

# Beyond Warmth and Competence: Influencer Marketing in Indonesia's Local Fashion

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study investigates the impact of brand warmth and brand competence on consumers repurchase intentions for local fashion brands in Indonesia, focusing on Batam City. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Stereotype Content Model (SCM), this study examines consumer engagement as a mediating factor and influencer marketing as a moderating variable.

**Research Methodology:** A quantitative method was employed, and responses from 446 participants in Indonesia were collected using structured questionnaires. Data were analyzed using SmartPLS 3.

**Results:** The findings revealed that brand warmth significantly enhanced repurchase intention, whereas brand competence did not. However, warmth and competence substantially increased consumer engagement, positively mediating the relationship with repurchase intention. Additionally, influencer marketing strengthens the effect of brand perception on consumer engagement.

**Conclusions:** These insights suggest that emotional perception (warmth) is a stronger driver of consumer loyalty than functional perception (competence), and that influencer-driven strategies can effectively boost brand-consumer connections.

**Limitations:** This study focuses only on local fashion brands in Indonesia, especially bags and wallets; therefore, the results may not apply to other products or industries. The study was conducted only in Indonesia and mainly involved female consumers.

**Contributions:** This study makes a significant theoretical contribution by integrating the TPB and SCM into the local branding context, particularly by emphasizing emotional branding and influencer partnerships to enhance sustained consumer engagement and loyalty in the competitive local fashion market.

**Keywords:** *Brand Competence, Brand Perception, Customer Engagement, Influencer Marketing, Repurchase Intention*

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## 1. Introduction

As a local brand in Indonesia, particularly in the fashion sector, it has gained popularity and experienced rapid growth (Kartikasari et al., 2025). Most Indonesians prefer to buy local fashion brands over global ones (Heriyati, Bismo, & Erwinta, 2024). This is because Local brands are known for their relatively affordable prices, best quality Safeer, Zhou, Abrar, and Luo (2022), and use sustainable materials such as Wood Plastic Composite (WPC) in environmentally friendly production processes (detikNews.com). This phenomenon has emerged due to the ease of access to popular trends and brands through digital technology and information (Huwaida et al., 2024).

During the 2024 National Online Shopping Day (HARBOLNAS) program, local products dominated sales, contributing 52% of sales, with a transaction value of IDR 16.1 trillion, an increase of approximately 31% compared to the previous year (Indonesia. go. id). However, local Indonesian brands face stiff competition from Chinese products on e-commerce platforms, which offer lower prices. This is evident in the fact that the Indonesian people continue to purchase imported Chinese fashion products, which remain expensive ([Heriyati et al., 2024](#)). According to the BPS Report, Indonesia's largest imports of clothing and bags are from China, which contributed 42.69 percent and increased approximately 10.53 percent ([Estherina, 2024](#)). Additionally, cross-border acquisitions of local brands in Indonesia can erode consumer loyalty, as consumers tend to expect higher quality from global brands ([Udin, Friedman, Anggraeni, & Shaikh, 2024](#)). Retail availability for local brands also needs to be considered, as large shopping malls often prioritize global brands ([Arunachalam, Bahadir, Bharadwaj, & Guesalaga, 2019](#)). For local Indonesian brands to survive in the market, it is necessary to strengthen their brands ([Sulhaini, Rusdan, Sulaimiah, & Dayani, 2022](#)), adopt new marketing strategies ([Ma & Gu, 2024](#)), and implement policy changes related to the import of fashion products ([Islamiati, 2023](#)).

Research in the Czech Republic related to consumer perception of local products has increased due to brand awareness, including the characteristics and benefits of local brands and customers ([Stoklasa & Matušinská, 2022](#)). Another study noted that consumers' perceptions of local and global brands influence brand stereotypes (warmth and competence) and found that brand warmth, rather than competence, increases purchase intention ([Kolbl, Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, & Diamantopoulos, 2019](#)). Consumer perception of local brands has an Emotional Connection with Consumers (Warmth) ([Sulhaini et al., 2022](#)), while global brands are closely related to their reliability in Social status, prestige, modernity, success, luxury, and self-image (competence) ([Safeer, Chen, Abrar, Kumar, & Razzaq, 2021](#)). Influencer marketing is considered to influence consumer purchasing intentions ([Aini & Zagladi, 2025](#)). However, existing studies primarily focus on the direct effects of warmth and competence on purchase intention without considering how digital marketing mechanisms may reshape these perceptions. Studies examining the role of influencers in the purchase of fashion products have revealed their strong influence ([Kliestik, Zak, & Hasprova, 2020](#)). Another study explained that virtual influencers can increase the perception of warmth and competence ([El Hedhli, Zourrig, Al Khateeb, & Alnawas, 2023](#)). Influencer marketing also encourages higher consumer engagement (brand warmth) and generates more online sales (brand competence) ([Ren, Karimi, Bravo Velázquez, & Cai, 2023](#)). Influencer marketing increases and raises purchasing intentions ([Irrawati & Isa, 2025](#)).

Academics have extensively researched the impact of brand warmth and brand competence on the intention to buy local products ([Kolbl et al. \(2019\)](#); [Kolbl, Diamantopoulos, Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, and Zabkar \(2020\)](#)) and strategies to increase brand warmth and repurchase intention ([Sehgal, Jham, & Malhotra, 2023](#)). There is still a lack of literature examining the impact of brand stereotypes (warmth and competence) on consumer engagement ([Wei, Zhang, and Qiao \(2022\)](#)), but no one has yet researched the moderation of influencer marketing on consumer engagement and buyback intention ([Nidhi Sehgal, 2021](#)). Therefore, researchers must investigate whether influencer marketing affects brand perception (warmth and competence) of local fashion products in Indonesia, thereby increasing consumer involvement and repurchase intentions. This gap is particularly relevant for Indonesia, where local brands compete intensely with imported and global products in highly digitized marketplaces. Understanding whether influencer marketing amplifies the effect of brand warmth and competence on repurchase intention is crucial for developing sustainable brand strategies. Repurchase intention is important because it helps companies retain existing customers ([Fatimah Az Zahra, 2026](#)). To answer this research question, the study incorporated the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) ([Ajzen \(1991\)](#)) and the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) ([S. T. Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick \(2007\)](#)) to investigate the relationship between the warmth of brand stereotypes and competence towards repurchase intention. This study examines the role of influencer marketing in shaping buyback intention Theory of Planned Behavior for local fashion products, utilizing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) framework. Examining SCM frameworks using TPB can help fill research gaps and provide practical insights to drive sustainable purchasing among an ever-growing consumer demographic.

This study fills this gap by positioning influencer marketing as a moderating mechanism that explains how digital marketing strategies interact with brand stereotypes to drive sustained purchasing behavior. By integrating SCM's cognitive-affective evaluation of brands with TPB's behavioral intention framework, this study extends existing theory into the influencer-driven digital environment and provides a more comprehensive explanation of repurchase intention in local fashion brands. This finding also provides significant benefits for local product entrepreneurs, as it increases their understanding of the repurchase intentions of local fashion products and stimulates the creation of innovative marketing strategies and strong branding. The government can also use this information to develop new policies that promote the business expansion of local fashion products and increase awareness and consumer adoption of local brands. The following sections explain the theoretical foundations, hypotheses, research methods, analysis results, and discussion ([Hoang & Tung, 2024](#))

## 2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

### 2.1 Theoretical Background

In the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), a person's intentions are considered the primary indicator of their effort or willingness to take action, serving as a strong predictor of their actual behavior ([Ajzen, 1991](#)). The TPB also emphasizes the significant influence of consumer behavior in shaping various industries, particularly the fashion sector. The SDG assumes that an individual's intention to engage in a particular behaviour is influenced by three key factors: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived control over the behaviour ([Yoopetch, Damrongmahasawat, & Promsiri, 2024](#)). Repurchase intention is related to consumer attitudes. If consumers are interested in a product, they are more likely to repurchase it ([Kaiyethire Bupalan, 2019](#)). The TPB can predict the intention to buy back local fashion products, so this becomes the Grant Theory of the researcher. Stereotypes are oversimplified and generalized beliefs about the characteristics of a social group that tend to be uniform in a given population ([Greenwald et al., 1995](#)). One of the most prominent theoretical frameworks for understanding the nature of stereotypes is the Stereotypical Content Model (SCM) ([Fiske, 2002](#)). SCM is the most widely used theory in stereotype research ([Halkias & Diamantopoulos, 2020](#)). According to this theory, each social group can be described along two basic dimensions: warmth and social competence. Warmth is associated with friendliness and kindness, whereas competence is associated with efficacy and skill ([S. T. Fiske et al., 2007](#)). Recent research on Stereotypical Content Models (SCMs) in psychology and marketing has progressed rapidly. Although most of this research has been conducted in Western countries, further exploration of SCMs in other regions is required. Therefore, research in Indonesia uses this SCM Model for local fashion products as a middle theory.

### 2.2 Warmth and Competence

Warmth is reflected in friendliness, trust, and social connection, whereas competence is characterized by intelligence, efficiency, and goal achievement; marketers can strategically emphasize both of these qualities through advertising ([Liu, Wei, Zhu, & Chen, 2022](#)). Brand Competence (BC) enhances the functional value of a product but not its emotional value, whereas Brand Warmth (BW) positively influences both functional and emotional value by conveying quality and benefits. Brand competence and warmth are considered to encourage consumer intent to purchase a product or service ([Hwang, Kim, & Kim, 2022](#)). Therefore, brand competence and warmth play a significant role in consumer behavior, as the purchase decision for a product is based on the extent to which the brand is perceived as competent and warm in offering the chosen product ([Wang & Liu, 2020](#)). Some studies have shown that BC and BW positively affect purchase decision-making intentions. This is also supported by other studies ([Kolbl et al., 2019](#); [Kolbl et al., 2020](#)). This is also supported by other studies ([Kolbl et al., 2019](#); [Kolbl et al., 2020](#)). Brand perception (i.e., warm versus competent) can also influence consumer engagement ([Eigenraam, Eelen, & Verlegh, 2022](#)). Previous research has shown that brand warmth results in more consumer engagement than brand competence ([Kervyn, Fiske, & Malone, 2021](#); [Liu et al., 2022](#)). However, other studies show that BC and BW significantly affect Consumer Engagement.

$H_1$ : BC has a positive effect on RPI

$H_2$ : BW has a positive effect on RPI

$H_3$ : BC has a positive effect on CE

$H_4$ : BW has a positive effect on CE

### 2.3 Influencer Marketing

Marketing is growing rapidly and is becoming a crucial part of marketing strategies (Spörl-Wang, Krause, & Henkel, 2025). Brands utilize influencers to boost sales and enhance Consumer Engagement (Putra Ramadhani Nurwijayanto, 2023). This is especially important because consumers prefer brands that are trustworthy, valuable, and competent; thus, influencers can increase Consumer Engagement (Joyce, 2024). Consumers are closely related to influencers, as products recommended by influencers tend to increase purchase intent (Kervyn et al., 2021). Previous research has demonstrated that influencer marketing has a positive impact on Consumer Engagement (Chen, 2020; Diamantopoulos, Szöcs, Florack, Kolbl, & Egger, 2021; Ge, Wang, Wang, & Tan, 2025; Jakubanecs, Supphellen, Helgeson, Haugen, & Sivertstøl, 2023; Li & Nan, 2023; Surira, Zakkariya, & Sajid, 2023; Xue, Zhou, Zhang, & Majeed, 2020). Influencer marketing is expected to shape brand perception by enhancing perceived warmth and competence. Informational cues, such as argument quality and credibility, are likely to strengthen perceived competence, whereas visual attractiveness and aesthetic presentation are more likely to enhance perceived warmth (Lu, 2026). Therefore, influencer marketing may strengthen the effect of brand stereotypes on repurchase intention by reinforcing the perceptions of warmth and competence. Another study discussed how brand stereotypes moderate influencer marketing effectiveness (Ren et al., 2023).

$H_5$ : IM moderates the relationship between BC and CE

$H_6$ : IM moderates the relationship between BW and CE

### 2.4 Consumer Engagement

Brands should prioritise effective communication methods in their Consumer Engagement strategies, particularly in post-purchase interactions, to strengthen emotional relationships with customers (Owusu, Li, & Omari-Sasu, 2025). Consumer Engagement can predict and explain consumer behaviour related to repurchase intention (Islam, Hollebeek, Rahman, Khan, & Rasool, 2019). Warmth and competence perceptions are positive predictors of consumer purchase intentions (Kervyn et al., 2021). Both intention to endorse and engagement reflect the active participation of consumers in a brand or product (Silva, Farias, Grigg, & Barbosa, 2020). Consumer Engagement can increase warm brand perception and competence (Eigenraam et al., 2022) and positively impact repurchase intention (Cheung, Pires, Rosenberger, Leung, & Salehuddin Sharipudin, 2021). Customer engagement with a product or service may lead to repurchase intention (Nasrulloh, Rohim, & Idries, 2025). Thus, this study empirically tested the effects of mediation as follows.

$H_7$ : CE mediates the relationship between BC and RPI

$H_8$ : CE mediates the relationship between BW and RPI

$H_9$ : CE has a positive effect RPI

Based on previous studies, the research framework for this study is as follows:

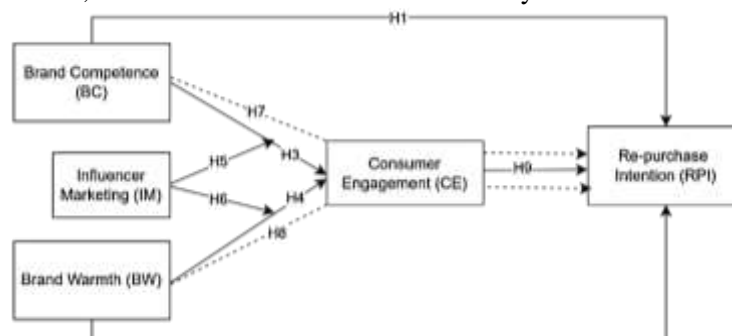


Figure 1. Research framework

### 3. Methodology

This study employs a quantitative methodology, collecting data from Batam, Indonesia, from consumers who have purchased fashion products, specifically bags, from local brands. Batam City, as a free trade zone, is supported by the government and society, which has high purchasing power, thus driving its economic growth (Angela, 2019). Batam has a strategic position as a Free Trade Zone (FTZ),

which facilitates cross-border trade and intensifies competition between local and imported fashion products. The data collection process lasted three months (October–December 2025) and utilized a Google Forms survey, where participants rated their approval on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The sampling technique uses the Hair model, which is when the number of respondents to be surveyed is uncertain (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019) based on the 1:10 ratio rule of thumb (Hair et al., 2019). The minimum required sample size for the 24 items was 240 respondents. Nevertheless, this study successfully obtained responses from 446 participants to ensure data robustness, minimize potential bias, and improve generalizability of the findings.

The measurement scale used in this study was modified from previous research to suit the specific circumstances in Indonesia. BC uses a six-item scale created by (Kolbl et al., 2020), a four-item scale for BW from (Oleszkiewicz & Lachowicz-Tabaczek, 2016) 3-item IM measurement, as described by (Giles & Edwards, 2018), and Sashi ((Sashi, 2012) created an eight-item CE scale. Lastly, three items for the RPI were used (Lin et al., 2022)(Lin, Chen, & Zhang, 2022). The survey included two screening questions to exclude data from respondents who had not purchased or used local-brand products. Respondents who answered "yes" to "Have you ever bought a local-brand bag/purse?" were asked the second question, "Which local brand of bag/purse have you purchased below in the last six months?" The study rewarded respondents who answered all survey questions to increase the number of high-quality responses. The authors used PLS-SEM analytical techniques to test research models and hypotheses, which are useful in making predictions and discovering new insights by identifying latent variable scores, accurately predicting individual scores, and explaining significant indicator variances (Hair et al., 2019). PLS-SEM is effective in capturing complex relationships between structural variables (Hoang, 2021). The analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 3.

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Result

#### 4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

Based on an online survey, there were 446 valid responses. The majority of consumers who bought local fashion brand products were women (90.9 %), while men accounted for 9.1%. The 18–25-year age group accounted for 64.9% of the sample, followed by the 26–33-year age group at 31.8%. This indicates that the intention to buy brand products among individuals aged > 26 years remains high (Toti, 2025). In terms of monthly income, the majority of respondents had an income of <5 million Rupiah (Nasrulloh et al.) (44.2%), followed by those with an income of 5-10 million IDR (40.1%) and >10 million IDR (15.7%). Judging from the varied occupations, the majority of respondents were private employees (37.2%), followed by sales and household workers (20.2%), students (19%), and individuals in other occupations (23.6%). The researcher surveyed three fashion products in the form of local brand bags and wallets that were most often bought by respondents: Buccheri (30.6%), Mossdom (18.2%), and Bostanten (17.8%). These demographic characteristics indicate that consumers of local brand fashion products are generally young adults who are already working and financially independent (Purwianti, 2024). With a steady income and well-managed expenses, they tend to be highly interested in fashion products as part of self-expression and lifestyle. This phenomenon reflects the group's growing interest locally, making them a strategic market segment for local fashion industry players to strengthen their brand position in the market.

#### 4.1.2 The Reliability and Validity Assessment

Table 1 summarizes the test results. The evaluation of the outer model aims to ensure that each indicator used in each construct has adequate validity and reliability. Convergent validity was demonstrated through the outer loading value, where all items in each construct exhibited a value above 0.6, indicating that the indicator effectively represented the construct. Internal reliability testing used Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values. The results show that all constructs have Cronbach's alpha values above 0.6 and CR exceeds 0.7, indicating that they meet the recommended reliability standards. An Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value  $\geq 0.5$  also strengthens convergent validity, indicating that the construct explains more variance than the measurement error. Additionally, a multicollinearity test was conducted using the VIF value, with all constructs having a VIF value of  $\leq 3$ , indicating that they remained within acceptable tolerance limits.

Table 1. Reliability and validity result

Contract	Item	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	VIF
BC	BC 1	0.706	0.633	0.801	0.574	1.258
	BC 2	0.844				1.320
	BC 3	0.716				1.194
BW	BW 1	0.807	0.779	0.858	0.603	1.630
	BW 2	0.843				1.853
	BW 3	0.685				1.331
	BW 4	0.762				1.532
IN	IM 1	0.760	0.841	0.782	0.549	1.208
	IM 2	0.841				1.237
	IM 3	0.600				1.182
THAT	EC 1	0.804	0.605	0.883	0.558	2.209
	EC 2	0.719				1.972
	EC 3	0.772				1.847
	EC 4	0.758				1.703
	EC 5	0.678				1.581
	EC 6	0.743				1.705
RPI	RPI 1	0.827	0.717	0.719	0.642	1.870
	RPI 2	0.858				1.920
	RPI 3	0.711				1.170
IM X BC	1.000				1.000	
IM X BW	1.000				1.000	

Table 2. The HTMT value

Variable	BC	BW	CE	IM	RPI	IM x BW	IM x BC
BW	0.486						
CE	0.691	0.671					
UM	0.385	0.219	0.302				
IM x BW	0.313	0.028	0.253	0.467			
IM x BC	0.045	0.321	0.147	0.435	0.292		
RPI	0.653	0.853	1.172	0.245	0.384	0.273	

Table 2 shows the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio) values for each pair of constructs in this study. The highest value obtained was 0.691 for the CE and BC construct pair, which was below the threshold of 0.9. This finding indicates that all constructs in the study met the criteria for discriminant validity because there was no excessive correlation between different constructs.

#### 4.1.3 The Structural Measurement Assessment and Result of PLS-SEM

Table 3. The R<sup>2</sup> Adjusted and Q<sup>2</sup> indices

Variable	R <sup>2</sup> Adjusted	Q <sup>2</sup>
CE	0.480	0.472
RPI	0.309	0.18

Table 3 shows that both R<sup>2</sup> and Q<sup>2</sup> values are within the acceptable range, indicating that the model has adequate explanatory and predictive capabilities. In the context of predictive model evaluation, R<sup>2</sup> and Q<sup>2</sup> are commonly used indicators for assessing the quality of a model. The R<sup>2</sup> coefficient represents the extent to which the independent variables, BC, BW, and IM, can explain the variation in the dependent variables, CE and RPI. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> values of 48% for CE and 30.9% for RPI indicate that the exogenous variables can explain a reasonable proportion of the variance in endogenous variables. In research in the field of social and behavioral sciences, a model is considered good enough if the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value exceeds 26%. However, because R<sup>2</sup> does not directly measure the predictive capability of the

model, the Q<sup>2</sup> value calculated using the blindfolding technique was used to complete this evaluation (Ringle, Sarstedt, & Straub, 2012). The Q<sup>2</sup> results, all of which are positive, indicate that the exogenous variables have significant predictive power over the endogenous variables (Hair et al., 2019)

Table 4. Result

Relationship	Hypothesis	Coefficient	St dev	T-statistics	P-values	Result
BC -> RPI	H1	-0.056	0.070	0.806	0.420	Rejected
BW -> RPI	H2	0.158	0.058	2.708	0.007	Accepted
BC -> CE	H3	0.336	0.046	7.243	0.000	Accepted
BW -> CE	H4	0.423	0.048	8.818	0.000	Accepted
BC*IM	H5	0.159	0.052	3.057	0.002	Accepted
BW*IM	H6	0.112	0.034	3.311	0.001	Accepted
BC -> CE -> RPI	H7	0.164	0.031	5.219	0.000	Accepted
BW -> CE -> RPI	H8	0.207	0.042	4.923	0.000	Accepted
CE -> RPI	H9	0.489	0.074	6.579	0.000	Accepted

#### 4.2 Discussions

Table 4 shows that repurchase intention does not significantly affect brand competence (coefficient = -0.056; p-value = 0.420 > 0.05). This is contrary to the theory or conclusion put forward by (Chen, 2020; Diamantopoulos et al., 2021; Ge et al., 2025; Jakubanecs et al., 2023; Li & Nan, 2023; Surira et al., 2023; Xue et al., 2020), who stated that there is a relationship between brand competence and purchase intention; therefore,  $H_1$  is rejected. Although prior theories suggest that competence should enhance purchase intention, this finding indicates that, in the context of local fashion brands in Indonesia, competence may be perceived as a basic requirement rather than a differentiating factor between brands. Product quality, reliability, and functionality are often viewed as the minimum standards that brands must meet, not as added values that motivate repeat purchases. Repurchase intention, which reflects a long-term relational commitment, may depend more on emotional attachment and symbolic meaning than on functional evaluation alone. This is also in line with the results of the research (Liu et al., 2022), which states that the perception of brand competence does not strongly influence purchase intention; competence is not enough to encourage consumers to purchase because product quality is considered a minimum standard, no longer a superior value.  $H_2$  shows that the p-value is 0.007 < 0.05, with a sample mean of 0.158, indicating that brand warmth significantly influences repurchase intentions. These results indicate that  $H_2$  is acceptable. This finding aligns with previous research (Chen, 2020; Diamantopoulos et al., 2021; Ge et al., 2025; Jakubanecs et al., 2023; Li & Nan, 2023; Surira et al., 2023; Xue et al., 2020).

This indicates that consumers experience emotional closeness, characterized by a sense of comfort, when using local fashion brands (Minbale et al., 2024). Data tests on  $H_3$  and  $H_4$  showed that the p-values were 0.000 < 0.05 with a sample mean of 0.336 (BC-CE) and a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05 with a sample mean of 0.423 (BW-CE). This indicates that hypotheses 3 and 4 are accepted. BW, with a coefficient value of 0.423, is the strongest variable influencing CE. These results align with previous research, indicating that competent and warm brands have a significantly positive impact on Consumer Engagement (Eigenraam et al., 2022; Kull, Romero, & Monahan, 2021; Li & Nan, 2023). In Indonesia, particularly in Batam, consumer perception favors local products because of their perceived superior quality, design, and price. A "love local products" campaign can enhance consumer engagement. Consumers are also satisfied with local fashion products because they build good relationships with local brands. A warm interaction exists between customers and brands through entertaining activities (Eigenraam et al., 2022) The moderating effect of influencer marketing positively and significantly influenced repurchase intention, affecting the relationship between brand competence and warmth and customer engagement. This indicates that hypotheses 5 and 6 are acceptable. there is a relationship between influencer marketing practices and Consumer Engagement with a brand (Akhtar, Siddiqi, Gugnani, Islam, & Attri, 2024; Ali & Alquda, 2022; Erwin, Suade, & Alam, 2023; Eze, 2024; Goel & Garg, 2025; Kapoor, Balaji, & Maity, 2024; Syrdal, Myers, Sen, Woodroof, & McDowell, 2023). Effective influencer marketing can positively influence brand perception, whether a brand is perceived

as warm, competent, or both (Ren et al., 2023). Hypotheses  $H_7$  and  $H_8$  test the mediating effect of Consumer Engagement in the relationship between two dimensions of brand—brand competence and brand warmth—and repurchase intention. On  $H_7$ , the Consumer Engagement analysis mediates the relationship between Brand Competence and Repurchase Intention, with a regression coefficient of 0.164 and a significance level of  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). These findings indicate that the higher a consumer's perception of brand competence, the greater their tendency to make repeat purchases.  $H_8$  tested the relationship between brand warmth and repurchase intention by including Consumer Engagement as a mediating variable (control model). The regression results showed that both the independent variable (brand warmth) and the mediating variable (customer engagement) had significant coefficients. The regression coefficient was 0.207, with a p-value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that Consumer Engagement significantly mediated the relationship between brand warmth and repurchase intention. Thus, these results provide empirical support for both hypotheses, showing that Consumer Engagement is crucial in reinforcing the positive influence of brand competence and warmth on repurchase intention. Overall,  $H_9$  had the largest value, with a regression coefficient of 0.489 ( $p$ -value =  $0.000 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, CE can be a mediator because it has the highest coefficient value compared to BC and BW. This hypothesis is acceptable and aligns with previous research suggesting that customers play a role in influence repurchase intentions. This means that the higher the consumer involvement, the higher the probability (or intention) of buying products from the local brand again.

## 5. Conclusions

### 5.1. Conclusion

This study makes a substantive theoretical contribution by integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Stereotype Content Model (SCM) within an influencer-driven digital marketing context. The findings clearly demonstrate that emotional evaluation, reflected in brand warmth, is a stronger determinant of repurchase intention than cognitive evaluation, which is reflected in brand competence. While competence enhances customer engagement, it does not directly stimulate repeat purchases, confirming that functional quality is no longer a source of competitive differentiation but rather a baseline expectation. By empirically validating the moderating role of influencer marketing and the mediating function of customer engagement, this study advances the existing literature by offering a more nuanced explanation of how brand stereotypes translate into sustained behavioral intention. The integration of SCM and TPB extends the theoretical understanding of repurchase behavior beyond direct-effect models toward a more dynamic and interaction-based framework. From a managerial perspective, the results provide a clear strategic direction for local brand marketers. Competing on product quality alone is insufficient in highly digitalized markets; brands must actively cultivate emotional resonance through authenticity, storytelling, and engaging with the community. Influencer marketing should be institutionalized as a long-term brand-building strategy, with careful alignment between influencer credibility, content quality, and brand personality to strengthen both warm and competent brand perceptions. Influencers should be positioned as strategic partners who co-create brand meaning rather than transactional endorsers. The implications extend beyond the fashion industry to other local sectors characterized by symbolic consumption and digital interaction, including food and beverages, beauty, and creative MSMEs. Finally, at the policy level, the findings call for a structured government intervention to enhance local brand competitiveness. This includes strengthening digital literacy programs for MSMEs, developing transparent influencer marketing guidelines, providing fiscal incentives for local brand promotion, and ensuring balanced trade policies to mitigate the excessive dependence on imported products.

### 5.2. Research Limitations

While this study offers valuable insights into the roles of brand competence, brand warmth, influencer marketing, and Consumer Engagement in shaping repurchase intentions among consumers in Batam, certain limitations must be acknowledged. First, this study focuses solely on local fashion brands, particularly bag and wallet products. Further research should investigate whether the results are consistent across other fashion subcategories (e.g., footwear and clothing) or other industries (e.g., beauty and food). Second, online surveys mean that the research was conducted in an uncontrolled environment. Respondents may have been influenced by various external stimuli while completing the questionnaire, which could affect their responses. Future research should adopt a mixed-methods

approach or conduct experiments in controlled settings to strengthen the reliability and robustness of the results. Finally, this study was conducted within the specific context of local fashion brands in Batam, where cultural, economic, and demographic factors may differ from those in other regions. Therefore, generalizing the findings to other cities or industries should be approached cautiously. Further research should extend this framework to different geographic areas or product categories, such as technology, food and beverages, or the service sector, to explore whether similar patterns in brand perception and consumer behavior still exist.

### **5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research**

This study primarily focuses on female consumers and does not explore detailed segmentation based on life or psychographic factors. Future research should investigate how different consumer segments respond to brand competence and warmth, and how influencer marketing may affect each group differently. Examining other demographic groups, such as older generations, male consumers, or consumers outside urban centers, may also provide valuable insights. Investigating these dimensions will provide a more nuanced understanding of how to effectively tailor brand marketing strategies across diverse demographic profiles.

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### **Author Contributions**

AF was responsible for the conceptualization, methodology development, formal analysis, investigation, and writing of the original draft. RA contributed to the data curation, formal analysis, and review and editing of the manuscript. LP participated in the formal analysis, provided supervision, and contributed to the review and editing of the manuscript. TZY contributed to the supervision, validation of the results, and reviewing and editing of the manuscript.

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