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Understanding Consumer Loyalty to Fashion Brands through Thematic Analysis of Online Reviews

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Consumer loyalty in the fashion industry has become increasingly complex in the digital era, where online reviews play a central role in shaping consumer perceptions and decision-making. This study investigates the determinants of consumer loyalty to fashion brands through a qualitative thematic analysis of online reviews collected from major e-commerce and review platforms. Drawing on Brand Loyalty Theory, Customer Satisfaction Theory, and Social Identity Theory, the research identifies key dimensions influencing loyalty, including perceived product quality, brand identity, emotional attachment, customer experience, and ethical considerations. The findings reveal that consumer loyalty is a multidimensional construct shaped by the interaction of functional, emotional, symbolic, and value-based factors. In particular, ethical and sustainability concerns have emerged as significant drivers of loyalty, reflecting a shift toward more conscious consumption patterns. The study contributes to existing literature by providing a comprehensive qualitative perspective on consumer loyalty and highlighting the importance of digital consumer insights. The findings offer practical implications for fashion brands seeking to enhance customer retention through integrated strategies that emphasise quality, authenticity, and ethical responsibility.

Keywords: consumer loyalty, fashion brands, online reviews, thematic analysis, brand identity, customer experience, sustainability.

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1. Introduction

The global fashion industry has evolved into a highly competitive and dynamic marketplace characterised by rapid trend cycles, digital transformation, and increasingly empowered consumers. In recent years, the proliferation of e-commerce platforms and social media has significantly altered how consumers interact with fashion brands. Among the most influential developments in this digital ecosystem is the rise of online consumer reviews, which serve as a critical source of information for prospective buyers and a strategic feedback mechanism for brands (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). As a result, understanding the role of online reviews in shaping consumer loyalty has become an essential area of inquiry within contemporary marketing and consumer behaviour research.

Consumer loyalty is widely recognised as a cornerstone of long-term business success. It is typically conceptualised as a deeply held commitment to repurchase a preferred product or service consistently over time, despite situational influences and marketing efforts by competitors (Oliver, 1999). In the context of fashion, however, loyalty is particularly complex due to the interplay of functional, symbolic, and emotional dimensions. Unlike utilitarian products, fashion items are often used as tools of self-expression and identity construction, making consumer-brand relationships more nuanced and multifaceted (Keller, 2001; Thomson et al., 2005).

The emergence of online reviews has added a new layer of complexity to this relationship. Online reviews, often categorised as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), provide consumers with access to peer-generated information about product quality, brand reputation, and overall customer experience (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). These reviews are typically perceived as more credible and trustworthy than traditional advertising, as they reflect the authentic experiences of other consumers (Filieri, 2015). Consequently, online reviews not only influence purchase decisions but also play a significant role in shaping long-term perceptions of brands.

In the fashion industry, where sensory experience and physical evaluation are traditionally important, the reliance on online reviews is particularly noteworthy. Consumers frequently depend on detailed textual descriptions and ratings to compensate for the inability to physically examine products before purchase. Reviews often include information about fabric quality, fit, durability, and style, as well as service-related aspects such as delivery time and return policies. This rich and unstructured data provides valuable insights into consumer expectations, satisfaction levels, and loyalty behaviours.

Despite the growing importance of online reviews, much of the existing research on consumer loyalty has relied on quantitative methods, focusing on measurable variables such as purchase frequency, satisfaction scores, and brand equity indices (Aaker, 1991; Oliver, 1980). While these approaches offer valuable generalisations, they may overlook the depth and complexity of

consumer experiences expressed in qualitative data. In contrast, qualitative methods such as thematic analysis enable researchers to explore underlying meanings, emotions, and patterns within textual data, providing a more holistic understanding of consumer behaviour (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This study addresses this gap by employing a qualitative thematic analysis of online reviews to explore the determinants of consumer loyalty to fashion brands. By analysing secondary data from online platforms, the research seeks to identify recurring themes and patterns that reflect how consumers perceive and evaluate fashion brands. The use of secondary data not only allows for the examination of a large volume of naturally occurring consumer expressions but also enhances the ecological validity of the findings.

Furthermore, this study integrates key theoretical perspectives, including Brand Loyalty Theory, Customer Satisfaction Theory, and Social Identity Theory, to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding consumer loyalty. Brand Loyalty Theory emphasises the importance of repeat purchasing behaviour and psychological commitment (Aaker, 1991), while Customer Satisfaction Theory highlights the role of expectation-performance comparisons in shaping satisfaction and loyalty (Oliver, 1980). Social Identity Theory, on the other hand, underscores the symbolic role of brands in expressing individual and group identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Together, these theories offer a multidimensional lens

through which consumer loyalty can be examined.

The objectives of this study are threefold. First, it aims to identify the key themes that influence consumer loyalty as expressed in online fashion reviews. Second, it seeks to analyse how these themes correspond to established theoretical constructs. Third, it aims to develop a conceptual model that captures the multidimensional nature of consumer loyalty in the digital fashion context.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to both academic literature and managerial practice. From a theoretical perspective, the study advances the understanding of consumer loyalty by incorporating qualitative insights and integrating multiple theoretical frameworks. From a practical standpoint, the findings provide valuable guidance for fashion brands seeking to enhance customer retention and build strong, lasting relationships with their consumers. In an era where consumer voices are amplified through digital platforms, leveraging insights from online reviews can serve as a powerful tool for strategic decision-making.

In conclusion, this study positions online reviews as a critical lens through which consumer loyalty can be understood in the contemporary fashion industry. By adopting a qualitative approach and grounding the analysis in established theories, the research offers a nuanced and comprehensive perspective on the factors that drive loyalty in an increasingly digital and consumer-centric marketplace.

2. Literature Review

Consumer loyalty has been a central topic in marketing research for several decades, with scholars offering various definitions and conceptual frameworks. Early studies conceptualised loyalty primarily in behavioural terms, focusing on repeat purchase patterns and brand choice consistency (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973). However, this perspective was later expanded to include attitudinal dimensions, recognising that true loyalty involves not only repeated behaviour but also psychological commitment and emotional attachment (Oliver, 1999).

Oliver (1999) proposed a four-stage model of loyalty development, consisting of cognitive, affective, conative, and action loyalty. This model suggests that loyalty evolves from rational evaluation to emotional attachment and ultimately to a committed intention to repurchase. In the fashion context, this progression is particularly relevant, as consumers often form emotional bonds with brands that align with their personal style and identity.

Aaker (1991) further contributed to the understanding of loyalty by incorporating it into the broader concept of brand equity. According to Aaker, brand loyalty represents a key dimension of brand equity, as it reflects the strength of the relationship between consumers and brands. High levels of loyalty not only ensure stable revenue streams but also reduce marketing costs and enhance competitive advantage.

2.1 Consumer Loyalty in the Fashion Industry

The fashion industry presents a unique context for studying consumer loyalty due to its emphasis on aesthetics, symbolism, and rapid change. Unlike functional products, fashion items are often consumed for their symbolic value, serving as expressions of identity, status, and social belonging (Keller, 2001). As a result, loyalty in fashion is influenced by both tangible product attributes and intangible brand associations.

Thomson et al. (2005) highlighted the importance of emotional attachment in consumer-brand relationships, particularly in categories such as fashion, where personal expression is central. Emotional attachment can lead to strong loyalty even in the presence of competitive alternatives, as consumers develop a sense of connection and trust with the brand.

However, the fast-paced nature of fashion trends can also challenge loyalty. Consumers may switch brands frequently in response to changing styles, price promotions, or social influences. This phenomenon has led researchers to explore the concept of “situational loyalty,” where loyalty is contingent on specific contexts rather than being stable over time (Dick & Basu, 1994).

2.2 The Role of Online Reviews and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

The rise of digital technologies has transformed the way consumers access and share information. Online reviews, a form of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), have

become a dominant source of consumer information in the digital marketplace (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Unlike traditional word-of-mouth, eWOM is characterised by its scalability, permanence, and accessibility.

Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) demonstrated the significant impact of online reviews on product sales, highlighting the persuasive power of peer-generated content. Similarly, Filieri (2015) found that the perceived credibility and usefulness of online reviews strongly influence consumer trust and purchase intentions.

In the fashion industry, online reviews play a particularly important role due to the experiential nature of products. Reviews often provide detailed descriptions of product attributes, such as fit, material, and comfort, which are difficult to assess through images alone. Additionally, reviews offer insights into service-related aspects, such as shipping efficiency and customer support, which contribute to overall satisfaction.

2.3 Thematic Analysis in Consumer Research

Thematic analysis has emerged as a widely used qualitative method for analysing textual data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It offers flexibility and can be applied across various theoretical frameworks, making it particularly suitable for exploratory research.

In the context of online reviews, thematic analysis allows researchers to uncover underlying meanings and sentiments

expressed by consumers. Unlike quantitative methods, which focus on numerical data, thematic analysis captures the richness and complexity of consumer experiences. This makes it an ideal approach for studying constructs such as loyalty, which involve emotional and symbolic dimensions.

2.4 Theoretical Perspectives on Consumer Loyalty

Brand Loyalty Theory: Brand Loyalty Theory emphasises the importance of repeat purchasing behaviour and psychological commitment (Aaker, 1991). It suggests that loyal customers are less sensitive to price changes and more likely to recommend the brand to others. In the digital context, loyalty is also reflected in positive online reviews and brand advocacy.

Customer Satisfaction Theory: Customer Satisfaction Theory is rooted in the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm, which posits that satisfaction is determined by the comparison between expectations and actual performance (Oliver, 1980). When performance exceeds expectations, positive disconfirmation occurs, leading to satisfaction and increased likelihood of loyalty.

In online reviews, expressions of satisfaction or dissatisfaction provide valuable insights into this evaluative process. Positive reviews often highlight instances where expectations were met or exceeded, while negative reviews point to gaps between expectations and reality.

Social Identity Theory: Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) provides a sociological perspective on consumer

behaviour, suggesting that individuals derive a sense of identity from their membership in social groups. Brands can serve as symbols of these identities, allowing consumers to express their values, beliefs, and affiliations.

In the fashion industry, this is particularly evident, as consumers often choose brands that reflect their desired image or lifestyle. Online reviews frequently include references to how products make consumers feel or how they are perceived by others, highlighting the role of identity in shaping loyalty.

2.5 Research Gap

Despite the extensive literature on consumer loyalty and online reviews, there remains a gap in understanding how loyalty is constructed through qualitative consumer expressions. Most studies have relied on quantitative methods, which may not fully capture the complexity of consumer experiences and perceptions.

This study addresses this gap by employing thematic analysis to explore online reviews as a rich source of qualitative data. By integrating multiple theoretical perspectives, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of consumer loyalty in the digital fashion context.

3. Theoretical Framework

Understanding consumer loyalty in the contemporary fashion industry requires a multidimensional theoretical approach that captures both behavioural and psychological dimensions of consumer behaviour. This study integrates three complementary theoretical perspectives-Brand Loyalty Theory, Customer Satisfaction Theory, and

Social Identity Theory-to develop a comprehensive framework for analysing how loyalty is constructed and expressed through online reviews. These theories collectively explain how functional performance, emotional evaluation, and identity-related factors interact to shape consumer loyalty in a digital environment.

3.1 Brand Loyalty Theory

Brand Loyalty Theory provides a foundational framework for understanding repeat purchasing behaviour and long-term commitment to a brand. According to Aaker (1991), brand loyalty is a core component of brand equity, reflecting the strength of the relationship between a consumer and a brand. Loyal consumers exhibit a consistent preference for a brand over alternatives, often accompanied by positive attitudes and advocacy behaviours.

Oliver (1999) further conceptualised loyalty as a deeply held commitment to repurchase a preferred product or service despite situational influences and marketing efforts by competitors. His four-stage model-cognitive, affective, conative, and action loyalty-highlights the progression from rational evaluation to emotional attachment and behavioural intention. In the fashion context, this progression is particularly relevant, as consumers often begin by evaluating product attributes such as quality and price, but over time develop emotional and symbolic connections with the brand.

In the digital era, brand loyalty is increasingly expressed through online behaviours, including positive reviews, ratings, and recommendations. These forms

of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) not only reflect loyalty but also contribute to its reinforcement by influencing other consumers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Thus, Brand Loyalty Theory provides a useful lens for interpreting how repeated positive experiences and consistent brand performance contribute to loyalty as observed in online review data.

3.2 Customer Satisfaction Theory

Customer Satisfaction Theory is another critical component of the theoretical framework, emphasising the evaluative processes that underpin consumer loyalty. Rooted in the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm, this theory posits that satisfaction is determined by the comparison between consumers' expectations and the actual performance of a product or service (Oliver, 1980). When performance meets or exceeds expectations, positive disconfirmation occurs, leading to satisfaction; when it falls short, negative disconfirmation results in dissatisfaction.

Satisfaction is widely recognised as a key antecedent of loyalty. Satisfied consumers are more likely to engage in repeat purchasing and to develop favourable attitudes toward a brand (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). In the context of online reviews, expressions of satisfaction or dissatisfaction provide direct insights into consumers' evaluative judgments. Positive reviews often highlight aspects such as product quality, comfort, and service efficiency, indicating that expectations have been met or exceeded. Conversely, negative reviews typically point to discrepancies

between expected and actual performance, which can undermine loyalty.

In the fashion industry, satisfaction is influenced not only by functional attributes but also by experiential factors such as shopping convenience, delivery speed, and customer service. These aspects are frequently discussed in online reviews, making them critical components of the thematic analysis. By incorporating Customer Satisfaction Theory, this study is able to link observed themes in review data to underlying evaluative processes that drive loyalty.

3.3 Social Identity Theory

While Brand Loyalty Theory and Customer Satisfaction Theory focus primarily on behavioural and evaluative dimensions, Social Identity Theory provides a sociopsychological perspective on consumer behaviour. According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), individuals derive a sense of identity and self-concept from their membership in social groups. This identity is often expressed through symbols, including brands, which serve as markers of personal values, beliefs, and social affiliations.

In the fashion industry, the role of identity is particularly pronounced. Fashion brands are not merely providers of clothing but also vehicles for self-expression and social positioning. Consumers often choose brands that align with their desired image, whether it be luxury, sustainability, minimalism, or trendiness (Keller, 2001). As a result, loyalty is not only a function of satisfaction but also of identity congruence.

Online reviews frequently contain references to identity-related factors, such as how a product makes the consumer feel or how it is perceived by others. For example, reviewers may express pride in wearing a particular brand or emphasise its alignment with their ethical values. These expressions highlight the symbolic and emotional dimensions of loyalty, which are central to Social Identity Theory.

3.4 Integrated Theoretical Model

The integration of these three theories provides a holistic framework for understanding consumer loyalty in the digital fashion context. Brand Loyalty Theory explains the behavioural manifestation of loyalty, Customer Satisfaction Theory elucidates the evaluative processes that lead to loyalty, and Social Identity Theory captures the symbolic and emotional dimensions.

Together, these perspectives suggest that consumer loyalty is shaped by the interaction of multiple factors, including:

- Functional value (e.g., product quality and performance)
- Evaluative judgment (e.g., satisfaction and expectation fulfilment)
- Emotional connection (e.g., attachment and trust)
- Identity alignment (e.g., self-expression and social belonging)

This integrated framework guides the thematic analysis of online reviews, enabling the identification and interpretation of key themes that reflect these dimensions. It also provides a theoretical basis for developing a

conceptual model of consumer loyalty that is both comprehensive and contextually relevant to the fashion industry.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore consumer loyalty to fashion brands through the analysis of online reviews. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for investigating complex and context-dependent phenomena, as it allows for an in-depth understanding of meanings, experiences, and social processes (Creswell, 2014). Given the exploratory nature of this study, a qualitative approach enables the identification of patterns and themes that may not be captured through quantitative methods.

The research is based on secondary data, specifically user-generated online reviews. Secondary data analysis offers several advantages, including access to large volumes of naturally occurring data and the ability to study real-world consumer behaviour without the influence of researcher intervention (Johnston, 2017). In the context of this study, online reviews provide rich textual data that reflect authentic consumer experiences and perceptions.

4.1 Data Source and Sampling

The data for this study were collected from publicly accessible online platforms, including e-commerce websites and fashion review forums. These platforms were selected because they host a large number of consumer reviews covering various fashion brands and product categories.

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select relevant reviews. Purposive sampling involves selecting data that are particularly informative for the research objectives (Patton, 2002). The following criteria were used for inclusion:

- Reviews must contain detailed descriptions of consumer experiences
- Reviews must reference brand perceptions or repeat purchase intentions
- Reviews must represent a range of perspectives, including both positive and negative evaluations

Approximately 500 reviews were selected for analysis, ensuring sufficient depth and diversity of data.

4.2 Data Analysis Method: Thematic Analysis

The study employs thematic analysis as the primary method of data analysis. Thematic analysis is a flexible and widely used qualitative method for identifying and interpreting patterns within textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is particularly well-suited for analysing online reviews, as it allows for the systematic examination of large volumes of unstructured data.

The analysis followed the six-phase process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006):

Phase 1: Familiarisation with Data: The researcher engaged in repeated reading of the reviews to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content and context.

Phase 2: Initial Coding: Relevant segments of text were coded based on their meaning

and relevance to consumer loyalty. Codes were generated inductively from the data rather than being predefined.

Phase 3: Searching for Themes: Codes were grouped into broader categories to identify potential themes. For example, codes related to product durability, material quality, and comfort were grouped under “perceived product quality.”

Phase 4: Reviewing Themes: Themes were reviewed and refined to ensure coherence and consistency. This involved checking whether the themes accurately represented the data and whether they were distinct from each other.

Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes: Each theme was clearly defined and labelled to reflect its core meaning. This step ensured clarity and interpretability.

Phase 6: Producing the Report: The final step involved integrating the themes into a coherent narrative, supported by theoretical insights and illustrative examples.

4.3 Trustworthiness and Rigour

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the findings, several strategies were employed:

- **Credibility:** Prolonged engagement with the data and iterative analysis enhanced the depth and accuracy of interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
- **Dependability:** A clear and transparent analytical process was maintained, allowing for replication and verification.

- **Confirmability:** The analysis was grounded in the data, with themes supported by multiple examples.
- **Transferability:** Detailed descriptions of the research context and methodology enable readers to assess the applicability of the findings to other settings.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving secondary data. All data were obtained from publicly available sources, and no personal or identifiable information was included in the analysis. The anonymity of reviewers was preserved, and the data were used solely for academic purposes (Mannan & Farhana, 2026).

4.5 Limitations of the Methodology

While the use of online reviews provides valuable insights, it also presents certain limitations. First, the data may be subject to self-selection bias, as individuals who leave reviews may not be representative of the broader consumer population. Second, the authenticity of online reviews cannot always be verified, raising concerns about potential manipulation or fake reviews (Filieri, 2015). Third, the absence of demographic information limits the ability to analyse differences across consumer segments.

Despite these limitations, the methodology offers a robust approach to exploring consumer loyalty in a real-world digital context. By leveraging qualitative analysis of secondary data, the study provides rich and nuanced insights into the factors that shape consumer loyalty in the fashion industry.

5. Findings and Analysis

The thematic analysis of approximately 500 online consumer reviews revealed a complex and multidimensional structure of consumer loyalty to fashion brands. Through systematic coding and categorisation, five overarching themes emerged: perceived product quality, brand identity and symbolic value, emotional attachment and trust, customer experience and service interactions, and ethical and sustainability considerations. These themes are not independent; rather, they interact dynamically to shape consumer loyalty in the digital fashion landscape.

5.1 Perceived Product Quality as a Foundational Driver

Perceived product quality emerged as the most frequently mentioned and foundational determinant of consumer loyalty. Reviewers consistently referred to attributes such as fabric quality, durability, stitching precision, fit accuracy, and comfort. Positive evaluations of these attributes often led to expressions of repeat purchase intention and long-term commitment to the brand.

Consumers frequently used phrases such as “consistent quality,” “worth the price,” and “reliable fit,” indicating that quality serves as a baseline expectation. When this expectation is met or exceeded, it reinforces satisfaction and trust, consistent with the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm (Oliver, 1980). Conversely, negative experiences with product quality, such as poor material, inaccurate sizing, or rapid wear and tear, were strongly associated with dissatisfaction and brand switching.

Interestingly, the analysis revealed that perceived quality is not purely objective but is shaped by expectations and prior experiences. For example, consumers often compared current purchases with previous ones, suggesting that consistency over time is critical for maintaining loyalty. This aligns with Brand Loyalty Theory, which emphasises the importance of consistent performance in building trust and commitment (Aaker, 1991).

Moreover, quality perceptions were often linked to price considerations. Consumers expressed a willingness to pay premium prices for brands that consistently delivered high quality, indicating a perceived value relationship. This suggests that quality not only drives satisfaction but also enhances perceived brand equity.

5.2 Brand Identity and Symbolic Value

The second major theme relates to the symbolic role of fashion brands in shaping consumer identity. Many reviewers described brands in terms of lifestyle, image, and social positioning. For instance, brands were associated with descriptors such as “elegant,” “minimalist,” “eco-conscious,” or “trendy,” reflecting their symbolic meanings.

Consumers often expressed loyalty to brands that aligned with their self-concept or aspirational identity. For example, individuals who valued sustainability showed strong attachment to brands perceived as environmentally responsible. Similarly, consumers seeking social recognition preferred brands associated with prestige or exclusivity.

This theme strongly supports Social Identity Theory, which posits that individuals use brands as symbols to express their identity and group affiliation (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Online reviews frequently contained statements indicating identity congruence, such as “this brand fits my style perfectly” or “I feel confident wearing this.”

Additionally, brand identity influenced how consumers interpreted their experiences. Positive experiences were often amplified when they aligned with the consumer’s identity, while negative experiences were sometimes rationalised or overlooked if the brand held strong symbolic value. This suggests that identity can act as a buffer against dissatisfaction, reinforcing loyalty even in the presence of minor issues.

5.3 Emotional Attachment and Trust

Emotional attachment emerged as a critical factor in sustaining long-term loyalty. Many reviewers expressed deep emotional connections with brands, often using language associated with affection, nostalgia, and personal significance. For example, some consumers described brands as “my favourite,” “go-to,” or “a part of my life.”

Trust was a central component of this emotional attachment. Consumers valued brands that consistently met their expectations and demonstrated reliability. Trust was often built over time through repeated positive experiences, aligning with the affective and conative stages of loyalty described by Oliver (1999).

The analysis also revealed that emotional attachment can mitigate the impact of

negative experiences. For instance, loyal customers were more forgiving of occasional product or service failures, indicating a strong relational bond. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that emotional attachment enhances resilience in consumer-brand relationships (Thomson et al., 2005).

Furthermore, emotional attachment was closely linked to storytelling and brand narratives. Consumers who resonated with a brand's story or values were more likely to develop a personal connection, highlighting the importance of emotional branding strategies.

5.4 Customer Experience and Service Interactions

Customer experience, encompassing both online and offline interactions, was another significant determinant of loyalty. Reviews frequently discussed aspects such as website usability, delivery speed, packaging, return policies, and customer service responsiveness.

Positive experiences in these areas contributed to overall satisfaction and reinforced loyalty. For example, fast and reliable delivery was often cited as a reason for repeat purchases. Similarly, responsive and helpful customer service enhanced trust and perceived brand reliability.

Conversely, negative service experiences—such as delayed shipping, poor communication, or complicated return processes—were major sources of dissatisfaction. In some cases, these issues outweighed positive product attributes,

leading to negative reviews and reduced loyalty.

This finding highlights the importance of a holistic approach to customer experience, where both product and service quality are integrated. It also aligns with Customer Satisfaction Theory, which emphasises the role of overall experience in shaping satisfaction and loyalty (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993).

5.5 Ethical and Sustainability Considerations

A notable and increasingly prominent theme was the importance of ethical and sustainability considerations. Many consumers expressed concern about environmental impact, labour practices, and corporate responsibility.

Reviews indicated that consumers were more likely to remain loyal to brands that demonstrated transparency and commitment to ethical practices. For example, brands that used sustainable materials or supported fair labour practices were viewed more favourably.

This trend reflects a broader shift in consumer values, where ethical considerations are becoming integral to purchasing decisions. It also suggests that loyalty is no longer driven solely by functional and emotional factors but also by moral alignment.

Interestingly, some consumers actively researched brands before making purchases, indicating a proactive approach to ethical consumption. This highlights the role of

information accessibility in shaping consumer behaviour in the digital age.

5.6 Interrelationships Among Themes

The analysis revealed that these themes are highly interconnected. For example, perceived quality influences satisfaction, which in turn affects emotional attachment and trust. Similarly, brand identity and ethical values contribute to emotional connection and reinforce loyalty.

This interconnectedness suggests that consumer loyalty is a holistic construct, shaped by multiple interacting dimensions. Brands that excel in one area but fail in others may struggle to maintain long-term loyalty.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of consumer loyalty in the contemporary fashion industry. By integrating insights from thematic analysis with established theoretical frameworks, the discussion highlights the multidimensional and dynamic nature of loyalty in a digital context.

6.1 Reinterpreting Consumer Loyalty in the Digital Era

Traditional models of consumer loyalty have often emphasised behavioural consistency and repeat purchasing (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973). However, the findings of this study suggest that loyalty in the fashion industry extends beyond mere behaviour to encompass emotional, symbolic, and ethical dimensions.

The prominence of online reviews as a data source underscores the importance of digital interactions in shaping consumer perceptions. Unlike traditional surveys, online reviews capture spontaneous and authentic expressions of consumer experiences, providing a richer understanding of loyalty.

6.2 Integration of Theoretical Perspectives

The integration of Brand Loyalty Theory, Customer Satisfaction Theory, and Social Identity Theory offers a robust framework for interpreting the findings. Each theory contributes a distinct perspective:

- Brand Loyalty Theory explains the behavioural outcomes of loyalty, such as repeat purchases and advocacy (Aaker, 1991).
- Customer Satisfaction Theory elucidates the evaluative processes that lead to loyalty (Oliver, 1980).
- Social Identity Theory highlights the symbolic and emotional dimensions of loyalty (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The findings demonstrate that these dimensions are not isolated but interact synergistically. For example, satisfaction with product quality enhances emotional attachment, which in turn reinforces behavioural loyalty.

6.3 The Central Role of Experience and Emotion

One of the key insights from this study is the central role of experience and emotion in shaping loyalty. While functional attributes such as quality remain important, they are

insufficient on their own to sustain loyalty in a competitive market.

Emotional attachment and trust emerged as critical mediators between satisfaction and loyalty. This supports the notion that consumer-brand relationships are relational rather than transactional (Thomson et al., 2005). Brands that successfully create emotional connections are more likely to retain customers and foster long-term loyalty.

6.4 The Emergence of Ethical Loyalty

The growing importance of ethical and sustainability considerations represents a significant shift in consumer behaviour. This finding aligns with recent research highlighting the rise of conscious consumerism, where consumers prioritise ethical values in their purchasing decisions (Filieri, 2015).

Ethical loyalty can be understood as a form of value-based commitment, where consumers remain loyal to brands that align with their moral beliefs. This adds a new dimension to traditional loyalty models, suggesting that ethical considerations should be integrated into theoretical frameworks.

6.5 Managerial Implications

The findings have several important implications for fashion brands:

- **Focus on Consistent Quality:** Maintaining high and consistent product quality is essential for building trust and satisfaction.
- **Strengthen Brand Identity:** Developing a clear and authentic

brand identity can enhance emotional connection and differentiation.

- **Enhance Customer Experience:** Investing in seamless and responsive service can significantly impact loyalty.
- **Embrace Sustainability:** Demonstrating commitment to ethical practices can attract and retain value-driven consumers.

6.6 Contribution to Literature

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it provides a qualitative perspective on consumer loyalty, addressing a gap in predominantly quantitative research. Second, it integrates multiple theoretical frameworks to offer a comprehensive understanding of loyalty. Third, it highlights the importance of digital data sources in consumer research.

6.7 Limitations and Future Research

While the study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The reliance on secondary data may limit control over data quality, and the absence of demographic information restricts the analysis of consumer segments. Future research could incorporate primary data or adopt a mixed-methods approach to validate and extend the findings.

7. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive examination of consumer loyalty to fashion brands through the lens of online reviews, offering both theoretical and practical insights into the evolving nature of

consumer-brand relationships in the digital age. By employing a qualitative thematic analysis of secondary data, the research captures authentic consumer experiences and identifies the key factors that shape loyalty in a highly competitive and dynamic industry.

The findings demonstrate that consumer loyalty is not a singular or static construct but a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by the interaction of functional, emotional, symbolic, and ethical dimensions. Perceived product quality remains a foundational driver of loyalty, reinforcing the importance of consistent performance and reliability. However, the study also reveals that emotional attachment and brand identity play equally significant roles, as consumers increasingly seek brands that align with their personal values and self-concept. This highlights the relevance of Social Identity Theory in understanding contemporary fashion consumption.

Furthermore, customer experience emerges as a critical determinant of loyalty, encompassing both product-related and service-related interactions. Seamless and positive experiences enhance satisfaction and trust, while negative encounters can undermine even strong brand relationships. In addition, the growing importance of ethical and sustainability considerations reflects a broader shift toward value-driven consumption, where consumers prioritise brands that demonstrate social and environmental responsibility.

The integration of Brand Loyalty Theory, Customer Satisfaction Theory, and Social Identity Theory provides a robust framework for interpreting these findings, emphasising

the interconnected nature of behavioural, evaluative, and symbolic dimensions of loyalty. This holistic perspective contributes to the academic literature by offering a nuanced understanding of loyalty formation in the digital fashion context.

From a managerial standpoint, the study underscores the need for fashion brands to adopt a multidimensional approach to customer retention. Strategies should focus not only on delivering high-quality products but also on fostering emotional connections, enhancing customer experiences, and demonstrating ethical commitment. By leveraging insights from online reviews, brands can better understand consumer expectations and adapt their strategies accordingly.

In conclusion, this research highlights the transformative impact of digital platforms on consumer behaviour and underscores the importance of integrating qualitative insights into the study of consumer loyalty. Future research may extend this work by incorporating cross-cultural comparisons or mixed-method approaches to further validate and enrich the findings.

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