing theory provides a useful framework for understanding this phenomenon. Schmitt (1999) argues that consumers seek experiences that engage their senses, emotions, and intellect. Virtual fashion shows align with this perspective by offering multisensory experiences that go beyond traditional advertising.

Research indicates that digital fashion shows significantly increase consumer engagement by providing accessible and dynamic experiences (Ihenacho, 2024). The use of VR and AR technologies enhances the sense of presence, making users feel as though they are part of the event. This immersive quality is particularly appealing to younger consumers, who are more familiar with digital environments.

Social media also plays a crucial role in amplifying engagement. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube enable users to share content, express opinions, and interact with brands in real time. This participatory culture transforms consumers into active contributors to brand narratives.

## 2.4 The Role of the Metaverse in Fashion Marketing

The concept of the metaverse has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly in relation to digital marketing and consumer experience. The metaverse refers to a collective virtual space where users can interact with digital environments and each other in real time. In the context of fashion, the metaverse provides a platform for virtual fashion shows, digital clothing, and immersive brand experiences.

Abdalla and Nasr (2023) describe the metaverse as an interactive digital advertising environment that enhances consumer engagement and brand communication. Fashion brands are increasingly leveraging metaverse platforms to create innovative marketing campaigns and reach younger audiences.

Virtual fashion shows within the metaverse offer a higher level of immersion compared to traditional digital formats. Users can attend shows as avatars, explore virtual environments, and interact with other participants. This level of interactivity creates a sense of presence and community, which is essential for building strong brand relationships.

## 2.5 Challenges and Limitations in Existing Literature

Despite the growing body of research on digital fashion, several gaps remain. One of the primary limitations is the lack of empirical studies that examine the long-term impact of virtual fashion shows on consumer behaviour. Most existing research focuses on short-term engagement metrics, such as

views and likes, rather than deeper psychological and behavioural outcomes.

Another challenge is the technological barrier associated with virtual fashion shows. High-quality VR experiences require advanced hardware and software, which may not be accessible to all consumers. This limitation raises concerns about inclusivity and the digital divide.

Additionally, the literature highlights concerns regarding authenticity and sensory experience. While virtual fashion shows offer visual and interactive benefits, they lack the tactile and physical elements that are central to fashion. This limitation may affect consumer perception and evaluation of products.

Finally, there is a need for more interdisciplinary research that integrates perspectives from marketing, technology, and cultural studies. Such an approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of virtual fashion shows in contemporary society.

## 3. Theoretical Framework

The rapid emergence of virtual fashion shows as a central component of digital marketing strategies necessitates a robust theoretical foundation to understand their implications for consumer behaviour, technological adoption, and experiential engagement. This study is grounded in three interrelated theoretical perspectives: Experiential Marketing Theory, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive lens

for analysing how virtual fashion shows function as immersive, technology-driven marketing tools.

### 3.1 Experiential Marketing Theory

Experiential Marketing Theory, as conceptualised by Schmitt (1999), emphasises the importance of creating holistic and memorable experiences that engage consumers on sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural levels. Unlike traditional marketing approaches that focus primarily on product features and functional benefits, experiential marketing seeks to establish emotional connections between consumers and brands. This approach is particularly relevant in the context of the fashion industry, where symbolic meaning, aesthetic value, and identity expression play critical roles.

Virtual fashion shows exemplify the principles of experiential marketing by transforming passive viewing into active participation. Through the use of immersive technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and interactive interfaces, brands can create multisensory environments that stimulate consumers' senses and emotions. For example, virtual runways can incorporate dynamic visual effects, narrative storytelling, and spatial interaction, enabling users to experience fashion in ways that transcend physical limitations (Ahn et al., 2023).

Furthermore, experiential marketing highlights the role of co-creation, where consumers actively participate in shaping their experiences. Virtual fashion shows facilitate this process by allowing users to

customise avatars, navigate virtual spaces, and interact with digital garments. This participatory dimension enhances engagement and fosters a sense of ownership and connection with the brand. As Pine and Gilmore (1999) argue, the experience economy is characterised by the staging of memorable events that engage individuals in a personal way, making experiential marketing a critical framework for understanding virtual fashion phenomena.

### 3.2 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989), provides a theoretical basis for understanding how consumers adopt and use new technologies. TAM posits that two primary factors—perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use—determine an individual's intention to adopt a technology. These factors influence attitudes toward the technology, which in turn affect behavioural intentions and actual usage.

In the context of virtual fashion shows, TAM is particularly relevant for analysing consumer adoption of digital platforms and immersive technologies. Perceived usefulness may include factors such as convenience, accessibility, and enhanced shopping experiences, while perceived ease of use relates to the usability of virtual interfaces and navigation systems. If consumers perceive virtual fashion shows as beneficial and easy to use, they are more likely to engage with them and integrate them into their consumption practices.

Recent studies have extended TAM to include additional variables such as perceived enjoyment, social influence, and trust, which are especially relevant in digital environments (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Virtual fashion shows often incorporate elements of entertainment and social interaction, which can enhance perceived enjoyment and increase adoption rates. For instance, interactive features and gamified experiences can make virtual shows more engaging, thereby influencing users' attitudes positively.

Moreover, TAM helps explain potential barriers to adoption. Technological complexity, lack of familiarity, and concerns about data privacy may hinder user acceptance. Understanding these factors is essential for fashion brands seeking to design user-friendly and accessible virtual experiences. By addressing issues related to usability and perceived value, brands can enhance consumer acceptance and maximise the effectiveness of their digital marketing strategies.

### 3.3 Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) offers a complementary perspective by focusing on the motivations and needs that drive individuals to engage with media. Unlike traditional media theories that view audiences as passive recipients, UGT conceptualises users as active agents who selectively consume media to satisfy specific gratifications (Katz et al., 1973).

In the context of virtual fashion shows, UGT provides insight into why consumers engage

with digital fashion content. Several key gratifications can be identified, including entertainment, information seeking, social interaction, and self-expression. Virtual fashion shows often combine these elements, offering visually stimulating content, insights into fashion trends, opportunities for social engagement, and platforms for identity construction.

Entertainment is a primary motivation, as virtual fashion shows are designed to be visually captivating and immersive. Information seeking is another important factor, as consumers use these platforms to learn about new collections, designers, and trends. Social interaction is facilitated through features such as live chats, comments, and social media sharing, enabling users to connect with others and participate in collective experiences.

Self-expression is particularly significant in digital environments, where users can create and customise avatars, explore virtual identities, and experiment with fashion styles. This aligns with the symbolic nature of fashion as a medium for identity construction and communication. By fulfilling these diverse gratifications, virtual fashion shows enhance user engagement and satisfaction.

### 3.4 Integration of Theoretical Perspectives

The integration of Experiential Marketing Theory, TAM, and UGT provides a multidimensional framework for understanding virtual fashion shows. Experiential marketing explains how immersive experiences are designed and

delivered; TAM elucidates how users adopt and interact with these technologies; and UGT reveals the motivations underlying user engagement.

Together, these theories highlight the interplay between technological innovation, consumer behaviour, and marketing strategy. They underscore the importance of designing virtual fashion shows that are not only technologically advanced but also user-centred and experience-driven. This integrated framework serves as the foundation for the empirical analysis presented in this study.

## 4. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the role of virtual fashion shows in digital marketing. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for investigating complex and emerging phenomena, as it allows for in-depth analysis and interpretation of meanings, experiences, and contextual factors (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Given the exploratory nature of this study, a qualitative approach enables a nuanced understanding of how virtual fashion shows are conceptualised and implemented within the fashion industry.

The research is based on secondary data analysis, which involves the systematic examination of existing data sources, including academic literature, industry reports, case studies, and digital media content. This approach is appropriate given the abundance of publicly available information on virtual fashion shows and digital marketing practices.

### 4.1 Data Sources and Collection

Data were collected from a range of secondary sources to ensure a comprehensive and diverse dataset. These sources include:

- Peer-reviewed journal articles on digital fashion, virtual reality, and marketing
- Industry reports from fashion and technology organisations
- Case studies of virtual fashion shows conducted by leading brands
- Online media content, including videos, press releases, and social media posts

The selection of sources was guided by criteria such as relevance, credibility, and recency. Only sources that provided substantive insights into virtual fashion shows and digital marketing were included. This purposive sampling strategy ensures that the data are both relevant and informative (Patton, 2002).

### 4.2 Analytical Approach

The study employs thematic analysis as the primary method of data analysis. Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative technique for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It involves several key steps:

- Familiarisation with the data
- Generation of initial codes
- Identification of themes
- Review and refinement of themes
- Interpretation and reporting

Through this process, recurring themes related to marketing strategies, consumer

engagement, technological innovation, and challenges were identified and analysed. Thematic analysis allows for flexibility and depth, making it well-suited for exploring complex phenomena such as virtual fashion shows.

### **4.3 Justification for Secondary Data Analysis**

The use of secondary data offers several advantages. First, it allows researchers to access a wide range of information without the time and resource constraints associated with primary data collection. Second, it enables the analysis of real-world practices and case studies, providing practical insights into industry trends. Third, it facilitates the integration of multiple perspectives, including academic and professional viewpoints.

However, secondary data analysis also has limitations. The researcher has limited control over the quality and scope of the data, and there may be inconsistencies across sources. To mitigate these issues, this study employs rigorous selection criteria and triangulation, comparing findings across multiple sources to ensure validity and reliability (Yin, 2018).

### **4.4 Reliability and Validity**

Ensuring the reliability and validity of qualitative research is essential for producing credible findings. In this study, reliability is addressed through systematic data collection and analysis procedures, including clear documentation of sources and coding processes. Validity is enhanced through triangulation, which involves comparing data

from different sources to identify consistent patterns.

Additionally, the study adopts a transparent and reflexive approach, acknowledging potential biases and limitations. By providing detailed descriptions of the research process, the study enables readers to assess the credibility and transferability of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **4.5 Ethical Considerations**

As this study is based on secondary data, it does not involve direct interaction with human participants. However, ethical considerations remain important. All sources used in the study are properly cited in accordance with APA (7th ed.) guidelines, ensuring academic integrity and respect for intellectual property.

Furthermore, the study critically evaluates sources to avoid the dissemination of inaccurate or misleading information (Mannan & Farhana, 2026). Only credible and reputable sources are included, and care is taken to present findings objectively and responsibly.

### **4.6 Limitations of the Methodology**

While the qualitative secondary research approach provides valuable insights, it also has inherent limitations. The reliance on existing data means that the study may not capture the most recent developments or emerging trends. Additionally, the absence of primary data limits the ability to explore individual consumer perspectives in depth.

Future research could address these limitations by incorporating primary data collection methods, such as interviews,

surveys, or experiments. Such approaches would complement the findings of this study and provide a more comprehensive understanding of virtual fashion shows.

## 5. Findings and Analysis

The analysis of secondary data, including academic literature and industry case studies, reveals several interrelated themes that characterise the role of virtual fashion shows in digital marketing. These themes include enhanced accessibility and global reach, interactivity and immersion, integration with social media ecosystems, innovative brand storytelling, commercialisation and new revenue models, and the challenges associated with technological and experiential limitations.

### 5.1 Enhanced Accessibility and Global Reach

One of the most significant findings is that virtual fashion shows substantially expand the accessibility of fashion content. Traditional runway shows are typically limited to a select audience of industry professionals, buyers, and media representatives, often constrained by geographical location and venue capacity. In contrast, virtual fashion shows democratize access by enabling global audiences to participate in real time or asynchronously through digital platforms.

This expanded accessibility aligns with the broader objectives of digital marketing, which emphasise reach, inclusivity, and scalability. According to Noris et al. (2020), digital fashion platforms allow brands to transcend physical boundaries and engage

with diverse consumer segments across different regions. This global reach not only enhances brand visibility but also supports market expansion strategies, particularly in emerging markets where physical presence may be limited.

Furthermore, accessibility is not limited to geographical factors but also includes temporal flexibility. Virtual fashion shows can be recorded and archived, allowing users to access content at their convenience. This on-demand availability increases the longevity of marketing campaigns and extends audience engagement beyond the temporal constraints of live events.

However, it is important to note that while virtual fashion shows enhance accessibility, they also introduce new forms of exclusion. Digital participation requires access to reliable internet connectivity and compatible devices, which may not be universally available. This digital divide highlights the need for inclusive design strategies that consider varying levels of technological access.

### 5.2 Interactivity and Immersion

Interactivity and immersion emerge as defining characteristics of virtual fashion shows, distinguishing them from traditional formats. Virtual environments enable users to actively engage with content, rather than passively observe it. This shift from passive consumption to active participation is central to contemporary digital marketing strategies.

Ahn et al. (2023) emphasise that interactivity significantly enhances user experience by fostering a sense of presence and involvement. Features such as virtual

navigation, clickable garments, and interactive interfaces allow users to explore fashion content in a personalised manner. This level of engagement not only increases user satisfaction but also strengthens emotional connections with brands.

Immersion, facilitated by technologies such as VR and AR, further enhances the experiential dimension of virtual fashion shows. Immersive environments create a sense of “being there,” enabling users to experience fashion shows as if they were physically present. This aligns with the principles of experiential marketing, which prioritise sensory and emotional engagement (Schmitt, 1999).

In addition, immersion supports creative experimentation, allowing designers to construct imaginative and surreal environments that would be impossible in physical settings. For example, virtual runways can be set in fantastical landscapes or abstract digital spaces, enhancing the aesthetic appeal and narrative depth of fashion presentations.

Despite these advantages, the level of immersion varies depending on the technological sophistication of the platform and the user’s device capabilities. High-quality immersive experiences often require advanced hardware, such as VR headsets, which may limit accessibility for some users.

### **5.3 Integration with Social Media Ecosystems**

Another key finding is the central role of social media in amplifying the impact of virtual fashion shows. Social media platforms function as both distribution

channels and engagement tools, enabling brands to reach large audiences and facilitate real-time interaction.

Livestreaming has become a common practice, allowing users to watch fashion shows as they unfold and participate through comments, reactions, and shares. Tawk (2022) highlights the importance of social media sentiment analysis in understanding audience responses to digital fashion shows, indicating that online engagement can provide valuable insights into consumer perceptions.

The integration of social media also supports user-generated content, which plays a significant role in contemporary marketing. Consumers can share their experiences, create derivative content, and engage in discussions, thereby contributing to the co-creation of brand narratives. This participatory culture enhances brand visibility and fosters a sense of community among consumers.

Moreover, social media platforms facilitate influencer collaborations, which are increasingly important in fashion marketing. Influencers can amplify the reach of virtual fashion shows by sharing content with their followers, thereby extending the impact of marketing campaigns.

However, the reliance on social media also presents challenges, including content saturation and algorithmic constraints. Brands must compete for attention in a crowded digital environment, requiring innovative strategies to capture and retain audience interest.

## 5.4 Brand Storytelling and Narrative Innovation

Virtual fashion shows provide new opportunities for brand storytelling, enabling designers to create narrative-driven experiences that convey brand identity and values. Unlike traditional runway shows, which are often constrained by physical staging, virtual environments allow for greater creative freedom.

Storytelling in virtual fashion shows often involves the integration of visual effects, music, and narrative elements to create immersive experiences. These narratives can reflect themes such as sustainability, cultural heritage, and innovation, aligning with broader brand positioning strategies.

According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), storytelling is a key component of the experience economy, as it enhances emotional engagement and memorability. Virtual fashion shows leverage this principle by creating cohesive narratives that resonate with audiences on an emotional level.

Furthermore, digital storytelling enables brands to experiment with new formats, such as short films, interactive experiences, and episodic content. This diversification of content formats enhances audience engagement and allows brands to reach different segments of the market.

## 5.5 Commercialisation and New Revenue Models

Virtual fashion shows also play a significant role in the commercialisation of digital fashion. The integration of e-commerce features allows consumers to purchase

products directly from the virtual environment, supporting the “see now, buy now” model.

In addition to physical products, virtual fashion shows facilitate the sale of digital goods, such as virtual garments and NFTs. Anuar and Jumrah (2024) note that digital fashion represents a growing market, with increasing consumer interest in virtual assets. These digital goods can be used in virtual environments, gaming platforms, and social media, expanding the scope of fashion consumption.

This shift toward digital commerce reflects broader trends in the digital economy, where virtual goods and experiences hold increasing value. Virtual fashion shows serve as platforms for showcasing these products, enabling brands to explore new revenue streams.

However, the commercialisation of digital fashion also raises questions about value perception and consumer acceptance. The intangible nature of digital goods may affect consumer willingness to pay, requiring effective marketing strategies to communicate their value.

## 5.6 Challenges and Limitations

Despite their advantages, virtual fashion shows face several challenges. Technological limitations, including high production costs and the need for specialised expertise, can be significant barriers to adoption. Additionally, the lack of physical interaction and sensory experience may limit consumer engagement.

Authenticity is another concern, as digital environments may lack the tactile and

emotional qualities associated with physical fashion. Maintaining brand identity and authenticity in virtual contexts requires careful design and strategic alignment.

Finally, the rapid pace of technological change presents ongoing challenges, as brands must continuously adapt to new platforms and consumer expectations.

## 6. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the transformative impact of virtual fashion shows on digital marketing, offering insights into their strategic implications and theoretical significance. By integrating experiential marketing, technology adoption, and user motivation perspectives, this discussion provides a deeper interpretation of the role of virtual fashion shows in the contemporary fashion industry.

### 6.1 Reconfiguration of Fashion Marketing Paradigms

Virtual fashion shows represent a fundamental shift in fashion marketing, moving from product-centric approaches to experience-driven strategies. This shift aligns with the principles of experiential marketing, which emphasise the creation of memorable and engaging experiences (Schmitt, 1999).

The immersive and interactive nature of virtual fashion shows enables brands to engage consumers on multiple levels, including sensory, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. This multidimensional engagement enhances brand perception and fosters deeper connections with consumers.

Moreover, the integration of digital technologies into fashion marketing reflects the broader digital transformation of the industry. Virtual fashion shows are not merely substitutes for physical events but represent a new paradigm that redefines how fashion is presented and consumed.

### 6.2 Consumer Empowerment and Participation

The participatory nature of virtual fashion shows reflects a shift toward consumer empowerment. Unlike traditional fashion shows, which position audiences as passive observers, virtual formats enable active participation and co-creation.

Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1973) provides a useful framework for understanding this shift, as it highlights the active role of consumers in seeking media experiences that fulfil their needs. Virtual fashion shows satisfy various gratifications, including entertainment, social interaction, and self-expression.

This participatory dynamic enhances engagement and loyalty, as consumers feel more connected to brands and their narratives. It also reflects broader trends in digital culture, where user-generated content and community engagement play central roles.

### 6.3 Technology Adoption and User Experience

The adoption of virtual fashion shows is influenced by factors identified in the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989). Perceived usefulness and ease of use are critical determinants of user acceptance,

highlighting the importance of designing user-friendly and accessible platforms.

The findings suggest that while virtual fashion shows offer significant benefits, their success depends on the quality of the user experience. Poorly designed interfaces or technical issues can negatively impact engagement and hinder adoption.

Additionally, perceived enjoyment and immersion play important roles in shaping user attitudes. Interactive and visually appealing experiences can enhance perceived value, increasing the likelihood of continued engagement.

#### **6.4 Tension Between Innovation and Authenticity**

One of the key challenges identified in this study is the tension between technological innovation and authenticity. While virtual fashion shows offer creative freedom and new possibilities, they may also risk undermining the authenticity associated with physical craftsmanship and heritage.

This tension reflects a broader challenge in digital marketing, where brands must balance innovation with consistency and authenticity. Maintaining a coherent brand identity in virtual environments requires careful integration of digital and physical elements.

The concept of “phygital” experiences, which combine physical and digital elements, offers a potential solution. By integrating virtual and physical components, brands can leverage the advantages of both formats while preserving authenticity.

#### **6.5 Strategic Implications for Fashion Brands**

The findings have several strategic implications for fashion brands. First, brands must invest in digital capabilities and technological infrastructure to create high-quality virtual experiences. This includes not only technical expertise but also creative skills in digital storytelling and design.

Second, brands should adopt a consumer-centric approach, focusing on user experience and engagement. This involves understanding consumer preferences and motivations and designing experiences that meet their needs.

Third, the integration of virtual fashion shows with social media and e-commerce platforms is essential for maximising impact. A cohesive digital ecosystem enables seamless interaction and enhances the effectiveness of marketing strategies.

Finally, brands should explore new business models and revenue streams associated with digital fashion, while also addressing challenges related to value perception and consumer acceptance.

#### **6.6 Implications for Future Research**

The study highlights several areas for future research. There is a need for empirical studies that examine the long-term impact of virtual fashion shows on consumer behaviour and brand perception. Additionally, interdisciplinary research that integrates marketing, technology, and cultural perspectives would provide a more

comprehensive understanding of digital fashion.

Future research could also explore the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, in shaping the future of fashion marketing. These technologies have the potential to further enhance personalisation, transparency, and interactivity.

## 7. Conclusion

This study has explored the growing significance of virtual fashion shows as a transformative element within digital marketing strategies in the contemporary fashion industry. Through a qualitative analysis of secondary data, the research has demonstrated that virtual fashion shows are not merely substitutes for traditional runway presentations but represent a fundamental reconfiguration of how fashion is communicated, experienced, and commercialised.

One of the key conclusions is that virtual fashion shows significantly enhance accessibility and global reach, enabling brands to engage with diverse and geographically dispersed audiences. This democratisation of fashion aligns with broader digital marketing objectives and reflects shifting consumer expectations for inclusive and on-demand content. Additionally, the interactive and immersive nature of virtual environments fosters deeper consumer engagement by transforming passive viewing into active participation. This aligns closely with experiential marketing principles, emphasising emotional

connection and memorable brand experiences.

The study also highlights the critical role of technological adoption in shaping user engagement. The effectiveness of virtual fashion shows depends largely on perceived usefulness, ease of use, and overall user experience. While advanced technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality offer significant potential for immersion, their accessibility and usability remain important considerations for widespread adoption.

At the same time, the research identifies several challenges that must be addressed. Issues related to authenticity, sensory limitations, and technological barriers underscore the complexity of transitioning from physical to digital formats. The absence of tactile and physical elements may affect consumer perception, requiring brands to carefully balance innovation with the preservation of core brand identity.

Furthermore, virtual fashion shows open new avenues for commercialisation, particularly through the integration of e-commerce and the emergence of digital fashion assets. These developments suggest a broader shift toward the virtualisation of consumption, where digital goods and experiences play an increasingly important role in the fashion economy.

In conclusion, virtual fashion shows represent a significant evolution in fashion marketing, offering both opportunities and challenges. Their successful implementation requires a strategic approach that integrates technological innovation, consumer-centred

design, and coherent brand storytelling. Future research should build on these findings by examining long-term consumer behaviour and exploring the implications of emerging technologies for the future of fashion marketing.

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