

The Role of Quality in Shaping Purchase Intentions for Luxury Brands Among Malaysian Consumers: A Theory of Planned Behavior Approach

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the factors influencing Malaysian consumers' intentions to purchase luxury brands, with a particular focus on the mediating role of perceived quality. The research is grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), integrating hedonism as an additional variable to provide a comprehensive understanding of luxury brand consumption.

Design/methodology/approach: A quantitative research design was employed using an online survey distributed via social media platforms. A total of 250 valid responses were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS version 4.1 to assess both the measurement and structural models.

Findings: The study found that attitude, perceived behavioural control, and hedonism significantly influenced perceived quality, which in turn had a strong effect on purchase intention. Quality also significantly mediated the relationships between these factors and purchase intention. However, subjective norm did not show a significant direct or indirect effect via quality.

Research limitations/implications: The study is limited by its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce social desirability bias. The sample, predominantly composed of young, educated individuals, may not be fully representative of the wider Malaysian population. Future research should consider longitudinal studies and a more demographically diverse sample.

Practical implications: Luxury brand marketers in Malaysia should focus on enhancing product quality perceptions and targeting consumers' intrinsic motivations such as hedonism and perceived control. Marketing strategies should shift away from emphasizing social pressure and instead promote exclusivity, emotional satisfaction, and personal relevance.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the existing literature by empirically validating an extended TPB framework in the context of Malaysian luxury brand consumption. It highlights quality as a critical mediator and provides region-specific insights, addressing a gap in research predominantly focused on Western markets.

Keywords: Luxury Brands, Purchase Intention, Quality

Introduction

Luxury brands are not a necessity but a desire within a culture or society (Kenton, 2021). Items that enhance the consumer's quality of life without being essential are considered luxury goods (Shrivastava et al., 2020). According to Islamic teachings, individuals may enjoy luxury in their food, clothing, and beverages, provided they avoid wastefulness and arrogance (Abdullah Al-Assaf, 2019). The top five luxury brands that enjoy the highest levels of online popularity are Dior, Gucci, Chanel, Louis Vuitton, and Hermes (Beauloye, 2023).

The field of luxury product marketing focuses on promoting premium-tier merchandise to discerning luxury clientele, including categories such as luxury automobiles, gourmet cuisine, fine wines, jewellery, apparel, watches, and handbags (Les Roches, 2022). The primary objective of luxury brands is to offer something exclusive and rare (Chechi, 2023). Quality, status, authenticity, personalization, investment, exclusivity, experience, and ethical practices are core values for luxury brand customers in today's innovative world (Villalon, 2023).

Consumers engage with brands to access the significance encapsulated within them and collaboratively shape that significance through their interaction and connections with the brands (Avery & Keinan, 2015). Luxury goods are often associated with conspicuous consumption, where individuals acquire items primarily to display their wealth (Kenton, 2021). The advantages linked to luxury brands and consumers' enjoyment are intertwined with the emotional response of consumers, which is conveyed through the consumption experience (Han & Kim, 2020). In the realm of luxury expenditure, Malaysia's standing as the 15th global position is highlighted by the 2023 Luxury Goods Worldwatch Report by Bain & Company, showing a 10% growth from the previous year. This growth is driven by the increasing presence of high-net-worth individuals in Malaysia, the appeal of luxury e-commerce, and the resurgence of international travel (Bain & Company, 2023).

The stock market has observed notable growth in luxury brand corporations such as Bulgari, Gucci, Ralph Lauren, and Donna Karan. Their initial public offerings exhibited a significant disparity between their elevated market values and corresponding profitability (Nueno & Quelch, 1998). The luxury goods industry is currently witnessing significant annual expansion in terms of value and volume; however, it faces challenges related to counterfeiting, which can negatively impact brand image and profitability (Armstrong et al., 2015). Motivations for acquiring luxury goods often include the desire to impress others, a significant criterion for luxury goods advertisers (Tsai, 2005). Darian (1998) posits that the acquisition of luxury brands serves to positively reflect one's financial standing and inspire others through the conspicuous display of purchases.

The swift increase in luxury product consumption has motivated researchers to explore various aspects, including examining people's attitudes and intentions regarding buying luxury items (Abd-Elaziz et al., 2015; Khalifa, 2015; Khalifa & Abou-Shouk, 2014; Khalifa

& Fawzy, 2017; Khalifa & Hewedi, 2016; Khalifa & Mewad, 2017). According to Statista, the market for luxury goods in Malaysia is projected to grow from 1,891.15 million USD in 2023 to 2,278.93 million USD in 2028, including prestige cosmetics, fragrances, luxury eyewear, fashion, leather goods, watches, and jewellery (Statista Market Insight, 2023). As Malaysians continue to embrace luxury, the country's luxury industry is poised for further growth and transformation, making luxury brands more accessible and desirable than ever before (Tan & Ooi, 2019).

Many research luxury brands have been conducted in affluent Western nations (Godey, 2013). However, further investigation is needed regarding luxury brands in Asian countries, particularly in Malaysia, where the luxury sector is experiencing substantial growth. Consumers choose premium brands for their personal and symbolic connotations, while daily brands are selected for their practical and functional attributes (Chen, 2023). For businesses to succeed, it is crucial to recognize that marketing strategies used in Western markets cannot simply be replicated, they must be tailored to suit the unique characteristics and preferences of different regions.

One limitation of the theory of planned behavior (TPB) is its potential inadequacy in fully capturing the complexity of human conduct, which includes emotions, past experiences, and situational factors. Contemporary discourse highlights concern about TPB's failure to consider individuals' preexisting needs, which can significantly influence behaviour regardless of stated attitudes (Alhamad et al., 2021). Furthermore, brand awareness plays a significant role in shaping consumer choices, as increased brand awareness positively impacts the likelihood of brand purchase (Hameed et al., 2023). This phenomenon is crucial because it substantially affects consumers' purchasing decisions and intentions (Shahid et al., 2017).

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the factors influencing Malaysian intention to purchase luxury brands. The study is important as it provides valuable insights to marketers, enabling them to enhance their marketing strategies and encourage more customers. The subsequent section presents relevant literature on impact purchasing, luxury brands, the development of hypotheses. This is followed by the methodology, results, practical implications and conclusion.

Literature Review

Luxury Brand

A luxury brand is distinguished by its high quality, exclusivity, and premium prices (Mahmoud, 2021). Demand for such brands tends to rise with increases in personal wealth or income (Kenton, 2021). Malaysia's economic growth slowed to 2.9% year to year in the second quarter of 2023, down from 5.6% in the first quarter (Biswas, 2023). The study indicates that luxury brands serve as unique forms of branding, conveying distinct sociocultural and individual meanings to their followers (Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015).

These brands are cultural phenomena, and research on Burberry in Taiwan shows that a brand's meaning is influenced by both its history and the cultural appeal of the country, with consumer interpretation playing a critical role in the successful branding (Peng & Chen, 2012). Luxury goods are often associated with high-involvement decisions, requiring extensive information gathering due to the high risk and expense involved. The purchase of luxury products is driven by attitudes, social norms, and perceived quality. Contemporary studies highlight Asia as having the highest number of luxury goods consumers, a trend driven by

societal influences (Razak et al., 2021). Popular luxury brands among Asians aged 21 and above include Coach, Longchamp, Prada, Christian Dior, Burberry, and Louis Vuitton (Lim et al., 2012).

Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has long been regarded as an important framework for explaining how both personal and social values influence human actions (Choo et al., 2004; Kumar, 2012). Ajzen (1991) posits that behaviour can be predicted through three main determinants: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Despite its widespread application, the exact dynamics among these variables are not always clear. Armitage and Conner (1999) maintain that TPB serves as a reliable and consistent model for anticipating intentions and actual behaviour over time, further highlighting the role of self-efficacy in shaping individuals' intentions. In contrast, Mathieson (1991) emphasises the practical value of TPB, suggesting that it can provide insights for strengthening strategic development.

TPB builds on the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which argues that behaviour is a direct result of intention, itself shaped by attitude toward the act and the influence of subjective norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Unlike TRA, TPB accounts for behaviours that may not be entirely within one's volitional control by incorporating perceived behavioural control (PBC) as a third determinant of intention.

Intention

The concept of intention has deep roots in both religious and psychological frameworks. As narrated by Amirul Mu'minin, Abu Hafs 'Umar bin al-Khattab (ra), the Messenger of Allah said, "Actions are (judged) by motives (niyyah), so each man will have what he intended. Thus, he whose migration (Hijrah) was for some wordly thing he might gain, or for a wife he might marry, his migration is to that for which he migrated" (Bukhari & Muslim, Hadith 1, 40 Hadith an-Nawawi).

Intentions can be understood as a complex framework consisting of two layers, influenced by beliefs and driven by a process of reasoning that involves identifying means to achieve desired ends, resolving conflicts, and ensuring internal consistency (Castelfranchi, 2014). The will, or an individual's volitional capacity, plays a pivotal role in motivating and guiding actions within this framework. Ajzen (1985) employs the concept of intention to evaluate the probability of future conduct.

Purchase intention refers to the likelihood that a consumer will intend or be inclined to acquire a specific product or service at a future point in time (Wu et al., 2011). Ghosh (1990) highlights that buying intention plays a crucial role in shaping customer purchasing behaviour. The purchase intent of Chinese consumers for luxury fashion goods is influenced by brand consciousness, social comparison, and fashion innovativeness (Zhang & Kim, 2013). Im and Ha (2011) argue that the intention to engage in shopping or make a purchase is a critical factor in forecasting future consumer behaviour.

Attitude

According to Ajzen (1991), attitude is characterized by the degree to which an individual holds a positive or negative viewpoint toward a specific behaviour. Ajzen (2001) further elaborates that attitude involves psychological assessments of attributes such as good-bad,

likable-dislikeable, and pleasant-unpleasant. Lien and Cao (2014) assert that attitudes are acquired and cultivated over time, often posing difficulties in their modification, although they may be subject to psychological motivation.

Bian and Forsythe (2012) found a positive relationship between self-monitoring and social-function views and consumers' purchase intentions for luxury brands in both the United States and China. Schade et al. (2014) noted that the purchasing behaviour of luxury brands in late teenagers is influenced by social-adjustive motives, whereas young adults are affected by value-expressiveness. However, middle-aged individuals do not demonstrate a significant correlation between value-expressiveness and luxury brand purchase behaviour. Previous research has also corroborated the substantial impact of attitude on intentions, as demonstrated by studies conducted by Zhang et al. (2005), Ling (2009) and Sanyal et al. (2014). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Attitudes influence customers' purchase intention towards luxury brands.

Subjective Norm

Within the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), subjective norm is recognised as a key determinant of behavioural intention. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) describe it as an individual's perception of whether significant others would approve or disapprove of a particular action. Glanz et al. (2008) further highlight its link to normative beliefs, suggesting that individuals' choices are shaped by the expectations of those around them. Empirical evidence supports this relationship such as Kim and Karpova (2010), observed a positive association between subjective norm and purchase intention when studying American college students' attitudes toward buying counterfeit fashion products. Similarly, Sari and Pribadi (2018) reported that purchase intention is influenced not only by brand equity but also by subjective norms, with the latter exerting a moderating effect on the relationship between brand equity and consumers' purchasing decisions.

Md-Taib et al. (2008) found that behavioral intentions are significantly influenced by subjective norms and attitudes. Ramli et al. (2021) noted that subjective norms are formed when individuals or groups of influence endorse specific actions. Halimi et al. (2021) argued that the determination of whether the subjective norm is positive or negative is contingent upon the reference. Thus, the next hypothesis is:

H2: Subjective norms influence customers' purchase intention towards luxury brands.

Perceived Behavioural Control

The TPB integrates the concept of perceived behavioural control as a critical element distinguishing between individuals' intentions and their subsequent behaviour (Ajzen, 2002). Perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's subjective assessment of the ease or difficulty associated with executing a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). According to Halimi et al. (2021), individuals with more resources tend to encounter fewer obstacles, leading to a heightened sense of behavioural control.

Perceived behavioural control encompasses the availability of resources and opportunities required for engaging in specific behaviours. This control can be influenced by various factors, including prior experience with online service purchases, perceptions of ease, financial barriers, and time limitations (Dedeke, 2016). It is essential to investigate perceived control

as a fundamental factor in understanding the development of customer behavioural intentions in the context of online transactions (Pena-Garcia et al., 2020). Therefore, based on a review of the literature, it is hypothesized that:

H3: Perceived behavioural control influences customers' purchase intention towards luxury brands.

Hedonism

The concept of hedonism plays a crucial role in shaping consumer inclination towards acquiring luxury products, as evidenced by earlier research conducted by Shukla (2012), Wiedmann et al. (2007), and Vigeron and Johnson (2004). Musaini et al. (2017) found a positive relationship between strong hedonistic motivation and customers' intentions to acquire counterfeit luxury brand products, indicating a significant market demand for these items. Hedonistic consumption refers to the act of consuming things driven by emotional impacts and closely linked to the pleasurable sensations experienced by the consumer. This term was formulated by Holbrook and Hirschman in 1982. Therefore, the proposed research hypothesis is as follows:

H4: Hedonism influences customers' purchase intention towards luxury brands.

Quality

Scholars in the field of luxury brands have underscored the significance of quality, as it plays a prominent role in shaping the perception of luxury (Quelch, 1987). According to Kim (2012), there is a positive correlation between purchase intentions and luxury goods that possess originality and ostentatious value. Conversely, luxury brands that prioritize quality and enjoyment value tend to elicit negative purchase intentions. It is also worth noting that purchase intentions might be influenced by past experiences. Canniere et al. (2010) found that customers with poorer relationships with a retailer tend to exhibit stronger buying intentions when the quality of their relationship with the retailer improves. Conversely, customers with stronger relationships with stronger relationships with a retailer tend to engage in more purchase behaviour when their purchase intentions are stronger.

The determination of quality can be based on the extent to which a product or service meets the needs and expectations of the consumer (Sebastianelli & Tamimi, 2002). This pertains to the standard of excellence as defined by marketing professionals. For instance, when a product aligns with or surpasses the consumer's expectations, it can be considered to possess a high degree of quality. Conversely, if the product fails to meet the consumer's expectations, it can be regarded as having a lower level of quality (Abu Hassan & Shaharudin, 2011). Quality has been demonstrated to mediate the relationship between brand awareness, perceived value, and customer experience, which in turn influences purchase intention (Rahardja et al., 2021, Astawa & Rahanatha, 2021). Therefore, the hypothesis is as follows:

H5: Quality influences customers' purchase intention towards luxury brands.

H6a: Quality mediates between attitude and customers' purchase intention towards luxury brands.

H6b: Quality mediates between subjective norm and customers' purchase intention towards luxury brands.

H6c: Quality mediates between perceived behavioural control and customers' purchase intention towards luxury brands.

H6d: Quality mediates between Hedonism and customers' purchase intention towards luxury brands.

Research Model

Figure 1 displays the suggested research model for the study. The model was created to analyse customers' purchase intention towards luxury brands, testing nine hypotheses related to attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, hedonism, and purchase intention, with quality acting as a mediator.

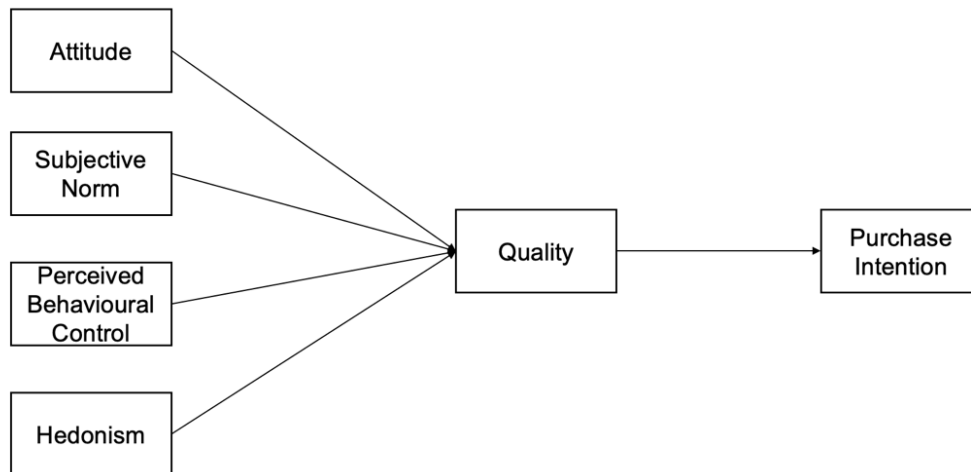


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Method

Data for this study were collected using an online survey. An enumerator was appointed to circulate the questionnaire via social media channels, primarily WhatsApp and Facebook, using Google Forms as the distribution medium. Prior to data collection, the enumerator was thoroughly briefed on the study's objectives and the procedures for administering the survey. The data collection process lasted four weeks and yielded 250 valid responses, which were deemed adequate for subsequent analysis. Descriptive statistics were generated using IBM SPSS Statistics version 29, while partial least square structural equation modelling (SEM) was carried out with SmartPLS version 4.

Findings

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study achieved a 100% response rate, with 250 usable survey questionnaires. Table 2 shows that 70% of respondents were male, while 30% were female. The largest age group was 31-36 years old (35.6%), followed by 23-26 years old (21.2%), 27-30 years old (20.8%), 37-42 years old (14%), 18-22 years old (6%), and both 49-53 years old and 54-58 years old (1.2% each).

Regarding marital status, 77.2% of respondents were single, and 22.8% were married. The majority of respondents were full-time students (72.4%), with others working in the public sector (18%), private sector (8.4%), and a small percentage unemployed (1.2%). In terms of income, 73.2% earned less than RM2,259, 14.4% earned between RM5,250 and RM11,819, 10.4% earned between RM2,560 and RM5,249, and 2% earned RM11,820 and above.

Educational qualifications showed that 40.8% had a bachelor's degree, 23.6% had completed foundation or equivalent, 20.8% had SPM, and 14.8% held a master's or PhD.

Partial Least Squares (PLS) Path Modelling

In this study, PLS path modelling was conducted using the SmartPLS 4.1 software (Ringle et al., 2015) to examine both the measurement and structural models, given that it does not require the assumption of normality, which is often absent in survey research (Chin et al., 2003). Following the recommendations of Anderson and Gerbing (1988), a two-step approach was employed. This approach necessitates establishing a valid measurement model before testing the structural model.

Assessment of the Measurement Model

In evaluating the measurement model, several criteria were assessed, including indicator reliability, internal consistency, content validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, as outlined by Hair et al. (2011, 2019). Table 1 summarises the results, showing that all items achieved the recommended factor loading threshold of 0.70, with the exception of SN1 (loading = 0.668), which was subsequently removed to improve model fit.

Convergent validity was examined using the average variance extracted (AVE), following the recommendations of Fornell and Larcker (1981). Chin (2010) further suggests that an AVE value above 0.50 demonstrates adequate convergent validity. The AVE values for this study ranged from 0.601 to 0.828, confirming satisfactory convergent validity.

To assess reliability, Cronbach's alpha was calculated, which reflects the average inter-item correlation for each construct (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Values below 0.60 are considered poor, 0.70 to 0.80 acceptable, and values above 0.80 indicate strong reliability. Hair et al. (2018) recommend a minimum threshold of 0.70. As presented in Table 1, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.783 to 0.897, all exceeding the acceptable benchmark. Composite reliability values were also above 0.80, further supporting the robustness of the constructs. Collectively, these results provide strong evidence of both internal consistency and convergent validity for the measurement model.

Table 1: Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Loadings >0.70	AVE >0.50	Composite Reliability >0.80	Cronbach's Alpha >0.7
Attitude			0.730	0.915	0.878
	Att1	0.847			
	Att2	0.869			
	Att3	0.864			
	Att4	0.838			
Subjective Norm			0.828	0.935	0.897
	SN2	0.913			
	SN3	0.931			
	SN4	0.886			
Perceived Behavioural Control			0.601	0.857	0.783
	PBC1	0.756			
	PBC2	0.798			
	PBC3	0.800			

	PBC4	0.745		
Hedonism			0.706	0.906
	H1	0.788		0.861
	H2	0.857		
	H3	0.854		
	H4	0.860		
Quality			0.726	0.913
	Qty1	0.714		0.870
	Qty2	0.896		
	Qty3	0.911		
	Qty4	0.872		
Purchase Intention			0.670	0.890
	Int1	0.773		0.835
	Int2	0.849		
	Int3	0.831		
	Int4	0.818		

The next stage of the analysis focused on assessing discriminant validity. This was conducted using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT), with the results presented in Table 2. All construct pairs demonstrated HTMT values below the recommended threshold of 0.90, with the exception of purchase intention and perceived behavioural control, which recorded a slightly higher value of 0.936. To further validate these results, a bootstrapping procedure was applied to test whether the HTMT values significantly differed from 1.00, which would indicate a lack of discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). The results showed that none of the upper bounds of the 95% confidence intervals included 1.00, thereby confirming that discriminant validity was achieved.

Table 2: Assessment of Discriminant Validity

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Attitude						
2. Hedonism	0.674					
3. Perceived Behavioural Control	0.891	0.900				
4. Purchase Intention	0.687	0.838	0.936			
5. Quality	0.596	0.852	0.952	0.899		
6. Subjective Norm	0.669	0.794	0.851	0.757	0.711	

Assessment of the Structural Model

Path coefficient estimates, reflecting the hypothesised relationships between constructs, were generated through the bootstrapping procedure. In line with the recommendations of Hair et al. (2017), 5,000 subsamples were drawn from the original dataset of 250 cases. Figure 2 illustrates the overall structural model results, while Table 3 presents a summary of the estimated path coefficients together with their standard errors and corresponding t-statistics.

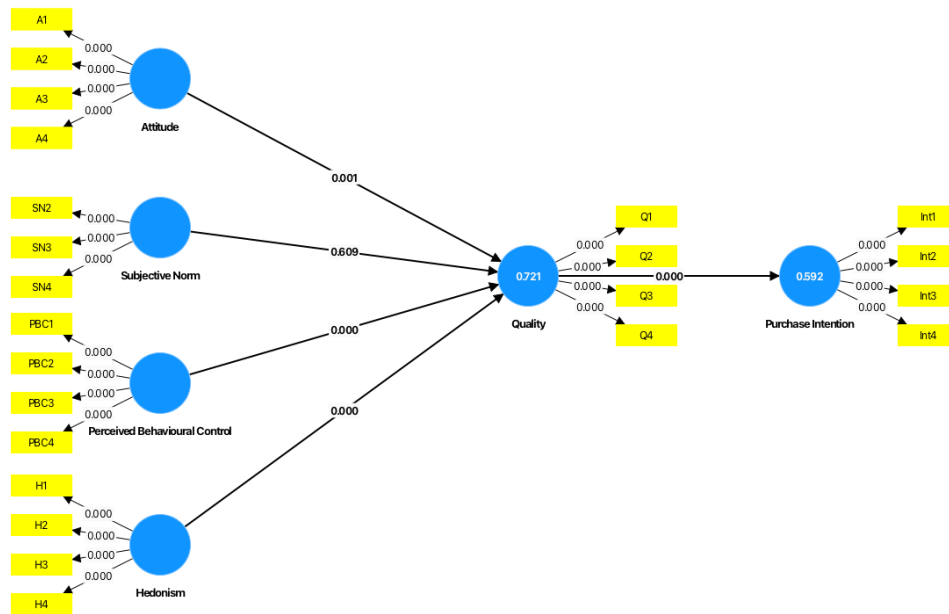


Figure 2: Results of structural model

Based on the findings presented in Table 3, four hypotheses were supported with t-values greater than 1.645 and p-values less than 0.05. The first hypothesis, H1, states that attitude is positively related to quality. The results in Table 3 and Figure 1 show a significant positive relationship between attitude and quality ($\beta = -0.172$, $t = 2.199$, $p = 0.001$), thus supporting H1. Additionally, the results demonstrate a positive relationship between perceived behavioural control and quality ($\beta = 0.692$, $t = 10.595$, $p = 0.000$), confirming H3. H4 contends that hedonism has a positive relationship with quality ($\beta = 0.306$, $t = 5.543$, $p = 0.000$). Similarly, hypothesis 4 posits that quality is positively related to purchase intention ($\beta = 0.769$, $t = 19.382$, $p = 0.000$). In contrast, one hypothesis was not supported. Subjective norm was not significantly related to quality, and their path coefficients was relatively low.

Table 3: Direct Relationship for Hypothesis Testing

	Hypotheses	Std Beta	Std Error	t-values	p-values	5.0% (LLCI)	95.0% (ULCI)	Decision
H1	Attitude→ Quality	-0.172	0.171	3.199	0.001	-0.262	-0.085	Supported
H2	Subjective Norm → Quality	0.029	0.027	0.512	0.609	-0.068	0.120	Not Supported
H3	Perceived Behavioural Control → Quality	0.692	0.691	10.595	0.000	0.586	0.799	Supported
H4	Hedonism → Quality	0.306	0.307	5.543	0.000	0.213	0.395	Supported
H5	Quality → Purchase Intention	0.769	0.767	19.382	0.000	0.691	0.824	Supported

Testing Mediator Effects

Based on the results presented in Table 4, four mediation hypotheses (H6a, H6b, H6c, H6d) were tested to investigate the mediating roles of quality between attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, hedonism, and intention. To examine these mediation hypotheses, this study utilized the PLS algorithm and conducted a bootstrapping procedure with a dataset of 250 cases and a sample size of 5000, following the methodology outlined by Hair et al. (2014). According to Preacher and Hayes (2008), the indirect effect is considered significant when the confidence interval does not include zero.

The results of the bootstrapping analysis indicated that the paths attitude → quality → intention ($\beta = -0.132$, $p = 0.001$), perceived behavioural control → quality → intention ($\beta = 0.532$, $p = 0.000$), and hedonism → quality → intention ($\beta = 0.235$, $p = 0.000$) were statistically significant. However, one mediation hypothesis (H6b) did not achieve statistical significance.

Table 4: Mediation Testing Results

	Hypotheses	Std Beta	Std Error	t-values	p-values	5.0% (LLCI)	95.0% (ULCI)	Decision
H6a	Attitude → Quality → Intention	-0.132	0.131	3.220	0.001	-0.203	-0.066	Supported
H6b	Subjective Norm → Quality → Intention	0.022	0.021	0.511	0.601	-0.052	0.094	Not Supported
H6c	Perceived Behavioural Control → Quality → Intention	0.532	0.530	9.451	0.000	0.444	0.630	Supported
H6d	Hedonism → Quality → Intention	0.235	0.236	5.125	0.000	0.162	0.311	Supported

Coefficient of Determination

Interpreting the coefficient of determination (R^2) requires consideration of the research context and model complexity. Generally, higher R^2 values indicate stronger predictive accuracy (Hair et al., 2017). According to Sarstedt and Mooi (2019), R^2 values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 may be classified as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively.

In this study, the R^2 value for quality was 0.59, signifying moderate explanatory power, while purchase intention recorded an R^2 of 0.717, indicating substantial explanatory strength. These results suggest that attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and hedonism collectively account for 59% of the variance in quality. In turn, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, hedonism, and quality together explain 71.7% of the variance in purchase intention.

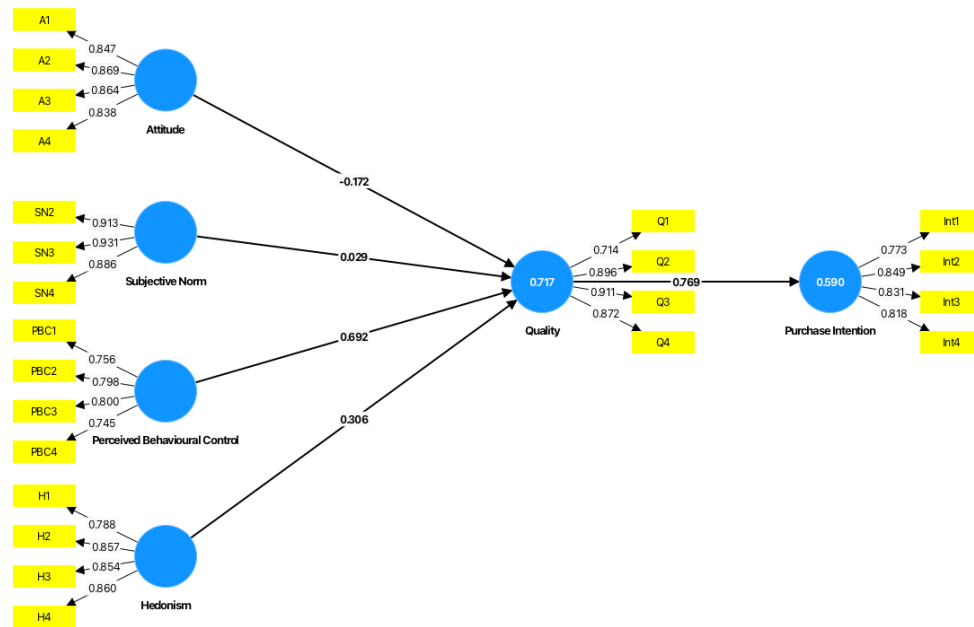


Figure 3: Coefficient of Determination

Effect size

The impact magnitude of predictor constructs can be evaluated using Cohen's f^2 , a measure that quantifies the significance of the change in R^2 resulting from variations in an independent latent variable. This metric essentially assesses the extent to which an endogenous construct explains an exogenous construct (Ramayah et al., 2018).

According to Cohen (1988), effect size values are categorized as large (0.35), medium (0.15), and small (0.02). The f^2 values presented in Table 5 indicate that all relationships contribute to small, medium, and large extents in explaining attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, hedonism, quality, and purchase intention.

Table 5. Effect Size

Constructs	F square	Effect size rating
Attitude -> Quality	0.049	Small
Subjective Norm -> Quality	0.001	Small
Perceived Behavioural Control -> Quality	0.499	Large
Hedonism -> Quality	0.127	Medium
Quality -> Purchase Intention	1.452	Large

Discussion and Conclusion

The study explored factors influencing purchase intention towards luxury brands among Malaysian consumers. Key findings include a significant positive relationship between attitude and quality, perceived behavioural control and quality, and quality and purchase intention. However, subjective norm did not significantly relate to quality. Additionally, quality mediated the relationships between attitude, perceived behavioural control, hedonism, and purchase intention, but not between subjective norm and purchase intention.

The results indicate that attitude, perceived behavioural control, and hedonism are crucial determinants of perceived quality, which in turn significantly impacts purchase intention. The

lack of significance in the relationship between subjective norm and quality suggests that external social pressures may not play a substantial role in influencing consumer's perceptions of luxury brand quality in Malaysia. This could imply that Malaysian consumers prioritize personal and intrinsic factors over societal expectations when evaluating luxury brands (Ling, 2009).

The findings of this study provide important practical implications for luxury brand marketers operating in the Malaysian market. The research highlights that key factors such as consumer attitude, perceived behavioural control, and hedonism significantly influence perceived quality, which, in turn, drives purchase intention towards luxury brands. This underscores the necessity for marketers to prioritize enhancing the perceived quality of their products, as it plays a central role in shaping consumers' purchase decisions.

Understanding these dynamics is essential for luxury brand marketers aiming to enhance their strategies in Malaysia. The findings emphasize the importance of focusing on improving perceived quality by leveraging positive attitudes and perceived control over purchasing decisions. Marketers should create campaigns that appeal to consumers' intrinsic motivations and personal preferences rather than solely relying on social norms or peer influence. By addressing these factors, luxury brands can better position themselves to attract and retain customers in the Malaysian market (Bian & Forsythe, 2012).

One of the notable insights from the study is the limited influence of subjective norms on perceived quality, suggesting that social pressures or external expectations do not heavily impact Malaysian consumers' perceptions of luxury brands. This indicates that Malaysian consumers are more driven by personal preferences and intrinsic motivations rather than societal approval when evaluating luxury products. As a result, luxury brand marketing strategies in Malaysia should focus less on social conformity and more on addressing individual values, such as personal satisfaction, exclusivity, and control over purchasing decisions.

To capitalize on these findings, marketers should design campaigns that appeal to consumers' internal motivations, emphasizing the superior quality and unique experiences that luxury brands offer. By fostering positive attitudes towards the brand and empowering consumers to feel in control of their purchasing choices, brands can strengthen their market positioning. Additionally, hedonistic appeals that focus on the emotional gratification and pleasure associated with luxury consumption may resonate strongly with this consumer segment.

However, the study also points to several limitations that marketers should consider. The reliance on self-reported data from an online survey introduces the possibility of biases, including social desirability bias, and the study's cross-sectional design limits causal inferences. Moreover, the sample, predominantly composed of more educated individuals, may not fully represent the broader Malaysian consumer base. Future marketing strategies should account for these limitations by incorporating a broader demographic profile and considering moderating factors such as income levels and prior brand experiences. This will enable luxury brands to better understand and cater to the diverse preferences of Malaysian consumers.

Future research should consider a longitudinal approach to better understand causal relationships and changes in consumer behaviour over time. Expanding the demographic

diversity of the sample can provide more generalizable insights. Researchers should also explore additional moderating factors that may impact the relationships between attitudes, perceived behavioural control, hedonism, quality, and purchase intention. Investigating the role of digital marketing and social media influence on luxury brand perception and purchase intention could offer valuable insights for developing more effective marketing strategies in the digital age.

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