"Ascertaining the antecedents of Generation Y consumers' perceived utility of celebrity influencers' fashion content on Instagram and consequent fashion brand predispositions and purchase intentions"

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ASCERTAINING THE ANTECEDENTS OF GENERATION Y CONSUMERS' PERCEIVED UTILITY OF CELEBRITY INFLUENCERS' FASHION CONTENT ON INSTAGRAM AND CONSEQUENT FASHION BRAND PREDISPOSITIONS AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS

Abstract

The fashion apparel industry constitutes a significant global economic force. Generation Y consumers represent a sought after target market to this industry as they are forecasted to have a disposable income outrivaling that of previous generations. Generation Y individuals are acknowledged as being amenable to the opinions of social media influencers, particularly those expressed by celebrity influencers, who often act as aspirational referents. Despite reports highlighting the relevance of the social media influencer strategy when targeting Generation Y, there remains a paucity of research on influencer marketing. Therefore, this study aims to ascertain the antecedents of Generation Y consumers' perceived utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion apparel content and consequent fashion brand predispositions and purchase intentions. Fieldwork yielded 334 questionnaires from a convenience sample of Generation Y students registered at two universities in South Africa; data were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The findings indicate that informational value, entertainment value, and trustworthiness account for more than 50% of the variance in Generation Y consumers' perceptions of the utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion content. In turn, perceived utility, in conjunction with its determinants, accounts for 70% of the variance in their predispositions toward showcased fashion apparel brands, which collectively accounts for 65% of the total variance in their intentions to purchase those brands. These findings highlight celebrity influencers' salient role in Generation Y consumers' fashion brand choices and the necessity of incorporating celebrity influencer appeal into fashion apparel marketing communication strategies designed to engage with this generation.

Keywords	influencers, celebrities, Instagram, fashion, Generation Y
JEL Classification	M30, M31, M37

INTRODUCTION

The fashion apparel market, which includes all types of clothing ranging from business wear to sportswear, luxury wear to fast fashion, is an important contributor to the global economy, generating a revenue of 1.53 trillion U.S. dollars in 2022; a figure expected to reach about 1.7 trillion U.S. dollars in 2023 (Smith, 2023). The fashion apparel industry is highly competitive, fast-paced, and dynamic (Chetioui et al., 2020) and has always employed aggressive marketing strategies (Helmuth, 2020). While fashion trends were traditionally communicated via

glossy magazines, billboards, and catwalk shows, there has been a definitive move in recent years to communicating such trends via social media platforms (Helmuth, 2020; Wilberg, 2018), particularly Instagram (Fear-Smith, 2021; Helmuth, 2020; Wilberg, 2018). One fashion marketing communication tactic acquiring momentum is using influencers on social media, especially celebrity influencers who, due to their inherent fame, have a superior reach and influence on their followers' brand choices (Lang, 2023; Hopper, 2022; Bhengu, 2020). This social media influencer appeal is proving particularly valuable in engaging with Generation Y consumers (people born from 1986 to 2005) (Markert, 2004), who represent a key target market for the fashion apparel sector (Chetioui et al., 2020; Nadeem et al., 2015; Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017; Eastman & Liu, 2012).

Despite the media espousing the merits of brands partnering with social media influencers when targeting Generation Y consumers (Rhea, 2023; Wilberg, 2018), there is a paucity of research on their perceptions of influencer marketing in published marketing and marketing-related literature (Chetioui et al., 2020).

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Instagram's visual nature and formatting features, such as image and video editing tools, geo-tagged content, specific audience-targeting tools, community and brand hashtags, stickers, poll surveys, and audience analytics applications, render it an ideal marketing channel for showcasing products and brands (Nguyen, 2021). Another vital marketing feature of the platform is allowing users to shop directly through the channel by clicking on the link that directs them to the point of sale (Wilberg, 2018). However, the platform now has over 200 million business accounts, which continues to grow (Tan, 2023), meaning that marketers need to find innovative ways to make their brands stand out in this increasingly crowded space. Thus, an increasing number of brand marketers are seeking partnerships with prominent social media influencers (Dencheva, 2023). Dhanesh and Duthler (2019) indicate that a social media influencer is a trusted opinion leader and trendsetter who, using personal branding, builds and maintains relationships with a significant number of followers on social media and exerts an influence on those followers' attitudes and behavior, including their consumption-related behavior in a niche or several niche product categories.

These influencers on social media are not necessarily celebrities. Nonetheless, it is the accounts of well-known celebrities who have already garnered fame in their chosen professions that generally draw in the most Instagram followers (Boyd, 2022) and who, by and large, are the most influential on Instagram (Lang, 2023; Hopper, 2022; Bhengu, 2020).

With over 60% of its worldwide users aged 18 to 34 years in 2023, Instagram is the platform of choice for engaging with Generation Y consumers (Zote, 2023). Generation Y consumers manifest as an attractive segment across a range of product categories, accounting for a substantial percentage of the global population, and are predicted to soon have a disposable income surpassing any prior generational segment (Tilford, 2018).

This generation of young adult consumers are drawn to innovative designs (Danziger, 2019), are brand aware, are obsessed with fashion trends (Olajide et al., 2018; Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017) and are predisposed toward conspicuous status consumption (Eastman & Liu, 2012). These inclinations, coupled with their increasing spending power, mean that Generation Y consumers constitute a key target market for the fashion apparel sector (Chetioui et al., 2020; Nadeem et al., 2015; Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017; Eastman & Liu, 2012).

From a marketing communication perspective, a salient characteristic of Generation Y consumers is that they are skeptical of traditional marketing messages, perceiving them as overly planned and misleading (Wilberg, 2018; Friedman, 2017). Successfully appealing to today's digitally-astute young adults who want to feel connected requires brands to move beyond a customer-centric approach to a life-centric approach by creating an authentic brand engagement experience (Dicey, 2022). Since social media remains a major portal

through which this generational segment views the world, influencer marketing is a valuable strategy for creating life-centric authentic brand engagement experiences (Zeeman, 2022).

While the potential value of partnering with celebrity influencers when targeting Generation Y consumers is clear, doing so effectively requires fashion apparel marketers to have a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the perceived utility of celebrity fashion influencers and empirical evidence as to whether that utility creates favorable predispositions and purchase intentions toward their showcased fashion apparel brands.

Following the focus of this study, constructs from two seminal theoretical models were adapted and coalesced to develop a hypothesized model of the potential antecedents of Generation Y consumers' perceptions of the utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion apparel content and the effect on their fashion apparel brand predispositions and purchase intentions. The first is Ducoffe's (1996) advertising value model, and the second is the extended version of the technology acceptance model developed and tested by Davis et al. (1989).

The model of the value of web advertising was developed and empirically tested in the mid-1990s by Ducoffe (1996). The model has subsequently been used in part or in its entirety to explore consumers' perceptions of and attitudes toward marketing communication on a variety of media platforms and in an assortment of settings (Fitriani et al., 2020; Falcão & Isaías, 2020; Hamouda, 2018; Lee & Hong, 2016). In this model, marketing communication's perceived value relates to consumers' subjective assessment of the utility of a marketing message, where this value is purported to be influenced positively by their perceptions of the message's informational and entertainment value, and influenced negatively by their perceptions of its invasiveness (Ducoffe, 1996).

Perceived informational value refers to a target audience's overall perceptions concerning whether a marketing communication message provides complete, relevant, and timely product/service information (Falcão & Isaías, 2020; Hamouda, 2018; Zhang et al., 2014; Ducoffe, 1996) and current

product information (Lata & Rana, 2021; Khwaja et al., 2020). Several studies highlight that informational value significantly predicts consumption-related communication's perceived utility or value (Wang & Genç, 2019; Lee & Hong, 2016; Haida & Rahim, 2015). For celebrity fashion influencers on Instagram, this entails keeping abreast with current fashion apparel trends and imparting that knowledge to their followers in a timely manner (Duong, 2019). It also entails detailed descriptions of the fashion brands they are showcasing, including information such as the material, sizing, and product fit. In addition, they should offer their followers styling tips and ideas on how to wear the item and pair it with other apparel items. They should also tag products in their posts and stories, as this feature makes it easy for followers to know where to purchase the brands they see in the celebrity influencer's Instagram content (Lang, 2023). In terms of the relevance and completeness of the information provided (Ducoffe, 1996), celebrity influencers should provide details concerning the quality of the material, the fit, how comfortable it is to wear, and whether it is worth the price. In this regard, fashion marketers must equip celebrity fashion influencers with detailed information about their products, such as apparel sizing and color options, prices, promotional offers, and store locations.

The second dimension, entertainment value, refers to the extent to which a target audience derives pleasure from viewing a marketing communication message, as in it being perceived as enjoyable, diverting, and fun to experience (Ducoffe, 1996). Numerous published studies confirm that the entertainment facet of marketing communication messages has a positive effect on the perceived utility (Yan et al., 2023; Shareef et al., 2019; Arli, 2017; Aydin & Karamehmet, 2017; Hu et al., 2011). Celebrity influencers seeking to increase the entertainment value of their fashion apparel brand content and recommendations on Instagram should tap into the value of their celebrity appeal. Celebrities typically attract intense media attention due to their success in their chosen professions, resulting in wide public recognition and fame (Fang & Jiang, 2015). This success and fame generally translate into leading a glamorous and luxurious lifestyle, rendering celebrities as aspirational referents that others seek to emulate (Gräve

& Bartsch, 2022; Gountas et al., 2012). When creating fashion brand content on Instagram, celebrity influencers should offer their followers a look into their glamorous and exciting world and choose backgrounds that showcase their stardom and luxury lifestyle. Sharing titbits about their daily life as well as their red-carpet moments should also help celebrity influencers increase the entertainment value of their fashion apparel content on Instagram. Adding advice gleaned from professional stylists and combining apparel items to create different styles may also make their Instagram content more exciting and enjoyable to view, not to mention more enlightening. They should also consider using Instagram's stories feature to share behind-the-scenes content with their followers, helping them build a deeper connection with their Generation Y followers.

The intrusiveness or irritation dimension of Ducoffe's (1996) advertising value model was excluded from consideration in this study because Instagram users actively opt to follow specific influencers. If they find that content annoying, they can simply cease to follow that particular influencer.

Source or message trustworthiness, which relates to a message receiver's sense that he/she is receiving credible, believable, unbiased, and objective information from a message source, is salient in all forms of communication (G. Belch & M. Belch, 2012), but particularly so in online reviews (Hudders et al., 2021). As such, the dimension of celebrity influencer trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1990) was added to Ducoffe's (1996) advertising value model. Numerous studies note trustworthiness as a salient contributor to the perceived utility of communication in the online arena (Yan et al., 2023; Falcão & Isaías, 2020; Alarcón-del-Amo et al., 2016). To be perceived as trustworthy, the celebrity influencer must have an interest in and a degree of knowledge of or expertise within a particular product category. As such, being a fashion influencer, first and foremost, means that the celebrity needs to have a reputation as a fashionista to prevent being viewed as a fraud (Breves et al., 2019). Celebrity influencers also need to only promote fashion apparel brands they actually use or believe in because promoting a fashion item on Instagram that they are never seen

wearing in public is likely to be viewed as misleading. For fashion apparel marketers, this suggests only partnering with celebrity influencers whose fashion style matches their brand's (Fear-Smith, 2021). Generation Y consumers are also likely to have more trust in celebrity influencers they can relate to, suggesting fashion marketers should seek partnerships with celebrity influencers in the same age group as Generation Y consumers (Wilberg, 2018). Furthermore, celebrity influencers should be clear about the disadvantages and advantages of the critiqued fashion apparel brand and whether it is worth the price. To this end, it is also important to avoid using filters to alter the appearance of the fashion apparel they are showcasing. Another aspect highlighted by Audrezet et al. (2020) is that influencers must always be transparent about any sponsored fashion apparel content; if or when they are sent free fashion items from a fashion house to critique, they should disclose that information to their followers.

This extended marketing communication value model was then juxtaposed with the technology acceptance model (Davis, 1986). This model has been applied to explain behavioral intentions related to information technology systems, including the adoption of social networking sites (Al-Khasawneh et al., 2022; Ambrose et al., 2020; Alsaleh et al., 2019; Alarcón-del-Amo et al., 2016) and behavioral intentions toward consumption-rated communication on social networking sites (Herzallah et al., 2022; Mukherjee & Banerjee, 2019; Florenthal, 2019). According to the original theory, attitude toward using new end-user computing tools predicts the actual usage of those tools (Davis, 1986). This theory was later extended to include the dimension of behavioral intentions, which was a salient mediator between attitude and actual behavior (Davis et al., 1989). The theory indicates that two crucial impressions predict attitudes toward accepting a new end-user computing system – the usefulness or utility of the system and its ease of use. Utility is defined as "the degree to which an individual believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance," and ease of use as "the degree to which an individual believes that using a particular system would be free of physical and mental effort" (Davis, 1986, pp. 24, 26).

The current study utilized the three dimensions of perceived utility, attitudes, and intentions from the technology acceptance model. The actual behavior dimension was excluded because the study used a cross-sectional approach for data collection. The perceived ease of use dimension was also omitted because social media necessitates minimal technological skill or effort and because members of Generation Y grew up with digital technologies and, thus, are generally technologically astute regarding digital platforms.

Perceived utility was operationalized as the degree to which celebrity influencers' fashion apparel content and opinions on Instagram contribute to helping their Generation Y followers make smarter and more gratifying fashion apparel purchase choices. Several studies conclude that perceived utility is a critical determinant of attitudes toward behavior (Yan et al., 2023; Ambrose et al., 2020; Alsaleh et al., 2019; Mukherjee & Banerjee, 2019; Wang & Genç, 2019). The attitude toward use dimension, which is "a person's attitude toward performing the behavior with respect to the object" (Davis, 1986, p. 20), was operationalized as predispositions in this study and was conceptualized as an Instagram follower's favorable attitude toward fashion apparel brands based on celebrity influencers' fashion content and opinions on Instagram. Numerous studies confirm that the attitude toward behavior is an essential predictor of behavioral intentions (Cham et al., 2021; Ambrose et al., 2020; Alsaleh et al., 2019; Mukherjee & Banerjee, 2019). In line with the technology acceptance model, Generation Y consumers' predispositions toward fashion apparel brands showcased in celebrity influencers' Instagram content were theorized as dependent on their perceived utility of that content and predictive of their behavioral intentions to purchase those showcased apparel brands.

This study aimed to ascertain the antecedents of Generation Y consumers' perceived utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion content and consequent fashion brand predispositions and purchase intentions. Guided by the literature reviewed, the paper proposes the following hypotheses:

H_{a1}: Generation Y consumers' perceived informational value of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion content has a significant positive influence on their perceived utility of such content.

H_{a2}: Generation Y consumers' perceived entertainment value of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion content has a significant positive influence on their perceived utility of such content.

H_{a3}: Generation Y consumers' perceived trustworthiness of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion content has a significant positive influence on their perceived utility of such content.

H_{a4}: Generation Y consumers' perceived utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion content has a significant positive influence on their predispositions toward those showcased fashion brands.

H_{a5}: Generation Y consumers' predispositions toward fashion brands showcased by celebrity fashion influencers on Instagram have a significant positive influence on their purchasing intentions toward those fashion brands.

2. METHODS

The study used a descriptive research design and a single cross-sectional sample approach. The target population was Generation Y university students aged 18 to 24 enrolled at South Africa's 26 public universities. Employing judgment sampling, the sampling frame was confined to two public university campuses in the country's Gauteng province, with the inclusion criteria for the campuses being that the sample should include respondents from South Africa's two principal types of public universities – traditional universities and universities of technology. Employing the convenience sampling technique, fieldworkers administered 400 self-reporting questionnaires equally (200 per campus) across the campus of the traditional university and that of the university of technology to students who, when approached, agreed to fill out the questionnaire.

The measurement instrument was a self-reporting structured questionnaire. This questionnaire contained a section requesting respondents' biographic and Instagram usage particulars and a section composed of adapted versions of previously validated scales from the literature.

Information on perceived informational value was garnered using the seven items of "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are a good source of fashion information," "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram supply relevant fashion information," "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram provide timely fashion information," "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are a good source of up-to-date fashion information," "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram make fashion information immediately accessible," "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are a convenient source of fashion information," and "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram supply complete fashion information" (Ducoffe, 1996, p. 28). Information on perceived trustworthiness was gathered using a scale that included the five items of "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are dependable," "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are honest," "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are reliable," "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are sincere," and "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are trustworthy" (Ohanian, 1990, p. 47). Information on perceived entertainment value was garnered using a five-item scale that included "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are entertaining," "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are enjoyable," "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are interesting," "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are fun," and "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are exciting" (Ducoffe, 1996, p. 28). Information on perceived utility was collected using the four items of "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are useful to me," "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram make fashion purchasing decisions easier," "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram make me a smarter fashion shopper," and "celebrity fashion reviews on Instagram are very beneficial to me" (Park & Lee, 2009, p. 336; Davis et al., 1989, p. 991). Instagram celebrity influence on fashion brand predispositions was measured using the seven items of "to make sure I buy the right fashion brand, I often observe what celebrities wear on Instagram," "I often try to buy fashion brands to be

like celebrities on Instagram," "I frequently gather information from celebrities on Instagram about fashion brands before I buy," "I like seeing advertisements on Instagram of what fashion brands celebrities wear," "celebrities on Instagram help me be more confident in the fashion brands I buy," "I get ideas about fashion brands from seeing celebrities on Instagram," and "celebrities on Instagram show me that people like myself wear similar fashion brands" (Eze et al., 2012, p. 74). The last construct, purchase intentions toward apparel brands showcased by celebrity influencers on Instagram, included the three items of "given a chance, I would consider purchasing fashion brands in the future that celebrities wear on Instagram," "it is likely that I shall actually purchase fashion brands that celebrities wear on Instagram in the near future," and "I intend to consider fashion brands that celebrities wear on Instagram in my future purchases" (Hu et al., 2011, p. 457).

The sample respondents' responses to these 31 statements were captured using a Likert scale with six response categories (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree).

The gathered data from the research instrument were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS (Version 28). Statistical analysis methods included the computation of frequencies and percentages, means, standard deviations, one-sample t-test, simple linear correlation (Pearson's r), collinearity diagnostics, and two-step structural equation modeling (confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis). Maximum likelihood estimation was employed for the confirmatory factor analysis and the subsequent path analysis. The selected significance level for all statistical analysis methods was $p \leq 0.01$.

3. RESULTS

Fieldwork yielded 334 completed questionnaires of the 400 distributed across the two campuses, providing an 84% response rate. The sample respondents' biographic and Instagram usage particulars are provided in Table 1.

As outlined in Table 1, the sample comprised more male (55%) than female respondents (44%). The spread of respondents from the two types of pub-

Table 1. Sample description

Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Female	147	44.0
Male	185	55.4
Missing	2	0.6
Age		
18	36	10.8
19	70	21.0
20	82	24.6
21	46	13.8
22	53	15.9
23	27	8.1
24	20	6.0
University		
Traditional	157	47.0
Technology	177	53.0
Instagram usage (minutes per day)		
>10	36	10.8
10-30	58	17.4
31-60	56	16.8
60-120	69	20.7
120-180	40	12.0
180<	75	22.5

lic universities was relatively equal, with 47% enrolled at the traditional university and 53% at the university of technology. Concerning Instagram usage, most respondents (22.5%) signaled that they spend over three hours a day on Instagram, followed by those who indicated spending between one and two hours per day on the site. Interestingly, only 11% spend less than 10 minutes per day on the site.

The means and standard deviations, t-values, and p-values were calculated to clarify the degree to which Generation Y students consider the fashion content and opinions celebrities share on Instagram as being informatory, entertaining, trustworthy, and utile. Moreover, the study measured the extent to which they perceived those critiques as affecting their predispositions and purchasing intentions toward those showcased fash-

ion apparel brands. By the six-point measurement scale, the expected mean value was fixed at 3.5 for the one-sample t-test. These results are outlined in Table 2.

The means of each of the six factors displayed in Table 2 are statistically significant ($p \leq 0.01$), indicating that Generation Y consumers perceive celebrity influencers' fashion apparel content and opinions on Instagram as entertaining, informatory, trustworthy, and utile. Moreover, they perceive that such content influences their fashion apparel predispositions and their purchase intentions toward those showcased fashion apparel brands. Entertainment value scored the highest mean (4.67), followed by informational value (4.56), perceived utility (4.21), purchase intentions (4.08), and fashion apparel brand predispositions (4.06). The perceived trustworthiness of celebrity

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, t-values, and p-values

Factors	Mean	Standard deviation	t-values	p-values
Informational value	4.56	.873	22.115	0.000
Entertainment value	4.67	.942	22.792	0.000
Trustworthiness	3.88	1.097	6.304	0.000
Utility	4.21	1.132	11.436	0.000
Predispositions	4.06	1.161	8.750	0.000
Intentions	4.08	1.270	8.333	0.000

Table 3. Correlation coefficients, tolerance values, and variance inflation factor values

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	Tol	VIF
1. Informational value						.45	2.22
2. Entertainment value	.69*					.47	2.13
3. Trustworthiness	.51*	.46*				.63	1.58
4. Utility	.58*	.58*	.55*			.33	3.01
5. Predispositions	.44*	.43*	.46*	.73*		.38	2.64
6. Intentions	.46*	.42*	.41*	.66*	.71*	.45	2.24

Note: *p < 0.01.

influencers' fashion content and opinions scored the lowest mean; however, it is still statistically significant.

Nomological validity was assessed by computing Pearson's r coefficients to verify that the associations between each pair of latent factors were consistent with extant theory and literature. Collinearity diagnostics were also carried out to check for any problematic multi-collinearity effects. The r coefficients, tolerance (Tol), and variance inflation factor values (VIF) are outlined in Table 3.

The r coefficients outlined in Table 3 were all statistically significant (p < 0.01) and in the correct direction; that is, positive. This attests to the nomological validity of the intended measurement model (Malhotra, 2020). There were no notable multi-collinearity results regarding the collinearity diagnostic results, given that the computed tolerance values all exceeded 0.10 and the average VIF of 2.30 was lower than 10 (Pallant, 2020).

Confirmatory factor analysis was then carried out on the hypothesized six-factor measurement model, including informational value, entertainment value, trustworthiness, perceived utility, predispositions, and purchase intentions. Each factor's first loading was constrained at 1.0, resulting in an over-identified model (χ^2 = 946.607, dfs = 419, p = 0.000). While the significant chi-square value insinuates unacceptable model fit, this value is the direct result of the study's large sample size (Hair et al., 2018; Byrne, 2016) and, as such, the additional fit indices were used. These additional fit indices included the goodness-of-fit indices of the comparative-fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the incremental-fit index (IFI), the badness-of-fit indices of the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA),

and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). Cronbach's alpha (*a*) and composite reliability (CR) values were applied to assess the model's reliability. Convergent validity was appraised by examining the standardized factor weight estimates and the average variance extracted (AVE) values. In order to establish discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratios between the latent factors were computed. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis are outlined in Table 4.

According to the values outlined in Table 4, there is evidence of both composite and internal consistency reliability with *a* and CR values > 0.70. Convergent validity was also in evidence with standardized weight estimates > 0.50 and AVE values ≥ 0.50 (Hair et al., 2018). Furthermore, the conditions for discriminant validity were met with HTMT ratios < 0.85 (Voorhees et al., 2016). The fit indices in Table 4 all suggest an acceptable model fit with goodness-of-fit indices > 0.90 and badness-of-fit indices < 0.08 (Malhotra, 2020). This infers that a six-factor model is the antecedent of Generation Y consumers' perceptions of the utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion apparel content and opinions and their effect on their fashion brand predispositions and purchase intentions.

Path analysis was then carried out on the hypothesized structural model. According to the hypothesized structural model, Generation Y consumers' perceived utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion content is dependent on their perception of the informational value, entertainment value, and trustworthiness of that content, and that this perceived utility predicts their predispositions and, hence, their purchasing intentions toward the showcased fashion apparel brands. The path estimates are summarized in Table 5.

Table 4. Confirmatory factor analysis

Latent factors	Standardized weight estimates	R^2	a	CR	AVE
Informational value F1	.68	.46			
	.72	.51			
	.69	.47			
	.67	.45	.88	.88	.50
	.72	.52			
	.76	.58			
	.72	.52			
Entertainment value F2	.79	.62			
	.83	.69			
	.78	.60	.89	.89	.61
	.73	.53			
	.79	.62			
Trustworthiness F3	.63	.40			
	.81	.66			
	.84	.70	.89	.89	.61
	.79	.62			
	.83	.69			
Utility F4	.80	.63			
	.78	.60	.87	.87	.62
	.81	.65			
	.77	.60			
Predispositions F5	.79	.63			
	.75	.56			
	.81	.66			
	.71	.50	.91	.91	.60
	.87	.75			
	.74	.54			
	.73	.53			
Intentions (F6)	.78	.61			
	.85	.72	.85	.85	.65
	.79	.63			
HTMT ratios	F1:F2 .79	F1:F3 .58	F1:F4 .67	F1:F5 .50	F1:F6 .53
	F2:F3 .52	F2:F4 .67	F2:F5 .48	F2:F6 .48	F3:F4: .63
	F3:F5 .52	F3:F6 .47	F4:F5 .82	F4:F6 .78	F5:F6 .80
Model fit indices	CFI = 0.920; TLI = 0.911; IFI = 0.920; RMSEA = 0.061; SRMR = 0.0539				

Table 5. Path estimates

Paths	Un-standardized betas	Standardized betas	Standardized errors	p-values
Informational value → Utility	0.32	0.23	0.125	0.01
Entertainment value → Utility	0.34	0.30	0.098	0.00
Trustworthiness → Utility	0.47	0.34	0.086	0.00
Utility → Predispositions	0.89	0.82	0.067	0.00
Predispositions → Intentions	0.79	0.81	0.064	0.00
Model fit indices	CFI = 0.917; TLI = 0.910; IFI = 0.918; RMSEA = 0.062; SRMR = 0.0574			

The resulting path estimates shown in Table 5 indicate that all five theorized regression paths are statistically significant ($p \leq 0.01$) and positive. Trustworthiness (beta = 0.34) is the strongest determinant of Generation Y consumers' perceived utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion content, followed by entertainment value (beta = 0.30) and informational value (beta = 0.23).

Therefore, the first three hypotheses, H_a1, H_a2, and H_a3, are supported. In turn, perceived utility (beta = 0.82) has a significant positive effect on Generation Y consumers' predispositions toward fashion apparel brands showcased by celebrity influencers on Instagram, and these predispositions (beta = 0.81) predict their intentions to purchase those apparel brands. Therefore, H_a4 and H_a5 are
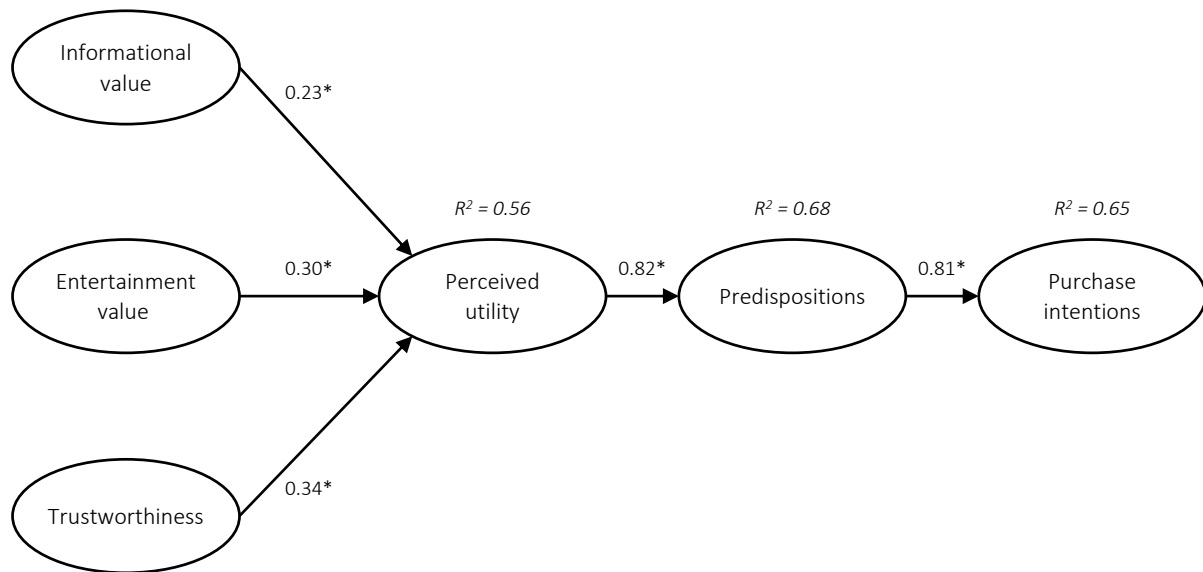
Figure 1. Structural model

also supported. The structural model's fit indices again indicate an acceptable model fit with goodness-of-fit indices > 0.90 and badness-of-fit indices < 0.80 (Malhotra, 2020). The results of this path analysis are visually depicted in Figure 1.

The squared multiple correlation coefficients (R^2) shown in Figure 1 indicate that informational value, entertainment value, and trustworthiness account for 56% of the variance in Generation Y consumers' perceptions of the utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion content. In turn, this utility, in conjunction with its determinants, accounts for 68% of the proportion of variance in their predispositions toward those showcased fashion apparel brands, which then collectively accounts for 65% of the proportion of total variance in their intentions to purchase those apparel brands showcased by celebrity influencers on Instagram.

4. DISCUSSION

This study sought to ascertain the antecedents of Generation Y consumers' perceptions of the utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion content and their effect on their fashion apparel brand predispositions and purchase intentions. This involved computing the means, t-values, and p-values, validating a six-factor model using confirmatory factor analysis, and conducting path analysis.

The means and one-sample t-test results indicate that Generation Y consumers view celebrity influencers' fashion content and opinions on Instagram as being informatory, entertaining, trustworthy, and utile and perceive such content as affecting their predispositions and purchasing intentions toward fashion apparel brands.

In terms of model validation, the *a*, CR, AVE, standardized weight estimates, HTMT values, correlation coefficients, and fit indices returned suggest that the antecedents of Generation Y consumers' perceptions of the utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion apparel content and opinions, and the effect on their fashion brand predispositions and purchase intentions is a six-factor model.

The path estimates returned for the structural model were all statistically significant and positive. The results indicate that informational value, entertainment value, and trustworthiness are all important contributors to Generation Y consumers' perceptions of the utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion apparel content and opinions. These findings corroborate those of prior studies that found informational value (Wang & Genç, 2019; Lee & Hong, 2016; Haida & Rahim, 2015), entertainment value (Yan et al., 2023; Shareef et al., 2019; Arli, 2017; Aydin & Karamehmet, 2017), and trustworthiness (Yan et al., 2023; Alarcón-del-Amo et al., 2016) to be significant influencers of the perceived utility of

consumption-related messages on digital platforms. Perceived utility, in turn, was a significant determinant of Generation Y consumers' predispositions toward fashion apparel brands showcased by celebrity influencers on Instagram, which was a significant predictor of their purchasing intentions toward those brands. These findings support Ambrose et al. (2020), Alsaleh et al. (2019), and Mukherjee and Banerjee (2019).

Furthermore, the findings indicate that informational value, entertainment value, and trustworthiness account for more than 50% of the proportion of variance in Generation Y consumers' perceptions of the utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion content. These antecedents together with the perceived utility of that content account for 70% of the variance in their predispositions toward those fashion brands. Information, entertainment value, trustworthiness, perceived utility, and predispositions collectively account for 65% of the total variance in Generation Y consumers' purchasing intentions toward those showcased fashion apparel brands.

Future research identifying possible additional antecedents of Generation Y consumers' perceived utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion content would add value to the current theory. Potential antecedents include celebrity influencers' perceived fashion expertise and their likability and attractiveness. Another possible research avenue is to repeat this study with Generation X and Generation Z members, as generational differences may affect how consumers perceive celebrity fashion influencers and incorporate their opinions into their fashion apparel decision-making processes. Given that South Africa is an emerging economy, research into Generation Y consumers' perceived utility of fashion celebrity influencers and consequent brand predispositions and purchase intentions from a developed economy perspective would also be valuable.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to ascertain the antecedents of Generation Y consumers' perceived utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion content and consequent fashion apparel brand predispositions and purchase intentions. The results of this study indicate that Generation Y consumers' perceptions of the utility of celebrity influencers' Instagram fashion apparel content and opinions depend on the extent to which they view such content as having informational and entertainment value, and as being trustworthy. Concerning the practical implications of this study, these findings highlight the importance of fashion marketers incorporating celebrity influencers into their integrated marketing communication strategy when trying to attract and engage with the Generation Y consumer segment. Doing so will help increase awareness for their fashion brand amongst this segment, given the large number of Instagram followers celebrities typically amass. In addition, it is likely to improve the fashion brand's image in that the star qualities of the celebrity will be transferred to the brand. This, in turn, is likely to lead to increased sales turnover. Naturally, a certain degree of caution needs to be exercised to identify which celebrity influencers to target. It is advisable to choose a celebrity influencer with a large following comprised mainly of Generation Y members. Moreover, that celebrity needs to have a known interest in fashion to ensure their trustworthiness; that is, choose a known fashionista. In addition, it is vital to make sure that the celebrity has a positive image amongst Generation Y consumers and has not been involved in any scandals that may damage the brand's image. It is also essential to provide the celebrity fashion influencer with complete product information, such as apparel sizing and color options, prices, promotional offers, and store locations. For their part, Instagram celebrity fashion influencers need to stay abreast of current fashion apparel style trends, provide detailed descriptions of the fashion brands that they are showcasing, including information, such as the material, sizing, and fit of the product, and offer styling tips and ideas on how to wear the item and how to pair it with other apparel items. They should strive to create engaging and enjoyable content by giving their followers a look into their glamorous and exciting lifestyle. They should also offer titbits about their daily life and use Instagram's stories feature to share behind-the-scenes content with their followers. Moreover, they should only showcase fashion apparel brands they believe in and actually wear and disclose any sponsorships, including free fashion house merchandise.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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