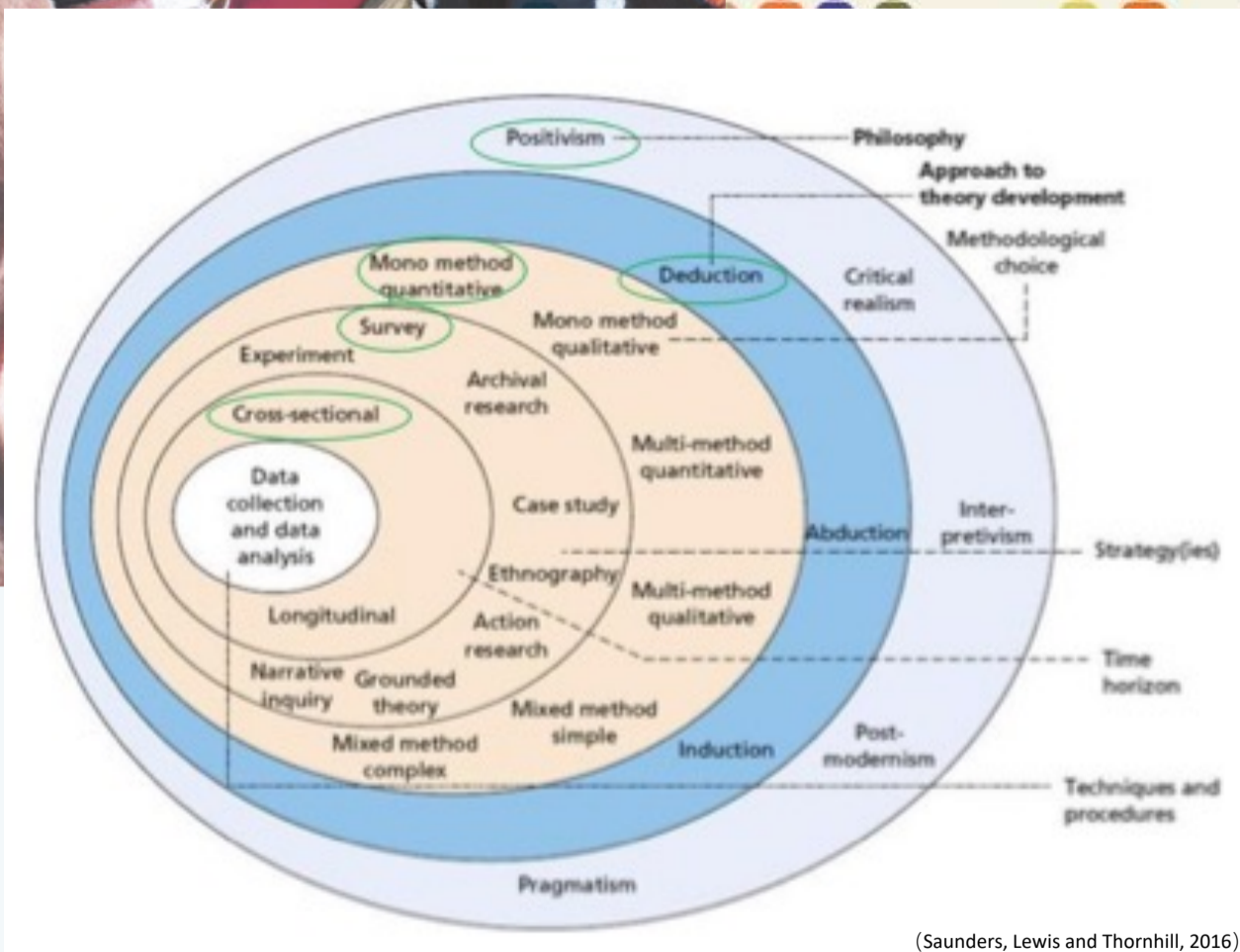


ABSTRACT

This study examines how authentic brand narratives, which focus on body positivity and confidence, influence the purchasing intentions of Gen Z women in the UK. Based on the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model, perceived authenticity is used as a stimulus variable, and emotional attachment and self-brand connection are used as mediators. Finally, a survey of 229 respondents showed that authenticity significantly enhanced emotional connection and increased purchase intention. This study provides an empirical reference for fashion brands to connect with Gen Z through narratives that are inclusive and emotionally resonant.

CONTEXT & RATIONALE

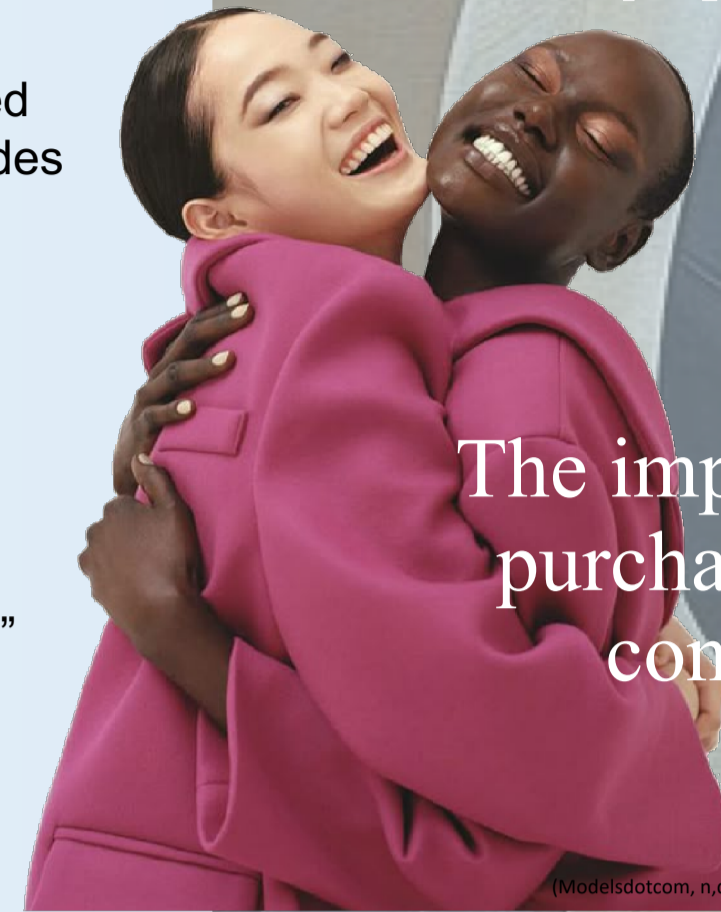
This study is inspired by Gen Z women's rejection of the "slim is beautiful" ideal long promoted by fashion brands. As consumers seek diverse, authentic, and inclusive representations, body positivity and confidence have become central themes. In 2023, Gen Z accounted for 47% of UK online fashion spending (The Pull Agency, 2022), underscoring their market power. Campaigns like Dove's Real Beauty show the emotional impact of authentic narratives (Coppock, 2023). However, academic research remains limited in quantitatively exploring how such storytelling influences purchase intention (Moin, 2020).



METHODOLOGY

- Design: Structured survey with validated 7-point Likert scales
- Sample: 229 UK-based Gen Z female consumers
- Analysis: SEM (AMOS), SPSS, PROCESS macro for mediation tests

Real Voices, Real Impact: What Makes Gen Z Say "Yes" to Fashion?



The impact of authentic personal storytelling on consumer purchase intentions: A study of body positivity and self-confidence campaigns in the UK fashion industry

AIM

To explore how authentic storytelling in fashion branding, centered on body positivity, drives Gen Z women's emotional connection and purchase intentions.

OBJECTIVES

1. Explore key concepts like emotional branding, authenticity, and identity in body positivity and self-confidence campaigns.
2. Apply the S-O-R model to map the links between authenticity, emotion, and purchase intention among Gen Z women.
3. Use quantitative methods to test the proposed relationships through a survey of UK Gen Z female consumers.
4. Provide marketing insights for fashion brands to enhance emotional engagement and drive purchase intentions through authentic storytelling.

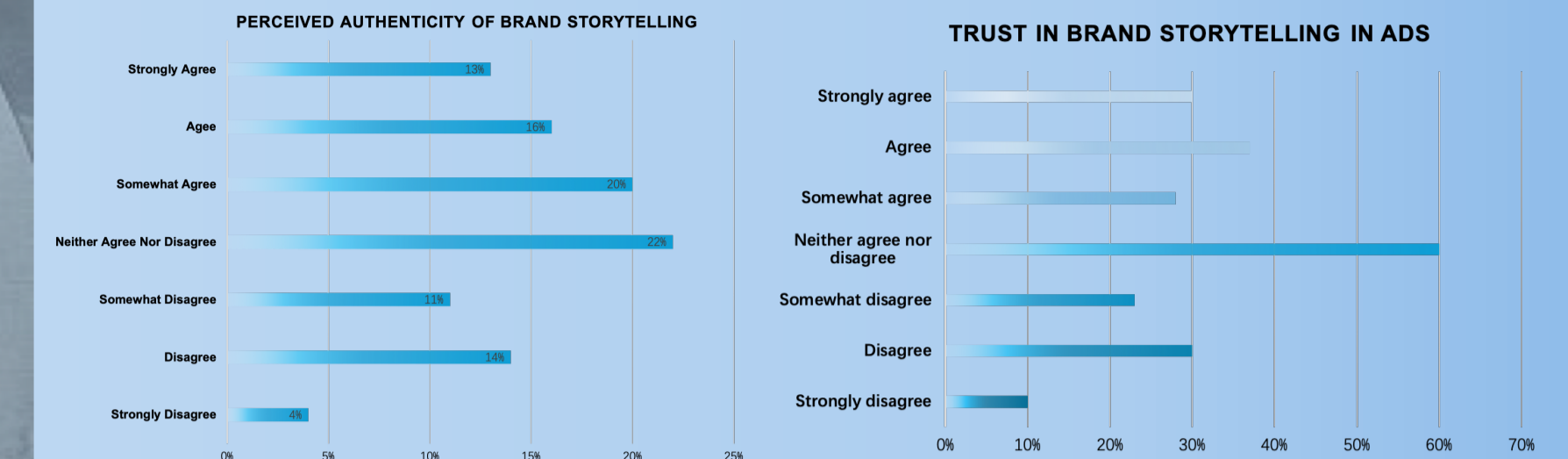
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK (S-O-R Model)



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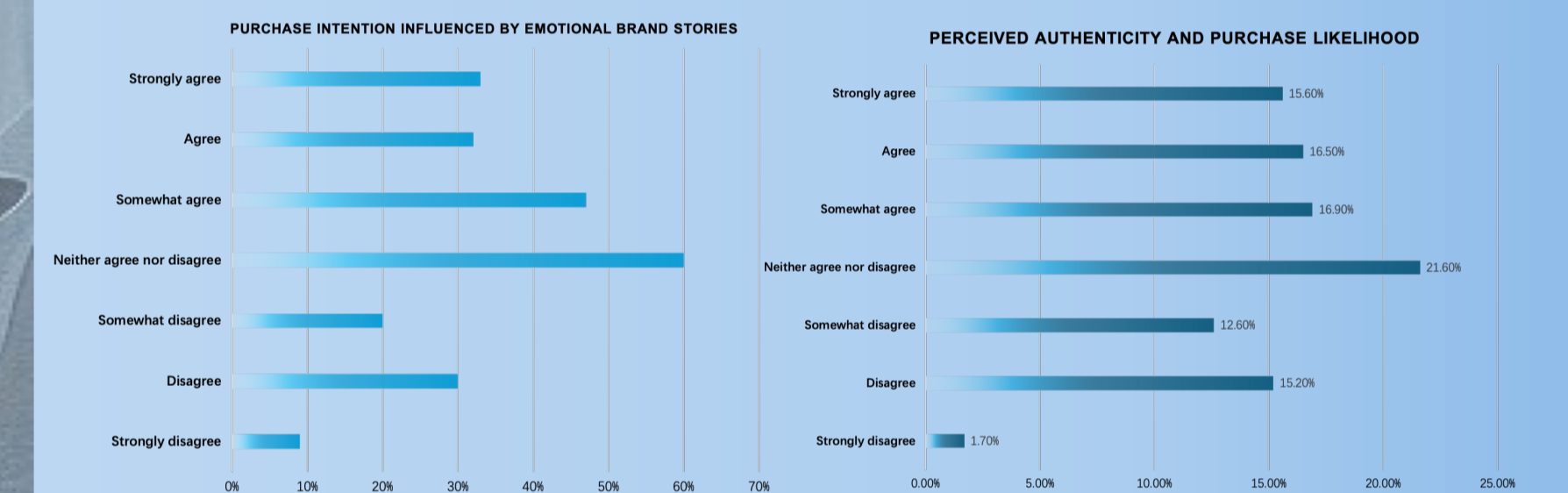
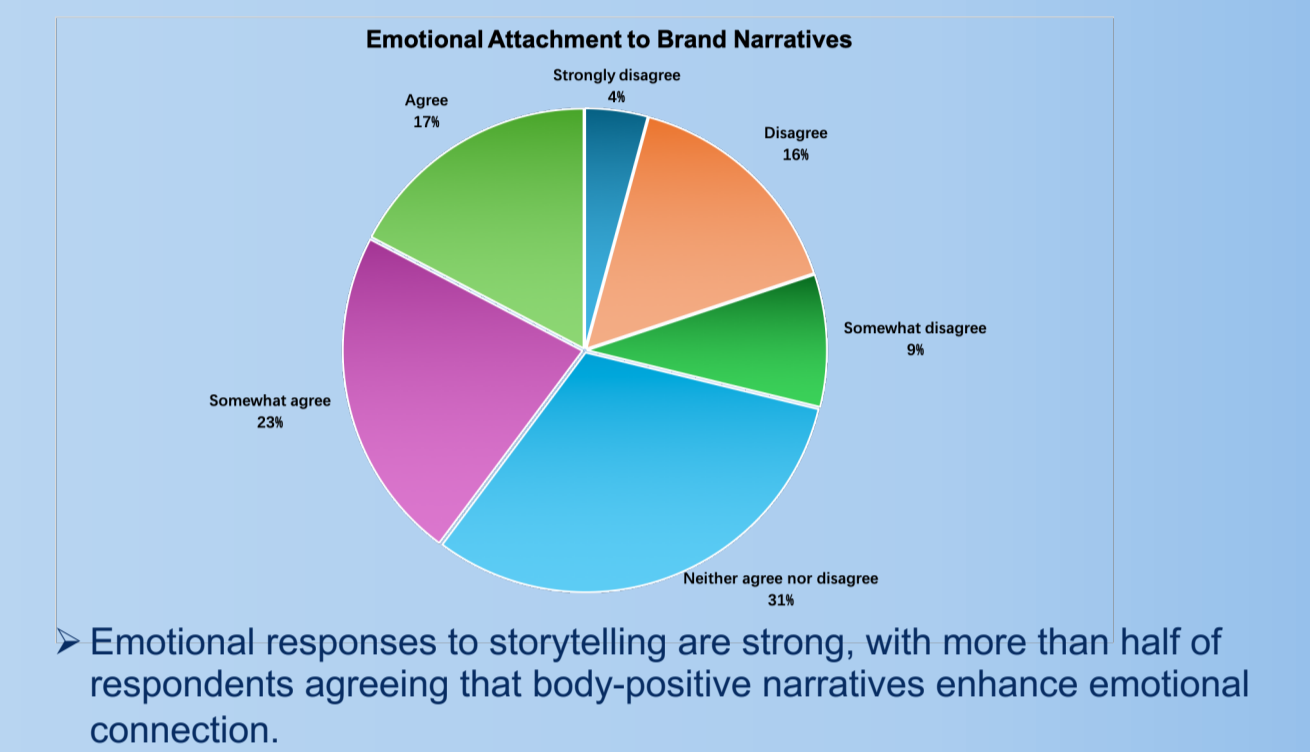


KEY FINDINGS



➤ Most Gen Z respondents agree that the brand's personal stories appear genuine, indicating a strong perception of narrative authenticity.

➤ Over 60% of participants express trust in the stories shared by brands, highlighting credibility as a key driver of emotional engagement.



➤ Authentic emotional storytelling increases willingness to support and buy from a brand, with a clear majority leaning toward positive intent.

➤ Consumers who perceive brand narratives as authentic are more likely to show higher purchase intention, affirming the emotional-to-behavioural link.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This study finds that the perceived authenticity of brand narratives significantly enhances emotional attachment and purchase intention among female Gen Z consumers, supporting the applicability of the S-O-R model. Emotional attachment mediates the relationship between authenticity and purchase intention, while self-brand connection reveals that when brand personality aligns closely with consumer identity, behavioral responses are more likely to be triggered. Furthermore, diversity in representation and social media interactivity strengthen perceived authenticity and emotional engagement. These findings suggest that brands must move beyond superficial slogans and adopt user-driven, genuinely expressive storytelling strategies to foster deeper consumer trust and loyalty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study suggests that fashion brands should prioritize adopting diversified, inclusive, emotionally resonant, and authentic narrative strategies. By leveraging user-generated content to strengthen self-brand identification and enhance emotional connection, brands can build long-term trust and loyalty among Generation Z in today's competitive fashion market.