

**EFFECT OF RESPECT AND SIMILARITY OF INFLUENCER BRAND ADVOCATES ON  
PURCHASE INTENTION OF CLOTHES MADE IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*The influx of imported ready-made clothing into Nigeria has intensified competition for market share, and poses a threat to Nigerian clothing brands. There is a need for made-in-Nigeria clothing brands to effectively communicate their value proposition to consumers so as to encourage strong purchase intentions. This study assessed the effect of respect and similarity of influencer brand advocates on purchase intention of clothes made in Nigeria in Abuja using a survey research design with respect and similarity as independent variables while purchase intention is the dependent variable. Data were collected through a structured five-point Likert scale questionnaire from a sample of 447 adult respondents ranging from ages 18 years and above. The data collected were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with the aid of SmartPLS v3 software. The findings revealed that respect and similarity had significant positive effect on purchase intention, with respect having a stronger effect, than similarity. Based on the findings, the study recommended that clothing brands should prioritise the selection of influencer brand advocates who are widely respected, credible, and admired, and marketing strategies should emphasise the influencer brand advocate's achievements, integrity, and alignment with the brand's values to enhance consumer trust and influence. Also clothing brands should select influencer brand advocates that have perceived resemblance to the target consumers in terms of values, interests, personality traits, lifestyle choices, and demographics such as age, gender, and ethnicity.*

**Keywords:** Respect, Similarity, Influencers, Brand advocates, Purchase Intention.

**Introduction**

Marketing and promotion play a pivotal role in the fashion industry and serve as essential tools for brand differentiation and consumer engagement. Fashion brands leverage emotional connections and lifestyle associations to create brand loyalty that transcends mere product functionality to psychological dimension of fashion marketing which has become

increasingly important as consumers seek brands that align with their values and self-expression (Jackson and Shaw 2009). Social media platforms, influencer marketing, e-commerce websites, and content marketing have become crucial channels for reaching and engaging consumers globally (Gurhan-Canli et al 2018). Many businesses are continuously seeking innovative strategies of capturing consumer attention with a view of influencing their

purchase intention (Clotey et al. 2023). Consequently, the strategic integration of influencers as brand advocates because of their capacity for targeted audience segmentation and niche marketing.

According to Xua et al. (2004) purchase intention is a consumer's willingness to buy a product or service based on their perceptions, attitudes, and situational factors. Chen and Chang (2012) described purchase intention as a crucial concept in marketing and consumer behaviour studies, and serves as a predictor of actual purchasing actions. Peter and Olson (2010) affirmed that purchase intention reflects behaviour before customers actually buy a product. Yee and San (2011) expounded that purchase intention is a strong indicator of potential consumer behaviour, which makes it valuable for businesses that want to optimize their marketing strategies. By understanding and analysing the factors that influence purchase intention, businesses can actually develop more effective marketing strategies and tailor their product offerings to enhance customer engagement and drive sales.

An influencer brand advocate is an individual who possesses the capacity to influence the attitudes and behaviours of a significant segment of consumers due to their perceived credibility, authenticity, and established relationship with their audience, and who actively and genuinely champions a particular brand or its products/services (Lou & Yuan, 2019). In the evolving landscape of digital marketing, the concept of influencer brand advocates has gained significant prominence, representing a refined understanding of how individuals can leverage their social capital to promote brands. Influencer brand advocates have a deep and organic alignment with the brand's values and mission which goes beyond transactional relationships to a more relational and integrated partnership. Shimps (2007) proposed the TEARS model for the examining of factors through which the effectiveness of influencer brand advocates can be accessed. TEARS model, stands for trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, respect and similarity. However, this study will be investigating the effect of the last two factors namely, respect and similarity of influencer brand advocates on purchase intention.

Respect describes how much the consumers appreciate or admire the influencer brand advocate based on his or her accomplishments and qualities (Shimp 2007). Influencer brand advocates are respected for their appealing personalities, their stand on pressing societal issues, and other vital qualities (Hennayake & Hennayake 2017).

Similarity represents the extent to which an influencer brand advocate matches the target audience in terms of characteristics related and pertinent to the endorsement relationship such as age, lifestyle, gender, ethnicity, etc. (Shimp 2007).

Nigeria's fashion sector struggles to compete with imported foreign clothing for domestic market dominance. The overwhelming presence of imported ready-to-wear garments creates an oversaturated market that threatens local manufacturers and intensifies competition (McKinsey & Company 2020).

This research will employ the final two components of the TEARS model, respect and similarity as independent variables to examine influencer brand advocacy, with purchase intention serving as the dependent variable. The survey specifically investigates how an influencer brand advocate's perceived respect and similarity influence consumer purchasing intention for Nigerian-made clothing within Abuja. The target population encompasses all clothing purchasers across Abuja's six area councils: Abaji, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje, Kwali, and the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC). Given the universal need for clothing, the study population is defined as Abuja's entire estimated population within the survey's geographical scope.

This research will deliver important findings for clothing manufacturers, marketing professionals, and government officials working to enhance domestic fashion production and consumption. Through examining consumer perceptions of influencer brand advocates and their impact on clothing purchasing decisions, the study aims to expand current understanding in marketing and consumer behaviour research. The research goal is to provide practical strategies for utilizing influencer brand advocates to promote indigenous fashion brands, thereby supporting

the development and long-term viability of Nigeria's clothing sector.

Based on this foundation, the major objectives of the study are to examine the effect of respect and similarity of influencer brand advocates on consumer purchase intention of clothes made in Nigeria, in Abuja.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Respect has no significant effect on consumer purchase intention of clothes made in Nigeria, in Abuja.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Similarity has no significant effect on consumer purchase intention of clothes made in Nigeria, in Abuja.

## **Conceptual Review**

### **Influencer Brand Advocate**

Raji et al. (2020) defined an influencer brand advocate as someone who consistently expresses positive opinions and recommends a brand, due to genuine satisfaction and belief in the brand's offerings. Furthermore, Singh et al. (2020) elaborates that an influencer brand advocate serves as a digital form of word-of-mouth, leveraging their personal platforms to disseminate messages that are perceived as authentic and reliable by their followers, thereby driving purchase intention. Jimenez-Castillo and Sanchez-Fernandez (2019) propose that an influencer brand advocate is an individual who actively integrates the brand into their lifestyle content, thereby showcasing its utility and value in a natural and relatable manner, which encourages followers to emulate their choices. In essence, influencer brand advocates are influencers who actively and voluntarily promote a brand, product, or service based on genuine satisfaction and enthusiasm. These individuals endorse the brand through various channels, including word-of-mouth, social media, and personal recommendations. It is an organic form of promotion, where the influencer brand advocates actively engage with the brand, often sharing positive experiences reviews, testimonials, creating user-generated content, and participating in brand communities and their advocacy is rooted in a deep appreciation for the product or service, making them credible sources

of information. Influencer brand advocates offer accessible and interactive experience, allowing followers to feel a "parasocial relationship" that mimics real-life friendships (Whang & Im, 2020). This perceived intimacy encourages followers to trust recommendations, thereby influencing purchase decisions and shaping consumer behaviour (Singh et al., 2020; Wiedmann & Mettenheim, 2020).

### **Respect**

Liu et al. (2023) defined respect as the level of high esteem consumers have for an influencer brand advocate, rooted in their achievements and character traits, representing a shared appreciation that stems from both professional mastery and personal authenticity consistently displayed over time. Shimp (2007) agrees that respect encompasses how much consumers value, honour, and look up to an influencer brand advocate, taking into account their complete range of personal and professional achievements, character quality, integrity, and contribution to society. This concept captures the level of admiration, regard, and trustworthiness that an influencer brand advocate earns when representing a brand. Liu et al. (2023) further observed that respect becomes particularly powerful when the influencer brand advocate's experiences and principles mirror those of the target consumers, fostering a deeper bond that enhances the brand connection. Fill and Van den Bergh (2019) characterized respect as a unique quality that develops from consistent achievements and the favourable acknowledgment these successes create within the target audience. Hennayake and Hennayake (2017) conceptualized respect as an indicator of the degree to which consumers revere and value the brand advocate due to their career achievements. Respect serves as an essential factor in assessing influencer brand advocates, going far beyond simple fame or popularity to include the profound admiration and high regard that target audiences genuinely feel toward the individual. The twofold aspect of respect, encompassing both accomplishment and behaviour, establishes it as a significant factor in choosing influencer brand advocates, and influencers who earn authentic respect are more positioned to sustain their impact on consumer attitudes over extended periods.

## **Similarity**

According to Shimp (2007), brand advocate similarity represents the extent to which a brand advocate aligns with target consumers regarding characteristics that are relevant and applicable to the endorsement partnership, including factors such as age, lifestyle, gender, ethnicity, and similar attributes. Solomon (2002) similarly conceptualized similarity as the degree to which an influencer brand advocate corresponds with the target audience on attributes including gender, age, lifestyle, and other characteristics, which affects how consumers interpret the social values associated with the brand ambassador. Brown and Stayman (1992) proposed that similarity pertains to the level of perceived likeness between the brand ambassador and target consumers regarding values, interests, personality characteristics, lifestyle preferences, and demographic factors including age, gender, and ethnicity. Consumers generally develop more favourable responses to advertisements that feature endorsers whom they view as sharing commonalities with themselves. Belch and Belch (2001) characterized similarity as the correspondence between the influencer brand advocate and target consumers across comparable demographic and psychographic components, mutual interests and enthusiasms, common social identity, aspirational aspects, emotional resonance, lifestyle, and objectives. Brand advocate similarity is strengthened through familiarity, which represents the recognition developed via repeated exposure between the influencer brand advocate and target audience. Consumers are more inclined to be swayed by messaging from individuals with whom they sense a connection or shared characteristics. To achieve optimal effectiveness, brand endorsements should align with a target audience that already follows the influencer brand advocate.

## **Purchase intention**

Khan et al. (2016) conceptualized purchase intention as the wish or plan to acquire a product from a particular brand, or secure a service at a future time. This intention is typically preceded by an emotional process involving consumer perceptions regarding the product or the source individual. It represents an individual's deliberate plan to exert effort toward purchasing a product

or service. Chinomona (2013) defined purchase intention, also termed buying interest, as the readiness or probability that a consumer will acquire a product or service, which develops when an individual has obtained sufficient information about the desired products or services. Solomon (2020) extended the understanding of purchase intention by highlighting the role of consumer decision-making processes in forming purchase intentions. He emphasized that purchase intention is not merely a singular decision point but rather a culmination of various stages including need recognition, information search, and alternative evaluation. It constitutes a critical aspect of consumer behaviour and decision-making process, hence comprehending this concept is crucial for businesses to accurately forecast and effectively shape consumer purchasing behaviour. Purchase intention plays a crucial role in predicting consumer behaviour and informs marketing strategies.

## **Empirical Reviews**

### **Respect and Purchase Intention**

Ali et al. (2023) investigated the effect of brand advocate respect on customer purchase intention in the textile business. The information was gathered through questionnaires distributed to 100 respondents who came to buy the products. The study revealed that brand advocate respect significantly influenced purchase intentions, as consumers preferred products endorsed by individuals they viewed as respectable and this effect was stronger among older consumers. The recommendation was that brands should focus on enhancing the respectability of their ambassadors to attract a wider audience and foster loyalty.

Mikail and Nuratitah (2024) examined literature reviews on the impact of influencer brand advocate respect on consumer purchase intention. The research focused on the perspectives of social media users in Nigeria aged between 18 to 34 years old. The study revealed that influencer brand advocate respect had no significant impact on consumer purchase intention. The study recommended that marketers and advertisers should pay more attention to the attractiveness and trustworthiness of their brand advocates.

Brahmbhatt et al. (2024) investigated the effect of influencer brand advocate respect on purchase intention of customers towards personal care products in Ahmedabad. The sample size was 122 respondents residing in the Ahmedabad district of Gujarat. The results of the study showed that influencer brand advocate respect had a positive and significant impact on purchase intention of personal care products in Ahmedabad.

### **Similarity and Purchase Intention**

Chaddha et al. (2021) examined the effect of influencer brand advocate similarity on consumer purchase intentions in Indian travel service industry. Structured questionnaires were distributed to 322 respondents belonging to Delhi using non-random convenience sampling. The findings indicated that perceived similarity with the brand advocate significantly influenced Indian consumers purchase intention for various services offered by tourism sector as consumers were more likely to trust brands when they felt a connection with the brand ambassador.

Oteh et al. (2023) evaluated brand advocate similarity and customer purchase intention of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) products. The sample size was 271 consumers of local footwear in South-East Nigeria. The finding was that the relationship between brand ambassador similarity and patronage of locally produced footwear is not significant hence is not associated with patronage of local foot wears.

Freeman and Chen (2015) evaluated the impact of influencer brand advocate similarity on purchase intention in young adults in Malaysia. The study adopted a quantitative approach, with a structured questionnaire distributed to 318 young adults aged between 18-25 years. The results show that the similarity of influencer brand advocates has a positive and significant relationship with consumer purchase intention.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Meaning Transfer Theory**

The meaning transfer model was developed by Grant McCracken in 1986 and explains how meanings are transferred from models to consumer goods and, ultimately, to consumers themselves. McCracken (1986) proposed that meanings in society are derived from culture and

are transferred to consumer products through various channels including advertising, fashion, influencer and celebrity endorsements. The meaning transfer model posits a three-stage process through which meanings move from the brand advocates to the product and ultimately to the consumer. In the first stage, the brand advocate acquires particular meanings and associations from their roles on television, in movies, sports, and other public roles and such meanings include status, class, lifestyle, personality traits, and cultural patterns that the brand advocates have cultivated through their public careers. In the second stage, the meanings transfer from the brand advocate to the product or brand during the endorsement process and this transfer occurs when consumers identify the meanings they associate with the influencer or celebrity in the endorsed product. The final stage involves the transfer of meaning from the product to the consumer where consumers actively engage in acquiring and constructing their self-image through their consumption of the endorsed products. Escalas and Bettman (2015) revealed that consumers use these products as tools for self-expression and identity construction, incorporating the transferred meanings into their self-concepts. This transfer of meaning enhances brand perception, increases brand awareness, and ultimately drives purchase intention.

### **Parasocial Interaction Theory**

The parasocial interaction (PSI) theory was introduced by Donald Horton and Richard Wohl in 1956 and describes a one-sided relationship that develops between a media user and a media personality through non-reciprocal interactions. The study by Horton and Wohl (1956) revealed that psychological and emotional bonds can form between individuals and media personalities and even though this relationship is not reciprocal, it can feel real to the individual, leading to feelings of intimacy, friendship, or even admiration for the media figure. The theory proposes that repeated exposure to a media personality can foster a sense of familiarity and connection such that viewers may come to see the media figure as a friend or confidante. Parasocial interaction is particularly common with influencers and celebrities, athletes, and even fictional characters and while these relationships are not physically real, they can have significant psychological and emotional impacts providing a sense of companionship, social support, and even a source

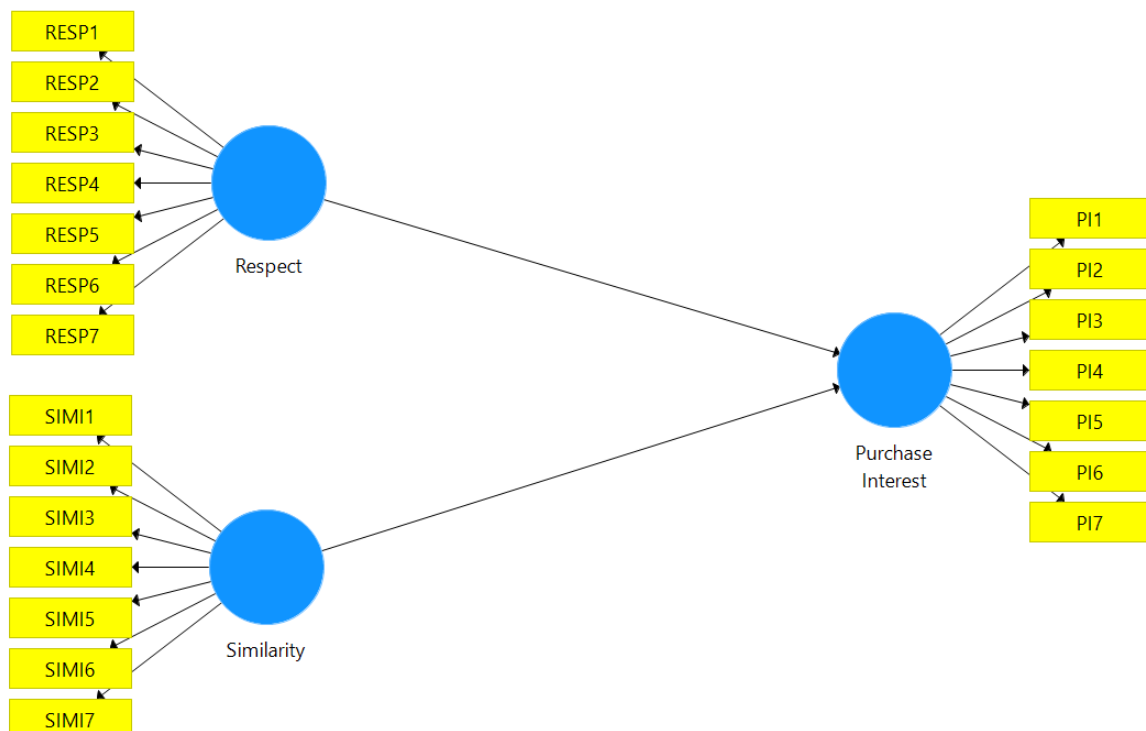
of identity. The parasocial interaction theory helps explain how brand ambassador strategies can have a significant influence on consumer purchase intention. When consumers develop a parasocial relationship with a brand ambassador, they feel a sense of connection and trust with the individual and this emotional connection is able to positively impact their perception of the brand. Kim et al. (2015) explored parasocial interactions and found that parasocial relationships with celebrity brand ambassadors has significant positive impact on consumer behaviour and can positively influence consumers' attitudes towards endorsed brands. Additionally, the research by Labrecque (2014) showed that parasocial interactions with brand ambassadors on social media can increase consumer engagement and purchase intentions.

**Methodology**

The research employed a cross-sectional survey methodology to examine the effect of influencer brand advocate respect and similarity on consumer purchase intention for clothing made in Nigerian, in Abuja. Based on National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) data, Abuja's population

stands at 3,067,460, and the study's sample size of 384 was calculated using Cochran's formula for sample size determination. To compensate for possible non-responses, the sample size was expanded by 20%, resulting in a final target of approximately 461 participants. Data collection utilized a structured questionnaire derived from Chaddha et al. (2021), and Spears and Singh (2004). The questionnaire comprised two parts: section A capturing demographic details and section B containing 21 items measuring the independent variables (respect, and similarity) and the dependent variable (consumer purchase intention) through a five-point Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). A purposive sampling approach was used to ensure participation was limited to adult consumers aged 18 and above. For comprehensive reach, data collection involved distributing the questionnaire online through social media channels including WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Telegram. These platforms are extensively utilized in Abuja and facilitated access to a varied audience efficiently. The collected data was analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with the aid of SmartPLS v3 software.

Figure 1: Theoretical Model for the Study



Note: SmartPLS Output, 2025

**Results and Discussions**

**Demographic Distribution of the Respondents**

In this study, 447 responses were received from the questionnaires distributed from Google drive to online platforms although the predetermined sample size was 461. The gender distribution shows that 229 (51.23%) of the respondents that

participated in the survey are females while 218(48.77%) are males (table 1). Also the age distribution of the respondents, indicates a diverse representation across different age groups of which 68(15.21%) were within the age of 18-24years, 116(25.95%) were between 25-34years, 126(28.18%) were between 35-44years, 57(12.75%) were between 45-54years, while 80(17.9%) were 55 years and above.

**Table 4.1:**

*Gender of the respondents*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	229	51.23	51.23	51.23
	Male	218	48.77	48.77	100.0
	Total	447	100.0	100.0	

**Note: Field Survey, 2025**

**Table 2:**

*Age group of the respondents*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24 years	68	15.21	15.21	15.21
	25-34 years	116	25.95	25.95	41.16
	35-44 years	126	28.18	28.18	69.34
	45-54years	57	12.75	12.75	82.09
	55 years and above	80	17.9	17.91	100
	Total	447	100.0	100.0	

**Note: Field Survey, 2025**

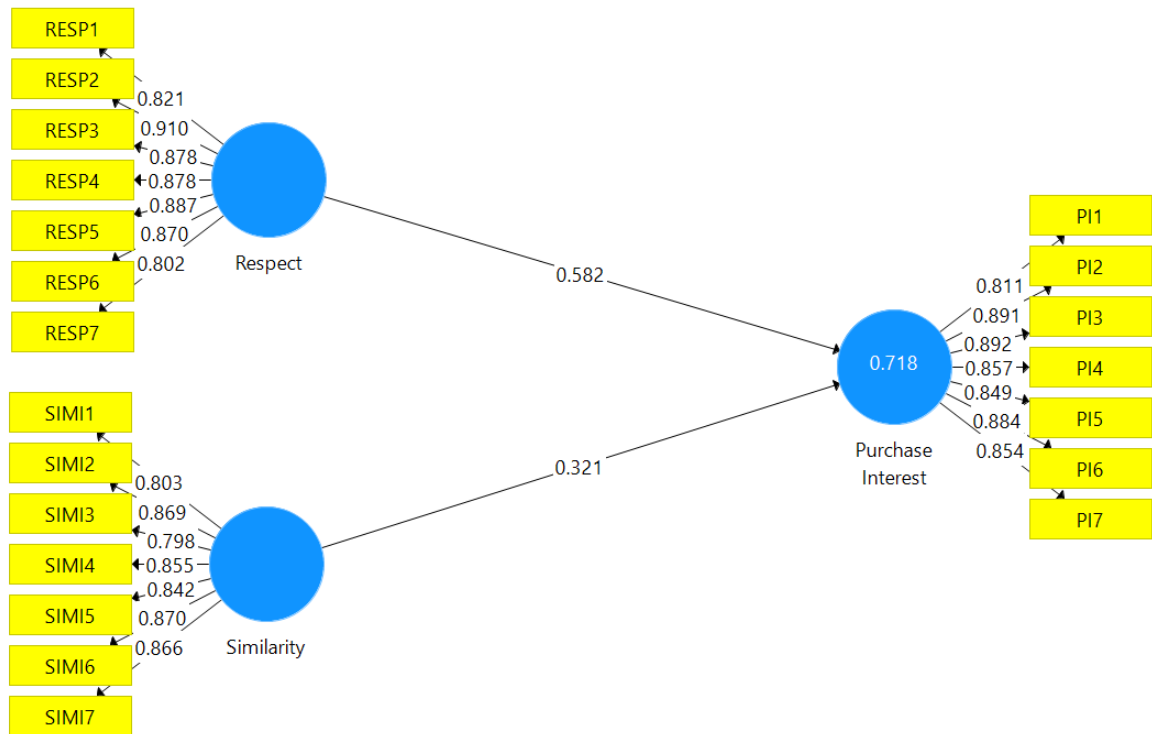
**The Measurement Model**

The measurement model was evaluated by examining the outer loadings of study items, with loadings above 0.70 considered acceptable as they indicate that the construct accounts for more than 50% of the indicator's variance (Hair et al.,

2019). When loadings surpass this 0.70 benchmark, they reveal robust relationships between items and their respective constructs, thereby strengthening confidence in the measurement model's precision and validity. The analysis revealed that all outer loadings met or

exceeded the 0.7 criterion, confirming strong associations between each item and its corresponding construct.

Figure 2: Indicator Outer Loadings



Note: SmartPLS Output, 2025

The outer loading analysis demonstrates excellent reliability and convergent validity for the measuring model across all the three constructs: respect, similarity, and purchase intention. All seven indicators for each construct

display high loadings well above the usually accepted criterion of 0.70, demonstrating that each item contributes significantly to the construct.

**Table 3:**

*Factor loadings of the constructs*

RESPECT	SIMILARITY	PURCHASE INTENTION
0.821	0.803	0.811
0.910	0.869	0.891
0.878	0.798	0.892
0.878	0.855	0.858
0.887	0.842	0.850
0.870	0.870	0.883
0.802	0.866	0.853

Note: SmartPLS Output, 2025

**Internal Consistency**

To assess internal consistency, three metrics were examined: Cronbach's Alpha, rho\_A, Composite Reliability. All three constructs

demonstrate excellent reliability and validity based on the reported statistics. Table 4 presents the construct reliability and validity measures for three constructs: Purchase Intention, Respect, and Similarity.

**Table 4:**

*Reliability of Study Scale*

	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>rho_A</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>	<b>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</b>
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	<b>0.943</b>	<b>0.945</b>	<b>0.953</b>	<b>0.745</b>
<b>Respect</b>	<b>0.943</b>	<b>0.944</b>	<b>0.954</b>	<b>0.747</b>
<b>Similarity</b>	<b>0.932</b>	<b>0.934</b>	<b>0.945</b>	<b>0.712</b>
<b>Threshold</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.5</b>

**Note : SmartPLS Output 2025**

Specifically, Cronbach's Alpha values for Purchase Intention (0.943), Respect (0.943), and Similarity (0.932) all exceed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7, indicating strong internal consistency among the items within each construct. Similarly, rho\_A values, Purchase Intention (0.945), Respect (0.944), and Similarity (0.934), confirm excellent internal consistency, often considered a more precise measure than Cronbach's Alpha.

The Composite Reliability (CR) values are also exceptionally high: 0.953 for Purchase Intention, 0.954 for Respect, and 0.945 for Similarity. These values exceed the recommended cut-off of 0.7, suggesting that the observed variables reliably represent the underlying constructs.

**Convergent Validity**

In terms of convergent validity, all constructs show strong results, with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values of 0.745 for Purchase Intention, 0.747 for Respect, and 0.712 for Similarity. Since all AVE values are well above the minimum acceptable level of 0.5, the finding indicates that a substantial portion of the variance in the items is explained by the latent constructs.

**Discriminant Validity**

Table 5 presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values, which assess discriminant validity, the degree to which constructs that should not be related are actually distinct from each other.

**Table 5:**

*Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)*

	<b>Purchase Intention</b>	<b>Respect</b>	<b>Similarity</b>
<b>Purchase Intention</b>			
<b>Respect</b>	0.865		
<b>Similarity</b>	<b>0.797</b>	<b>0.785</b>	

**Note: SmartPLS Output 2025**

In the above table, the HTMT values between the constructs are as follows: the HTMT between Purchase Intention and Respect is 0.865, between Purchase Intention and Similarity is 0.797, and

between Respect and Similarity is 0.785. The HTMT values between constructs are all below the recommended threshold of 0.9, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity.

**Structural Model**

The structural model demonstrates comprehensive path analysis examining

relationships between independent and dependent variables. This structural model evaluation incorporated standard assessment metrics, including path coefficients, t-values, p-values, and the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ).

**Table 6:**

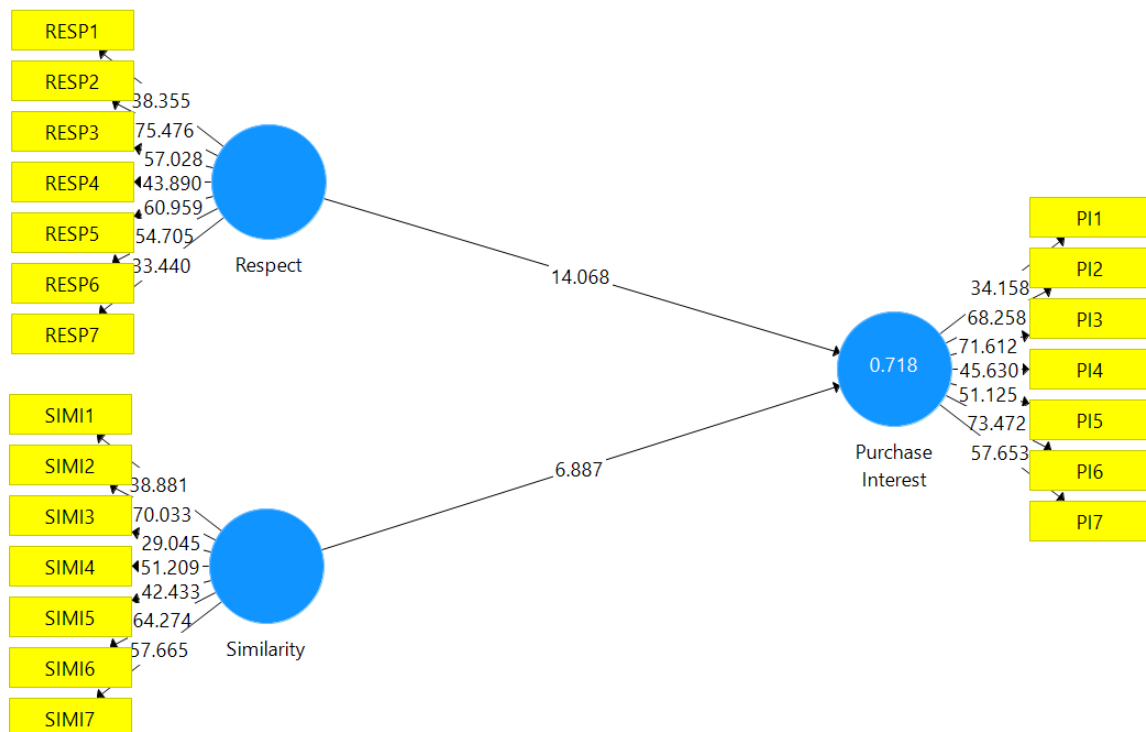
*Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ )*

	<b>R Square</b>	<b>R Square Adjusted</b>
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	0.718	0.716

Table 6 presents the  $R^2$  and adjusted  $R^2$  values for the construct of Purchase Intention. The  $R^2$  value of 0.718 for the dependent variable Purchase Intention indicates that approximately 71.8% of the variance in consumers' purchase intention can be explained by the combined effects of the

independent variables. This implies that the model has good predictive power for Purchase Intention, confirming that the constructs of respect and similarity are significant predictors of consumer Purchase intention in Abuja, Nigeria.

Figure 3: Structural Model



**Note: SmartPLS Output, 2025**

**Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing**

The results of the path coefficients, T-values, P-values that provide insight into the strength and

statistical relevance of the relationships between the independent variables, respect and

similarity, and the dependent variable, purchase intention are presented in table 7.

**Table 7:**

*Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing of the Model*

	<b>Path coefficient Beta**</b>	<b>T Statistics</b>	<b>P Values</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>Respect -&gt; Purchase Interest</b>	0.582	14.068	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>Similarity -&gt; Purchase Interest</b>	0.321	6.887	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Rejected</b>

**Note: SmartPLS Output, 2025**

These results of the path analysis from a structural equation model specifically assess the relationships between respect and similarity as predictors of purchase intention.

The path coefficient from Respect to Purchase Interest is 0.582, with a T-statistic of 14.068 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates a strong, statistically significant positive relationship, as the p-value is well below the common significance threshold of 0.05; hence the null hypothesis (**H<sub>01</sub>**) is rejected. The high T-statistic further confirms the robustness of this relationship.

The path coefficient for the relationship between similarity and purchase intention is 0.321, with a t-statistics of 6.887, and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ) showing that similarity has a moderate but statistically significant positive effect on consumer purchase intention; hence the null hypothesis (**H<sub>02</sub>**) is rejected.

**Discussion of Findings**

This research examined how influencer brand advocates' perceived respect and similarity affect consumer purchase intention of clothing made in Nigerian, in Abuja. The analysis revealed a Beta coefficient of 0.582 for respect, demonstrating a strong positive correlation with purchase intention. Specifically, each unit increase in

perceived respect corresponds to an average 0.582-unit increase in purchase intention, suggesting that consumers' regard for an influencer's respectability significantly enhances their likelihood to make purchases. These results align with findings from Ali et al. (2023) and Brahmabhatt et al. (2024), supporting the positive influence of respect on consumer behaviour. Conversely, the findings contradict Mikail and Nuratitah's (2024) research, which concluded that respect does not significantly impact purchase intention.

Regarding similarity, the results demonstrate a positive relationship with purchase intention, reflected in a Beta coefficient of 0.321. This indicates that each unit increase in perceived similarity between consumers and influencer brand advocates leads to a corresponding 0.321-unit increase in purchase intention. The findings suggest that when consumers perceive themselves as similar to an influencer brand advocate, their likelihood of making a purchase increases significantly. These results are consistent with research conducted by Freeman and Chen (2015) and Chaddha et al. (2021), which similarly established the positive impact of perceived similarity on consumer purchasing behavior. However, the findings contrast with Oteh et al. (2023), who reported no significant relationship between similarity and purchase intention.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The strategic integration of influencers as brand advocates has become an indispensable component of modern fashion marketing. Their ability to build trust, generate authentic

engagement, and directly influence consumer purchase intentions is their profound and evolving place in shaping the fashion landscape. Influencer brand advocate respect has a positive effect on consumer attitudes, perceptions, behaviour and purchase intention towards the

brand that is being endorsed. Also similarity between an influencer brand advocate and the target audience is a crucial factor in their effectiveness as the findings show that consumers tend to have more positive attitudes towards brand advocates who they perceive as similar to themselves and this increases their purchase intention.

In light of these findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Fashion brands should prioritise the selection of influencer brand advocates who are widely respected, credible, and admired, and marketing strategies should emphasise the influencer brand advocate's achievements, integrity, and alignment with the brand's values to enhance consumer trust and influence.
2. Brands should select influencer brand advocates that have perceived resemblance to the target consumers in terms of values, interests, personality traits, lifestyle choices, and demographics such as age, gender, and ethnicity.

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