The Insecurity Economy
How Modern Enterprises Monetize Anxiety, and Why Confidence Is Becoming More Profitable

Adrit Das

Lede: Lululemon's Founder said some women's bodies just don't belong in his yoga pants. Rihanna built an empire on the opposite bet. Both made billions monetizing how women feel about themselves.

Abstract:

Lifestyle, fashion and beauty brands sell identity and use belonging and status to spur consumption decisions by employing marketing tactics such as artificial scarcity and social proof. This comparative case study focuses on six brands: Shein, Brandy Melville, Telfar, Savage X Fenty, Victoria's Secret and Lululemon. Through a self-conducted original tactic audit measuring the brands according to a shared list of psychological marketing tactics, we observe three pairs of cases (coercive, empowerment, and legacy) as brands reverse marketing decisions following pressure from social backlash. Shein employed 18 out of the 20 patterns, more than any of its competitors. Telfar's decision to remove limiting scarcity marketing helped to increase its revenue tenfold. Victoria's Secret's poor viewership numbers (down from 9.7 million in 2013 to 3.3 million in 2018) and increasing backlash to its exclusionary scarcity marketing led to a more inclusive runway show in 2025. This motivates the paper's focus on the Insecurity Economy versus the Confidence Economy. The paper concludes that firms abandon coercive practices only when exclusion becomes too costly, and return to them when the pressure eases. Consumer education and sustained regulation are better at translating knowledge about manipulative marketing into action than corporate responsibility. This finding suggests that breaking the spell of artificial scarcity is not only an ethical choice but perhaps a highly lucrative one, and should be of more interest to marketers and regulators as fad-driven marketing increasingly targets youth.

Introduction:

In the fashion, beauty and lifestyle industries, the sale of brand stock symbolizes the marketing of products through identities and the promise of belonging, status or self-image, rather than through durability or utility. These tactics have intensified alongside the rise of social commerce, the integration of shopping directly into social media platforms so that browsing, discovery, and purchasing all happen within the same app rather than across separate sites. As a marketing strategy, social commerce turns scrolling into buying through scarcity, limited-time offers and algorithmic amplification of people's wants and demands (see Li et al., 2021). With the global fast fashion market in 2025 being worth 164 billion dollars, the conventional way this brand stock is sold is in fast fashion marketplaces (Bhagat, 2026). These marketplaces have developed into two separate engagement models: through artificially enforced scarcity and thinness, and through radical accessibility and inclusivity within the design. This article studies whether empowerment marketing and coercive trend-driven marketing rely on different psychological mechanisms, or whether they draw on the same underlying levers aimed in opposite directions, and under what conditions companies will stop using exploitative marketing practices. The question is answered through a comparative analysis of the companies Shein, Brandy Melville, Telfar, Savage X Fenty, Victoria's Secret, and Lululemon, two of which had modified their marketing in response to public pressure. Additionally, it introduces the framework of the Insecurity Economy and the Confidence Economy, whereby consumers choose to purchase products because they feel deficient, versus because they feel validated respectively.

Literature Review:

Characterizing the core psychological mechanisms:

Before discussing the brands, it is important to define the psychologies this paper will refer to as the common toolbox of coercive and empowerment marketing. Fear of missing out (FOMO), is the pervasive apprehension that other people are having rewarding experiences from which one is absent. FOMO is one of the most researched psychology concepts for use in digital marketing. In this context, FOMO is often considered together with another psychological driver concept, artificial scarcity. This describes the use of marketing techniques such as sale countdown timers, low-stock alerts or time-boxed drops to signal scarcity and to increase the buyer's urgency. In this sense, scarcity describes the mechanism and FOMO describes the associated emotional response. At the same time, social comparison theory explains how social media has accelerated comparisons because social media is instant, social and quantified with likes, followers or public displays of consumption, making a limited-time drop feel urgent and a viral trend feel like something one cannot afford to be left out of.

Another similar heuristic, social proof, was described by psychologist Robert Cialdini in his 1984 book, Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion, which remains one of the most cited papers in marketing research. Cialdini defined social proof as the tendency of people to look to the behavior of others as evidence of correct action, especially under conditions of uncertainty (Cialdini, 2021). In one classic field experiment, hotel guests who were exposed to a sign saying that most guests had reused towels were more likely to do so than guests who were exposed to an environmental appeal. This shows that the presence of an anonymous "crowd" can influence people more than a rational argument (Goldstein et al., 2008). In the online world, social proof is demonstrated by follower numbers, "selling fast" badges, customer reviews, and influencer endorsements to use the crowd to overcome consumer hesitation. For the purpose of this research, social proof is defined in the above way and is not discussed further, as it only becomes relevant with regard to the tactic audit in the Results section.

Psychological mechanisms underlying trend-driven marketing. More evidence of how these mechanisms can affect online behaviors has been provided by research into social media engagement, which has found that FOMO acts as a predictor of impulse buying, since the fear of missing a trend leads people to make impulsive purchases (Habib, 2025). This impulse-buying effect does not occur in isolation, but rather is compounded by a related and broader pattern: social media addiction itself. A meta-analysis of international research has found a large and statistically meaningful positive correlation between social media addiction and anxiety or FOMO. Thus, social media platforms, which power contemporary advertising, are structurally linked to the the same platforms that power contemporary advertising are structurally linked to the specific cognitive vulnerabilities, loss aversion, social validation-seeking, and compulsive checking behavior, that advertising is designed to exploit (Jing et al., 2025). This is compounded by influencer marketing. FOMO and status anxiety partially mediate the effect of influencer exposure on status consumption (Tuna et al., 2025). FOMO is a psychological mechanism that can explain how exposure to other people's social media leads to status consumption. This is tied into the process of addictiveness in app design, artificial scarcity, and influencer culture, all of which together create a compounding pressure system increasingly learned, rather than accidentally created, by marketers.

Research indicates links between trend pressure and consumer anxiety in youth.

Research indicates links between trend pressure and consumer anxiety in youth. But it's not just the purchasing that comes at a cost. In the demographic that fast fashion and beauty companies target most aggressively (teenagers and young adults), heavy social media usage was found to exacerbate FoMO, anxiety, compulsive trend participation, and everyday loss of productivity (Latupeirissa & Cistadewi, 2025). Relatedly, however, studies have found that FOMO itself is linked to reduced wellbeing through influencer-led consumption practices. These negative effects are not incidental but rather structural and thus a product of trend marketing (Bartosiak et al., 2025). Likewise, research into the use of urgency features on social commerce platforms has found that built-in features such as countdown timers and stock indicators, likely due to the nature of their activation of psychological fears and anxieties, are not neutral but rather dynamically create particular emotional states when making a purchase decision (Li et al., 2021). The similarities observed in these independent studies across general social media usage, influencer marketing, and social commerce platforms indicate that the anxiety and purchase phenomenon is not restricted to a specific platform or sector, but is a general feature of trend-based digital marketing.

Average Anxiety Scores (GAD-7) by Generation

"Gen Z reports highest anxiety levels as screen time increases," PsyPost / The Conversation. https://www.psypost.org/gen-z-reports-highest-anxiety-levels-as-screen-time-increases/

This is partly explained by the younger generations' high social media use and FOMO, a pattern corroborated by peer-reviewed research: Jing et al. (2025) found a statistically significant positive correlation between social media addiction and both anxiety and FOMO across international studies, and Latupeirissa and Cistadewi (2025) similarly found that heavy social media use among Gen Z specifically exacerbates FOMO and anxiety. That said, the relationship is correlational rather than causal in all three sources, and some researchers caution that generational differences in self-reported anxiety may also reflect differences in how comfortable each generation is with disclosing mental health symptoms, not just underlying differences in anxiety itself.

A third and more applied subfield examines how individual companies translate these psychological mechanisms into concrete marketing practice, whether by deploying them deliberately or by rejecting them outright. Regulatory scrutiny of Shein's website design, including a formal complaint submitted by the European consumer advocacy group BEUC, documents several features of how Shein's interface manipulates consumers, including fake countdown timers, low-stock notifications, and confirm-shaming prompts. BEUC (2025) reports that Shein is an unusually aggressive user of such interface techniques among its industry peers. Empowerment research includes scholarly literature on the effectiveness of body positive marketing campaigns (e.g., the effect of Aerie Real, a campaign built around unretouched imagery and a size range extending to roughly XXL, on body image), which largely shows little evidence of a strong positive effect of unretouched, size-expanded marketing on consumers' self-image, though results vary from study to study (Convertino et al., 2016). Brand strategy literature and case studies of companies such as Telfar show how the avoidance of artificial scarcity (rather than the embrace of it) can create substantial business success, challenging the idea that scarcity is required to drive demand in fashion and luxury (Abd-Elazem, 2020; The Desiree Team, 2024).

A gap this study addresses:

Despite this research, dark patterns, interface designs that intentionally manipulate users into decisions they would not otherwise make, and empowerment-oriented marketing are usually studied in isolation. Research on dark patterns describes the manipulative design tactics in depth, but only a few studies attempted to analyze these tactics against comparable brands that do not use these tactics, using a shared definition or framework. This has led to an almost complete lack of research on whether dark patterns actually work. Studies of body-positive or body-affirmative campaigns have thus far studied their empowerment marketing in isolation, but not whether their underlying psychological structure (of scarcity, identity, belonging, and social proof) is materially different from that of the coercive model, or whether the two operate on the same structures, but seek different emotional outcomes. Still fewer studies have analyzed why a particular enterprise might switch from one model to the other, or whether any such switch would be stable once publicity has waned.

Methods:

We address these questions in two ways. First, we present an original tactic audit, based on a benchmark list of psychological marketing tactics across six brands, along with comparative insights across the coercive and empowerment frameworks. Second, we offer an explanation of the potential transformation of public awareness of these tactics into brand transformation based on the evidence from our case studies. The research is a comparative case study. The data was gathered from investigative journalism, statements from the brand, regulatory databases, and peer-reviewed academic literature on the psychology of consumer behavior. Brands were selected to form matched pairs within each category: two brands built around manufactured scarcity or exclusionary body standards (Shein, Brandy Melville), two built around the deliberate rejection of scarcity and inclusive design (Telfar, Savage X Fenty), and two legacy brands that publicly altered exclusionary practices following sustained criticism (Victoria's Secret, Lululemon). Sources were located through targeted searches combining each brand name with terms such as "dark patterns," "scarcity marketing," "body positivity," and "diversity backlash," cross-referenced against peer-reviewed databases for the underlying psychological concepts. This data is presented in a tactic audit, and three pairs of case studies, the coercive pairing, empowerment pairing, and legacy pairing (brands that change marketing tactics due to public pressure). This allows the study to test whether the theoretical mechanisms discussed above actually occur in marketing decision making, or whether they are simply an artifact of psychological theory.

Results:

Tactic Audit:

In the table below, all six brands are compared and contrasted with eight marketing tactics mentioned in the Literature Review, including artificial scarcity mechanism messages, urgency messages (such as countdown timers and low stock messages), implementation of gamified curation or rewards, exclusionary sizing or body ideals, non-retouched or unfiltered models, inclusive sizing, pre-order sales as a rejection of artificial scarcity, and diverse casting in campaigns and on the catwalk. These eight tactics were selected because each maps directly onto a psychological mechanism defined in Section 2: scarcity and urgency messaging correspond to FOMO and loss aversion, gamified rewards and forced registration correspond to compulsive engagement design, exclusionary or inclusive sizing corresponds to social comparison and identity signaling, and diverse casting and unfiltered imagery correspond to social proof.

Table 1: Tactic Audit Table

Tactic	Shein	Brandy Melvile	Telfar	Savage x Fenty	Victoria's Secret	Lululemon
Artificial scarcity/ urgency messaging	Yes	Yes	No	No	Partial	No
Gamified Rewards	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Exclusionary sizing/ narrow body standard	Yes	Yes	No	No	Partial	Partial
Unfiltered Imagery	No	No	Yes	Yes	Partial	No

Size-inclusive Design	No	No	Yes	Yes	Partial	Partial
Open Pre-Order access (anti-scarcity)	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Diverse Casting	No	No	Yes	Yes	Partial	Partial
Forced Registration	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Coercive evidence case: Shein and Brandy Melville.

Shein's website design has been the basis of a complaint filed by the European consumer organization, BEUC, which documented a number of specific website design patterns (fake countdown timers, product notifications about low stocks, and confirm shaming) that were psychologically manipulative and pressured customers to make purchases (BEUC, 2025; Zwieglinska, 2024). An independent study, identifying 20 manipulative website design patterns, found that Shein used 18 patterns, more than the brands H&M, Zara, and ASOS (The Fashion Law, 2025). Brandy Melville's coercive tactics are less time-based and more geared toward body dimensions, since the brand produces items available in only one size for most of its products (Cho, 2024; Matsuzawa, 2025). Reports have also stated that the brand has caused harm, including students forcing themselves to starve to fit into clothing available from the brand (Matsuzawa, 2025). The brand's practices were discussed in a student journalism article (Cho, 2024) and an accompanying HBO documentary (Orner, 2024).

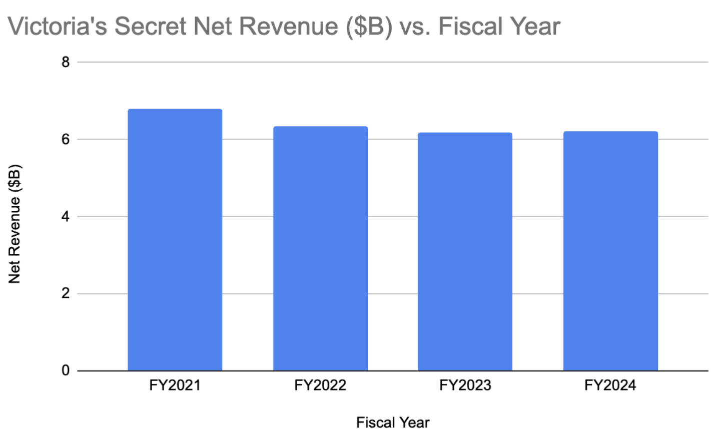
Empowerment case evidence: Telfar, Savage X Fenty

Telfar's marketing strategy is most visible in the Bag Security Program. Telfar announced the program in August 2020, explicitly refuting the luxury brand scarcity model. After the bags began to sell out and attract resellers, Telfar announced that for 24 hours any customer can order any bag in any color knowing the brand would fulfill the order instead of waiting for limited stock. It may have been the only time countering artificial scarcity yielded profits, with the 24-hour sale grossing ten times as much money as the entire brand did in the previous year (Abd-Elazem, 2020; Bustle, 2024). The lingerie brand, Savage X Fenty, was founded by singer Rihanna in 2018 and was said to aim to challenge the lingerie industry status quo with a range of sizes from 30A to 46DDD, unretouched photography, and cast diversity among models (Hakeem, 2020; Branden Carter, 2025). By that time, the brand of its nearest rival, Victoria's Secret, had begun to lose favor (John, 2024).

The switchers: Victoria's Secret and Lululemon:

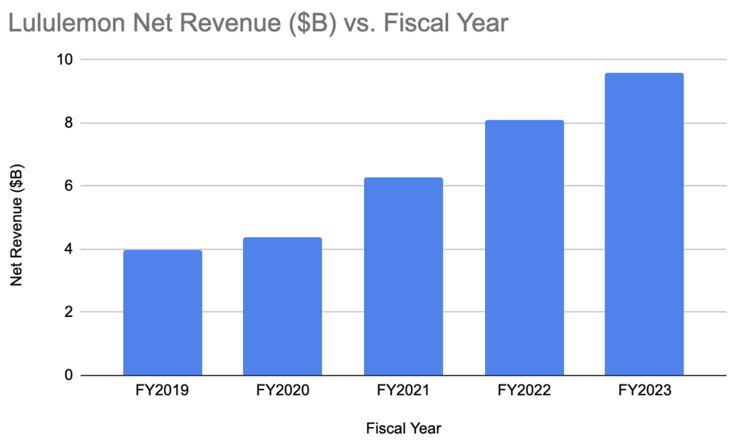
The Victoria's Secret fashion show, a core part of the company's marketing strategy, had its viewership drop from 9.7 million in 2013 to 3.3 million in 2018 as the company's increasingly criticized image and practices fell out of favor (Vorobei, 2024). While it ended the show in 2019, it relaunched as a more diverse brand with a more diverse set of spokesmodels in 2021 and plans to return to a televised format in 2024 with a multi-racial, multi-size, and multi-generational cast, the first since the show's end (John, 2024). The 2024 revival, streamed on Amazon Prime Video, peaked at approximately 2.67 million viewers, a figure still below the show's 2018 broadcast low, though it was the year's most-watched entertainment livestream on its platform (StreamsCharts, 2024). As of 2025, the brand had rolled back on some of the diversity and inclusion initiatives, with its chief executive telling investors it would return to a more "unapologetically sexy" branding, even as models such as Ashley Graham and Precious Lee continued to appear in its cast (Robinson, 2025).

Figure 1:



The workout wear company Lululemon has followed a parallel but distinct trend. Founder Chip Wilson said in statements in 2013 and 2024 that some women's bodies do not work for the brand's product, and that a brand must be willing to signal which customers it does not want (Lemire, 2024; Bringle, 2026). The company distanced itself from Wilson's comments (Thayaparan, 2024). Since then, the company has expanded its size range, and created a diversity, equity, and inclusion function (Thayaparan, 2024). Wilson remains the company's largest individual shareholder (Bringle, 2026).

Figure 2:



Discussion and Analysis:

Finding 1: both economies pull the same four levers, albeit in opposite directions:

As shown in the Tactic Audit, identity signaling, belonging, and social proof appear in the coercive and empowerment columns with the only difference being their hedonic target. Shein's countdown timers and Telfar's Bag Security Program are structurally inverse responses to the same design problem: how to distribute a product. Shein manufactures urgency to trigger loss aversion. Telfar removes urgency, betting that the absence of qualms makes customers feel more valued in the long run. The tenfold increase in Telfar's revenues over that period is evidence that manufactured urgency is a choice, not a commercial necessity, and plays into the argument made in this paper that the Insecurity Economy and the Confidence Economy are not opposing toolkits, but expansions of a similar psychology, from the brand profiting from a consumer's sense of inadequacy or from their sense of affirmation (or both at different times).

Finding 2: Anxiety is the product, not the side-effect, of avoidance:

This means that the link between FOMO, artificial scarcity, and consumer anxiety identified in Section 2, and the coercion evidence from the dark-pattern complaint in the Coercive evidence case is not incidental, but built into the design of the interface. Each of the dark patterns cited in Shein's complaint maps directly onto a well-identified psychological mechanism. Countdown timers apply loss aversion. Low-stock notifications create social proof pressure by leading consumers to believe the product has been approved by others. Confirm-shaming plays on consumers' desire for self-consistency and to maintain their self-image. Furthermore, because they are baked into the architecture of the platform, the status-anxiety should be understood to be part of its business model rather than a side effect of it. The status-anxiety discussed in the Literature Review section suggests that if status anxiety mediates the relationship between exposure to an influencer and intention to purchase the product, the anxiety rather than the product itself becomes part of the transaction.

Finding 3: brands become less exclusive when the exclusion becomes too costly, and return when it is.

In the section analysing Victoria's Secret and Lululemon, we show there was no observable change in Victoria's Secret's or Lululemon's marketing models in response to values alone. Victoria's Secret's change was triggered by the measurable, multi-year decline of the firm's most critical marketing asset, the televised fashion show audience, and the emergence of a direct competitor, Savage X Fenty, which practiced inclusive values. After its next change for cultural and commercial reasons by 2025, the brand language returned in part to its earlier pattern, with ethnically diverse casting. A parallel pattern, though less publicly reversed, is visible at Lululemon. Though the firm disowned the founder's statements and continued to build on its portfolio, the founder still being its largest shareholder suggests that the dissonance between its brand values and founding philosophy was more than resolved. Particularly in light of the two cases discussed above, the findings suggest that consumers should be skeptical of "redemption" marketing narratives and that, to the extent to which reputational and market costs for exclusionary business practices can be avoided, the redemptive effects of a controversy will be muted.

These findings carry a practical implication beyond the six brands studied here: they suggest a working model for how a brand entering the market today could apply the Confidence Economy rather than default to coercive tactics.

Any brand hoping to reach a millennial or Gen Z audience will sooner or later have to ask itself the question of whether scarcity is really necessary in order to build demand. In the case of Telfar, the answer is no. A new brand could implement the Confidence Economy by changing three elements like the brands in the case studies, who made similar choices but without the serendipity seen in Telfar or Savage X Fenty. First, it would replace manufactured urgency by backing access with guarantees similar to a Bag Security Program. Demand can be communicated through desirability and design rather than countdown clocks and scarcity, and hype can be maintained without the pressure associated with urgency. Second, it would need to prioritize building size inclusivity and unretouched content into its brand from the beginning, rather than introduce them in response to market pressure, as, per the Victoria's Secret and Luluemon analysis, that version of inclusivity is the most likely to be rolled back when the pressure to implement it inevitably wanes. Finally, it would need to treat the psychology of its potential customer base - the FOMO and social comparison issues identified in the Literature Review - as a constraint to be worked around, rather than a design lever to be pulled, particularly since Gen Z and younger millennials represent not only the most lucrative part of this potential customer base, but also the one most susceptible to the FOMO and social comparison generated by the platform. The commercial risk is lower than it seems: Telfar's increase in same-day revenue tenfold, and Savage X Fenty's explosive growth in a market dominated by an incumbent, show that confidence economy principles, if deployed as intended, are not only ethical and moral, but can be more profitable than the alternative in the right brand context.

Limitations:

Due to the reliance on public-facing marketing materials, investigative reporting, regulatory disclosures, and sales data reported by companies in press releases and news articles, it is not possible to control for the impact of other events when attributing financial impact to specific advertising campaigns. All six brands analyzed here were fashion and apparel brands, which suggests that further research is needed to generalize the concepts proposed here beyond that sector. Further, the fact that some of the brands analyzed here, particularly Victoria's Secret, are still in the process of repositioning their marketing as of the time of this writing means that some conclusions are tentative.

Next steps:

Future research could also explore whether the Insecurity Economy and Confidence Economy framework replicates in gaming, beauty technology, and food and beverage marketing. These industries think very clearly about how they can use scarcity and social proof marketing strategies to sell their products, but have not examined how they use scarce versus abundant alternatives in this context. On a more empirical level, future research should use primary consumer research methods, such as surveys or interviews, in order to test whether those exposed to Confidence Economy marketing report lower levels of anxiety compared to those exposed to Insecurity Economy marketing, rather than relying on the correlational findings from other studies.

Conclusion:

This paper addresses the question of whether "empowerment" marketing and coercive, trend-based marketing rely on the same psychological levers and the question of why companies move away from coercive marketing. The answer to the first question is, yes, both rely on the same four levers, i.e. scarcity, identity, belonging, and social proof, and differ only in the direction of their effect on the consumer's self-image, from unworthy to empowered. The unifying theme of the proposed Insecurity Economy versus the Confidence Economy framework is that "empowerment marketing" is not about freedom from manipulation, but rather redirecting manipulation toward less negative emotional outcomes.

The evidence from the case studies suggests a less rosy answer: the companies stop using coercive tactics once they are no longer financially sustainable (e.g., due to declining engagement, public backlash, or regulatory scrutiny). But exerting pressure on companies alone, as seen with Victoria's Secret's 2025 pivoting, doesn't create lasting change. When consumers understand manipulation tactics and regulatory bodies keep the spotlight on businesses, public scrutiny becomes a legitimate lasting market pressure beyond goodwill. Telfar's tenfold sales increase after shifting away from scarcity proves, if anything, that the Insecurity Economy isn't the only game in town for contemporary businesses. The most radical reshaping of the marketing landscape in the next 10 years may not be some brand new idea, but rather the simple act of not making customers feel miserable in order to sell to them.

Works Cited

Abd-Elazem, S. (2020, December 2). Telfar – Revolutionizing what it means to be a luxury brand. Marque Magazine. https://marquemagazine.org/2020/12/02/telfar-revolutionizing-what-it-means-to-be-a-luxury-brand-samiha-abd-elazem/

Bartosiak, A., Lee, J. E., & Loibl, C. (2025). Fear of missing out, social media influencers, and the social, psychological and financial wellbeing of young consumers. PLOS ONE, 20(4), e0319034. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0319034

BEUC (The European Consumer Organisation). (2025, June). Click to buy (more): How fast fashion giant SHEIN uses dark patterns to push overconsumption. https://www.beuc.eu/sites/default/files/publications/BEUC-X-2025-051_How_fast_fashion_giant_SHEIN_uses_dark_patterns.pdf

Bhagat, P. (2026, August 24). Fast fashion market size, share, growth, analysis, 2034. Straits Research. https://straitsresearch.com/report/fast-fashion-market

Bringle, J. (2026, April 11). Lululemon founder says popular brand isn't for "certain customers." WWD. https://wwd.com/sourcing-journal/industry-news/lululemon-founder-chip-wilson-certain-customers-plus-size-racist-japanese-1238827342/

Bustle. (2024, February 20). How Telfar's viral it bag might change the way you shop forever. https://www.bustle.com/style/telfar-bag-security-program-changing-luxury-fashion

Carter, B. (2025, December 21). Case study: Savage X Fenty. https://thebrandencarter.com/blog-2/2021/6/22/case-study-savage-x-fenty

Cho, A. (2024, October 1). Not for everyone: Brandy Melville's stance on body positivity. The State News. https://statenews.com/article/2024/10/not-for-everyone-brandy-melvilles-stance-on-body-positivity

Cialdini, R. B. (2021). Influence: The psychology of persuasion. Harper Business.

Convertino, A. D., Rodgers, R. F., Franko, D. L., & Jodoin, A. (2016). An evaluation of the Aerie Real campaign: Potential for promoting positive body image? Journal of Health Psychology, 24(6), 726–737. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105316680022

Desiree Team, The. (2024, October 1). How Telfar became the symbol of accessible luxury. Desiree Design. https://www.desireedesign.co.uk/brand-insider/telfar-luxury-branding-case-study

Fashion Law, The. (2025, June 6). Shein targeted in EU over dark patterns, overconsumption. https://www.thefashionlaw.com/shein-dark-patterns-and-the-business-of-overconsumption/

Goldstein, N. J., Cialdini, R. B., & Griskevicius, V. (2008). A room with a viewpoint: Using social norms to motivate environmental conservation in hotels. Journal of Consumer Research, 35(3), 472–482. https://doi.org/10.1086/586910

Habib, S. (2025, April 10). Impact of FOMO on social media engagement and impulse buying of lifestyle products: Mediation analysis. Journal of Innovative Digital Transformation. https://www.emerald.com/jidt/article/2/2/176/1253251/Impact-of-FOMO-on-social-media-engagement-and

Hakeem, F. (2020, December 28). Examining body positivity in Rihanna's Savage X Fenty lingerie runway show. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348682454_Examining_Body_Positivity_in_Rihanna's_Savage_X_Fenty_Lingerie_Runway_Show

Jing, Z., et al. (2025, September 24). Correlations between social media addiction and anxiety, depression, FOMO, loneliness and self-esteem among students: A systematic review and meta-analysis. PLOS ONE. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0329466

John, T. (2024, October 16). Can a troubled Victoria's Secret successfully write its next chapter? It's certainly pulling out all the stops. CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2024/10/16/style/victorias-secret-fashion-show-return-ny/index.html

Latupeirissa, J. J. P., & Cistadewi, N. M. W. (2025, September 30). Social media trends and FoMO among Gen Z: A systematic literature review. Observatorio (OBS).* https://obs.obercom.pt/index.php/obs/article/view/2631

Lemire, S. (2024, January 8). The Lululemon controversy over "certain customers" comment, explained. TODAY.com. https://www.today.com/popculture/news/lululemon-chip-wilson-controversy-explained-rcna132284

Li, J., Qi, J., Wu, L., Shi, N., Li, X., Zhang, Y., & Zheng, Y. (2021). The continued use of social commerce platforms and psychological anxiety—The roles of influencers, informational incentives and FoMO. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18(22), 12254. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8620271/

lululemon athletica inc. (2021, March 30). Annual report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2021 [SEC filing]. U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1397187/000139718721000009/R12.htm

lululemon athletica inc. (2024, March 21). Lululemon athletica inc. announces fourth quarter and full year fiscal 2023 results [SEC filing]. U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1397187/000139718724000009/lulu-20240128xex991.htm lululemon athletica inc. (2024, August 29). Lululemon athletica inc. announces second quarter fiscal 2024 results [SEC filing]. U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1397187/000139718724000033/lulu-20240728xex991.htm

Macrotrends. (n.d.). Victoria's Secret revenue 2021–2026: VSXY. Retrieved September 7, 2026, from https://www.macrotrends.net/stocks/charts/VSXY/victorias-secret/revenue

Matsuzawa, M. (2025, March 7). One size (doesn't) fit all. The Campanile. https://thecampanile.org/31390/opinion/one-size-doesnt-fit-all/

Neely, S., & Witkowski, K. (2026, January 1). Gen Z reports highest anxiety levels as screen time increases. PsyPost. https://www.psypost.org/gen-z-reports-highest-anxiety-levels-as-screen-time-increases/

Orner, E. (Director). (2024). Brandy Hellville & the Cult of Fast Fashion [Film]. HBO Documentary Films.

Robinson, R. (2025, October 16). Victoria's Secret returns to Brooklyn for star-studded fashion show. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/roxannerobinson/2025/10/16/victorias-secret-returns-to-brooklyn-for-star-studded-fashion-show/

StreamsCharts. (2024, October). Victoria's Secret Fashion Show 2024 ends as year's top entertainment stream. https://streamscharts.com/news/victorias-secret-fashion-show-2024

Thayaparan, A. (2024, January 5). Lululemon founder faces backlash for blasting company's diversity, inclusion efforts. CBC News. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/chip-wilson-body-inclusivity-1.7074987

Tuna, M. F., et al. (2025, November 20). Fear of missing out (FOMO) and status anxiety as drivers of materialism and conspicuous consumption among social media users. Discover Psychology. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s44202-025-00533-2

Victoria's Secret & Co. (2023, March 2). Victoria's Secret & Co. reports fourth quarter 2022 results [SEC filing]. U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1856437/000185643723000009/ex991vsco-20224qearningsre.htm

Vorobei, S. (2024, November 30). The return of Victoria's Secret Fashion Show: Rebrand or ruse? Harbingers' Magazine. https://www.harbingersmagazine.com/articles/the-return-of-victorias-secret-fashion-show-rebrand-or-ruse-by-sofia-vorobei/

Zwieglinska, Z. (2024, December 2). How Shein and Temu are using "dark patterns" to drive holiday sales. Glossy.

https://www.glossy.co/fashion/how-shein-and-temu-are-using-dark-patterns-to-drive-holida
y-sales/