

# The Influence of Fashion Bloggers on the Pre-Purchase Decision for Online Fashion Products among Generation Y Female Malaysian Consumers

Mohd Zaimmudin Mohd Zain, Patsy Perry, Lee Quinn

**Abstract**—This study explores how fashion consumers are influenced by fashion bloggers towards pre-purchase decision for online fashion products in a non-Western context. Malaysians rank among the world's most avid online shoppers, with apparel the third most popular purchase category. However, extant research on fashion blogging focuses on the developed Western market context. Numerous international fashion retailers have entered the Malaysian market from luxury to fast fashion segments of the market; however Malaysian fashion consumers must balance religious and social norms for modesty with their dress style and adoption of fashion trends. Consumers increasingly mix and match Islamic and Western elements of dress to create new styles enabling them to follow Western fashion trends whilst paying respect to social and religious norms. Social media have revolutionised the way that consumers can search for and find information about fashion products. For online fashion brands with no physical presence, social media provide a means of discovery for consumers. By allowing the creation and exchange of user-generated content (UGC) online, they provide a public forum that gives individual consumers their own voices, as well as access to product information that facilitates their purchase decisions. Social media empower consumers and brands have important roles in facilitating conversations among consumers and themselves, to help consumers connect with them and one another. Fashion blogs have become an important fashion information sources. By sharing their personal style and inspiring their followers with what they wear on popular social media platforms such as Instagram, fashion bloggers have become fashion opinion leaders. By creating UGC to spread useful information to their followers, they influence the pre-purchase decision. Hence, successful Western fashion bloggers such as Chiara Ferragni may earn millions of US dollars every year, and some have created their own fashion ranges and beauty products, become judges in fashion reality shows, won awards, and collaborated with high street and luxury brands. As fashion blogging has become more established worldwide, increasing numbers of fashion bloggers have emerged from non-Western backgrounds to promote Islamic fashion styles, such as Hassanah El-Yacoubi and Dian Pelangi. This study adopts a qualitative approach using netnographic content analysis of consumer comments on two famous Malaysian fashion bloggers' Instagram accounts during January-March 2016 and qualitative interviews with 16 Malaysian Generation Y fashion consumers during September-October 2016. Netnography adapts ethnographic techniques to the study of online communities or computer-mediated communications. Template analysis of the data involved coding comments according to the theoretical framework, which was developed from the literature review. Initial data analysis shows the strong influence of Malaysian fashion bloggers on their followers in terms of lifestyle and morals as well as fashion style. Followers were guided towards the mix and

match trend of dress with Western and Islamic elements, for example, showing how vivid colours or accessories could be worked into an outfit whilst still respecting social and religious norms. The blogger's Instagram account is a form of online community where followers can communicate and gain guidance and support from other followers, as well as from the blogger.

**Keywords**—Fashion bloggers, Malaysia, qualitative, social media.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE purpose of this paper is to explore how fashion consumers are influenced by fashion bloggers towards pre-purchase decision for online fashion products in a non-Western context. Social media have transformed and facilitated the search for both fashion information and fashion products. Fashion blogs provide information about clothing, fashion trends and other related issues and are posted or written by fashion bloggers on social media platforms that enable them to reach a wide audience of followers. Web 2.0 allows users to create and exchange content [1], for example by sharing opinions, experiences [2], and build relationships with like-minded people [3]. This happens on social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, and Youtube) when users interact and communicate with each other; giving rise to networking between users [4]. In addition, social media platforms are also used as new channels for online retailers to promote their business [5]. Social media is the ideal place where retailers can have bidirectional communication with users and reach more users or consumers, as the number of users of internet and social media is reported to grow continuously globally [6]. There is a growing amount of research on social networking platforms in many fields, but less attention has been given in the context of fashion and no research has been done on this topic in Malaysia.

In Malaysia, there are approximately 11 million Generation Y (aged 18-36 years old) citizens, representing 40% of the country's population [7]. These are also among the highest proportion of the population who use the internet every day [8]. In 2014, Malaysians rank among the world's most avid online shoppers [9] with online fashion shopping in Malaysia shows growth and continues to rise from year to year [10]. Fashion bloggers are becoming popular, who use blogs and social media platforms to post videos or photos and interact or communicate with the users, primarily utilising social media platforms, which can create eWOM [11] and trigger the pre-purchasing decision for fashion products among users [12].

M. Z. Mohd Zain, P. Perry and L. Quinn are with the School of Materials, The University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL UK, (e-mail: mohdzaimmudin.mohdzain@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk, patsy.perry@manchester.ac.uk, lee.quinn@manchester.ac.uk).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Internet and social media play an important role in brand marketing activities nowadays. There is much evidence about the importance of this platform for retailers to market and advertise their products and services [13] and for the users to use them for their convenience (time, place, accessibility etc.) and information searching purposes [14]. Retailers also can learn about consumer behaviours and consumers' purchasing decision via internet and social media data [15].

In the fashion industry, successful influential fashion bloggers have become fashion opinion leaders, who have high involvement in fashion and the ability to persuade their followers or other consumers to buy or use the same style of fashion [16]. Fashion bloggers play important roles to deliver the messages to their followers or readers regarding fashion products or brands. It is important for them to be a good storyteller, whether in text, images, or videos, to convince their followers or readers for communication and marketing purposes [17]. Currently, famous fashion bloggers have amassed huge numbers of followers on the internet, post about their personal style: inspiring their followers with what they wear [18] or collaborate with other fashion brands. Moreover, fashion bloggers who are involved in many fashion-related activities become fashion opinion leaders [16]. As well, famous and established fashion bloggers are hired by companies as endorsers for fashion brands to promote their brands [19], such as Susie Lau (H&M, Gap and Urban Outfitters) and Chiara Ferragni (Chanel, Calvin Klein and Louis Vuitton). The number of fashion bloggers is rising (IFB, 2015) and although some studies have been done on this topic such as [11], [20], [21], more issues need to be discussed in this relatively new topic, for example, consumer behaviour towards fashion blogs and fashion bloggers and how the fashion bloggers influence pre-purchase decision for fashion products.

Six key types of influences of fashion bloggers towards pre-purchasing decision for fashion products for using social media platforms were identified from the literature review: opinion leader endorsement [22], celebrity endorsement [23], eWOM [24], online community engagement [25], dialogic co-creation value [26] and democratisation of opinion [27].

- i. *Opinion leader endorsement* refers to the practice of opinion leaders, who have wide knowledge about the topic they are involved in, not only sharing their opinions or experience with others, but also having a major impact on consumer purchasing decision [28] and convincing others to get involved in the same thing [29].
- ii. *Celebrity endorsement* refers to the practice of famous people who use their prestige and reputation to promote brands, products or services, which has significant influence on their fans or followers [30]. Hence, celebrity endorsers have the power to influence the consumers and trigger their purchasing decision [23].
- iii. *Electronic word of mouth* (eWOM) is a communication or interaction between online or internet users which spreads information amongst them. This influences users' or consumers' decision making process and purchasing

decision [24] by referring to the information received and shared on the internet.

- iv. *Online consumer engagement* is the bidirectional interaction; consumers share experiences, opinions or knowledge with retailers or brands [25] by participating in the conversation on Web 2.0 platforms such as social media, has the ability to influence and improve shopping behaviour and consumer purchasing decisions [31].
- v. *Dialogic co-creation value* happens when consumers communicate with retailers; consumers evaluate the experience of the products as a value in context and retailers aim to satisfy them by providing goods or improve innovations based on consumers' evaluations [26].
- vi. *Democratisation of opinion* gives power for ordinary consumers' voices to be heard on the internet; by sharing and expressing the experience about the products which helps retailers to develop brand strategy and also influences consumers' purchasing decision [27].

## III. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was taken, using netnography and semi-structured interviews to gather data. Netnography is an adaptation of ethnographic search techniques to the study of online communities or computer-mediated communications [32]. Netnography refers to the analysis of data created as a result of online interactions and communications by internet users (publicly available online discourse such as discussion forums, blogs, message boards etc.), as they communicate with other users [33].

Semi-structured interview technique enables the researcher to obtain rich data, details and new insights from relevant respondents who can share their opinions, attitudes, experiences, processes, behaviours or predictions regarding the research topic [34]. Conducting interviews also creates personal interaction with respondents, by listening to them carefully what they want to say and make them feel important to be part of the research because they are worthy for that research topic [35].

A combination of these two techniques was used to strengthen the findings and gain deeper insights. This approach was taken in a number of recent studies, such as the study of Kozinets et al. on online food image sharing which analysed data from online food-oriented social networks and 17 interviewees [36]. Weijo et al. identified new insights into online consumption communities by doing netnography in an online community website plus interviews with 16 respondents [37]. Ertimur and Gilly examined consumer-generated advertisements, by applying netnography techniques in online forums and interviews with 14 respondents [38].

In this study, two Malaysian fashion bloggers were selected based on their popularity and the level of engagement from their followers on Instagram, in order to ensure a rich source of data, as shown in Table I. The bloggers' identities are kept confidential for ethics reasons.

For the semi-structured interviews, a purposive sample of respondents was recruited, using snowball sampling to reach

respondents beyond the network of contacts of the first author. The first author asked respondents if they have friends or anyone who meet the sample criteria (female, Generation Y, shop online for fashion products at least once a month, and engage in social media platforms and follow fashion bloggers).

TABLE I  
SAMPLE OF MALAYSIAN FASHION BLOGGERS

Kozinets [39]	Fashion Blogger A	Fashion Blogger B
1. Active on social media	Share posts and interacts almost everyday	Share posts and interacts almost everyday
2. Posting relevant posts (fashion products)	Fashion products, food, work, family, events	Fashion products, beauty and cosmetics, food, work, family, events
3. Have many followers and engage with other users	The most active social media platform used is Instagram, where this blogger has almost 600k followers	The most active social media platform used is Instagram, where this blogger has almost 100k followers
4. Rich in data (comment threads on social media)	Using many social media platform – Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Blogspot	Using many social media platform – Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Blogspot

TABLE II  
TEMPLATE ANALYSIS FOR NETNOGRAPHY AND INTERVIEWS

Themes	Subthemes
1. Opinion Leader Endorsement	1.1 Reference for fashion tips 1.2 Not only fashion inspiration, but also life inspiration (family and business) 1.3 Fashion trendsetter (mix & match, Western brand + Islamic wear) 1.4 Boost self-confidence 1.5 Earn respect from followers
2. eWOM	2.1 Spread information (@ button) 2.2. Asking questions and answering (provide information)
3. Online Community Engagement	3.1 Interaction between followers 3.2 Interaction between followers and bloggers
4. Dialogic Co-creation Value	4.1 Idea? Strategy (for Islamic Fashion) 4.2 Special request/ Suggestion (products and tutorials)

The interview topic guide was developed from the literature review and the netnography analysis done at the early stage of data collection. Finally, the results from both netnography and semi structured interview were analysed using template analysis.

#### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis started with observing posts on the two famous Malaysian fashion bloggers' most active social media platform Instagram. All relevant fashion posts on their Instagram feed were analysed for three months from 1 January – 31 March 2016. This amounted to approximately 150 posts by Blogger A and 120 posts by Blogger B. All posts were filtered for fashion relevancy, which resulted in a final selection of 50 posts from Blogger A and 35 posts from Blogger B. The posts and comment threads were copied and pasted to Microsoft Word and then translated into English, resulting in 60 pages with 6208 words. This data was then analysed manually following established procedures in previous research papers that conducted fashion blog netnographies [11], [20], [21],

[40]. The selected comment threads were coded into themes and narrowed down into subthemes. A pseudonym was used to replace the personal name of online users to ensure confidentiality. Data from semi-structured interview were transcribed verbatim and translated into English before the coding process took place. The results obtained from both netnography and semi structured interview were combined and interpreted into relevant themes. As this is a work in progress, only the following four themes in Table II will be presented, including Blogger A netnographic data and 16 interviews.

##### A. Opinion Leader Endorsement:

1.1 Reference for fashion style: These fashion bloggers become a reference when it comes to fashion style, where their posts are able to attract followers as fashion inspiration or to ask for their opinion/suggestion/recommendation for fashion tips. Bloggers tend to create modern and new fashion trends by mixing Western fashion styles with traditional Islamic wear, but still based on religious norms accepted by Malaysian society.

(Lmh@v\*) "I really admire the way you wear your hijab. It's a long shawl, right? Do you mind a tutorial please?"

(Gs\*) "Oh my God, V\* I love your style because you are wearing really soft fabrics, love this colour and you are looking pretty cool as alwaysss 😊❤️😊"

(sf\*@v\*) "I need your suggestion. Which of Aleena's top catch your eyes the most? Want to buy all of them but I have forgotten... I'm not rich enough. LOL. So hard to pick. 😊😊"

(nfr\*) "You are so pretty!!!! I love your pants!! How do you make yourself look taller? I can't rock that kind of pantsΛ"

(y3d\*&@v\*) "v\* I would like to purchase this dress but still can't figure out where I can get the cardigan as what you wear. Can you advise me what the brand is?"

1.2 Not only do fashion bloggers become fashion inspiration, but they are also seen as inspiration to be successful in general life, including family and business aspects. Female followers especially consider these fashion bloggers, not only as their inspiration in fashion styling, but also inspiration for their life. In traditional life in Malaysia, women were considered to stay at home, cook, take care of family and were not allowed to work. Only men were allowed to work and bring home money. But nowadays, women followers are inspired by these fashion bloggers that a woman can also be a mother, daughter, wife and entrepreneur who is successful in life and can bring money home to family same as men. Many women nowadays in Malaysia have careers and are becoming more independent, but still must balance time between work, family and religious commitments.

(fg.fx\*) "You are my inspiration, V\* (and F\*, too. Don't cry F\*). You have inspired the world, you have

inspired all the young adults, and you have inspired me to keep going (in terms of business relation). Thanks God, I found you. Read your blog, watched RC\*, RW\*, the Downy dress thing, stalked your IG hehehehehehe. Thank you for being an insta-addict :p It keeps me motivated when I feel like giving up. Thanks God, still trying to get there... know that Berkin-there. May The Almighty bless you and your family.”

(Sr\*) “V\*, this anecdote without a doubt seals you as someone who deserves all the good things that has been happening to you. All the outpouring of love from your family and friends, all your success in business and life as well as your two wonderful children and husband. God willed it V\*, your dad has taught you well. In a way, you have made it in life. I get jealous of you sometimes but I know, you work hard for all this and you pray a lot. All this is a result of your own actions so you deserve it, God willing, I think if only I could push just a little harder, maybe my dreams will come true too. Thanks again for inspiring me”.

(Respondent 3) “...The main reasons (for following fashion bloggers), a part of being beautiful and cute (laughing) they are so inspiring. Because, they are busy, involve in business, have family but still have time to update their blogs, activities and lifestyle. So amazing! They also have their own personality, bonus reality TV show such as v\*. But after all, the reason is because the inspiration”

1.3 Fashion trendsetter: The followers are inspired by the trends shown by fashion bloggers, especially when it comes to mixing the fashion styles between Western brands and Islamic wear (mix and match). Typically a blogger may create a modest outfit using Western brands and traditional dress elements which would feature long trousers or skirt, long-sleeved loose blouse, high heels, statement handbag and traditional headscarf. The bloggers also have the power to create trends when they display non-familiar style in Malaysia, which is then accepted by their followers.

(Fr\*) “Always amazed when you look so good, so stunning on your culottes plus bright scarf. Just as simple as that. You win 🍷👉 @v\*”

(hzdb\*) “I'm really loving the top with the white leggings in all honesty! And the heels and the bag and the scarf and the whole combination is on point ok @sr\* @n.i\*”

(Respondent 15) “...one of the fashion bloggers that I follow is sa\*, she wears dresses and wedding dresses as well. She likes pastel and soft colour, not too bright. The dresses that she wears are not too funky or modern; suitable for all age. Another bloggers, nh\*, each hijab has different name, even for each pattern has its own name, so interesting for example Bellarina, Anabelle etc. I like the idea how she combines the hijabs with Swarovski...”

1.4 Boost self-confidence: Followers consider these fashion bloggers as their role models or idols who inspire them. As fashion bloggers post about the things they do, their success in life, share updates and information, the contents are seen as valuable and help the followers to be inspired and increase their self-confidence. Fashion was a sensitive topic to be discussed among society in Malaysia, as there were less successful fashion role models before. But now, with social media platforms, successful fashion bloggers can be easily seen followed, inspire their followers to be successful like them and convince society that the fashion industry is acceptable in Malaysia.

(Am\*) “V\*: ! I just watched R\*, It was about you 😊 As an ex-SPM candidate (high school), I'm not very confident with myself, which course should I take and focus on. I hope that I will make the best choice for my future. You are my idol and I'm impressed. Good luck in life V\*, God bless you, your family and friends always. ❤️❤️❤️”

(Nk\*) “I started my college today! Errr it's kind of sad that I hadn't made any friends! But LOL it didn't bother even a bit because I am inspired by you! I want to be successful as you in now and hereafter. 😊”

1.5 Earn respect from followers: These fashion bloggers not only try to balance between fashion trends and religious norms, but also practice positive values suggested by rules and regulations in religion such as being humble, grateful, sincere. These positive values drive fashion bloggers to earn respect from their followers, not only in fashion style, but also in terms of good behaviour and being a role model in the Muslim community.

(Lp\*) “I know you don't really reply to most of your comments, but that okay. I just want to say that THIS is why you are...you. Not everybody was born into an accomplished family and gets to experience things that most people could only dream about. Yet somehow, that didn't 'get' you. I love how you sincerely believe in being nice, humble and grateful, how you brought the memory back alive with your words that even strangers are touched and inspired by it. Thank you for your stories, especially this one. THIS is why you are you. And that is never a bad thing. Kudos, v\*!”

(Yyy\*) “Was searching high and low for you V\*, but you'd left. Wanted to take a pic with you :( Nonetheless, thank you for the short chat. You are so humble! Made my night ❤️👉 @v\*”

#### B. eWOM

2.1 Spread information between followers: Followers communicate with each other, spread information about fashion products or news updates and share them openly in the comment threads. This information can be seen by multiple other users and rapidly shared among them. Followers tag their contacts using the '@' button to

spread the information and keep each other updated.

(A\*) Wow... I just love your handbag series stories. Doesn't matter if it's a hand-me-down Birkin or what, you already made it V\* at least from my perspective. Kudos to you and May God bless you with happiness!

(sh\*) شوقو مالها @aw\*i@lo\* @f\_\* @12\*@\_m\* @\_1\*

(Respondent 3) "... I really like to interact and 'stalk', I see everyday life. I prefer to 'like' bloggers; who also like to tag; for example where the shawl from, where the handbag from, so they can be searched easily. Actually, bloggers provide all information. I also leave comments. In addition, when I like one scarf, I will mention to my friends and share with them..."

(Respondent 15) "... Yes, as I mentioned before, I will take photos from IG and repost them, and share them with other followers. I will also put hash tag to these photos; make it easier for other users to search for their favourite fashion products".

(Respondent 5) "... I like to mention my friends' name on my favourite posts, and also the posts liked by my friends. The reason why we do this is because we want to help each other so we don't miss the latest trends or new arrivals. We also share or change opinions when we talk about our favourite fashion products..."

2.2 Asking questions and answering: Followers ask questions on the forums, and the questions may be answered by other users or the blogger. Although the conversation is between only two users, rather than tagging multiple others in the post, the conversations can still be seen by others. They also share opinions and experiences on the comments threads, helping other followers who may have the same questions to search for the answers.

(Sa\*) Does anyone know the colour of the Duck V\* wearing? It's so pretty and of course she is too 😊 ... (ha\*) I'm guessing it's satin silk candy pop... (sa\*) thank you!! ... (ha\*) Hehe but I am not sure also @sa\* It looks like the Candy Pop, it's really bright beautiful colour, I have it 😊 Hopefully V\* will confirm for you"

(ajdn\*@v\*) "that pink purple colour is that available at fv website? really gorgeous". v\* "Yes! Go to What's New page, it's there 😊" @ajdn! "thank you for fast reply my idol @v\* 😊😊😊😊"

(shff@are\*) "which pants it is?" are@shff\* "This is our CERUS Pants which we are going to restock. However, you can also check out our ASTER Pants and LEVANT Pants which has a similar cutting"

### C. Online Community Engagement

3.1 Interaction between followers: Using social media, followers are able to communicate with each other, sharing their opinions, experiences or expressions. Some search for information, some help by replying to the questions. Followers tag the names of those they interact with, replying to each other on the comment threads.

(Respondent 7) "... In my opinion (interaction between followers), it is very important. Sharing experience and opinion make the products worth to buy. Moreover, the conversation thread will create a good bond with other users, especially when we share the same interests."

(nth\*) "Puan @v\* what is the name of this blouse? I did search yesterday, but I couldn't find out which one. I really hope that you'll reply me. I want to look beautiful like you. Thank you." ahdhf\*@nth\* "its Tina Basic Top in beige" nth\*@ahdf\* "thankkkk uuuuu!!!!"

(Respondent 15) "... Yes, sometimes bloggers don't put price for the products, so I will ask by leaving the comments. The other users are so helpful, especially those who have already bought the items will help to answer my question because sometimes, bloggers are so busy and overlook the comments. In my opinion, this type of interaction is very important, because it will help each other; for the price, it is important to put the price so it will be easier for the followers to make decision..."

3.2 Interaction between followers and bloggers: Followers not only interact between themselves, but also with fashion bloggers in bidirectional ways. They mention the bloggers' name: seeking advice, asking questions, sharing opinions, information and experiences on the platform.

(Respondent 5) "...to get the confirmation or other information about fashion products on the internet, I interact with other users. Asking questions, sharing experience and a bit of arguments; the conversation is always running. I also 'PM' fashion bloggers if I want to ask questions regarding fashion style advice. To express agreement, I always press the 'like' button and share the information with other friends..."

(aiss\*) "Does anybody know where are those shoes are from? #gottahaveem" v\* "The shoes are from Chanel 😊@ainaass @bella\_ronii @tatamachi"

(d6\*) "Very nice yellow. What material is the scarf?" v\* "It's the new and improved mixed crepe. Launching soon @d6\*"

(Respondent 1) "... Absolutely, I do interact with my friends on fashion blogs or bloggers social media accounts. For example, I will ask them regarding the styles, for example which colour of this or that match me, because I have problem when it comes to many choices, it makes me confused! To me, they all look beautiful and so hard to select! That's why I always interact on social media to search for opinion or others' experience."

### D. Dialogic Co-Creation Value

4.1 Idea/Strategy (for Islamic Fashion): Followers interact with each other or the fashion blogger – sharing ideas, opinion, suggestions, or expressions about the fashion items, especially for Islamic fashion in Malaysia. They leave positive and negative comments, which are useful for the blogger or fashion brand to develop products that

will satisfy consumers' needs and wants, and reach more followers.

(Ai\*) Omgggg love this!! Can't wait to have you in our Songket cape 😊😊@v\*...(nu\*)\_I love your blouses. I bought few including this. They have simple cutting. Very wearable except not wudhu' friendly (ablution) @v\*. Please take note about the design.

(nnzy\*) "Wow... that shining top can look good with hijab... I would never think of that... you are a brilliant fashion setter"

4.2 Special request/Suggestions: Followers also express their suggestion or special request to fashion bloggers, which can satisfy their needs and wants; such as to write on blogs or produce more fashion products, in terms of styles, colours, sizes, materials, price and etc. Followers also request for tutorials on how to wear shawls and new trends of wearing the hijab.

(Kn\*) Hi V\*, as a loyal reader of your blog, can I request that you write about wardrobe essentials and things that are staple and worth to be invested? 😊

(kxx\*) "You can introduce basics too 😊 I mean people today has so many things to think about especially those so-called-minimalists who hate owning a lot of clothes, and to those who want their investment to be worthy"

(syzn\*) I don't feel like I want to buy, unless if they have other colours, hope they have more colours @naziraziya, hahaha"

(aae@re\*) "Can you please, please consider remaking these pants? (I'm pretty sure these are yours) 🙏📱😊"

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study reveals four elements that influence fashion bloggers' followers in their pre-purchase decision for online fashion products in the Malaysian context.

- 1) Opinion leader endorsement – followers consider their favourite fashion bloggers as a reference or resource when it comes to fashion products, especially fashion trends in Malaysia. These fashion bloggers inspire them greatly, and followers seek advice from them regarding fashion products and perceive these bloggers as the motivation for them to dress up, which leads to pre-purchase decision making [22] and also tend to know where to get the products shown by bloggers. In addition, the followers also seek to find information from the posts in social media platform; for example, the new trends of wearing hijabs; and how to build an appropriate outfit mixing Western items with traditional clothing.
- 2) eWOM – social media platform functionality helps users to spread information quickly, by sharing content, opinions and experiences. Followers enjoy sharing content and help to keep other users updated. Moreover, they also help each other by asking and answering questions, making this information accessible by other

followers to view on the comment threads, and continually spreading them to other users to encourage pre-purchase decision [24].

- 3) Online community engagement – Web 2.0 permits users to communicate with each other and also with fashion bloggers. Malaysian fashion bloggers' followers interact with each other by sharing opinions, information, experiences, which leads to online bonding and trust between them and influencing their pre-purchase decision [31].
- 4) Dialogic co-creation value – the rich content of users' comments on social media platforms represents a rich source of data for brand or idea strategy development. Analysing the comments, either positive or negative, may help producers to ascertain what users or consumers want to satisfy them [41], and fulfil their needs [26].

The research findings provide insight into how Malaysian female fashion consumers' pre-purchase decisions for online fashion products are influenced by fashion bloggers. This research indicates that famous fashion bloggers in Malaysia have a significantly positive impact on their followers' pre-purchase decision. This study also illustrates how the different types of influences occur between online communities, in terms of the interaction and communication that lead to purchasing decisions.

## VI. FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research could focus more on fashion bloggers instead of followers or consumers. The credibility of paid bloggers could be an interesting argument, as credibility is amongst the most discussed topics relating to blogs in this area [42]. The questions such as 'How credible is the information of the fashion product introduced by the paid fashion bloggers?', or 'Is the influence overshadowing the credibility?' could be raised in further research to explore more deeply about the role of fashion bloggers. Further research could adopt other research methods such as in-depth interviews with online community members to gain richer information and findings regarding their consumer behaviour.

Finally, as the selected fashion bloggers in this study are females, further research could be extended to male fashion bloggers, because there are increasingly many more online fashion products targeted at male consumers. A comparison study could be made between genders.

## REFERENCES

- [1] S. V. Halliday, "User-generated content about brands: Understanding its creators and consumers", *Journal of Business Research*, 69(1), pp. 137-144, 2016.
- [2] A. J. Kim and K. K. Johnson, "Power of consumers using social media: Examining the influences of brand-related user-generated content on Facebook", *Computers in Human Behavior*, 58, pp. 98-108, 2016.
- [3] S. Quinton, and S. Harridge-March "Relationships in online communities: the potential for marketers", *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 4(1), pp. 59-73, 2010.
- [4] I. A. Zolkepli and Y. Kamarulzaman, "Social media adoption: The role of media needs and innovation characteristics", *Computers in Human Behavior*, 43, pp. 189-209, 2015.
- [5] A. J. Kim and E. Ko, "Do social media marketing activities enhance

- customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand”, *Journal of Business Research*, 65(10), pp. 1480–1486, 2012.
- [6] Statista, “Number of social network users in Malaysia from 2014 to 2019 (in millions)”, accessed on 12 December 2015 at <www.statista.com/statistics/489233/number-of-social-network-users-in-malaysia/>, 2015.
- [7] M. Muda, R. Mohd, R. and S. Hassan, “Online Purchase Behavior of Generation Y in Malaysia”, *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 37, pp. 292-298, 2015.
- [8] Statista, “Daily internet usage rate in Malaysia in 2016, by age group”, accessed on 9 November 2016, at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/348017/daily-internet-usage-age-group-malaysia/>, 2016.
- [9] Nielsen, “Malaysians rank among the world’s most avid online shoppers”, accessed on 6 October 2015, at <www.nielsen.com/my/en/press-room/2014/e-commerce.html>, 2014.
- [10] Statista, “Digital Market Outlook – Fashion”, accessed on 9 November 2016, at [https://www.statista.com/download/outlook/whitpaper/Fullpage/2/244/122/2\\_244\\_122.pdf](https://www.statista.com/download/outlook/whitpaper/Fullpage/2/244/122/2_244_122.pdf), 2016.
- [11] M. Kulmala, N. Mesiranta and P. Tuominen, “Organic and amplified eWOM in consumer fashion blogs”, *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 17(1), pp. 20-37, 2013.
- [12] W. W. Moe and M. Trusov, “The Value of Social Dynamics in Online Product Rating Forums”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 48(3), pp. 444-456, 2011.
- [13] D. Grewal, A. L. Roggeveen, R. C. Runyan, J. Nordfält, and M. E. V Lira, “Retailing in today’s world: Multiple channels and other strategic decisions affecting firm performance”, *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 34, pp. 261–263, 2016.
- [14] G. Christodoulides, N. Michaelidou and N. Theofania Siamagka, “A typology of internet users based on comparative affective states: evidence from eight countries”, *European Journal of Marketing*, 47(1/2), pp. 153-173, 2013.
- [15] P. Marian, “Are you ready to create your own social media network?” WGSN, accessed on 18 October 2015, at <http://www.wgsn.com>. 2015.
- [16] J. E. Workman and S. Cho, “Gender, fashion consumer groups, and shopping orientation”, *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 40(3), pp. 267-283, 2012.
- [17] K. De Valck and G. Kretz, “Pixelize me: Digital Storytelling and the creation of archetypal myths through explicit and implicit self-brand association in fashion and luxury blog”, *Research in Consumer Behavior*, pp. 313, 2011.
- [18] A. Rocamora, “Personal fashion blogs: Screens and mirrors in digital self-portraits”, *Fashion Theory*, 15(4), 407-424, 2011.
- [19] L. Sherman, “The most influential personal style bloggers”, Fashionista, accessed on 12 August 2015 at <[fashionista.com/2013/01/influential-fashion-style-bloggers-2013](http://fashionista.com/2013/01/influential-fashion-style-bloggers-2013)>, 2013.
- [20] G. Parrott, A. Danbury and P. Kanthavanich, “Online behaviour of luxury fashion brand advocates”, *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 19(4), pp. 360-383, 2015.
- [21] C. Pihl, “Brands, community and style—exploring linking value in fashion blogging”, *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 18(1), pp. 3-19, 2014.
- [22] C. Shen, C. -Y. Huang, C. -H. Chu and , H. -C. Liao, “Virtual community loyalty: An interpersonal-interaction perspective”, *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 15(1), pp. 49–73, 2010.
- [23] S. M. Choi and N. J. Rifon, “It is a match: The impact of congruence between celebrity image and consumer ideal self on endorsement effectiveness”, *Journal of Psychology & Marketing*, 29, pp. 636–650, 2012.
- [24] K., Goodrich and M. de Mooij, “How ‘social’ are social media? A cross-cultural comparison of online and offline purchase decision influences”, *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 20(1-2), pp. 103-116, 2014.
- [25] R. J. Brodie, A., Ilic, B. Juric and L. Hollebeck, “Consumer Engagement in a Virtual Brand Community: An Exploratory Analysis”, *Journal of Business Research*, 66(1), pp. 105–114, 2011.
- [26] J. K. Hsieh and Y. C Hsieh, “Dialogic co-creation and service innovation performance in high-tech companies”, *Journal of Business Research*, 68(11), 2266-2271, 2015.
- [27] L. Crewe, “When virtual and material worlds collide: democratic fashion in the digital age”, *Environment and Planning*, 45(4), pp. 760-780, 2013.
- [28] S. Lysonski and S. Durvasula “Consumer decision making styles in retailing: evolution of mindsets and psychological impacts”, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 30(1), pp. 75-87, 2013.
- [29] B. Shen, Y. Wang, C. K. Lo and M. Shum, “The impact of ethical fashion on consumer purchase behaviour”, *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 16(2), pp. 234-245, 2012.
- [30] K. L. Keller, *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity*, Pearson Education, Essex, 2013.
- [31] T. Powers, D. Advincula, M. S. Austin, S. Graiko and J. Snyder “Digital and social media in the purchase decision process: A special report from the Advertising Research Foundation”, *Journal of Advertising Research*, 52(4), pp. 479–489, 2012.
- [32] R. V. Kozinets, *Netnography: Doing Ethnographic Research Online*, London, SAGE Publications Ltd., 2009.
- [33] M. R. Nelson and C. C. Otness, “Exploring cross-cultural ambivalence: a netnography of intercultural wedding message boards”, *Journal of Business Research*, 58(1), pp. 89-95, 2005.
- [34] J. Rowley, “Conducting research interview”, *Management Research Review*, 35, pp. 260-271, 2012.
- [35] I. Seidman, *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers college press, 2013.
- [36] R. Kozinets, A. Patterson and R. Ashman, “Networks of Desire: How Technology Increases Our Passion to Consume”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 43(5), pp. 659-682, 2016.
- [37] H. Weijo, J. Hietanen and P. Matilla, “New insights into online consumption communities and netnography”, *Journal of Business Research*, 67(10), pp. 2072-2078, 2014.
- [38] B. Ertimur and M. C. Gilly, M. C, “So whaddya think? Consumers create ads and other consumers critique them”, *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26(3), pp. 115-130, 2012.
- [39] R. V. Kozinets, *Netnography. Doing Ethnographic Research Online*, Sage Publications Ltd, London, 2010.
- [40] C. De Lassus and N. A. Freire, N. A, “Access to the luxury brand myth in pop-up stores: A netnographic and semiotic analysis”, *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 21(1), pp. 61-68, 2014.
- [41] V. Zwass, “Co-creation: Toward a taxonomy and an integrated research perspective”, *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 15(1), pp. 11-48, 2010.
- [42] J. Colliander, and S. Erlandsson, “The blog and the bountiful: Exploring the effects of disguised product placement on blogs that are revealed by a third party”, *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 21(2), pp. 110-124, 2015.