

Fast Fashion vs Sustainable Fashion: Psychological Mechanisms of Generation Z Consumption in the Influencer Era

Kholifah^{1*}, Kabul Trifiyanto²

¹*Department of Business Digital, Universitas Putra Bangsa, Kebumen, Central Java, Indonesia*

^{*}*Corresponding author: Kholifah*

Corresponding email: ifahupb@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The increasing popularity of sustainable fashion has not been accompanied by corresponding purchasing behavior among Generation Z, reflecting a persistent intention-behavior gap. However, existing research has predominantly focused on purchase intention, providing limited explanation of how social influence and self-regulation shape its translation into actual behavior. This study examines how sustainability attitude and influencer exposure affect sustainable fashion purchasing behavior through purchase intention and whether self-control moderates the intention-behavior relationship. Using an explanatory cross-sectional design, data from 200 Generation Z consumers in Indonesia were collected through purposive sampling and analyzed using PLS-SEM. Sustainability attitude does not significantly predict purchase intention ($\beta = 0.379$, $p = 0.086$), whereas influencer exposure has a positive effect ($\beta = 0.563$, $p = 0.011$). Purchase intention positively predicts actual purchase behavior ($\beta = 0.278$, $p < 0.001$) and mediates the effect of influencer exposure, but not sustainability attitude, on actual behavior. Self-control negatively moderates the intention-behavior relationship, indicating that greater self-control weakens the translation of purchase intention into actual purchases. The model explains 88.2% of the variance in purchase intention and 67.8% of the variance in actual purchase behavior. These findings reveal the distinct roles of sustainability attitude, influencer exposure, purchase intention, and self-control in explaining Generation Z's sustainable fashion purchasing behavior.

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1. Introduction

The global fashion industry has experienced rapid growth, accompanied by increasing attention to sustainability and ethical consumption (Jaheer Mukthar et al., 2024). As an emerging consumer segment, Generation Z (Gen Z) demonstrates relatively high levels of environmental awareness, particularly in terms of preferences for environmentally friendly products and sustainable production practices (Niinimäki et al., 2020). Nevertheless, a significant discrepancy remains between their pro-environmental attitudes and their actual consumption behavior.

Previous studies have examined sustainable fashion consumption from several perspectives, including sustainability attitudes, social influence, purchase intentions, and individual psychological factors (Jung et al., 2020; Kim & Rana, 2025; Ngo et al., 2024). Existing research has

established that sustainability-related attitudes can influence consumers' evaluations and intentions toward sustainable products, while studies on social media and influencer marketing have demonstrated that influencer exposure can shape consumers' purchase intentions. However, much of the existing literature focuses on purchase intention as the primary outcome and provides limited evidence on how such intentions are translated into actual sustainable fashion purchasing behavior. Similarly, studies on the intention-behavior gap have documented inconsistencies between consumers' sustainability-oriented intentions and their actual purchasing decisions, while social influence and individual self-regulatory factors have often been examined separately rather than within an integrated behavioral mechanism (Kautish & Khare, 2022; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Subasinghe et al., 2025).

Although influencer-related social influence has become increasingly important in shaping Generation Z's fashion consumption, relatively limited research has examined how such influence is translated into actual sustainable fashion purchase behavior through purchase intention (Aprianingsih et al., 2023)(Rütelioné & Bhutto, 2024). Furthermore, the role of self-control in determining whether purchase intention is translated into actual purchase behavior remains relatively underexplored in the sustainable fashion context (Garima et al., 2025; Li & Yu, 2022). Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by integrating sustainability attitude and influencer exposure as antecedents of purchase intention, examining purchase intention as a mediating mechanism linking these factors to actual purchase behavior, and positioning self-control as a moderator of the relationship between purchase intention and actual purchase behavior among Generation Z consumers.

This phenomenon is commonly referred to as the intention-behavior gap, which describes the discrepancy between individuals' stated intentions to engage in sustainable consumption and their actual purchasing behavior (Carrington et al., 2010, 2014; Sundaraja et al., 2023). In the context of the fast fashion industry, many Gen Z consumers claim to support sustainable fashion while continuing to purchase fast fashion products because of their affordability, accessibility, and the appeal of rapidly changing fashion trends (Joy et al., 2012). This inconsistency reflects an attitude-behavior gap in which consumers' actual purchasing decisions remain insufficiently aligned with their sustainability-oriented values and attitudes (Bocti et al., 2021)(Leclercq-Machado et al., 2022). Furthermore, this condition illustrates the green consumption paradox, whereby increased environmental awareness does not necessarily lead to environmentally responsible consumption behavior (Vieira et al., 2023; White et al., 2019; Zhuo et al., 2022). Consumers frequently experience a conflict between their desire to remain fashionable and their commitment to ethical consumption. Consequently, purchasing decisions often become inconsistent and are influenced more by situational and emotional factors than by long-term rational considerations.

The growing influence of social media influencers has further intensified this phenomenon in the digital era. Influencers can shape consumer preferences, establish social norms, and trigger the fear of missing out (FOMO), thereby encouraging impulsive purchasing behavior. Content such as fashion haul videos, promotional campaigns, and viral trends accelerates the fast fashion consumption cycle, ultimately weakening consumers' commitment to sustainability principles. Consequently, although consumers are increasingly exposed to messages promoting ethical consumption, their actual purchasing behavior often contradicts these sustainability values.

In this context, self-control emerges as a critical psychological factor in explaining the discrepancy between behavioral intentions and actual purchasing behavior. Self-control refers to an individual's ability to regulate impulses and delay immediate gratification in pursuit of long-term goals. Individuals with higher levels of self-control are generally more consistent in incorporating sustainability values into their purchasing decisions, whereas those with lower levels of self-control are more likely to engage in impulsive purchases driven by emotional responses and external influences (Tangney et al., 2004).

Therefore, examining the psychological mechanisms underlying the intention-behavior gap, the green consumption paradox, and self-control is essential for understanding the consumption behavior of Generation Z. In this context, purchase intention is positioned as a mediating mechanism because consumers' sustainability attitudes and exposure to influencers are expected to influence actual purchasing behavior primarily through the formation of purchase intentions.

Purchase intention represents the psychological stage that connects consumers' internal evaluations and external social influences with their subsequent purchasing decisions, thereby providing a mechanism for explaining how these factors may translate into actual behavior. However, having a positive purchase intention does not necessarily guarantee that consumers will carry out the intended behavior. This is particularly relevant in sustainable fashion consumption, where consumers may face competing motivations and purchasing considerations. Therefore, self-control is positioned as a moderating variable because the extent to which consumers can regulate their impulses and control their purchasing decisions may determine whether purchase intentions are successfully translated into actual purchase behavior. In other words, purchase intention explains the mechanism through which sustainability attitude and influencer exposure may affect actual purchase behavior, while self-control explains why the strength of this intention-behavior relationship may differ across consumers. Based on this framework, this study contributes to the sustainable consumer behavior literature by integrating sustainability attitude, influencer exposure, purchase intention, and self-control into a single model to provide a more comprehensive explanation of actual sustainable fashion purchasing behavior among Generation Z. Furthermore, the findings offer practical implications for industry practitioners and policymakers in designing strategies that encourage the translation of sustainable purchase intentions into actual behavioral change toward more ethical and sustainable fashion consumption.

2. Methods

The study employed a quantitative, explanatory cross-sectional design and estimates the hypothesised relationships with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM was selected because the study emphasizes prediction and mechanism explanation, includes a mediating construct with multiple simultaneous paths, and does not require strict distributional assumptions.

Research setting, population and sampling

The population of this study consists of Generation Z (Gen Z) individuals who actively use social media and have experience purchasing sustainable fashion products. The respondents were required to have purchased at least one sustainable fashion product, enabling them to provide relevant responses regarding their sustainability attitudes, influencer exposure, purchase intention, self-control, and actual sustainable fashion purchase behavior.

The sample comprises a subset of Gen Z individuals who meet the specified inclusion criteria, such as university students or young adults aged 18 to 28 years who actively follow fashion influencers on social media. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that respondents were relevant to the research objectives. Participants were selected based on the following criteria: (1) belonging to Generation Z, (2) actively using social media, and (3) having previously purchased fashion products.

Measurement

All constructs in this study were operationalized as reflective multi-item measures. The measurement instrument was adapted from previously established scales and contextualized to the sustainable fashion consumption setting among Generation Z. The original items were translated into Indonesian using a translation and back-translation procedure to maintain semantic equivalence between the original and adapted versions. During the adaptation process, wording was adjusted to reflect the sustainable fashion context while retaining the conceptual meaning of each original construct. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Table 1 The measurement items, item codes, original sources, and adaptation procedures

Construct	Code	Measurement item	Source	Adaptation process
Sustainability Attitude	SA1	I am concerned about the environmental impact of fashion products.	Chan (2001); Ajzen (1991)	The original environmental-attitude item was contextualized specifically to the environmental consequences of fashion products.

Construct	Code	Measurement item	Source	Adaptation process
	SA2	I believe that fashion products can have negative impacts on the environment.	Chan (2001); Ajzen (1991)	The general perception of environmental consequences was adapted to fashion consumption.
	SA3	I prefer environmentally friendly fashion products.	Chan (2001); Ajzen (1991)	The preference for environmentally friendly products was specified as sustainable fashion products.
	SA4	I believe that purchasing sustainable fashion products is a good choice.	Chan (2001); Ajzen (1991)	The general positive evaluation of environmentally responsible consumption was contextualized to sustainable fashion purchasing.
	IE1	I frequently see fashion-related content posted by influencers on social media.	Lou & Yuan (2019)	The exposure dimension was contextualized to the frequency of encountering fashion influencer content on social media.
	IE2	I pay attention to fashion-related content posted by influencers.	Lou & Yuan (2019)	The exposure concept was extended to the attentional response toward influencer-generated fashion content.
Influencer Exposure	IE3	I trust influencers when they provide information or recommendations about fashion products.	Lou & Yuan (2019); Djafarova & Rushworth (2017)	Source credibility was contextualized to trust in influencers as sources of fashion-product information.
	IE4	I find fashion influencers attractive and appealing.	Lou & Yuan (2019); Djafarova & Rushworth (2017)	The source-attractiveness dimension was contextualized to fashion influencers encountered on social media.
	IE5	I have a desire to imitate the fashion choices of influencers I follow.	Djafarova & Rushworth (2017)	Social influence and identification were adapted to the desire to mimic influencers' fashion choices.
Purchase Intention	PI1	I intend to purchase sustainable fashion products.	Ajzen (1991); Dodds et al. (1991)	Purchase intention was specified specifically toward sustainable fashion products.
	PI2	I am willing to try sustainable fashion products.	Ajzen (1991); Dodds et al. (1991)	General willingness to try a product was contextualized to sustainable fashion products.
	PI3	I plan to purchase sustainable fashion products in the future.	Ajzen (1991); Dodds et al. (1991)	Future purchase intention was specified for sustainable fashion products.
	PI4	I am likely to purchase sustainable fashion products.	Ajzen (1991); Dodds et al. (1991)	Perceived likelihood of purchase was contextualized to sustainable fashion.
Actual Purchase Behavior	APB1	I frequently purchase sustainable fashion products.	Verplanken & Herabadi (2001); Ajzen (1991)	Purchase frequency was contextualized to actual purchases of sustainable fashion products.
	APB2	I have actually purchased sustainable fashion products.	Verplanken & Herabadi (2001); Ajzen (1991)	Actual purchase behavior was specified as completed sustainable fashion purchases rather than purchase intention.
	APB3	My actual sustainable fashion purchases are consistent with my intention to purchase sustainable fashion products.	Verplanken & Herabadi (2001); Ajzen (1991)	The intention-behavior consistency dimension was contextualized to sustainable fashion purchasing.

Construct	Code	Measurement item	Source	Adaptation process
Self-Control	APB4	Purchasing sustainable fashion products has become part of my purchasing habits.	Verplanken & Herabadi (2001)	The habitual purchasing dimension was contextualized to sustainable fashion consumption.
	SC1	I am able to control my impulses when making fashion purchase decisions.	Tangney et al. (2004)	General impulse control was contextualized to fashion purchasing decisions.
	SC2	I am disciplined when making fashion purchase decisions.	Tangney et al. (2004)	The self-discipline dimension was contextualized to consumer decision-making.
	SC3	I am able to delay immediate gratification when making fashion purchases.	Tangney et al. (2004)	Delay of gratification was contextualized to resisting immediate fashion consumption.
	SC4	I consistently act according to my plans when making fashion purchases.	Tangney et al. (2004)	Plan-consistent behavior was contextualized to fashion purchase decisions.

Conceptualization of Influencer Exposure. In this study, Influencer Exposure is not conceptualized as mere passive exposure or the frequency with which consumers encounter influencer content. Instead, the construct refers to consumers' exposure to and psychological responsiveness toward influencer-generated fashion content on social media. This conceptual domain encompasses three closely related aspects: exposure and attention, source-related responses, and social/behavioral responsiveness. The exposure and attention dimension reflects how frequently consumers encounter and attend to influencer-generated fashion content (IE1–IE2). The source-related response dimension captures consumers' trust in and perceptions of influencer attractiveness (IE3–IE4), while the social/behavioral responsiveness dimension reflects consumers' desire to imitate influencers' fashion choices (IE5). This conceptualization is based on prior influencer research emphasizing that the effect of influencer-generated content involves not only content exposure but also source credibility, attractiveness, and social identification. Lou and Yuan (2019) emphasize the importance of influencer credibility and source characteristics in consumers' responses to influencer-generated content, while Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) demonstrate the role of credibility and social identification in shaping consumers' responses to online influencers. Accordingly, the present study uses Influencer Exposure as an umbrella construct capturing consumers' exposure and responsiveness to influencer-generated fashion content rather than treating frequency of exposure, trust, attractiveness, and imitation as separate constructs.

Instrument Adaptation Procedure. The adaptation of the measurement instrument followed a contextualization process designed to preserve the conceptual meaning of the original scales while making the items relevant to sustainable fashion consumption among Generation Z. First, the original measurement items were reviewed to identify their underlying conceptual domains and dimensions. Second, the items were translated into Indonesian and contextualized from general consumer behavior, environmental behavior, and social media contexts to sustainable fashion consumption. Third, the translated items were reviewed to ensure that the wording was understandable and appropriate for Generation Z social media users. Fourth, a back-translation procedure was conducted by translating the Indonesian version back into English and comparing it with the original items to identify potential semantic discrepancies. Any wording differences were reviewed and revised to maintain conceptual equivalence. Importantly, the adaptation focused on contextual wording rather than changing the theoretical meaning of the constructs. The final instrument consisted of 21 reflective measurement items: four items for Sustainability Attitude, five items for Influencer Exposure, four items for Purchase Intention, four items for Actual Purchase Behavior, and four items for Self-Control.

Data screening

Before data analysis, the collected responses were screened to ensure their suitability for further analysis. First, we examined the completeness of the responses and found no missing values in the

substantive questionnaire items. Second, we assessed the responses based on the predetermined eligibility criteria. The final sample consisted of 200 Generation Z respondents who actively used social media and had been exposed to influencer content related to fashion products. Third, we screened the data for potentially careless or inconsistent responses to ensure data quality. All 200 responses met the eligibility criteria and were retained for further analysis. Therefore, the final sample used in the PLS-SEM analysis consisted of 200 respondents.

Analytical procedure

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is well suited for studies involving complex structural models with multiple latent constructs and comparative analyses across groups. The analysis began with an evaluation of the measurement model to assess the quality of the research instrument. This stage included tests of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability for each construct.

After establishing the adequacy of the measurement model, measurement invariance across groups was assessed to ensure that the constructs were interpreted consistently by respondents with different preferences for imported and local fashion products. Establishing measurement invariance is essential because it allows any observed differences between groups to be attributed to structural relationships within the model rather than to differences in respondents' interpretation of the measurement instrument.

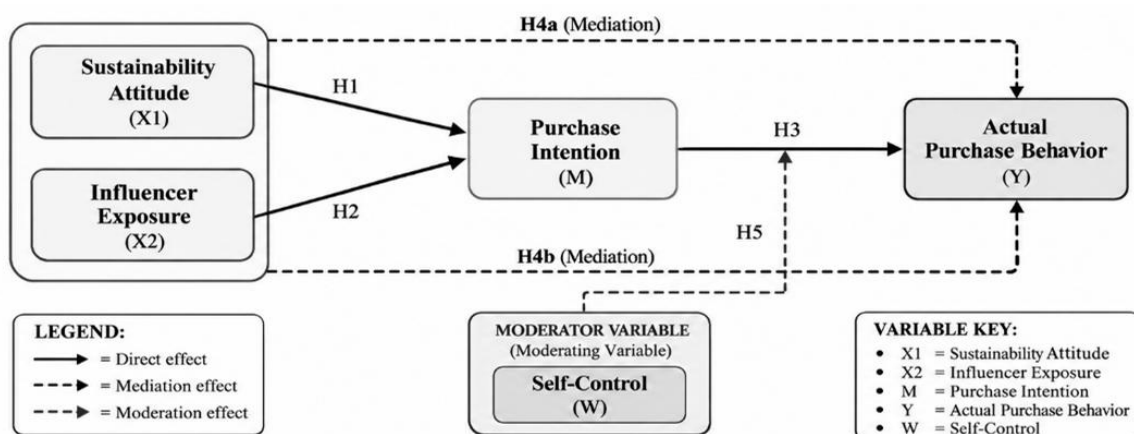


Figure 1: Research model

3. Results

A total of 200 questionnaires that met the completeness and eligibility criteria were included in the final analysis. The evaluation of the measurement model indicated that all constructs satisfied the recommended reliability and validity criteria. Specifically, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, while the average variance extracted (AVE) values for each construct were greater than 0.50. These results demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency reliability and convergent validity. Furthermore, discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT). The HTMT values were below the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating that the constructs were empirically distinguishable from one another. Before assessing the structural model, an inner variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis was conducted to assess potential collinearity among the predictor constructs. The VIF results were examined to ensure that multicollinearity did not adversely affect the estimation and interpretation of the structural path coefficients.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 200)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18–20 years	58	29.0
	21–23 years	81	40.5
	24–26 years	42	21.0
	27–28 years	19	9.5
	Total	200	100.0
Gender	Male	82	41.0
	Female	118	59.0
	Total	200	100.0
Education Level	Senior High School	36	18.0
	Diploma	22	11.0
	Bachelor's Degree	129	64.5
	Master's Degree	13	6.5
	Total	200	100.0
Monthly Income	< IDR 2,000,000	53	26.5
	IDR 2,000,000–3,999,999	67	33.5
	IDR 4,000,000–5,999,999	45	22.5
	≥ IDR 6,000,000	35	17.5
	Total	200	100.0

A total of 200 valid responses were included in the analysis. Most respondents were aged 21–23 years (40.5%), followed by those aged 18–20 years (29.0%). Female respondents constituted the majority of the sample (59.0%). Most participants held a bachelor's degree (64.5%), while the largest proportion reported a monthly income of IDR 2,000,000–3,999,999 (33.5%). Overall, the sample represents digitally connected Generation Z consumers with relatively high educational attainment but moderate purchasing power, making them an appropriate population for investigating sustainable fashion purchasing behavior.

Table 3. Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Decision
Sustainability Attitude	0.932	0.952	0.831	Reliable & Valid
Influencer Exposure	0.948	0.960	0.830	Reliable & Valid
Purchase Intention	0.865	0.908	0.713	Reliable & Valid
Self-Control	0.919	0.943	0.805	Reliable & Valid
Actual Purchase Behavior	0.893	0.926	0.758	Reliable & Valid

The results in Table 3 indicate that all constructs demonstrate satisfactory reliability and convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.865 to 0.948, while composite reliability values range from 0.908 to 0.960, both exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. In addition, all AVE values are above 0.50 (0.713–0.831), confirming that each construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators. Therefore, all constructs meet the recommended criteria for reliability and convergent validity.

Table 4. Outer Loadings

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Decision
Sustainability Attitude	SA1	0.894	Accepted
	SA2	0.943	Accepted
	SA3	0.917	Accepted
	SA4	0.891	Accepted
Influencer Exposure	IE1	0.860	Accepted
	IE2	0.944	Accepted

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Decision
Purchase Intention	IE3	0.945	Accepted
	IE4	0.855	Accepted
	IE5	0.945	Accepted
	PI1	0.909	Accepted
	PI2	0.866	Accepted
	PI3	0.730	Accepted
	PI4	0.861	Accepted
Self-Control	SC1	0.895	Accepted
	SC2	0.875	Accepted
	SC3	0.902	Accepted
	SC4	0.916	Accepted
Actual Purchase Behavior	APB1	0.824	Accepted
	APB2	0.880	Accepted
	APB3	0.884	Accepted
	APB4	0.893	Accepted

Table 4 presents the outer loading results, which demonstrate satisfactory indicator reliability, as all measurement items exhibited loading values above the recommended threshold of 0.70. The outer loading values ranged from 0.891 to 0.943 for Sustainability Attitude, 0.855 to 0.945 for Influencer Exposure, 0.730 to 0.909 for Purchase Intention, 0.875 to 0.916 for Self-Control, and 0.824 to 0.893 for Actual Purchase Behavior. Although PI3 recorded the lowest outer loading at 0.730, the value remained above the acceptable threshold and was therefore retained in the analysis. Overall, all 21 indicators demonstrated adequate indicator reliability, indicating that each measurement item appropriately represents its respective construct and can be retained for subsequent assessment of the structural model.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity Based on Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Construct Pair	HTMT	Decision
Sustainability Attitude ↔ Purchase Intention	0.867	Accepted
Influencer Exposure ↔ Purchase Intention	0.899	Accepted
Sustainability Attitude ↔ Influencer Exposure	0.838	Accepted

The discriminant validity assessment using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT) indicates that the constructs demonstrate adequate discriminant validity. The HTMT value between Sustainability Attitude and Purchase Intention was 0.867, while the value between Influencer Exposure and Purchase Intention is 0.899. Meanwhile, the HTMT value between Sustainability Attitude and Influencer Exposure is 0.838. All HTMT values are below the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating that the constructs are empirically distinguishable from one another and measure conceptually distinct constructs. Therefore, the results support the discriminant validity of the measurement model.

Table 6. Inner VIF Values

Predictor Construct	Endogenous Construct	VIF	Decision
Sustainability Attitude	Purchase Intention	1.365	Acceptable
Influencer Exposure	Purchase Intention	1.242	Acceptable
Purchase Intention	Actual Purchase Behavior	1.244	Acceptable
Self-Control	Actual Purchase Behavior	1.242	Acceptable
Purchase Intention × Self-Control	Actual Purchase Behavior	1.139	Acceptable

The inner VIF results indicate that there are no critical collinearity issues among the predictor constructs in the structural model. The VIF values range from 1.139 to 1.365, which are well below the recommended threshold of 5.00. Specifically, the VIF values for Sustainability Attitude, Influencer Exposure, Purchase Intention, Self-Control, and the Purchase Intention × Self-Control interaction term are 1.365, 1.242, 1.244, 1.242, and 1.139, respectively. These results indicate that

multicollinearity is not a concern and that the estimated structural path coefficients are unlikely to be substantially affected by collinearity among the predictor constructs. Therefore, the structural model can proceed to the subsequent hypothesis testing and interpretation.

The structural model evaluation revealed that Purchase Intention achieved a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.882, indicating that Sustainability Attitude and Influencer Exposure jointly explained 88.2% of the variance in Purchase Intention. Meanwhile, Actual Purchase Behavior had an R^2 value of 0.678, suggesting that Purchase Intention, Self-Control, and the interaction term between Purchase Intention and Self-Control explained 67.8% of the variance in Actual Purchase Behavior. According to the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2022), these coefficients of determination indicate that the proposed research model possesses substantial explanatory power.

Table 7. Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Sustainability Attitude → Purchase Intention	0.379	1.719	0.086	Not Supported
H2	Influencer Exposure → Purchase Intention	0.563	2.542	0.011	Supported
H3	Purchase Intention → Actual Purchase Behavior	0.278	5.108	<0.001	Supported
H5	Purchase Intention × Self-Control → Actual Purchase Behavior	-0.165	4.029	<0.001	Supported

Table 7 shows that H2, H3, and H5 are supported, whereas H1 is not supported. Influencer exposure positively affects purchase intention ($\beta = 0.563$, $p = 0.011$), and purchase intention positively affects actual purchase behavior ($\beta = 0.278$, $p < 0.001$). In contrast, sustainability attitude does not significantly influence purchase intention ($\beta = 0.379$, $p = 0.086$). Moreover, self-control negatively moderates the relationship between purchase intention and actual purchase behavior ($\beta = -0.165$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher levels of self-control weaken the positive effect of purchase intention on actual purchasing behavior.

Table 8. Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis	Indirect Effect	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H4a	Sustainability Attitude → Purchase Intention → Actual Purchase Behavior	0.105	1.478	0.140	Not Supported
H4b	Influencer Exposure → Purchase Intention → Actual Purchase Behavior	0.156	2.207	0.028	Supported

As shown in Table 8, purchase intention does not mediate the relationship between sustainability attitude and actual purchase behavior ($\beta = 0.105$, $p = 0.140$), leading to the rejection of H4a. However, purchase intention significantly mediates the relationship between influencer exposure and actual purchase behavior ($\beta = 0.156$, $p = 0.028$), supporting H4b. These findings suggest that influencer exposure affects actual purchase behavior indirectly by strengthening consumers' purchase intentions, whereas sustainability attitude does not exert a significant indirect effect through the same mechanism.

4. Discussion

Sustainability Attitude and Purchase Intention

The findings indicate that sustainability attitude does not have a significant effect on purchase intention among Generation Z. Although respondents demonstrate positive attitudes toward environmental sustainability, these attitudes alone are insufficient to increase their intention to purchase sustainable fashion products. This finding suggests that, while attitude is generally considered an important antecedent of behavioral intention, its influence may diminish when consumers prioritize other decision-making factors, such as price, product quality, design, fashion trends, and product accessibility. Consequently, environmental concern does not automatically translate into purchase intention within the context of sustainable fashion consumption.

These findings support the concept of the green consumption paradox, which describes a situation in which consumers express concern for environmental sustainability but continue to make purchasing decisions based primarily on practical and economic considerations (Joshi &

Rahman, 2015). In the fashion industry, this paradox is evident among Generation Z consumers who recognize the importance of sustainable consumption but still prefer fast-fashion products because they are perceived as more affordable, offer greater product variety, and better accommodate rapidly changing fashion trends. Furthermore, the present findings reflect the intention–behavior gap, which refers to the discrepancy between individuals' environmental values or attitudes and their actual purchasing decisions. This suggests that positive sustainability attitudes alone are insufficient to stimulate purchase intention when consumers continue to face barriers such as limited purchasing power, restricted access to sustainable products, and the perception that sustainable fashion is more expensive than conventional alternatives.

The present findings are consistent with those of Joshi and Rahman (2015), who argued that environmental concern does not necessarily encourage consumers to purchase environmentally friendly products because purchasing decisions remain strongly influenced by economic considerations and product characteristics. Therefore, sustainability attitude appears to represent a favorable personal value rather than the primary determinant of purchase intention among Generation Z.

Influencer Exposure and Purchase Intention

The results reveal that influencer exposure has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, indicating that increased exposure to influencer-generated content on social media enhances Generation Z's intention to purchase sustainable fashion products. This finding demonstrates that influencers play an important role in shaping consumers' perceptions through engaging content, authentic product reviews, personal experiences, and recommendations that are perceived as credible and trustworthy. Consequently, repeated exposure to influencer content strengthens consumers' confidence in sustainable fashion products and encourages stronger purchase intentions.

This finding is consistent with Social Learning Theory, which proposes that individuals acquire attitudes and behavioral intentions by observing attractive, credible, and influential role models (Bandura, 1986). Within the context of social media, influencers function as opinion leaders whose consumption behaviors and lifestyle choices are frequently observed and imitated by their followers. As a result, Generation Z consumers are more likely to develop favorable evaluations of sustainable fashion products after being repeatedly exposed to influencer recommendations. The findings also support those of Djafarova and Rushworth (2017), who concluded that influencer recommendations significantly increase consumers' purchase intentions, particularly among younger audiences who actively engage with digital platforms. Therefore, influencer exposure represents an important social antecedent of sustainable fashion purchase intention among Generation Z.

Purchase Intention and Actual Purchase Behavior

The findings confirm that purchase intention has a positive and significant effect on actual purchase behavior, indicating that individuals with stronger purchase intentions are more likely to convert those intentions into actual purchasing decisions. This result demonstrates that purchase intention serves as an important psychological mechanism that bridges consumers' preferences and their actual purchasing behavior. Nevertheless, the strength of this relationship may still depend on situational factors such as financial capability, self-control, and product characteristics.

The findings are consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which identifies behavioral intention as the strongest predictor of actual behavior. According to this theory, individuals with stronger intentions are more likely to perform the intended behavior, provided that no substantial barriers prevent the behavior from occurring. Within the context of sustainable fashion consumption, Generation Z consumers who have developed a strong intention to purchase environmentally friendly products are therefore more likely to translate this intention into actual purchasing behavior. This finding is further supported by Paul et al. (2016), who identified purchase intention as one of the primary predictors of environmentally responsible purchasing behavior.

The Mediating Role of Purchase Intention

The results indicate that purchase intention does not mediate the relationship between sustainability attitude and actual purchase behavior. Although Generation Z consumers demonstrate positive attitudes toward sustainability, these attitudes are insufficient to generate purchase intentions that subsequently lead to actual purchasing behavior. Therefore, the mediating mechanism proposed in this study is not supported.

This finding further reinforces both the green consumption paradox and the intention-behavior gap, suggesting that environmental concern alone is inadequate to influence actual purchasing decisions (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Instead, other determinants, including product price, social influence, fashion trends, and product availability, appear to play a more dominant role in shaping Generation Z's purchasing behavior. These results imply that strengthening environmental awareness alone may not be sufficient to encourage sustainable consumption unless accompanied by improvements in product accessibility, affordability, and market attractiveness.

The Mediating Role of Purchase Intention

The findings demonstrate that purchase intention significantly mediates the relationship between influencer exposure and actual purchase behavior. This result indicates that influencer exposure not only increases consumers' purchase intentions but also encourages them to translate those intentions into actual purchasing behavior. Accordingly, purchase intention functions as an important psychological mechanism through which influencer marketing affects consumers' purchasing decisions.

The findings suggest that influencers are capable of developing consumers' interest, confidence, and desire to purchase sustainable fashion products before actual purchasing behavior occurs. Consequently, greater exposure to influencer-generated content increases the likelihood that consumers will first develop stronger purchase intentions and subsequently convert these intentions into real purchasing behavior. This result highlights the importance of influencer marketing as an effective communication strategy for encouraging sustainable fashion consumption among Generation Z.

The Moderating Role of Self-Control

The findings reveal that self-control negatively moderates the relationship between purchase intention and actual purchase behavior. Specifically, the positive relationship between purchase intention and actual purchasing behavior becomes weaker as individuals' self-control increases. This indicates that consumers with higher levels of self-control are better able to regulate impulsive consumption tendencies, even when they possess strong purchase intentions.

Within the context of this study, Generation Z consumers with stronger self-control are more likely to evaluate their actual needs, financial conditions, product benefits, and environmental consequences before making purchasing decisions. Conversely, individuals with lower self-control are more likely to convert purchase intentions into impulsive buying behavior, particularly after being exposed to persuasive promotional content or influencer recommendations on social media. These findings support Self-Regulation Theory, which emphasizes that self-control enables individuals to regulate their behavior according to long-term goals despite the presence of immediate temptations (Baumeister et al., 2007). Accordingly, self-control represents an important psychological mechanism that shapes the extent to which purchase intentions are translated into actual purchasing behavior among Generation Z consumers.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that sustainability attitude does not have a significant effect on purchase intention, indicating that environmental concern alone is insufficient to encourage Generation Z consumers to develop purchase intentions toward sustainable fashion products. In contrast, influencer exposure has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, suggesting that exposure to influencer-generated content plays an important role in shaping consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable fashion products.

Furthermore, purchase intention has a positive and significant effect on actual purchase behavior, indicating that stronger purchase intentions increase the likelihood of translating purchase intentions into actual purchasing behavior. The findings also reveal that purchase intention does not mediate the relationship between sustainability attitude and actual purchase behavior, whereas it significantly mediates the relationship between influencer exposure and actual purchase behavior. These results suggest that influencer exposure affects purchasing behavior primarily through its ability to strengthen consumers' purchase intentions, while sustainability attitudes alone are insufficient to trigger this process.

In addition, self-control negatively moderates the relationship between purchase intention and actual purchase behavior. This finding indicates that individuals with higher levels of self-control are less likely to translate their purchase intentions into actual purchasing behavior, highlighting the importance of self-regulation in sustainable consumption decisions among Generation Z. This study demonstrates that Generation Z's sustainable fashion purchasing decisions are influenced more strongly by influencer exposure than by sustainability attitude. The findings also provide empirical evidence supporting the existence of the green consumption paradox and the intention-behavior gap in the context of sustainable fashion consumption in the digital era. Moreover, this study contributes to the sustainable consumer behavior literature by highlighting the complementary roles of social influence, purchase intention, and self-control in explaining the mechanisms underlying actual sustainable purchasing behavior.

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