

The Role of Content Marketing and Lifestyle in Fashion Purchase Decision-Making Among Gen Z

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Abstrak

Meningkatnya penggunaan media sosial telah mengubah cara Generasi Z (Gen Z) menemukan, mengevaluasi, dan membeli produk fesyen. Sebagai generasi yang tumbuh dalam lingkungan digital, Gen Z sering terpapar content marketing melalui platform seperti Instagram, TikTok, dan YouTube, sehingga konten digital menjadi salah satu sumber penting informasi dan inspirasi fesyen. Meskipun penelitian sebelumnya telah membahas hubungan content marketing dengan perilaku konsumen serta hubungan gaya hidup dengan perilaku pembelian, penelitian yang mengkaji hubungan keduanya secara bersama-sama dengan pengambilan keputusan pembelian fesyen pada konsumen Gen Z di Indonesia masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara content marketing, gaya hidup, dan pengambilan keputusan pembelian fesyen pada Gen Z. Penelitian menggunakan survei kuantitatif dengan desain cross-sectional terhadap 350 responden Indonesia berusia 13–28 tahun. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis faktor eksploratori, analisis reliabilitas, korelasi Pearson, dan regresi linier. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa content marketing dan gaya hidup memiliki hubungan positif dengan pengambilan keputusan pembelian fesyen serta secara bersama-sama menjelaskan 56,4% variasi pada variabel dependen, dengan gaya hidup menunjukkan hubungan statistik yang lebih kuat. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi dalam memahami perilaku konsumen pada lingkungan yang dimediasi secara digital dengan menyoroti hubungan antara konten media sosial, gaya hidup, dan pengambilan keputusan pembelian fesyen pada Gen Z.

Kata Kunci: Budaya Digital, Content Marketing, Gaya Hidup, Generasi Z, Media Sosial, Pengambilan Keputusan Pembelian Fesyen.

Abstract

The increasing use of social media has transformed how Generation Z (Gen Z) discovers, evaluates, and purchases fashion products. As digital natives, Gen Z is frequently exposed to content marketing through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, where digital

content has become an important source of fashion information and inspiration. While previous studies have examined the relationships between content marketing and consumer behavior, and between lifestyle and purchasing behavior, limited research has investigated their combined relationship with fashion purchase decision-making among Indonesian Gen Z consumers. This study examines the relationship between content marketing, lifestyle, and fashion purchase decision-making among Gen Z. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted with 350 Indonesian respondents aged 13-28 years. Data were analyzed using exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation, and linear regression. The results indicate that both content marketing and lifestyle were positively associated with fashion purchase decision-making, jointly explaining 56.4% of the variance in the dependent variable, with lifestyle demonstrating the stronger statistical association. These findings contribute to understanding consumer behavior in digitally mediated environments by highlighting the relationships between social media content, lifestyle, and fashion purchase decision-making among Gen Z.

Keywords : Content Marketing, Digital Culture, Fashion Purchase Decision Making, Generation Z, Lifestyle, Social Media

BACKGROUND

Technology and social media have significantly transformed Gen Z's fashion consumption by allowing content marketing to become a dominant strategy within online fashion spaces and making lifestyle-oriented shopping increasingly visible among Gen Z consumers (Gensler & Rangaswamy, 2025; Singh, 2023). Unlike previous generations, Gen Z has grown up in a digitally connected environment where smartphones, internet access, and social media continuously shape their everyday decisions, particularly in relation to fashion consumption (Mulyani et al., 2019; Nurmalia et al., 2024). As digital natives, they are constantly exposed to fashion content, creating a unique digital culture shaped by online trends, media consumption, and social interactions (Nurmalia et al., 2024; T. Wijaya et al., 2020). In this context, digital culture represents not only shopping behavior but also a broader social environment that influences how young consumers perceive value, relevance, and fashion trends when evaluating fashion products and making purchase decisions (Engel et al., 1995; T. Wijaya et al., 2020).

This digital culture is further strengthened by social media algorithms that personalize content based on users' searches, viewing behavior, and online interactions. The shift from traditional advertising and physical store experiences toward visual, fast-paced, and interactive media formats has changed how Gen Z discovers, evaluates, and engages with fashion products (Engel et al., 1995; Gensler & Rangaswamy, 2025). Through social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, fashion content including influencer recommendations, customer reviews, styling videos, and personalized recommendations can reach consumers almost instantly, providing information that consumers use when comparing products and evaluating purchase alternatives (Hamisena & Sudyajayanti, 2024; Nadanyiova & Sujanka, 2023; T. Wijaya et al., 2020). Continuous exposure to this visual content also

makes fashion appear more accessible while reducing resistance toward marketing messages (Singh, 2023; Wicaksono, 2024).

Content marketing has become an increasingly important marketing strategy in today's digital environment, transforming how brands communicate with consumers. Rather than relying solely on traditional advertising, brands increasingly create and distribute valuable, relevant, and engaging content to attract and retain their target audience (Maslow, 1954; Singh, 2023). This approach is particularly relevant to Generation Z, who rely heavily on social media, influencer recommendations, and peer reviews when searching for fashion inspiration, evaluating products, and making purchasing decisions (Nadanyiova & Sujanka, 2023). Fashion brands increasingly communicate through styling videos, product reviews, storytelling, influencer collaborations, and user-generated content distributed across social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube (Nadanyiova & Sujanka, 2023; Singh, 2023; Wicaksono, 2024).

Furthermore, online fashion content has changed how lifestyle is expressed within digital environments [27]. For Gen Z, purchasing fashion products is not only intended to satisfy functional needs but also serves as a means of expressing personal identity, lifestyle values, and social belonging (Maslow, 1954; Nurmalia et al., 2024; Sutanto & Aubelia, 2022). Lifestyle refers to an individual's pattern of living, which is reflected through activities, interests, and opinions (AIO) (Plummer, 1974). In consumer behavior research, lifestyle is widely used to explain differences in purchasing behavior because consumers with similar demographic characteristics may demonstrate different consumption patterns based on their lifestyle (Plummer, 1974). For Gen Z, lifestyle is increasingly expressed through both offline and digital activities, as smartphones, internet access, and social media have become integrated into communication, entertainment, information seeking, and shopping (Nurmalia et al., 2024; Yasin et al., 2023). Social media also provides access to fashion trends, product information, and online communities, making digital platforms an important part of their daily lifestyle (Nurmalia et al., 2024; N. Wijaya & Utami, 2021).

Fashion purchase decision-making refers to the process through which consumers identify their needs, search for information, evaluate available alternatives, make purchasing decisions, and assess their satisfaction after the purchase (Engel et al., 1995). The Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) Model explains this process through five stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation (Engel et al., 1995). The development of digital technology has transformed how consumers complete each stage of the purchase decision-making process. Rather than relying solely on physical stores or conventional advertising, consumers increasingly obtain product information through social media, online reviews, fashion content, and digital communities (Amalia & Sagita, 2019; Putri & Marlien, 2022). For Gen Z, digital platforms have become important sources of fashion inspiration and product information, allowing consumers to compare products, evaluate alternatives, and obtain recommendations before making purchasing decisions (Nadanyiova & Sujanka, 2023; Putri & Marlien, 2022).

Although previous studies have examined the relationships between online advertising, digital marketing, and consumer purchasing behavior (Putri & Marlien, 2022; Salwanisa & Wikartika, 2023; Wicaksono, 2024), relatively limited research has examined how content

marketing and lifestyle are jointly associated with fashion purchase decision-making among Generation Z within social media environments. Existing studies have primarily focused on outcomes such as brand awareness, customer engagement, and purchase intention (Chandra & Sari, 2021; Nugroho et al., 2022), providing relatively limited understanding of how specific forms of digital content, including influencer recommendations, user-generated content, and personalized recommendations, relate to consumers' purchasing decisions (Erwin et al., 2023; Nadanyiova & Sujanka, 2023; Singh, 2023). In addition, lifestyle is frequently conceptualized as a relatively stable personal characteristic rather than as a digitally mediated lifestyle that develops through continuous interaction with social media and content marketing (Plummer, 1974; T. Wijaya et al., 2020).

Moreover, conventional consumer decision-making frameworks rarely integrate psychological theories to explain how digital environments relate to consumer purchasing behavior (Engel et al., 1995). Social Learning Theory explains how individuals develop behaviors by observing influencers, peers, and online communities (Bandura, 1977; Wahyuni et al., 2025), whereas Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes the reciprocal interaction between environmental influences, cognitive processes, and behavioral responses (Bandura, 1986; Li & Hua, 2022). Complementing these perspectives, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs explains how fashion consumption extends beyond functional needs to fulfill psychological needs related to belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1954). Integrating these theoretical perspectives therefore provides a more comprehensive framework for examining the relationships between content marketing, lifestyle, and fashion purchase decision-making among Gen Z within contemporary digital culture.

Research Urgency

The rapid growth of social media and content marketing has transformed Gen Z's fashion purchase decision making. However, limited research has examined how content marketing and lifestyle interact in shaping these decisions. Therefore, this study is important for advancing the understanding of Gen Z's digital consumption behavior and providing insights for developing content marketing strategies that align with their lifestyle.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

This study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between content marketing and fashion purchase decision making among Gen Z?
2. What is the relationship between lifestyle and fashion purchase decision making among Gen Z?

The research hypotheses are:

- H1: There is a significant relationship between content marketing and fashion purchase decision making among Gen Z
- H2: There is a significant relationship between lifestyle and fashion purchase decision making among Gen Z

METODE

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey to examine the relationships between content marketing, lifestyle, and fashion purchase decision-making among Gen Z consumers in Indonesia. A structured questionnaire was administered to collect data from respondents at a single point in time. The collected data were analyzed using linear regression to examine the relationships between the independent variables (content marketing and lifestyle) and the dependent variable (fashion purchase decision-making).

Participants and Sampling

The target population of this study consisted of Indonesian Gen Z consumers aged 13-28 years who actively use social media and have experience purchasing fashion products online. Data were collected using an online questionnaire administered through Google Forms and distributed via Instagram, WhatsApp, and LINE. A total of 350 respondents were obtained and included in the analysis.

A non-probability sampling approach was employed because the study sought respondents who met specific inclusion criteria related to the research objectives. Participants were eligible if they (1) were between 13 and 28 years old, (2) actively used social media, and (3) had previously purchased fashion products online.

Instrument Development

The questionnaire was adapted from established theories and previously published studies on content marketing, lifestyle, and fashion purchase decision-making. Although the measurement constructs were derived from existing literature, the questionnaire items were adapted to reflect the context of fashion purchasing among Gen Z consumers in Indonesia.

The questionnaire was initially developed in English and subsequently translated into Indonesian, as all participants were Indonesian. The translated questionnaire was reviewed by the research supervisor to ensure that the wording, terminology, and meaning of each item remained consistent with the original construct and were appropriate for the target population before data collection.

Research Ethics

Participation in this study was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the purpose of the research before completing the online questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered anonymously through Google Forms, and no personally identifiable information was collected. Respondents were informed that their responses would be treated confidentially and used solely for academic research. Completion and submission of the questionnaire indicated the respondents' voluntary agreement to participate in the study.

Variables and Measures

The questionnaire consisted of three constructs: content marketing, lifestyle, and fashion purchase decision-making. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Content Marketing

Content marketing served as the first independent variable in this study. The questionnaire consisted of 16 items developed based on the theoretical concept of content

marketing and relevant literature on digital marketing and consumer behavior (Singh, 2023; Wicaksono, 2024). The items were designed to measure respondents' perceptions of fashion-related content encountered through social media, including influencer endorsement, user reviews, popularity signals, and peer reviews of digital marketing content.

The operationalization of this construct was further informed by Cialdini's Principle of Social Proof (Cialdini, 2009), which suggests that individuals often rely on the opinions and behaviors of others when evaluating products under conditions of uncertainty. Therefore, the measurement also considered social cues commonly found in digital fashion marketing, such as influencer recommendations, customer reviews, testimonials, and user-generated content.

Lifestyle

Lifestyle serves as the second independent variable in this study. The questionnaire consisted of 12 items developed based on Plummer's Activities, Interests, and Opinions (AIO) framework (Plummer, 1974). Lifestyle is defined as an individual's pattern of living, reflected through daily activities, interests, and opinions.

The operationalization of this construct was further supported by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1954), which explains that fashion consumption may reflect psychological needs such as belongingness, esteem, and self-expression. In addition, Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986) provides a perspective that lifestyle preferences may develop through observation and interaction within social environments. Accordingly, the questionnaire measured lifestyle as a pattern of behavior and preferences related to fashion consumption among Generation Z consumers.

Fashion Purchase Decision-Making

Fashion purchase decision-making served as the dependent variable in this study. The questionnaire consisted of 20 items developed based on the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) Model of consumer decision-making (Engel et al., 1995). Fashion purchase decision-making refers to the process through which consumers recognize a need, search for information, evaluate available alternatives, make purchasing decisions, and evaluate their decisions after purchasing fashion products.

The operationalization of this construct was further supported by Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), which explains that purchasing behavior develops through reciprocal interactions among environmental influences, personal cognition, and behavioral responses. Accordingly, the questionnaire measured respondents' decision-making process when purchasing fashion products through digital platforms.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using JASP. Because the questionnaire items were developed based on established theories and relevant literature, construct validity was evaluated using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Prior to EFA, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were performed to determine the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Internal consistency for reliability was subsequently assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Pearson correlation analysis was then conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables, followed by linear regression analysis to

examine the relationships between content marketing, lifestyle, and fashion purchase decision-making and to test the proposed hypotheses.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

- List of abbreviations:
- CM: Content marketing
 - FPDM: Fashion purchase decision-making
 - LS: Lifestyle
 - Gen Z: Generation Z

AI Disclosure

Generative AI, such as Google’s Gemini and ChatGPT, was used for language refinement, grammatical editing, and the readability and flow of the manuscript. All the research design, data collection, statistical analysis, interpretation of findings, and the manuscript conclusion were conducted solely by the author.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Construct Validity and Reliability Results

Table 1. Construct Validity and Reliability Results						
Construct	KMO	Bartlett's Test x ² (df)	p-value	No. of Initial Items	No. of Final Items	Cronbach's α
CM	0.840	1282.307 (66)	<.001	16	12	0.805
LS	0.868	1141.034 (28)	<.001	12	8	0.855
FPDM	0.905	2342.253 (78)	<.001	20	13	0.909

Note. KMO = Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy

Construct validity was evaluated using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). As shown in Table 1, all constructs demonstrated acceptable KMO values (>0.80), indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant for all constructs ($p < .001$), suggesting sufficient correlations among the measurement items. Internal consistency reliability was also satisfactory, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.805 to 0.909, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70.

Because the questionnaire items were developed based on established theories and relevant literature, construct validity was evaluated using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Prior to EFA, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were conducted to determine whether the data were suitable for factor analysis. Internal consistency reliability was subsequently assessed using Cronbach's alpha.

Factor Loading**Table 2. Content Marketing Factor Loading**

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Uniqueness
CM9	0.707		0.521
CM1	0.662		0.575
CM12	0.629		0.602
CM10	0.627		0.566
CM13	0.587		0.615
CM14	0.573		0.662
CM16	0.565		0.672
CM4	0.523		0.691
CM2	0.468		0.732
CM5		0.724	0.360
CM8		0.669	0.477
CM7		0.669	0.585

The initial Content Marketing instrument consisted of 16 items. The KMO value was 0.840, indicating adequate sampling for factor analysis, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1282.307$, $p < .001$), confirming that the data were suitable for EFA. During the validity analysis, CM3 and CM6 were removed because they did not load onto any factor, whereas CM11 and CM15 were excluded because they loaded onto a third factor with an eigenvalue below 1.00. Consequently, 12 items were retained after the validity analysis. Subsequent reliability analysis identified CM7 as failing to meet the item-rest correlation criterion (estimate = 0.147), and the item was therefore removed. The final Content Marketing instrument consisted of 11 items and demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.805$).

Table 3. Lifestyle Factor Loading

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Uniqueness
LS5	0.845		0.335
LS1	0.744		0.470
LS2	0.716		0.411
LS4	0.625		0.673
LS6	0.577		0.508
LS10		0.863	0.276
LS9		0.853	0.390
LS12		0.520	0.491

The initial Lifestyle instrument consisted of 12 items. The KMO value was 0.868, indicating adequate sampling for factor analysis, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1141.034$, $p < .001$), confirming that the data were suitable for EFA.

During the validity analysis, LS8 and LS11 were removed because they did not load onto any factor, whereas LS3 and LS7 were excluded because they loaded onto a third factor with an eigenvalue below 1.00. Consequently, 8 items were retained after the validity analysis. Subsequently, Cronbach's alpha indicated satisfactory internal consistency, and no additional items were removed following the reliability analysis. Consequently, all 12 items were retained for subsequent statistical.

Table 4. Fashion Purchase Decision-Making Factor Loading

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Uniqueness
FP6	0.935		0.329
FP5	0.841		0.373
FP9	0.820		0.447
FP10	0.754		0.511
FP2	0.561		0.629
FP14	0.487		0.417
FP8	0.454		0.569
FP16	0.425		0.454
FP13	0.425		0.492
FP20		0.814	0.476
FP17		0.778	0.437
FP18		0.722	0.592
FP12		0.434	0.474

The initial Fashion Purchase Decision-Making instrument consisted of 20 items. The KMO value was 0.905, indicating adequate sampling for factor analysis, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 2342.253$, $p < .001$), confirming that the data were suitable for EFA. During the validity analysis, FP7, FP11, and FP15 were removed because they cross-loaded, whereas FP19 was excluded because it did not load onto any factors. While FP1, FP3, and FP4 loaded onto a third factor with an eigenvalue below 1.00. Consequently, 13 items were retained after the validity analysis. Subsequently, Cronbach's alpha indicated satisfactory internal consistency, and no additional items were removed following the reliability analysis. Consequently, all 12 items were retained for subsequent statistical.

Pearson Correlation Matrix

Table 5. Pearson Analysis

	Pearson's r	p	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
CM – FPDM	0.620***	<.001	0.551	0.681
CM – LS	0.610***	<.001	0.539	0.671
FPDM - LS	0.714***	<.001	0.658	0.762

A correlation analysis was conducted to look at the strength of the relationships between CM, LS, and FPDM. The results showed that all three variables have a significant and strong positive relationship ($p < .001$). CM has a strong positive correlation with FPDM ($r = 0.620$) and LS ($r = 0.610$). Particularly, the strongest relationship in the study is between LS and FPDM ($r = 0.714$). These findings were supported by the upward-trending scatter plots, confirming that as CM exposure and LS alignment increase, Gen Z's FPDM rises alongside them.

Linear Regression

Table 6. Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	RMSE
M0	0.000	0.000	0.000	7.177
M1	0.751	0.564	0.562	4.751

Table 7. ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p
M1	Regression	10142	2	5071.04	224.7	<.001
	Residual	7833	375	22.57		
	Total	17975	349			

Table 8. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized	Standardized Error	Standardized	t	p
M0	(Intercept)	50.4119.760	0.384		131.415	<.001
M1	(Intercept)	0.394	1.993		4.898	<.001
		0.853	0.060	0.294	6.583	<.001
			0.583	0.535	11.961	<.001

A linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how content marketing (CM) and Lifestyle (LS) predict Gen Z's Fashion Purchase Decision-Making (FPDM). The overall regression model showed that it was highly significant ($F = 224.7$, $p < .001$). The model yielded an R-squared value of 0.564, indicating CM and LS together contribute 56.4% of the total variance in Gen Z's fashion purchase decision-making. Looking at individual variables, LS emerged as the stronger predictor of consumer choices (Standardized Coefficient = 0.535, $t = 11.961$) compared to CM (Standardized Coefficient = 0.294, $t = 6.583$). These results prove that content marketing drives purchasing habits, and the impact will be obvious when it is aligned with consumers' lifestyles.

DISCUSSION

The study examined the relationships between content marketing, lifestyle, and fashion purchase decision-making among Generation Z consumers within digital environments. The

multiple linear regression analysis demonstrated that the overall regression model was statistically significant ($F = 224.70$, $p < .001$), indicating that content marketing and lifestyle were jointly associated with fashion purchase decision-making. The model explained 56.4% of the variance in fashion purchase decision-making ($R^2 = 0.564$), suggesting that these two variables represent important factors associated with purchasing decisions among the respondents. Nevertheless, approximately 43.6% of the variance remained unexplained, indicating that additional factors not included in this study may also contribute to consumers' purchasing decisions, including price perception, brand image, product quality, perceived value, financial capability, trust, and other psychological or situational influences (Hermawan & Dermawan, 2024; Putri & Marlien, 2022). Although these variables were beyond the scope of the study, their potential contribution suggests that fashion purchase decision-making is a multidimensional process shaped by numerous interrelated factors rather than a single determinant.

The findings indicate that fashion purchase decision-making among Generation Z is associated with both marketing-related and consumer-related factors. As digital natives, Generation Z frequently encounters fashion-related information through social media platforms where brands, influencers, and consumers continuously exchange product-related content. Within these digital environments, consumers are no longer limited to obtaining information through conventional advertising or physical retail experiences but instead interact with a wide variety of digital content, including styling demonstrations, product reviews, influencer recommendations, and user-generated content (Nadanyiova & Sujanka, 2023; Nurmalia et al., 2024; Singh, 2023). At the same time, consumers interpret this information according to their personal interests, preferences, and everyday lifestyles. Consequently, fashion purchase decision-making may be understood as developing through the interaction between external marketing communications and consumers' internal characteristics rather than through either factor independently. This interpretation is consistent with previous studies suggesting that purchasing decisions within digital environments emerge through interactions among marketing communications, consumer characteristics, and digital information sources (Nurmalia et al., 2024; Putri & Marlien, 2022; Salwanisa & Wikartika, 2023).

The findings are also consistent with previous studies reporting that digital marketing and consumers' lifestyle characteristics are associated with purchasing behaviour within online environments (Gensler & Rangaswamy, 2025; Salwanisa & Wikartika, 2023; Singh, 2023; Wicaksono, 2024). Previous research has demonstrated that social media platforms have evolved beyond their original function as communication technologies to become important environments through which consumers search for information, compare products, evaluate alternatives, and interact with brands before making purchasing decisions (Etikasari et al., 2024; Nadanyiova & Sujanka, 2023; Singh, 2023). Rather than functioning solely as promotional channels, these platforms facilitate continuous exchanges of informative, entertaining, and interactive content that support consumers throughout the purchasing process (Gensler & Rangaswamy, 2025; Khan & Siddiqui, 2013; Singh, 2023). The significant relationships identified in the study reinforce this perspective by suggesting that both marketing communications and consumers' lifestyle characteristics are associated with fashion purchase decision-making among Generation Z consumers.

The findings may further be interpreted through the theoretical framework adopted in this study. The Engel–Kollat–Blackwell (EKB) Model explains purchasing decisions as a sequence of cognitive processes consisting of problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation (Engel et al., 1995). Rather than occurring as isolated actions, purchasing decisions develop through the collection, interpretation, and evaluation of information obtained from multiple sources. Within digital environments, content marketing may function as an external information source by providing consumers with product demonstrations, reviews, styling ideas, and recommendations that support the information-search and evaluation stages. Lifestyle, meanwhile, may influence how consumers interpret and utilise this information according to their interests, activities, and opinions. Although the study did not examine each stage of the EKB model separately, the significant relationships observed in the regression analysis are consistent with the proposition that both marketing communications and consumers' personal characteristics contribute to fashion purchase decision-making.

The study also extends previous literature by simultaneously examining content marketing and lifestyle within a single analytical framework. Previous studies have commonly investigated these variables independently by focusing on digital marketing (Singh, 2023; Wicaksono, 2024), shopping lifestyle (Hermawan & Dermawan, 2024), or purchasing behaviour (Putri & Marlien, 2022; Salwanisa & Wikartika, 2023). While these studies have provided important insights into individual determinants of consumer behaviour, relatively few have examined how external marketing communications and consumers' lifestyle characteristics are jointly associated with fashion purchase decision-making among Generation Z. By integrating these variables within a single regression model, the study provides a broader understanding of purchasing behaviour within digitally mediated environments, where consumers continuously interact with marketing content while simultaneously interpreting that information according to their own lifestyle characteristics.

More specifically, the findings indicate that content marketing was positively associated with fashion purchase decision-making among Generation Z consumers. Pearson correlation analysis demonstrated a significant positive relationship between content marketing and fashion purchase decision-making ($r = 0.620$, $p < .001$), while the multiple linear regression analysis further showed that content marketing remained a significant predictor when lifestyle was included in the model ($\beta = 0.294$, $p < .001$). These findings suggest that respondents who reported more positive perceptions of content marketing also tended to report higher levels of fashion purchase decision-making. The results are consistent with previous studies reporting that content marketing contributes to consumer purchasing behaviour by providing relevant, valuable, and engaging information through digital platforms (Salwanisa & Wikartika, 2023; Singh, 2023; Wicaksono, 2024).

Unlike conventional advertising, which primarily emphasises direct promotional messages, content marketing seeks to establish consumer engagement through informative, entertaining, and relevant content (Singh, 2023). Within the fashion industry, such content frequently includes styling demonstrations, product reviews, storytelling, influencer collaborations, educational fashion content, and user-generated content distributed through social media platforms (Erwin et al., 2023; Nadanyiova & Sujanka, 2023; Singh, 2023). These

forms of communication provide consumers with opportunities to obtain product-related information in ways that are integrated into their everyday digital experiences. Rather than interrupting consumers with promotional messages, content marketing enables fashion brands to communicate information that consumers may actively seek and voluntarily engage with before making purchasing decisions. Previous studies similarly suggest that informative and engaging digital content facilitates consumer interaction and supports purchasing decisions by improving consumers' access to relevant product information (Salwanisa & Wikartika, 2023; Singh, 2023; Wicaksono, 2024).

The observed relationship between content marketing and fashion purchase decision-making may also be interpreted through the Engel–Kollat–Blackwell (EKB) Model (Engel et al., 1995). According to this framework, consumers progress through several stages before completing a purchase, beginning with problem recognition and continuing through information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation. Within digital environments, content marketing may facilitate the information-search stage by providing consumers with accessible information through product reviews, demonstrations, influencer recommendations, and user-generated content. Consumers may subsequently use this information during the evaluation stage to compare available alternatives before selecting products that correspond to their preferences and needs. Although the study did not investigate each stage of the EKB model individually, the positive association observed between content marketing and fashion purchase decision-making is consistent with the proposition that digital marketing content functions as an important informational resource throughout the consumer decision-making process.

The findings may further be interpreted through Social Learning Theory, which proposes that individuals acquire knowledge, attitudes, and behavioural tendencies through observing others within their social environment (Bandura, 1977). Within social media platforms, influencers, content creators, and other consumers function as observable models who share product experiences, styling ideas, reviews, and recommendations. These forms of content provide opportunities for consumers to observe how fashion products are evaluated and incorporated into everyday life before making purchasing decisions. Previous studies likewise suggest that influencer-generated content and user-generated content represent important sources of observational information that support consumers' evaluation of fashion products (Erwin et al., 2023; Nadanyiova & Sujanka, 2023). Although observational learning was not directly measured in the study, the significant association identified between content marketing and fashion purchase decision-making is consistent with the proposition that repeated exposure to fashion-related content contributes to consumers' product evaluation processes.

Social Cognitive Theory provides a complementary explanation for the observed relationship. According to this theory, consumer behaviour develops through reciprocal interactions among environmental influences, personal cognition, and behavioural responses (Bandura, 1986). Within digital environments, content marketing represents one component of consumers' informational environment that may contribute to how product-related information is processed before purchasing decisions are made. Rather than directly determining purchasing behaviour, digital marketing content may increase product awareness, facilitate

comparisons among competing products, improve familiarity with brands, and support the evaluation of available alternatives. Previous studies have similarly reported that digital marketing activities distributed through social media platforms assist consumers during product evaluation and purchasing decisions among Generation Z. Consequently, the findings are consistent with the proposition that marketing communications support consumers' cognitive evaluation of products rather than directly determining purchasing behaviour.

The relationship between content marketing and fashion purchase decision-making may also be interpreted through Cialdini's Principle of Social Proof (Wahyuni et al., 2025). This principle proposes that individuals frequently evaluate products by considering the behaviour and opinions of others, particularly under conditions of uncertainty. Within digital fashion environments, social proof is commonly reflected through customer reviews, testimonials, influencer recommendations, user-generated content, and visible consumer engagement. These forms of social information may reduce uncertainty by providing observable evidence of other consumers' experiences before purchasing decisions are made. Previous studies likewise reported that recommendations provided by influencers and other consumers constitute important informational cues within digital environments (Erwin et al., 2023; Nadanyiova & Sujanka, 2023). Although the study did not directly examine specific forms of social proof, the positive association identified between content marketing and fashion purchase decision-making is consistent with previous literature suggesting that social information embedded within digital content supports consumers' product evaluation processes.

The findings further indicate that lifestyle was positively associated with fashion purchase decision-making among Generation Z consumers. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between lifestyle and fashion purchase decision-making ($r = 0.714$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, the multiple linear regression analysis demonstrated that lifestyle remained a significant predictor in the model ($\beta = 0.535$, $p < .001$). Compared with content marketing, lifestyle demonstrated a larger standardized regression coefficient, suggesting that consumers' personal characteristics represented a larger statistical association with purchasing decisions within the proposed model. This finding indicates that although digital marketing provides consumers with important product-related information, purchasing decisions remain closely associated with consumers' existing patterns of living, interests, and preferences.

The findings are consistent with previous studies that identified lifestyle as an important factor associated with consumer purchasing behaviour (Hermawan & Dermawan, 2024; Nurmalia et al., 2024; Sutanto & Aubelia, 2022). Lifestyle reflects an individual's pattern of living, which is expressed through activities, interests, and opinions (AIO) (Engel et al., 2006). These dimensions influence how consumers allocate their time, evaluate products, and make consumption decisions. Consumers with different lifestyle orientations may therefore interpret identical marketing communications differently because they evaluate products according to their own interests, values, and everyday experiences. Previous studies similarly reported that shopping lifestyle and digitally oriented lifestyles are associated with purchasing behaviour among Generation Z consumers within online environments (Hermawan & Dermawan, 2024). Collectively, these findings support the study by suggesting that consumers' lifestyle

characteristics represent an important consideration throughout the fashion purchase decision-making process.

The significant association between lifestyle and fashion purchase decision-making also reflects the characteristics of Generation Z as consumers who have grown up in digitally connected environments. Unlike previous generations, Generation Z has integrated smartphones, social media, and internet-based communication into many aspects of everyday life, including entertainment, communication, education, and shopping (Nurmalia et al., 2024; Yasin et al., 2023). Consequently, fashion consumption increasingly develops within digital environments where consumers continuously encounter fashion-related information, observe consumption practices, and interact with brands and other consumers. Previous studies have similarly suggested that digital platforms provide Generation Z consumers with continuous access to fashion trends, product recommendations, and online communities that facilitate product evaluation before purchasing decisions are made (Nadanyiova & Sujanka, 2023; Nurmalia et al., 2024; N. Wijaya & Utami, 2021). The findings reinforce this perspective by demonstrating that consumers' lifestyle characteristics remain significantly associated with fashion purchase decision-making within digitally mediated environments.

The observed relationship may also be interpreted through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which proposes that consumer behaviour extends beyond satisfying functional needs and may also reflect psychological needs related to belongingness, esteem, and self-expression (Maslow, 1954). Within the context of fashion consumption, consumers may therefore evaluate products not only according to practical considerations such as quality, durability, or price but also according to whether those products correspond to their personal preferences and desired lifestyles. Although the study did not directly measure consumers' psychological needs, the positive association between lifestyle and fashion purchase decision-making is consistent with Maslow's proposition that purchasing decisions frequently reflect broader psychological motivations in addition to functional considerations. This interpretation is also consistent with previous literature suggesting that fashion products frequently possess symbolic meanings that extend beyond their utilitarian functions (Maslow, 1954; Sutanto & Aubelia, 2022).

Social Learning Theory also provides a useful explanation for the observed relationship. According to this theory, individuals develop behavioural tendencies through observing others within their social environments (Bandura, 1977). Throughout everyday life, consumers continuously encounter behavioural models provided by peers, family members, influencers, and online communities. These interactions provide opportunities to observe fashion preferences, consumption patterns, and product evaluations that may subsequently contribute to consumers' own lifestyle development. Previous studies likewise suggest that digital environments facilitate observational learning by allowing consumers to access fashion-related experiences shared by influencers and other consumers (Nadanyiova & Sujanka, 2023; Yasin et al., 2023). Although observational learning was not directly measured in the study, the positive association between lifestyle and fashion purchase decision-making is consistent with the proposition that consumers' lifestyle preferences develop through continuous interactions with both offline and online social environments.

Social Cognitive Theory further complements this interpretation by explaining that behaviour develops through reciprocal interactions among environmental influences, personal cognition, and behavioural responses (Bandura, 1986). Within digital environments, consumers continuously encounter information originating from fashion brands, influencers, online communities, and other consumers. These information sources provide opportunities for consumers to evaluate products according to their existing interests, experiences, and lifestyle characteristics before making purchasing decisions. Rather than assuming that digital environments directly determine purchasing behaviour, Social Cognitive Theory suggests that consumers actively process available information before translating it into behavioural responses (Bandura, 1986). The findings therefore support previous studies reporting that digital lifestyles and online interactions are associated with purchasing behaviour among Generation Z consumers (Fathinasari et al., 2023; Nurmalia et al., 2024; Yasin et al., 2023).

An important finding of the study is that lifestyle demonstrated a larger statistical association with fashion purchase decision-making than content marketing. Although both variables were statistically significant, the standardized regression coefficient for lifestyle ($\beta = 0.535$) exceeded that of content marketing ($\beta = 0.294$). This finding suggests that while marketing communications represent important external sources of information, consumers' personal lifestyle characteristics may play a larger role in purchasing decisions within the proposed model. Lifestyle reflects relatively stable patterns of activities, interests, and opinions that influence how consumers interpret marketing messages and evaluate products (Plummer, 1974). Consequently, consumers exposed to similar marketing content may nevertheless make different purchasing decisions because they interpret available information according to their own preferences, priorities, and patterns of living.

This finding is also consistent with the Engel–Kollat–Blackwell (EKB) Model, which proposes that purchasing decisions are influenced by interactions between external information sources and internal consumer characteristics (Engel et al., 1995). Within this framework, content marketing represents an external information source that supports consumers during the information-search and evaluation stages, whereas lifestyle reflects an internal characteristic that influences how consumers interpret, evaluate, and utilise available information throughout the decision-making process. The larger regression coefficient observed for lifestyle therefore suggests that consumers' internal characteristics may contribute more substantially to fashion purchase decision-making than exposure to marketing communications alone within this sample and model. Although digital marketing provides consumers with important product-related information, the final purchasing decision remains closely associated with consumers' own interests, preferences, and everyday lifestyles.

Beyond explaining consumer purchasing behaviour, the findings also contribute to broader discussions within the field of Digital Humanities by providing empirical evidence regarding human behaviour in digitally mediated environments. Contemporary digital platforms no longer function solely as communication technologies but also operate as cultural environments where individuals interact with information, participate in online communities, and encounter commercial content as part of their everyday activities. Within these environments, fashion consumption increasingly develops through continuous interactions among consumers, brands, influencers, and digital platforms, making purchasing decisions

part of broader processes of digital participation rather than isolated economic behaviour. Consequently, the findings extend previous consumer behaviour research by demonstrating that purchasing decisions among Generation Z are associated not only with marketing communications but also with consumers' participation in digitally connected environments.

The findings further suggest that content marketing and lifestyle should be understood within the broader context of digital culture, where marketing communication is increasingly embedded within consumers' everyday online experiences. Previous studies have suggested that digital culture is characterised by the continuous production, circulation, and interpretation of digital content through online platforms (Gensler & Rangaswamy, 2025; T. Wijaya et al., 2020). Within this environment, consumers are not merely passive recipients of advertising but active participants who search for information, compare alternatives, evaluate reviews, and engage with fashion-related content before making purchasing decisions. The positive relationships identified in the study are therefore consistent with previous literature suggesting that social media platforms have become important cultural spaces through which consumer decision-making develops.

The findings also contribute to discussions concerning platform-mediated lifestyles. Previous research has suggested that Generation Z's lifestyle increasingly develops through continuous interaction with digital platforms that support communication, entertainment, information seeking, and shopping (Nurmalia et al., 2024; T. Wijaya et al., 2020). Although lifestyle in the study was measured using the Activities, Interests, and Opinions framework (Plummer, 1974), the significant relationship observed between lifestyle and fashion purchase decision-making suggests that contemporary lifestyle should also be understood within digitally mediated environments where many everyday activities occur through online platforms. Social media therefore functions not only as a communication medium but also as an environment through which consumers encounter fashion trends, exchange recommendations, and integrate consumption activities into their daily routines. From this perspective, fashion purchasing represents one aspect of a broader digitally mediated lifestyle rather than an isolated consumer activity.

Although the study did not directly measure online identity or identity construction, the findings may also contribute to broader theoretical discussions concerning these concepts. Previous literature suggests that fashion consumption frequently functions as a medium through which individuals communicate personal preferences, values, and aspects of their identities within digital environments (Sutanto & Aubelia, 2022; T. Wijaya et al., 2020). Accordingly, the significant association between lifestyle and fashion purchase decision-making is consistent with literature proposing that purchasing behaviour may reflect broader processes of self-expression occurring through digital interactions. Nevertheless, because online identity was not directly examined in the study, this interpretation should be understood as a theoretical implication informed by previous literature rather than an empirical conclusion derived from the findings.

Finally, the findings provide several practical implications for fashion brands and digital marketers seeking to engage Generation Z consumers. The significant association between content marketing and fashion purchase decision-making suggests that brands should prioritise informative, relevant, and engaging content rather than relying exclusively on direct

promotional messages. Content such as styling demonstrations, authentic product reviews, educational fashion content, influencer collaborations, and user-generated content may better support consumers during the information-search and evaluation stages of the purchasing process (Erwin et al., 2023; Singh, 2023; Wicaksono, 2024). At the same time, because lifestyle demonstrated the larger statistical association with fashion purchase decision-making, marketing strategies should extend beyond product promotion by considering consumers' activities, interests, and opinions. Developing content that reflects consumers' everyday experiences and lifestyle preferences may increase the perceived relevance of marketing communications while strengthening consumer engagement. Collectively, these findings suggest that effective digital marketing requires not only producing attractive content but also understanding how consumers integrate marketing information into their everyday digital experiences. By recognising the interactions among content marketing, lifestyle, and fashion purchase decision-making, fashion brands may develop communication strategies that are more closely aligned with the characteristics of Generation Z consumers within contemporary digital culture.

CONCLUSION

Based on the statistical results and discussion, Content Marketing (CM) and Lifestyle (LS) are the key pillars behind Gen Z's fashion choices and work together to explain 56.4% of why Gen Z decides to buy fashion items. Next, Content Marketing (CM) serves as a direct trigger for shopping, with the numbers showing a strong and positive link ($r = 0.620$), proving that Gen Z is exposed to fun and authentic online advertisement, and more likely they are to buy something. Following, Lifestyle (LS) is the single most powerful factor guiding their choices, emerging as the top predictor in our model (Standardized Coefficient = 0.535) and sharing the strongest relationship with Fashion Purchase Decision Making (FPDM) ($r = 0.714$). When Gen Z buys clothes, it's not just about needing something to wear, but also a personal way for them to express themselves, match their digital habits, and find their own identity. At last, the data shows that digital marketing actively changes their daily habits from time to time, as seen through the strong relationship between Content Marketing (CM) and Lifestyle (LS) ($r = 0.610$). In summary, while online marketing serves as the initial trigger by capturing their attention and introducing new trends, it is the consumer's personal lifestyles and personal identities that ultimately determine the most significant factors in getting them to press the "buy" button.

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