The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Fashion Purchase Intention Among Youth in Hanoi

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Abstract
As social media has become the primary channel of information and communication for Vietnamese consumers, with approximately 79 million users by the end of 2025, social media marketing has grown increasingly important for the fashion industry, while youth in Hanoi have emerged as a key consumer segment that has not yet been examined systematically. This paper aims to synthesize the theoretical foundations and empirical evidence on the effect of social media marketing on fashion purchase intention among youth in Hanoi. Using a desk-research method that synthesizes, analyzes, evaluates, and compares secondary data sources from Vietnam and abroad, the findings show that five components of social media marketing-content marketing, influencer marketing, interactivity, electronic word-of-mouth, and personalization-all affect purchase intention, mainly through mediating mechanisms such as brand awareness, trust, and perceived value. The study contributes an integrated theoretical framework for a local context that has so far been underexplored, and offers managerial implications for domestic fashion enterprises in selecting communication platforms and building brands that fit the consumption characteristics of Hanoi youth.

Keywords: *social media marketing; purchase intention; fashion products*

1. Introduction

Social media has become the primary channel of information and communication for Vietnamese consumers. According to Kemp (2026), by October 2025 Vietnam had approximately 79 million social media accounts out of a total population of 102 million, and social media marketing has accordingly become one of the most important channels through which enterprises across many sectors reach their customers. Among these sectors, fashion is one of those most visibly affected, as online shopping and social commerce increasingly reshape consumption behavior for clothing, footwear, and accessories (ECDB, 2025). Against this backdrop, youth in the city of Hanoi, which has the second-largest population in the country with more than 8.5 million residents as of 2023 (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, as cited in VietNamNet, 2025), have emerged as a key consumer segment for fashion products, given their high frequency of social media use and the strong influence of digital communication on their purchasing decisions. The relationship between social media marketing and consumer purchase intention has attracted considerable attention from international researchers over roughly the past decade. Theoretically, this effect is commonly explained through the theory of planned behavior, in which attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control are regarded as direct antecedents of behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). Building on this theoretical foundation, a number of empirical studies have demonstrated the positive effect of social media marketing activities-including content marketing, influencer marketing, and electronic word-of-mouth-on the purchase intention of young consumers across various product categories, ranging from organic cosmetics (An &

Ngo, 2025) to fashion products specifically (George et al., 2025). In Vietnam, this line of research has likewise produced noteworthy findings. Ngo et al. (2024) identified the factors driving Generation Z's intention to purchase sustainable clothing products nationwide. Hoàng and Trân (2024) found that short-video marketing on social media indirectly affects Generation Y and Generation Z consumers' online fashion purchase intention in Ho Chi Minh City. In Hanoi specifically, Trịnh Hoài et al. (2022) examined the roles of enjoyment, brand image, and advertising in shaping the intention to purchase domestic fashion products on a social commerce platform, although that study was confined to a single platform and did not comprehensively cover the other dimensions of social media marketing. A clear research gap therefore remains: to date, no study has systematically synthesized multiple components of social media marketing in relation to the fashion purchase intention of youth in Hanoi.

Building on this gap, the present paper sets out to synthesize the theoretical foundations and empirical evidence on the effect of social media marketing on the fashion purchase intention of youth in Hanoi. Accordingly, the paper addresses two main questions: first, which components of social media marketing influence the fashion purchase intention of young consumers; and second, through which mediating or moderating mechanisms these components operate within the specific context of the Hanoi market.

Theoretically, the paper contributes synthesized evidence to the literature on social media marketing within the context of an emerging market where digital consumption behavior is changing rapidly. Practically and managerially, the findings are of pressing relevance for fashion enterprises-particularly domestic brands-competing intensely against imported goods and cross-border e-commerce platforms. Given limited marketing budgets, identifying which component of social media marketing yields the greatest effect on the purchase intention of Hanoi youth will help marketing managers allocate resources more efficiently, design more appropriate communication content, and strengthen brand competitiveness in the urban fashion market.

2. Theoretical Foundations and Research Method

2.1 Core Concepts

For the purposes of this paper, social media marketing is defined as the set of communication and promotional activities that enterprises carry out through social media platforms to build brand awareness, cultivate customer relationships, and stimulate purchasing behavior; it comprises such core components as content marketing, influencer marketing, interactivity, electronic word-of-mouth, and personalization. Purchase intention is understood as a consumer's subjective likelihood of carrying out the behavior of purchasing a specific product or service in the near future, and it is regarded as the most direct and reliable predictor of actual purchasing behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Fashion products in this paper are confined to the category of personal consumer goods comprising clothing, footwear, and related accessories, which currently account for the largest share of revenue within Vietnam's fashion e-commerce sector (ECDB, 2025). These three concepts form the central relationship that this paper seeks to clarify, with social media marketing serving as the independent variable and the fashion purchase intention of Hanoi youth as the dependent variable to be explained.

2.2 Theoretical Foundations

This study draws on four widely validated theories of consumer behavior from the international literature. First, the theory of reasoned action, abbreviated as TRA, proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), holds that an individual's behavior is directly governed by behavioral intention, which is in turn shaped by attitude toward the behavior and subjective norms. Applied to this study, the theory helps explain how young consumers' positive attitudes toward advertising content on social media, as well as social pressure from friends and online communities, can

translate into fashion purchase intention. Second, the theory of planned behavior, abbreviated as TPB, developed by Ajzen (1991) as an extension of the theory of reasoned action, adds perceived behavioral control to capture the barriers or facilitating conditions an individual perceives when performing a behavior. In the context of online fashion shopping, perceived behavioral control is reflected in the ease of navigating a social media platform, confidence in the payment process, and ease of access to product information. Third, the technology acceptance model, abbreviated as TAM, developed by Davis (1989), explains the intention to use a technological system through two cognitive factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. This model helps explain why the user-friendliness and convenience of shopping features embedded in social media platforms, such as in-app stores or chat-based ordering functions, can affect young consumers' purchase intention. Fourth, the stimulus–organism–response model, abbreviated as SOR, proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) in the field of environmental psychology, treats external environmental stimuli as influencing an individual's internal psychological state, which in turn produces a behavioral response. Applied to this study, social media marketing activities serve as the stimulus, the emotional and cognitive state of young consumers exposed to these stimuli serves as the mediating organism, and fashion purchase intention serves as the resulting response. Integrating these four theories allows this paper to build a comprehensive explanatory framework that encompasses the social, technological-cognitive, and psychological dimensions of purchasing behavior.

2.3 Desk-Research Method

Methodologically, this paper adopts a desk-research approach based on synthesizing, analyzing, evaluating, and comparing previously published secondary data sources. The data sources drawn upon include scholarly articles indexed in international databases, market reports published by digital-technology research organizations, and domestic studies on online fashion consumption behavior. Three criteria guided the selection of sources. First, priority was given to works published from 2015 onward to ensure the currency of the evidence. Second, sources were retrieved using keywords directly related to social media marketing, purchase intention, and fashion products, combined with the Vietnamese and Hanoi context. Third, only sources whose publication details could be verified-through a digital object identifier for academic sources or a direct access link for organizational sources-were used. On this basis, the retrieved literature was classified by theme, cross-compared between international and domestic studies, and evaluated for similarities and differences in order to identify common findings as well as remaining research gaps.

2.4 Proposed Analytical Framework

Building on the theoretical and empirical synthesis above, this paper proposes an analytical framework comprising five components of social media marketing-content marketing, influencer marketing, interactivity, electronic word-of-mouth, and personalization-acting as independent variables that affect the fashion purchase intention of Hanoi youth. This relationship is assumed to be governed by mediating and moderating mechanisms, including brand awareness, trust, and perceived value. This framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

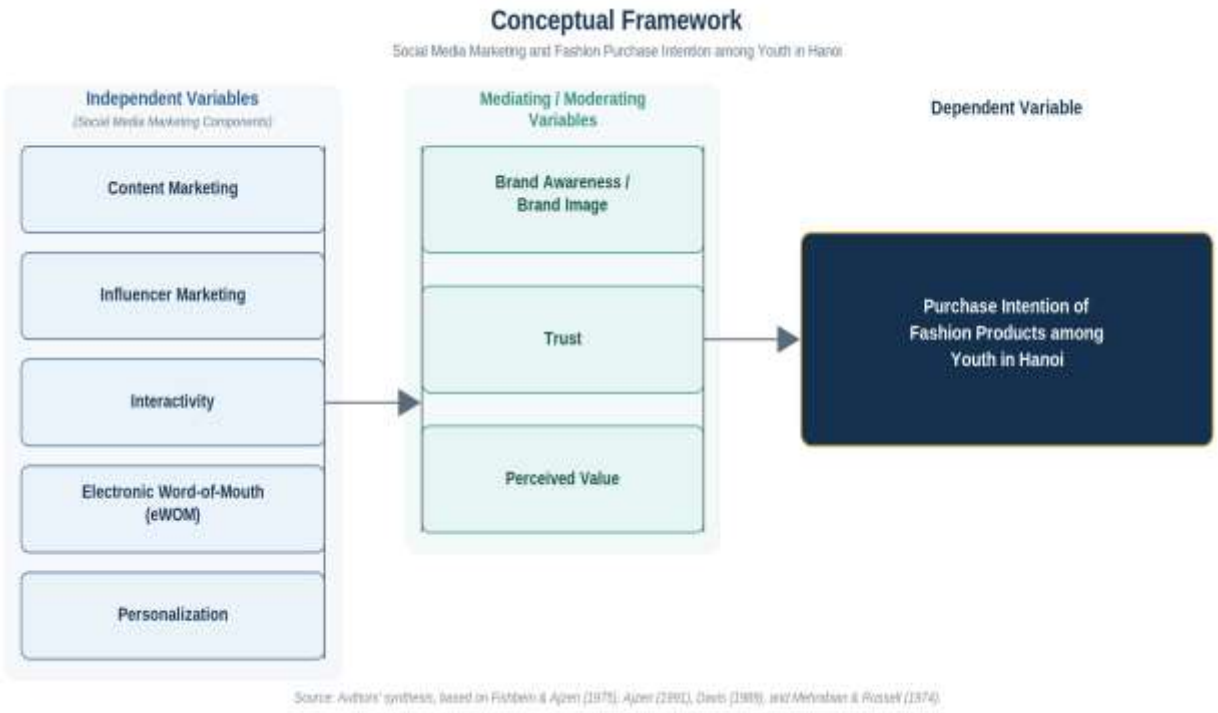


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the effect of social media marketing on the fashion purchase intention of youth in Hanoi

Source: Compiled and proposed by the authors, drawing on Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), Ajzen (1991), Davis (1989), and Mehrabian and Russell (1974).

3. Synthesis and Analysis of Research Findings

3.1 Components of Social Media Marketing Affecting Purchase Intention

The synthesized literature shows that all five components of social media marketing specified in the analytical framework in Figure 1 are supported by empirical evidence, although the strength and mechanism of their effects differ across research contexts. With respect to content marketing, Schivinski et al. (2022) found that both firm-created and user-generated content on social media indirectly affect fashion purchase intention through brand equity, and that this effect is further moderated by the degree of self-congruity between the consumer and the brand's image. This finding indicates that content marketing does not operate directly or uniformly, but rather through an intervening cognitive mechanism, consistent with the logic of the theory of reasoned action discussed in Section 2.2. With respect to influencer marketing, Gomes, Marques, and Dias (2022) showed that the content quality produced by digital influencers and the degree of para-social interaction between influencers and followers are the two factors with the strongest direct, positive effect on fashion purchase intention, whereas trustworthiness and expertise mainly operate indirectly through consumer attitude toward sponsored content. This result is reinforced by the systematic review of George et al. (2025), which shows that research on influencer marketing in the fashion industry has grown rapidly and consistently confirms its positive role in shaping purchase intention. With respect to interactivity, understood as the degree of reciprocal engagement between a brand and consumers on social media, Vo Minh, Nguyen Huong, and Dang Nguyen Ha (2022) found that social brand engagement directly affects brand equity and indirectly affects purchase intention in Vietnam's fashion industry, with the strength of this effect varying significantly across age groups. With respect to electronic word-of-mouth, An and Ngo (2025) found that social media marketing activities, of which electronic word-of-mouth is an important component, positively

affect young consumers' purchase intention through the mediating mechanisms of perceived quality and perceived value; although that study was conducted in the organic-cosmetics category, the mechanism identified shows strong similarity to the fashion sector, given that both belong to the category of consumer products with high personal-expression value. Finally, with respect to personalization, Dewi, Herlina, and Boetar Boetar (2022) found that social media marketing activities in general, of which content personalization is one constituent element, positively affect purchase intention in the fashion industry through the mediating role of brand awareness. For ease of comparison, representative studies are summarized in Table 1 below by author, research context, social media marketing variable used, and key findings.

Table 1. Summary of Selected Empirical Studies on the Effect of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention

Author(s), Year	Research Context	Social Media Marketing Component(s)	Key Findings
Schivinski et al. (2022)	Fashion consumers, international sample	Firm-created and user-generated content	Indirect effect on purchase intention through brand equity, moderated by self-congruity
Gomes, Marques, & Dias (2022)	Fashion consumers in Portugal	Digital-influencer characteristics: trustworthiness, expertise, content quality	Content quality and para-social interaction have a direct, positive effect on purchase intention
Vo Minh, Nguyen Huong, & Dang Nguyen Ha (2022)	Vietnam's fashion market	Social brand engagement	Direct effect on brand equity; indirect effect on purchase intention, varying by age segment
An & Ngo (2025)	Generation Z in Vietnam; organic cosmetics	Social media marketing activities and eWOM	Positive effect on purchase intention via perceived quality and perceived value
Dewi, Herlina, & Boetar Boetar (2022)	Fashion consumers in Indonesia	Social media marketing activities (general)	Positive effect on purchase intention, mediated by brand awareness
Hoàng & Trần (2024)	Generation Y and Z in Ho Chi Minh City	Short-video marketing	Indirect effect on online fashion purchase intention through consumer attitude
Trịnh Hoài et al. (2022)	Youth in Hanoi	Enjoyment, brand image, and advertising on a social commerce platform	Brand image has the strongest effect on purchase intention for domestic fashion products

Author(s), Year	Research Context	Social Media Marketing Component(s)	Key Findings
Ngo et al. (2024)	Generation Z in Vietnam	Green perceived value linked to social media communication	Green perceived value is the strongest predictor of sustainable fashion purchase intention

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Overall, the evidence summarized in Table 1 indicates that no single component of social media marketing dominates across every research context; rather, the strength of the effect depends on the product category, the demographic characteristics of consumers, and the mediating mechanism selected in each specific research model.

3.2 Consumption Characteristics of Hanoi Youth in the Fashion Sector

The fashion consumption characteristics of Hanoi youth are directly shaped by this population's social media usage patterns. With approximately 79 million social media accounts out of a national population of 102 million as of October 2025 (Kemp, 2026), young users-including youth in Hanoi-constitute the demographic group with the highest frequency and duration of social media use. In terms of product-information-seeking behavior, a survey by TGM Research (2025) of online fashion shoppers in Vietnam found that the majority of fashion shoppers use smartphones as their primary device for searching and ordering, reflecting a mobile-first shopping trend. At the same time, Vietnam's fashion e-commerce market currently leans heavily toward platforms that integrate social media and short-form video, with Shopee and TikTok Shop together accounting for the majority of the gross merchandise value transacted across the four largest e-commerce platforms (vnmarketinsights, 2026)-indicating that Hanoi youth increasingly obtain fashion-product information not only through conventional social media pages but also through live-streamed selling and short product-demonstration videos. In terms of consumer psychology, young urban consumers in cities such as Hanoi tend to use fashion products as a means of expressing personal identity and affirming their position within online reference groups, which results in a high sensitivity to emerging fashion trends and a strong susceptibility to community reviews and comments before making a purchase decision. This characteristic is consistent with the finding of Trịnh Hoài et al. (2022), who identified brand image-a factor closely tied to the capacity for identity expression-as the strongest predictor of the intention to purchase domestic fashion products among Hanoi youth on a social commerce platform. At the same time, because Vietnam's online fashion market remains highly price-competitive and characterized by frequent large-scale promotions, the consumption behavior of Hanoi youth also displays a notable sensitivity to price alongside brand considerations, particularly during major promotional events on e-commerce platforms.

3.3 Mediating and Moderating Mechanisms

The synthesized evidence shows that the effect of social media marketing on purchase intention is rarely purely direct; rather, it is largely transmitted through mediating mechanisms or shaped by moderating factors related to brand cognition. Regarding the role of brand awareness, both Dewi, Herlina, and Boetar Boetar (2022) and Trịnh Hoài et al. (2022) confirm that it serves either as a mediating mechanism or as the strongest direct factor in the chain linking social media marketing to fashion purchase intention, indicating that building consistent brand awareness across social media platforms is a necessary condition for communication activities to translate into actual purchase intention. Regarding the role of trust, Gomes, Marques, and

Dias (2022) showed that the trustworthiness of an influencer does not affect purchase intention directly but mainly operates through consumer attitude toward sponsored content, suggesting that trust functions more as an underlying condition than as an immediate driver of effect.
Regarding perceived value, An and Ngo (2025) identified this, alongside perceived quality, as one of the two principal mediating mechanisms through which social media marketing activities translate into purchase intention; Ngo et al. (2024) extend this concept to green perceived value and identify it as the strongest predictor of the intention to purchase sustainable fashion products among Generation Z, indicating that the content of perceived value can be flexibly adapted according to the characteristics of a specific fashion-product segment. Regarding the level of engagement, the findings of Schivinski et al. (2022) together with Vo Minh, Nguyen Huong, and Dang Nguyen Ha (2022) show that brand engagement on social media can act either as a factor directly affecting brand equity or as a moderator that alters the strength of the relationship between communication content and purchase intention, particularly when considered alongside individual self-congruity or customer age group. Taken together, these findings indicate that a complete explanatory model of the effect of social media marketing on fashion purchase intention must account for at least the four mediating and moderating mechanisms identified above, rather than considering only a direct relationship between the two principal variables.

3.4 Comparison between the International Context and the Vietnamese Context

Comparing studies conducted in developed markets with those conducted in Vietnam reveals both notable similarities and differences. In terms of similarities, the mediating mechanisms of brand awareness, trust, and perceived value are consistently observed across both groups of contexts-as seen in Schivinski et al. (2022) in the international setting and Trịnh Hoài et al. (2022) in Hanoi-indicating that the consumer-behavior theories discussed in Section 2.2 apply across cultural contexts and levels of market development.
The main difference, however, lies in the structure of the social media platforms used as communication channels. Whereas international studies such as those of Gomes, Marques, and Dias (2022) and Schivinski et al. (2022) primarily examine image- and long-form-content-oriented platforms such as Instagram or fashion blogs, studies conducted in Vietnam-including Hoàng and Trần (2024) and Vo Minh et al. (2022)-focus predominantly on short-video and direct social-interaction platforms, reflecting the particular structure of popular social media platforms in Vietnam, where shopping activity is deeply integrated into short-video and social-commerce platforms rather than separated from communication activity (vnmarketinsights, 2026). In addition, community-oriented consumption culture is more pronounced in the Vietnamese context, where brand engagement and influence from online communities tend to exert a strong effect on individual decisions, a pattern consistent with the relationship-oriented character of Vietnamese consumer culture in general and of Hanoi youth in particular. Finally, whereas most international studies focus on fashion brands that already hold an established global position, studies conducted in Vietnam, such as Trịnh Hoài et al. (2022), place greater emphasis on the competitiveness of domestic fashion brands in the face of pressure from imported goods and cross-border e-commerce platforms, suggesting that the practical implications of social media marketing in Vietnam are more closely tied to the goal of developing domestic brands.

4. Discussion

4.1 Theoretical Contributions

The findings synthesized in Section 3 yield several theoretical contributions. First, the paper integrates four theories of consumer behavior-the theory of reasoned action, the theory of planned behavior, the technology acceptance model, and the stimulus–organism–response

model-into a single unified analytical framework, whereas most of the studies surveyed in Table 1 apply only a single theory to a specific aspect of social media marketing. Second, the paper provides synthesized evidence for a local context that remains underrepresented in the existing literature, as most domestic studies have been conducted in Ho Chi Minh City or at the national level, while the consumption characteristics specific to Hanoi youth in the fashion sector have not yet been examined systematically. Third, by jointly examining multiple mediating and moderating mechanisms-brand awareness, trust, perceived value, and engagement-the paper clarifies that the effect of social media marketing on purchase intention does not operate through a single pathway, but instead depends on which mediating factor predominates within a given product segment and consumer group.

4.2 Managerial Implications

Based on these findings, several managerial implications are proposed for fashion enterprises, particularly domestic brands operating in Hanoi. First, enterprises should prioritize building consistent brand awareness across social media, as this is the most robust and stable mediating mechanism identified across the synthesized studies. Second, enterprises should select platforms that match the consumption habits of Hanoi youth; short-video and social-commerce platforms, such as TikTok Shop and Shopee, should be prioritized over traditional one-way communication channels. Third, influencer-marketing activities should emphasize content quality and close, relatable interaction rather than relying solely on follower count. Fourth, enterprises should actively encourage electronic word-of-mouth, as genuine reviews and shared experiences from young customers carry strong persuasive power among peers of the same age group. Fifth, because Hanoi youth are simultaneously price-sensitive and brand-conscious, enterprises need to balance short-term promotional campaigns with long-term brand-building strategies. Finally, domestic fashion brands should emphasize identity and personal-expression elements in their communication content, as this represents a viable competitive advantage in the face of pressure from imported goods and cross-border e-commerce platforms.

5. Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Research Directions

Using a desk-research method, this paper has systematized the theoretical foundations drawn from four fundamental models of consumer behavior and synthesized empirical evidence on the effect of social media marketing on the fashion purchase intention of youth in Hanoi. The findings show that all five components of social media marketing-content marketing, influencer marketing, interactivity, electronic word-of-mouth, and personalization-are capable of affecting purchase intention, though largely through mediating mechanisms such as brand awareness, trust, and perceived value rather than through direct effects. At the same time, the mobile-first and short-video-oriented social media usage patterns of Hanoi youth, together with the community-oriented consumption culture characteristic of Vietnam, distinguish this context to some extent from that of developed markets. Alongside these contributions, the paper has several limitations stemming from the nature of the desk-research method. First, because no primary data were collected, the paper cannot quantitatively test the specific magnitude of effect of each component of social media marketing, nor precisely determine the mediating or moderating role of each variable within the specific context of Hanoi. Second, part of the literature used, particularly the international studies, pertains to related categories such as cosmetics rather than fashion products proper, so the inferences drawn for the fashion sector remain analogous rather than fully category-specific. Third, the domestic literature synthesized is concentrated mainly on Ho Chi Minh City or the national level, so the body of direct evidence specific to Hanoi remains comparatively limited.

In light of these limitations, future research should undertake direct quantitative surveys of Hanoi youth, employing structural equation modeling to simultaneously test the roles of the multiple mediating and moderating variables proposed in Figure 1. In addition, future studies could extend the comparison between Hanoi and other major Vietnamese cities to further clarify regional specificities in fashion consumption behavior as shaped by social media marketing.

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