HOW INFLUECER MARKETING AFFECTS MALAYSIAN GEN Z CONSUMER INTENTIONS IN PURCHASING FASHION AND BEAUTY PRODUCTS

BY

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A final year project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

BACHELOR OF MARKETING (HONOURS)

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND FINANCE
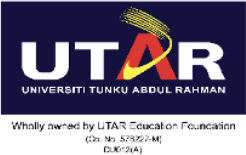DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING

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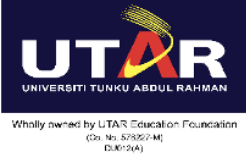| *Alternative Access Option (if applicable):* |
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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the number of social media influencers is growing substantially, leading many corporations to employ influencer marketing as a marketing communication method to raise brand awareness, attract customers' attentions, and enhance public social engagement. This study aims to examine how influencer marketing affects Malaysian Gen Z consumer intentions in purchasing fashion and beauty products. By utilizing the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), this study investigates the impacts of independent variables, including attitudes towards influencer marketing (IV1) and the subjective norms (IV2), on Malaysian Gen Z consumers' purchasing intentions (DV).

A quantitative research methodology was applied in this research, and a data set was obtained from 385 respondents via online questionnaire by using snowball sampling method. The findings showed a strong relationship between attitudes towards influencer marketing and the subjective norms with the Malaysian Gen Z consumers purchasing intentions, supporting H1 and H2, respectively. These findings also enhance the understanding while providing theoretical and practical implications for both future researchers and fashion and beauty-related marketers and companies. However, this study faced a few limitations, including the lack of generalizability and unexplained variables. These limitations offer opportunities for future research to investigate deeper into the principles of influencer marketing and its impact on consumer behaviours.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Purchasing Intentions, Gen Z, Fashion and Beauty Industry, TRA model, Attitude, Subjective Norms, Malaysia.

Subject Area: HF5410-5417.5 Marketing. Distribution of products

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ATT	Attitude
DV	Dependant Variable
E-WOM	E-Word of Mouth
GEN	Generation
H&M	Hennes & Mauritz AB
IV	Independent Variable
LVMH	Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MRA	Multiple Regression Analysis
OOTD	Outfit of The Day
PI	Purchasing Intentions
QR	Quick Response
SN	Subjective Norms
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TJX	The TJX Companies, Inc
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
TV	Television
US	United States
UTAR	Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

LIST OF APPENDICES

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH OVERVIEW

1.1 Research Background

1.1.1 Influencer Marketing

The presence of social media influencers is getting increasingly prevalent as a result of the rapid growth of social media, this results in a significant impact on customers' perceptions, beliefs, preferences, choices, and decisions. Influencers marketing has evolved since social media influencer initially appeared in the early 2000s, growing from a home-based hobby to a profitable full-time profession (Joshi et al., 2023). Vidani and Das (2021) stated that most companies have increased their investments in digital marketing and social media since they are aware that there are about 80% of people use the internet in the developed countries. Marketing companies have therefore decided to create a campaign which involves customer engagement in order to get the desired result. Considering up to 40% to 50% of consumers across different product categories read reviews from social media platforms, more marketers start to embrace social media marketing in interacting with their customers. Consequently, the concept of influencer marketing emerged. Influencer marketing is the term for marketing communications where influencers advertise brands using their personal social media accounts (Geyser, 2019). According to Belanche et al. (2021), with the rise of social media platforms, influencers is known as the opinion leaders of new generation that occupying the space between friends and celebrities. On top of that, influencers can also be characterized as self-made "microcelebrities" (Evans et al., 2017).

According to Dhanesh and Duthler (2019), influencers and celebrities are conceptually different from one another. Influencers are "born" on social media, in which they cultivate their primary activities, while celebrities are recognized

for their interactions apart from social media (Schouten et al., 2019). Today, the fame and prominence that the social media influencers have gained are helping in the advancement of their careers in mainstream media, such as the movie and TV sectors (Joshi et al., 2023). Influencers are well-known specialists in their fields with sizeable social media followers, their recommendations represent a form of social proof about the brand to prospective customers (Sheikh, 2023). As a result, influencers who have large followings can act as strong ambassadors for a brand or a company by consistently sharing informative content on social media to gain awareness while developing an extensive number of valuable prospects (Liu, 2021). Since it gained popularity in the last decade, the influencer marketing industry has experienced significant growth. Based on Benchmark Report 2023 from Santora (2023), it stated that the market for influencer marketing has expanded to $21.1 billion in 2023. Compared to $16.4 billion in the previous year, this is a remarkable 29% growth.

1.1.2 Gen Z

Gen Z dominates nearly all of the world's population with over two billion people globally (Nugroho et al., 2022). According to the Department of Statistics, there were about 8.476 million Gen Zers in Malaysia during 2019, which represents 26% of the total 32.6 million people living in Malaysia, making them the largest age group (Vincent & Ahmad, 2021). Gen Z is the generation born in the 1990s and raised during the 2000s, enduring the century's major technological revolutions. They experience a world where the internet, networks, mobile devices, computers, and digital media are all readily accessible (Dolot, 2018). According to (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022), Generation Z referred to the people who were born in the period from the mid-1990s to the early 2010s. Although the exact birth years can vary among authors, the most common range is from 1995 to 2010. There are many other names for Gen Z, such as iGeneration, Gen Tech, Net Gen, and Digital Natives (

Nidhyananth & Vanathi, 2018). It was also known as C Generation, which represented "connected to the internet", "computerized", "content-centric", and "changing" (Dolot, 2018).

Researchers point out that both virtual and actual environments can be acceptable for Generation Z. They are able to switch effortlessly between these two environments since they perceive them as complementary. This situation has allowed Generation Z to discover and evaluate the information they want easily and rapidly (Dadić et al., 2022). The communication process between Gen Z is very active since they use a wide range of communication devices and social media. They express their ideas and attitudes by having comments about reality, environment, and their surroundings (Dolot, 2018). More broadly, this connection has encouraged young people to get together and discuss worldwide topics including movies, music, celebrities, fashion, cuisine, entertainment, and social trends (Dadić et al., 2022). According to Morning Consult Survey 2022, 54% of Generation Z indicated that they use social media for at least four hours per day, while 38% said they spend even more time there. TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are the online platforms they utilize the most (Alves, 2023).

1.1.3 Fashion and Beauty Industry

According to Mobile Styles - Beauty & Health On-Demand (2018), beauty is a positive trait that is valued all over the world. For most people, being beautiful means leading a fulfilling, balanced, and healthy lifestyle that appeals to their highly aesthetic and visual senses. Beauty focuses more on the visual perception of the entire appearance, while fashion is the ideal complement to the looks by selecting the appropriate apparel, accessories, and footwear. As one of the biggest sectors worldwide, fashion plays a vital role in the global economy. According to Euromonitor, the global apparel market was valued at $1.71 trillion in 2021, rising 18.1% from the previous year (Fashion United, 2022).

On the other side, the worldwide beauty marketplace, which comprises the categories of skincare, perfume, cosmetics, and haircare, brought in revenue of nearly \$430 billion during 2022, that is projected to grow up to over \$580 billion by 2027 (Mckinsey & Company, 2023). Fashion and beauty industries are interrelated that focus on the enhancement of people's physical appearance and self-expression. Fashion is the styles, patterns, and trends in apparel, accessories, and footwear while beauty is the products and services related to skincare, haircare, and grooming. Since both fashion and beauty are centered around the concept of individual expression and style, they are strongly interconnected (Talhajaved, 2023). On top of that, most well-known fashion brands have their own beauty lines. People who are interested in fashion also like beauty, and vice versa (Graziano, 2018).

According to Frith (2014), women have enhanced their beauty with paints and potions for centuries. Until the 20th century, multinational firms and their advertising agencies effectively capitalized on women's interest in beauty and appearance to gain profit. Nowadays, a few multinational firms generate a significant amount of the beauty products that are sold globally. In terms of beauty branding, the US and France have dominated the world. Globally, the top two cosmetic brands account for more than one-fifth of all beauty product sales, which are Procter & Gamble and L'Oreal. The history of the fashion industry begins in 1826. Charles Frederick Worth, the world's first fashion designer, founded his fashion company in Paris and started the practice of fashion houses advising customers on what to wear. During this period, some fashion businesses began hiring artists to make patterns for clothing. After viewing the patterns, customers can place an order if they like them (Fashion Law Journal, 2022). Before the mid-19th century, nearly every clothing was created in hand by people at home or on orders from tailors. Due to the invention of emerging technologies such as the sewing machine, the growth of the industrial production system, and the development of department stores and other retail establishments, clothing was produced in large quantities in

standard sizes and sold for standard prices in the beginning of the 20th century (Steele & Major, 2018). The top 5 global fashion companies are LVMH, Nike, Christian Dior, Inditex, and TJX Companies (Lu, 2024).

1.2 Research Problem

1.2.1 Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing, as we can see today, is currently the most dominating force in the thriving marketing world. Brands are now taking advantage of influencers such as people among us who have a massive fan base on social media for interaction with their audiences. Influencers in the present days are seen advertising products on social media channels such as XiaoHongShu, YouTube, Tik Tok, and Instagram, etc. These days, consumers want to hear about what other consumers and influencers think before taking an informed decision. Inevitably, therefore according to Chopra et al. (2020), influencers are contributing significantly to the formation of customer's opinions of the branded products and services. A past study indicated that consumers were found to have more trust and respect for influencers as opposed to traditional avenues thereby favouring their recommendations (Berger & Keller Fay Group, 2016). Moreover, influencers tend to seem more trustworthy or credible than traditional celebrities since they are perceived as being closer to their target audience (Lou & Yuan, 2019)(Sokolova & Kefi, 2019). As a result, followers frequently look for or rely on social media influencers' recommendations when making decisions about what to purchase, underscoring the importance and possible negative effects (Casaló et al., 2020). Their recommendations or encouragement may also assist brands in reaching a wider audience and creating leads (Santora, 2024). Approximately 58% of Malaysians bought a product because an influencer recommended it (Statista Research Department, 2023). Compared to more traditional marketing methods, social media influencers are becoming recognised as one of the most successful and powerful promotional

marketing strategies (Irshaid, 2020). Influencer marketing is growing in popularity as a result of the pandemic's widespread spread, changes in consumers' purchasing habits, significant technological advancements, and the online world's savvy approach to the marketing and selling of goods and services. They follow influencers on these platforms who captivate them with their artistic creations, which include beautiful photos, films, information, abilities, and experience in a certain sector. The content creators successfully achieve this by maintaining a friendly profile to which the audience can relate. They build long-standing relationships by being trustworthy, believable, and relatable. Of course, the most important than that is the fact that these is non celebrities but ordinary people who has gained and familiarized with a particular field of expertise. While the proportion of traditional marketing, such as radio, print, and TV commercials, is gradually declining as businesses dive deeper and deeper into influencer marketing, they are gradually becoming more acquainted with and cognisant of the benefits that this type of advertising can provide. Regarding the effectiveness, 90% of marketers think influencer marketing is effective (Dimitrieska & Efremova, 2021).

1.2.2 Gen Z

A consumer trends survey conducted by Santiago in 2024 revealed that 31% of social media users said they would rather hear about new products from an influencer they follow than from any other source or channel. Customers in Generation Z (43%), in particular, are particularly likely to favour influencers while looking for new products. Out of all the generations, 32% of Gen Z social media users made a purchase based on a recommendation from an influencer. This suggests that, in comparison to customers in other generations, Gen Z customers are far more likely to be influenced by recommendations from influencers (Santora, 2024).

Moreover, Generations Z has the highest population size by far, almost the entire population globally with 1.9 billion in total (Nugroho et al., 2022). According to data from Department of Statistics, Gen-Z accounted for 8.476 millions of Malaysia's 32.6 million inhabitants in 2019, or almost 26% of the country's total population (Vincent & Ahmad, 2021). The digital revolution reshaped the life of every generation and the social interaction especially for Gen Z. The development of social media, the Internet, and smart devices brought about new ways of living that altered how we communicated and made decisions about our purchases (Ninan et al., 2020). Gen Z is very convinced that influencers are just normal and they treat them rather as trusted and reliable personalities than celebrities (Martinez-Lopez et al., 2020). Furthermore, the market researcher Kantar (2020) discovered that 44% of Gen Z customers are just buying a product because of an influencer's approval (Pradhan et al., 2022).

1.2.3 Fashion and Beauty Industry

Fashion and beauty sectors have seen a significant growth on social media. This is because social media has made physical appearance more important, particularly since the selfie phenomenon has become the trend on Instagram during the past ten years. Millions of people show their newest hairstyles, outfit styles, and beauty routines on their social media (Schwarz, 2022). Currently, influencer marketing is used by almost 60% of fashion and beauty companies, and 21% more plan to use it in the coming year (Simpson, 2016). Beauty industry was one of the first to embrace influencer marketing since those beauty professionals started posting lessons and sharing about their favourite products on YouTube. Therefore, companies are pleased to support and offer skincare, cosmetics, and haircare products for the long-form beauty videos on YouTube, which are still very popular nowadays. Influencers have been sharing their favourite products for the past few decades through sponsored content, affiliate marketing, and real product reviews. The amount of this content has grown

significantly on social media sites like Instagram, TikTok and XiaoHongShu. Another reason beauty industry utilized influencer marketing is that it performs well in visual media, and beauty is visually appealing (Geyser, 2024). The fashion sector also has a significant presence in social media, similar to the beauty sector. Through posts or reels that include tagging from each brand and occasionally even affiliate links, the lifestyle influencers commonly broadcast their OOTDs (Outfit of the Day) on Instagram (USA Link System, 2022).

Fashion and beauty companies spend a lot of money on celebrities and TV models to appear on magazine covers, billboards, and television commercials to introduce new collections or advertise new products (EOS Intelligence, 2020). Although these attempts were successful, new marketing strategies are developed as technology advances. Hence, majority of companies are moving towards digital media and collaborating with influencers since they have realized how time-consuming it is to promote products through traditional channels (Valentina & Ramona, 2020). There are some successful influencer marketing cases; for instance, H&M engaged in discussions with customers on Instagram in 2018 in order to generate new ideas for its Nyden brand. H&M collaborated with nine influencers who polled their followers on Instagram stories to find out their preferences for particular designs, like utilizing zippers instead of buttons. These polls received 35,000 votes and over 425,000 viewers in a period of two weeks (Dua, 2018).

1.3 Research Objectives

In general, this research intends to examine the impact of influencer marketing on Malaysian Gen Z consumers' purchasing intentions towards fashion and beauty products. In detail, this research aims to examine the impact of Malaysian Gen Z consumer attitudes about influencer marketing on purchasing intentions for fashion and beauty products. Additionally, this research seeks to examine the influence of

subjective norms on Malaysian Gen Z consumers purchasing intentions towards fashion and beauty products.

1.4 Research Questions

How does influencer marketing affect the purchasing intentions of Malaysian Gen Z consumers towards fashion and beauty products?

How does the attitude of Malaysian Gen Z consumers towards influencer marketing impact their purchasing intentions for fashion and beauty products?

How do subjective norms influence the purchasing intentions of Malaysian Gen Z consumers towards fashion and beauty products?

1.5 Research Significance

Influencer marketing has typically been investigated in the past studies to discover how it affects customer purchasing decisions. For instance, consumers' purchase decisions will be influenced by social media influencers' credibility and reliability. Nevertheless, this research explored different areas from the past studies. There are past studies about the impact of influencers on online purchasing intention by Lisichkova and Othman (2017), the influence of influencer marketing on young customers' buying behaviour by Gelati and Verplancke (2022), and the effect of social media influencers on Malaysian females' purchase intention towards pet products by Liew et al. (2021). Compared to these existing studies, this research focuses on the impact of influencer marketing on Malaysian Gen Z purchasing intentions towards fashion and beauty products. Hence, this research will be helpful for future academics or researchers as it

proposes a conceptual model that fills the literature gap by enriching the literature on fashion and beauty sectors and emphasizing on Gen Z consumers in Malaysia.

Next, this research will also be beneficial for practitioners of fashion and beauty industries. Recently, influencer marketing has emerged as a highly effective and popular marketing strategy for most of the businesses, and it is believed that both the fashion and beauty sectors are perfectly and naturally suited for social media (Ahmad et al., 2015 & Spencer-Jolliffe, 2022). However, there are drawbacks when collaborating with social media influencers. For example, certain social media influencers will abuse their status of authority and request ridiculous things from companies (Chin, 2018). Furthermore, as they get paid for promoting the brand's products, some influencers will give fraudulent reviews in order to maintain the reputation associated with the brand (Chin, 2019). Furthermore, some influencers will endorse multiple products in the same category, and customers will then begin to wonder about their reliability and loyalty (Tripp et al., 1994). Several companies have then found themselves in a dilemma on whether they should keep working with influencers. Therefore, this research provides companies with a deeper comprehension of the impact of influencer marketing on the young generation's intentions in purchasing fashion and beauty products so that they are able to create more innovative marketing plans to advertise their products.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Underlying Theory

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) model refers to a rational choice model that explores how consumers rationalize their behaviours (Johansen & Guldvik, 2017). It indicates that an individual's behaviour is motivated by their intention for carrying out the action, and this intention is an outcome of their attitude toward the behaviour and subjective norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Martin Fishbein initially suggested it in 1967, and he, along with Icek Ajzen, further developed it in 1975 (Fishbein, 2008). The TRA model and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which is the extension of the TRA model, shared a common focus. Both theories are cognitive in nature and provide a conceptual framework for comprehending individual's behaviour in specific circumstances (LaCaille, 2013). Specifically, the TRA model focuses on establishing an observation system of two sets of variables. The variables are attitudes, which are characterized as favourable or unfavourable feelings toward the fulfillment of a goal, and subjective norms, which are people's perceptions of their ability to use the product to accomplish the goal (Salgues, 2016). Individuals are more probable to carry out the proposed behaviour if they perceive it positively (attitude) and are convinced that others want them to do so (subjective norm), which will increase their intention (motivation) (Mimiaga et al., 2009). TRA model helps identify the driving forces behind consumer behavioral intentions and demonstrates how an intention for a specific behaviour can impact, explain, or forecast its actual use (Johansen & Guldvik, 2017).

Today, it has become a widely used framework for studying a variety of behaviours, including decisions made by consumers and by organizations. Its value as a reliable model for comprehending and forecasting human actions based on attitudes and social influences is confirmed by its continuing relevance in a number of fields (Yi, 2023).

Since numerous previous studies on related research topics used the TRA model as the underlying theory to examine consumers' behavioural intentions, it is appropriate for this research to use it as well (refer Appendix 2.1). On the other hand, the TPB model is not suitable for this particular study. According to the research that used the TPB model (Cabeza-Ramírez et al., 2022; Tiwari et al., 2024), both the attitudes and subjective norms have significant influences on consumers' purchasing intentions, but perceived behavioural control has an insignificant impact on them. Therefore, as the underlying theory of the study, the TRA model would be more precise than the TPB model. In this research, the TRA model is used to investigate how consumers' attitudes and subjective norms relating to influencer marketing affect their intention in purchasing fashion and beauty products.
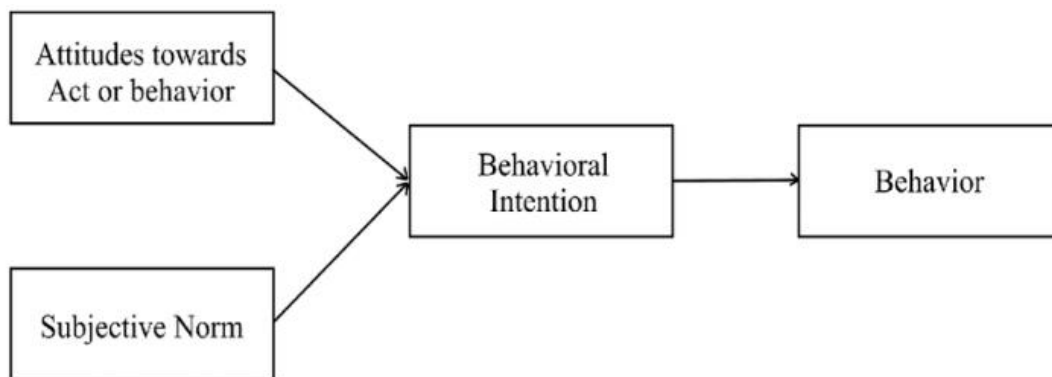
Figure 2.1 TRA Model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975)

2.2 Review of Variables

2.2.1 Attitude Towards Influencer Marketing

The way customers see and engage with a social media account reflects their attitude towards influencer marketing and influences how they connect with it thereafter (Immanuel & H.S., 2021). Casaló et al. (2020) alongside Chetioui et al. (2020) define the awareness attitudes toward influencers which include the

role of influencers as community role models, informers on the latest and unique fashion products, creators of exciting content about the fashion industry, and loyal sources of information. This presents a broader definition of attitude which is about a person's feelings about a behaviour before doing it in a positive or negative manner (Al-Debei et al., 2013). Armitage and Conner (2001) revealed that these attitudes can be a considerable factor in deciding whether a person is likely to adopt the behaviour. Furthermore, good opinions increase the likelihood of adoption, according to Armitage and Conner (2001) (Chetioui et al., 2020). Furthermore, being positive increases consumers' inclinations to make purchases, which is a key factor in determining how valuable they consider the brand to be. Positive customer behaviour also results in ongoing brand favouritism. This perceived value varies from consumer to consumer, and it is influenced by his judgment of the difference between what he receives and what he sacrifices. It typically has a significant impact on his desire and intention to buy (Lin et al., 2019).

2.2.2 Subjective Norms

Subjective norms are the social pressure that people mostly perceive regarding whether it is appropriate or not to engage in the specific behaviour. In fact, these norms are a reflection of the behavioural expectations that significant others, like family, friends, and work mates, have when they are around an individual. They tend to influence the person's actions possibly persuading them to do or not to do something (Chetioui et al., 2020). According to an article by Rhodes and Courneya (2003), subjective norms capture the peer and environmental pressure that positively forces individuals to behave a certain way. Another aspect of subjective norms is the code of ethics aspect. For example, consumers are more likely believe they have a social responsibility, and they need to act accordingly, with the intention of maintaining a positive image or support community values, as stated by Nam et al. (2017). This normative notion is also

emphasized by several scholars including Hasan et al. (2020), and Oteng-Peprah et al. (2020), who further state that the essence of this norm also acts as the basis of a consumer who can either agree or deny to the decision-making process with the specific product or behaviour normative linkage, that will therefore affect their behaviours in several contexts.

2.2.3 Gen Z Purchasing Intentions Towards Fashion and Beauty Products

A key principle of consumer cognitive behaviour is brand or product purchase intention, which quantifies a person's propensity to purchase a specific brand or item (Lin et al., 2019). It is a mental strategy that people, generally, formulate and make elaborate purchase decisions about a particular number of goods of a particular brand, and different stimuli coming from the seller can influence such a process (Rachmy, 2018; Mubarak & Sanawiri, 2018). Marketing professionals gather consumer feedback regarding their intended purchases to forecast sales of new or existing products. These data can subsequently be used in refining the market segmentation and promotional strategies that are most effective for the various market segments (Goyal, 2014). Often, this determination usually occurs via several stages of information search and assessment of other competing options where consumers weigh and compare other product alternatives (Belch & Belch, 2003). Thus, the product experience spreads from the buyer to potential future customers. Purchase intention is a key metric for forecasting future consumer purchasing patterns since it generally indicates the likelihood that a specific brand will be ultimately selected for purchase by a client (Huang et al., 2011).

2.3 Conceptual Framework
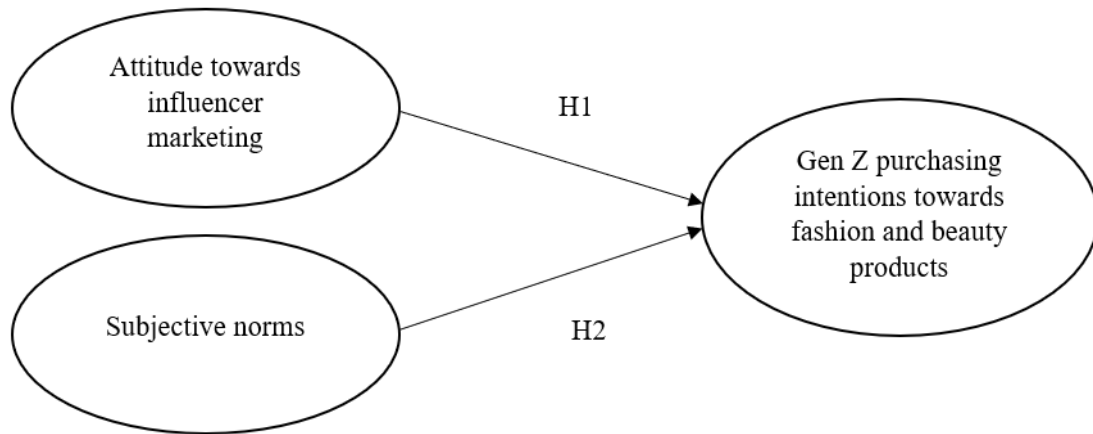
Figure 2.2 Conceptual Framework (Own Development)

2.4 Hypotheses Development

2.4.1 Attitude towards influencer marketing with Gen Z purchasing intentions of fashion and beauty products

Research consistently shows that the attitude of customers, especially Gen Z, towards influencers significantly affects their buying decisions, especially in the case with fashion and beauty industries. According to research by Chetioui et al. (2020) and Taillon et al. (2020), participants' favourable attitudes towards influencers are directly correlated with how engaged they are with their influencer advertisements, which is ultimately connected to increased product purchase intentions. The fact that consumers are provided with the information they need by its credible sources is the reason why influencers are trusted and are more likely to be purchased. Further, some people take these influencers as their role models in a community and hence their opinions and views matter so much (Immanuel & H.S., 2021).

Rachmy et al. (2018) describe purchase intentions through four indicators: explorative, expressive, referential, and transactional interests, all of which play a role in consumers' decision to buy stuff. Additionally, the legitimacy of well-known influencers contributes to the success of electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM), and brand attitude, image, quality, and loyalty are important elements in the broad use of influencer marketing (Chetioui et al., 2020). Therefore, it is hypothesised that generation Z's inclination to purchase fashion and beauty products increases with their positive attitude towards influencer marketing.

H1: Attitude towards influencer marketing is positively related to Gen Z's purchasing intentions towards fashion and beauty products.

2.4.2 Subjective norms with Gen Z purchasing intentions towards fashion and beauty products

Research shows that subjective norms are crucial in the process of Gen Z's intention to buy, including in the fields of fashion and beauty. Subjective norms involve the perceived descriptive social standards from the referents like friends, family members, and social leaders, and have a significant influence on the consumerization or buying behaviours (Soo & Gong, 2023). The norms are emphasised, and depending on how the person is influenced by the referents, this can actually shape the intentions to acquire in a positive or bad way (Alalei & Jan, 2023). The case is that Gen Z consumers may imitate behaviours that they see as having been approved by friends. For example, if they think that purchasing a specific brand is a behaviour approved by people around them, they are more likely to do so (Chetioui et al., 2020).

In the same manner, negative experiences from close friends and family members can prompt consumers to alter their purchase intentions by shifting their opinions to a more negative outlook. Besides, the impact of external

factors like social, economic, and environmental is also considered significant factors to impact purchasing behaviour among consumers towards the fashion and beauty products (Soo & Gong, 2023). However, the strength of the force depends on the area (Sun & Xing, 2022). Hence, the hypothesis is that the Gen Z subjective norm is positively related to their brand consumption decision that in general, the adoption of favourable opinions can help to stimulate this kind of purchase behaviour.

H2: Subjective norms are positively related to Gen Z's purchasing intentions towards fashion and beauty products.

CHAPTER 3: METHADOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research methodology applied by the researcher is quantitative research. In the past, numerous studies with similar research topic have also used quantitative method. Apuke (2017) defines quantitative research as a type of research method that uses numerical data collection and analysis, along with the application of mathematical techniques, mainly statistics, to clarify a phenomenon or issue. Hence, this research intends to discover how the influencer marketing affects consumer purchasing intention for fashion and beauty products by gathering numerical data through distributing questionnaires to the targeted respondents, who are Gen Z consumers, to test the study's hypothesis. The numerical data can also be computed into statistical data in order to support or disprove "alternate knowledge claims" (Desmond, 2019).

In order to have a deeper understanding on how influencer marketing affects consumer purchasing intentions, descriptive research is used. Based on Aggarwal (2023), descriptive research refers to a research method that systematically characterizes a phenomenon by giving a thorough understanding of the topic based on the predetermined variables and questions. This research collects data using structured methods such as observational methods, surveys, and case studies to describe the characteristics, behaviours, or relationships among variables in detail (Manjunatha, 2019). By analysing data from the targeted respondents, the researcher can obtain valuable insights into the impact of influencer marketing on consumers intentions to purchase fashion and beauty products.

3.2 Sampling Design

The target population for this study is Generation Z, which makes up 26% of Malaysia's population and is one of the largest age groups (Vincent & Ahmad, 2021). Considering Generation Z spends up to eight hours a day online due to their electronically integrated lifestyle that includes social media notifications and smartphones, they are easily able to interact with online news from around the globe (Tjiptono et al., 2020). Moreover, they are the generation that spend time online, look up social media platforms and purchase items and services through internet (Ng et al., 2021). When compared to international Gen Zs, conducting research with local Gen Zs is more affordable. This is said so as it is simpler to gather information and insights on local Gen Z's because they are easy to reach for follow-up research and feedback.

Sampling frame is a researcher's list or sample instrument that serves the purpose of the choice of population to be investigated (Villegas, 2023). The respondents who were born between 1997 and 2012, or Generation Z, will be the ones completing the questionnaire. Since the Generation Z age ranges from 12 to 27 years old, students will make up the majority of respondents. These young people are likely to participate in our survey because they are easier to reach and are aware of the trends in fashion and beauty products that the influencers may be involved in (Beresford Research, 2024).

Regarding the sample location, the survey can be completed via a Google Form using a QR code and link that is posted on social media or in person. Respondents that answer the questionnaire in person will receive a QR code, which they can scan to complete the form. Before scanning the QR code, the respondent will be asked to state their age in order to qualify as Generation Z. Based on Braun et al. (2021), online surveys are flexible and generally mostly straightforward method of accessing large and geographically spread-out audiences like Gen Zs in Malaysia. Furthermore, Braun et al. (2021) mentioned that it will make it easy for us to use the tool for follow-up and tracking the responses from the respondents.

Non-probability sampling will be the method used for sampling in this study. Non-probability sampling is a technique when study participation is not equitable across members of the population (Fleetwood, 2024). The researcher will choose which population to measure, either by getting to know the researcher or by deciding whether or not to engage in the study independently (Stratton, 2021). The snowball sampling approach is taken into consideration in this study. The most convenient sampling approach for this questionnaire will be snowball sampling. Simkus (2023) states the snowball sampling method begins with a single-subject, one-way referral chain. One specific subject should have one referral included in the research group as the sample. This additional referral leads to yet another and will go on until the appropriate number of samples is reached. Likewise, the current researcher will transmit a google form modified e-questionnaire to the intended responders. Gen Zs and the present researcher's contact information are shown on the cover of the questionnaire. Having finished the survey, the participant is invited to forward it to his/her friends, relatives, or anyone within the target audience group.

The number of observations or participants involved in a study or experiment is known as the sample size. Using a representative sample size of people or things from a broader population, the sample size determines the population (Coursera Staff, 2023). The Department of Statistics estimates that there were 8,476,000 Gen Zers in Malaysia in 2019. It is evident that the target population's expected population size is more than 2,500,000. The size of the sample specified by Morgan's Table will be 384 if the population is more than 2,500,000 (refer Appendix 3.1).

3.3 Data Collection Methods

3.3.1 Primary Data

Factual and original data that is gathered for the first time by the researchers themselves is referred to as primary data. Gathering primary data is a slightly complex process, it may include surveys, observations, experiments,

questionnaires, in-person interviews, etc. (Ajayi, 2023). In the research, the primary data will be collected through questionnaires. A questionnaire with a set of structured-scale questions is prepared to be distributed to the respondents to collect their responses via Google Form. Instead of merely physical distribution, social media platforms will also be used to share the Google Form in order to reach more people in a responsive way. Following collection, the data is then to be analysed through both the descriptive and inferential analyses for the findings and discussion purposes.

3.3.2 Questionnaire Design

It is an English-language survey questionnaire. There would be a short description regarding this research before the questionnaire started. The questionnaire is designed around the Theory of Reasoned Action Model (TRA), and is divided into three parts, including Section A (Demographic Information), Section B (General Information), and Section C (Theory Variables).

Section A covers the respondents' demographic information. This section consists of five multiple-choice questions regarding respondents' age, gender, education level, occupation, and nationality. The age and nationality will also be the screening questions. Moving on, Section B explores the respondents' general information. There are four multiple-choice questions, which mainly ask respondents whether they have ever purchased fashion and beauty products, followed any fashion and beauty-related influencers on social media, and the social media platforms they used the most.

Lastly, Section C discussed the theory variables, which consist of respondents' attitudes towards influencer marketing, subjective norms, and respondents' purchasing intentions for fashion and beauty products. This section contains fifteen questions in total. A non-comparative scaling method known as the

Likert scale, is used in these questions for respondents to show their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements that describe the variables that influence their purchasing intentions. Each statement is assigned a numerical score ranging from 1 to 5, which represents strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree, respectively. For each statement, respondents are required to select the number between 1 and 5 that most accurately describes their feelings.

3.3.3 Pre-test

Pretesting is the stage of survey research in which study participants complete questionnaires to assess the validity and reliability of the survey instruments before they are distributed. Pretesting has been found to be essential for creating survey questions and enhancing data gathering for higher-quality research (Hu, 2014). Pre-testing is an essential tool for identifying issue areas, minimizing measurement error, reducing the burden on respondents, and ensuring that they can correctly understand and respond to questions (Ruel et al., 2015). In this research, we have gathered the feedback from two lecturers to help in discovering any errors in our questionnaire. One of the lecturers is the head of the marketing department of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) and holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Marketing) degree, while another lecturer is also from the department of marketing of UTAR and holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree.

3.3.4 Pilot-test

According to Simkus (2023), a pilot study is also known as a feasibility study. In advance of a larger-scale study, researchers will conduct a smaller-scale preliminary study to determine its viability and refine the research design. It

requires selecting a small sample of respondents to test the study on. By discovering any deficiencies in the methods designed by the researchers, it may help to save time or money. As suggested by Browne (1995), a sample size of at least thirty or more people is ideal for estimating a parameter. Hence, 30 sets of questionnaires were given to the targeted participants in the pilot study.

3.3.5 Origin of Construct

Table 3.1

Summary of Origin of Construct

Variables		Questions	Sources
Attitudes	ATT1	The content made by the influencers I follow is reliable.	Desmond (2019) Cabeza-Ramírez et al. (2022) Paylan and Semiz (2021)
	ATT2	The content made by the influencers I follow is informative.	
	ATT3	The content made by the influencers I follow is a good sources of fashion and beauty product information.	
	ATT4	It is good to purchase fashion and beauty products used by the influencers.	
	ATT5	I like to purchase fashion and beauty products recommended by the influencers.	
	ATT6	Influencer marketing is a good form of marketing channel.	
Subjective Norms	SN1	I believe that I let myself be guided by influencers when making my fashion and beauty-related purchase decisions.	Cabeza-Ramírez et al. (2022)
	SN2	The people important to me (friends/family) think I should buy fashion and beauty products recommended by influencers	
	SN3	People around me purchase fashion and beauty products recommended by influencers	
Purchasing Intentions	PI1	I am likely to purchase the fashion and beauty products recommended by the influencers I follow	Desmond (2019)

	PI2	I consider purchasing the fashion and beauty products recommended by the influencers I follow	Cabeza-Ramírez et al. (2022) Baig and Shahzad (2022)
	PI3	I intend to purchase the fashion and beauty products recommended by the influencers I follow	
	PI4	I will try to purchase the fashion and beauty products recommended by the influencers I follow in the future	
	PI5	I will recommend the people around me to purchase the fashion and beauty products recommended by the influencers	

3.4 Proposed Data Analysis Tool

3.4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis is a crucial step that provides a systematic approach to summarize and study relationships between variables prior to conducting complex inferential statistics. According to Kaur et al. (2018), standard statistical methods helped them simplify the data through summarization, rearrangement and manipulation thereby making it easy for the researchers to interpret and evaluate. It entails computing the measures of central tendency, comprising mean, mode, as well as median, and measures of variability, for example, range, variances, and standard deviation, among others, in order to give a clear statistic (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Through exploring and highlighting patterns and relationships within the data, descriptive analysis helps researchers come to preliminary conclusions and form new hypotheses. It turns raw survey data into a comprehendible form like pie charts, bar graph and table, helping improve demographic and other data accessible to readers. According to what Mishra et al. (2019) have mentioned and Kaliyadan and Kulkarni (2019) have further stated, descriptive statistics aid in summarizing the significant findings of the research by putting together quantitative metrics and graphical

illustrations which are not only descriptive but also strong base for subsequent statistical analysis and conclusions.

3.4.1.1 Reliability Test

The term reliability of a test score is a statement of how accurate they are, that is they are clear, accurate enough, and free from measurement errors for use. The commonly used statistic for reliability, especially when it comes to establishing its unbiased nature, is Cronbach's Alpha. According to Amirrudin et. al. (2021), Cronbach's Alpha is an internal uniformity assessment used in the context of the multi-item assessment instruments. Cronbach's Alpha gives the reliability of an instrument. Good reliability according to Cronbach's Alpha should therefore be more than 0.6, and a value that is below 0.6 is deemed poor. With an ideal Cronbach's Alpha having a score of between 0.6 and 0.8. More specifically, it is considered as very good if the value obtained is between 0.8 and 1 in the case of relative measures as highlighted by Daud et. al. (2018). In this research, SPSS software will be used to conduct the reliability test to assess the reliability of the collected data and present the results in table or chart forms.

Table 3.2:

Cronbach's Alpha Rule of Thumb Measures

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
Alpha ≥ 0.9	Excellent
$0.8 \leq$ Alpha ≤ 0.9	Good
$0.7 \leq$ Alpha ≤ 0.8	Acceptable
$0.6 \leq$ Alpha ≤ 0.7	Questionable
$0.5 \leq$ Alpha ≤ 0.6	Poor
Alpha ≤ 0.5	Unacceptable

Note. Adapted from Semantic Scholar (2015).

3.4.1.2 Pilot Test's Reliability Result

The reliability result of the pilot test, gathered from 30 respondents, is shown in the Table 3.3. In terms of Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, the dependent variable purchasing intentions has an alpha value above 0.9, which is excellent; the independent variable attitudes have an alpha value above 0.8, which is good; and the independent variable subjective norm has an alpha value of 0.7, which is acceptable (Daud et al., 2018).

Table 3.3:

Pilot Test Reliability Result

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Results
Attitudes	6	0.841	Good
Subjective Norms	3	0.699	Acceptable
Purchasing Intentions	5	0.902	Excellent

Note. Own Development.

3.4.2 Inferential Analysis

Inferential statistical tests remain to be one of the basic tools for analysing sample data on the grounds of which to make generalizations regarding a larger population. This is necessary in the context of when analysing the complete population analysis is impractical. As outlined by Levine et al. (2007) and Bhattacherjee (2012), inferential statistics use analyses of statistical techniques to reach deductions or to forecast some population characteristics from the sample data. Based on this research, a five-point Likert scale is utilised to represent variables that range from mission or belief, to norms, mindset, view, and goals. Moreover, the scale provides a basis for a wide variety of studies,

including those aimed at exploring the levels from the lowest to the highest. A positive aspect of the scale is the testing of hypotheses as a part of inferential statistics, which is opposite to descriptive statistics, in which data are only characterized without making predictions or conclusions out of the sample. The collected data then goes through inferential statistical analysis, where both parametric tests, that is, when the normal distribution of findings is assumed, and non-parametric tests, to compare the characteristic features of both samples, are used in order to confirm or refute the hypotheses of the study and to project its outcomes onto the whole population. It has been shown in the works of Amin (2019) that this kind of technique allows one to accurately predict the observed qualities throughout the population based on the data gathered through sampling. The statistical software SPSS will be utilized for the inferential analysis.

3.4.2.1 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis

Using Pearson correlation analysis is one way to analyse data and determine the likelihood that two variables would predict one another. When the coefficient of the correlation between the two variables is greater than -1 and less than 1, it is deemed valid at the significance level of 0.05. Evaluations are also conducted about the strength, direction, and importance of the correlations between the variables. Consequently, in order to provide an alternative assessment and predict accurately, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient evaluates the similarity of variables. Variable-level agreement may be evaluated using this method (Sensuse et al., 2015).

Table 3.4:

Correlation Coefficient Range Standard

Correlation Value	Relationship
1.0	Perfect

0.80 – 0.99	Very Strong
0.60 – 0.79	Strong
0.40 – 0.59	Moderate
0.20 – 0.39	Weak
0.01 – 0.19	Very Weak
0.0	No Relationship

Note. Adapted from Isa (2022).

3.4.2.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

Plonsky and Ghanbar (2018) defines Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) as a collection of statistical methods based on correlation that are used to examine one dependent variable and a small number of independent variables. The values of each dependent variable are predicted using multiple regression analysis using known values for the independent variables. The research equation is shown as follows:

$DV = A + B1\ (IV1) + B2\ (IV2)$

Where:

DV = Purchasing Intentions
A = The intercept
Bx = Coefficient for each independent variables
$IV1$ = Attitudes
$IV2$ = Subjective Norms

Gen Z's purchasing intentions for fashion and beauty products are represented by DV, whereas $IV1$ and $IV2$ stand for attitudes towards influencer marketing and subjective norms, respectively.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table 4.1:

Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	268	69.61
Male	117	30.39
Total	385	100.00

The distribution of respondents' genders is displayed in Table 4.1. The majority of respondents are female, accounting for 268 out of 385 responses, or 69.61% of the total. Men make up the remaining 30.39% of the total, with 117 out of 385 responses.

Table 4.2:

Employment Status of Respondents

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Unemployed	6	1.56
Employed	88	22.86
Student	291	75.58
Total	385	100.00

Table 4.2 displays the respondents' employment status. 291 out of 385 respondents, or 75.58% of the total, are students, making up the majority. Out of 385 respondents, 88 are employed, constituting 22.86% of the sample. 6 out of the 385 responders are unemployed, making up 1.56% of the total.

Table 4.3:

Education Level of Respondents

Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Secondary	21	5.45
Foundation	64	16.62
Diploma	57	14.81
Bachelor's Degree	225	58.44
Master's Degree	18	4.68
Total	385	100.00

The respondents' education level is shown in Table 4.3 above. Most of the respondents hold a bachelor's degree, which represents 58.44% of the entire sample, indicating a higher level of education within the sample. Moreover, only 4.68% of all the respondents have a master's degree, making it the smallest portion of the sample. Following that, respondents with a secondary, diploma, and foundation education level make up 5.45%, 14.81%, and 16.62%, respectively, of the overall sample.

Table 4.4:

Most Used Social Media Platforms of Respondents

Social Media	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Facebook	217	56.36
Instagram	363	94.29
TikTok	160	41.56
Xiaohongshu	312	81.04

The social media platforms that respondents use the most are shown in Table 4.4 above. Instagram is the most popular social media platform, with 363 out of 385 respondents, accounting for the majority of 94.29% of the total. The second most used social media platform is Xiaohongshu, with 312 respondents, which make up 81.04% of all

respondents. Furthermore, other social media platforms including Facebook and TikTok account for 56.36% and 41.56% of the whole, respectively.

4.1.1 Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test

Table 4.5

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Results of Reliability Test
Attitudes	6	0.842	Good
Subjective Norms	3	0.771	Acceptable
Purchasing Intentions	5	0.871	Good

Table 4.5 displays the result of the reliability test, which was conducted based on the 385 respondents. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of attitudes is 0.842, indicating that it has a good reliability. Next, subjective norms have the coefficient value of 0.771, showing that it has an acceptable reliability. Lastly, purchasing intentions have the coefficient value of 0.871, considering as in a good reliability.

4.2 Inferential Analysis

Table 4.6:

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis

		Attitude (ATT)	Subjective Norms (SN)	Purchasing Intentions (PI)
ATT	Pearson Correlation	1	0.669**	0.796**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		< 0.001	< 0.001
SN	Pearson Correlation	0.669**	1	0.709**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001		< 0.001
PI	Pearson Correlation	0.796**	0.709**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< 0.001	< 0.001	

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson's correlation coefficient value of attitudes is 0.796, indicating that the attitudes towards influencer marketing and Malaysian Gen Z consumers' purchasing intentions have a very strong relationship. This means that an increase in the attitudes towards influencer marketing will result in an increase in consumers' purchasing intentions. Moving on, the Pearson's correlation coefficient value of subjective norms is 0.709, demonstrating that the subjective norms and consumers' purchasing intentions are strongly correlated. This implies that an increase in the subjective norms will lead to an increase in consumers' purchasing intentions.

4.2.1 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 4.7

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0.831	0.690	0.689	0.30772

R-square is the proportion of total variation in Malaysian Gen Z consumers' purchasing intentions that is explained by attitudes and subjective norms. The Table 4.7 shows that the R-square of this regression model is 0.690. This indicates that about 69% of the variation in average purchasing intentions is explained by the variation in attitudes and subjective norms. Other variables are responsible for the remaining 31%.

Next, the adjusted R-square refers to the proportion of variation in Malaysian Gen Z consumers' purchasing intentions that is explained by attitudes and subjective norms after adjusted for the degree of freedom. The adjusted R-square shown in Table 4.7 is 0.689, which demonstrates that about 68.90% of the variation in average purchasing intentions is explained by the variation in attitude and subjective norms, when the degree of freedom is considered.

Table 4.8:

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Multiple Linear Regression

Model	Sum of Square	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Value	Sig. (P-Value)
Regression	80.625	2	40.313	425.713	< 0.001
Residual	36.173	382	0.095		
Total	116.798	384			

Table 4.8 showed the significance p-value is lower than 0.001. This indicates that the regression model has a high level of statistical significance, showing that the attitudes and subjective norms explain a considerable percentage of the variation in the purchasing intentions. This significance is also reflected in the significant F value, 425.713.

Table 4.9:

Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Independent Variables	Unstandardized B	Coefficients Standard Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t-statistics	Sig. (P-Value)
(Constant)	0.284	0.147		1.936	0.054
Attitudes	0.673	0.044	0.582	15.191	< 0.001
Subjective Norms	0.279	0.033	0.320	8.360	< 0.001

Equation:

PI = 0.284 + 0.673 (ATT) + 0.279 (SN)

Where:

PI = Purchasing Intentions

ATT = Attitudes

SN = Subjective Norms

According to Table 4.9, the intercept of the regression model is 0.284, which indicates that the average purchasing intentions is 0.284 unit when there is no attitudes and subjective norms towards influencer marketing. Also, the positive value shows that the purchasing intentions towards fashion and beauty products by Malaysian Gen Z consumers is explained by the attitudes and subjective norms.

Moving on, the coefficient value of attitudes is 0.673. This indicates that, for each additional unit increase in attitudes, Malaysian Gen Z consumers' average purchasing intentions will increase by 0.673 unit with holding all other variables constant. Next, the coefficient value of subjective norms is 0.279. It implies that, for every unit increase in subjective norms, their average purchasing intentions will increase by 0.279 unit with holding all other variables constant.

Following that, the sig. (p-value) for the attitudes is < 0.001, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to support that the attitudes have a significant relationship with the purchasing intentions at the significance level of 0.05. Besides, the sig. (p-value) for the subjective norms is < 0.001, which is also below the significance level of 0.05. Consequently, there is adequate evidence to prove that there is a significant relationship between subjective norms and purchasing intentions at the significance level of 0.05.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Discussion of Findings

Table 5.1 provided the overview of the tests conducted on the hypothesis.

Table 5.1:

An Overview of the Outcomes of the Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis	Significant Value	Result
H1: Attitude towards influencer marketing is positively related to Gen Z's purchasing intentions towards fashion and beauty products.	< 0.001	Supported
H2: Subjective norms are positively related to Gen Z's purchasing intentions towards fashion and beauty products.	< 0.001	Supported

Note: Own Development

H1: Attitude towards influencer marketing is positively related to Gen Z's purchasing intentions towards fashion and beauty products.

The results support H1 with a significant value of less than 0.001, demonstrating that Gen Z's attitudes on influencer marketing have a major positive impact on their intentions to buy fashion and beauty items. This is consistent with earlier research by Smith et al. (2022) and Johnson & Lee (2021), which reveals that a consumer's likelihood to make a purchase may be significantly influenced by their impression of influencer marketing. This is particularly true for Generation Z, who are recognised for their high levels of interaction with social media influencers and tendency to form

positive opinions about firms that these influencers support. Garcia et al. (2023) claim that people who have a positive perception of influencer marketing are more prone to trust the products that are being promoted, which increases their likelihood to make a purchase.

H2: Subjective norms are positively related to Gen Z's purchasing intentions towards fashion and beauty products.

With a computed value of less than 0.001, H2 is also supported, showing that Gen Z's purchase intentions for fashion and beauty goods are mostly influenced by subjective norms. This is in line with study conducted by Davis & Kim (2022), which shows that social influence and other people's views play a significant role in people's purchasing decisions, especially for younger Gen Z customers. When the young consumers in the Gen Z group feel that their friends, or other influential groups within their peer group, are inclined towards specific fashion and beauty products, they are likely to follow suit and be influenced by the same. This is supported by the work of Lopez & Wang (2021) stating that subjective norms can cause perceived norms which is a feeling of acceptance or rejection in the society hence affecting the buying behaviour of consumers. Hence, the attitudes and actions of peers and social groups will remain an influential determinant of the purchasing behaviours of Generation Z.

5.2 Implications of the Study

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) provides theoretical support for the research study, which concentrates on the influencer marketing's effect on Malaysian Gen Z consumers' purchasing intentions of fashion and beauty items. The variable that is being dependent in the study includes Gen Z's purchasing intentions on fashion and beauty product which are affected by two independent variables: attitude towards influence marketing and subjective norm. After

examining the research's data, it can be concluded that independent variables like Gen Z's attitude towards influencer marketing and their intention to buy fashion and beauty items have a substantial positive link. Thus, with the positive correlation established between attitude towards influencer marketing and buying intentions, this research contributes to help future researchers in understanding of how modern digital marketing tools influence the tendency of buying among the young target like Gen Z consumers. It also expands on the broad idea that Gen Z customer preferences in the fashion and beauty industries are greatly influenced by influencer marketing.

Moreover, as seen in the results, subjective norms, which include attitudes regarding what others expect from them, played a critical role in influencing the buying behaviour of Gen Z. This is in concordance with theories that posit social influences or the influence of peers as critical elements that influence consumers' decision-making. The prevailing view in the research is that Generation Z is very much impacted by these societal norms, particularly in regards to fashion and cosmetics. This supports current theories and the idea that future researchers should take into account social relationships, and influences when segmenting this demographic.

Finally, the study offers information that would enable a recommendation to be made to future researchers on the level of effectiveness of using influencer marketing as a tool for developing trust. The link between the attitudes towards influencer marketing and purchase intentions can theoretically be related to trust building models in marketing. Credibly, this implies that influencers perform the role of providing credible information to consumer thereby increasing product relatability and trust among the Gen Z consumers. This is in accordance with the theoretical frameworks which give influencers the role of opinion-maker consumers who give their recommendations and testify to the credibility of a product.

This research work can be of great help to future researchers since they can refer to its theoretical framework in carrying out research on similar matters. This study contributes to comprehending the role that each independent variable plays in predicting the dependent variable and how the Theory of Reasoned Action may be applied to Gen Z's purchase intentions for fashion and beauty items. This makes it possible for researchers to understand why some independent variables that, within other study contexts, would not be relevant, significantly influence Gen Z's purchase intentions concerning fashion and beauty products. Moreover, compared to other works, which examined only the intention of Gen Z to buy fashion and beauty goods, the findings of this study may be more country-specific for Malaysia.

5.2.2 Practical Implications

From a pragmatic point of view, the conclusions made in this study will be helpful for companies operating the fashion and beauty industries to improve their marketing campaigns to appeal to Gen Z consumers. One of the implications is recognizing the necessity to take advantage of Gen Z's positive attitudes towards influencer marketing. It is essential that business concentrate on linking with influencers that are reputable and this means that they have a good following and people perceive them and regard them as credible. For instance, companies could partner with influencers, who are deemed as genuine and have large audiences on Instagram as well as Tik Tok. These influencers may share their own stories and product experiences, which would improve the company's standing and greatly help Gen Z consumers in their decision-making. In this way, using such influencers can increase the companies' opportunities to positively influence their brand image thanks to the trust and credibility of the audience with these influencers.

Also, it is acknowledged that marketers can easily harness the benefits of subjective norms in their marketing strategies. According to the findings, one way of influencing the buying behaviour of Gen Z is to highlight that many of them like the product or using celebrities who are deemed cool by the youth. Subjective norms can be powerfully communicated when the messages are in the form of 'everyone is doing it' or 'everyone is like that'. Companies should therefore ensure that their campaigns are focused around social acceptance about peer approval as this reassures the target market that they have to buy the advertised products since it is expected of them. For example, a company could use celebrity endorsement in their campaign with catchphrases like 'Get the trend everyone is chatting about' or 'Be part of the group that uses this product.' These sorts of appeals will make the target market feel that it is normal to buy the advertised products, hence buying them.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the need to develop influencer relationships that are genuine and mutually beneficial as they impact the followers' perception of the brand. It is critical for companies to ensure that they hire influencers who are close to the image of their targeted audience and can develop content from the users' angle while being believable. The use of authentic content in influencer marketing means that there is a higher likelihood of engagement as compared to when the target market finds it hard to connect with the influencers. For instance, a fashion and beauty company focused on reaching Gen Z audience should collaborate with influencers who incorporate the brand's products in their daily use and promote them by sharing makeup tutorials, problem-solving solutions, and personal experience. Thus, with the help of actual posts, and providing influencers with the opportunity to discuss personal experiences and other stories connected with the given product, people will reach for such products, trust them, and potentially, buy them.

Last but not least, companies need to incorporate the data into their influencer selection process and campaign management. With regards to data analytically on engagement rates, the age and gender of the audiences involved, as well as

conversion statistics, companies can easily tell which influencers are well-suited for their advertisements and how to improve their market strategies further. For instance, it is possible for a firm to use analytics to determine which of the influencers produces the best outcome in terms of engagement and leads from Gen Z consumers Only the best influencers compatible with the brand and proven to deliver results will be used in the subsequent campaigns. Also, since this research is only concentrating on Malaysian Gen Z consumers, it is imperative that marketers and companies take cultural and social aspects into consideration when developing their influencer marketing strategies. This was because the campaigns could be localised in terms of cultural standards, tastes and preferences by engaging relevant influencers who could bring this dimension into the campaigns.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of the research is the lack of generalizability. In our study, the majority of respondents were students, accounting for about 76% of the total. This is because snowball sampling was the sampling technique used in this study. Sample biases have created as the respondents are obtained through referrals. The respondents are more likely to refer others in their personal networks who possess traits or experiences in common with them. Since the majority of the respondents are students, leading to other referred respondents being mostly students as well. Students often represent a large segment of Gen Z, with similar age ranges, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic levels. However, this homogeneity limits the ability to generalize the findings to a larger segment, which also includes individuals who are employed or unemployed. Students' perceptions, experiences, and behaviours may be significantly affected by their academic environment, resulting in different concepts about influencer marketing for students than for those who are employed or unemployed. As a result, this situation may not truly reflect the whole Generation Z population's opinions on

purchasing intentions for fashion and beauty products. The depth and breadth of the study may also be restricted, thereby affecting its overall quality and generalizability.

The other limitation is the unexplained variables. In light of the findings, an R-square value of 0.690 indicates that about 69% of the variation in purchasing intentions is explained by the variation in attitudes and subjective norms. This means that the remaining 31% are explained by other variables, resulting in an incomplete understanding of the relationship being studied. The research focuses on influencer marketing and its impact on Gen Z consumers' purchasing intentions towards fashion and beauty products, by examining only two independent variables: attitudes and subjective norms. While these factors are significant, but they do not represent all the possible variables that can impact consumers' purchasing decisions. In addition, it is crucial to know that consumer purchasing intentions can also be influenced by factors beyond the scope of this research, such as product pricing, product quality, other marketing approaches, consumer trends, and cultural aspects. Hence, further study is required to discover the remaining variables or elements that affect consumers' purchasing intentions in order to enhance the understanding of consumers' behaviors.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Firstly, as a result of the homogeneity of the respondents in the present study, future research must deploy a more eligible sampling technique. Instead of employing snowball sampling, which tendencies to target samples that are biases due to the persons' referrals from similar social networks, researchers could employ stratified random sampling or quota sampling. These methods would guarantee the inclusion of more Gen Z participants with diverse composing, their socioeconomic statuses, employments, and education levels. Moreover, it is suggested that subsequent investigations should involve respondents with greater diversity in ages and other characteristics. Thus, it would be more appropriate to select both employed and unemployed participants and people from different income backgrounds so that the

results are not restricted to the participants who are students. Moreover, time series research could also be initiated to see how purchasing attitudes and intentions are going through changes in the longer run depending on the Gen Z subgroups based on demographic characteristics or life cycle stage, for example, students versus employees.

Finally, to support future research work, it is crucial to consider other factors for studying Gen Z's buying behaviour. For example, future studies may investigate other variables which could affect Gen Z's purchasing behaviour. Other control variables that could be examined include those related to the specific product, such as its price, perceived quality, and the level of customers' brand loyalty to a specific product or services and other marketing communication techniques, including traditional advertising, digital marketing, and word-of-mouth communication. Such variables' inclusion might help to get a deeper insight into consumer behaviour. In addition, future research could use a cross-sectional research design employing both quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews or focus groups in order to further explore the factors relating to the actual purchase intentions. Such an approach would allow the consideration of buyers' psychological and emotional states in greater detail beyond the framework of this research.

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Appendices

Authors	Research Topic	Underlying Theories
(Desmond, 2019)	Antecedents of consumer's attitude towards social media influencer & its impact on purchase intention	Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)
(Baig & Shahzad, 2022)	Impact of social media influencer's credibility dimensions on consumer behavior: An empirical study related to influencer marketing on Pakistan's fashion industry	Social Learning Theory, Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Social Comparison Theory
(Paylan & Semiz, 2021)	Examining the impact of the legitimacy of social media influencers on attitude towards the brand and purchase intention from a consumer perspective	Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)
(Shravya, 2022)	Impact of influencer marketing on consumer purchase intention towards sustainable apparels	Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

Appendix 2.1: Research that used TRA Model

MORGAN'S TABLE FOR SAMPLE SIZE

Population Size	Confidence = 95%				Confidence = 99%			
	Margin of Error				Margin of Error			
	5.0%	3.5%	2.5%	1.0%	5.0%	3.5%	2.5%	1.0%
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
20	19	20	20	20	19	20	20	20
30	28	29	29	30	29	29	30	30
50	44	47	48	50	47	48	49	50
75	63	69	72	74	67	71	73	75
100	80	89	94	99	87	93	96	99
150	108	126	137	148	122	135	142	149
200	132	160	177	196	154	174	186	198
250	152	190	215	244	182	211	229	246
300	169	217	251	291	207	246	270	295
400	196	265	318	384	250	309	348	391
500	217	306	377	475	285	365	421	485
600	234	340	432	565	315	416	490	579
700	248	370	481	653	341	462	554	672
800	260	396	526	739	363	503	615	763
1000	278	440	606	906	399	575	727	943
1200	291	474	674	1067	427	636	827	1119
1500	306	515	759	1297	460	712	959	1376
2000	322	563	869	1655	498	808	1141	1785
2500	333	597	952	1984	524	879	1288	2173
3500	346	641	1068	2565	558	977	1510	2890
5000	357	678	1176	3288	586	1066	1734	3842
7500	365	710	1275	4211	610	1147	1960	5165
10000	370	727	1332	4899	622	1193	2098	6239
25000	378	760	1448	6939	646	1285	2399	9972
50000	381	772	1491	8056	655	1318	2520	12455
75000	382	776	1506	8514	658	1330	2563	13583
100000	383	778	1513	8762	659	1336	2585	14227
250000	384	782	1527	9248	662	1347	2626	15555
500000	384	783	1532	9423	663	1350	2640	16055
1000000	384	783	1534	9512	663	1352	2647	16317
2500000	384	784	1536	9567	663	1353	2651	16478
10000000	384	784	1536	9594	663	1354	2653	16560
100000000	384	784	1537	9603	663	1354	2654	16584
300000000	384	784	1537	9603	663	1354	2654	16586

Appendix 3.1: Morgan's Table for Sample Size

Section A: Demographic Information
1. Age: ■ Below 14 ■ 14 – 29 ■ Above 29
2. Gender: ■ Male ■ Female
3. Education Level: ■ Secondary ■ Foundation ■ Diploma ■ Bachelor's degree ■ Master's degree
4. Occupation: ■ Student ■ Employed ■ Unemployed
5. Nationality: ■ Malaysian ■ Non-Malaysian
Section B: General Information
6. Have you ever purchased any fashion and beauty products? ■ Yes ■ No
7. Do you follow any influencers who often share their daily outfits or makeup routines? ■ Yes ■ No
8. Do you follow any influencers from fashion and beauty industry? ■ Yes ■ No
9. Which social media platforms you used the most? [can choose more than one] ■ Facebook ■ Instagram ■ TikTok ■ Xiaohongshu

Please choose the number 1 to 5 that best describes your feelings for each statement. *1- strongly disagree 2- disagree 3- neither agree nor disagree 4- agree 5- strongly agree*					
Section C: Theory Variables					
10. The content made by the influencers I follow is reliable.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The content made by the influencers I follow is informative.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The content made by the influencers I follow is a good sources of fashion and beauty product information.	1	2	3	4	5
13. It is good to purchase fashion and beauty products used by the influencers.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I like to purchase fashion and beauty products recommended by the influencers.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Influencer marketing is a good form of marketing channel.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I believe that I let myself be guided by influencers when making my fashion and beauty-related purchase decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
17. The people important to me (friends/family) think I should buy fashion and beauty products recommended by influencers.	1	2	3	4	5
18. People around me purchase fashion and beauty products recommended by influencers.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I am likely to purchase the fashion and beauty products recommended by the influencers I follow.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I consider purchasing the fashion and beauty products recommended by the influencers I follow.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I intend to purchase the fashion and beauty products recommended by the influencers I follow.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I will try to purchase the fashion and beauty products recommended by the influencers I follow in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I will recommend the people around me to purchase the fashion and beauty products recommended by the influencers.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 3.2: Research Questionnaire

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.842	.842	6

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.771	.771	3

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.871	.871	5

Appendix 4.1: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Results

Correlations

		ATT	SN	PI
ATT	Pearson Correlation	1	.669**	.796**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001
	N	385	385	385
SN	Pearson Correlation	.669**	1	.709**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001
	N	385	385	385
PI	Pearson Correlation	.796**	.709**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	
	N	385	385	385

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix 4.2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis Results

Correlations

		PI	ATT	SN
Pearson Correlation	PI	1.000	.796	.709
	ATT	.796	1.000	.669
	SN	.709	.669	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	PI	.	<.001	<.001
	ATT	.000	.	.000
	SN	.000	.000	.
N	PI	385	385	385
	ATT	385	385	385
	SN	385	385	385

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Akaike Information Criterion	Selection Criteria			Schwarz Bayesian Criterion
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change		Amemiya Prediction Criterion	Mallows' Prediction Criterion		
1	.831[a]	.690	.689	.30772	.690	425.713	2	382	<.001	-904.496	.315	3.000		-892.636

a. Predictors: (Constant), SN, ATT
b. Dependent Variable: PI

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	80.625	2	40.313	425.713	<.001[b]
	Residual	36.173	382	.095		
	Total	116.798	384			

a. Dependent Variable: PI
b. Predictors: (Constant), SN, ATT

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.284	.147		1.936	.054					
	ATT	.673	.044	.582	15.191	<.001	.796	.614	.433	.553	1.810
	SN	.279	.033	.320	8.360	<.001	.709	.393	.238	.553	1.810

a. Dependent Variable: PI

Appendix 4.3: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results