

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON PROMOTING FASHION CLOTHES TOWARDS CUSTOMERS BUYING DECISION

John Mark D. Fernandez¹, Angela C. Asis², Joline B. Macalinao³, Rhea Mhae D.C. Mendoza⁴,
Guian R. Reyes⁵

¹²³⁴⁵⁶ Bachelor in Science in Business Administration Major in Marketing Management, Polytechnic University of the Philippines – Cabiao Campus, Nueva Ecija

johnmarkfernandex609@gmail.com, Mendozarheamhae@gmail.com, angelaasis63@gmail.com
guianreyes63@gmail.com, macalinaojoline04@gmail.com

Abstract	Article Info
This study explores the influence of Social Media Influencers on customer buying decisions in the promotion of fashion clothes commerce in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija. It analyses how social media influencers affect customer buying decisions through the motivation and variables such as compliance, identification, and internalisation, and its relationship to the variables of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, such as the attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. This study reveals that social media influencer marketing has a significant impact on customer buying decisions by shaping the psychological processes towards their decision-making processes, though the subjective norms are not statistically significant. Using a descriptive-quantitative research design with 100 respondents, chosen using the purposive sampling technique. This method made sure that the respondents had direct interaction with the study's main topic, such as following a social media influencer or making a purchase based on their reviews and product recommendations. Additionally, it is appropriate that the respondents can provide valuable insights into the relationship between influencer marketing and customer buying behaviour. Weighted mean and Spearman's rho correlation are used as the statistical treatment of the data that assesses the relationship between influencers towards buying decisions. The result showed that attitude has $\rho = 0.435$, $p = 0.010$, and the perceived behavioural control has $\rho = 0.313$, $p = 0.027$, showing that there is a significant impact on the customer buying decision; however, the Subjective norms have $p = 0.064$, showing that this variable or aspect has no effect on the customer buying decision. This finding contributes to the digital marketing customer behaviour literature being identified, which psychological and behavioural aspects are most affected by the social media influencer in the semi-urban Philippine context. This research contributes to digital marketing and consumer behaviour literature by identifying which psychological and behavioural constructs are most affected by social media influencers in a semi-urban Philippine setting.	Keywords: Polytechnic University of the Philippines–Cabiao Campus, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Major in Marketing Management, Social Media Influencers, Fashion Clothes and Buying Decision, Consumer Behavior and Influencer Marketing, Compliance, Identification, Internalization, Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, Purchase Intention

INTRODUCTION

In today's generation, where social media influencers are becoming major drivers of how customers decide what to buy, customers especially depend on product reviews, endorsements, and content from influencers when making purchases, when promoting fashion clothes items (Kim et al.; H.-Y., 2021). Social media influencers have a crucial role in marketing strategies, as their popularity seems to be effective for a specific brand (Qalati et al., 2022). However, some influencers may exaggerate or fake their promotion, which may mislead buyers. This highlights the concerns about how much influence and directive power they have and whether the customer is being informed.

As technology evolves, society and trends follow fast and become complex, making it complicated. People often follow online trends to feel they are within and accepted by others. Social media platforms are so easy to access it allow customers to be exposed to both harmful and helpful product review content (Leo Ao et al., 2023). Social media influencers now act as opinion drivers that shape the way people think and what they purchase (Kondort, 2023). They are perceived as more reliable and relatable than celebrities, and their perceived expertise makes them more believable (Lie Ao, 2023). This has made influencer marketing one of the most powerful tools for the brand to utilise to maximise its visibility and sales.

Many researches and studies have revealed that social and economic conditions shape how people respond to social media stimuli. For instance, in some areas, it is proven that people are more sceptical about taking an action or need more proof and other promotional videos before trusting an online endorsement of a social media influencer (Chandravathannie, 2024; Alenezi, 2024). Having said that, marketers should think about which influencers to use and partner with in delivering their brand message. However, in this study, the researcher will investigate how social media influencers affect buying decisions, specifically in buying fashion clothes, in terms of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

The aim of this study is to explore how influencers shape customer buying decisions in places where trust and credibility are evident. It gives an opportunity to help local businesses improve their strategies and strengthen customer relationships. It will serve as a guide for future influencer campaigns that are ethical, effective, and built on real engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the research has shown that social media influencers significantly impact consumer buying behaviour when customers perceive them as credible, relatable, reliable, and authentic. Social media influencers' credibility, such as their trustworthiness and expertise, has been leading to a gradual increase in customer purchase intention (Qalati et al., 2022; Kim et al.). In addition, a customer is more likely to trust and be engaged with an influencer rather than with the traditional celebrity brand endorsement (Lie Ao, 2023). However, some researchers have also proven that not all influencers' strategies work equally well; it varies depending on how they position themselves. Guadagno & Cialdini (2019) highlighted that social media influencers' credibility and openness build trust; over-expression and scripted advertisement and promotion may reduce the customer's confidence and lead to manipulation.

In addition, studies by Leo Ao et al. (2023) and Kondort (2023) revealed how social media influencers act as powerful digital communicators, often shaping customers' attitudes and behaviours toward marketing and promoting fashion clothes. However, research by Lim and Weissmann (2023) highlighted that openness alone does not equate to a guaranteed purchase decision; consumer engagement and audience segmentation also matter in promoting the same industry. Moreover, geographic location and cultural differences are significant aspects that can influence how consumers respond to the influencers' stimuli (Chandravathannie, 2024, and Alenezi, 2024). This situation is timely and relevant in the Philippines setting, where trust issues and economic conditions affect how marketing messages are being received and comprehended.

In line with that, social media influencer marketing studies have not investigated rural places like Cabiao, Nueva Ecija. While national trends have supported and proven the effectiveness of social media influencers and marketing, localised studies and data are still limited. This highlights the need for studies that examine and analyse the impact of influencers' marketing in specific communities and that account for consumer behaviour in terms of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Knowing the market dynamics is important for making an ethical and effective influencer strategy that surely connects with their respective audience.

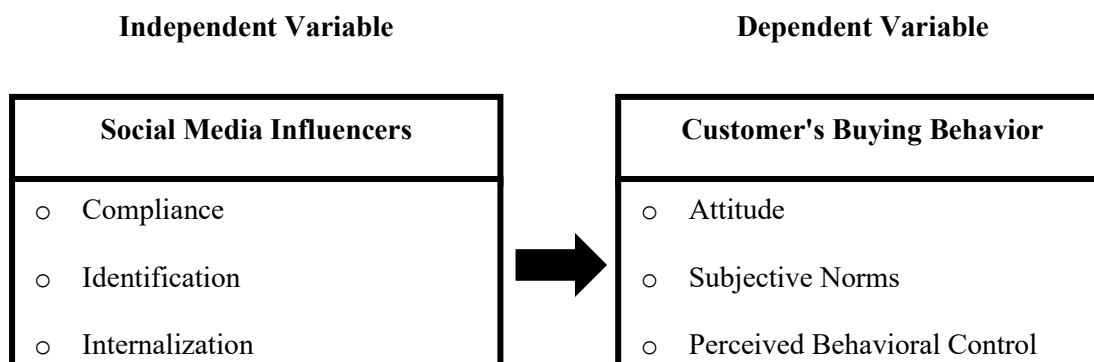


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the descriptive and quantitative method as a tool to understand how social media influencers promoting fashion clothes affect the customer buying decision in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija. It investigated the relationship between the social media influencer's compliance, identification, and internalization and the customer buying decision's attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

1. Objective Definition

This study aimed to show the importance of social media influencers' compliance, identification, and internalization from the Social Influence Theory, while on the other hand, their attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control from the Theory of Planned Behavior affected customer buying decisions. The statistical tool of the data was the Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient and has a practical relevance to the results of influencer marketing strategies in a rural setting.

2. Scenario Development

This study was created to understand the customers in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija, who are exposed to fashion content promoted by social media influencers. The survey questionnaire has common customer challenges such as their trust in influencer reviews, weakness to influencer content, and alignment of influencer values with customer personal identity. Questions were made to assess how frequently respondents engaged with influencers, whether they acted on fashion clothes promotion posts, and how their perceptions aligned with the variables, such as compliance, identification, and internalisation.

3. Setup and Configuration

The online survey was distributed via Google Forms, which is accessible to many customers who have mobile devices and computers. Qualifying questions were used to ensure that only qualified respondents could proceed to the main part of the survey. The form was set to accept only one response from each respondent. A pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents who were not included in the actual respondents of the study and not included in the total sample. The data was computed using Jamovi and resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of 0.887, revealing that it has a high level of consistency with the reliability standard (Taherdoost, 2016).

4. Step-by-Step Execution

The first part includes an introduction stating the research topic, research gap, research goals, research objective. The second part encourages respondents to answer the survey questions to understand the effect of social media influencers on customer buying decisions in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija.

5. Data Collection

Data were collected through a researcher-developed questionnaire on Google Forms, which contained screening questions to find respondents who met the criteria of age, residence and online purchases. It consisted of measurements of compliance, identification, internalisation, attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. The means of the relationships were computed to find the level of agreement, and Spearman's rho was used to find the correlation coefficient between social influence and customer buying behaviour. P-values were assigned based on the statistical importance of these correlations at a 0.05 level, which is deemed meaningful if it reaches this threshold.

6. Evaluation and Iteration

The data analysis also provided the research findings of marketing and consumer research. Another statistically important correlation was found between attitude and purchase intention ($r=0.435$, $p=0.010$). The results showed that influencer had a direct impact on perceived behavioural control ($r=0.313$, $p=0.027$), and a small, although not important, impact on subjective norms ($p=0.064$). Given the impact on both attitudes and perceived behavioural control, it was concluded that influencers are an integral part of the online fashion shopping experience for consumers and that influencer marketing strategies should be emotionally positive and empowering. In this study, the researchers discuss the possibility of influencers explaining the advantages of a product to their audience to counteract the effects of influencer engagement on the way people think about and act on control.

7. Conclusion and Next Steps.

Influencer content had an impact on shaping consumer attitudes and perceived behavioral control in fashion-related buying decisions. However, subjective norms showed limited influence. These results emphasize the strategic value of influencer-driven campaigns in digital marketing. Recommendations include developing targeted content that promotes positive attitudes and strengthens consumer confidence in their purchasing choices.

8. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The statistical test using Spearman's rho showed a strong relationship between influencer strategies and customer behavior: attitude has $\rho=0.435$ with $p=0.010$, and perceived behavioral control of $\rho=0.313$ and $p=0.027$ significantly had an impact on customer buying decisions; however, subjective norm had $p=0.064$, showing that it has no effect. Social media influencers had an impact on the fashion buying decisions of customers in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija. Among the factors, internalization had the highest influence, showing that people tend to adopt the values and styles of influencers they trust. This means that when people connect with a personality or lifestyle of an influencer, they are more likely to follow their fashion recommendations. The result revealed and supports the Theory of Planned Behavior, with which the data suggest that attitude and perceived behavioral control are central variables in customer buying behavior. The not significant variable, which is the subjective norm in this study, suggests that external social pressure may be little to no more influential than internalized attitude and perceived behavioral control in a rural customer setting (Giadagno and Caildini, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Results showed that social media influencers have a higher impact on the fashion clothes buying behavior of the customer of Cabiao, Nueva Ecija. From the findings and behavior of the consumers, the researcher has discovered that influencers can bring real value to a business by improving brand trust towards the purchase

behaviour of their audience. This study's results may provide perceptions into customer behaviour as well as help social media influencers to develop their social media marketing skills in this digital environment. The findings may help with future marketing and social media marketing activities from a local perspective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Fashion brands should deploy social media influencers whom they believe to be credible in their specific field. Fashion influencers can build consumer trust by promoting fashion products in their own way and in a way that allows brands to reflect real life and honest experiences, such as styling videos, behind-the-scenes, or other relatable, candid content and expressions. To decide on the best influencer strategies, consumer feedback is required. In future studies, a larger and more diverse sample about the impact of influencer credibility, exposure frequency, and social media platform on consumer attitudes should be used. Researchers may also apply qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups to gain deeper insight into consumer behaviour and trust in digital marketing.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ajzen, I. (2021). The theory of planned behaviour: Frequently asked questions. *Human Behaviour and Emerging Technologies*, 3(2), 314–324. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.195>
- [2] Alenezi, M. A. (2024). Consumer trust and influencer marketing in small communities. *Journal of Marketing Perspectives*, 18(1), 56–68.
- [3] Chandravathannie, R. (2024). Cultural influences on digital purchasing behaviour. *Asian Journal of Consumer Research*, 7(2), 112–125.
- [4] Guadagno, R. E., & Cialdini, R. B. (2019). Online persuasion and human behaviour: A new look at influence. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 158(5), 586–599.
- [5] Kim, H.-Y. (2021). Digital consumption and the rise of social media influencers. *Journal of Retail and Digital Commerce*, 11(3), 244–258.
- [6] Kondort, G. (2023). Influencers as opinion leaders in digital communities. *Social Media Trends Review*, 9(1), 89–97.
- [7] Lasut, J. T., Saleh, S. M., & Halim, R. H. (2022). Engagement and trust in influencer marketing. *Journal of Digital Marketing Research*, 16(4), 215–230.
- [8] Leo Ao, Y., Zhang, F., & Chen, L. (2023). Platform diversity and consumer feedback in influencer marketing. *Online Market Analytics*, 14(2), 99–113.
- [9] Lie Ao, J. (2023). Cost-effective branding through digital influencers. *E-Marketing Journal*, 22(1), 45–59.
- [10] Lim, A., & Weissmann, C. (2023). Credibility and openness in Philippine influencer marketing. *Southeast Asian Journal of Business Research*, 5(3), 144–157.
- [11] Qalati, S. A., Ostic, D., Shuib, M., Rajput, S., & Galindo, L. (2022). A mediated model on the adoption of social media and customer brand engagement: Evidence from the fashion industry. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, 17(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jtaer17010001>
- [12] Saleem, S. (2022). The authenticity factor in influencer marketing: A consumer behavior study. *Journal of Consumer Behavior Studies*, 10(3), 200–214.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researcher's first order of business is to thank God for always being there for them, giving them strength to get through every obstacle they encountered while undertaking this business research, and showing them the path. Because of his goodwill and blessings, he was able to do this work.

To the Polytechnic University of the Philippines—Cabiao Campus for allowing us to undertake this research. The campus's goals are to be honest about building a strong platform for research to be done and to attain academic excellence.

The researchers are very thankful to the Polytechnic University of the Philippines—Cabiao Campus for letting them do this study. The school's academic support, good learning environment, and easy access to resources all helped this research do well.

We also like to thank the staff and instructors at PUP Cabiao Campus. It was very important to the professionals that the pupils were dedicated to doing well in school and seeking help and advice.

The researchers thank the people who validated the instrument for their help because their professional review made sure that the survey tool was accurate and reliable. It was quite beneficial that they helped improve the tool used to collect data.

We really appreciate Ma'am Criselda P. Coronado's attentive and helpful advice on how to utilize JAMOVİ correctly. It was a lot easier to perform the data analysis technique since she helped me grasp what the statistics meant.

The researchers also wish to thank everyone who took the time to fill out the survey. The most important factor that made the study work was that they were ready to give honest and useful answers.

The researchers would want to thank the families for always being there for them in every manner, including emotionally, spiritually, and financially. Their love and support were always there to aid and cheer them on when things got rough. Your loved one really appreciated how patient, understanding, and moral support you were at this time.

Your kind words, moral support, and shared experiences helped your friends get through the hardest parts of performing research and gave them the strength to keep going.

Lastly, the researchers thank each other for all the work they did, how well they worked together, and how well they worked as a team while completing the research. They got to know each other better every time they talked, worked together, or solved an issue. This made their study and friendship as a research team stronger.

This signifies that the author worked hard and was dedicated to writing the thesis "The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Promoting Fashion Clothing Towards Customers' Buying Decision." This is a great intellectual accomplishment.