
Issues and Perspectives in Business and Social Sciences

Social media, influencers, and fashion consumption: evidence from Malaysian university students

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Abstract

This study investigates the factors influencing Malaysian university students' purchase intention for fashion products within the context of social media and influencer marketing. Drawing on data from a sample of 316 students, the study examines demographic variables (gender, academic year, and monthly pocket money), behavioural factors (social media usage and influencer engagement), and influencer attributes (expertise, attractiveness, fit, and trust). Statistical analyses, including *t*-tests, one-way ANOVA, post-hoc tests, and multiple regressions, were conducted to assess relationships. Results showed that gender had no significant effect, while academic year, financial capacity, and time spent on social media significantly influenced purchase intention. Higher intention was reported among students who frequently interacted with, engaged with, or shared content from fashion influencers. Regression findings confirmed that all four influencer attributes significantly affected purchase intention, with expertise and fit being the strongest predictors. These findings offer valuable insights for marketers aiming to design targeted campaigns based on student financial profiles and digital behaviours.

Keywords:

Purchase intention;
Social media influencer;
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Fashion e-commerce;
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1. Introduction

The global fashion industry was worth approximately 1.7 trillion US dollars in 2023, and the market size is expected to reach 2 trillion US dollars by 2028 (Statista, 2023). The fashion industry has grown to a very large extent and has shifted from conventional physical shops to electronic commerce systems. Social media has been identified as a primary promotion tool in this transition process. More than half of global internet users consume fashion products and are influenced by social media sites such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok (Searles, 2024).

The rise of social media has transformed the way young consumers, particularly university students, engage with fashion brands. According to Kemp (2024), Malaysia has 33 million users with a 97.4% internet connection as of early 2024, of which 83.1% use social media (Statista, 2024). Indeed, a survey conducted by Nielsen (2019) showed that 99% of Malaysian students, particularly aged 15-24, are active social media users who are deeply engaged with digital content that is usually directly associated with influencers. This means that they are a highly targeted group because they spend a lot of time on their screens, particularly on social media platforms.

In Malaysia, where digital engagement among youth is high, the factors that drive students' purchase intentions are yet to be fully understood. First, most influencer marketing studies focus on general consumers, but little is known about university students (18–25) who exhibit different purchasing behaviours influenced by factors such as pocket money, social media use, and academic years. Second, few studies have investigated how engagement behaviours (e.g. liking, sharing, and interacting with influencers) affect purchase intention. Third, instead of treating influencer credibility as a broad factor, breaking it down into trust, expertise, attractiveness, and fit provides deeper insights.

Hence, this study aims (i) to investigate how gender, financial (pocket money), academic (year of study), and social media behaviours (time spent) affect the purchase intention of fashion products; (ii) to examine how engagement behaviours with fashion influencers (interaction, post-sharing, and following influencers) create distinct groups that influence the purchase intention of fashion products; and (3) to analyse the impact of fashion influencer attributes (trust, expertise, attractiveness, and fit) on the purchase intention of fashion products.

2. Literature review

In the context of fashion e-commerce, purchase intention reflects Malaysian university students' psychological willingness to buy fashion items that influencers endorse. It captures the motivational state preceding action and is widely used to assess marketing effectiveness in digital environments, particularly those shaped by influencer dynamics. Recent research emphasises that influencer attributes such as trustworthiness, authenticity, and expertise shape consumer attitudes, which in turn foster purchase intentions. For instance, Till and Busler (2000) found that when students perceive influencers as authentic and aligned with their values, their intention to buy increases. This is particularly important for Gen Z students, who rely heavily on peer-like digital personas for product discovery.

Similarly, Lee and Eastin (2020) concluded that visual congruence between influencers and fashion brands enhances perceived credibility, which strengthens consumer intentions. Social platforms such as TikTok and Instagram amplify this effect by facilitating ongoing exposure to curated content that is often unrealistic. Moreover, Al-Htibat and Garanti (2019) highlighted that frequent engagement with influencer content through likes, shares, or comments further solidifies intention by reinforcing familiarity and perceived social proof. Therefore, in this study, purchase intention is positioned as the central outcome variable that best reflects the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies targeting university students in the Malaysian fashion e-commerce landscape.

2.1 Demographic and behavioural factors

Research shows that demographic factors like gender can affect how likely someone is to buy fashion products online. Chiu et al. (2005) found that men and women think differently about online shopping. Women focus more on convenience, while men are more concerned about security. Kanwal et al. (2022) reviewed many studies and found that women are more influenced by social factors in online shopping. Andrews et al. (2007) found that women and men differ in the values they seek when shopping online: women focus more on functional value and social connections, while men emphasise social and conditional values. Similarly, Lin, Featherman, and Brooks (2013) showed that males are more influenced by interactivity and perceived risk in online shopping attitudes, whereas females respond more to vividness and diagnosticity of product information. Age also plays a role. Boardman and McCormick (2023) showed that younger and older users have different ways of using fashion websites. Research also shows that younger students with higher academic years and more pocket money tend to have stronger

online purchase intentions due to greater financial freedom and experience (IAB, 2021). Zhang et al. (2012) suggested that people with more money or shopping experience may look at product information differently, which can change how they decide to buy online.

Social media usage plays a key role, with frequent users, especially females, more likely to form purchase intentions because they engage more with fashion content and brand posts (IAB, 2021; Suari et al., 2019). These factors narrow and shape online fashion purchase intentions by influencing motivation, trust, and shopping behaviour. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed to examine the differences in purchase intention across the selected demographic and behavioural factors:

H1a: There is a significant difference in purchase intention between genders.

H1b: There is a significant difference in purchase intention across different academic years.

H1c: There is a significant difference in purchase intention based on the amount of pocket money received by students.

H1d: There is a significant difference in purchase intention based on the time spent on social media.

2.2 Engagement behaviour

Engagement on social media, such as following influencers, interacting with content, and sharing posts, can also influence purchase intention. Tafesse and Wood (2021) found that the way influencers create and share content helps increase follower engagement, which leads to more interest in buying. Onofrei et al. (2022) showed that the quality of content and trust in the influencer affect how people behave online and whether they want to buy. Similarly, research by Dauhan and Langi (2024) indicates that followers' engagement with influencers, including liking and commenting on posts, significantly impacts their attitudes and intentions to purchase endorsed products. Studies also reveal that consumers who actively follow fashion influencers and share product-related content tend to have higher purchase intentions because these behaviours build trust and social proof (Lin et al., 2013; Suari et al., 2019). Females especially rely more on electronic word-of-mouth and peer recommendations, making their engagement with social media content a strong driver for buying fashion products online (Andrews et al., 2007; IAB, 2021). Overall, higher levels of engagement increase confidence in purchase decisions and encourage online fashion shopping. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed to examine how different forms of engagement with fashion influencers influence purchase intention:

H2a: There is a significant difference in purchase intention between students who follow fashion influencers and those who do not.

H2b: There is a significant difference in purchase intention based on the level of interaction with fashion influencers.

H2c: There is a significant difference in purchase intention based on the level of engagement with fashion influencers.

H2d: There is a significant difference in purchase intention based on the frequency of sharing influencer posts.

2.3 Credibility

The Source Credibility Model (SCM), proposed by Ohanian (1990), highlights three fundamental attributes that determine the credibility of an influencer: trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. Trustworthiness is an extremely important aspect of fashion e-commerce, as students are likely to follow the recommendations of an influencer they deem sincere and reliable (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). Expertise, another vital characteristic, refers to the influencer's perceived knowledge and competence in their domain. In the context of fashion influencers, those who are seen as knowledgeable or authoritative are more likely to impact purchasing decisions, as university students rely on their advice for fashion

trends and style guidance (Hwang & Jeong, 2016). Attractiveness is not limited to physical appearance; it also includes overall appeal and relatability. Influencers who possess charm, personality, and visual appeal are more likely to engage their followers and encourage positive purchasing behaviours (Chetioui et al., 2020).

This study also adopts another construct known as perceived congruence/fit, which seeks to establish the correlation between the influencer and the product being promoted. The Match-Up Hypothesis, suggested by Till and Busler (2000), posits that if the endorser has a matching personality to the brand or product that they endorse, then the endorsement is seen as more believable. This alignment can significantly influence consumer perceptions, making students more likely to act on the product recommendations. For example, if a particular fashion influencer who is well-known for minimalistic outfits shares a recommendation of a brand that fits this description, students will be inclined to trust the endorsement and may make a purchase. The inclusion of congruence/fit provides a more comprehensive understanding of how influencer-product alignment impacts consumer behaviour.

2.3.1 Influencer's expertise

In the fashion e-commerce space, the expertise of influencers is another key factor that affects Malaysian university students' purchase decisions. Expertise relates to how knowledgeable and competent influencers are perceived to be in the fashion domain, which can significantly enhance their credibility and persuasiveness when they endorse products.

Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) found that when influencers are perceived as fashion experts, they have a stronger impact on the purchase intentions of young audiences, particularly on visual platforms such as Instagram. Malaysian students are active on social media and tend to follow the guidance of those who are deemed experts in fashion. This was supported by Hwang and Jeong (2016), who found that when sponsored content is provided by opinion leaders with high expert power, consumer attitudes are likely to change, and the probability of purchasing a product is likely to improve, since opinion leaders are regarded as knowledgeable in their respective fields.

Jin et al. (2019) highlighted that expertise helps an influencer gain credibility in the fashion industry. For Malaysian students seeking style advice and up-to-date fashion trends, influencers who display significant expertise and insight become more persuasive, guiding students' purchase intentions and decisions. Therefore,

H3a: Expertise of the fashion influencer significantly influences purchase intention.

2.3.2 Influencer's attractiveness

Attractiveness is a crucial element in influencer marketing, particularly in the online fashion retail space, where visual presentation is essential. Influencer attractiveness includes not only physical appearance but also personal style and charisma, which together help capture and sustain the audience's attention. De Veirman et al. (2017) found that attractive influencers are more likely to garner favourable responses from followers because physical appeal often enhances content perception. This is especially relevant for Malaysian university students who are active users of Instagram and TikTok, platforms that prioritise visual content. The "halo effect" plays a role here, where the attractiveness of the influencer positively shapes viewers' perceptions of product quality and desirability.

Lim et al. (2017) noted that beauty significantly boosts engagement, increasing viewers' willingness to make purchases. Similarly, Chetioui et al. (2020) concluded that perceived visual appeal enhances credibility, making the influencer's message persuasive. For Malaysian students,

especially those interested in fashion or regularly seeking inspiration online, the influencer's attractiveness directly impacted their attitudes and likelihood of purchase. Therefore, visual appeal is not just aesthetic; it functions as a psychological cue driving consumer behaviour. Therefore,

H3b: Attractiveness of the fashion influencer significantly influences purchase intention.

2.3.5 Perceived congruence/fit

In Malaysian fashion e-commerce, perceived congruence, or the fit between an influencer and a brand, plays a critical role in shaping university students' purchase intentions. This alignment influences how genuine and appropriate students perceive endorsements. Till and Busler (2000) emphasised that authenticity increases significantly when influencers are seen as a natural match for the brands they promote. For students who are increasingly selective in their consumption, congruence helps build trust and boosts their purchase inclination.

Ki et al. (2020) also supported the notion that influencer-brand compatibility enhances engagement. When students perceive consistency between an influencer's persona and the product being promoted, they are more likely to view the message as credible and take action. This compatibility encourages emotional connections and interactions with the content. Jin et al. (2019) further argued that the closer the match between the brand and influencer's personality, the more authentic and persuasive the endorsement. This is particularly relevant for university students, who often associate with influencers whose lifestyles and values mirror their own. Overall, perceived congruence enhances credibility and is a key determinant of students' attitudes and intentions to purchase fashion products through influencer marketing. Therefore, H3c: The fit between the fashion influencer and the fashion product significantly influences purchase intention.

2.3.4 Influencer's trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is one of the factors that influence how students approach the recommendations of influencers. Ohanian (Ohanian, 1990) identified believability as a measure of evaluating the efficiency of a communicator. When influencers are considered credible and genuine, trust, impression, and purchase intention also increase (Wiedmann & von Mettenheim, 2021).

Wiedmann and von Mettenheim (2021) further emphasised the role of trustworthiness in determining the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns. It was discovered that Malaysian consumers are more likely to interact with content shared by trusted influencers. Furthermore, Hwang and Zhang (2018) demonstrated that trustworthiness enhances parasocial relationships, wherein students feel a strong personal connection to influencers, boosting their purchase intentions and willingness to share positive eWOM. This connection is particularly relevant in Malaysian university culture, where influencers who are seen as authentic and genuine can drive greater engagement and purchase behaviour among students. Therefore, H3d: Trustworthiness of the fashion influencer significantly influences purchase intention.

3. Research framework

This conceptual framework, illustrated in Figure 1, shows the direct relationships between three key constructs—demographic factors (gender, academic year, pocket money, social media usage), engagement behaviours (following, interaction, engagement level, sharing), and influencer credibility (expertise, attractiveness, congruence, trustworthiness)—and purchase intention.

Each construct independently contributes to understanding students’ fashion purchase intentions in social media contexts.

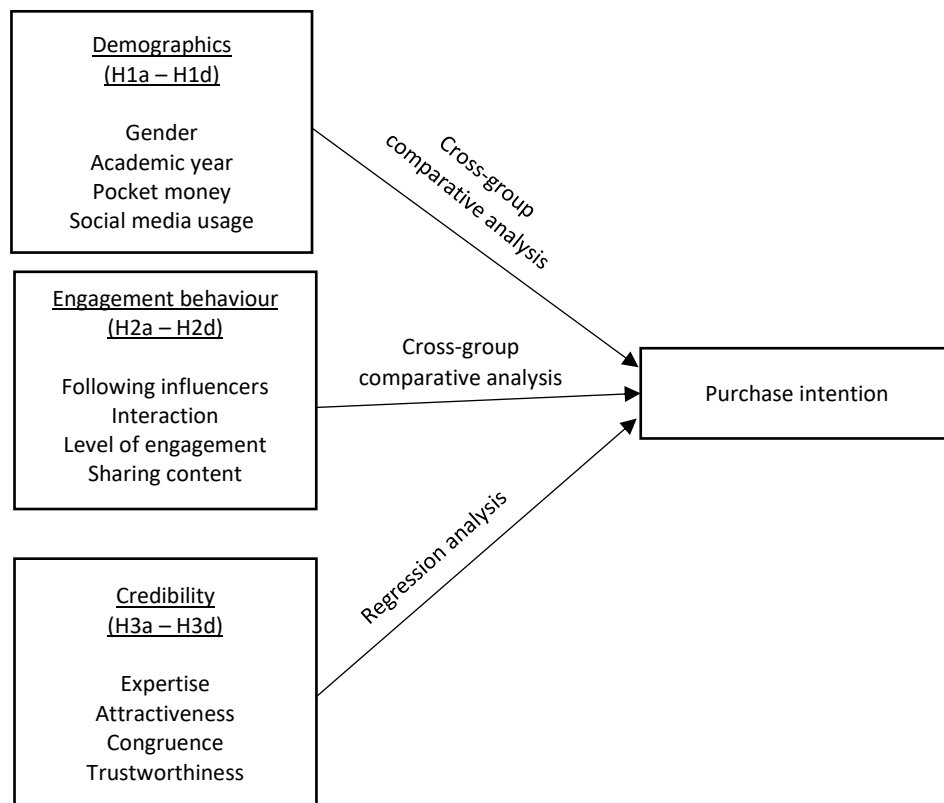


Figure 1: Theoretical framework

4. Methods

This study employed a quantitative research approach to analyse the impact of fashion influencers on the buying intentions of Malaysian university students. Data were collected through an online survey hosted on Google form. The questionnaire was divided into multiple sections addressing demographic details, influencer characteristics and purchase intention. The survey was distributed through email, university networks, and social media platforms to maximise the reach and participation. This study ensured accessibility and convenience for respondents by using online surveys, facilitating comprehensive data collection. The 316 responses collected were greater than initially anticipated, strengthening the study’s reliability and applicability with a generous pool of participants.

The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree"), to measure variables such as trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, congruence/fit, and purchase intention. This scale was deemed most suitable for measuring the intensity of respondents’ perceptions and attitudes. Multiple regression analysis will be employed to explore the sequential relationships between the independent variables (trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and congruence/fit) and the dependent variable (purchase intention).

5. Results

The respondents in this study comprised 316 university students, including 163 females and 153 males. They represent different academic years, with 75 in their first year, 111 in their second, 97 in their third, and 33 in their fourth. In terms of pocket money, 8.2% of the students receive less than RM500, 20.9% receive between RM500 and RM1000, and 34.5% get between RM1001 and RM1500, while the remaining students receive more than RM1500. Regarding social media usage, 6.6% spent less than 1 hour daily, 15.2% spent 1 to 2 hours, and 52.8% spent more than 4 hours daily on social media (Table 1).

Table 1: Respondents' demographics

| Category | Group | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| A. Gender | Female | 153 | 48% |
| | Male | 163 | 52% |
| B. Year of Study | 1st year | 97 | 31% |
| | 2nd year | 111 | 35% |
| | 3rd year | 75 | 24% |
| | 4th year | 33 | 10% |
| C. Monthly Pocket Money | Less than RM500 | 66 | 21% |
| | RM501–RM1000 | 109 | 35% |
| | RM1001–RM1500 | 115 | 36% |
| | More than RM1500 | 26 | 8% |
| D. Hours Spent on social media (per day) | Less than 1 hour | 66 | 21% |
| | 1–2 hours | 109 | 35% |
| | 2–4 hours | 115 | 36% |
| | More than 4 hours | 26 | 8% |

5.1 Demographic on purchase intention

To address the first research objective, this study analysed the differences in fashion purchase intention based on gender, academic year, pocket money, and social media usage. Using *t*-tests and ANOVA, the results showed no gender-based differences but significant effects for academic year, financial allowance, and time spent on social media, indicating that both economic capacity and digital engagement strongly influence students' fashion purchase behaviour and should guide targeted marketing strategies (Table 2).

5.1.1 There is a significant difference in purchase intention between genders (H1a)

The *t*-test comparing male and female students' purchase intention scores indicated no significant difference between the two groups. Male students reported a mean purchase intention of 3.96 (SD = 0.90) on the 5-point scale, which was virtually identical to that of female students (mean = 3.95, SD = 0.86). This small mean difference (≈ 0.01) was not statistically significant ($t = -0.075$, $p = 0.94$), suggesting that gender does not play a notable role in Malaysian university students' intentions to purchase fashion products. In practical terms, this finding implies that male and female students are equally receptive to fashion-related purchase. Fashion marketers can thus approach young adult audiences without a strong need to differentiate campaigns by gender, as both groups demonstrate comparable purchase inclination.

5.1.2 There is a significant difference in purchase intention across different academic years (H1b)

Students' academic year significantly impacted their fashion purchase intentions. A one-way ANOVA showed a notable effect ($F = 6.812$, $p < 0.001$), with purchase intention decreasing steadily from first-year to final-year. First-year students reported the highest mean score (mean = 4.16, SD = 0.78), whereas fourth-year students reported the lowest mean score (mean = 3.42, SD =

1.09). Second- and third-year students showed intermediate levels (mean = 4.06 and 3.86, respectively). Post-hoc analysis confirmed that both first and second-year students had significantly higher purchase intention than final-year students (mean differences of 0.743, $p = 0.005$ and 0.649, $p = 0.015$). However, the differences between the other years were not statistically significant. This suggests a sharp drop in fashion interest among students in their final year, likely due to academic pressure, financial planning, or a focus on post-graduation priorities. Therefore, marketers should prioritise early year students while offering tailored campaigns, such as career wear or graduation-themed collections, for final-year audiences.

Table 2: Differences in purchase intention of fashion products based on demographics and behaviours

| Groups | Test results | | | | Post-hoc analysis | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|-------|----------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|
| | Mean | SD | Test value | p -value | Group comparison | Mean diff. | p -value |
| Gender: | | | | | | | |
| Male | 3.962 | 0.899 | $t = -0.075$ | 0.940 | | | |
| Female | 3.954 | 0.855 | | | | | |
| Year of study: | | | | | | | |
| 1st | 4.160 | 0.779 | $F = 6.812^{**}$ | 0.000 | 1st vs. 2nd | 0.095 | 0.858 |
| 2nd | 4.065 | 0.827 | | | 1st vs. 3rd | 0.297 | 0.085 |
| 3rd | 3.863 | 0.848 | | | 1st vs. 4th | 0.743 | 0.005** |
| 4th | 3.417 | 1.089 | | | 2nd vs. 3rd | 0.202 | 0.309 |
| | | | | | 2nd vs. 4th | 0.649 | 0.015* |
| | | | 3rd vs. 4th | 0.447 | 0.154 | | |
| Pocket money (RM): | | | | | | | |
| 0-500 | 3.654 | 1.080 | $F = 13.239^{**}$ | 0.000 | < 500 vs. 501-1000 | 0.199 | 0.853 |
| 501-1000 | 3.455 | 1.054 | | | < 500 vs. 1001-1500 | -0.433 | 0.239 |
| 1001-1500 | 4.087 | 0.810 | | | < 500 vs. > RM1500 | -0.540 | 0.088 |
| 1501+ | 4.193 | 0.611 | | | RM501-1000 vs. 1001-1500 | -0.633 | 0.000** |
| | | | | | 501-1000 vs. > 1500 | -0.739 | 0.000** |
| | | | 1001-1500 vs. > 1500 | -0.106 | 0.687 | | |
| Hours spent on social media (hours): | | | | | | | |
| Less than 1 | 3.381 | 1.062 | $F = 48.008^{**}$ | 0.000 | < 1 vs. 1-2 | -0.036 | 0.999 |
| 1-2 | 3.417 | 0.734 | | | < 1 vs. 2-4 | -0.085 | 0.987 |
| 2-4 | 3.466 | 0.895 | | | < 1 vs. > 4 | -1.041 | 0.001** |
| More than 4 | 4.422 | 0.573 | | | 1-2 vs. 2-4 | -0.049 | 0.987 |
| | | | | | 1-2 vs. > 4 | -1.005 | 0.000** |
| | | | 2-4 vs. > 4 | -0.957 | 0.000 | | |

** significant at $p \leq 0.01$
* significant at $p \leq 0.05$

5.1.3 There is a significant difference in purchase intention based on the amount of pocket money received by students (H1c)

Students' monthly pocket money significantly impacted their fashion purchase intentions. A one-way ANOVA comparing the four income groups (<RM500, RM500–1000, RM1001–1500, >RM1500) revealed a significant difference ($F = 13.239$, $p < 0.001$). Purchase intention increased with financial capacity: students receiving over RM1500 per month reported the highest mean (mean = 4.19), while those receiving RM500–1000 reported the lowest (mean = 3.45). Post-hoc analysis confirmed significant differences between the RM500 and 1000 group and the two higher-income groups ($p < 0.001$), but no significant difference between the RM1001 and 1500 and >RM1500 groups. This suggests a threshold effect: once students receive RM1000 or more, additional income no longer substantially increases purchase intention. These findings underscore the role of disposable income in shaping consumer behaviours. Students with greater financial flexibility are more willing to spend on non-essential fashion items. Therefore, marketers should segment student audiences by spending power, offering premium fashion collections to affluent groups and value-based promotions to budget-conscious consumers.

5.1.4 There is a significant difference in purchase intention based on the time spent on social media (H1d)

Social media usage was the most influential factor affecting students' fashion purchase intentions among all demographic and behavioural variables. Respondents were categorised by daily time spent on social platforms: less than 1 hour, 1–2 hours, 2–4 hours, and more than 4 hours. A one-way ANOVA revealed a highly significant effect ($F = 48.008, p < 0.001$), showing that purchase intention increased with greater social media exposure. Students spending more than 4 hours daily reported the highest mean purchase intention (mean = 4.42, SD = 0.57), about one full point higher than the means of lower-usage groups (mean = 3.38 to 3.47). Post-hoc results confirmed that the >4-hour group had significantly higher intentions than all others ($p < 0.001$), while differences among lower-usage groups were not significant, indicating a threshold effect. These findings underscore the impact of digital engagement, as heavy users are more exposed to influencer content and trends than light users. Marketers should target this segment with influencer-driven and visually appealing campaigns to maximise conversion potential.

5.2 Engagement behaviours

We analysed the differences in fashion purchase intention based on respondents' engagement behaviours. Using t -tests and ANOVA, the results showed significant mean differences in purchase intention associated with the extent of engagement behaviours. The results are presented in Table 3.

5.2.1 There is a significant difference in purchase intention between students who follow fashion influencers and those who do not (H2a)

H2a proposed that students who follow fashion influencers would differ in their purchase intentions compared to those who do not. The results of an independent-samples t -test confirmed this hypothesis, revealing a highly significant difference between the two groups ($t = 16.725, p < 0.001$). Interestingly, the direction of this difference was contrary to the conventional expectations. Students who did not follow any fashion influencers reported a significantly higher mean purchase intention (mean = 4.216, SD = 0.690) than those who did (mean = 2.732, SD = 0.577), with a mean difference of approximately 1.484 on a 5-point scale.

This challenges the widely held assumption that following influencers inherently increases the likelihood of purchasing behaviour. One possible interpretation is that students who do not follow influencers may rely more on their own style preferences, peer opinions, or traditional retail experiences, which could foster a stronger commitment to fashion purchases. Conversely, followers may be more exposed to a broader range of trends, making them more selective or sceptical.

These findings suggest that followership alone is not a sufficient indicator of consumer readiness. Marketers should focus not only on whether students follow influencers but also on how they interact with and internalise influencer content to effectively predict or influence purchase intentions.

5.2.2 There is a significant difference in purchase intention based on the level of interaction with fashion influencers (H2B)

H2b investigates whether the frequency of interaction with influencers significantly affects students' purchase intentions. This hypothesis is strongly supported by the ANOVA results ($F = 45.204, p < 0.001$), which revealed a consistent increase in purchase intention as the interaction frequency increased. Students were grouped into five categories: Never, Rarely, Sometimes,

Often, and Always, and the mean purchase intention ranged from mean = 2.738 for "Sometimes" interactors to mean = 4.231 for those who "Always" interact.

Table 3: Differences in purchase intention of fashion products based on influencer interaction and engagement

| Groups | Test results | | | Post-hoc analysis | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------|---------|
| | Mean | SD | Test value | p-value | Group comparison | Mean diff. | p-value |
| Follow influencers | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 2.732 | 0.577 | $t = 16.725^{**}$ | 0.000 | | | |
| No | 4.216 | 0.690 | | | | | |
| Interaction with influencers | | | | | | | |
| Never | 2.906 | 0.499 | $F = 45.204^{**}$ | 0.000 | Never vs Rarely | -0.048 | 0.999 |
| Rarely | 2.955 | 0.614 | | | Never vs Sometimes | 0.169 | 0.941 |
| Sometimes | 2.738 | 0.620 | | | Never vs Often | -1.299 | 0.000** |
| Often | 4.205 | 0.827 | | | Never vs Always | -1.324 | 0.001** |
| Always | 4.231 | 0.571 | | | Rarely vs Sometimes | 0.217 | 0.729 |
| | | | | | Rarely vs Often | -1.250 | 0.000** |
| | | | | | Rarely vs Always | -1.276 | 0.000** |
| | | | | | Sometimes vs Often | -1.468 | 0.000** |
| | | | | | Sometimes vs Always | -1.493 | 0.000** |
| | | | | | Often vs Always | -0.026 | 0.998 |
| Engagement with influencers | | | | | | | |
| Never | 2.818 | 0.448 | $F = 39.932^{**}$ | 0.000 | Never vs Rarely | -0.030 | 1.000 |
| Rarely | 2.848 | 0.575 | | | Never vs Sometimes | -0.799 | 0.001** |
| Sometimes | 3.617 | 0.818 | | | Never vs Often | -1.523 | 0.000** |
| Often | 4.341 | 0.643 | | | Never vs Always | -1.087 | 0.000** |
| Always | 3.905 | 0.978 | | | Rarely vs Sometimes | -0.769 | 0.000** |
| | | | | | Rarely vs Often | -1.493 | 0.000** |
| | | | | | Rarely vs Always | -1.057 | 0.000** |
| | | | | | Sometimes vs Often | -0.724 | 0.000** |
| | | | | | Sometimes vs Always | -0.288 | 0.558 |
| | | | | | Often vs Always | 0.436 | 0.090 |
| Comment/ share influencer's post | | | | | | | |
| Never | 2.889 | 0.546 | $F = 48.117^{**}$ | 0.000 | Never vs Rarely | 0.014 | 1.000 |
| Rarely | 2.875 | 0.593 | | | Never vs Sometimes | -0.047 | 0.999 |
| Sometimes | 2.935 | 0.536 | | | Never vs Often | -1.346 | 0.000** |
| Often | 4.235 | 0.741 | | | Never vs Always | -1.349 | 0.000** |
| Always | 4.238 | 0.686 | | | Rarely vs Sometimes | -0.060 | 0.994 |
| | | | | | Rarely vs Often | -1.360 | 0.000** |
| | | | | | Rarely vs Always | -1.363 | 0.000** |
| | | | | | Sometimes vs Often | -1.300 | 0.000** |
| | | | | | Sometimes vs Always | -1.302 | 0.000** |
| | | | | | Often vs Always | -0.003 | 1.000 |

** significant at $p \leq 0.01$

Post-hoc analysis clarified the significance of these differences in the study. Students in the "Often" group reported a mean of 4.205, which was significantly higher than "Never" (mean = 2.906, $p < 0.001$). Likewise, "Always" interaction (mean = 4.231) resulted in significantly greater purchase intention than "Rarely" (mean = 2.955) and "Sometimes" (mean = 2.738), with all differences being statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). However, the differences between the lower-frequency groups (e.g. "Never" vs. "Rarely") and between the highest-frequency groups ("Often" vs. "Always") were not statistically significant. This suggests a plateau effect: once interactions become frequent, additional increases do not lead to further gains in purchase intention.

These findings confirm that the frequency of interaction is a more powerful predictor of purchase intention than mere followership. Marketers should prioritise creating opportunities for repeated and engaging interactions, such as Q&As, polls, or direct responses, to foster higher involvement, which may enhance conversion potential.

5.2.3 There is a significant difference in purchase intention based on the level of engagement with fashion influencers (H2c)

Hypothesis H2c evaluated whether students' overall engagement with fashion influencers, such as viewing, liking, or emotionally responding to posts, significantly affected their intention to purchase fashion products. The one-way ANOVA yielded a statistically significant result ($F = 39.932, p < 0.001$), demonstrating that higher engagement levels corresponded to increased purchase intention.

Students who engaged "Often" with influencer content had the highest mean purchase intention (mean = 4.341), while those who "Never" engaged showed the lowest mean purchase intention (mean = 2.818). Post-hoc analysis revealed significant differences between most of the engagement categories. For example, students who engaged "Rarely" (mean = 2.848) or "Sometimes" (mean = 3.617) reported significantly lower purchase intention than those in the "Often" group, with mean differences of -1.493 ($p < 0.001$) and -0.724 ($p = 0.002$), respectively. These results indicate that regular engagement fosters higher purchase intentions. Interestingly, there was no significant difference between the "Often" and "Always" groups (mean diff = $+0.436$, $p = 0.193$), suggesting a threshold effect, where purchase intention plateaus after a certain level of engagement.

This supports the idea that consistent and meaningful interaction with influencer content, not necessarily excessive use, is a critical driver of fashion purchase intention. For marketers, this highlights the need to cultivate regular, emotionally engaging content rather than overwhelming the audience. Encouraging frequent but balanced engagement may lead to higher consumer responsiveness and a stronger conversion potential.

5.2.4 There is a significant difference in purchase intention based on the frequency of sharing influencer posts (H2d)

H2d assessed whether the frequency of sharing or reposting fashion influencer content significantly impacted students' fashion purchase intentions. The one-way ANOVA yielded a statistically significant result ($F = 48.117, p < 0.001$), demonstrating that sharing behaviour plays a meaningfully shapes purchase intention.

Students who "Often" shared influencer posts had the highest mean purchase intention (mean = 4.235), while those who "Never" shared reported a notably lower mean purchase intention of 2.889. Post-hoc comparisons revealed large and statistically significant differences between the "Often" group and all other groups: "Never" (mean diff = 1.346, $p < 0.001$), "Rarely" (mean diff = 1.360, $p < 0.001$), and "Sometimes" (mean diff = 1.300, $p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that frequent sharing behaviour is strongly associated with a higher readiness to purchase fashion products.

In contrast, no significant differences were observed among the lower-frequency groups ("Never", "Rarely", "Sometimes"), with p -values above 0.97. This pattern indicates a threshold effect: only consistent sharing activity correlates with elevated purchase intention, while occasional or passive sharing does not.

5.3 Effects of credibility

We conducted correlation and regression analyses to determine the influence of influencer credibility on purchase intention. The results are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4: Correlation matrix for influencer attributes and purchase intention

| | Expert | Attractive | Fit | Trust |
|--------------------|----------|------------|----------|----------|
| Expertise | 1 | | | |
| Attractiveness | 0.798*** | 1 | | |
| Fit | 0.874*** | 0.777*** | 1 | |
| Trustworthiness | 0.842*** | 0.797*** | 0.771*** | 1 |
| Purchase intention | 0.837*** | 0.791*** | 0.823*** | 0.786*** |

*** statistical significance at $p < 0.01$.

Table 5: Regression analysis

| Variable | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | | Model 4 | | Model 5 | |
|-------------------------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| | β | p | β | p | β | p | β | p | β | p |
| (Constant) | 0.477*** | 0.000 | 0.448*** | 0.004 | 0.373*** | 0.009 | 0.737*** | 0.000 | -0.071 | 0.586 |
| Expertise | 0.837*** | 0.000 | | | | | | | 0.279*** | 0.000 |
| Attractiveness | | | 0.791*** | 0.000 | | | | | 0.222*** | 0.000 |
| Fit | | | | | 0.823*** | 0.000 | | | 0.291*** | 0.000 |
| Trustworthiness | | | | | | | 0.786*** | 0.000 | 0.150*** | 0.007 |
| Adjusted | | | | | | | | | | |
| R-squared | 0.699 | | 0.625 | | 0.677 | | 0.618 | | 0.764 | |
| p -value of F -stat | 0.000 | | 0.000 | | 0.000 | | 0.000 | | 0.000 | |

*** statistical significance at the $p < 0.01$.

5.3.1 Expertise of fashion influencers has a positive effect on purchase intention (H3a)

H3a evaluated whether the perceived expertise of fashion influencers significantly impacted students' intention to purchase fashion products. The regression analysis in Model 1 revealed a strong and statistically significant effect, with a standardised beta coefficient of 0.837 ($p < 0.001$). This was the highest among all the standalone models, highlighting expertise as the most influential predictor when examined individually. Students who perceive influencers as knowledgeable, experienced, and credible are more inclined to trust their recommendations and consider the promoted products to be valuable or desirable.

In the full regression model (Model 5), which included all four influencer attributes (expertise, attractiveness, fit, and trust), expertise remained a significant independent predictor ($\beta = 0.279$, $p < 0.001$). Although the effect size declined owing to overlapping variance with other predictors, it still uniquely contributed to explaining purchase intention. The correlation matrix further supports this finding, with a strong positive correlation between expertise and purchase intention ($r = 0.837$, $p < 0.01$), making it the most impactful attribute. These results confirm that students place substantial importance on influencer expertise when forming purchase intentions.

5.3.2 The attractiveness of fashion influencers has a positive effect on purchase intention (H3b)

H3b assessed whether the physical and stylistic attractiveness of fashion influencers significantly impacted students' fashion purchase intentions. The regression results from Model 2 show a strong and statistically significant effect, with a standardised beta coefficient of 0.791 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that attractiveness plays a meaningful role in shaping consumer intentions. Students are more likely to respond positively to influencers they perceive as visually appealing and stylish.

This finding is supported by the correlation matrix (Table 4), which shows that attractiveness exhibits a strong positive correlation with purchase intention ($r = 0.791$, $p < 0.01$). Although this is slightly lower than the correlation for expertise, it still demonstrates that attractiveness contributes substantially to persuasive effectiveness.

In the comprehensive regression model (Model 5), which includes all influencer attributes simultaneously, the beta value for attractiveness remained significant at $\beta = 0.222$ ($p < 0.001$). The reduction in effect size reflects overlapping variance with related constructs such as expertise and fit but confirms that attractiveness continues to influence purchase intention independently.

5.3.3 The congruence or fit of fashion influencers has a positive effect on purchase intention (H3c)

H3c examined whether the perceived congruence, or “fit”, between fashion influencers and the products they promote significantly affects students’ purchase intention. Fit refers to how well an influencer’s personal style, values, or image align with the fashion brand or product being endorsed. When the fit was tested individually in the regression model (Model 3), the results indicated a strong and significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.823$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating that perceived alignment strongly influences purchase behaviour.

The correlation matrix (Table 4) further reinforces this result, where fit shows a high positive correlation with purchase intention ($r = 0.823$, $p < 0.01$). Among all influencer attributes, this correlation was among the highest, confirming that fit is a critical dimension of influence in the fashion context. Even in the full regression model (Model 5), where fit was analysed alongside other factors such as expertise, attractiveness, and trust, it remained a significant independent predictor of purchase intention ($\beta = 0.291$, $p < 0.001$). Although reduced due to overlapping variance, its retained significance indicates that fit adds unique explanatory value to the overall model.

5.3.4 Trust in fashion influencers has a positive effect on purchase intention (H3d)

H3d explored whether students’ trust in fashion influencers significantly affected their intention to purchase fashion products. Trust was operationalised as students’ beliefs in an influencer’s honesty, reliability, and integrity. When tested independently (Table 4, Model 4), trust showed a strong and statistically significant effect on purchase intention, with a standardised beta coefficient of 0.786 ($p < 0.001$). This confirms that trust alone plays a meaningful role in shaping students’ willingness to act on the influencers’ recommendations.

The correlation matrix (Table 4) further supports this finding, showing a strong positive correlation between trust and purchase intention ($r = 0.786$, $p < 0.01$), which is nearly identical to its beta coefficient when assessed in isolation. In the full regression model (Model 5), which included expertise, attractiveness, fit, and trust simultaneously, the beta value for trust dropped to 0.150 but remained significant ($p = 0.007$). This reduction is anticipated because of the overlapping variance with other attributes, particularly fitness and expertise. However, its continued significance confirms that trust has a unique and independent contribution to the model.

6. Discussion

6.1 Effects of demography

The results for H1a indicate that gender does not significantly influence the purchase intention for fashion products among Malaysian university students. The independent-samples *t*-test showed almost identical mean scores between male and female students, with a non-significant

result, suggesting that both genders demonstrate equal enthusiasm toward fashion consumption, at least within the university demographic. This finding supports the prior research by Casaló et al. (2020), who observed that gender differences in online fashion shopping are narrowing because of the universal appeal of influencer content. Similarly, Lou and Yuan (2019) highlighted that influencer marketing effectiveness is shaped more by source credibility and content engagement than by demographic factors such as gender. In Malaysia, where social media exposure among youth is extensive, both male and female students may be equally influenced by fashion trends and digital advertisements. From a marketing perspective, these findings recommend a gender-neutral strategy. Brands targeting student consumers should focus on authenticity, style relevance, and influencer trustworthiness rather than differentiating messaging by gender. This unified approach can enhance efficiency while resonating across diverse student segments.

The findings for H1b confirm a statistically significant effect of the academic year on students' fashion purchase intention. Students in earlier academic years, especially first and second year, reported significantly higher purchase intentions than those in their final year. This suggests that academic seniority is inversely related to fashion-buying motivation, likely due to shifting priorities and financial caution among senior students.

This result aligns with the research of Bakewell and Mitchell (2003), who observed that younger students are more fashion-conscious and inclined toward impulsive or identity-driven purchases. Final-year students facing graduation, job-seeking pressures, and financial planning may prioritise essentials over discretionary spending. Furthermore, Lazaro et al. (2020) found that younger consumers associate fashion consumption with self-expression, whereas older students exhibit more functional and budget-conscious decision-making. From a marketing standpoint, this implies that fashion campaigns should target junior students with trend-focused and aspirational messaging. For senior students, brands might promote practical or transitional fashion items, such as workplace attire, paired with discounts. Segmenting by academic year enables brands to tailor value propositions based on students' evolving priorities, ensuring more relevant and resonant engagement across different groups.

H1c is supported by the results, which show a significant relationship between students' monthly pocket money and their purchase intention for fashion products. Students receiving more than RM1000 per month reported substantially higher purchase intentions, suggesting that financial capacity is a strong enabler of consumer behaviour among students. The results also indicate a threshold effect: beyond a certain allowance level, further increases do not significantly raise purchase intention.

This finding supports the findings of Park and Davis Burns (2005), who found that disposable income strongly predicts fashion involvement and shopping frequency among young consumers. Similarly, Eastman and Liu (2012) note that college students with greater discretionary income are more willing to engage in non-essential or image-driven purchases, especially fashion. Financial flexibility increases confidence in following trends and responding to influencer promotions. For marketers, this highlights the value of segmenting student audiences based on their spending power. Premium fashion lines or influencer collaborations can be directed toward high-allowance students, whereas budget-conscious promotions, student discounts, or value bundles may appeal to those with lower allowances. Understanding students' financial profiles allows brands to match marketing strategies to purchasing capabilities, thereby improving campaign effectiveness.

H1d is strongly supported by the results, showing a highly significant effect of social media usage on students' fashion purchase intentions. Students who spent more than four hours per day on social media reported the highest purchase intention, whereas those with lower usage showed significantly less intent. This pattern reveals a threshold effect, where heavy usage substantially increases purchasing motivation, likely due to repeated exposure to fashion content, influencer

promotions and peer influence. This finding aligns with the research by Lim et al. (2017), who found that increased time on social media intensifies exposure to persuasive marketing content, leading to stronger brand engagement and intention to buy. Similarly, Appel et al. (2020) emphasised that high-frequency social media users are more susceptible to trends, especially in visually driven domains such as fashion.

For marketers, this highlights the importance of targeting heavy social media users with frequent influencer-led content and visually appealing campaigns. Since this segment is more responsive, personalised ads, influencer stories, and trending challenges can significantly boost conversion. Meanwhile, alternative channels may be required to reach low-engagement users who are less exposed to social media marketing strategies.

6.2 Effects of engagement behaviours

H2a is supported by the analysis, which shows a significant difference in purchase intention between students who follow fashion influencers and those who do not follow them. Students who followed influencers reported higher purchase intentions, suggesting that simply choosing to follow such accounts is a proxy for interest, trust, or identification with the influencer's personal brand and values.

This finding aligns with previous studies (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019), which found that following influencers fosters a sense of intimacy and lifestyle aspiration that strengthens brand persuasion. Similarly, Lee and Eastin (2020) emphasised that following implies selective attention and voluntary engagement, making followers more receptive to marketing messages. Even without active interaction, following provides constant exposure to curated fashion content, increasing product familiarity and purchase intention. For marketers, this suggests that follower count is not just a vanity metric; it reflects a potentially primed audience. Brands should collaborate with influencers whose audiences closely match their target demographics. Encouraging followership through incentives, shout-outs, and exclusive content can also expand reach and increase the likelihood of conversion among highly engaged student consumers.

H2b is strongly supported by the data, showing a statistically significant relationship between interaction frequency with fashion influencers and students' purchase intentions. Post-hoc analysis revealed that students who interacted "Often" or "Always" had significantly higher purchase intentions than those who interacted "Never" or "Rarely". These differences—particularly between "Often" and "Never"—confirm that frequent interaction is a key behavioural driver of fashion-related purchasing among students. This finding aligns with Sokolova and Perez (2021), who highlighted that active interaction fosters parasocial relationships, enhancing trust and perceived intimacy. As students engage more often, influencers become relatable and persuasive. De Veirman et al. (2017) similarly found that higher engagement intensity increases an influencer's credibility, leading to stronger purchase responses. From a practical perspective, this emphasises the need for interactive influencer marketing strategies. Brands should collaborate with influencers who encourage active participation through live sessions, comment replies, or interactive stories to build emotional bonds with their followers. Interaction goes beyond visibility; it creates a relational tie that amplifies influence and drives real consumer behaviour in the student market.

The analysis for H2c revealed a statistically significant effect of overall engagement frequency on purchase intention. Students who engaged "Often" with fashion influencer content had notably higher purchase intentions than those who engaged less frequently. The largest increase was observed when moving from moderate to frequent engagement levels, confirming that consistent exposure and emotional investment are key predictors of consumer behaviour. This supports earlier findings by Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019), who showed that frequent engagement, even if indirect (viewing, liking, following), fosters a sense of familiarity and perceived

authenticity. Such exposure creates emotional resonance and increases the likelihood of brand trust and purchase decisions. Similarly, Lim et al. (2017) argue that engagement enhances content recall and message internalisation, particularly in younger, digitally native audiences. From a marketing standpoint, the results emphasise that engagement quality matters more than passive visibility. Influencer campaigns should focus on creating content that encourages habitual consumption, such as style tips, relatable stories, and behind-the-scenes clips, to keep students returning regularly. Frequent engagement builds loyalty, enhances emotional connection, and increases students' readiness to act on product endorsements.

H2d is supported by the data, showing a statistically significant relationship between the frequency of sharing influencer posts and students' purchase intentions. Students who "Often" shared influencer content exhibited substantially higher purchase intention compared to those who shared "Never" or "Rarely". This pattern suggests that sharing behaviour reflects a deeper psychological alignment with the influencer and their messages. This finding aligns with Jin et al.'s (2019) argument that sharing influencer content signals internalisation and endorsement, which often translates into purchase behaviour. Sharing also enhances self-image construction, as users associate themselves with the influencer's identity or aesthetic (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). It becomes a form of social signalling that reinforces the commitment to the brand or product being shared. From a marketing standpoint, this insight reinforces the value of encouraging the creation of shareable content. Fashion brands should collaborate with influencers to create visually appealing, emotionally resonant, and easy-to-share posts. Contests, quote graphics, and relatable messages stimulated reposting behaviour. Because frequent sharing strongly correlates with purchase intention, it can serve as both a predictive indicator and a strategic objective in campaign planning.

6.3 Effects of credibility

H3a is supported by the regression analysis, which found that influencer expertise significantly and positively influenced students' fashion purchase intentions. Among all the tested attributes, expertise showed the strongest predictive power, indicating that students are more likely to purchase fashion products promoted by influencers they perceive as knowledgeable and skilled in the fashion domain. A strong positive correlation between expertise and purchase intention can be seen in Table 3, while the regression results show that expertise remained a significant predictor both individually (Model 1) and when tested alongside other attributes (Model 5). Recent studies have reinforced these findings. Sokolova and Kefi (2020) found that influencer expertise enhances credibility and positively influences followers' attitudes and behavioural intentions. Similarly, Ki et al. (2020) highlighted that perceived competence fosters stronger trust and message acceptance, especially in domains such as fashion, where consumer reliance on expert guidance is high. From a practical standpoint, brands should prioritise influencers with recognised fashion knowledge and those who offer style advice, product evaluations, or trend commentary. These influencers help bridge the gap between brand messaging and consumer trust, particularly among young and impressionable student consumers.

H3b is supported by the regression analysis, which found that the perceived attractiveness of fashion influencers has a significant and positive effect on students' purchase intention. When tested individually, attractiveness had a strong influence. In the combined model, attractiveness remained significant, reflecting a shared variance with other influencer traits but still contributing meaningfully. This finding is consistent with those of previous studies. Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019) demonstrated that attractive influencers are perceived as more credible and aspirational, especially in the fashion context. Similarly, Sokolova and Kefi (2020) found that visual appeal enhances message persuasion and follower trust, which ultimately boosts purchase intentions.

Attractiveness often serves as a heuristic cue in decision-making, and students are more likely to engage with influencers whose personal style aligns with their ideals. For marketers, this underscores the value of selecting influencers who present a strong and fashion-forward visual identity that resonates with youth culture. However, attractiveness should be complemented by authenticity and content relevance to ensure a holistic and credible brand message.

H3c is supported by the regression results, confirming that the perceived fit between a fashion influencer and the promoted product significantly influences students' purchase intentions. When tested independently, the fit showed a strong predictive effect. Even in the full model with all four influencer attributes, the fit remained significant, indicating a meaningful and unique contribution to consumer behaviour. This finding is consistent with the match-up hypothesis, which posits that message effectiveness increases when the endorser is perceived to be congruent with the brand (Till & Busler, 2000). More recent studies, such as Lee and Eastin (2020), have shown that when there is a high level of alignment between an influencer's identity and the product category, followers are more likely to perceive the endorsement as authentic, thereby increasing their purchase intentions. This highlights the importance of ensuring brand-influencer alignment for marketers. Selecting influencers whose personal style, values, or niche closely match the brand image can enhance endorsement credibility, especially in fashion, where perceived authenticity and aesthetic synergy are critical to influencing purchase behaviour.

H3d is supported by the analysis, indicating that students' trust in fashion influencers significantly and positively influences their purchase intentions. When trust was tested as a single predictor, it showed a strong individual impact. In the full regression model with all influencer attributes included, trust remained significant, suggesting that it plays a distinct yet interrelated role in shaping purchase decisions. These results align with those of prior studies emphasising the importance of trust in influencer marketing. Sokolova and Kefi (2020) highlighted that trust in an influencer enhances perceived message credibility, which increases the likelihood of behavioural outcomes such as purchase intention. Similarly, Ki et al. (2020) found that trust, developed through consistent and authentic content, is central to building parasocial relationships and converting attention into consumer actions. From a practical perspective, brands should prioritise working with influencers who consistently display honesty, transparency, and sincerity in their content. In a highly saturated influencer market, trust is a key differentiator. Students are more likely to engage with and act upon endorsements when they perceive the influencer as genuinely endorsing products they personally use and believe in.

7. Conclusion

This study investigated the key factors influencing fashion purchase intention among Malaysian university students, focusing on demographic traits (academic year and pocket money), social media behaviours (time spent online), and influencer-related variables (engagement activities and credibility attributes). Based on data from 316 respondents, the findings confirm that financial capacity, academic seniority, and social media usage significantly shape the purchase intention. Behavioural engagement, such as interacting with, following, and sharing influencer content, also plays a meaningful role.

Among all the factors, influencer credibility emerged as the most important predictor of purchase intention. Specifically, expertise and product-influencer fit stood out as the strongest drivers, surpassing the effects of personal demographics and behavioural engagement. This underscores that students place the greatest weight on the credibility and authenticity of influencers when forming purchase intentions, followed by their attractiveness and trust. These results highlight the powerful role of influencer marketing in shaping youth consumer behaviour in the digital landscape. Practically, this study offers marketers actionable insights into targeting strategies

that emphasise influencer expertise and authentic brand alignment to effectively engage student audiences.

Despite its contributions, this study has some limitations. It used cross-sectional, self-reported data and focused solely on Malaysian university students, which limits generalisability. Future research should adopt cross-national or longitudinal designs to explore how influencer credibility and purchase intentions evolve over time and across different cultures. By further unpacking these dimensions, future studies can advance a richer understanding of how influencer marketing drives consumer behaviour in today's digital economy.

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