ETHICAL CHALLENGE OF FASHION INFLUENCERS ENDORSEMENT: ANALYSING COMMUNICATION AND CONSUMPTION CULTURE

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Abstract
The fast fashion trend is gaining popularity due to the presence of fashion influencers on social media despite its adverse impact on environmental sustainability. This research aims to explore the fashion influencers communication strategy, assess how fashion influencers endorsements contribute to the formation of consumptive culture, and investigate fashion influencers endorsement concepts that are more ethical. The qualitative research is used by employing the observations on six Indonesian fashion influencers Instagram accounts, and the interviews with three informants confirmed as being with three informants confirmed as affected by fashion influencers endorsement. The data were analysed using media content analysis and thematic analysis. The study concluded with three main findings. Firstly, fashion influencers employ persuasive and interactive communication strategies. Secondly, the formation of a consumptive culture results from the fashion expertise of influencers, which nurtures consumer satisfaction by promoting a consumptive lifestyle among consumers, even though they ultimately assess their consumption. Lastly, fashion influencers can be aligned to reconstruct more ethical endorsement by applying responsibility, sanctity, and sustainability principles.

Keywords: Consumerism, Endorsement, Ethics, Fashion Influencer, Fast Fashion

Abstrak

Kata Kunci: Endorsement, Etika, Fashion Influencer, Fast Fashion, Konsumerisme
Introduction

Nowadays, social media such as YouTube and Instagram are filled with fashion influencers (FI) promoting fashion products. They often advertise various fashion items, ranging from the latest clothes, shoes, to accessories. Their growing popularity has made them a major force in the fashion industry, influencing thousands or even millions of followers. However, behind the glamour of these endorsements, a significant issue needs to be addressed: the environmental impact of the fast fashion (FF) products they promote. The consumptive lifestyles they encourage through attractive and stylish posts are contributing to global ecological problems.

Research by the Ellen Macarthur Foundation (2017) shows that worldwide fashion output has surged by more than 50%, from around 50 billion pieces to over 100 billion units between 2000 and 2015, and is projected to expand by 400% by 2050. The quick expansion can be credited to the FF trend, which motivates individuals to keep up with current fashion styles (Indriyani & Suri, 2020). FF is a business model that rapidly provides clothing trends by frequently updating styles (Zamani et al., 2017), and offering low prices (Niinimäki et al., 2020). Findings from a 2019 survey by Rentique of 500 respondents aged 24-35 in Indonesia showed that more than 80% of fashion aficionados favour purchasing FF items because of their affordability. According to the poll, 75% of women acknowledged wearing a FF dress only 2-3 times before getting rid of it because they think it is no longer fashionable (Akurat, 2019).

Despite the price and constantly evolving FF styles, there is an undeniable hidden cost. The textile sector functions linearly in the FF industry, extracting substantial non-renewable resources to create short-lived clothes. The “make-wear-discard” system harms ecosystems and valuable resources due to the significant consumption of energy, water, and other resources in garment production (Kalambura et al., 2020). According to Niinimäki et al. (2020), the textile industry is estimated to contribute 8-10% of global CO² emissions (4-5 billion tons per year), is a significant consumer of water (79 trillion litres per year), is responsible for about 20% of industrial water pollution from textile processing and dyeing, and contributes to approximately 35% (190,000 tons per year) of ocean primary microplastic pollution from textile waste (>92 million tons per year).
The environmental concerns related to the large FF industry are now a significant global priority, emphasising sustainable consumption and production, sustainable business practices, consumer behaviour, and decreasing FF to promote environmental justice. The issue of increased FF consumption is worsening because social media influencers endorse and promote FF trends.

FI are individuals with a large social media following who create and share fashion-related material, capable of influencing their followers' thoughts and purchasing decisions on fashion items (Magano et al., 2022). Approximately, 88.2% of Indonesian women aged 17-31 who actively use Instagram follow at least one FI account. Nearly 50% of the participants acknowledge being swayed to buy things FI endorse. 51 respondents said they purchase influencer-promoted products to find inspiration in apparel (Nainggolan, 2018). FI have faced criticism for a perceived lack of openness in their sponsored posts (Marsh, 2017). The difference between postings in which influencers willingly give product recommendations and those in which they are paid is frequently ambiguous (Frier, 2017). The sustainability implications of these fashion endorsements frequently need to be clarified. According to a study by the Fashion Retail Academy, 54% of individuals attribute some responsibility for expanding FF firms to influencers (Wightman-Stone, 2019).

This study explores the communication patterns of FI based on communication theory. Placed on the dialectical communication theory of Ethos, Logos, and Pathos (Higgins & Walker, 2012), this study aims to analyze the persuasive techniques used by influencers in their recommendations. In addition, the study combines the 4C digital marketing strategy (Context, Communication, Collaboration, and Connection) established by Chris Hauer, providing a comprehensive framework for examining influencer communication tactics (Solis, 2010). The research seeks to elucidate the intricate dynamics of influencer endorsements and their influence on consumer behaviour in the fashion industry using these theoretical foundations.

Furthermore, media exposure, particularly from FI, can lead individuals to develop compulsive and obsessive buying behaviour, known as consumptive behaviour (Jalees & Raza, 2017). Consumptive behaviour is frequently associated with consumerism, which goes beyond just economic transactions. Consumerism includes dreams, consolation, communication, confrontation, image, and identity (Nava, 1987). It
focuses more on wants than fundamental needs (Bocock, 1993). Baudrillard (1988) defined consumption as individuals purchasing products to create and uphold their identity and to distinguish themselves from others by displaying acquired items. He contends that consuming has escalated to a hyper-real, symbolic level, where the concept of buying drives many individuals in their professional endeavours rather than the action itself. As referenced in Kaufman (2023), Stearns suggests that consumerism is driven by advertising and manipulation. Gradually, it evolves into a cultural standard. The natural inclination towards acquiring pleasant and functional items should be directed towards establishing a society where these wants do not negatively impact the environment or result in unmet needs or poverty. This critical social perspective on consumerism in the FF industry is inadvertently perpetuated by the existence of FI. Therefore, this research also will be viewed from this perspective.

Quantitative studies by Budiyati & Diwanti (2023) have mainly guided empirical research on consumer behaviour or consumerism. This study investigates how marketing influencers, Muslim fashion trends, and lifestyle impact the consumptive behaviour of students. There is a need for a comprehensive strategy, as indicated in the study Gunawan & Iskandar (2020), which uses a mixed-methods approach but has yet to examine the development of consumptive culture fully. Indriyani & Suri (2020) conducted a study emphasising social media's impact on purchasing decisions driven by consumer motivation for FF products in Indonesia. Although quantitative research is dominant, qualitative methods may provide a more thorough picture of how consumptive culture develops in the context of FF product purchases driven by FI.

The research aims to analyse FI communication patterns to promote fashion products and how they shape Indonesian culture's lifestyle and consumption, particularly FF products. Additionally, the study seeks to propose ethical approaches for FI endorsing strategies.

Method

This study used a qualitative methodology to investigate how FI endorse fashion products and impact consumer culture, specifically in the FF industry. This study combines deductive and inductive reasoning strategies to expand the scope and
thoroughness of the investigation. Investigating how FI communicate to endorse fashion products primarily focuses on a deductive approach. An inductive reasoning approach is used to investigate the second research question by applying phenomenological research methods to analyse interview results. Creswell (2012) describes phenomenological research as identifying the fundamental nature of human experiences associated with a particular occurrence (Sugiyono, 2022). This section will investigate consumer experiences and the impact of FI on social media users who have been motivated to buy FF products.

The research was conducted between June and September 2021, utilising several data collection methods. The observation procedure was performed for 14 days, from 8-21 June 2021, on the Instagram of six Indonesian FI. The research subjects were chosen using purposive sampling, taking into account the number of followers and ensuring diversity in backgrounds, styles, and audience demographics. These are the six FI selected for examination in this study:

Table 1. List of Observed Indonesian FI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Influencer</th>
<th>Social Media Platform</th>
<th>Account Name</th>
<th>Followers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rachel Vennya Roland</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>@rachelvennya</td>
<td>5.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sarah Gibson</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>@sarahgibson21</td>
<td>1.6 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Keanu Angelo</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>@keanuagl</td>
<td>4.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Indy Ratna Pratiwi</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>@indyratnap</td>
<td>1.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dwi Handayani Syah Putri</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>@dwihandaanda</td>
<td>1.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ayla Dimitri</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>@ayladimitri</td>
<td>374 thousand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This research also conducted interviews on 14-17 July 2021 to explore the experiences of consumers that have been influenced by FI on Instagram. The interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth understanding of how these influencers impact purchasing decisions and consumer behaviour. The participants were queried regarding their evaluations of influencer legitimacy, the appeal of endorsed products, and their personal consumption habits. The participants for the interview in this study were chosen by purposive sampling. The sampling criteria are individuals who actively follow FI on Instagram and frequently engage in their content, and they have purchased at least one product recommended by FI on Instagram in the past few months. The following is a list of individuals who were interviewed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Informant Type</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DU</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>University Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>University Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IZ</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>University Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data observation involved qualitative content analysis, a research method that subjectively interprets text data through a systematic classification procedure that includes coding and detecting themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This analysis entailed studying influencer postings to identify themes, styles, and marketing strategies using dialectical communication theory and the 4C idea in digital marketing. The data analysis results are a textual narrative demonstrating the implementation of rhetorical communication and digital marketing by FI on Instagram. The interview data was analysed by thematic analysis, which involved six stages: familiarising with the data, creating initial codes, forming themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and presenting the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This study employs the method of theoretical triangulation to examine the communication culture of influencers, consumption culture, and ethical aspects of influencers. This triangulation aims to enrich the analysis and enhance the validity of the findings.
Results and Discussion

**Fashion Influencer Endorsement Strategy**

**Communication Rhetoric**

Ethos is centred on the credibility and perceived character of the speaker. This rhetorical factor refers to a speaker or communicator's image of reliability and credibility (Browning & Hartelius, 2018). Examining the ethos of these influencers demonstrates a sophisticated comprehension of how credibility and character are deliberately developed in the sphere of social media influence. Rachel Vennya intentionally crafts her public persona as a sympathetic and trustworthy young influencer and businessman, utilising her role as a mother of two. Her strict endorsement criteria and measurable brand influence showcase her credibility. Dwi Handaanda strategically cultivates her image by regularly posting Outfit of the Day (OOTD) content and engaging in collaborations, positioning herself as a prominent person in the fashion sector. Keanu Agl utilises a distinctive and captivating approach to enhance authenticity by offering exclusive discount codes for exclusive endorsements. Indy Ratna P adeptly manages her tasks by engaging a younger audience with unique fashion selections and consistent involvement. Sarah Gibson, an influencer and entrepreneur in the cosmetics industry, strategically combines endorsements and personal updates to create a comprehensive image that boosts relatability and knowledge. Ayla Dimitri, an editor and fashion stylist, conveys her values by creating top-notch material, using targeted hashtags, forming collaborations, and presenting herself as a prominent figure in the fashion industry.

Pathos, as described by Aho (1985), is the skill of influencing the audience's emotions by utilising sentiments. The expressive use of language and imagery is intended to generate emotions and enhance the emotional bond with the audience, supporting identification in persuasive communication (Higgins & Walker, 2012). Studying influencers shows the deliberate use of pathos to establish powerful emotional connections with their audience. To establish a strong bond with her extensive audience, Rachel Vennya uses evocative phrases, engaging Question and Answer (Q&A) sessions, and insights into her personal life. Dwi Handaanda adeptly merges optimism with comedy to form a solid connection with her predominantly female audience. Keanu Agl's distinctive and hilarious demeanour elicits shared laughter in Q&A sessions. Indy Ratna P produces captivating content, provides profound wisdom, and reveals moments
of vulnerability to form a deep emotional connection. Sarah Gibson shares details about her experiences in the beauty industry. Ayla Dimitri incorporates uplifting and inspiring language into her fashion and lifestyle content to create an emotional bond centred on a shared commitment to well-being.

Logos focuses on the coherence and honesty of an argument, highlighting logic and the use of reason (Green, 2004). This rhetorical feature highlights the argument's logical consistency and validity. As per Higgins & Walker (2012), logos in rhetoric refers to the logical framework of an argument and how the audience perceives its rationality, which enhances its effectiveness in persuasive communication. Rachel Vennya successfully utilises logos through clear and informative descriptions, relevant hashtags, and detailed information on product characteristics, prices, and special coupons. Dwi Handaanda enhances brand credibility by providing practical expertise in fashion and skincare, maintaining transparency in product promotions, and participating in partnerships to ensure consistent content updates. Keanu AGL integrates humour and logical information in endorsement videos, utilising promo codes to balance rationale and entertainment. Indy Ratna P uses logos in user-friendly text to display mix-and-match fashion concepts and effectively elucidate suggested things. Sarah Gibson, a cosmetics entrepreneur, utilises branding in her daily routine through extensive product descriptions, transparent pricing, and practical demonstrations of product efficacy. Ayla Dimitri carefully employs logos through hashtags, mix-and-match displays, and collaborations such as the 3mongis alliance.

Digital Marketing Strategy

FI plays a crucial role in influencer marketing by producing and endorsing branded content, establishing a more genuine and direct relationship with potential consumers than traditional brand promotions. This marketing plan encompasses various components. Context involves framing stories by shaping a narrative through language and message content (Solis, 2010). Effectively using the Context factor is crucial in influencing the visual narratives of influencers' engagement methods. FI create visually appealing social media profiles with high-quality, high-definition images that display fashionable clothing and daily routines. Rachel and Dwi Hananda employ a strategic method for creating Instastory content and endorsements, focusing on appealing images
and comprehensive presentations. Keanu incorporates unusual poses and frequent videos for fun, while Indy Ratna P integrates fascinating anecdotes into her OOTD images to form a unified narrative. Using a vivid and high-resolution style, Sarah Gibson authentically communicates through intimate experiences, such as images with her hubby and pets. Ayla Dimitri develops her authority by providing insightful OOTD advice and high-quality photographs, creating a friendly and knowledgeable brand image.

Communication involves sharing stories, listening, responding, and growing to ensure messages are effectively transmitted to the intended audience (Solis, 2010). Within the sphere of influencers, each individual possesses a unique communication style. Rachel Vennya is adept at providing lifestyle, fashion, and parenting guidance in a lucid and approachable tone. Dwi Handaanda offers detailed information on fashion and skincare products. Keanu AGL is known for his interactive and engaging attitude, encouraging engagement with followers with stimulating content that prompts recommendations and inquiry. This interactive feedback loop enhances audience involvement and provides valuable content for future programming, fostering a sense of community. Indy Ratna P interacts with online users by replying to comments and sharing distinctive stories, whilst Sarah Gibson uses videos to display her everyday activities. On the contrary, Ayla Dimitri uses transition videos and sports-related content to communicate her views effectively.

Collaboration entails working together to enhance efficiency and effectiveness (Solis, 2010). Social media cooperation is when accounts or corporations cooperate with users to improve efficacy. Rachel Vennya interacts with her followers on Instagram by using the question function for discussions and suggestions. Dwi Handaanda engages with comments and joins lifestyle discussions, integrating audience input in interactive Instagram stories. Keanu AGL creates collaboration chances through entertaining material that elicits responses, actively engaging with comments from followers. Indy Ratna P promotes collaboration by incorporating comedy into their work, frequently offering entertaining personal anecdotes to encourage interaction. Sarah Gibson engages with her followers by immediately replying to comments and resolving inquiries on her Instagram account. Ayla Dimitri participates in cooperative endeavours by responding to inquiries from her followers.
According to Solis (2010), connection is the bonds we form and maintain, highlighting the creation and fostering of relationships over time. Rachel Vennya interacts with her audience by using the question-and-answer feature. This engaging method helps address many follower questions, thereby improving their relationship. Dwi Handaanda employs a holistic approach to connection by using the question-and-answer feature and simultaneously producing lyrical and motivating content. Dwi Handaanda maintains and strengthens this connection by regularly sharing reminders about life values, creating poetry compositions, and hosting Q&A sessions with his followers. Keanu AGL focuses on an emotional connection by utilising the question-and-answer tool and creating material that connects with his followers on an emotional level. Indy Ratna P fosters a relationship by regularly utilising the question-and-answer tool to engage with followers and address their inquiries directly. Sarah Gibson fosters connections by soliciting comments and suggestions from followers using the inquiry box feature. Ayla Dimitri promotes connection using the question-and-answer tool and promotes a positive perspective.

Communication rhetoric and the 4C concept in digital marketing are tied to FI promotion. Communication rhetoric uses ethos, pathos, and logos to establish credibility, emotional connection, and logical persuasion through an influencer's persona. The 4C concept in digital marketing emphasises how influencers motivate and engage their followers to promote products. When influencers authentically deliver contextually appropriate messages, build emotional bonds with their followers, form mutually beneficial partnerships, and use interactive communication to engage and feedback to their audiences, communication rhetoric and 4C digital marketing merge. This figure shows the FI communication method:
**Construction of Consumptive Lifestyle in Fashion Influencer Endorsements**

The following are the themes and categories used to summarize the interview results regarding how influencers construct customer behavior:

![Figure 1. FI Endorsement Strategy](image-url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influencer Expertise</td>
<td>Fashion Reference</td>
<td>Influencers are relied upon for fashion advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Resemblance</td>
<td>Followers imitate influencers who possess similar appearances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promo and Discount Codes</td>
<td>Influencers' discounts stimulate impulsive buying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumptive Behaviour</td>
<td>Impulsive Buying</td>
<td>Influencers leads to impulsive buying influenced by aesthetics and endorsements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excessive Consumption</td>
<td>Regular exposure to products endorsed by influencers results in excessive spending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Yet Considering the Fashion Sustainability</td>
<td>Prioritize aesthetics rather than considering the ecological consequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Satisfaction</td>
<td>Desire Fulfillment</td>
<td>Buying endorsed clothes gives emotional satisfaction and a sense of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Winning Competition Satisfaction

Scarcity enhances the competitiveness and satisfaction of the shopping experience.

Symbol of Social Status

Purchasing clothing serves as a means to establish and display one's social standing.

Consumption Behaviour Evaluation

Regret and Dissatisfied

Regret purchases when items do not meet expectations.

Excessive Amount of Clothing

Realize they own too many clothes, leading to decision fatigue.

Adjusting to Necessity

Shift towards buying only necessary, high-quality items to reduce waste.

Eco-Friendly Fashion Awareness

Growing awareness of environmental impact, with future intent to buy sustainable items.

Source: Data Analysis Results

Influencer Expertise

Fashion Reference

Increased engagement stems from the perception that social media influencer advertisements are more reliable than those produced by studios or celebrities (Ki et al., 2020). Due to their substantial connections, respected sources, and parasocial engagement with their audience, influencers possess considerable sway over consumer behaviour. As a result, advertisers find influencer marketing exceedingly alluring (Lundblad & Davies, 2016). According to interviews, individuals who utilise social media consult FI as a point of reference for style, seeking motivation to dress following prevailing trends and sentiments.

“It is very helpful for figuring out what to wear to a certain café, especially when looking at Yogya influencers. Because of this, I don't often read material like articles, but I always check the (social media) feed. For the reason that I use Instagram all the time.” (KN, personal interview, 17 July 2021)
"Why do I follow an influencer? Just for reference. Because they know what is good and right for them. After that, I can figure out what might help me in the future. How much power do they have?... Based on my experience, Instagram stories have a bigger effect on recommendations than other features." (IZ, personal interview, 17 July 2021)

Physical Resemblance

The physical similarity is pivotal when an individual chooses to follow an FI. The influencer's followers likely have comparable facial features, skin tone, and body shape. This is consistent with the social theory of mimicry, which states that people unconsciously replicate various behaviours, such as facial expressions, emotions, postures, body movements, and languages (Chartrand & van Baaren, 2009). Unconscious mimicry is a significant facet of human social interactions, wherein individuals inadvertently adopt the postures, mannerisms, and behaviours of others (Van Baaren et al., 2009). Alternatively, society tends to imitate the fashion choices of influencers unwittingly; if an influencer appears to be comfortable in a specific ensemble, individuals may perceive that same attire as suitable for themselves. As disclosed during the interview.

"...you know, from the stories. Since you can watch videos of people showing off their clothes, you can get a good idea of what size they are and whether they make you look fat or not." (DU, personal interview, 14 July 2021)

"Dianti, Yure, a friend of Dianti's and a student at UMY (Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta), Admia Punjabi from Malang, and Nursifah from Bandung are all people of the same age—those who I think would be a good match for me. Dianti and I are the same age and about the same height, for example. Ah, I can relate. It's likely that if something looks good on Dianti, it will look good on me too." (KN, personal interview, 17 July 2021)

Promo and Discount Codes

FI frequently provides promotions to their followers while endorsing brands. This reflects the experience of individuals who are occasionally deceived and tempted to buy things because of endorsements from FI. Promotions are a powerful marketing strategy that can impact customer shopping decisions, with extensive promotions typically resulting in immediate judgments and impulse buys (Stanko, 2016). Consumers are more satisfied and have a stronger desire to purchase when there is a larger discount, which may lead them to buy non-essential things or make extra purchases (Yu et al., 2018). Discount codes used by specific influencers impact customer consumption levels. Lee & Park (2023) suggests that influencer discount codes can enhance the perception of influencer authenticity and encourage customers to
utilise these codes. Offering influencer promo coupons helps affect consumer culture, even though not everyone can utilise these deals.

“Fashion influencers have a certain amount of power and authority that can affect younger people. Influencers often promote certain things... That gets your attention, and the fact that each item costs 45 thousand or 25 thousand bucks makes it even more appealing.” (DU, personal interview, 14 July 2021)

Consumptive Behaviour

Impulsive Buying

The interview findings indicate that the interviewee frequently engages in impulsive buying, particularly when swayed by the aesthetics and possessions of others. Although they know the things may not be suitable, they want to purchase them persists. Although not consistent, the respondent admits to experiencing impulsive buying driven by social influence and the convenience of internet shopping. The study emphasises the importance of influencers in enhancing brand awareness and image for Indonesian fashion firms, particularly their impact on buy intentions and customer loyalty rather than direct sales growth (Andhini & Ramadhan, 2023).

“Be honest, that does happen a lot (laughs). For instance, she (a fashion influencer) wears a cute outfit, even if it might not look cute on us. 'Oh God, I want to buy it, I want to buy it!' So, I quickly looked for her Instagram and clicked "follow." If I see her Shopee, I immediately check it out and buy something. It can happen on the spur of the moment.” (KN, personal interview, 17 July 2021)

Excessive Consumption

The informant disclosed that she tends to be more excessive in his spending, particularly when purchasing clothes promoted by influencers. His exposure to and impact of sponsored products is indirect but frequent due to his use of social media. Viewing purchasing decisions as economic decisions means that the perceived worth of the thing being bought is already established. The variables under consideration are solely the price of the goods, other options, and the consumer's income. Psychological and anthropological approaches study the development and changes in perceived values (Salem Khalifa, 2004). Unintentionally, financial factors are occasionally not seen as a top priority, and this lack of awareness can result in lavish conduct in financial circumstances over time.

“As I got older, I realised I was wasting time and money (influencer ads). One million rupiah could have been used to buy many things, put money into stocks, and other things.” (DU, personal interview, 14 July 2021)
Not Yet Considering the Fashion Sustainability

The informant said clothing is currently viewed as a means of self-expression mainly for shaping one’s appearance. The informant admitted to being indifferent to the environmental repercussions of fashion products. Both informants prioritise purchasing attractive and distinctive clothing, even in small amounts, without considering the environmental consequences of the fashion industry's manufacturing and consumption practices. This is feasible due to a lack of understanding about clothing and sustainability, partly caused by the restricted information accessible to customers (Yan et al., 2021).

“I haven’t reached that point yet (thinking about a more minimalist fashion and paying attention to more environmentally friendly brands).” (KN, personal interview, 17 July 2021)

“Honestly, I haven't thought about eco-friendly fashion yet. Most of the time, I only buy clothes that look good on me. I like to buy one-of-a-kind items, so it’s like a race to get them when available.” (IZ, personal interview, 17 July 2021)

Self-Satisfaction

Desire Fulfillment

Consumption is based on the perceived advantage of fulfilling a subjective want, which creates a demand that needs to be met. Psychologically, behaviour is motivated by internal instincts to fulfil needs and goals rather than just the external object. In the fashion-consuming process, respondents show "happiness" while purchasing goods promoted by FI, transforming the purchase into an emotive experience rather than a mere necessity.

“The first thing that made me feel good was to buy clothes that influencers wear, whether the clothes are good or just cute. It makes me look stylish.” (DU, personal interview, 14 July 2021)

“I'm glad because I need fashion ideas from people I trust when choosing which online stores to recommend. Due to the large number of fake online stores with fake customer reviews.” (KN, personal interview, 17 July 2021)

Winning Competition Satisfaction

FI frequently endorses exclusive fashion items, impacting consumers' clothing purchasing decisions. Respondents recognise the importance of remaining watchful because of quick sales and limited inventory, reporting successful purchases and missed chances. They are motivated by competition and the wish to obtain desired things at a favourable price. These viewpoints underscore the influence of restricted supply and
competitiveness on online purchasing experiences and emotional reactions. Broeder & Wentink (2022) found that time-limited promotions can indirectly increase the perception of scarcity and competitiveness.

“That's just how it is. But if I see something cute on Instagram and the online store only has 50 of them in stock, backed by many influencers, and I still manage to check it out, it makes me feel like I won a battle. I finally got the job done and won the competition.” (KN, personal interview, 17 July 2021)

“It depends. Because with thrift items in online shops, it's a quick process, and there's a specific time frame. So, if I'm not checking my phone and Instagram, sometimes I miss it, and it's already sold out. If I get it, alhamdulillah (thank God), if not, well, that's okay.” (IZ, personal interview, 17 July 2021)

Symbol of Social Status
Respondents indicated that purchasing clothes serves functional purposes and contributes to social advancement. Consumers purchase items to gain symbolic values that enhance their ideal, societal, or personal identity (Grewal et al., 2019). Consumers can align themselves with a specific social class and demonstrate cultural understanding based on the status symbol of a product. Fashion's prestige typically leads to widespread consumption (Lundblad & Davies, 2016).

“Sometimes, if buying clothes is not for necessity but more for social flaunting, there is some truth to it.” (DU, personal interview, 14 July 2021)

Consumption Behaviour Evaluation
Regret and Dissatisfied
Informants experience disappointment post-shopping. Some people experience initial happiness while making a purchase but later feel dissatisfied when the fashion product fails to fulfil their expectations or is not as satisfied as anticipated. This pertains to the regret hypothesis, which posits that individuals may experience regret following impulsive purchases (Liao et al., 2017). According to the theory, satisfaction is derived from a purchase that brings happiness, while dissatisfaction, anger, and regret arise when the purchase fails to do so.

“There are two ways to feel. First, be happy. Second, why does it look good on them but not on me? It looks soft, but it gets really hot when I wear it. Sometimes, for example, the colour doesn't match when it arrives. I like earth tones like green and grey and don’t often use bright colours like purple and blue.” (KN, personal interview, 17 July 2021)

“I used to be happy, but then I thought, Why does someone else have the same thing? Like when I wear a knit sweater, and someone else does too?” (DU, personal interview, 14 July 2021)
**Excessive Amount of Clothing**

The informants are unaware that their wardrobe is replete with garments. At first, they relished altering their fashion style by donning various outfits on each occasion. Over time, they became perplexed as the closet was already full. The issue stemming from this behaviour is decision fatigue associated with the paradox of choice (Bardey et al., 2022). An extensive selection of clothing in one's wardrobe can lead to decision fatigue, making it difficult to choose ensembles and increasing awareness of the drawbacks of having too many clothing options.

“Okay, for example, if I have an income of 4 million, then 1 million will be used to buy clothes (including those influenced by fashion influencers). It's like I have to set a target. But over time, why is the wardrobe so full but has no function (for the clothes bought)? I used to think that in front of different people, I have to wear different clothes.” (DU, personal interview, 14 July 2021)

“Sometimes it's a bit overwhelming when there are too many clothes... Sometimes, when you have a lot of clothes, it's not about figuring out where to put them but more about deciding which clothes to give away. Because sometimes, I think I might need them in the future.” (IZ, personal interview, 17 July 2021)

**Adjusting to Necessity**

Some interviewees have acknowledged that they frequently make unnecessary clothing purchases, primarily due to the powerful recommendations of FI. Consumers must establish particular criteria for purchasing garments and resist being influenced by FI to engage in mindful consumption. Conscious consumerism entails making deliberate shopping choices, emphasising sustainability, and matching requirements with mindful purchases. The importance is in appreciating the quality of clothing and evaluating its long-lasting durability (Gomes de Oliveira et al., 2022).

“Now, the smart thing is for us to choose whether it's fashionable for others to see or for ourselves, and it's perfectly fine to select based on your own needs.” (KN, personal interview, 17 July 2021)

“Now, as someone who influencers have influenced, my current thought is probably like this: Buy useful things because the value of items tends to decrease, and they will become waste. Try to live as minimally as possible.” (DU, personal interview, 14 July 2021)

**Eco-Friendly Fashion Awareness**

Consumers become aware throughout the interview that their clothing purchase habits adversely influence the environment because of unsustainable consumption.
Evans defines sustainable consumption as consuming fewer goods and services in terms of quantity and environmental impact (Evans, 2011).

“It is important (sustainable fashion). Especially since I'm someone who actively avoids using plastic, but I've never thought about using more environmentally friendly fashion... in the future, I might always consider items that are more long-lasting, including clothes.” (KN, personal interview, 17 July 2021)

**Ethical Approach to Being a Fashion Influencer**

FI is an important societal figure who affect narratives through their advertising strategies. Becoming a fashion influencer can be a lucrative job, as their wages are linked to the number of followers they have (Breves et al., 2019). FI has a role towards addressing the consumption of FF, which is why urgency is necessary. An ethical examination, especially employing Max Weber's ethic of responsibility, is essential. This ethical perspective accepts the importance of moral obligations but also admits the lack of a predetermined ranking of values and the certainty of value conflicts in making moral decisions (Starr, 1999). Weber's ethics highlights the importance of evaluating potential consequences and taking responsibility for the anticipated outcomes of one's actions. It encourages individuals to consider the repercussions in several aspects, recognising the variety of values in contemporary society and the tensions between them (Arnaldi & Bianchi, 2016).

FI, viewed through Max Weber's ethic of responsibility, must carefully assess and contemplate the repercussions of their endorsements. This ethic requires influencers to consider the potential consequences of their impact, prompting them to take responsibility for the results of their fashion advice. Influencers can act as moral counsellors in the fashion industry by foreseeing and evaluating the consequences of their activities in advance. Responsibility can include virtues, role, outcome, cause, capacity, and responsibility (Vincent, 2011). Influencers have several responsibilities. Decisions mirror one's individuality and shape cultural trends. Influencers, as trendsetters, need to contemplate the environmental and ethical consequences of their endorsements. Their influence can cause a surge in demand for quick fashion, resulting in problems. They can sway opinions, thus they should advocate for sustainable fashion. Irresponsible behaviour might result in criticism and harm their reputation, leading to accountability for their actions.
Coeckelbergh (2012) proposed that responsibility can be viewed in two ways: looking forward to preventing negative outcomes (prospective responsibility) and looking back after negative events (retrospective responsibility). Within FI, the differentiation between anticipating the future and reflecting on the past is essential. In the future, influencers should conscientiously evaluate the possible negative consequences of their decisions, particularly on environmental or ethical concerns. This is known as potential responsibility. In retrospect, influencers must accept accountability for any problems that result from their previous recommendations. This is referred to as retrospective responsibility. Influencers must consider the repercussions of their actions and be prepared to take responsibility and rectify any mistakes that may occur.

Promoting sustainable products presents difficulties for influencers and advertising. Advertisers require assistance in identifying suitable influencers for their campaigns, and comprehending several categories of sustainable influencers is essential. Advertisers can utilise influencers who talk about sustainability to engage with their audience. Brand collaborations and proper compensation might impede the financial success of sustainable influencers. Brands utilising influencer marketing must handle the scrutiny and prioritise accountability for their sustainable practices, despite the advantages of this technique (Kaufman, 2023).

Generally, ethical marketing can also be adopted within the notion of sacred (sanctity) marketing, which argues that marketing extends beyond profit-driven enterprises to include social marketing, which seeks to benefit society (Schindler & Minton, 2022). Influencers' endorsement involves marketing influence to promote desirable behaviours for individuals and society and generate profit. By associating responsible fashion choices with influencers and making them feel special or sacred, marketers can motivate customers to embrace more ethical activities. This aligns with the social marketing objective of encouraging beneficial habits, such as sustainable fashion decisions, through establishing a sense of sanctity surrounding them.

Nowadays, there is a shift toward more responsible influencers, such as sustainable FI that use their online platforms to promote and educate their audience about sustainable fashion. These influencers advocate for eco-friendly practices, such as zero-waste lifestyles, vegan or vegetarian diets, and other environmental topics. Unlike
general lifestyle influencers, sustainability influencers consistently centre their content around sustainability, using social media to reshape their followers' perspectives on fashion and its environmental impact. These influencers maintain a carefully curated feed on platforms like Instagram, reserving more casual and spontaneous moments for ephemeral content like Instagram Stories, aiming to connect with followers without compromising the overall aesthetic of their feed (Jacobson & Harrison, 2022).

The rise of sustainable fashion social media influencers can be beneficial to reconstruct the idea of irresponsible FI. Orminski et al. (2021) highlight the vital importance of opinion leaders in promoting awareness of sustainable fashion. They emphasised the efficacy of human communication in reaching a broader audience rather than depending on traditional media with inconsistent coverage. Today, with the prevalence of Internet channels for information, the line between objective media and personal communication needs to be clearer. Salem & Alanadoly (2021) found a positive correlation between social media usage and environmentally friendly actions. They emphasised the importance of word-of-mouth as a crucial method for influencing consumer perceptions of eco-friendly products. Communicators in the sustainable fashion industry must address logical errors and create clear and persuasive messaging to assist individuals in comprehending the notion of sustainable fashion and recognising the impact of their consumption habits (Orminski et al., 2021).

Below is a summary of ethical aspects considerations that can be implemented by FI:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical Aspect</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Sanctity</th>
<th>Sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Considering their endorsements' ethical and environmental consequences.</td>
<td>Promoting ethical behaviour as respectable and encouraging followers.</td>
<td>Promoting sustainable fashion and educating consumers to do so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Focus</td>
<td>Anticipating and taking responsibility</td>
<td>Creating a sense of importance and value around the support of sustainable fashion.</td>
<td>Promoting products and lifestyles that support sustainable fashion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Proposed Ethical Aspects for FI
the negative impacts of their endorsements.

**Purpose**
- Assessing and considering the environmental and ethical impact of their endorsements, correcting mistakes if needed.
- Inspiring consumers to adopt sustainable practices by understanding and valuing ethical choices as honorable.
- Educating and influencing followers to adopt sustainable fashion practices.
- Educating and influencing followers to understand and adopt sustainable fashion practices.

**Approach**
- Proactively and reactively taking responsibility for ethical impacts, including preventing and addressing negative outcomes.
- Connecting ethical fashion choices with high moral values, encouraging a sense of duty to follow sustainable practices.
- Using social media platforms to promote and educate about the importance of sustainability in fashion.
- Using social media platforms to promote and educate about the importance of sustainability in fashion.

**Example Activities**
- Evaluating products before promoting, fixing any negative impacts caused by their endorsements.
- Associating sustainable fashion products with noble values, inspiring followers to see these choices as honorable.
- Promoting sustainable products, educating followers about FF, and encouraging eco-friendly actions.

**Conclusion**
Communication rhetoric, incorporating ethos, pathos, and logos, synergises with the 4C concept in digital marketing. Influencers genuinely engage with their audience, establish partnerships, and interactively participate, resulting in a potent blend of persuasive tactics. FI communication tactics aim to convince and maintain relationships for digital marketing purposes. Consumers often make impulsive and irrational clothing
purchases due to the strategies employed by FI. Consumers enjoy purchasing clothing promoted by influencers at this stage, leading to customers recognising and comprehending their purchasing habits more rationally. FI need to accept responsibility, sanctity, and sustainability by thoroughly assessing the impacts of their endorsements.

There are several limitations of the study. Initially, the interviews were conducted with a limited number of informants which could potentially restrict the applicability of the findings. In addition, the observation was limited to Instagram, which may have disregarded other major social media platforms. Thus, it is anticipated that this research will motivate future investigations to incorporate a wider array of persons and things, resulting in more extensive data. To enhance academic research in Indonesia, it is also advisable to place greater emphasis on the critical dimension of communication, particularly in relation to sustainable development.

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