

# Reshaping Customer Experience with Generative AI: Insights from Fashion Experts

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# **Reshaping Customer Experience with Generative AI: Insights from Fashion Experts**

## **Abstract**

This study investigates how Generative AI enhances customer experience in fashion retail across the entire customer journey. Based on expert interviews and current literature, and using the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action), it finds that GenAI enriches brand visibility, personalization, and engagement through tools like virtual try-ons, AI-generated visuals, and tailored content. While these technologies attract and retain customers, over-reliance may reduce authenticity, especially for luxury brands that value the human touch. This study offers a 360° view of GenAI's impact on fashion customer experience and highlights the importance of balancing automation with creativity. It recommends strategic use of GenAI to complement, not replace, human input. GenAI can streamline shopping, improve service, and support post-purchase care, provided it is used transparently. The findings offer practical insights for optimizing AI integration in mass-market and luxury retail.

*Keywords: Generative AI, Fashion, Customer Journey*

*Track: Marketing and Technology Interaction*

## **1. Introduction**

AI is reshaping the fashion industry across areas like production and marketing by streamlining processes and improving virtual try-ons. Within this shift, Generative AI (GenAI) stands out for its content and image generation capabilities, helping designers visualize concepts and enhancing advertising (Park & Ahn, 2024). GenAI could transform the entire fashion ecosystem by enabling better product design, reducing marketing costs, and offering personalized, interactive customer experiences (Harreis, Koullias, Roberts, and Te, 2023). A report by the Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company states that 74% of retail and e-commerce firms plan to increase GenAI investment by 2027 (Amed, Berg, Balchandani, Rölkens, and Barrelet, 2023). Despite growing use, academic research on how customers perceive and respond to GenAI throughout their journey remains limited and fragmented. Most existing studies focus on purchase intention, especially Chatbots (Ferraro, Demsar, Sands, Restrepo, and Campbell, 2024; Ranjan & Upadhyay, 2025), lacking a comprehensive view of GenAI's broader impact on customer experience. To address this gap, this study offers a 360° perspective on GenAI's role in fashion customer experience, providing theoretical and practical insights. Using the AIDA model (Strong, 1925), we explore how GenAI influences each stage of the customer journey.

## **2. Background of study and research objectives**

### *2.1 Generative AI and customer experience*

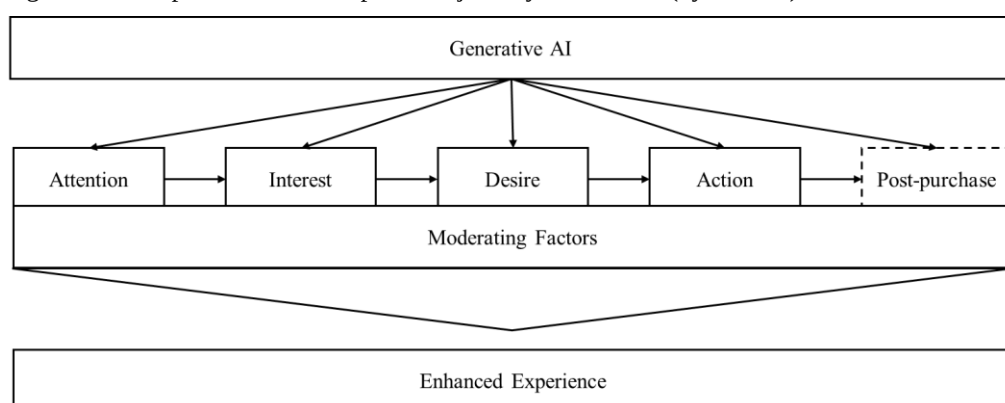
Generative AI offers exciting possibilities for enhancing customer experience, and consumers are optimistic about its potential (Lebow, 2024). GenAI enables hyper-personalized, interactive shopping journeys, and fashion brands are already using GenAI for applications like advertising visuals, virtual try-ons, and tailored recommendation systems (Rahman et al., 2023; Sands, Demsar, Ferraro, Campbell, and Cohen, 2024; Park & Ahn, 2024; Sohn, Sung, Koo, and Kwon, 2020). Meanwhile, retailers should prioritize solving customer needs with AI rather than just showcasing innovation (Bain & Company, 2024a). Generative tools like custom designs and size-specific suggestions boost trust, loyalty, and engagement (Wilendra, Nadlifatin, and Kusumawulan, 2024). As another example, Generative Adversarial Networks are revolutionizing fashion by creating realistic, dynamic product visualizations, while virtual models reflect diverse body types, enhancing purchase confidence (Ozuem & Willis, 2024). GenAI-powered virtual try-ons reduce costs and prevent

overproduction, and AI-generated content like product descriptions supports personalized marketing (Guo et al., 2023). Additionally, GenAI drives innovation in social commerce with tools like ChatGPT for personalized campaigns (Wilendra et al., 2024). These advancements that GenAI brings align well with established marketing communication models such as AIDA, helping to guide and enhance each stage of the customer journey through Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action as explained in the following section.

## 2.2 Theoretical framework (AIDA) and emerging research questions

The AIDA model, which stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, Action, describes the stages consumers follow before purchasing (Strong, 1925) and is the foundation for exploring GenAI's role in fashion retail in this paper. Tools like ChatGPT and DALL-E enhance each phase by offering personalized visuals, recommendations, and support. AI-generated ads and virtual models draw Attention when transparency and trust are present; chatbots and suggestions sustain Interest if accurate and privacy-conscious; virtual try-ons spark Desire when realistic and easy to use; and in the Action stage, AI assists with checkout and service, though trust and human support remain essential (Jannach, Manzoor, Cai, and Chen, 2021; Hartmann, Exner, and Domdey, 2025). As adoption grows, a key question is whether these tools are truly effective or just a digital trend. While early uses are promising (Chui, Hazan, Roberts, Singla, and Smaje, 2023), deeper insights are needed into GenAI's impact on engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). This study applies a conceptual framework based on the AIDA model plus an extra stage (Post-purchase) (Figure I) to examine GenAI's influence across the whole customer journey.

Figure I: Conceptual customer experience journey framework (by authors)



The model illustrates how GenAI influences each stage of the customer journey and finally contributes to enhanced customer experience. At each stage, the customer's perception of

value is shaped by their interaction with GenAI tools, and considering the proposed framework, the study poses the following research questions:

**RQ1:** How do different forms of Generative AI (e.g., image generation, text generation, chatbots, etc.) influence customer experience at each stage of the customer journey, as defined by the AIDA model?

**RQ2:** How can fashion brands optimize the use of Generative AI to enhance the customer experience across the customer journey?

### 3. Methodology

To answer our research questions, we conducted semi-structured interviews, a flexible qualitative method ideal for capturing expert insights (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, and Kangasniemi, 2016). We decided to reach out only to fashion industry experts, as fashion customers are often not aware that they interact with GenAI or see results created by GenAI (Bain & Company, 2024b), which usually leads to fragmented GenAI experiences (Ferraro et al., 2024). Interviewing only experts offers clearer insight into GenAI's integration in the whole customer journey and its expected impact on satisfaction and behavior. Six fashion industry experts were selected (Table I) through purposive sampling, appropriate for a pilot study (Palinkas et al., 2015). Interviews, held between March and April 2025, were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using MAXQDA to identify themes along the customer journey, using the AIDA model (Silver & Lewins, 2014) as the lens for analysis.

*Table I: Profile of the respondents*

| Interview | Country             | Age | Profession in the fashion industry         | Years of Experience |
|-----------|---------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 01        | Italy               | 38  | Fashion marketing expert                   | 10                  |
| 02        | Trinidad and Tobago | 43  | Business owner, fashion designer           | 20                  |
| 03        | Canada              | 40  | Business owner, handicraft designer        | 10                  |
| 04        | UK                  | 43  | Lecturer in fashion marketing and branding | 4.5                 |
| 05        | US                  | 33  | Conscious denim designer                   | 8                   |
| 06        | Canada              | 56  | Digital (AI) fashion creator               | 12                  |

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1 Impact of Generative AI across the AIDA model

The interviews reveal how GenAI influences each stage of the customer journey within the fashion industry. The key findings for every AIDA stage are summarized below:

### *I- Attention*

GenAI allows brands to boost visibility and attract new customers through dynamic content creation. A key use is generating visually engaging, story-driven posts for platforms like Instagram, often using fantasy-inspired visuals to increase engagement: *"... Often, I'll write the bulk of it and I'll put it back into chatGPT and ask him to give me a catchy top liner because that's what people see when they're scrolling. (Interview2)"* Beyond social media, AI speeds up visual concepting, helping brands develop campaigns from mood boards to photorealistic images: *"... but you can take a raw sketch, feed it into various AI programs, and it will spit out a really beautiful, accurate, finished sketch. And then you can take it yet another step, where it will take that finished, beautiful sketch and turn it into a photorealistic version. (Interview 6)"* GenAI also enhances personalization through virtual try-ons, allowing customers to see how items like glasses or clothes would look on them, building confidence in their purchase decisions: *"... for example, if you need to buy glasses or you need to try something on yourself, generative AI helps you to see how it can be on you, that's why it can be pushing the customer to buy easily. (Interview2)"* While some brands use AI to generate headlines and spark attention, concerns remain about content authenticity: *"...I think there's still a bit of a fear around authenticity and kind of engagement with consumers around, particularly putting out representations of people and of models and of garments that are generative rather than real. (Interview4)"* Despite these concerns, GenAI shows strong potential for enhancing customer brand awareness.

### *II- Interest*

Generative AI helps sustain customer interest by creating engaging, interactive experiences during the consideration phase. Virtual try-ons and AR tools let shoppers visualize products like clothing or home items in realistic, personalized ways, keeping them excited and connected to the brand. *"... it's very exciting for the clients that I work with to have an idea and see it in a sketch and then see it in a tech pack and then see it as a sample and in production, and they're very excited to get it out into the world. (Interview 5)"* AI can also generate dynamic digital content, such as personalized product visuals or sneak peeks of upcoming launches, which can be shared across social media to build anticipation. Its effectiveness may vary by product type, niche, or handcrafted items might benefit more from a traditional, personal touch. The key is blending AI innovation with authenticity to keep customers genuinely interested. *"... I think AI cannot be useful because when you combine the traditional handcraft with modern*

*handicraft, it has specific customers and the niche market is not very big, or it's not a mass product. (Interview 3) ”*

### *III- Desire*

Generative AI can elevate product appeal by creating imaginative, fantasy-driven visuals that spark desire. GenAI empowers creators to deliver unique, standout pieces without traditional design backgrounds. Personalization through GenAI gives customers more control, enhancing emotional connection and product appeal. *“... And so to be able to see it in a 3D rendering is kind of tides over that excitement until their product comes to market. So it can keep the clients interested as well as potential customers. (Interview 5) ”*, However, it may play a smaller role for heritage luxury brands like Hermès, where desirability is tied to exclusivity and craftsmanship. Still, for newer or agile brands, the mix of fantasy, transparency, and personalization driven by AI can be a powerful way to fuel consumer desire. *“... I think it definitely increases the desirability, just because it's so fantasy oriented, like when people see these images, they just create such an interest because they don't look realistic, if that makes sense. (Interview 6) ”*

### *IV- Action*

Generative AI is reshaping the action stage of the AIDA model by making the shopping experience more interactive and personalized. Technologies like Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality, paired with gamification, drive higher conversion rates and resonate strongly with Gen Z shoppers who crave digital engagement. GenAI-powered chatbots and virtual stylists guide users through the purchase journey, offering tailored suggestions that boost basket size and enhance the buying experience. *“...like having a personal AI stylist built into your website to be able to take more consumers to a greater total in their basket. (Interview 4) ”*, In luxury fashion, emotional connection and personalized service still outweigh AI. Brands in this space rely more on human touchpoints and in-store experiences to foster loyalty and repeat purchases. While GenAI boosts conversions and personalization across many segments, luxury fashion remains grounded in human-centered experiences. *“...if we speak about luxury words for every customer, it's very important the real experience with the customer advisor with the boutique, with how the customer feels inside, that's why it's all things natural that we want to touch about speaking with the customer service. (Interview 1) ”*

### *V- Post-Purchase*

Generative AI can enhance post-purchase engagement by offering unique incentives and streamlining support. Virtual assistants also simplify returns, handling much of the process for

the customer and improving satisfaction. Additionally, AI can gather richer feedback by engaging customers directly, providing businesses with deeper insights into their experiences. *“... the obvious one for that is just sort of supporting people through the return purchase. (Interview 4)”*, On the backend, GenAI can integrate with internal systems to help staff access information faster and respond more efficiently, improving service and overall engagement. In short, by optimizing support, personalization, and feedback, GenAI strengthens customer relationships and drives long-term loyalty. *“... I think maybe AI can help me or other sellers or producers to get better feedback. (Interview 3)”*

## 4.2 Addressing research questions

### 4.2.1 RQ1, Generative AI, and customer touch points

To address the first research question, the interviews reveal that GenAI is reshaping retail marketing by capturing Attention through enhanced visibility and engagement, using personalized content like captions, imagery, and virtual try-ons. It builds Interest by offering convenience and tailored experiences that attract new customers, though some experts question the creative depth of AI-generated ads. GenAI also fuels Desire by fostering emotional connections through immersive storytelling and individualized recommendations, especially effective for agile, mass-market brands, while luxury labels like Hermès maintain a focus on exclusivity and craftsmanship. In the Action stage, tools such as virtual try-ons, AI stylists, and chat assistants enhance conversion rates and satisfaction, even as luxury retail continues to rely on personal service. Finally, in Post-purchase, GenAI supports returns, follow-ups, and automated service, while in mass-market environments, it drives retention through review prompts and feedback tools. The results align with existing literature, but offer a more holistic perspective on the customer journey (Lee & Kim, 2024; Sands et al., 2024; Chakraborty, Polisetty, Rana, & Khorana, 2024; Ranjan & Upadhyay, 2025; Das & Das, 2025).

### 4.2.2 RQ2, maximizing the benefits

To address the second research question, according to our interviewed experts, to optimize GenAI across the customer journey, brands should use it to enhance, not replace, human creativity. In the Attention stage, AI can support visual storytelling, but transparency is essential for building trust. During the Interest stage, tools like virtual try-ons and product customization increase engagement, though privacy concerns must be carefully managed. In the Desire stage, personalization deepens emotional connection, particularly for smaller brands, while luxury labels are advised to adopt AI selectively to preserve their sense of



exclusivity. At the Action stage, AI-driven tools such as chatbots and fit assistants enhance convenience, though human support continues to play a vital role. Finally, in the Post-purchase phase, GenAI simplifies returns, delivers tailored follow-ups, and automates customer service. Ultimately, blending AI with human touchpoints creates a more seamless and engaging customer experience. These findings are in line with current literature (Park & Ahn, 2024; Chakraborty et al., 2024; Sands et al., 2024).

## 5. Conclusion, limitations, and future directions

This study explored how GenAI can enhance customer experience in fashion by applying the AIDA model as a lens and drawing on expert insights. The findings suggest that GenAI significantly contributes to brand engagement, personalization, and post-purchase support. However, over-reliance on AI risks diminishing authenticity, making it essential for brands, particularly in the luxury sector, to preserve the value of human creativity and emotional connection. In addressing the second research question, the study emphasizes the importance of using GenAI strategically as a complement rather than a replacement for human input. GenAI can elevate visual storytelling, tailor experiences, and improve service efficiency when applied thoughtfully. While this is a small-scale qualitative study and therefore limited in scope, it provides valuable insights and lays the groundwork for future research. Future studies should explore customer viewpoints and utilize frameworks like the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980) to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how GenAI impacts customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

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