

EDUCATION

The University of Birmingham

Sep 23 - Present | Expected Submission: Sep 2026

PhD in Marketing

Doctoral Research: The Power of the Unreal: Virtual Influencers and Sustainable Consumer Behaviour

The University of Manchester

Sep 21 - Dec 22

Master of Science in International Fashion Marketing (Distinction)

Master Dissertation: Social Media Influencers' Impact on China's Gen Z Upcycled Fashion Purchase (*Score: 80%*)

Southwest University

Sep 17 - Jun 21

Bachelor's in Management (1st Class)

Undergraduate Dissertation: The Effect of Spokesperson Scandals on Consumer Brand Trust

RECOGNITION

- Associate Fellow (AFHEA), awarded by Advance HE.
- Active member of the British Academy of Management (BAM), engaging with disciplinary research communities.
- Member of Advance HE Connect, contributing to professional dialogue on teaching and higher education practice.

TEACHING AND WORKING EXPERIENCE

University of Birmingham

Birmingham, UK

Lecturer, teaching assistant and tutor

Sep 24 - Now

- Delivered teaching as a **PGTA** across **six** undergraduate and postgraduate modules, including *Digital Marketing*, *Marketing Communication* (BSc and MSc), *Introduction to Marketing and Communication*, *Marketing Strategy* (BSc and MSc), *Marketing and New Technology*, and *Services and Retail Strategy*. Contributed to large-cohort seminars (100+ students) and independently led small-group seminars (around 25 students).
- Designed and delivered **guest lectures** in *Marketing Communication* and *Marketing and New Technology*, integrating doctoral research on virtual influencers and brand-consumer relationships to strengthen research-informed teaching and bridge theory and contemporary digital marketing practice.
- Provided **one-to-one** academic and pastoral support through tutorials and office hours, offering structured guidance on assessment expectations, research skills and study strategies. Supported diverse and international groups in developing academic confidence and engagement, referring students to appropriate university services where necessary.
- Developed inclusive, research-informed teaching materials grounded in constructivist pedagogy, incorporating scaffolded tasks, structured discussion prompts and collaborative activities to enhance participation and accessibility for linguistically and culturally diverse learners.
- Creatively designed and delivered a live-client, project-based MSc assessment in *Marketing Communication*, partnering with UoB alumni start-ups. Facilitated scaffolded workshops, staged feedback cycles and industry-facing presentations, strengthening applied analytical capability, critical thinking and graduate employability.
- Embedded AI literacy within teaching materials and learning activities, guiding students in the responsible and critical use of AI in marketing practice. Facilitated AI-supported campaign development activities, including visual content generation and basic web prototyping, strengthening students' strategic thinking and critical evaluation of AI-generated outputs.
- Used digital learning and collaboration tools, including Canvas, Microsoft Teams, Padlet, Mentimeter, Kahoot and Genially to organise learning materials, communicate with students, facilitate online or blended engagement and support individual academic guidance and provide digitally mediated assessment feedback.
- Contributed to assignment marking, feedback and moderation processes in line with module requirements and Business School assessment standards, with teaching input reflected in strong student engagement and positive module feedback.

RESEARCH AND PROJECT EXPERIENCE

University of Birmingham

Birmingham, UK

Research Assistant

Apr 24 - Sep 25

- Collaborated with interdisciplinary academic teams across Marketing and Finance on multiple research projects, including private equity exit strategies, AI literacy in higher education and sustainable fashion consumption.
- Conducted systematic and structured literature reviews, synthesising theoretical and empirical insights to inform research design and publication development.
- Contributed to qualitative and quantitative research activities, including focus group design, interview data collection, thematic analysis and structured empirical evaluation.
- Produced analytical outputs linking research findings to theoretical frameworks and managerial implications.
- Managed concurrent research tasks and timelines using Trello and online collaborative tools, coordinating priorities and communicating progress effectively within interdisciplinary project teams.

University of Birmingham

Workshop Coordinator, *Woman in Finance*

Birmingham, UK

Apr 25 - Jul 25

- Assisted in planning and organising a **hybrid academic–industry** workshop on finance, gender, and development, engaging academics, entrepreneurs, and early-career researchers. Contributed to the workshop’s inclusivity and accessibility, with 20+ participants attending both **in-person** and **online**.
- Promoted the workshop via LinkedIn and direct outreach, contacting 83 scholars from 17 UK universities to encourage paper submissions and participation, expanding the conference’s reach and impact.
- Managed administration, securing funding approval and overseeing contract execution to ensure efficient and compliant delivery. Coordinated logistics, including process planning, venue arrangements, equipment setup, resource integration, preparation of conference materials, and on-site support to ensure smooth delivery.

Southwest University

Research Assistant: *The Sixth Economic Census Report of Chongqing*

Chongqing, China

Jul 20 - Nov 20

- Contributed to a government-commissioned research project examining regional economic development, collaborating with academic colleagues to conduct large-scale secondary data analysis in line with official reporting and policy standards.
- Produced analytical and visual data reports to support evidence-based policy recommendations, demonstrating strong quantitative analysis, methodological rigour and stakeholder-oriented communication skills.

RESEARCH EXPERTISE, FUNDING, PUBLICATIONS AND SCHOLARLY ENGAGEMENT

Research Expertise

Research focused on sustainable consumer behaviour, social media and AI-enabled marketing communication. Doctoral research examines how virtual influencers, form realism and moral language influence perceived authenticity, consumer attitudes and sustainable purchase intentions. Broader interests include AI applications in marketing, consumer interactions with AI-enabled agents, and responsible digital marketing practice.

Research Funding and Awards

- College of Social Sciences PGR Student Development Fund, University of Birmingham, 2024-2026.
- Birmingham Business School Development Fund, University of Birmingham, 2024-2026.
- Academy of Marketing 2026 Doctoral Colloquium Bursary, 2026.
- BISCA Early Career Research Travel Fund, 2026.

Conference Papers and Presentations

- Zhang, X., Hassan, L. and Lamprinakos, G. (2026). Virtual Influencers Sustainable Marketing: How Form Realism and Moral Language Shape Consumer Responses. *Paper accepted for presentation at the Academy of Marketing Conference, 2026.*
- Zhang, X., Hassan, L. and Lamprinakos, G. (2025). Virtual Influencers and Sustainable Consumer Behaviours: A Systematic Literature Review and Research Agenda. *Presented at the Birmingham Business School Doctoral Conference, University of Birmingham.*
- Zhang, X., Hassan, L. and Lamprinakos, G. (2025). Virtual Influencers and Sustainable Consumer Behaviours. *Presented at the Postgraduate Research Festival, University of Birmingham.*

Manuscripts in Development

- Zhang, X., Hassan, L. and Lamprinakos, G. The Power of the Unreal: Virtual Influencers and Sustainable Consumer Behaviour. Manuscript completed and currently under revision for journal submission in 2026.
- Zhang, X., J Li, Hassan, L. and Lamprinakos, G. Authenticity in Virtual Influencer and Social Media Influencer Marketing: A Systematic Review. Manuscript in preparation for submission in 2026.
- Nur, T., Zhang, X., Hassan, L. and Lamprinakos, G. AI Influencers and Consumer Financial Decision-Making. Co-authored manuscript in preparation for submission in 2026.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Xiaohongshu (RedNote)

Event Marketing Intern

Shanghai, China

Mar 21 - Jul 21

- Developed and executed social media content and user engagement strategies, increasing account followers by 350% within four months. Conducted customer analytics and merchant training using consumer behaviour data, supporting client growth (8 new merchants achieved monthly sales of 100,000 RMB).
- Gained professional insight into influencer-related communication and online consumer interaction, complementing teaching and research expertise in social media and AI-enabled marketing.

Havas Group

Digital Marketing Intern

Shanghai, China

Dec 20 - Mar 21

- Supported digital marketing strategy development for lifestyle and luxury clients, including UGG, Hermès and Breitling. Conducted campaign performance analysis using Google Analytics, 360, and Sougou, contributing to an 18% increase in multi-channel campaign impressions within one month.
- This experience informs teaching on digital advertising, campaign evaluation and data-informed marketing decision-making, helping students connect analytical evidence with advertising strategy and effectiveness.