

The Rise of Social Media: Challenging Fashion Capital's Influence on Fashion Consciousness

Exploring the Shifting Dynamics of Fashion Influence in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

The ever-increasing rise of social media has sparked a debate about whether fashion capitals are facing a decreasing impact on the fashion industry and the fashion consciousness of individuals due to social media exposure. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore and compare the individual effects of social media exposure through online exposure to fashion, and fashion cities, with fashion being embedded in the assets of a city, on an individual's fashion consciousness. This investigation focuses on two dimensions of social media exposure, namely the amount of exposure (*i.e.*, how much time people spend on social media) and social media platform frequency (*i.e.*, how often people use social networking sites). Through the incorporation of existing theories on fashion capitals and social media exposure and conducting a survey with participants from Paris and Rotterdam ($N = 156$), this study has contributed to the debate.

The findings indicate that both online exposure to fashion content and exposure to fashion in one's city of residence have an impact on fashion consciousness, with the influence of online fashion content surpassing the offline impact of fashion in cities. Fashion capitals appear to be losing their hand in the rules of fashionability and influencing consumers, as individuals from Rotterdam in this study were more fashion-conscious than those from Paris. Moreover, the relationship between one's place of residence and the extent to which they are exposed to fashion in the city was proven to be insignificant. Noticeable is that this study contradicted the assumption of recent studies that fashion cities are unlikely to lose their oligarchical power as an essential part of the concept and fundamental structure of fashion. Additionally, this study found that fashion expenditure holds a relationship with fashion consciousness, a reasonable yet new finding. This study has contributed to the existing body of literature by providing numerous significant and useful observations in its investigation of the subject. Using this present study as a foundation, future researchers can examine additional elements that may affect the current debate.

KEYWORDS: *Fashion consciousness, Fashion capitals, Social Media Exposure, Online Fashion Content, Fashion Week*

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Theoretical Framework.....	7
2.1 <i>Fashion Consciousness.....</i>	7
2.2 <i>Social Media.....</i>	8
2.2.1 Social Media Exposure	9
2.2.2 Online Exposure to Fashion Content	10
2.3 <i>Offline Exposure to Fashion in Cities.....</i>	11
2.4 <i>Theoretical Debate: Online vs. Offline exposure to fashion.....</i>	13
2.5 <i>Summary.....</i>	15
3. Methodology	16
3.1 <i>Research Design</i>	16
3.2 <i>Sample.....</i>	17
3.3 <i>Procedure.....</i>	17
3.4 <i>Operationalization</i>	18
3.4.1 Demographic variables	18
3.4.2 Social media exposure	19
3.4.3 Fashion Consciousness	20
3.4.4 City Fashion Exposure	20
3.4.5 Online Fashion Content Exposure	20
3.5 <i>Data Analysis.....</i>	21
3.6 <i>Validity and Reliability</i>	21
3.7 <i>Research Ethics.....</i>	22
4. Results	23
4.1 <i>Respondents</i>	23
4.2 <i>Social Media Exposure</i>	25
4.3 <i>Fashion Consciousness.....</i>	26
4.3.1 Fashion Consciousness & Gender	27
4.3.2 Fashion Consciousness & Age.....	27
4.3.3 Fashion Consciousness & Place of Residence.....	27
4.3.4 Fashion Consciousness & Educational Level	28
4.3.5 Fashion Consciousness & Fashion Expenditure	28

4.4 Hypothesis Testing	29
4.4.1 Social Media Exposure, Online Exposure to Fashion Content, and Fashion Consciousness	29
4.4.2 Place of Residence, City Fashion Exposure, and Fashion Consciousness..	30
4.4.3 Online Exposure to Fashion Content compared to City Exposure to Fashion	30
4.5 Summary	31
5. Discussion and Conclusion	33
5.1 Key Findings	33
5.2 Theoretical and Societal Implications	36
5.3 Research Strengths.....	38
5.4 Research Limitations and Future Research Suggestions.....	38
5.5 Conclusion	40
References	41
Appendix A Questionnaire.....	46

1. Introduction

In the year 2021, approximately 168.4 billion apparel products were consumed worldwide (Statista, 2022). Moreover, the Statista Consumer Market Outlook predicts that this value will continue to increase over the ensuing years, reaching an impressive 197.3 billion items in 2026 (Statista, 2022). Due to the expansion of the fashion industry, the fast fashion business model which aims to produce new, stylish, yet affordable clothing items is bolstered, requiring fashion consumers to respond rapidly to emerging fashion trends and frequently update their wardrobes (Michaela, 2015). Many individuals are committed to spending money in response to changes in fashion, which is reflected in the fact that the average adult spends 5% of their monthly income on fashion products (Collings, 2014). This is guided by the idea that being fashion-conscious, which is defined as having an interest in clothing, fashion, and appearance, and adhering to fashion trends, is highly valued in society (Gul et al., 2014).

For decades, cultural cities have been influential in the design, manufacturing, distribution, marketing, and retailing of fashion products. As the world's first fashion capital, Paris holds the reputation of being the prime center of fashionability and the home to inspirational design and fashion-conscious individuals (Antoniadou, 2022; Breward, 2010). Through hosting cyclical events such as fashion weeks, as well as the incorporation of fashion in the cultural assets of the city, Paris disseminates knowledge and imagery about fashion (Zhang et al., 2022). Additionally, Zhang et al. (2022) state that the acceleration of globalization has contributed to this manner, as Parisian fashion trends are increasingly traveling across national boundaries. This strengthens the influence the fashion capital has on global fashion trends (Zhang et al., 2022).

Yet, alongside globalization positively impacting the noticeable presence of fashion capitals, it has also given rise to the impact of social media (Ahmad et al., 2015). Social media has evolved into a social trendsetter in the current digital era as individuals spend an increasing amount of time online (Chu & Seock, 2020). Social media platforms are becoming the most significant source of fashion information in addition to being considered to be the most successful marketing technique for fashion businesses (Chu & Seock, 2020). With social media disseminating online fashion content containing fashion information and trends, and one's exposure to this constantly increasing, it is expected that social media exposure is impacting fashion consciousness in this manner.

Due to the ever-increasing rise of social media and its increasing involvement in the fashion industry (Ahmad et al., 2015), some question whether fashion capitals will remain impactful in the creation and dissemination of global fashion trends, and as a result in influencing the fashion consciousness of individuals (Breward, 2010; Zhang et al., 2022). Globalization has undoubtedly engendered new trends in the global fashion industry. On the one hand by weakening geographical boundaries, thus broadening opportunities for fashion capitals to disseminate fashion knowledge and imagery and influence fashion consciousness worldwide (Zhang et al., 2022). Yet on the other hand by accelerating the decoupling between physical and symbolic fashion production through the advancement of information and communication technologies (Shetty et al., 2015). This study aims to contribute insights into the debate about whether fashion capitals are facing a decreasing impact on the fashion industry and the fashion consciousness of individuals due to social media exposure. To achieve this, the separate influences of social media exposure through online exposure to fashion, and fashion as embedded in the assets of a city on an individuals' fashion consciousness will be investigated and compared to detect whether one is more impactful. Additionally, Gul et al. (2014) suggested that future research on fashion consciousness should adopt a cross-cultural research design. Therefore, this study will be comparing individuals from Paris, which is reported as the fashion capital and subjectively most fashion-conscious city worldwide, and Rotterdam, as this vibrant and diverse city is renowned for its dynamic and global character, yet despite its cosmopolitan atmosphere, the fashion scene is not very prominent in this city (Rocamora, 2009; Zhang et al., 2022). Additionally, Rotterdam was selected due to accessibility considerations to research subjects, with it being the location of the conducted study.

Thus, the current debate on whether or not fashion cities are having a decreased influence on individual's fashion consciousness due to social media exposure has not been resolved. This study will contribute insights into this debate by answering the following research question: *"To what degree do social media exposure and cities influence fashion consciousness?"*.

Not only is this research of academic relevance but it is also expected to add value to society. Firstly, fashion significantly affects people's lifestyles and expenditures, as many individuals spend money in response to fashion changes (Collings, 2014; Gul et al., 2014). However, frequent changes in the fashion world and people's urge to adapt to these might result in lifestyle modifications or, more severely, financial issues. It is crucial to comprehend how fashion consciousness is impacted to evaluate if this may engender expenditure issues,

especially in urban areas like Paris, where contact with fashion is inevitable (Antoniadou, 2022). Additionally, when the population's fashion consciousness significantly increases, to which social media exposure and fashion cities may contribute, clothing production and distribution may increase accordingly. According to McNeill and Moore (2015), many segments of the fashion industry respond to increasingly fast-paced fashion cycles by adopting unsustainable production techniques to meet demands. For the sake of sustainability, it should be identified if fashion consciousness is overaccelerating due to social media exposure. Fashion companies that use offline practices to create and disseminate fashion trends in an effort to appeal to the fashion consciousness of potential customers can benefit from this study as well, as they should be aware of the potential overshadowing effect social media may have to adapt their strategies accordingly and remain relevant. This study can also serve as a valuable indicator when allocating and distributing marketing budgets, specifically for actors operating within the fashion industry. Finally, talents or individuals aspiring to pursue a career in the fashion industry might benefit from this research in order to carefully consider where to concentrate their efforts, such as models who might take part in runway castings or seek a career as fashion influencer.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the existing body of literature on the research topic will be presented and expanded upon, and the hypotheses guiding this study will be presented. The first section, 2.1, will provide relevant insights into fashion consciousness. In section 2.2, social media will be addressed, with section 2.2.1 presenting more detailed information on social media exposure and section 2.2.2 discussing online exposure to fashion content. In this section, the formulation of hypotheses H1a and H1b will take place. Afterward, in section 2.3, offline exposure to fashion in cities is elaborated upon, after which H2a and H2b are formulated. Section 2.4 will contextualize the debate surrounding the prevalence of fashion in cities due to the rise of social media, as presented with H3. Lastly, in section 2.5, the provided theoretical framework will be shortly summarized in a visual manner and the hypotheses will be repeated.

2.1 Fashion Consciousness

From the year 1970 onward, researchers began examining the notion of fashion consciousness, which would later be defined as a person's level of interest in fashion trends or styles (Summers, 1970). To be deemed fashion-conscious, a person does not necessarily need to be a fashion innovator or opinion leader (Summers, 1970; Gutman & Mills, 1982). Instead, these authors claim that fashion consciousness is characterized by an interest in clothing, fashion, and appearance. Also, a fashion-conscious person depicts a loyal character who adheres to current fashion trends to uphold their social status (Summers, 1970; Gutman & Mills, 1982). According to previous studies, consumers' fashion consciousness is associated with a desire to dress according to current trends, frequent wardrobe changes, and enjoyable shopping experiences (Nam et al., 2007). Nam et al. (2007) moreover state that consumers with a high level of fashion awareness typically exhibit changes in how they receive or process information. Fashion consciousness therefore undoubtedly serves as a useful consumer characteristic for fashion marketers, since it can boost consumers' receptivity to fashion advertisements (Nam et al., 2007). Also, the fact that fashion-conscious individuals have more interest in fashion, enjoy shopping, and adhere to fashion trends results in them being regarded as early fashion adopters, and therefore strategic target consumers for fashion brands (Michaela, 2015).

Fashion consciousness has intensively been studied in relation to purchasing intention, social media marketing, and brand consciousness (Gul et al., 2014; Khan et al.,

2019), in which it often served as a mediating factor (Khan et al., 2019). Additionally, previous research has uncovered a significant impact of fashion consciousness on materialism, especially in terms of fashion consumers aged 18-35 (Leung et al., 2015). Fashion-conscious consumers are likely to frequently purchase fashion items to improve their appearance, as well as to adhere to fashion trends (Khan et al., 2019). This causes them to purchase and possess more fashion and luxury products than the average individual, which eventually results in higher materialistic values (Leung et al., 2015). Also, whereas research on fashion consciousness was previously centered primarily around women, as historically the practice of clothing consumption and shopping has been regarded as feminine, Shephard et al. (2016) state that men are increasingly involved in fashion-conscious behavior as well.

During the historical existence and notion of fashion capitals, a relationship between cities and fashion consciousness has been assumed by researchers, as further substantiated in Section 2.3 (Antoniadou, 2022). As explained, fashion consciousness can serve as a useful consumer characteristic, but this may vary in different cities. However, looking at existing studies, the application of statistical methodologies to prove or disprove this fact has not been employed yet. In the same instance, a possible relationship between social media exposure and fashion consciousness might be assumed due to their increasingly intertwined grounds. Here, statistical methodologies have also not been utilized to validate this assumption. In this study, the possible and presumed relationships between fashion consciousness, social media exposure, and cities will be statistically examined.

2.2 Social Media

Carr and Hayes (2015, p. 50) define social media in the following manner: “Social media are Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others.” To define social media, many factors should be considered, as a result of which its definitions range from “a collection of software-based digital technologies” (Appel et al., 2020, p. 80), to “digital places where people conduct significant parts of their lives” (Appel et al., 2020, p. 80). Yet the definition provided by Carr and Hayes (2015) captures the notion that the current social media landscape knows two key aspects: the platforms and the users (Appel et al., 2020). The Internet-based channels make up the ecosystem in which users have the opportunity to interact, create and exchange user-generated content, or self-present in any

place at any moment in time (Carr & Hayes, 2015). Due to its omnipresence and accessibility, social media has changed the globe and its entire mode of operation while bringing individuals closer together (Ahmad et al., 2015). As people increasingly use social media platforms, they significantly impact our lives. By currently being the cheapest and fastest way to reach the world, using social media is incredibly important for people of all ages, as well as businesses in all industry segments (Shetty et al., 2015). This is reflected in the fact that as of January 2023, the total of active social media users is estimated at 4.76 billion worldwide (DataReportal, n.d.).

One industry that is going through a revolution due to social media is the fashion industry, as consumers' interest in new designers, items, and trends grows online (De Perthuis & Findlay, 2019). Due to its low-cost and wide-reach marketing opportunities, De Perthuis and Findlay (2019) claim that the fashion industry has adopted social media as their major marketing tool and uses social media platforms to portray fashion trends. Additionally, the online focus on fashion is fueled by the presence of fashion bloggers and social media influencers that showcase their fashion choices, as well as the increased presence of user-generated fashion content (Park et al., 2016). Thus, social media has evolved into a social trendsetter in the current digital era and besides it being one of the most effective marketing strategies for fashion businesses, social media platforms are becoming the most important source of fashion knowledge (Chu & Seock, 2020).

2.2.1 Social Media Exposure

Media exposure refers to “the extent to which audience members have encountered specific messages or classes of messages/media content” (Slater, 2004, p. 168). Previously, media exposure was particularly studied in the context of traditional mass media (Drew & Weaver, 1990; Slater, 2004). Already in 1990, Drew and Weaver (1990) found strong relationships between media exposure and behavior, opinions, and knowledge. Throughout the years other studies also uncovered media’s strong impact on for instance physical and mental health, and body image (Brown & Walsh-Childers, 2002; Van Vonderen & Kinnally, 2012).

As described above, social media is increasingly present and integrated into one's daily activities, which results in increased exposure to social media content (Ahmad et al., 2015). Social media exposure is thus related to the use of social media and often involves the frequency of use and the selective process of choosing social media outlets (Appel et al.,

2020). Through exposure to online social models, an individual's desire to purchase a product is often triggered, leading to changes in attitudes and behavior (Appel et al., 2020). Moreover, one's exposure to online content is prone to increasingly continue to grow due to the omnipresence of social media platforms (Appel et al., 2020).

2.2.2 Online Exposure to Fashion Content

Online fashion content refers to any type of fashion-related information or media that is published and distributed on the internet, including social media posts, fashion articles, blog posts, videos, images, online fashion magazines, e-commerce websites, fashion influencers' content, and more (M, 2019). For the purpose of this study, online fashion content on social media will be focused on, with a specific interest in the social media platforms TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest, as these platforms are the most important with regard to fashion content (Hashem, 2022). As touched upon in Section 2.2, the presence of fashion bloggers and social media influencers that showcase their fashion choices are factors that fuel the fashion industry to being increasingly prevalent online (Park et al., 2016). Moreover, fashion businesses expand their online presence through the creation and dissemination of social media content related to fashion (Chu & Seock, 2020), alongside there being an increase in user-generated content on social media. Thus, the presence of online fashion content is growing, alongside social media exposure constantly increasing. It is expected that the more one is exposed to social media, the more one is exposed to online fashion content. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1a: Social media exposure will have a significant positive impact on online exposure to fashion content.

Online fashion content can discuss a wide range of fashion-related subjects, including celebrity fashion, sustainable fashion, product reviews, and fashion trends. Information concerning fashion brands, designers, and stores are also prevalent topics (Greatcontent, n.d.). Currently, consumers' involvement with fashion designers, items, and trends is growing (Chetioui et al., 2020). Moreover, the fashion industry is facing increasing demands and increasingly fashion-sensitive consumers (Chetioui et al., 2020). This may partially be a result of the fashion industry increasingly portraying fashion trends on social media platforms through online fashion content (De Perthuis & Findlay, 2019). Online fashion trends are

commonly led and disseminated by fashion influencers, who are notorious for the creation of online fashion content, such as hauls or blogs (Chetioui et al., 2020).

Thus, the fashion industry and the increasingly fashion-sensitive consumers are operating to greater extents on online grounds, through the production, dissemination, and consumption of online fashion content. With fashion consciousness involving an interest in clothing, fashion, and appearance, and adhering to current fashion trends, increased exposure to online fashion content presenting such trends and styles may have an impact on one's fashion consciousness. Although this assumption may appear reasonable, previous studies have not utilized statistical methodologies to validate this assumption. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1b: Online exposure to fashion content will have a significant positive impact on fashion consciousness.

2.3 Offline Exposure to Fashion in Cities

In the fashion industry, cities have historically been highly responsible for the establishment and dissemination of worldwide fashion trends (Zhang et al., 2022). Particularly the Big Four fashion capitals, New York, Milan, London, and Paris have established themselves as major actors of influence in global culture, primarily due to their long-standing oligarchic power in dictating global fashion trends (Zhang et al., 2022). According to these authors, fashion capitals serve as important branding tools in the fashion industry. Fashion brands use the location or origin of the brand as a mark to differentiate their product, thus leveraging the authenticity and distinctiveness of urban culture for branding purposes.

As the world's first fashion capital, Paris holds the reputation of being the prime center of fashionability and the home to inspirational design (Breward, 2010; Rocamora, 2009). The French capital has aimed to contain its dominant position in the realm of fashion and culture (Rocamora, 2009). For instance through exclusively presenting new French fashion collections in Paris, the city grew in fashion attraction and media attention (Rocamora, 2009). Currently, Paris disseminates knowledge, as well as imagery about fashion through hosting cyclical events such as fashion weeks, as well as the incorporation of fashion in the cultural assets of the city (Rocamora, 2009; Zhang et al., 2022). Zhang et al. (2022) state that the acceleration of globalization has contributed to this manner, as it has

disrupted the traditional boundaries of time, place, and fashion creativity. This has led to Parisian fashion trends increasingly traveling across national boundaries, which in turn strengthens the influence the fashion capital has on global fashion trends. This global pipeline allows key actors in the fashion industry, such as fashion designers and brands, to attend fashion events worldwide. By encouraging encounters between members of the fashion community, such physical events stimulate knowledge creation and information exchange relating to fashion (Zhang et al., 2022). Globalization processes have also resulted in the emergence of fashion weeks worldwide. From South Africa fashion week to Belarus fashion week, an increasing number of cities aim to contribute to the dissemination of fashion trends (FashionUnited, n.d.). As a consequence, more cities are seeking to position themselves as attractive cultural destinations in the realm of fashion, which may result in an expansion of the term “fashion cities” (Zhang et al., 2022).

Thus, the fashion industry has historically been impacted by fashion cities, with Paris holding the reputation of being the prime center of fashionability (Antoniadou, 2022; Breward, 2010). According to Zhang et al. (2022), the assumption that fashion cities are an essential part of the concept and fundamental structure of fashion is unlikely to fade out. This is evidenced by the fact that an increasing number of cities are hosting fashion events. It is expected that one’s place of residence influences the frequency of one’s exposure to fashion trends, information, and culturally ingrained elements of the fashion industry. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2a: One’s place of residence has an impact on one’s exposure to fashion in the city.

The prominence of fashion cities, such as Paris, has created a surge of fashion consciousness among people worldwide (Zhang et al., 2022). Due to the inevitable presence and perceived importance of fashion in cities, some argue that those residing in cities with high integration of fashion are generally more fashion-conscious (Antoniadou, 2022; Rocamora, 2009). According to both these authors, Parisians are regarded as extremely fashion-conscious. The ambient appeal that is central to the constant fashionable display in the city is a phenomenon the people passing the streets of Paris contribute to (Rocamora, 2009). This argument can be supported by Bourdieu’s cultural capital theory developed in 1986 (Bourdieu, 2011). This theory assumes that individuals who possess societally valued cultural knowledge and tastes are advantaged in social and economic situations. In the context of fashion, it is argued that individuals residing in cities with a strong presence of

fashion have higher levels of cultural capital regarding fashion (Bourdieu, 2011). As they are more exposed to fashion brands, knowledge, trends, and tastes, they may develop a stronger level of fashion consciousness. Also, cultural capital not only serves to demonstrate one's cultural competence, but it also upholds one's social status. As stated in Section 2.1, a fashion-conscious individual generally depicts a loyal character of adhering to fashion trends to uphold their social status (Summers, 1970; Gutman & Mills, 1982; Rocamora, 2009). This is in line with the argument of Bourdieu (2011), claiming that individuals possessing cultural capital are advantaged in social and economic situations.

Nam et al. (2007) moreover state that exposure to fashion in their surroundings can serve as an important information source for fashion consumers. This becomes visible through practices such as window shopping, observing fashion in public spaces, attending fashion events, or participating in fashion trends. However, the extent to which one can participate in such practices is dependent on the city's offerings. To actively engage in for instance window shopping or attending fashion events, it is essential to have access to physical spaces that allow this interaction.

Thus, some regard Parisians to be extremely fashion-conscious, which could be a result of the offline exposure to fashion in their city of residence (Rocamora, 2009). When exposed to fashion by their surroundings, individuals may increase their knowledge of fashion trends, information, and styles and as a result their level of fashion consciousness. Despite a long history of fashion cities, existing studies have not applied statistical methodologies to prove or disprove this assumption. Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2b: Offline exposure to fashion will have a significant positive impact on fashion consciousness.

2.4 Theoretical Debate: Online vs. Offline exposure to fashion

Not everyone shares the view that fashion cities are and will remain an essential part of the concept and fundamental structure of fashion, as presented by Zhang et al. (2022). Despite the impact of fashion as disseminated through cities, social media is increasingly emerging as an influencing factor in the fashion industry (Ahmad et al., 2015). As explained in Section 2.2, social media has become a primary source of fashion trend awareness (Chu & Seock, 2020). This has sparked a debate about whether social media is now predominant in

developing fashion trends, making fashion in cities less influential (Zhang et al., 2022). In other words, some question whether fashion capitals will remain impactful in the creation and dissemination of global fashion trends, and as a result on the fashion consciousness of individuals (Breward, 2010; Zhang et al., 2022).

In recent years, fashion consumers are increasingly concerned with sustainability, ethical fashion, and diversity (Casati, 2020). Representing diversity is an issue traditional fashion outlets are slow to improve upon, with both runway and magazine models lacking diversity in terms of ethnic backgrounds and body sizes (Ma, 2020). Additionally, as consumers and industry professionals become increasingly conscious of the adverse impacts that the fashion industry has on the environment and society, there is a growing demand for sustainable and ethically conscious practices (Casati, 2020). Paris Fashion Week, one of the most prominent physical fashion events, has received criticism for its excessive waste, carbon footprint, and lack of diversity in representation (Ma, 2020; Penny, 2023). According to these authors, this has resulted in some fashion brands and designers choosing to boycott or reduce their participation in Paris Fashion Week, seeking alternative platforms that align with their sustainability and ethical values (Ma, 2020; Penny, 2023). Because of this, some fashion companies and designers have decided to boycott or scale back their participation in Paris Fashion Week in favor of alternative venues that better reflect their commitment to sustainability and ethical behavior. As a result, a declining number of people are attending Paris Fashion Week (Ma, 2020; Penny, 2023).

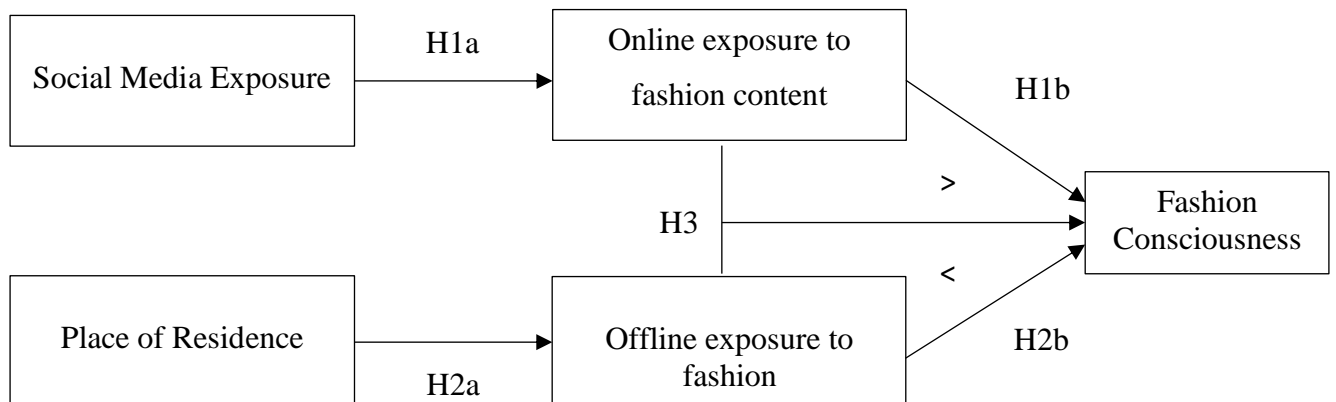
The declining number of Fashion Week attendees can also be contributed to the fact that, with the rise of social media, fast fashion, and online shopping, the fashion industry has become more democratized and accessible. The ability to digitally experience the most recent collections and trends without physically attending fashion weeks is made possible by the live streaming and social media sharing of fashion events and shows. Brandwatch Consumer Research (2023) reports that Paris Fashion Week was the most discussed fashion week online, reaching nearly 1.5 million online conversations between January 1 and March 6, 2023. Moreover, Adibfar et al. (2022) argue that especially since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a significant increase in online shopping for fashion items, which can be associated with various reasons. Covid-19 has allowed those unfamiliar with online stores and shopping to become more acquainted with the experience and ease of this practice. Additionally, access to a wider selection of clothing items, as well as free and fast deliveries make individuals increasingly search for fashion online. This may consequently lead to a

decreased interest in fashion as present in cities, for instance through a decrease in window shoppers (Adibfar et al., 2022).

Hence, social media enables an omnipresent, global tool to disseminate fashion trends, as well as fashion information one previously could only gain from attending physical fashion stores or events such as Paris Fashion Week. One could argue that social media has taken over as the prime source of an individual's ability to develop and maintain fashion consciousness, including for those residing in a fashion capital. Therefore, the following hypothesis regarding the debate on whether fashion cities are facing a decreasing impact on the fashion industry and the fashion consciousness of individuals due to the online presence of fashion, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H3: Online exposure to fashion content will have a significantly higher positive impact on fashion consciousness than offline exposure to fashion.

2.5 Summary



H1a: Social media exposure will have a significant positive impact on online exposure to fashion content.

H1b: Online exposure to fashion content will have a significant positive impact on fashion consciousness.

H2a: One's place of residence has an impact on one's exposure to fashion in the city.

H2b: Offline exposure to fashion will have a significant positive impact on fashion consciousness.

H3: Online exposure to fashion content will have a significantly higher positive impact on fashion consciousness than offline exposure to fashion.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology of this study will be discussed. First, the research design is presented. Next, the sample and sampling method will be discussed, which will be followed by a section on the procedure of the survey. The fourth section will present the operationalization of all present variables in this study: demographic variables, social media exposure, fashion consciousness, city fashion exposure, and online fashion content exposure. Then, the data analysis will be introduced. Finally, the validity and reliability of this study are argued for, followed by a section dedicated to research ethics.

3.1 Research Design

The goal of this research is to examine the relationships that may exist between social media exposure, online exposure to fashion, one's place of residence, exposure to fashion in cities, and fashion consciousness. A quantitative study must be conducted to examine the relationships between these variables and the effects one may have on another (Punch, 2013). Punch (2013) adds that quantitative approaches enable the testing of hypotheses, which improves prediction and the generalizability of results. Since the research hypotheses were founded on existing theory, as discussed in the previous section, a deductive approach to quantitative methods is employed (Streefkerk, 2022).

The quantitative method of survey research is adopted. Surveys are generally used to quantitatively describe specific aspects of a given population and to examine relationships among variables. Also, they allow for the investigation of large samples and the acquirement of demographic information (Glasow, 2005). The anonymity of survey participation encourages respondents to provide more truthful and accurate responses. This study aims to generate responses from various countries, thus an online survey is preferable, as its remote nature prevents geographical dependence. The survey was created in Qualtrics and distributed through Facebook groups and crowdsourcing websites to reach survey participants from both cities. The survey was provided in English, French, and Dutch, to grant participants the opportunity to read as well as answer questions in the language they are most comfortable with. To accurately translate the survey, the translation website Deepl.com was consulted. Afterward, native speakers of the selected language reviewed the translated questionnaires.

3.2 Sample

For this study, the sampling method selected was the non-probability sampling method of non-proportional quota sampling. Non-probability sampling methods allow for the selection of participants in a non-random manner (Babbie, 2011). This sampling method was most suitable, as this research aimed to investigate participants from two specific cities, making the characteristics of the sample predetermined. Quota sampling is regularly used to gain knowledge about a specific subgroup's characteristics or look at similarities and differences between various subgroups (Nikolopoulou, 2022). Non-proportional quota sampling was used, as the comparative component of this study was merely adopted to uncover possible differences between the cities' residents, making it unnecessary for the sample to be proportional to the actual number of city residents (Nikolopoulou, 2022). Additionally, due to limited accessibility to participants from Paris, the non-probability sampling method of snowball sampling was applied. Snowball sampling is a sampling technique in which participants are requested to assist in identifying potential research subjects, which can be especially useful when studying geographically dispersed populations (Babbie, 2011).

In this study, the criteria for respondents were age, as according to the ethical guidelines as stated in the Methodological Guidelines Thesis Research, research participants are required to be at least 18 years old (Verboord & Janssen, 2021), and place of residence. As this research aimed to investigate fashion consciousness in general, no gender was excluded from the sample. A total number of 156 ($N = 156$) respondents comprised the final sample, which is in line with the methodological guidelines for this study (Verboord & Janssen, 2021).

3.3 Procedure

To recruit participants, a standardized message was created that provides details about the researcher, the aim of the study, the expected duration of the survey, and a link to the survey itself. As stated previously, the survey participants were recruited through various Facebook groups and crowdsourcing websites, both of which are comprised of individuals from various countries. Therefore, the composed message, including the link to the survey, was disseminated to the aforementioned groups. Individuals that clicked the link were immediately referred to the survey. As the survey could be accessed through a link, it was accessible at any time and on any technological device. The survey was created in Qualtrics

and consisted of an opening message, questions regarding each studied variable, and a closing message (see Appendix A). The survey began with the opening message, which served to provide information about the researcher, including their contact details in case a participant has any queries or concerns, introduce the aim of the study, and request the participant for consent. Here, the participants' anonymity and the confidentiality of data were assured, and the participants were informed of their right to withdraw from participating in the survey at any moment. The questionnaire began with demographic questions regarding gender, age, place of residence, educational level, and monthly fashion expenditure. Then, the questions regarding social media exposure were posed, followed by the questions regarding fashion consciousness, as well as city fashion exposure, and lastly, the questions on online fashion content exposure were presented. After responding to each question, the participant was thanked for their time and participation and informed that if they desired to obtain the research results they could submit their email in the designated text box. Again, the contact details of the researcher were disclosed here. The survey was pilot tested on four volunteers to test and refine the questionnaire if necessary, before disseminating it on a wider scale. After the desired sample size had been reached for the final survey, the generated data was transferred to SPSS for analysis.

3.4 Operationalization

3.4.1 Demographic variables

Demographic information was collected from the participants to better understand the characteristics of the sample, as well as to inform future research studies. Furthermore, demographic data can provide valuable context for the results of the study and can help to shed light on potential differences or similarities between subgroups of the sample (Hammer, 2011). These questions also served as filters, preventing the data analysis from including individuals who are irrelevant to the study, such as those under the age of 18 and those who do not reside in Paris or Rotterdam. The demographic questions, which are all measured on a categorical level, were presented in the following manner:

Gender. Participants were asked: "What is your gender?", while provided the answer options "male", "female," "non-binary," and "I prefer not to say."

Age. Participants were asked: "What is your age?", while provided with the answer options "18-24", "25-34", "35-44", "45-54", "55-64", and "65 or older".

Place of residence. Participants were asked: "What is your place of residence?", while

provided with the answer options “Paris”, “Rotterdam”, and “None of the cities above”. The latter answer led to an immediate exit from the survey. Participants were also asked for how long they have lived in this city, with the answer options being “< 1 month - 6 months”, “> 6 months - 1 year”, “> 1 year - 2 years”, “> 2 years - 3 years”, “> 3 years - 4 years”, “> 4 years - 5 years”, and “> 5 years”.

Educational level. Participants were asked: “What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed”, while provided with the answer options “Less than a high school diploma”, “High school degree or equivalent”, “Bachelor’s degree (e.g., BA, BS)”, “Master’s degree (e.g., MA, MS, MEd)”, “Doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD)”, and “Other, please specify”.

Monthly fashion expenditure. Participants were asked to indicate the percentage of monthly income they spend on fashion products in comparison to the average adult. The average percentage of expenditure on fashion products is 5%, as estimated by financial expert Pete Dunn (Collings, 2014). This question was presented as a statement: “The average adult spends 5 % of their monthly income on buying fashion products. How would you rate your monthly expenditure on fashion, as a percentage of your monthly income?”, with the answer options “Much below average (<1%)”, “Below average”, “Average (5%)”, “Above average”, and “Much above average (>10%)”. This question was followed by an example, namely: “For example: if your monthly income is €3000, you would spend around €150 per month on clothing.”

3.4.2 Social media exposure

As stated in Chapter 2.2.1, social media exposure relates to the use of social media and often involves the frequency of use and the selective process of choosing social media outlets ((Appel et al., 2020). Therefore, two questions were included in the questionnaire to measure the concept of social media exposure.

Time. To measure social media exposure, and as inspired by Shensa et al. (2018), first participants were asked to estimate the total time spent on social media for personal use per day, excluding work-related use. Open-ended boxes for hours and minutes were provided, and the total estimated time was converted to minutes for analysis, which could range from 0 to 1440 minutes.

Frequency. Afterward, participants were asked to rate how often they use the following four social media sites/platforms: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest.

These platforms were selected because, according to Hashem (2022), these are considered the most important social media platforms with regard to fashion content. Shensa et al. (2018) formulated seven response options, which are the following: I don't use this platform, less than once a week, 1-2 days a week, 3-6 days a week, about once a day, 2-4 times a day, and 5 or more times a day. Insights into participants' selective processes of choosing social media outlets may lead to additional findings into the exact possible relationship between social media exposure and fashion consciousness.

3.4.3 Fashion Consciousness

To measure fashion consciousness, the 5-item scale to measure fashion consciousness as presented by Nam et al. (2007) was adopted. The scale consists of the following items: "I usually have one or more outfits that are of the latest style", "when I must choose between the two, I dress for fashion, not for comfort", "an important part of my life and activities is dressing stylishly", "it is important to me that my clothes be of the latest style", and "a person should try to dress in style". The respondents could indicate their level of agreement with the statements using a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

3.4.4 City Fashion Exposure

To measure exposure to fashion in a city, thus fashion exposure participants may encounter in physical reality and their place of residence, a scale was developed and named City Fashion Exposure. Five statements were posed for which participants could indicate their level of agreement using a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). These statements were partially inspired by the scale Nam et al. (2007) adopted to investigate fashion information sources in their research. The statements were presented in the following manner: "I regularly go window shopping where I live", "I regularly go to fashion events", "I regularly observe clothing styles in public spaces", "I regularly follow fashion trends from my city", and "I regularly discover new clothes/brands through billboard advertisements in my city".

3.4.5 Online Fashion Content Exposure

To measure online fashion content exposure, five statements were posed for which participants could indicate their level of agreement using a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). These statements were: "I regularly use social

media for fashion inspiration”, “I regularly see new fashion trends on social media”, “I regularly try new looks or styles based on what I see on social media”, “I enjoy following fashion influencers on social media”, and “I regularly use social media to discover new fashion brands”.

3.5 Data Analysis

After all the participants completed the survey, the results from Qualtrics were transferred to SPSS for analysis as numerical data. A data-cleaning process followed, including the removal of invalid responses. To answer the proposed hypothesis and compare the residents from two cities, several independent-samples t-tests, simple and multiple linear regressions, and ANOVAs were conducted for the analysis (Pallant, 2016).

3.6 Validity and Reliability

To strengthen the validity and reliability of this study, several actions have been undertaken. Firstly, validity refers to how accurately a method measures what it is intended to measure. To strengthen the content validity, which evaluates the degree to which in this case the questionnaire measures all aspects of the research topic, several variables and scales were included that all contribute to measuring the topic of interest. For face validity, which judges whether items seem to accurately reflect what is intended to measure (Bryman, 2016), the questionnaire was pilot tested before being disseminated. Feedback from other researchers and members of the studied population ensured that the questionnaire was operationalized in a comprehensible manner. According to Bryman (2016), non-probability sampling can pose a threat to the external validity of the research. However, to minimize the impact of the sampling strategy on the validity of research results, a relatively large sample was obtained. Additionally, the questionnaire was distributed through multiple channels, which increased the diversity of the sample, while still meeting the sampling criteria.

To strengthen the reliability, referring to the “consistency of a measure” (Heale & Twycross, 2015, p. 66), high internal consistency of the adopted multi-item scales is of importance, which is calculated by the Cronbach’s α (Cronbach, 1951). When available, existing scales with an acceptable internal consistency were used to increase reliability. The original scale to measure fashion consciousness developed by Nam et al. (2007) ($\alpha = 0.91$) was considered to be reliable. For the scales developed to measure both city and online exposure to fashion content, no preexisting scales were available. Cronbach’s α was

calculated to measure the internal consistency of all adopted multi-item scales in this study, thus for ‘fashion consciousness’, ‘city fashion exposure’, and ‘online fashion content exposure’. For each variable, Cronbach’s α is presented in Table 1. According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011), a Cronbach’s α that exceeds 0.70 is considered acceptable. As visible in Table 1, all variables have a Cronbach’s α exceeding 0.70, thus each scale is considered reliable, and no scale items had to be deleted to improve the internal consistency. Additionally, the translation of the fashion consciousness scale from English to French and Dutch may have caused the slight decrease in internal consistency.

Table 1. Overview of Cronbach’s α

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach’s α
Fashion Consciousness	5	0.81
City Fashion Exposure	5	0.74
Online Fashion Content Exposure	5	0.91

3.7 Research Ethics

This study was both designed and executed according to the ethical guidelines as stated in the Methodological Guidelines Thesis Research (Verboord & Janssen, 2021). A clear statement of consent, including information about the participant’s anonymity, the confidentiality of the gathered data, and the participant’s right to withdraw at any time were provided before the start of the questionnaire. The consent statement indicated that by continuing to the questionnaire, the participant agreed to voluntarily participate in the study. The questionnaire's length and expected time of completion, the nature of the study, as well as the researcher's contact information, were also provided. In the closing message, the researcher’s contact details were repeated in case a participant has any queries or concerns. The visual design of the survey also adhered to the ethical guidelines by not including the official name, logo, stationary, or any letter headings of the Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR). On the other hand, the opening message to the survey did state that the researcher is a student at EUR in the process of writing their master’s thesis (Verboord & Janssen, 2021). Lastly, participants were not at risk for harm of any kind as a result of their participation in this study.

4. Results

In this chapter, the results of all conducted analyses as implemented on the research data will be presented. In the first section, 4.1, information on the respondents will be provided. Section 4.2 will present the demographic findings on social media exposure. In section 4.3, the results on possible relationships between fashion consciousness and the demographic findings will be listed in subsections, each presenting the possible relationship between fashion consciousness and one of the demographic variables. Section 4.4 will concern the hypothesis testing, with 4.4.1 presenting the findings on H1a and H1b, 4.4.2 the findings on H2a and H2b, and 4.4.3 the findings on H3. Finally, the findings will be shortly summarized in section 4.5, and an overview of the hypothesis acceptance and rejection will be presented.

4.1 Respondents

In total, 206 respondents participated in the research by filling in the questionnaire, thus comprising the initial sample. 50 responses were deleted either because the participant did not fit the sampling profile, thus indicated to be younger than 18 years old, or not residing in Paris or Rotterdam, or because the participant did not give consent for their data to be used for research purposes. As stated in Section 3.4.1, not fitting the sampling criteria led to an immediate exit of the survey. A total number of 156 ($N = 156$) comprised the final sample that was included for further analysis. Table 2 presents an overview of their demographic information.

The final sample consisted of 65.4% of females and the male share was 34%. One participant indicated their gender to be non-binary/third gender, comprising 0.6% of the sample. Most participants were between 18 and 24 years old (61.5%), followed by 25-34 (24.4%), 35-44 (5.1%), 45-54 (4.5%), 55-64 (3.2%), and 65 years old or older (1.3%). The majority of participants reside in Rotterdam, although the sample was relatively equally distributed with 52.6% of participants residing in Rotterdam and 47.4% residing in Paris. The majority of participants indicate to have lived in their city of residence for more than 5 years (34.0%), followed by more than 2 years to 3 years (16.7%), more than 6 months to 1 year (13.5%), more than 1 year to 2 years (12.2%), more than 3 years to 4 years (11.5%), less than 1 month to 6 months (7.1%), and the fewest percentage living in their city of residence for more than 4 years to 5 years (5.1%). For educational level, most participants have completed a bachelor's degree (41.0%) or a master's degree (30.1%), followed up by a high school

degree or equivalent (24.4%). 3 participants indicated their educational level to be other and specified this as an associate degree (1.9%). 1.3% completed less than a high school diploma and another 1.3% completed their Doctorate degree. Lastly for demographic questions, one was asked to rate their fashion expenditure as compared to the average. A majority rated their fashion expenditure as above average (30.8%), followed by below average (26.3%), average (21.8%), much below average (14.7%), and much above average (6.4%).

Table 2. Demographic Information

Demographics	Specifications	Counts	Proportion (in %)
Gender	Male	53	34.0%
	Female	102	65.4%
	Non-binary/Third Gender	1	0.6%
Age	18-24	96	61.5%
	25-34	38	24.4%
	35-44	8	5.1%
	45-54	7	4.5%
	55-64	5	3.2%
	65 or older	2	1.3%
Place of Residence	Paris	74	47.4%
	Rotterdam	82	52.6%
How long lived in Place of Residence	Less than 1 month – 6 months	11	7.1%
	More than 6 months – 1 year	21	13.5%
	More than 1 year – 2 years	19	12.2%
	More than 2 years – 3 years	26	16.7%
	More than 3 years – 4 years	18	11.5%
	More than 4 years – 5 years	8	5.1%
	More than 5 years	53	34.0%

Educational Level	Less than high school diploma	2	1.3%
	High school degree or equivalent	38	24.4%
	Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, BS)	64	41.0%
	Master's degree (e.g., MA, MS, Med)	47	30.1%
	Doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD)	2	1.3%
	Other, please specify	3	1.9%
Fashion Expenditure (Compared to average)	Much below average (less than 1%)	23	14.7%
	Below average	41	26.3%
	Average (5%)	34	21.8%
	Above average	48	30.8%
	Much above average (more than 10%)	10	6.4%

4.2 Social Media Exposure

The variable Social Media Exposure was measured by combining the total minutes per day spent on social media, and the frequency of using several social media platforms, measured on a scale from I don't use this platform to 5 or more times a day. On average, the participants spend 194.44 minutes on social media each day, with a minimum amount of 30 minutes and a maximum amount of 960 minutes ($SD = 110.77$). The social media platform that was most used by the participants was Instagram ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 1.67$), followed by TikTok ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 2.53$), Facebook ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.89$), and Pinterest ($M = 1.89$, $SD = 1.24$). Table 3 presents an overview of the frequency of use.

Table 3. Frequency of using social media platforms

Social Media Platform	Specifications	Counts	Proportion (in %)
Facebook	I don't use this platform	47	30.1%
	Less than once a week	35	22.4%
	1-2 days a week	20	12.8%

	3-6 days a week	14	9.0%
	About once a day	20	12.8%
	2-4 times a day	12	7.7%
	5 or more times a day	8	5.1%
Instagram	I don't use this platform	8	5.1%
	Less than once a week	6	3.8%
	1-2 days a week	4	2.6%
	3-6 days a week	4	2.6%
	About once a day	15	9.6%
	2-4 times a day	47	30.1%
	5 or more times a day	72	46.2%
TikTok	I don't use this platform	77	49.4%
	Less than once a week	6	3.8%
	1-2 days a week	5	3.2%
	3-6 days a week	5	3.2%
	About once a day	15	9.6%
	2-4 times a day	20	12.8%
	5 or more times a day	28	17.9%
Pinterest	I don't use this platform	84	53.8%
	Less than once a week	38	24.4%
	1-2 days a week	13	8.3%
	3-6 days a week	9	5.8%
	About once a day	12	7.7%
	2-4 times a day	0	0.0%
	5 or more times a day	0	0.0%

4.3 Fashion Consciousness

In general, the participants in this study were found to be relatively fashion-conscious ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.88$). It was tested whether the demographic variables were of influence in one's level of fashion consciousness. In this section, the possible relationships between fashion consciousness and the demographic variables are presented. Each section will present the possible relationship between fashion consciousness and one demographic variable.

4.3.1 Fashion Consciousness & Gender

Firstly, to investigate whether gender influences fashion consciousness and to confirm Shephard et al. (2016) stating that men are increasingly involved in fashion-conscious behavior, the possible relationship between the two was studied. Initially, the demographic question regarded gender consisted of three answer options: male, female, and non-binary/third gender. However, as non-binary only had 1 case, testing the relationship by means of an ANOVA was not possible. Therefore, a T-test comparing males and females was performed instead. The t-test showed that females do not have a significantly higher fashion consciousness ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 0.86$) than males ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.90$), $t(152) = -.16$, $p = .871$. Thus, indeed, there is no significant difference in the fashion consciousness of males and females.

4.3.2 Fashion Consciousness & Age

Next, the possible relationship between fashion consciousness and age was investigated. An ANOVA was conducted with age groups as IV and fashion consciousness as DV. ANOVA revealed no significant main effect for age groups on fashion consciousness, $F(5, 149) = 1.58$, $p = .171$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$. Thus, age does not have a significant impact on one's fashion consciousness.

4.3.3 Fashion Consciousness & Place of Residence

Then, the possible and expected relationship between fashion consciousness and place of residence was tested by means of a t-test. The t-test showed that people from Rotterdam have a significantly higher level of fashion consciousness ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.81$) than people from Paris ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 0.93$), $t(153) = -2.06$, $p = .041$. As expected, there is a significant relationship between one's place of residence and fashion consciousness. However, surprisingly, participants from Rotterdam were significantly more fashion-conscious than participants from Paris, which is not in line with the expectations of previously conducted research on this topic. This will be further discussed in Section 5.1.

Also, to examine whether for how long a person has lived in their place of residence has any influence on this manner, a linear multiple regression was conducted with fashion consciousness as criterion. The predictors were the place of residence and for how long the participant has lived in their place of residence. The model was found not to be significant, $F(2,152) = 2.11$, $p = .124$, $R^2 = .03$. Only place of residence was found to be a significant

predictor ($\beta = .17, p = .042$) while for how long the participant has lived in their place of residence was not significant ($\beta = .00, p = .991$) for fashion consciousness. Thus, for how long a person has lived there does not impact the relationship between one's place of residence and fashion consciousness.

4.3.4 Fashion Consciousness & Educational Level

One's educational level may have an impact on one's fashion consciousness as well. To investigate this, an ANOVA was conducted with educational level as independent variable and fashion consciousness as dependent variable. ANOVA revealed no significant main effect for educational level on fashion consciousness, $F(5, 149) = .17, p = .973$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. Thus, there is no significant relationship between one's educational level and fashion consciousness.

4.3.5 Fashion Consciousness & Fashion Expenditure

Finally, it was examined if there is a significant relationship between one's fashion expenditure and fashion consciousness. An ANOVA was conducted with fashion expenditure as IV and fashion consciousness as DV. ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for fashion expenditure on fashion consciousness, $F(4, 150) = 16.29, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .30$. Tukey post-hoc comparisons revealed that participants that spend much above average on fashion significantly are more fashion-conscious ($M = 3.58, SD = 0.86$) than participants that spend below average on fashion ($M = 2.56, SD = 0.75$), $p = .001$, and participants that spend much below average on fashion ($M = 2.15, SD = 0.71$), $p < .001$. Also, it was found that participants that spend above average on fashion significantly are more fashion conscious ($M = 3.42, SD = 0.72$) than participants that spend below average on fashion ($M = 2.56, SD = 0.75$), $p < .001$, and participants that spend much below average on fashion ($M = 2.15, SD = 0.71$), $p < .001$. Lastly, it was found that participants that spend an average amount on fashion significantly are more fashion conscious ($M = 3.04, SD = 0.75$) than participants that spend below average on fashion ($M = 2.56, SD = 0.75$), $p = .048$, and participants that spend much below average on fashion ($M = 2.15, SD = 0.71$), $p < .001$. No other comparisons reached significance. Thus, it is evident that the amount one spends on fashion as a portion of their monthly income has a significant impact on how fashion-conscious this person is.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

4.4.1 Social Media Exposure, Online Exposure to Fashion Content, and Fashion Consciousness

In this section, the first hypotheses regarding the influence of social media exposure, online exposure to fashion content, and fashion consciousness are tested. As stated in Section 2.2.2, it is expected that social media exposure will have a significant positive impact on online exposure to fashion content. Social media exposure consists of both the total time spent on social media and the frequency of using social media platforms, thus a linear multiple regression was conducted with online exposure to fashion content as criterion. The predictors were total time spent on social media and frequency of using social media platforms, a computed variable of all four separate platforms. The model was found to be significant, $F(2,153) = 23.00, p < .001, R^2 = .23$. Only the frequency of using social media platforms was found to be a significant predictor ($\beta = .49, p < .001$) while total time spent on social media still was not significant ($\beta = -.35, p = .727$) for online fashion content exposure. This led to an acceptance of **H1a**: Social media exposure will have a significant positive impact on online exposure to fashion content.

Since the frequency of using social media platforms was the significant impacting factor in the possible relationship between social media exposure and fashion consciousness, an additional analysis was conducted to compare the four social media platforms as presented to the participants. Thus, a linear multiple regression was conducted with online fashion content exposure as criterion and the predictors being the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest. The model was found to be significant, $F(4,151) = 20.00, p < .001, R^2 = .35$. Only Facebook ($\beta = -.07, p = .301$) was found not to be a significant predictor for online fashion content exposure, while Instagram ($\beta = .29, p < .001$), TikTok ($\beta = .29, p < .001$), and Pinterest ($\beta = .22, p = .002$) had a significant effect on online fashion content exposure.

Moreover, it is expected that online exposure to fashion content will have a significant positive impact on fashion consciousness. To test this relationship, a simple linear regression with fashion consciousness as criterium and online exposure to fashion content as predictor was conducted. The model was found to be significant, $F(1,153) = 116.18, p < .001, R^2 = .43$. Thus, online exposure to fashion content ($\beta = .66, p < .001$) has a significant positive influence on fashion consciousness. As a result, the following hypothesis was accepted **H1b**:

Online exposure to fashion content will have a significant positive impact on fashion consciousness.

4.4.2 Place of Residence, City Fashion Exposure, and Fashion Consciousness

As presented in Section 4.3.3, this study revealed that people residing in Rotterdam are significantly more fashion-conscious than people residing in Paris, indicating a direct effect of one's place of residence and fashion consciousness. However, in this section, the possible relationship between one's place of residence and city fashion exposure, as well as the possible relationship between city fashion exposure and fashion consciousness will be tested.

Firstly, it is expected that one's place of residence has an impact on one's exposure to fashion in the city. To test this possible relationship, a simple linear regression with city exposure to fashion as criterium and place of residence as predictor was conducted. The model was found not to be significant, $F(1,154) = .70$, $p = .406$, $R^2 = .00$. Thus, place of residence ($\beta = -.07$, $p = .406$) has no significant influence on city exposure to fashion. For this reason, hypothesis **H2a**: One's place of residence has an impact on one's exposure to fashion in the city, must be rejected.

Additionally, it is expected that city exposure to fashion will have a significant positive impact on fashion consciousness. To investigate this possible effect, a simple linear regression with fashion consciousness as criterium and city exposure to fashion as predictor was conducted. The model was found to be significant, $F(1,153) = 92.89$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .38$. Thus, city exposure to fashion ($\beta = .62$, $p < .001$) has a significant positive influence on fashion consciousness, leading to the acceptance of **H2b**: City fashion exposure will have a significant positive impact on fashion consciousness.

4.4.3 Online Exposure to Fashion Content compared to City Exposure to Fashion

As presented in the previous sections, both online exposure to fashion content and city exposure to fashion have a significant impact on one's fashion consciousness. To answer **H3**: Online exposure to fashion content will have a significantly higher positive impact on fashion consciousness than city exposure to fashion, a linear multiple regression was conducted with fashion consciousness as criterion. The predictors were online exposure to fashion content and city exposure to fashion. The model was found to be significant, $F(2,152) = 83.83$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .52$. Both online exposure to fashion content ($\beta = .46$, $p < .001$) and city exposure

to fashion ($\beta = .36, p < .001$) were found to be positive predictors for fashion consciousness. To compare the significant effects of online exposure to fashion content and city exposure to fashion, the beta coefficients of the relationships were reviewed. According to Peterson and Brown (2005), the beta coefficient indicates the magnitude and direction of the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The variable with the larger coefficient is the one with the bigger effect on the dependent variable. As online exposure to fashion content ($\beta = .46$) has a larger beta coefficient than city exposure to fashion ($\beta = .36$), online exposure to fashion content has a bigger effect on fashion consciousness. Consequently, this results in the acceptance of **H3**: Online exposure to fashion content will have a significantly higher positive impact on fashion consciousness than city exposure to fashion.

4.5 Summary

The findings of this study indicate that one's fashion consciousness is not impacted by gender, age, educational level, or how long you have lived in your city of residence. On the contrary, one's fashion expenditure, $F(4, 150) = 16.29, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .30$., and place of residence do significantly impact one's fashion consciousness, with people from Rotterdam having a significantly higher fashion consciousness ($M = 3.07, SD = 0.81$) than people from Paris ($M = 2.78, SD = 0.93$), $t(153) = -2.06, p = .041$. Social media exposure was found to be a significant positive predictor for online fashion content exposure, $F(2, 153) = 23.00, p < .001, R^2 = .23$, resulting in the acceptance of H1a. In this model, only the frequency of using social media platforms was found to be a significant predictor ($\beta = .49, p < .001$), with Instagram ($\beta = .29, p < .001$), TikTok ($\beta = .29, p < .001$), and Pinterest ($\beta = .22, p = .002$) having a significant effect on online fashion content exposure. Moreover, online exposure to fashion content ($\beta = .66, p < .001$) has a significant positive influence on fashion consciousness, thus H1b is accepted. In the relationship between one's place of residence and exposure to fashion in the city, no significant relationship was found, $F(1, 154) = .70, p = .406, R^2 = .00$, leading to the rejection of H2a. However, this study did find a significant relationship between exposure to fashion in the city and fashion consciousness, $F(1, 153) = 92.89, p < .001, R^2 = .38$, as a consequence of which H2b was accepted. Lastly, to either accept or reject H3, the effects of online exposure to fashion content and city exposure to fashion were compared, concluding that online exposure to fashion ($\beta = .46$) has a larger effect on fashion consciousness than exposure to fashion in the city of residence ($\beta = .36$).

Consequently, H3 was accepted. In Table 4, an overview of the hypothesis testing is presented.

Table 4. Overview of Hypothesis Testing

	Hypotheses	Accepted (Yes/No)	Significance Level
H1a	Social media exposure will have a significant positive impact on online exposure to fashion content.	Yes	$p < .001$
H1b	Online exposure to fashion content will have a significant positive impact on fashion consciousness.	Yes	$p < .001$
H2a	One's place of residence has an impact on one's exposure to fashion in the city.	No	$p = .406$
H2b	Offline exposure to fashion will have a significant positive impact on fashion consciousness.	Yes	$p < .001$
H3	Online exposure to fashion content will have a significantly higher positive impact on fashion consciousness than offline exposure to fashion.	Yes	$p < .001$

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, the key findings will be discussed, and the emergence of these findings will be further substantiated. Thereafter, the theoretical and societal implications are presented, the research strengths and limitations are advocated, and various suggestions for future research are implied. Lastly, a conclusion is drawn.

5.1 Key Findings

This study aimed to answer the following research question: *“To what degree do social media exposure and cities influence fashion consciousness?”*. In order to answer this question, five hypotheses were formulated and examined. The first two hypotheses concern the online impact of social media exposure and online fashion content, thus H1a and H1b, and H2a and H2b focus on the offline impact of place of residence and offline exposure to fashion in a city. H3 compares these effects to give insights into the debate on whether or not the rise of social media and online fashion content disregards the impact cities have in the dissemination of fashion information and trends and as a consequence on the fashion consciousness of individuals.

For the first hypothesis, it was expected that social media exposure would have a significant positive impact on online exposure to fashion content, which was confirmed by the findings. The results indicated that for social media exposure, time spent on social media did not influence the extent to which one is exposed to fashion content online. However, the frequency of visiting the social media platforms TikTok, Instagram, and Pinterest did significantly influence one's online exposure to fashion content. Recent data indicate that the most prominent social media platforms with regard to online fashion content are Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and Pinterest (Hashem, 2022). However, this study suggests that contrary to the other three platforms, Facebook does not influence one's exposure to online fashion content. Thus, the results demonstrate that accessing TikTok, Instagram, and Pinterest, rather than time spent on social media or accessing Facebook, has a substantial impact on how much one is exposed to fashion information online. A key revelation with respect to the relationship between social media exposure and fashion consciousness is that the significance of the relationship is dependent on how you measure the construct. The two components that comprise the construct of social media exposure, thus time spent on social media and frequency of using social media platforms, have varying impacts. Only measuring time spent on social media did not reach significance, whereas only measuring the frequency of using

social media platforms did. However, combining the two components established a model that reached significance. Future studies on social media exposure take into consideration how they measure social media exposure and how this influences the findings of their research.

In turn, it was predicted that exposure to fashion content online would impact one's fashion consciousness, which was validated by the research findings. As argued in Section 2.2.2, online fashion content concerns any fashion-related information or media which increasingly portrays fashion trends, designs, and items. Fashion-conscious individuals are characterized by an interest in fashion and adhering to fashion trends. Exposure to online fashion content provides such individuals with the particular information needed to fuel one's fashion consciousness and stimulate their interest in the matter. This finding also supports the idea that social media is now becoming a dominant source of fashion information for many (Chu & Seock, 2020).

On the other side of the spectrum, fashion cities have historically impacted the establishment and dissemination of worldwide fashion trends. Paris in particular holds the reputation of being the prime center of fashionability and the home to fashion-conscious individuals (Antoniadou, 2022; Rocamora, 2009). In many cities, fashion is culturally ingrained with society, and fashion events and stores allow for the offline presentation of fashion within the spaces of a city. In line with the idea of the existence and dominance of fashion capitals, previous research suggested that in New York, Milan, London, and Paris, fashion is particularly integrated with the cultural assets of the city (Zhang et al., 2022). Moreover, as Paris has historically been a key player in the dissemination of fashion knowledge and imagery, it was assumed that Parisians are generally more exposed to fashion in their city of residence (Rocamora, 2009). As a result of these facts, it was hypothesized that one's place of residence has an impact on the extent to which one is exposed to fashion in a city. The findings indicate that there is no significant relationship between one's place of residence and one's exposure to fashion in their city of residence. Contrary to the assumed dominance of fashion capitals and the idea that fashion is more culturally integrated into the city in such capitals, the data generated in this study considers this fact to be untrue. Residents from Rotterdam are not significantly less exposed to fashion in their city of residence than residents from Paris. This might indicate a decrease in, or even disappearance of the long-standing power in dictating the global fashion industry that the fashion capital assumably held.

Then followed the question of whether city exposure to fashion will affect one's fashion consciousness. Despite the finding that one's place of residence does not impact the extent to which one is exposed to fashion in their city of residence, this study has found a significant finding. Indeed, as expected, exposure to fashion in the city does impact one's fashion consciousness. Through window shopping, observing fashion styles in public spaces, attending fashion events, following fashion trends from their city, and being exposed to billboard advertisements, individuals can develop higher levels of fashion consciousness. Already in 2007, Nam et al. (2007) stated that exposure to fashion through one's surroundings such as in a city can serve as an important information source for fashion consumers. Additionally, the cultural capital theory developed by Bourdieu supports the idea that cities with a strong presence of fashion can evoke higher levels of cultural capital regarding fashion, and thus can generate higher fashion consciousness (Bourdieu, 2011).

When testing for a possible relationship between one's place of residence and fashion consciousness, it was found that in the sample participants from Rotterdam had significantly higher levels of fashion consciousness than participants from Paris. Initially, this finding appeared to be remarkable, as the historic nature of Paris as a fashion capital would suggest the finding to be reversed, with participants from Paris carrying the highest level of fashion consciousness. However, the hypotheses testing can serve as a backbone in the explanation of this finding. With one's place of residence not significantly impacting one's exposure to fashion in the city, yet one's exposure to fashion in their city of residence being a significant impacting factor in their fashion consciousness, various implications can be made. Exposure to fashion in the city of residence, which can practically appear through window shopping, observation of fashion in public spaces, and more, influences one's fashion consciousness. However, in this day and age, it appears that fashion capitals do not serve as prime centers of fashionability anymore in this manner. As fashion consciousness is positively influenced by exposure to fashion in a city, it can be assumed that fashion is equally, if not more integrated into society in the city of Rotterdam in comparison to Paris. The rise of fashion weeks across the world can serve as an example of how fashion is traveling and becoming an important cultural element in cities across the world (FashionUnited, n.d.). This fact, combined with the additional finding on one's place of residence and offline exposure to fashion in the city indicates that fashion capitals are no longer a dominant factor in the fundamental structure of fashion consciousness and exposure. This contradicts the idea of Zhang et al. (2022), stating that it is unlikely that fashion cities as an essential part of the concept and fundamental structure of fashion will fade out.

Thus, both online exposure to fashion content and offline exposure to fashion in cities have been found to be significantly impacting factors in one's level of fashion consciousness. The debate about whether online exposure to fashion has surpassed offline exposure to fashion as the most prominent factor in fashionability remained unanswered in previous research. However, when comparing the effect of online exposure to fashion content and offline exposure to fashion in one's city, it was proven that in this sample online exposure to fashion does indeed have a significantly higher positive impact on fashion consciousness than exposure to fashion in one's city. This is in line with the premise that through the increased online presence of fashion businesses, fashion influencers and bloggers, and user-generated fashion content, social media enables an omnipresent, global tool to disseminate fashion trends and information that limits the impact of fashion cities.

5.2 Theoretical and Societal Implications

This study has contributed to the existing body of research on fashion consciousness, as previously studied by researchers such as Nam et al. (2007), Summers (1970), and Gutman and Mills (1982). The notion of fashion consciousness has intersected with social media, on which fashion businesses are increasingly present. Through online fashion content such as influencer, business, and user-generated content, one's fashion consciousness can be influenced. Also, this research has taken into account existing studies on the role and impact of fashion in cities and prominent fashion capitals, as especially provided by Antoniadou (2022), Breward (2010), Rocamora (2009), and Zhang et al. (2022). Up until now, research on fashion consciousness was primarily concerned with purchase intention, brand consciousness, and materialism, and generally fashion consciousness served as a mediating variable in relationships (e.g. Khan et al., 2019). However, the impact of fashion information channels such as online fashion content and fashion in cities on one's level of fashion consciousness had not yet been investigated properly. Additionally, the rising debate on the assumed decreased impact of fashion capitals and the rising influence social media has on fashion information and trends remained unanswered. This study has adopted a deductive approach in order to combine existing literature on the presence of fashion online, as well as in the assets of cities. Accordingly, a theoretical framework was built to give insights into the debate. The most significant contribution of this research to the debate is its demonstration that fashion capitals are essentially losing their influence and reputation as the epicenter of fashionability and fashion-conscious individuals. This fact was demonstrated by individuals

from Rotterdam being more fashion-conscious and one's place of residence having no impact on how much one is exposed to fashion in their city. Noticeable is that this study contradicted the assumption of Zhang et al. (2022), stating that it is unlikely that fashion cities as an essential part of the concept and fundamental structure will fade out. Despite the recency of the study conducted by Zhang et al. (2022), the findings of this particular research suggest otherwise.

Along with being of academic value, this study is practically relevant for various actors. As this study has proven that exposure to fashion content online indeed increases one's fashion consciousness, which is characterized by an urge to adapt to fashion trends and frequent wardrobe changes, fashion expenditure may accelerate. The valuable insight on the relationship between fashion expenditure and fashion consciousness, claiming that as one spends more money on fashion they are generally deemed more fashion-conscious, reflects this manner. Individuals that are involved in fashion and would regard themselves as fashion-conscious, especially those who are regularly exposed to fashion content online, should become more cautious of the impact the online fashion environment may have on their expenditure. This is to prevent possible negatively impactful lifestyle modifications from happening. Also for sustainability reasons, it is valuable to gain insight into the probable rise of fashion consciousness in the future, due to an ever-increasing growth of social media presence and exposure. As a result, fashion production and distribution may overaccelerate, a situation the world should prevent from happening. Finally, actors in the fashion industry that remain heavily reliant on offline fashion practices, such as fashion weeks and physical stores, should be cautious of the overshadowing effect of social media. Although it was proven that the assets of fashion in cities still are influencing one's fashion consciousness, online fashion content is taking the lead in this environment. These actors should be able to adapt to the emerging trends in the field and recognize the growing impact of the online environment to safeguard their power and position. Actors in the fashion industry can moreover consider the findings as an indicator for marketing budget expenditure, as the growing online presence of fashion would recommend allocating a proportionate amount of money to this manner. Due to its lower-cost and wide-reach marketing opportunities, the fashion industry can benefit from using social media as an innovative marketing tool (De Perthuis & Findlay, 2019). Finally, it would be advantageous for talent in the fashion industry to carefully consider where to focus their efforts, such as fashion models who could participate in runway castings or pursue a career as a fashion influencer.

5.3 Research Strengths

This study holds several strengths and limitations that should be accounted for while evaluating the quality of the research. Firstly, the diversity of the generated sample is worthy to address. The sample includes a large age distribution range, covering all age groups from 18-24 years old to 65 years or older, and all educational levels ranging from less than a high school diploma to a doctorate degree. Also in terms of fashion expenditure and social media use, the participants' answers were very dispersed, with for example the daily time spent on social media ranging from 30 minutes to 960 minutes. A diverse sample allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic, increased generalizability of the research findings, the identification of subgroup differences, and the mitigation of stereotypes and bias. For example, this study supported the claim that men are now equally involved in fashion-conscious behavior as women, a statement that was previously considered untrue due to a stereotype existing within the research field. The diverse sample also increases the external validity of the study (Babbie, 2011).

Also noteworthy is the nearly equal distribution of the participants from Paris and Rotterdam. Balanced sample sizes within the studied subgroups increase the statistical power the research holds, as well as the possibility to detect significant and meaningful findings. It also increases reliability and enhances comparability, thus the generalizability of the findings to the larger population (Babbie, 2011).

Finally, for the purpose of answering the research question that guides this research, an overarching research model was built from the combined existing literature on two separate topics, namely social media exposure and fashion in cities. By synthesizing existing knowledge from different domains, a holistic perspective on the research topic is fostered, allowing to explore it from multiple angles as well as to provide a more nuanced analysis. Due to the integration of literature from various angles, an enhanced theoretical foundation is built which provides a solid ground for the developed research model.

5.4 Research Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

Despite finding various significant insights in this study due to the research quality, some limitations should be considered. Although the sample is arguably diverse and has a wide range of participants, a few aspects should be taken into account when assessing the generalizability of the findings. Contrary to the distribution of the participants in terms of their place of residence, the gender distribution is not similarly equal. With 53 male

participants, 102 female participants, and 1 participant identifying as non-binary/third gender, all genders have been included in the sample. However, the vast majority of participants identify as female, ruling a 65.4% share of the sample. This fact should be accounted for when addressing the generalizability of the findings and leads to the interpretation of these results needing to be treated with caution.

With respect to the sampling method of this research, an effort was made to recruit a diverse sample. However, the sampling techniques of non-probability sampling, and particularly snowball sampling do not allow for the calculation of the margins of error and confidence intervals and carry the possibility of under- or overrepresentation of the studied population. These sampling techniques were primarily adopted due to time constraints. By executing a longitudinal study that includes a probability sampling technique to expand the population of the study, future research can further identify a greater and more diverse sample that may produce new valuable insights.

Also, this study suggests a future research direction that addresses oligarchical fashion capitals. In this sample, only Paris as a presumed fashion city was focused on. However, future studies could further investigate the impact of New York, Milan, and London to validate the finding that fashion capitals are no longer of oligarchical power. Moreover, Paris Fashion Week, historically one of the most prominent and influential physical fashion events, has received criticism for its excessive waste, carbon footprint, and lack of diversity in representation, as explained in Chapter 2 (Ma, 2020; Penny, 2023). For this reason, visitors are seeking alternative platforms that align with their sustainability and ethical values, and fashion companies and designers are increasingly scaling back their participation in Paris Fashion Week in favor of alternative venues that better reflect their commitment to sustainability and ethical behavior. This fact may have contributed to the insignificant impact the city had on exposure to fashion, with the findings being in contrast with existing studies in the theoretical foundation of fashion capitals. To explore whether fashion events in other cities remain impactful with regard to fashionability and fashion consciousness, future studies could research the extent to which fashion events such as Fashion Week Copenhagen, which is notorious for its ecological credentials, are of influence in this field.

Despite the decreasing direct impact that fashion cities may have on consumers' fashion consciousness, it is crucial to recognize their presumably remaining influence on various practices and segments in the fashion industry. Fashion cities facilitate the design, manufacturing, and production of apparel, nurture emerging talents, and support education and research through the founding of renowned fashion institutes and schools. Hereby, they

contribute to the growth, innovation, and dynamic character of the world of fashion (Yezhova et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2022). For this reason, one should not entirely disregard the existence of fashion cities yet. Future studies should examine whether fashion cities indeed remain impactful in various other segments and practices of the fashion industry.

5.5 Conclusion

After a long-standing history of oligarchic power in dictating global fashion trends and being regarded as the prime center of fashionability (Zhang et al., 2022), fashion capitals like Paris are required to thrive alongside the ever-expanding presence of social media. A debate, contemplating whether fashion content online is overshadowing the importance of cities in one's exposure and consciousness of fashion began to rise, to which this study provides valuable insights. The results can serve a cautionary role for individuals, fashion businesses, and those concerned with sustainability in the fashion industry. After conducting a quantitative study, the current research has concluded that online fashion content has surpassed the influence of fashion as embedded in the cultural nature and offline spaces of a city in terms of fashion consciousness. Furthermore, it appears that fashion capitals are losing their power and reputation as the epicenter of fashionability, with Rotterdam being more fashion conscious and one's place of residence not impacting to what extent one is exposed to fashion in their city. It was also discovered that fashion expenditure holds a relationship with fashion consciousness, a reasonable yet new finding. Finally, gender, age, and educational level had no impact on fashion consciousness in this study, affirming previous research on the matter.

Thus, it was concluded that both online exposure to fashion content and exposure to fashion in one's city of residence have an impact on fashion consciousness, with the impact of online fashion content surpassing the impact of cities. With Rotterdam being more fashion-conscious than Paris and the relationship between one's place of residence and the extent to which they are exposed to fashion in the city proven to be insignificant, fashion capitals are seemingly losing their hand in the rules of fashion consciousness. Despite this study bringing valuable information forward, there are many more aspects to the subject matter that should be explored in the future.

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Appendix A Questionnaire

Introductory text

Hello and welcome to this survey! My name is Meike van Loon, and I am currently writing my thesis for the Master Media and Creative Industries at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. I am researching the possible relationship between social media exposure, offline exposure to fashion and one's fashion consciousness in various cities.

Participating in this survey will take approximately 5 minutes of your time and is entirely anonymous, confidential, and voluntary. By continuing with this survey, you consent to your results being used for academic purposes. Furthermore, there are no risks associated with this research. You can withdraw from the survey at any time by stopping the survey.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this survey!

If you have any queries or feedback regarding the survey or my research in general, please contact me through the following email address: 539483ml@eur.nl. Thank you in advance!

Demographics Questions

1. What is your gender?
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
 - ☐ Non-binary/third gender
 - ☐ Prefer not to say

2. What is your age?
 - ☐ 18-24
 - ☐ 25-34
 - ☐ 35-44
 - ☐ 45-54
 - ☐ 55-64
 - ☐ 65 or older

3. What is your place of residence?

- Paris
 - Rotterdam
 - None of the cities above [Immediate exit]
4. For how long have you lived in your city of residence?
- <1 month-6 months
 - >6 months-1 year
 - >1 year-2 years
 - >2 years-3 years
 - >3 years-4 years
 - >4 years-5 years
 - >5 years
5. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
- Less than a high school diploma
 - High school degree or equivalent
 - Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, BS)
 - Master's degree (e.g., MA, MS, MEd)
 - Doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD)
 - Other, please specify: ...
6. The average adult spends 5% of their monthly income on buying fashion products. How would you rate your monthly expenditure on fashion, as a percentage of your monthly income?
- For example: if your monthly income is €3000, you would spend around €150 per month on clothing.*
- Much below average (<1%)
 - Below average
 - Average (5%)
 - Above average
 - Much above average (>10%)

Social Media Exposure Questions

7. Please indicate the total time you spend on social media for personal use per day (excluding work-related use):

Hours

Minutes

8. Please rate how often you use the following social media sites/platforms:

	I don't use this platform (1)	Less than once a week (2)	1-2 days a week (3)	3-6 days a week (4)	About once a day (5)	2-4 times a day (6)	5 or more times a day (7)
Facebook (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TikTok (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pinterest (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Fashion Consciousness Questions

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

9. I usually have one or more outfits that are of the latest style.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

10. When I must choose between the two, I dress for fashion, not for comfort.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

11. An important part of my life and activities is dressing stylishly.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

12. It is important to me that my clothes be of the latest style.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

13. A person should try to dress in style.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

City Fashion Exposure Questions

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

14. I regularly go window shopping where I live.

- Strongly disagree

- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

15. I regularly go to fashion events.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

16. I regularly observe clothing styles in public spaces.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

17. I regularly follow fashion trends from my city.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

18. I regularly discover new clothing/brands through billboard advertisements in my city.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Online Fashion Content Exposure Questions

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

19. I regularly use social media for fashion inspiration.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

20. I regularly see new fashion trends on social media.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

21. I regularly try new looks or styles based on what I see on social media.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

22. I enjoy following fashion influencers on social media.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

23. I regularly use social media to discover new fashion brands.

- Strongly disagree

- Disagree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Closing text

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Again, if you have any queries or feedback regarding the survey or my research in general, please contact me through the following email address: 539483ml@eur.nl.

If you wish to receive the research results, please submit your email address in the text box below: