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Unpacking the roles of social media, self awareness, and social influence in shaping perceived value among Generation Z

Section:
Marketing management

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Abstract

The environmental impact of fast fashion has increased interest in sustainable alternatives, particularly among Generation Z, a key consumer group for eco-friendly fashion. This study explores how Social Media, Self-awareness, and Social Influence affect the perceived value of sustainable fashion for Generation Z in Indonesia. Using a structured questionnaire with 190 respondents, data were analyzed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Results show that Social Media has the strongest positive influence on Perceived Value, indicating its critical role in shaping evaluations of sustainable fashion. Self-awareness also positively correlates with Perceived Value, suggesting that more self-aware consumers better recognize the benefits of sustainable fashion. Conversely, Social Influence has a positive but non-significant relationship with Perceived Value, indicating that peer influence alone may not adequately shape deeper perceptions without direct experience or detailed product information.

Received: 8/20/2025
Revised: 10/14/2025
Accepted: 12/24/2025
Online: 12/31/2025

Keywords:

Sustainable fashion, perceived value, social media, self awareness, social influence, Generation Z

JRMB
Jurnal Riset
Manajemen dan Bisnis
Vol. 10, No. 2, 2025
pp. 65-78

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36407/jrmb.v8i2.1192>



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Abstrak

Dampak lingkungan dari fast fashion telah meningkatkan minat pada alternatif berkelanjutan, khususnya di kalangan Generasi Z, kelompok konsumen kunci untuk fesyen ramah lingkungan. Studi ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana Media Sosial, Kesadaran Diri, dan Pengaruh Sosial memengaruhi nilai yang dirasakan dari fesyen berkelanjutan bagi Generasi Z di Indonesia. Menggunakan kuesioner terstruktur dengan 190 responden, data dianalisis melalui Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hasil menunjukkan bahwa Media Sosial memiliki pengaruh positif terkuat terhadap Nilai yang Dirasakan, menunjukkan peran pentingnya dalam membentuk evaluasi fesyen berkelanjutan. Kesadaran Diri juga berkorelasi positif dengan Nilai yang Dirasakan, menunjukkan bahwa konsumen yang lebih sadar diri lebih mengenali manfaat fesyen berkelanjutan. Sebaliknya, Pengaruh Sosial memiliki hubungan positif tetapi tidak signifikan dengan Nilai yang Dirasakan, menunjukkan bahwa pengaruh teman sebaya saja mungkin tidak cukup membentuk persepsi yang lebih dalam tanpa pengalaman langsung atau informasi produk yang detail.

Kata Kunci: Fesyen berkelanjutan, nilai yang dirasakan, media sosial, kesadaran diri, pengaruh sosial, Generasi Z

INTRODUCTION

The fast fashion industry has emerged as one of the most significant contributors to environmental degradation, characterized by rapid production cycles, excessive resource consumption, and substantial waste generation. Research indicates that the textile and clothing industry is responsible for approximately 2-8% of global carbon emissions and is the second-largest consumer of the world's water supply (Sharpe et al., 2025; Wagaw & Babu, 2023). Furthermore, the rise of disposable fashion culture has led to mounting textile waste, with millions of tons of clothing ending up in landfills annually. In response to these environmental challenges, sustainable fashion has gained traction as an alternative approach that emphasizes ethical production practices, eco-friendly materials, product durability, and circular economy principles (Brewer & Olive, 2014). Sustainable fashion encompasses garments designed, produced, distributed, and consumed in ways that minimize environmental impact while promoting social responsibility throughout the supply chain.

Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is a critical consumer segment for sustainable fashion adoption. As digital natives who have grown up with unprecedented access to information about environmental issues, this generation demonstrates heightened awareness of sustainability concerns. It expresses greater willingness to align their consumption patterns with their environmental values. Research suggests that Generation Z consumers are more likely to seek out brands that demonstrate an authentic commitment to sustainability and are willing to pay premium prices for products that align with their ethical standards (Qin et al., 2020). However, despite this expressed concern, a gap often exists between environmental attitudes and actual purchasing behavior, highlighting the need to understand the psychological and social mechanisms that shape their consumption decisions.

Understanding the factors that influence Generation Z's perceived value of sustainable fashion is essential for brands seeking to promote the adoption of environmentally friendly products. Perceived value represents consumers' overall assessment of product utility based on perceptions of what is received and what is given (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001), encompassing multiple dimensions including quality value, emotional value, functional value, and social value. Three key antecedents have been identified as influential in shaping these value perceptions. Social Influence, defined as the impact that others have on an individual's attitudes and behaviors (Delamater et al., 2018), operates through mechanisms such as subjective norms, social factors, and image considerations (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Self Awareness, the capacity to recognize and understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors (Goleman, 1996), enables consumers to evaluate products in alignment with personal values and self-concept. Social Media, as interactive digital platforms that facilitate content creation and sharing (Solis, 2011), serves as a primary information

source for Generation Z, exposing them to brand content, influencer endorsements, and peer discussions about sustainable fashion.

Previous research has examined these factors across various consumption contexts, yet few studies have comprehensively examined their simultaneous effects on the perceived value of sustainable fashion among Generation Z consumers. Specifically, the differential roles of social, personal, and media factors in shaping value perceptions remain underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining the Influence of Social Influence, self-awareness, and Social Media on the perceived value of sustainable fashion. Drawing upon established theoretical frameworks, this research proposes that these three antecedents contribute differently to value formation. Based on prior literature, Social Media is expected to demonstrate the strongest effect due to its capacity to communicate rich, engaging content that illustrates multiple value dimensions (Hewei & Youngsook, 2022; Chen & Lin, 2019). Self-awareness is expected to positively influence perceived value, as self-aware individuals better recognize the alignment between personal values and product attributes (Pareek, 1996; van Beuningen et al., 2011). Social Influence, while potentially impactful on behavior, may have a limited direct effect on deeper value perceptions without reinforcement through direct experience (Wu et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2016).

This study contributes to the sustainable consumption literature by providing empirical insights into the mechanisms through which Generation Z consumers form value perceptions toward sustainable fashion. The findings offer practical implications for sustainable fashion brands, marketers, and policymakers seeking to promote environmentally responsible consumption among this influential demographic. By understanding the relative importance of social media engagement, self-awareness cultivation, and social influence activation, stakeholders can develop more effective strategies to enhance consumer value perceptions and ultimately drive sustainable fashion adoption. The research employs a quantitative approach using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling to test the hypothesized relationships, with data collected from Generation Z consumers in Indonesia who are familiar with sustainable fashion products.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Perceived value is a critical concept in consumer behavior and marketing, representing the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product or service based on perceptions of what is received and what is given (Demirgüneş, 2015; Rajh, 2012; Salsabila et al., 2023). It is a multidimensional construct that includes several key dimensions. Perceived quality refers to the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority (Rajh, 2012). Perceived risk encompasses the potential negative outcomes associated with purchasing or using a product (Salsabila et al., 2023). Functional value relates to the practical or utilitarian benefits of a product (Carvache-Franco et al., 2024; Xie et al., 2019). Emotional value refers to the feelings, or affective states, a product induces (Xie et al., 2019). Finally, social value refers to the enhancement of social self-concept through the product (Durkin et al., 2015; Xie et al., 2019).

Social influence on perceived value

Social influence significantly affects customers' perceived value in various ways. First, social influence can directly enhance the social value dimension of perceived value. For instance, social media influencers can shape consumers' perceptions of brand value, satisfaction, and favorability (Kumar et al., 2023). This occurs because influencers often serve as opinion leaders whose endorsements can elevate the perceived social status associated with a product. Second, social influence serves as a positive moderator, amplifying the effects of perceived value on consumer attitudes and behaviors. For example, in online shopping contexts, social influence can enhance perceived value, leading to more favorable attitudes and approach behaviors (Wu et al., 2015). Third, in social commerce, factors such as trust in social media and the reputation of group-buying sites significantly influence perceived customer value, which in turn affects purchase intentions

(Lee et al., 2016). This indicates that social influence through trust and reputation can enhance the perceived value of deals and promotions. Fourth, social influence can mediate the relationship between perceived value and usage intentions. For example, on social networking sites, social influence positively correlates with utilitarian, social, and hedonic values, which, in turn, influence usage intentions (Yen, 2013). Finally, social influence can lead to non-transactional behaviors such as customer engagement and participation, which are crucial for long-term customer value and profitability (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2021). This suggests that social influence not only affects immediate purchase decisions but also shapes long-term customer relationships.

H1: Social Influence has a positive effect on the perceived value

Self-awareness and perceived value

Self-awareness is the capacity to recognize and understand one's own emotions, thoughts, behaviors, and personality traits. It involves processing information about oneself objectively while maintaining self-identity (Ahmad et al., 2023). This metacognitive function of the brain requires the integrated action of heteromodal cortices. Self-awareness is crucial for personal growth, emotional management, and making conscious decisions that align with one's values and objectives (Lavigna & La Torre, 2024). It also plays a significant role in understanding both the self and others, which is essential for social interactions and empathy (Khvatova, 2020). Self-awareness can significantly influence perceived value in various contexts, as evidenced by research across multiple domains. In the context of product creation, self-awareness during the process can interact with consumers' chronic self-focus tendencies and the level of autonomy constraint of the task. When autonomy is constrained, self-aware consumers who are more self-conscious tend to evaluate the experience more favorably. Conversely, when there are fewer constraints, less self-conscious consumers may have a better experience (Min & Wakslak, 2022). Regarding service satisfaction, self-awareness can influence customer satisfaction with service providers. Higher self-awareness tends to increase satisfaction when the service outcome is unfavorable, as customers attribute the outcome to themselves rather than the provider. However, it can decrease satisfaction when the outcome is favorable, as customers may attribute positive outcomes to their own actions rather than the service (Pham et al., 2010).

Financial self-awareness, defined as detailed knowledge of one's financial assets, liabilities, and spending patterns, is associated with better financial decisions and greater satisfaction. This effect is mediated by perceived efficacy in handling personal finances, suggesting that individuals who are more aware of their financial situation derive greater perceived value from their financial decisions and are more satisfied with their financial outcomes (Chowdhry & Dholakia, 2020). The perceived choice in self-control activities can boost success by increasing the perceived value of the activity. This suggests that self-awareness in recognizing one's choices can enhance the perceived value and success of self-control efforts. When individuals are aware that they have voluntarily chosen to engage in self-control, they attribute greater value to the activity and are more likely to succeed (Chow et al., 2022).

An increase in self-efficacy, which is closely related to self-awareness, positively affects perceived value during service interactions. This occurs because self-efficacy enhances customers' self-beliefs in their capabilities, leading to a more valuable and satisfying service experience. When customers believe they can effectively navigate a service encounter, they perceive greater value in the interaction and its outcomes (van Beuningen et al., 2011). In summary, self-awareness shapes perceived value through multiple mechanisms, including attribution processes in service encounters, enhanced self-knowledge in financial contexts, recognition of personal choice in self-control activities, and strengthened self-efficacy beliefs. These findings underscore the importance of self-awareness as a psychological factor that influences how consumers evaluate the value of products, services, and experiences.

H2: Self awareness has a positive effect on perceived value

Social media and perceived value

Social media refers to a variety of online platforms and applications that enable users to create, share, and exchange content and information within virtual communities and networks. It is characterized by its interactive nature, allowing for two-way communication and feedback among users. Social media encompasses interactive platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, which facilitate the creation and sharing of user-generated content (Selkie & Moreno, 2016). Unlike traditional media, social media enables bidirectional communication, allowing users to both consume and produce content while engaging in conversations and interactions with other users and content creators (Davis, 2016; Selkie & Moreno, 2016). Furthermore, social media is deeply integrated into daily life, influencing various aspects such as identity formation, relationship maintenance, and even political and economic activities. The diverse range of social media applications includes collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual games, and virtual social worlds, reflecting its capacity to serve different user needs and motivations (Kaplan, 2015).

Perceived value in the context of social media refers to users' evaluation of the benefits they receive from using social media platforms. Several factors influence how social media shapes perceived value. High-quality, useful content on social media platforms significantly enhances users' perceived value, as they are more likely to engage with platforms that provide valuable information that meets their needs (Gao et al., 2021). Features that promote interactivity, such as comments, likes, and shares, positively affect perceived value by making users feel more connected and valued within the platform community (Hanaysha & Alhyasat, 2025; Yu et al., 2025). Entertaining and relevant content also boosts perceived value, as users appreciate content that is both informative and enjoyable (Hanaysha & Alhyasat, 2025). Social media's ability to enhance both social interactions and work-related tasks contributes to its perceived value, with users finding value in platforms that support their social presence and work efficiency (Chen, 2019). Additionally, the balance between relational benefits, such as social connection and enjoyment, and costs, including privacy concerns and information overload, determines the overall perceived value of social media platforms (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2020).

In the specific context of sustainable fashion, social media plays a particularly important role in shaping perceived value. Research by Hewei and Youngsook (2022) demonstrated that social media interaction significantly affects perceived value, indicating that perceived value mediates the relationship between social media interactivity and purchase outcomes. Similarly, Chen and Lin (2019) found that social media indirectly influences satisfaction through social identification and perceived value, highlighting the mediating mechanisms through which social media affects consumer responses. For Generation Z consumers, who are digital natives, social media platforms serve as primary sources of information about sustainable fashion. Through social media, consumers are exposed to content from sustainable fashion brands, influencers promoting ethical consumption, and peer discussions about environmental issues. This exposure shapes their perceptions of the value of sustainable fashion products across multiple dimensions, including quality value, emotional value, functional value, and social value. When social media content effectively communicates these value dimensions, it enhances consumers' overall perceived value of sustainable fashion products. Therefore, based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Social media has a positive effect on perceived value

METHODS

Sample and procedures

This study uses a causal-associative research approach to examine the cause-and-effect relationships between independent variables and a dependent variable, with a mediating variable included (Hendryadi et al., 2025). A quantitative research method was employed to investigate a specific population or sample by collecting and statistically analyzing numerical data. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire. The population for this study consists of Generation Z individuals, although the exact number is unknown. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which required respondents to meet specific criteria: they must be aged 18 to 27 years, be aware of sustainable fashion products, and be familiar with the brand SMM's products.

In this study, the sample is intended to represent the population, specifically to target Generation Z. The sample size was accurately determined according to the guidelines provided by Hair et al. (2019), which recommend a minimum sample size of 5–10 observations multiplied by the number of indicators for Structural Equation Modeling analysis. Furthermore, Hair et al. (2019) state that an appropriate sample size ranges from 100 to 200 respondents. Accordingly, this study used a sample of 190 respondents and employed convenience sampling. The majority of respondents (170, 89%) were female, while 20 (11%) were male. Regarding age, 141 respondents (74%) were aged 17–22 years, and 49 respondents (26%) were aged 23–27 years. In terms of occupation, 162 respondents (85%) were students, 1 respondent (0.53%) was a civil servant, 17 respondents (9%) were private sector employees, 3 respondents (2%) were self-employed, and 7 respondents (4%) had other occupations outside the characteristics specified in this study.

Measurement

Social Influence was measured using three indicators adapted from Venkatesh et al. (2003), encompassing subjective norm, which reflects the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behavior; social factor, which captures the Influence of social norms and culture on individual behavior; and image, which refers to the extent to which using a product or service is perceived to enhance one's status or image within a social group (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Self-awareness was operationalized using six indicators derived from Goleman's (1996) conceptualization of emotional intelligence. These indicators include recognizing one's own feelings and behavior, which involves the ability to identify and understand personal emotional states; recognizing one's own strengths and weaknesses, reflecting accurate self-assessment; having an independent attitude, indicating the capacity to maintain personal autonomy; being able to make decisions accurately, representing sound judgment and decision-making skills; being skilled in expressing thoughts, feelings, opinions, and beliefs, capturing effective self-expression; and being able to evaluate oneself, reflecting the capacity for self-reflection and self-appraisal.

Social Media was measured using four indicators based on Solis's (2011) framework for understanding social media engagement. Context refers to the form of content shared and the manner in which it is presented; communication represents the interactive dialogue and exchange of information between users; collaboration reflects the cooperative efforts and collective participation within social media communities; and connection captures the establishment and maintenance of relationships and networks through social media platforms (Solis, 2011).

Perceived Value was operationalized using four dimensions from Sweeney and Soutar's (2001) multidimensional scale. Quality value refers to the utility derived from the perceived quality and expected performance of the product; emotional Value captures the utility derived from the feelings or affective states generated by the product; functional Value reflects the utility derived from the product's ability to perform its intended functional purpose; and social Value represents the utility derived from the product's capacity to enhance one's social self-concept and facilitate social approval (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). All indicators were measured using a Likert scale, with respondents indicating their level of agreement with each statement. The multidimensional approach to measurement ensures that each construct is comprehensively captured, enabling a nuanced understanding of how these variables influence purchase intention among Generation Z consumers in the context of sustainable fashion.

Table 2. Measurement Model Evaluation

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>VIF</i>	<i>Loading</i>	<i>CA</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Social Influence			0.93	0.93	0.71
SI1	3.52	0.81			
SI2	4.85	0.90			
SI3	2.07	0.75			
SI4	3.79	0.88			
SI5	6.43	0.89			
SI6	4.70	0.85			
SI7	3.04	0.78			
Self Awareness			0.94	0.94	0.79
SA1	4.78	0.92			
SA3	5.69	0.93			
SA6	5.15	0.90			
SA8	1.73	0.74			
SA9	6.65	0.92			
SA11	4.47	0.91			
Social Media			0.91	0.91	0.71
SM2	4.77	0.88			
SM3	1.58	0.72			
SM4	2.41	0.82			
SM6	2.87	0.85			
SM7	6.05	0.91			
SM9	2.86	0.84			
Perceived Value			0.91	0.91	0.63
PV1	2.66	0.82			
PV2	3.07	0.84			
PV3	2.11	0.75			
PV4	2.58	0.75			
PV5	1.99	0.75			
PV6	2.92	0.82			
PV7	3.04	0.84			
PV8	2.54	0.76			

Source: Primary data, processed with SmartPLS (2025)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Measurement model evaluation

We adhered to the reporting guidelines established by Hair et al. (2019) to present the results of our PLS-SEM analysis. First, we assessed the indicator loadings. As indicated in Table 2, all indicator loadings exceeded 0.70, consistent with the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019). Next, we evaluated internal consistency reliability using two metrics: composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (CA). The analysis revealed that all CR values were below 0.95, suggesting no issues with the measurement model, as no items exceeded the recommended threshold. Similarly, all latent variables met the consistency criteria set by Hair et al. (2019), with both CR and CA

values exceeding 0.70. The third stage involved evaluating convergent validity using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. As presented in Table 2, the AVE values ranged from 0.58 to 0.79, which satisfies the minimum threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019).

4.2. Structural model evaluation

We assessed multicollinearity by examining Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs). The results indicated that most independent variables had VIF values below 5, suggesting no severe multicollinearity. Although some variables displayed VIF values above 5, Hair et al. (2019) state that VIF values below 10 are still considered acceptable. Additionally, we evaluated the R² values (see Table 3). The analysis indicated that the R² values for Purchase Intention and Perceived Value were 0.84 and 0.74, respectively.

Table 3. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	t-value	p-value	R ²
H1	SI → PV	0.16	1.94	0.05	
H2	SA → PV	0.16	2.60	0.00	
H3	SM → PV	0.64	9.07	0.00	
<i>Source: Primary data, processed with SmartPLS (2025)</i>					

Hypothesis 1 (H1) proposed a positive relationship between Social Influence and Perceived Value. The results show a coefficient of $\beta = 0.16$, a t-value of 1.94, and a p-value of 0.05. This finding indicates that the relationship between Social Influence and Perceived Value is positive but only marginally significant at the conventional threshold. Although the effect size is modest, the p-value at exactly 0.05 suggests that social influence may have a limited direct impact on how Generation Z consumers perceive the value of sustainable fashion products. This implies that while peers and social norms can shape behavior, they may not be sufficiently strong to fundamentally alter deeper value perceptions without reinforcement from other factors, such as direct experience or more concrete product information.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) examined the effect of Self Awareness on Perceived Value. The results reveal a positive, statistically significant relationship, with a β coefficient of 0.16, a t-value of 2.60, and a p-value of 0.00. This finding provides strong support for H2, indicating that higher levels of self-awareness are associated with enhanced perceptions of value in sustainable fashion products. Generation Z consumers who possess greater self-awareness are better able to recognize and appreciate the multiple dimensions of value offered by sustainable fashion, including quality, emotional satisfaction, functional benefits, and social recognition. Self-aware individuals are more likely to reflect on their personal values and align their consumption choices with those values, leading to a deeper appreciation of the benefits embedded in sustainable products.

Hypothesis 3 (H3) investigated the relationship between Social Media and Perceived Value. The results demonstrate a strong positive and highly significant effect, with a coefficient of $\beta = 0.64$, a t-value of 9.07, and a p-value of 0.00. This finding offers robust support for H3, establishing Social Media as the most influential antecedent of Perceived Value among the three factors examined. The substantial coefficient indicates that social media exposure plays a critical role in shaping how Generation Z consumers perceive the value of sustainable fashion products. Through social media platforms, consumers are exposed to rich content that communicates product quality, sustainability features, environmental benefits, and social recognition associated with sustainable fashion. Influencers, brand content, peer discussions, and online communities collectively contribute to the construction and reinforcement of positive value perceptions. This finding underscores the importance of social media as a strategic tool for sustainable fashion brands seeking to enhance consumer value perceptions and, consequently, drive purchase intentions.

Discussion

The first hypothesis (H1) examined the Influence of Social Influence on Perceived Value of sustainable fashion among Generation Z. The results revealed a positive yet statistically non-significant relationship between these variables. This finding indicates that although social Influence can shape consumer behavior in various contexts, its direct effect on how Generation Z perceives the value of sustainable fashion products was not sufficiently robust in this study. This result aligns with the theoretical framework proposed by Kumar et al. (2023), who suggested that social media influencers can shape consumers' perceptions of brand value, satisfaction, and favorability. However, the non-significant finding suggests that, for Generation Z, social Influence through peers and opinion leaders may require reinforcement through direct experience or more concrete product information to alter value perceptions fundamentally. Furthermore, Wu et al. (2015) noted that social Influence serves as a positive moderator that amplifies the effects of perceived value rather than directly creating it, which may explain why the direct path from social Influence to perceived value did not achieve statistical significance. Lee et al. (2016) also emphasized that factors such as trust and reputation mediate the relationship between social Influence and perceived value, suggesting that the absence of these mediating mechanisms in the direct relationship may account for the non-significant finding. Finally, as Yen (2013) demonstrated, social Influence correlates with utilitarian, social, and hedonic values. Still, these relationships may require active engagement and participation (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2021) to translate into enhanced perceived value. Therefore, while social Influence remains an important factor in consumer behavior, its direct impact on perceived value appears limited among Generation Z consumers in the context of sustainable fashion.

The second hypothesis (H2) investigated the relationship between Self Awareness and Perceived Value. The results demonstrated a positive and statistically significant effect, providing strong support for the hypothesis that self-awareness enhances perceived value. This finding indicates that Generation Z consumers with higher levels of self-awareness are better able to recognize and appreciate the multiple dimensions of value offered by sustainable fashion products. This result is consistent with the theoretical foundation established by Ahmad et al. (2023), who defined self-awareness as the capacity to recognize and understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors while maintaining self-identity. Lavigna and La Torre (2024) further emphasized that self-awareness enables individuals to make conscious decisions aligned with their values and objectives, which, in the context of sustainable fashion, translates to a deeper appreciation of product value. The significant finding also aligns with Min and Wakslak's (2022) research, which demonstrated that self-aware consumers evaluate experiences more favorably when their autonomy is taken into account. Moreover, Pham et al. (2010) found that self-awareness influences attribution processes, with higher self-awareness leading to more favorable evaluations under certain conditions. The relationship between self-awareness and perceived value is further supported by Chowdhry and Dholakia's (2020) work on financial self-awareness, which demonstrated that enhanced self-knowledge leads to greater perceived value and satisfaction. Chow et al. (2022) also showed that recognizing personal choice in self-control activities increases perceived value, while van Beuningen et al. (2011) established that self-efficacy, closely related to self-awareness, positively affects perceived value during service interactions. Collectively, these theoretical perspectives confirm that self-aware individuals possess an internal value system that enables them to evaluate products more deeply and to recognize the quality, emotional, functional, and social value embedded in them. For Generation Z, fostering self-awareness through educational initiatives and reflective marketing communications may enhance their appreciation of sustainable fashion products.

The third hypothesis (H3) examined the effect of Social Media on Perceived Value. The results revealed a strong, highly significant positive relationship, establishing Social Media as the most influential antecedent of Perceived Value among the factors examined in this study. This finding indicates that social media exposure plays a critical role in shaping how Generation Z

consumers perceive the value of sustainable fashion products. The theoretical framework strongly supports this result. Selkie and Moreno (2016) and Davis (2016) characterized social media as interactive platforms that enable bidirectional communication and user-generated content creation, which facilitates the rich information exchange necessary for value formation. Kaplan (2015) further emphasized the diverse range of social media applications that serve different user needs, allowing sustainable fashion brands to reach consumers through multiple channels and content formats. The significant finding aligns with Gao et al. (2021), who demonstrated that high-quality, useful content on social media platforms significantly enhances users' perceived value by meeting their informational needs. Hanaysha and Alhyasat (2025) and Yu et al. (2025) found that interactive features such as comments, likes, and shares positively affect perceived value by fostering connection and a sense of community belonging. Chen (2019) highlighted that social media's ability to enhance both social interactions and informational needs contributes to its perceived value, while Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2020) emphasized that the balance between relational benefits and costs determines overall value perceptions. In the specific context of sustainable fashion, Hwei and Youngsook (2022) demonstrated that social media interaction significantly affects perceived value, with perceived value mediating the relationship between social media interactivity and purchase outcomes. Chen and Lin (2019) similarly found that social media indirectly influences satisfaction through social identification and perceived value. For Generation Z, who are digital natives, social media platforms serve as primary sources of information about sustainable fashion, exposing them to brand content, influencer endorsements, and peer discussions that collectively shape their perceptions of quality value, emotional value, functional value, and social value. Therefore, when social media content effectively communicates these value dimensions, it substantially enhances consumers' overall perceived value of sustainable fashion products. This finding underscores the importance of social media as a strategic tool for sustainable fashion brands seeking to enhance consumer perceptions of value.

In summary, the findings confirm that Self Awareness and Social Media are significant positive predictors of Perceived Value, with Social Media demonstrating the strongest effect among Generation Z consumers. Social Influence, while positive, did not achieve statistical significance in its direct relationship with Perceived Value, suggesting that its impact on value perceptions may be limited without the reinforcement of direct experience or additional mediating mechanisms. These results highlight the differential roles of personal, social, and media factors in shaping consumer perceptions of value in the context of sustainable fashion. For practitioners and marketers, these findings emphasize the importance of leveraging social media platforms to effectively communicate value dimensions while fostering consumer self-awareness through targeted educational content and reflective messaging strategies.

Practical implications

The findings of this study offer several practical implications for brands, marketers, and policymakers seeking to enhance the perceived value of sustainable fashion among Generation Z. First, the significant influence of social media on perceived value suggests that sustainable fashion brands should prioritize their social media presence and content strategy to communicate value to consumers effectively. Brands like Sejauh Mata Memandang should invest in creating engaging, informative, and value-oriented content that highlights the quality, sustainability features, and environmental benefits of their products. Collaborating with influencers and fostering online communities can amplify this effect, as these actors can effectively communicate product value and shape consumer perceptions across multiple value dimensions. Social media content should go beyond mere product promotion to include educational content about sustainability, behind-the-scenes looks at ethical production processes, and storytelling that connects products to broader environmental values. Given that Generation Z are digital natives, their immersion in social media platforms makes this channel particularly effective for building and reinforcing value perceptions.

Second, the significant relationship between self-awareness and perceived value indicates that brands should develop marketing communications that help consumers connect their personal values with the value dimensions offered by sustainable fashion products. Campaigns that encourage self-reflection on personal environmental values and explicitly demonstrate how sustainable fashion aligns with them may be particularly effective at strengthening value

perceptions. Marketers should emphasize not only the functional and quality aspects of products but also the emotional and social values that resonate with environmentally conscious consumers. This approach can strengthen the internal value systems that drive deeper appreciation of sustainable fashion. Educational content that helps consumers understand their values and how they align with sustainable consumption choices can enhance the perceived relevance and value of sustainable fashion products.

Third, although social influence showed a positive relationship with perceived value, its relatively weaker effect compared to social media and self-awareness suggests that brands cannot rely solely on social trends to build deep value perceptions. While peer influence and social norms can create awareness and initial interest, building robust value perceptions requires more substantive communication strategies. Brands should complement social influence approaches with direct consumer experiences, such as product trials, pop-up stores, or virtual try-on features, that allow consumers to form their own value perceptions through direct interaction with products. These experiential marketing approaches can bridge the gap between superficial social influence and deeply held value perceptions by providing tangible evidence of product quality and benefits.

Finally, the differential effects across the three antecedents suggest that sustainable fashion brands should adopt integrated marketing strategies that combine social media engagement, cultivation of self-awareness, and the strategic use of social influence to build perceived value. Rather than relying on a single approach, brands should develop coordinated campaigns that leverage the unique strengths of each factor. Social media can be used to build awareness and shape value perceptions through rich, engaging content that highlights multiple value dimensions. Self-awareness can be cultivated through reflective marketing communications and educational initiatives that help consumers connect personal values with sustainable fashion attributes. Social influence, while less directly impactful on value perceptions, can still play a supporting role by creating social proof and normalizing sustainable fashion consumption. By integrating these approaches, brands can create a comprehensive marketing ecosystem that addresses the multiple pathways through which Generation Z forms value perceptions toward sustainable fashion.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that several factors significantly influence Generation Z's perceived value of sustainable fashion products. Social Media and Self Awareness are positive predictors of Perceived Value, with Social Media being the most influential. It plays a crucial role in shaping how Generation Z evaluates sustainable fashion by providing rich content on quality, sustainability, and social recognition. Self-awareness also matters, as more self-aware consumers can better appreciate the various dimensions of value in sustainable fashion, such as quality and emotional satisfaction. The non-significant impact of Social Influence suggests it may not directly alter value perceptions without direct experience or concrete information. For brands targeting Generation Z, it's essential to maintain an engaging social media presence and foster consumer self-awareness through educational content that aligns personal values with sustainable fashion.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that warrant attention in future research. First, while the sample size of 190 respondents is adequate for SEM analysis, it may not fully represent Generation Z's diverse perceptions of sustainable fashion. Future studies should aim for a larger, more diverse sample and a longer data collection period to enhance generalizability. Second, the limited literature on the relationship between Self Awareness and Perceived Value in sustainable fashion restricted the theoretical development of this study. Future research should consider additional variables,

such as environmental awareness and green consumer values, to deepen understanding of the psychological factors influencing value perceptions.

Third, focusing exclusively on Generation Z consumers familiar with the brand Sejauh Mata Memandang may limit the applicability of findings to other sustainable brands or geographical contexts. Including a variety of brands and regions would provide a more comprehensive view of sustainable fashion consumption. Fourth, the cross-sectional design captures relationships at a single point in time, which does not reflect the dynamic nature of consumer perceptions. Longitudinal studies are recommended to track changes over time and understand the evolution of value perceptions among Generation Z. Fifth, this study did not explore potential moderating variables, such as gender, income, or prior experience with sustainable products, that could influence the relationships between antecedents and perceived value. Investigating these factors could yield deeper insights. Finally, future research should consider barriers to positive value perceptions, such as price sensitivity and skepticism toward sustainability claims. A balanced examination of both drivers and barriers would provide valuable insights for promoting sustainable fashion among Generation Z consumers.

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Declarations

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research and publication of this article.

Conflicts of interest/ Competing interests:

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

Data, Materials and/or Code Availability:

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.