

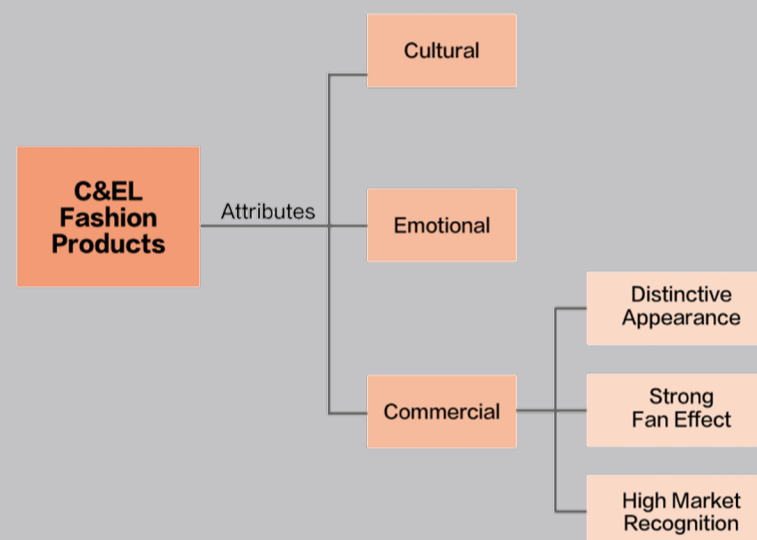
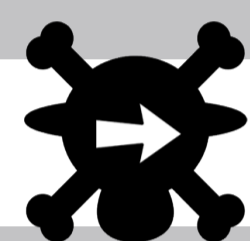
## RATIONALE & AIM & OBJECTIVES

Character and entertainment licensing is widely used in fashion to evoke emotion, expand markets, and gain cultural traction. However, results vary—some collaborations succeed, while others fail to gain fan approval. **Access to well-known IPs alone doesn't guarantee consumer purchase action, which prompting a key question: what drives purchase intention towards licensed fashion?**

This study aim to explore the psychological, cognitive, and cultural drivers of Gen Z's purchase intentions toward character and entertainment-licensed fashion products.

1. **Review literature** to identify key affective and cognitive factors.
2. **Develop a conceptual model** to explain the hypothesised relationships between these factors to purchase intention.
3. **Collect and analyse** quantitative data from Gen Z participants to test the model.
4. **Discuss the findings and provide strategic recommendations** for emotionally and culturally effective licensing collaborations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW



The most distinctive feature of character and entertainment licensed fashion products is their integration of **emotional** appeal, **cultural** symbolism, and **commercial** value. To examine what drives Gen Z's purchase intentions toward these products, this study draws on the **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**

and the **ABC Model of Attitudes**. TPB identifies attitude as the primary predictor of purchase intention, while the ABC model offers a more nuanced perspective by breaking attitude down into affective and cognitive components. Guided by these frameworks and the characteristics of C&EL fashion, this study identifies five key factors:

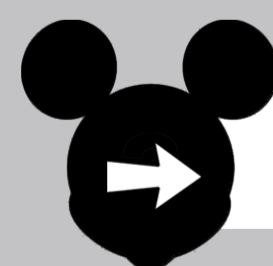
**Post-subcultural affiliation:** Reflects Gen Z's desire to express fluid identities and niche group membership through stylistic alignment with character-based fashion.

**Emotional resonance:** Captures the emotional attachment or nostalgia consumers feel toward characters, enhancing perceived value and personal relevance.

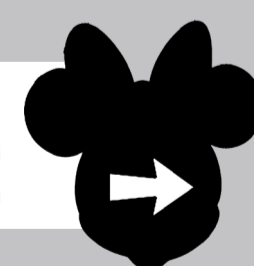
**Social sharing value:** Refers to the perceived shareability or social appeal of wearing character-branded fashion, especially on visual platforms like TikTok and Instagram.

**Perceived novelty:** Represents the extent to which C&EL products are seen as creative, distinctive, and stimulating—fulfilling curiosity and aesthetic expectations.

**Collection value:** Measures the symbolic or sentimental worth of owning such items, often linked to identity, memory, and exclusivity.



## RESEARCH DESIGN



This study adopts a **positivist, deductive, explanatory** design using a **mono-method quantitative survey** to test hypotheses. A structured, self-administered questionnaire with a 7-point Likert scale was used. This survey designed a **personalised character and entertainment selection mechanism**. Participants selected their favourite IP at the beginning of the survey, which was then dynamically embedded throughout to personalise items and enhance emotional engagement and response accuracy.



# WHO'S YOUR FAVOURITE CHARACTER? WHAT DRIVE US TO BUY LICENSED FASHION?

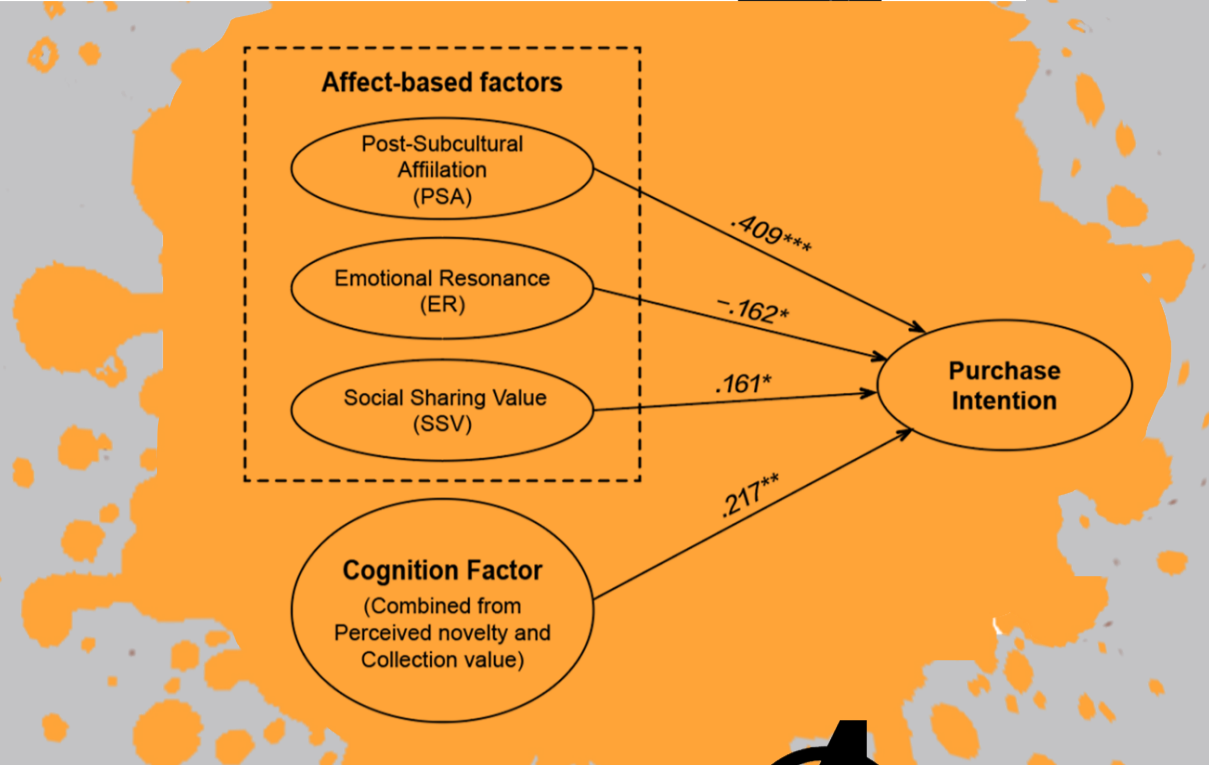


< **The Rise of Character and Entertainment-Licensed Fashion: Understand the Key Factors Influencing Gen Z's Purchase Intentions** >

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## FINAL REGRESSION MODEL



## ESSENTIAL FINDINGS

The conceptual model was revised by merging Perceived Novelty and Collection Value into a single Cognition Factor due to their theoretical and statistical alignment. The adjusted regression model demonstrated improved explanatory clarity, allowing for a more focused analysis of each predictor's influence on purchase intention. **Post-subcultural affiliation emerged as the strongest predictor** of purchase intention ( $\beta = .409$ ), highlighting Gen Z's use of C&EL fashion for identity signaling and symbolic belonging. **Social sharing value also showed a positive effect** ( $\beta = .161$ ), suggesting that visual shareability and trend alignment play a role in purchasing decisions. Surprisingly, **emotional resonance had a negative impact** ( $\beta = -.162$ ), possibly due to nostalgia detachment or diminished novelty. **Perceived novelty and collection value were combined into a Cognition Factor** ( $\beta = .217$ ), showing that rational appraisals of uniqueness and symbolic worth **also influence the intention**. Overall, Gen Z's purchase intentions towards character and entertainment-licensed fashion products are shaped by both symbolic identity expression and evaluative judgments.



## MANAGERIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

**Align with Post-subcultural Aesthetics:** C&EL fashion should reflect Gen Z's hybrid identities and lifestyle affiliations. Move beyond character placement embed IP into styles that resonate with niche fandoms like anime, gaming, or streetwear to enhance symbolic value and self-expression.

**Prioritise Cultural Relevance in Licensing:** Post-subcultural affiliation is the strongest driver of purchase. Brands should design flexible, remixable styles and collaborate with creators or influencers from fandom communities to amplify identity-based engagement.

**Balance Emotional Resonance with Relevance:** Emotional connection alone may not drive purchase. Avoid over-relying on nostalgia; instead, select IPs that reflect Gen Z's current cultural identities without evoking overly juvenile or saturated associations.

**Design for Visual Shareability:** Gen Z favours aesthetic engagement over active promotion. Focus on highly visual, stylised products that look appealing on social platforms, supported by micro-influencers, user styling, and content-driven marketing.

**Highlight Novelty and Collectibility:** Gen Z values products that are rare, novel, and symbolically rich. Frame licensed fashion as collectible art—use limited editions, bold design, and scarcity cues to elevate desirability and perceived value.

**Co-create Cultural Artefacts, Not Just Products:** Licensing should evolve into co-creation of lifestyle artefacts. Fashion-IP collaborations must blend narrative, aesthetics, and cultural symbolism to deliver identity-rich, community-rooted consumer experiences.