

## **Final Study Report**

Topic: Relationship between social media and shopping habits for Auburn's Panhellenic community

### **Executive Summary**

The goal of this study was to understand how social media has affected the Auburn Panhellenic community's shopping habits. Through this study, we found many possible outcomes. Some of these outcomes were that social media increased many girls' shopping habits, social media enhanced shopping habits, and social media and sorority members influenced how people dressed.

The data was collected using two focus groups, which took place on April 3 at 11 a.m. in Tichenor room 211 and April 7 at 5 p.m. at Abby's house. In total, nine people volunteered to participate: seven girls currently in sororities, one who was in a sorority but dropped out, and one who has never been in a sorority. The focus group was asked 11 questions about their fashion choices and Greek life affiliations. All the participants were female and in their early 20s.

Our study found that social media significantly improved and inspired girls' fashion styles. Moreover, it showed a correlation between girls in sororities and girls outside of sororities accepting fashion trends. Fashion styles and tastes vary from person to person for a variety of reasons. As there are so many styles, trends, and tastes to choose from, social media influences come into play as well.

However, our study also revealed that social media had a stronger influence on fashion trends among girls in sororities compared to those outside of sororities. The constant exposure to fashion-related content and the desire to fit in with their sorority sisters seemed to drive a higher

acceptance of fashion trends within this group. We felt that young women who use social media daily and belong to sororities were very familiar with our topic.

## **Literature Review**

Our team decided to conduct a focus group on the relationship between social media and shopping habits for the Auburn Panhellenic community. Through research, we found many reasons why this topic is so important.

According to a study by Sprout Social Data, “91% of consumers believe in the power of social media to connect people” (Bringé 2023). Social media is a popular spot for brands and influencers to market clothing, so it is a powerful way to make connections. The Forbes article emphasized how an online presence is a wonderful way to develop relationships with users.

As college-aged sorority girls, we know that shopping for clothes for date parties, socials, and formals can add up. In our study, we found that social media has influenced sorority girls' shopping habits by giving them ideas for clothing to buy, different fashion styles, and an easier way to shop directly on social media. In addition to seeing what products look like on other people, social media helps girls spot trends quickly. “The rise of shopping hauls and try-on videos with trending hashtags on social media has led to increased shopping sprees as trends change quickly” (Bari 2022). This can also lead to increased pressure for sorority girls to constantly update their wardrobes and keep up with the latest trends. This can lead to increasing their spending habits.

Social media has influenced brands in return due to real-time feedback and participation on products (Byrne 2023). With this fast-paced communication, brands are now able to keep up with trends and create a better relationship with consumers. Social media has become a major

part of people's everyday life, so incorporating ads for companies is crucial to get products seen and trending.

One topic that is heavily debated in the fashion industry is fast fashion. Many social media brands promote cheaper quality clothing in order to receive the clothing faster (Conant 2023). This has made an impact on the fashion industry as a whole because it has influenced buyers to want what is trendy rather than the quality and the product they are actually purchasing.

Another aspect of online shopping is not being able to try on clothing. A way that social media has adapted to this problem is clothing hauls. Clothing hauls help buyers see the product so they can decide if they want to buy it or not. While having access to unlimited amounts of fashion, there tends to be a lack of originality. “The abundance of information available online has also led to some concerns about the potential for a lack of originality and creativity in the industry” (Cooper 2023). Having so much access to the fashion industry can affect sales, market prices and how trendy an item might be.

## **Method**

During class, we decided that a focus group was the best way to gain the best results because we would be able to discuss these questions face-to-face and receive better responses. Most of the questions that we had were opinion-based, and there would be more than just one answer. Being able to discuss these topics will help us get a better insight of what our participants believe when it comes to fashion and what drives them to follow trends. We decided to create a GroupMe, including everyone in PRCM 4400 and asked if anyone was willing to participate in our focus group. At first, we struggled to get responses, so we spoke to our professor about offering extra credit and reaching out to other class sections to get more people.

After having our professor reach out and message her classes about the extra credit, we received responses from people willing to come to the focus group. When preparing for our focus group, we wrote an introduction for our moderator to read, discussing the rules and what the study will be about. The moderator was then prepared with a list of questions and transition questions to ask the people in the study. At the end of the focus group, we stated that everything would be kept confidential and thanked everyone for coming. When preparing the questions, we based them on concerns about social media and trends in the fashion industry. Our topic was very well known by young women and girls involved in sororities who also use social media daily. When conducting the focus group, we had three note-takers writing down all responses from our participants while also recording the whole session in their voices. We did this so we could listen back to ensure we wrote down the correct information. On April 3, we met with five girls in Tichenor room 211 to conduct the study. When we started the study, the moderator asked the participants to say their names, hometowns, the sorority they were involved in if they were in one, and their ages. The study was awkward at first and then once a few of the questions were asked and answered, the participants started to become more open. On April 7, we met with four girls at 5:00 pm. We held the focus group at Abby's house, which is located at 134 Cedarcrest Circle. This time worked out because it was a convenient time of the day when all of the participants had free time and had completed their tasks for the day. The setting was very relaxed and took place in the living room of the house. All of the participants were members of Auburn's Panhellenic community, and a majority of the members were in the sorority Phi Mu. We began the study by having each participant state their name, sorority, age, and where they were from. The study went very smoothly and each participant seemed very comfortable and freely expressed their opinions and thoughts. The purpose of this study was to determine how social

media has influenced shopping habits among Auburn Panhellenic. Our study examined the shopping habits of Auburn Panhellenic members across various social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. To identify the correlations between social media usage and shopping behaviors, we asked participants how these platforms impacted their purchasing decisions. To get a better understanding of our goal we asked our participants a few questions about their influences on social media, shopping habits and fashion trends.

## **Results**

Our study provided valuable insight into how fashion on social media affects sorority girls' shopping habits. Although we conducted only two studies, we still obtained good results. This study could have provided more niche information if we had conducted studies at different universities in various places.

The discussion of the influence of social media platforms on fashion choices is prominent within this study. Participants in both groups mentioned platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Pinterest as significant sources of inspiration for fashion trends, and social media influencers played a substantial role in shaping purchasing decisions and style choices. Emma Spivey mentions TikTok and Pinterest as her biggest influences, particularly for outfit inspiration (T1RQ1). Whitley from Group 2 mentions TikTok's "For You Page" as a source of inspiration for her clothing choices, indicating the platform's role in shaping trends (T2RQ1).

Another recurring theme was the role of sororities in setting fashion trends on Auburn's campus. Sororities are perceived as influential in setting fashion trends, particularly during events like recruitment. Most women in greek life and potential new members tend to share pictures and videos from work week and recruitment that set the fashion trends on campus for the school year. Gigi from Group 1 mentions the influence of sorority girls in setting trends,

especially during recruitment, and how trends from larger Greek communities like the University of Alabama impact fashion trends at Auburn (T1RQ7). Jenna from Group 2 emphasizes the role of sororities as trendsetters and the impact of recruitment videos in showcasing the style and vibe of each sorority (T2RQ7).

Fashion taste and style differ from place to place, depending on where someone comes from. Both groups mentioned how everyone in college comes from all over, and that's why you see so many different styles. The Panhellenic community also combines various types of styles. However, there are some styles that are more prominent than others. But most of the girls' styles are very different from what they were before college. As a result of being in a sorority and being around people from various backgrounds, their styles have evolved. It also aims to make a positive impression on people and make a good impression on sorority culture.

In conclusion, our study delved into the intricate relationship between social media, sorority culture, and fashion preferences among college women, focusing on the context of Auburn University. Despite the limited scope, our findings underscore the significant influence of platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Pinterest in shaping trends, alongside the pivotal role of sororities in setting fashion standards, particularly during recruitment events. The diversity of backgrounds within the collegiate community contributes to a rich tapestry of styles, reflecting both individuality and collective influences. As students navigate their college experience, their fashion identities evolve, influenced by social media, sorority affiliations, and personal growth. Further research across diverse university settings could offer deeper insights into the nuances of these dynamics, enriching our understanding of the ever-evolving intersection of social media, sorority culture, and fashion on college campuses.

## **Discussion**

The data gathered from both Group 1 and Group 2 sheds light on the significant impact of social media on fashion trends and consumer behavior, particularly among college-aged women and, more specifically, those involved in sororities at Auburn University. Here are some key interpretations and observations.

The influence of social media on purchasing behavior is prominent within this specific population, where platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Pinterest on their clothing purchases. Trends showcased by influencers and fellow college students play a substantial role in shaping preferences. Group 2, in particular, highlighted the convenience of finding affordable fashion trends and dupes through platforms like TikTok, indicating a growing reliance on social media for fashion inspiration and shopping.

Sororities on Auburn University's campus play a large role in fashion trends. They serve as influential entities in setting fashion trends within the Auburn community, especially during recruitment periods. Members are perceived as trendsetters, and their styles are often emulated by others on campus. However, individual styles vary within sororities, and personal preferences ultimately dictate fashion choices. Sorority members prioritize comfort and individuality over conforming to specific standards.

Social media influencers also play a role in what fashion trends are picked up by showing affordable dupes for higher-end clothing brands. Influencers could also demonstrate the importance of repurposing and upcycling clothing items. Which not only promotes sustainability but affordable fashion through recycling and reducing existing clothing. Many members of sororities often buy dupes of clothing items they see on social media because of the

recommendations and reviews from social media. Sorority members can use their influence by encouraging fashion swap events that allow sorority members to exchange and borrow gently used clothing items with other girls in the Panhellenic community.

While social media provides a platform for discovering new trends, accessing affordable fashion, and expressing individual styles, it also presents negative consequences. Across Auburn's campus, there is a standard or connotation of abiding by trends. Participants expressed concerns about the pressure to constantly buy new clothing, compare oneself to others, and possess name-brand clothing. Social media exacerbates consumerism and contributes to feelings of inadequacy.

The prevalence of social media has transformed shopping habits, leading to increased online shopping, impulsive buying, and a desire to keep up with rapidly changing trends. Social media introduces new trends regularly, and when Auburn Panhellenic women embrace these trends, it sparks a desire in others to invest in new clothing. Some have adopted more mindful approaches to shopping, focusing on building capsule wardrobes, utilizing second-hand platforms like Poshmark, and being selective in their purchases.

Every study has its limitations, hindering a comprehensive perspective. In this case, the study was constrained by the participation of only seven active Auburn Panhellenic women, a challenge both in terms of recruitment and results. However, despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into the perceptions of Auburn women on this topic. Another limitation is the qualitative nature of the study; findings are subjective and interpretive, reflecting the perspectives and experiences of the participants. While qualitative research provides rich insights

into participants' lived experiences, it lacks the statistical rigor and generalizability of quantitative research methods.

As we reflect on the overall study and results, we see that there are some improvements for future studies and actions. There is a need for further exploration into the long-term effects of social media on consumer behavior, mental health, and perception of clothing quality within the fashion industry. Research could delve deeper into the intersection of sorority culture and fashion, examining how it impacts identity formation, inclusivity, and perceptions of beauty. Strategies to promote media literacy and responsible consumption should be developed, particularly targeting younger demographics susceptible to the influence of social media.

In conclusion, while social media has revolutionized the fashion industry by democratizing access to trends and styles, it also presents challenges related to consumerism and self-image. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for individuals, brands, and policymakers to foster a more positive and sustainable relationship with fashion in the digital age. The Auburn Panhellenic community, in particular, plays a significant role in setting fashion standards not only on campus but also among other Panhellenic communities.

## Appendices

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## Focus Group Discussion Guide

### *Introduction*

Thank you all for volunteering to participate in our study. Our enthusiasm for fashion trends and social media has led us to delve into the impact of social media on the fashion industry. We will be exploring social media's influence in shaping cultural norms within the fashion realm. Our goal is to look into how social media intersects with fashion within Auburn sororities. Through actively engaging with social media platforms and staying informed on emerging trends, we're intrigued by how the Greek community at Auburn University incorporates these trends. This study is being conducted by a group of junior students studying Public Relations in Professor Brunner's Public Relations Research (PRCM 4400), who may be contacted at [brunnbr@auburn.edu](mailto:brunnbr@auburn.edu).

Participants for this study were selected based on their affiliation with Auburn's Panhellenic community. The moderator will pose open-ended questions about the subject matter, and we encourage all participants to engage actively, providing honest responses while respecting the opinions of others. Please refrain from engaging in inside conversations, interrupting others, or using offensive language. You should be free to speak your mind. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your thoughts and opinions. The results of this study, as well as everything that is said here, should remain confidential. No one should speak about what is discussed in this study.

### *Ice breaker question*

1. What influences you to buy your clothing?

### *Topic questions*

1. How often do social media influencers cause you to buy something?
  - a. What has made you want to follow their trends? (probe)
2. How many of the clothing items do you purchase that are explicitly used for a sorority function?
  - a. Can you give an example? (probe)
3. How often do you borrow clothing to wear to sorority functions?
  - a. What causes you to borrow some items and not others? (probe)
4. How do you perceive the influence of sororities on fashion trends within the Auburn community?
  - a. Can you give an example? (probe)
5. Do you think females in sororities feel the need to adhere to specific standards for clothing?
  - a. Can you give an example? (probe)
  - b. Who or what makes you feel as if you have to adhere to these standards? (probe)

*Transition questions*

1. What are some positives that you see coming from social media's impact on the fashion industry?
2. Do you think people in sororities have different fashion styles/tastes than people not in a sorority?
3. On the other hand, what negative effects do you see from social media's impact on the fashion industry?
4. How have your shopping habits evolved since social media started playing such a role in the fashion industry?

*Conclusion question*

1. Are there any additional insights or observations you would like to share regarding this topic?

*Closing Statement*

*Thank you all for your time and participation. A reminder that the information shared here should be kept confidential. Your discretion in handling it appropriately is highly appreciated. If you have questions, please feel free to ask any of us or email Dr. Brunner at [brunnbr@auburn.edu](mailto:brunnbr@auburn.edu). War Eagle!*

Transcript: Group 1 (April 3, 2024)

MODERATOR: Okay so my name is Emma, so thank you all for volunteering to participate in our study. Our goal is to look into how social media intersects with fashion within Auburn sororities. Through actively engaging with social media platforms and staying informed on emerging trends, we were intrigued by how the Greek community at Auburn University incorporates these trends. This study is being conducted by a group of junior students studying PR, which is us. Participants for the study were selected based off their affiliation with Auburn's Panhellenic community. I'll be posing open ended questions about the subject matter, and we are all just going to answer them. You should be free to speak your mind; there's no right or wrong answers. And we're interested in your thoughts and opinions. The result of this study as well as everything that is said here should remain confidential. No one should speak about what is discussed in a study afterwards. So we can just go around and say like your name, age, and like what sorority you're in, if you're in one.

GIGI: I'm Gigi and I'm 22 and I was in Zeta Tau Alpha until this senior year and I recently dropped.

EMMA THOMAS: My name is Emma. I'm 20. And I am a Kappa Kappa Gamma.

CAROLINE: My name is Caroline. I'm 21 and I am not in a sorority.

LOREN: My name is Loren. I'm 21 and I'm in Alpha Xi Delta.

EMMA SPIVEY: I'm Emma. I'm 21 and I'm in Gamma Phi Beta.

MODERATOR: Right, so we're gonna start off by asking what influences you to buy your clothing the most?

EMMA SPIVEY: I think my biggest influence is definitely probably TikTok or Pinterest. I find myself on Pinterest a lot. And I definitely follow people on Tik Tok because of their outfits and

things that I like. And so following those trends, I think definitely plays a big part in my influence for what I buy.

EMMA THOMAS: Definitely social media, even my friends, like maybe some stuff they have that they found somewhere that I loved so I get the same name or same color or something.

GIGI: Yeah, I'd say TikTok and Instagram as well. And then, I think just influencers on both those platforms, especially.

LOREN: I agree.

CAROLINE: Yeah, I would say the same thing. Whenever I walk around campus, notice seeing someone wearing something or look it up.

MODERATOR: How often do social media influencers cause you to buy something or what has made you want to follow their trends?

LOREN: I don't think very often, for me, I have a hard time buying things, but I do have interest in it. And I know that if I continue to have interest in it, I'll go back and buy it.

EMMA THOMAS: Yeah, I'm the same way. I'm not huge on social media. But, if I do see it, I might add it to my cart, buy it later, but usually takes me a minute to buy something.

GIGI: I usually see so many things that I like, but I have a lot of self control on what I actually end up buying. I just feel it's, I just see stuff every single day that I want, but I just don't ever end up buying it.

EMMA SPIVEY: I'm kind of the same way I think I have really good self control whenever it comes to impulsive buying. But one thing I do look at is kind of influencers that are posting things that are different from everyone else. And so if I continuously see those things that can influence me towards becoming more inclined to purchase something from them.

CAROLINE: I agree pretty much but I will also leave things in my cart for weeks and then I'll end up buying it usually.

MODERATOR: How many of the clothing items do you purchase that are explicitly used for sorority functions?

EMMA THOMAS: I usually purchase a new outfit for everything, depending on specific date parties, I try to reuse or find something in someone's closet, but I mainly buy something brand new every time.

GIGI: I usually buy new stuff for rush each summer, all the themes. And typically I'll try and use that stuff for the rest of the year. For any other themed things going on. And yeah, then I also just would borrow a lot of dresses from friends for date parties.

EMMA SPIVEY: I think for me, it definitely depends. I definitely buy new things for bigger functions. And then certain themes and date parties and rush, but then me and my friends all kind of share everything really. So that's one nice thing about having roommates in other sororities because we all kind of are able to switch items.

LOREN: I agree. I usually buy things for pre recruitment and rush and reuse those throughout the year, and usually only for really big functions like formal.

MODERATOR: And this kind of goes off of that question, but how often do you borrow clothing to wear to sorority functions? And, what causes you to borrow them?

EMMA THOMAS: It's like a thing that I feel someone might have something or I've seen a picture of someone in it. And I'm like, Okay, I'll ask that person. Because yeah, I usually try to see if I can borrow it first before I buy.

EMMA SPIVEY: I find myself being last minute. That usually is whenever I am most inclined to borrow from my friends. If this is next week, I don't have time to order something or go out then.

Or if it's a specific theme, and one of my friends already has something related to that theme, then that's usually whenever I'll borrow something from one of my friends.

LOREN: I'm not a big borrower. So most of the time, I know I can ask, but I just never think to do so I'll just prepare something.

MODERATOR: Okay, so how do you perceive the influence of sororities on fashion trends within the Auburn community? And can you give an example?

GIGI: Can you repeat that question?

MODERATOR: How do you perceive the influence of sororities on fashion trends within the Auburn community? Is there a certain vibe you think that you should be wearing for events and stuff? How is it influenced?

EMMA THOMAS: I definitely think there is a thing socially going through recruitment, there's always a certain skirt people are wearing or even bags for girls going through. I feel I got a lot of that off of social media, or Pinterest and stuff.

EMMA SPIVEY: I think one thing that's really cool about college is everyone's kind of from everywhere, so you kind of get to see different styles from the north, and then from the West, and from the south. So it all kind of combines into different types of styles all throughout the Panhellenic community. And so there definitely are certain styles that are more prominent. But I will say I think my style, and the things that I buy now are a lot different than I would have bought before college. So I definitely think being in a sorority and being around people from all different areas influence how my style has changed.

GIGI: I feel like sororities are always jump onto the trend, while they're happening very quickly. So I feel sorority girls are on trend, especially for recruitment and things when everyone looks cohesive, and I feel like a lot of times maybe the bigger Greek presence like University of

Alabama, sororities play a lot of influence on a lot of the rest of the schools. Because I feel at least whenever we go through rush, we look at a lot of the Phi Mu's at University of Alabama because they're kind of the picture perfect, sorority look. And so I feel they kind of set a lot of the fashion and social media trends and then we kind of go off of that.

MODERATOR: This kind of answer was answered a little bit but do you think females and sororities feel the need to adhere to specific standards for clothing? Or the different sororities if they have different ones like styles?

EMMA THOMAS: Yes, of course, like I wear whatever but I feel like there are sororities that all have this certain brand they always wear or even there's brands that I've never heard of until I came to Auburn. So I definitely feel like each sorority has something. A go to brand or something.

MODERATOR: Who or what makes you feel as if you have to adhere to these standards? You think it's the president of the sororities? Or do you think it's just the culture?

EMMA SPIVEY: Who or what makes you feel as if you have to adhere to these standards? You think it's the president of the sororities? Or do you think it's just the culture?

MODERATOR: What are some positives that you see coming from social media has impact on the fashion industry?

EMMA THOMAS: I guess with social media, you're able to see all around other sororities and at different college's styles that they have and maybe new brands or trends that might be coming in the next recruitment or even semester.

EMMA SPIVEY: That's what I was gonna say to you. I think there's a lot of diversity on social media. So being able to see the diverse types of styles from different types of groups, I think definitely helps.

GIGI: I feel like there's always one or two outfits that are heavily on social media, if it's game day, or semi dresses and stuff, there's always one outfit that you see everywhere on social media. I don't know. A good example like the white cowgirl boots. I felt like those blew up especially the sorority girl culture from social media as an example.

MODERATOR: Kind of going on the other side of that, what negative effects do you see from social media's impact on the fashion industry?

LOREN: I think as a consumer and just the need to feel like you have to constantly buy new stuff.

GIGI: Just not feeling content with what you have is kind of stressful.

MODERATOR: Do you think people in sororities have different fashion styles or tastes than people are not in a sorority?

CAROLINE: Okay, I'm just gonna answer it because I'm not in line so I will say that during Rush week and at all I do get inspiration for outfits and stuff. Y'all don't dress differently but y'all do it first and then everyone else follows so I think y'all are the trendsetters and then we follow because we think y'all are perfect. So we follow along. That's what I think.

MODERATOR: How have your shopping habits evolved since social media started playing such a role in the fashion industry?

EMMA THOMAS: I feel every time I go on one of my accounts or something that I see new and I either screenshot or add it to my cart. So I feel like I'm more likely to buy more, the more I am on social media.

GIGI: I think my fashion sense has changed a ton in being in college especially and social media. I think that social media has really helped me a lot but now it's sometimes I'm like dang can it really just slow down a bit. There's always something new that is coming out.

EMMA SPIVEY: I definitely kind of agree with that. I think my style has definitely changed a lot due to social media in a good way but I definitely think my shopping habits have changed but at the same time I definitely try to be aware of them so that way I'm not impulsively feeding into consumerism too much.

MODERATOR: Is there any additional insights or observations you would like to share regarding the topic, just social media trends and how easily our generation might be influenced?

GRACIE: Can y'all tell me where y'all are from?

GIGI: I am from Houston Texas.

EMMA THOMAS: Daphne, Alabama

LOREN: Decatur, Illinois,

EMMA SPIVEY: Dothan, Alabama

MODERATOR: Okay, well thank you all for your time and participation reminder that the information shared here should be kept confidential. It was highly appreciated. If you have any questions feel free to ask any of us or Dr. Brunner. Thanks.

Transcript: Group 2 (April 7, 2024)

MODERATOR: My name is Abby, so thank you all for volunteering to participate in our study. Our goal is to look into how social media intersects with fashion within Auburn sororities. Through actively engaging with social media platforms and staying informed on emerging trends, we were intrigued by how the Greek community at Auburn University incorporates these trends. This study is being conducted by a group of junior students studying PR, which is us. Participants for the study were selected based off their affiliation with Auburn's Panhellenic community. I'll be posing open ended questions about the subject matter, and we are all just going to answer them. You should be free to speak your mind; there's no right or wrong answers. And we're interested in your thoughts and opinions. The result of this study as well as everything that is said here should remain confidential. No one should speak about what is discussed in a study afterwards. So we can just go around and say things like your name, age, where you are from and what sorority you're in, if you're in one.

WHITLEY: I'm Whitley, I'm 21 years old from Birmingham, Alabama and a Phi Mu

MEG: I'm Meg, I'm from Atlanta, Georgia and I'm 21 years old and I'm also a Phi Mu

NATALIE: I'm Natalie, I'm also a Phi Mu and I'm 21 years old from Dallas, Texas

JENNA: I'm Jenna, I'm 21 and I'm from Louisville, Kentucky and I'm an Alpha Xi

MODERATOR: So we're going to start off by asking what influences you to buy your clothing the most?

WHITLEY: My roommates or stuff I see online that's cute through ads.

MEG: Current trends and what is most comfortable on my body.

NATALIE: What I see on my Tik Tok "For You Page" and what other college age girls are wearing. I also look at clothes by Rent The Runway as well as Instagram Ads and sales.

JENNA: Whatever trends I see on Instagram, Tiktok, or Rent the Runway that appeal to me. Mainly the trends I see on campus appeal to me the most.

MODERATOR: How often do social media influencers cause you to buy something or what has made you want to follow their trends?

WHITLEY: I'm not huge on social media fashion trends but is influenced by style at good prices.

MEG: I can often be influenced by others just to stay on top of the trends. But I'm more into sporty/cool style so wouldn't follow trends that stay away from that style.

NATALIE: Social media influencers influence me a lot but a lot of the times I don't follow through to actually purchase it unless I really want it. I look at more influencers with similar style and affordability.

JENNA: Social media doesn't influence me very often but if I see trends that I like or I see that I would like and actually wear repeatedly, then I will buy it.

MODERATOR: How many of the clothing items do you purchase that are explicitly used for sorority functions?

WHITLEY: All of the clothes I buy are sorority related. I buy most of them for date parties, socials, or hanging out at a sorority function.

MEG: I think 70% of the time I buy something for an event but often use Rent The Runway for events.

NATALIE: I rent 80% of the clothes I wear. I don't really buy for sorority events because I know I won't rewear it.

JENNA: I would say 50% of my wardrobe is based on sorority functions based on if I can wear it again or rent it from Rent the Runway or other people.

MODERATOR: This kind of goes off of that question, but how often do you borrow clothing to wear to sorority functions? And, what causes you to borrow them?

WHITLEY: I pretty much borrow everything that I wear because it is easier since I have six roommates with a lot of clothes and rental memberships that I can use. I borrow stuff instead of buying things because I'm in college with a tighter budget.

MEG: I borrow a ton because I also live with six girls and have many friends to borrow from. I would borrow over buy to save money just because it is so much more affordable.

NATALIE: I rent most of my clothes but I sometimes borrow things. It just depends on the item and if I can't find it on rent the runway.

JENNA: I borrow depending on the theme of the event and if I know someone that has what I want, but I don't borrow that often, I rent clothes too.

MODERATOR: So how do you perceive the influence of sororities on fashion trends within the Auburn community? And can you give an example?

WHITLEY: I think every sorority has a certain vibe and you can usually see the vibe through recruitment videos. There are certain sororities with more out of state girls that dress differently than the preppier girls. All sororities have a certain vibe that can influence younger girls.

MEG: I'm really influenced by older women but realize that as a college student that I may be influential to high schoolers. But everyone has their own style but some girls look up to sorority members for new trends.

NATALIE: I think sororities are influential especially during recruitment. It's easy to tell what trends are coming up based on how girls are dressing and the outfits they post. Most sorority girls at Auburn are really into fashion, which heavily influences other girls.

JENNA: I think that sorority girls are very trendy and tend to start lots of trends on campus and sororities tend to have their own style or vibe, but everyone has different styles. I think recruitment is very popular and well-known on social media to see the outfits and themes.

MODERATOR: Do you think females and sororities feel the need to adhere to specific standards for clothing? Or the different sororities if they have different ones like styles?

WHITLEY: I feel like as you get older that goes away but you see more of it freshman and sophomore year because you are coming to a new town and care more about wanting to impress the people around you. Now I dress more for myself and similar to my roommates.

MEG: I agree with Whitley. Coming from a private school and wearing a uniform everyday made me excited to dress like a college girl. But now I can focus on my own style.

NATALIE: I agree with Meg. In high school I would wear the same t-shirt and shorts to school and going into college I was so excited to buy outfits and dress up.

JENNA: I definitely agree with Whitley because freshman and sophomore year, you kind of explore what style you like and as you get older you know what you like or what looks best on you.

MODERATOR: Who or what makes you feel as if you have to adhere to these standards? You think it's the president of the sororities? Or do you think it's just the culture?

WHITLEY: Social media along with Tik Tok and living in a dorm freshman year because everyone just followed along with each other and trends. Also not knowing people, you want to make a good impression with your style.

MEG: I wanted to fit the basic style of a freshman college girl and everyone followed the same trends.

NATALIE: Tik Tok really influenced me because so many people would link their outfits.

JENNA: Definitely wanting to make a good impression on people and sorority culture is a huge influence on adhering to those standards.

MODERATOR: What are some positives that you see coming from social media has impact on the fashion industry?

WHITLEY: The availability because outfits are linked and you can find dupes for expensive brands. Like To Know It is also convenient to shop outfits. Also if you are an influencer you can make commission.

MEG: There are so many positives because it is growing so much. Tik Tok has blown up and made it easy to find accessible and affordable fashion trends. There are many dupes for college girls needing quick outfits.

NATALIE: Social media is really helpful to see what the item actually looks like on someone and how they style it. Influencers also help show what trends are going on at the moment.

JENNA: Social media is awesome for getting ideas, seeing how it looks on someone, and finding more affordable options, especially as a college student.

MODERATOR: On the other hand, what negative effects do you see from social media's impact on the fashion industry?

WHITLEY: Social media can be toxic sometimes because it is like a social norm and so easy to compare yourself to people on social media. The most toxic part is comparison, which just goes along with social media in general.

MEG: One negative impact of social media is that people that may not have your style can get bullied if they dress differently or have a unique style. Another negative is that some people can buy more expensive things and often girls compare themselves to these people.

NATALIE: Social media makes me buy more which can be a negative because it is so easy to click a button and purchase stuff. In the past when we had to go to a store to buy stuff it wasn't as easy to impulse buy.

JENNA: I agree with all of that. It definitely depends on how a person handles and deals with social media.

MODERATOR: Do you think people in sororities have different fashion styles or tastes that people are not in a sorority?

WHITLEY: It's not as much based on a sorority as it is your personality. There are some girls not in a sorority that may dress more edgy, but every sorority dresses differently.

MEG: We have built our closets buying stuff for sorority events that other people may not need, which is different. But a lot of it depends on where you are from and your personality. There are many people in my sorority that dress differently than me.

NATALIE: Girls in the south dress similar. I noticed during football season that all girls dress similarly even if they aren't in a sorority. But also girls in sororities probably wouldn't have as many cocktail dresses or costumes as sorority members.

JENNA: I feel like girls in the south generally dress the same but sorority girls seem particular in brands. Like I said, everyone has their own style.

MODERATOR: How have your shopping habits evolved since social media started playing such a role in the fashion industry?

WHITLEY: I shop online a lot more now because the links to the outfits are always provided. Now there are also promotion codes and more sales that are easily accessible.

MEG: My shopping habits have become better because my style is simple and social media has influenced me to develop a "capsule wardrobe." I also use Poshmark a lot now.

NATALIE: Online shopping makes it easier to find something on sale through social media promotion. It also makes me more interested in shopping and finding my style.

JENNA: I honestly love to scroll on Tiktok or Instagram to find inspo and see where they got it but my shopping habits are better and I am not as impulsive as I used to be.

MODERATOR: Is there any additional insights or observations you would like to share regarding the topic, just social media trends and how easily our generation might be influenced?

MEG: It's just so important for everyone to be themselves and have their own style, even though social media can influence this.

MODERATOR: Well thank you all for your time and participation reminder that the information shared here should be kept confidential. It was highly appreciated. If you have any questions feel free to ask any of us or Dr. Brunner. Thanks.