

# The Influence of External and Internal Determinants on Generation Z's Purchase Intention for Sport Shoes: A PLS-SEM Approach

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## Abstract

Every business certainly strives to remain competitive and sustainable in an increasingly competitive global market. There is no exception for other industries including the global sports footwear industry to face the same thing. Realising the growing potential of Generation Z, who incline toward sustainable brands and willing to pay for branded product than any other generations, this study adopted Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) as the fundamental theory to govern the proposed framework to investigate the effect of product brand, product price, product quality, endorsement, and promotion on purchase intention for sports shoes among Generation Z in Sarawak, Malaysia. A total of 184 respondents took part voluntary in this study. WarpPLS software was used to perform the partial least square - structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis to examine the relationship among the proposed variables. Interestingly, the findings revealed that product price, endorsement, and promotion have a positive and significant relationship with the purchase intention of sports shoes among Generation Z. Surprisingly, product brand and product quality were found to have no significant relationship with purchase intention. This study provides the basis for future researchers of the sports shoe sector to analyse the relationship between the constructs in other contexts.

**Keywords:** Sports Shoes Industry, Purchase intention, Generation Z, Theory of Reasoned Action, PLS-SEM, Malaysia.

**Introduction**

Global economic developments throughout the globalisation age can have a direct or indirect effect on all business activities. Nowadays, all industries, regardless of size, face intense competition from existing global competitors, while people are getting busier than before. As a result, demand for sports apparel, particularly athletic wear and sports shoes, is increasing as consumers' sentiments toward health changed positively. The statistical report of global sports apparel market was worth US\$167 million in 2018 and is predicted to reach US\$248.1 million by 2026, and it is growing at a compound yearly growth rate of 5.1 percent between 2019 and 2026. This is also evidenced by the recent disclosed data on the global sports apparel market's total revenue from 2021 to 2028. (Statista, 2022). According to the report, the global sports apparel market would generate revenue of 193 billion US dollars in 2021. Indeed, the sports industry has been consistently growing over the past few decades (Bartoluci & Skoric, 2009). According to a recent study by Saatchian, Azizi, and Talebpour (2021), the trend of wearing sportswear in daily life is expanding due to the potential for enhancing an individual's image and social lifestyle.

People's lifestyle routines have evolved toward energy conservation in recent years. Sporting endeavours, too, are undergoing a similar evolution. People are becoming more health conscious, as indicated by the proliferation of health care and gym facilities in the modern day. They are more concerned with their health in tandem with their awareness of health issues. The greater acceptance of sportswear in everyday life and a growth in the general population's participation in sports are the drivers of the demand for sportswear. Sporting activities are gaining popularity, especially among Generation Z. Generation Z, as the demographic generation that comes after the Millennials is the newest generation, since they were born between 1997 and 2012 or are currently between the ages of 9 and 24 (Kasasa, 2021). The various generational cohorts demonstrate distinct purchasing behaviours as a result of their disparate views, tastes, and values (Barber, 2010). Generation Z is more receptive to sustainable brands and is prepared to pay a premium for them than prior generations (Petro, 2020). Marketers must understand consumer behaviour based on purchase intentions as it is critical to maintain a competitive edge in the market. Through it, marketers can analyse and discover the factors that influence consumer demand.

Decision making is one of the core aspects that distinguish present generations from previous generations. Generation Z is notably different from prior generations in terms of brand awareness. As a result, communicating with Generation Z requires an awareness of their preferences. Yadav and Rai (2017) propounded that Generation Z is heavily influenced by social media sites. Social media facilitates virtual networks and communities platform for them to provide feedback on the products and services that they used. Thus, websites must consider the interests, wants, and desires of these different generations in order to provide them with a customised service, and influence Generation Z's shopping decisions. Otherwise, these generations will look for a brand that meets their needs and desires (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008). As a result of the generational disparities in demand for sports footwear, it is critical to do research into and identify the elements that influence Generation Z's purchase intention for sports shoes.

Through a review of the literature, it was discovered that the majority of previous studies examined only a subset of variables (i.e., product brand, product price, and product quality) and their effect on purchase intention. Additionally, it was proposed through a review of the literature that these few variables (e.g., product brand, product price, product quality, endorsement, and promotion) are significant when examining themes linked to purchase intention. However, no previous study has examined these characteristics in a single framework. As such, this study will employ the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) as the guiding theory to examine the link between internal determinants (i.e., product brand, price, and quality) and external determinants (i.e., endorsement and promotion) on purchase intention among Generation Z for the sports shoes. Additionally, there are no study that examines such a proposed research framework in the context of Sarawak. Thus, this research enables the sports business to obtain a better understanding of Generation Z's purchase intentions, particularly in the Sarawak context.

## **Literature Review**

### *Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)*

Fishbein (2008) defines Theory of Reasoned Action as the behavioural intention that determines actual behaviour. When attitudes and subjective norms improve, a stronger inclination to adopt the behaviour may result. Attitude refers to the individual's favourable or adverse feelings toward a particular behaviour. Fishbein and Cappella (2006), as well as Fishbein (2008), describe attitude as an individual's main belief about whether the outcome of conduct would be favourable or bad. Subjective norms can be assumed based on an individual's approval or disapproval of a particular behaviour. The normative beliefs are a subset of the subjective norms of beliefs. The term "Normative social influence" refers to the ability of a person/group to persuade other individuals to conform to his/their accepted and appreciated standards (Aronson & Wilson, 2005).

Nomi and Sabbir (2020) have used the Theory of Reasoned Action to examine the independent variables affecting purchasing intention. The purpose of this study is to determine the characteristics that affect consumer purchase intentions for life insurance. Religion, risk aversion, saving motivations, and financial literacy are all explored as independent variables. Negara and Rouly (2020) then investigated the association between information susceptibility and normative susceptibility and purchasing intention. This study used the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to guide the proposed research framework, examining the impact of internal determinants (i.e., product brand, price, and quality) and external determinants (i.e., endorsement & promotion) on purchase intention of sports shoes among Generation Z in Sarawak, Malaysia.

### *Concept of Purchase Intention*

The concept of purchase intention is a type of decision-making in which consumers consider the rationale for purchasing a particular brand (Shah et al., 2012). Past study revealed that the purchasing intention might be correlated to the consumer's loyalty (Juhl et al., 2002). Consumers who are satisfied with their sports shoes' purchasing intention can help the sports shoe industry to grow more profitable (Yap & Yazdanifard, 2021). As a result, buying intention is proven as a critical component of the business environment. Customer satisfaction, in general, refers to a customer's appraisal of a product or service after they have used it. Simultaneously, customers tend to make comparisons between the things they have

purchased and those from a different company in the same industry. In other words, purchasing intention establishes whether the products meet the consumers' expectations and wants, based on which the consumers would evaluate the products or services. This means that, the sports shoe industry must manufacture shoes that meet the expectations and needs of their customers. If the sports shoe industry produces shoes that fall short of customer expectations and needs, this will lead to the decrease of demand for the sport shoes.

Generally, the term "intention" has been defined as the antecedent that motivates and stimulates consumers to purchase products or services (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). As mentioned by Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel (2006), it is important for marketers to have a clear understanding of factors that influence their customers' actual behaviour (Ghalandari & Norouzi, 2012). The recent study by Nathalie, Irene, Augusto, and Jose (2020) stated that, there is a strong correlation between purchase intention and consumers' online purchase behaviour. According to Sprotles and Kendall (1986), a consumer's purchasing intention is a mental orientation that characterises the consumer's approach to decision-making. Kim and Pysarchik (2000) established a significant link between these two constructs. Thus, they assert that consumers' purchasing intentions can be used as a substitute for removing their purchase behaviour. The purpose of consumers remains fundamental to well-known theories like the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). Ajzen (1991) asserts that intention is a factor that influences and inspires customer behaviour. In summary, the present study employed purchase intention as the dependent variable.

### *Product Brand*

Kotler and Armstrong (2010) defined brand as a term, a name, a symbol, a design, or a combination of the above that is regularly used to differentiate products and services. The brand of a product might be crucial in the purchase intention process. The sports apparel sector must cultivate a favourable image with customers in order to retain them and sustain companies' market share. When a customer is loyal to a brand, they will return and suggest the brand to others. Brand loyalty refers to customers' willingness to pay a premium for a particular brand over comparable products (Ercis et al., 2012). It is demonstrated that brand loyalty could facilitates customers' continuous purchase leading to long-term loyalty, and indirectly contributes to a company's profitability (Molla & Licker, 2001). A well-known brand of products can help spread the word about the benefits and also increase recall of the promised benefits.

The sports apparel sector includes a variety of companies, including Nike, Adidas, Puma, Under Armour, and New Balance. Buyers will favour well-known brand due to their trustworthiness and strong reputation. Additionally, a product's brand might serve as a guarantee of quality if consumers possess the purchasing power to select high-quality products. In fact, the branding of a product itself can provide numerous benefits, which indirectly influence consumers' purchase decisions (Ebrahim, Ghoneim, Irani, & Fan, 2016). A high level of brand awareness translates into a high level of brand recognition in the minds of customers. As a result, brand awareness is more likely to influence consumers' purchasing decisions (Tih & Kean, 2013). Hernandez and Kuster (2012)'s findings also indicate that a consumer's perception toward a brand has a substantial impact on their purchase intention. As a result of the debate above, the first hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Product brand is positively and significantly related to Generation Z's purchase intention.

#### *Product Price*

The price of the product is highlighted as a factor in influencing the competitive values, market share, profit, marketing strategy, and product quality of the product (Hassan et al., 2010). However, different customers interpret a product's price differently. As stated by Sara and Maria (2006), a decreased in price may boost a consumer's inclination to acquire a product. The sports apparel sector must retain clients who are willing to pay a premium for their preferred brand and do not purchase solely on the basis of pricing (Levy & Weitz, 2012). Typically, customers with a high level of brand loyalty are willing to pay a premium for the products of their preferred brand (Simangunsong & Hariandja, 2018). Some customers believe that when comparing and evaluating competing brands, it is preferable to examine the price and value of their preferred brands. It was revealed that consumers acquire goods that have a high perceived value during the purchase intention (Yu & Lee, 2019). The findings by Hermann et al(2007) revealed that a product's price has a substantial effect on consumer satisfaction. In reference with the above discussion, the second hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Product price is positively and significantly related to Generation Z's purchase intention.

#### *Product Quality*

The term "product quality" refers to the customer's assessment of the overall quality or superiority of the product or service they expect (Zeithaml, 1998). The concept "conformance requirement" or "fitness for use" refers to the product's quality. For instance, some customers choose to wear sports shoes for intense exercise, while others prioritise durability when choosing sports shoes. When consumers perceive different product prices, they may believe that higher product prices indicate higher product quality. Rao and Monroe (1989) assert that price could be a barometer of quality. Additionally, product quality plays a significant role in influencing purchase intention (Alam, 2020). The sports apparel sector must place a premium on the way consumers perceive the products offers and on recognition of the products' perceived quality. Tariq, Nawaz, Butt, and Nawaz (2013) suggested that the quality of a sport apparel should be periodically improved. If the product is of high quality, buyers will purchase it (Chi et al., 2009). The third hypothesis is proposed in light of the preceding discussion:

H3: Product quality is positively and significantly related to Generation Z's purchase intention.

#### *Endorsement*

Endorsement is a widely used marketing approach in the sports apparel sector (e.g., Min et al., 2019; Oodith, 2019). It is considered to be an external determinant of purchase intention. As successful endorsers, they can directly or indirectly influence consumers' purchasing intentions toward a sport brand. For example, Stuart (2007) claimed that players who can encapsulate the position of sports hero and fame, such as Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods, are more likely to persuade consumers to make a purchase. As such, the sports apparel sector can team up with a celebrity to form a co-branding partnership. Based on the

empirical findings from Renton (2009), it was found that endorsements from well-known athletes are even more powerful and specific when compared to other types of endorsements. Elberse and Golod (2007) established that the sports apparel industry's employment of a world-class athlete to promote a sport brand can result in a large profit margin. According to Dix, Phau and Sonia (2010), sports personalities have a greater influence on the purchasing intention and behaviour of young people when it comes to sports merchandise than on other products. Chia and Poo (2009) assert that the younger generation is adept at following their favourite celebrities on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The presence of a celebrity can help expand the reach of the sport brand and transfer the celebrity's fame to the brand. Collaboration between the sports apparel sector with the appropriate celebrity, their representative, and endorsement have a good effect on the industry as a whole. As a result of the above discussion, the fourth hypothesis is suggested.

H4: Endorsement is positively and significantly related to Generation Z's purchase intention.

#### *Promotion*

Sales promotion, according to Schultz, Robinson, and Petrison (1998), is an external determinant and critical component of the marketing mix since it stimulates consumers' purchase intentions. Promoting a product or service can be used to attract and motivate consumers to purchase it. The purpose of promotion is to engage with consumers and capture their hearts. Businesses might use sales promotion methods to entice intermediaries or customers to purchase their products (Kotler, 2000; Pelsmacker et al., 2001). According to Chang and Tsai (2011), marketing communication strategies such as advertising, direct marketing, personal selling, public relations, and sales promotions are used to increase consumers' purchase behavioural intention. The sports apparel sector can adapt to changing lifestyles and continually launch new promotional strategies, such as cash refunds, discounts and coupons, as well as prize or gift redemptions in exchange for returned certificates. Frequently, retail managers use promotional methods as a means of attracting new customers and improving their sales earnings (Cui et al., 2016). Consumers are now perceived to be price sensitive and easily influenced by promotional offers (Yeshin, 2006). Moreover, prior research indicates that promotional offers have a considerable impact on customers' purchasing intentions (Biswas, Bhowmick, Guha, & Grewal, 2013; Zhafira, Andreti, Akmal, & Kumar, 2013). As a result of the prior discussions, the fifth hypothesis is presented.

H5: Promotion is positively and significantly related to Generation Z's purchase intention.

The following conceptual framework was proposed based on a review of the literature (see Figure 1).



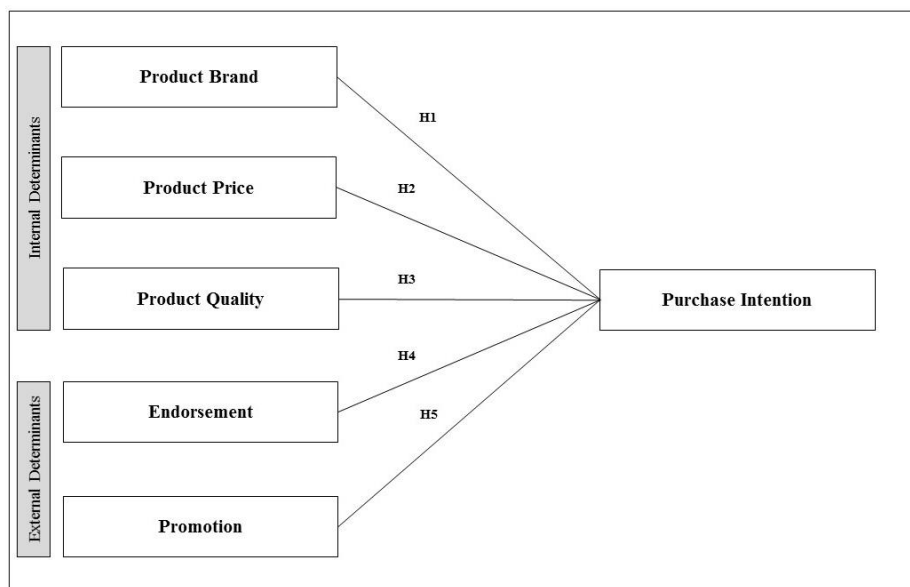


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

## Methodology

The numerical data were collected quantitatively by the dissemination of an online closed-ended questionnaire. To collect data from Generation Z in Sarawak, a non-random probability sampling method, or a purposive sampling method to be precise, was adopted. The responders to this survey must be at least 18 years old and part of Generation Z. Prior to data collection, the minimum sample size was determined using the G-Power software. A sample size of 138 was proposed for a priori power analysis to evaluate the developed research model utilising a medium effect size, a significance threshold of 0.05, and a power of 0.95. This resulted in the collection of 184 rows of data, which is regarded sufficient to assess the suggested study framework. The researcher of this study used both the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 and WarpPLS (version 6.0) to conduct statistical analysis on the data gathered. To begin, SPSS 23.0 was used to evaluate the respondents' demographic profiles. The developed model was then evaluated using partial least squares-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis, followed by bootstrapping, using WarpPLS 6.0 software.

## Findings

### *Assessment of the Measurement Model*

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to analyse the model established to validate the scales' reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Items loading must be more than 0.50, according to (Gefen et al., 2000). The composite reliability (CR) method was used to analyse the construct's internal consistency. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981); Memon and Rahman (2014), CR is a superior measure of internal consistency than Cronbach's alpha since it takes into account the standardised loadings of the manifest variables. Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2011) proposed that the minimal cut-off point for CR must be 0.70 or higher in order to be termed as "moderate." Finally, the average variance explained (AVE) method was used to evaluate the structures. According to Bagozzi and Yi (1988), AVE values of 0.5 and above are acceptable. Thus, the criterion for the item loadings must be greater than 0.50, the CR must be greater than 0.70, and the AVE must be 0.50 or

higher for the data to be considered acceptable. The researcher analysed the measurement model using the aforementioned criteria, and the findings are shown in Table 1. Table 1 only covers the first and last iterations. The early iterations produced results before deletion, while the final iterations produced results after deletion. The purchase intention coefficient of determination (R2) was 0.562, indicating a moderate model that explained more than 56.2 percent of the variance (Cohen, 1988).

Table 1  
*The Results of Measurement Model*

Model Construct	Measurement Item	Loading	CR <sup>a</sup>	AVE <sup>b</sup>	Loading	CR <sup>a</sup>	AVE <sup>b</sup>
		First iteration			Final iteration		
<b>Product Brand</b>	Productbrand_1	0.821	0.931	0.731	0.821	0.931	0.731
	Productbrand_2	0.889			0.889		
	Productbrand_3	0.816			0.816		
	Productbrand_4	0.865			0.865		
	Productbrand_5	0.881			0.881		
<b>Product Price</b>	Productprice_1	0.713	0.785	0.433	0.757	0.808	0.519
	Productprice_2	0.402			Omitted		
	Productprice_3	0.795			0.816		
	Productprice_4	0.568			0.520		
	Productprice_5	0.735			0.752		
<b>Product Quality</b>	Productquality_1	0.691	0.914	0.681	0.691	0.914	0.681
	Productquality_2	0.821			0.821		
	Productquality_3	0.822			0.822		
	Productquality_4	0.883			0.883		
	Productquality_5	0.893			0.893		
<b>Endorsement</b>	Endorsement_1	0.911	0.955	0.811	0.911	0.955	0.811
	Endorsement_2	0.894			0.894		
	Endorsement_3	0.887			0.887		
	Endorsement_4	0.918			0.918		
	Endorsement_5	0.892			0.892		
<b>Promotion</b>	Promotion_1	0.735	0.916	0.687	0.735	0.916	0.687
	Promotion_2	0.781			0.781		
	Promotion_3	0.858			0.858		
	Promotion_4	0.880			0.880		
	Promotion_5	0.880			0.880		
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	Purchaseintention_1	0.747	0.826	0.492	0.623	0.834	0.559
	Purchaseintention_2	0.599			Omitted		
	Purchaseintention_3	0.826			0.801		
	Purchaseintention_4	0.599			0.735		
	Purchaseintention_5	0.708			0.815		



	Purchaseintention _5						
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Note: Productprice\_2 and Purchaseintention\_2 were deleted due to low loadings.

Table 2

*Discriminant Validity of Constructs*

	PB	PP	PQ	Endor	Promo	PI
Product Brand (PB)	<b>0.855</b>					
Product Price (PP)	0.596	<b>0.720</b>				
Product Quality (PQ)	0.567	0.491	<b>0.825</b>			
Endorsement (Endor)	0.543	0.516	0.443	<b>0.900</b>		
Promotion (Promo)	0.552	0.273	0.581	0.345	<b>0.829</b>	
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.568	0.559	0.521	0.600	0.492	<b>0.747</b>

Note: Diagonals represent the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) while the other entries represent the correlation.

*Assessment of the Structural Model*

The remaining hypotheses were tested by assessing the inner (structural) model's p-values, t-values, and standardised coefficient beta values. The findings of the hypotheses testing were summarised in Table 3 and Figure 2. The t result for one-tailed hypothesis testing should be greater than 1.645 ( $p < 0.05$ ) or 2.33 ( $p < 0.01$ ). Three of the five direct hypotheses proposed and evaluated were supported by the statistical analysis. Only one of the hypothesised internal determinants (i.e., product pricing) and two of the proposed external determinants (i.e., endorsement and promotion) were found to be positively and significantly associated to purchase intention of sport shoes among Generation Z. Surprisingly, it was discovered that the two internal determinants namely, product brand and product quality, have no influence on Generation Z's purchasing intention. As a result, the statistical analysis supported H2, H4, and H5, but not H1 and H3. The Q2 values for purchase intention were set to 0.565 to demonstrate the model's predictive validity, in accordance with Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2016)'s recommendation that a Q2 value of more than zero is significant.

Table 3

*Path Coefficients and Hypotheses Testing*

H	Relationship	Standard Beta	P-value	t-value	Decision	VIF	f <sup>2</sup>
H1	Product Brand → Purchase Intention	0.022	0.384	0.295	Not Supported	2.285	0.012
H2	Product Price → Purchase Intention	0.267	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>3.828**</b>	<b>Supported</b>	1.949	0.155
H3	Product Quality → Purchase Intention	0.061	0.202	0.837	Not Supported	1.937	0.032

H4	Endorsement → Purchase Intention	0.335	<0.001	4.856**	Supported	1.787	0.208
H5	Promotion→ Purchase Intention	0.285	<0.001	4.098**	Supported	1.870	0.155

Note:  $p < 0.01^{**} = t > 2.33$ ;  $p < 0.05 = t > 1.645^*$  (H = Hypothesis)

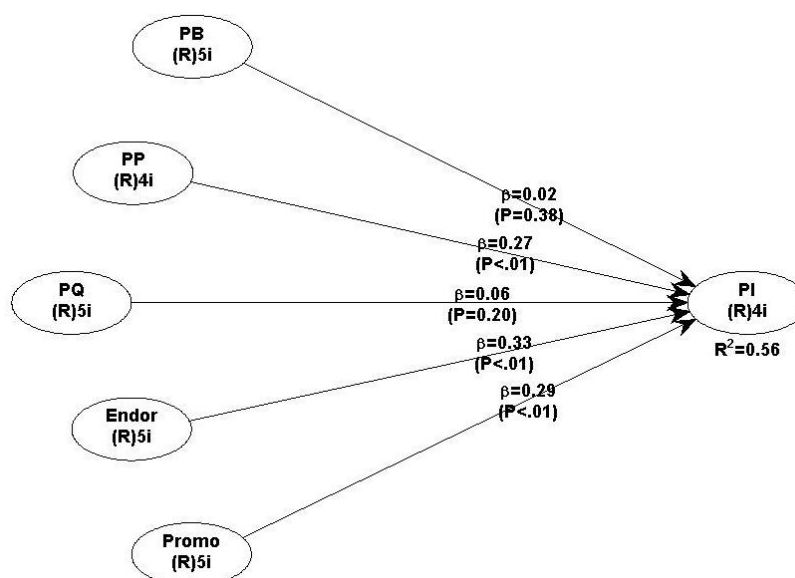


Figure 2: Research Model with Path Coefficient and P-values

### Discussion

The results of Hypothesis 1 analysis revealed that product brand had no significant positive impact on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.022$ ;  $p = 0.384$ ;  $t = 0.295$ ), implying that Hypothesis 1 was not supported. A brand is a name or symbol that a buyer perceives as identifying the goods and services of a vendor or group of sellers in comparison to other sellers in the market. Since many people still buy their products only on the basis of the brand, the product brand is regarded as one of the most essential considerations for buyers in many marketplaces. However, the findings of this study revealed that the product brand has no substantial positive impact on purchase intention. When it comes to sports shoes, Generation Z is less concerned with the name and brand. While most customers all across the world are noticing the well-known brands such as Nike and Adidas in the sector of sports shoes and gear, Generation Z is known as a more perplexing generation due to their behaviour that differs from the previous generations, particularly when they have no brand allegiance to a product. Due to the minor variations between sports shoe brands, Generation Z consumers do not expend much effort in gathering and comparing information about various sports shoe brands. As a result, product brand has little influence on Generation Z purchasing intentions.

The subsequent analysis for Hypothesis 2 revealed that product price had a significant positive impact on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.267$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $t = 3.828$ ), indicating that Hypothesis 2 was supported. Product price is identified as an important factor in determining competition, market share, profit, product marketing strategy, and product quality. Some

regular consumers believe that the price of a product is the most essential component. The better the consumer approval of the pricing, the quicker the choice to purchase the product. Furthermore, the product price can explain how much money will be spent based on the needs and satisfaction with the goods they would purchase. If the sports apparel sector offers price discounts, it can reduce consumers' sense of the price paid in the short term and increase product buy intention. In reality, when the price of a product is high, customers' buying intentions tend to be lower. When the price of a product decreases, consumers' inclination to acquire the products increases. As a result, product pricing had a positive and significant impact on purchase intention among Generation Z.

The results of Hypothesis 3 analysis revealed that product quality had no significant positive impact on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.061$ ;  $p = 0.202$ ;  $t = 0.837$ ), thus demonstrating that Hypothesis 3 was not supported. The customer perception of overall quality or superiority of goods or services expected by the customers can be defined as the perception of product quality. The quality of a product can be characterised as "conformance requirement" or "fitness for usage." As a result of the tangible quality of the products, consumers may repeat in purchasing single brands or switch between brands. However, the findings of this study revealed that product quality had no substantial positive impact on purchase intention. This could be due to the fact that, the Generation Z is lacked of product comprehension, in which it is difficult for them to determine product quality and distinctions across product brands by seeing and touching. Generation Z consumers have a low perception of product quality. At this time, word-of-mouth marketing from relatives and friends, expert recommendations, and endorsements are seen as the powerful substantiation that compensates consumers' lack of understanding about the product brand. This may lead to Generation Z's recognition and acceptance of a certain product. Due to the aforementioned reasons, product quality has little influence on Generation Z's purchasing intentions.

The study for Hypothesis 4 revealed that endorsement had a substantial positive impact on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.335$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $t = 4.856$ ), indicating that Hypothesis 4 was supported. For many businesses, the endorsement approach is one of the most popular techniques of marketing. Being an effective endorser can either directly or indirectly enhance purchase intentions and customer preferences toward brands. As a result, hiring an endorsement is not only a popular and practical approach to reach out to customers, but it is also determined as a fundamental and effective sports marketing technique. Famous athlete endorsements are significantly more targeted and successful when compared to other endorsers. Sports superstars can be persuasive through both techniques, depending on the product they are supporting and their level of experience in that particular category. Athletes, for example, who support sports equipment or athletic gear could be considered the expert endorsers, who influencing individuals through a process of internalisation. Sports personalities have a stronger influence on Generation Z's purchasing intentions for sports-related products than on other products. As a result, it was discovered that endorsement has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention among Generation Z.

The study for Hypothesis 5 revealed that promotion had a significant positive impact on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.285$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $t = 4.098$ ), indicating that Hypothesis 5 as confirmed. Sales promotion is an important component of the marketing mix that stimulates consumers' purchase intentions. Promotion has a significant impact on consumers' purchasing intentions.

Promotion can be used to entice and persuade customers to buy a product or service. The goal of promotion is to engage with customers and touch their hearts. The sports apparel sector might employ sales promotion strategies to encourage intermediaries or consumers to buy their items in the near future. During the promotional period, customers will make purchases. Since consumers need to spend more money to purchase merchandise during the normal time period, purchasing products during the promotion period allows them to pay less money to purchase the products. If a price reduction is offered on the products, customers will prefer to buy more. As a result, promotion is discovered to have a positive and significant impact on purchase intention among Generation Z.

### **Conclusion, Implications and Limitations**

To summarize, the findings steer us to draw conclusions that product price, endorsement, and promotion have induced a strong tendency among the Generation Z's sport shoes purchase intention in the Sarawak context. Unfortunately, the current study found that product brand and product quality were negatively related to sport shoes purchase intention among the Generation Z. This study is therefore to provide empirical evidence by examining both the internal and external drivers of Generation Z's inclination to purchase sports shoes in Sarawak. The study adds to and expands on the existing body of knowledge regarding sports shoe purchase intention. It was concluded that an internal determinant (i.e., product pricing) and two external determinants (i.e., endorsement and promotion) had a positive and significant influence on Generation Z's intention to purchase sports shoes. The empirical evidence presented in this study provides practical and valuable information to the sports apparel industry regarding the factors influencing sports shoe purchasing intention among Generation Z.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study lays the groundwork for future researchers interested in the subject of sports shoes to continue investigating the links between the hypothesised independent factors and purchase intention. From a practical standpoint, the study's findings provide pertinent data for the sports apparel industry's sports shoe industry. The findings may be beneficial to the sports apparel business and vendors that looking for better understanding regarding the perspectives of Generation Z's purchase intentions for sports shoes, particularly in the Sarawak, Malaysia's context. From this, the sports apparel industry and sellers can deduce that they need to do more to understand Generation Z's local perceptions, create opportunities for local Generation Z to purchase their products, and adopt a primary development strategy to increase their profitability and position in the sports shoe market.

As with any research, this study has a number of limitations. To begin, this study's drawback is identified through the narrow distribution of the survey questionnaire, which consisted primarily of respondents from Sarawak, Malaysia. Diverse geographical research may yield a variety of outcomes and conclusions, and some of which may be more generalised. The second limitation of this study is, the survey questionnaires were distributed entirely online. A face-to-face interview could provide more significant understanding to the researchers. Despite these limitations, the current findings contribute to a better understanding of the factors influencing Generation Z's inclination to purchase sports shoes in Sarawak, Malaysia. The findings indicated that the following elements influenced Generation Z's purchasing intention: product pricing, endorsement, and promotion. As a

result, it is clear that Generation Z is more influenced by external than internal forces. Finally, this study provides important information to the sports apparel industry and retailers.

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