

## DIGITAL INFLUENCE & ANTI HAULS, THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS ON NORMALIZING REJECTION OF THE CONSUMPTION

Waseem Mushtaq Khan<sup>\*1</sup>, Atif Butt<sup>2</sup>, Aqib Mushtaq<sup>3</sup>, Abdullah Farooq<sup>4</sup>

<sup>\*1,2</sup>PhD Scholar, Visiting Lecturer, International Islamic University Islamabad

<sup>3</sup>Scholar, International Islamic University Islamabad

<sup>4</sup>PhD Scholar, Visiting Lecturer, International Islamic University Islamabad

<sup>1</sup>wmkhan11@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>atif.butt@iiu.edu.pk,

<sup>3</sup>aqibmushtaq597@gmail.com, <sup>4</sup>abdullahfarooqqazi@gmail.com

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### Abstract

The recent trend of anti-haul and deinfluencing in social media re-conceptualize the concept of digital influence on consumption. Instead of promoting over-consumption behavior, these online phenomena promote non-consumption behavior and convince users to reduce their purchasing intention. Though anti-consumption movements have gained much popularity, research examining the digital influence on consumption rejection behavior remains limited. This study aims to investigate how digital influence affects consumption rejection behavior through anti-haul engagement, anti-consumption attitude, perceived social norm and self-control. Based on the principles of Social Influence theory, Consumer Resistance theory and Social Comparison theory, the conceptual model was established and tested using quantitative research design. A survey was conducted and data were collected from 487 social media users through a structured online questionnaire. PLS-SEM analysis was performed with Smart PLS 4. This study finds that digital influence has positive effects on anti-haul engagement and positively influences anti-consumption attitude and perceived social norms. Both anti-consumption attitude and perceived social norm also enhance the consumption rejection behavior. It also shows that perceived social norm acts as mediating variable between anti-haul engagement and consumption rejection behavior while self-control positively moderates the relationship between anti-consumption attitude and consumption rejection behavior. The study extends the application of Social Influence theory from consumption-driven results to the positive and useful behavior, especially, highlights the critical role of anti-haul communities to develop consumption rejection behavior among users. The findings would provide useful recommendations for marketers, policy makers, sustainability advocates and digital content producers in order to advocate responsible consumption.

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Corresponding Author: \*

Waseem Mushtaq Khan

### INTRODUCTION

Social media has profoundly impacted the process through which consumers discover, evaluate and purchase products. Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and Facebook has become major platforms and

online marketplaces where content creators, influencers and communities guide consumer decision-making processes and influence consumer attitudes and behavior. Social media influencers have become opinion leaders who play

a key role in affecting consumers' purchase intention and consumption behavior by providing opinions on products (endorsements and paid posts), showcasing lifestyle demonstrations and recommending products (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Buvr et al., 2023). Hence, social media influence is one of the dominant influences shaping consumer behavior in modern consumption, especially for young consumers who heavily rely on digital media for product-related information and purchasing guidance (Buvr et al., 2023).

Social media influence has helped to widen consumer culture by generating new forms of aspirational lifestyle and identity-driven consumerism. By showcasing idealized life styles of happiness, social success and high life with ownership of various goods, influencers prompt consumers' consumption aspirations, stimulate purchasing intentions and increase materialistic behaviors through the application of the social comparison processes (Efendiolu, 2022). This indicates that the development of consumer culture is one of the major aspects driven by the impact of social media.

While many researchers believe that social media is contributing to increased consumption, there has been an emergence of counter-consumption trend that challenges traditional consumer culture in recent years. Anti-haul is one of the most influential trend. In the anti-haul video, the creator will explicitly refuse to purchase some particular items and then present logical, rational, ethical, economical or environmental-based reasoning for refusal. It is a stark contrast to the usual "haul" videos that celebrates purchase as an enjoyable practice; instead, anti-hauls provide justification for resistance against overwhelming consumer desires and for self-discipline purchase behaviors. This trend is developing at a same pace as its sister trend such as 'deinfluencing', 'no-buy', 'low-buy', 'underconsumption-core', and so on, and they all encourage conscious purchase behaviors rather than over-consumption (Buvr et al., 2023).

Anti-haul can be classified as a new kind of anti-consumption behavior challenging the common marketplace ideology. Anti-consumption behavior

refers to consumption of rejecting, refusing or reducing consumption due to various reasons, such as personal, social, ethical, economic or environmental issues. Research indicates that anti-consumption behavior can be reinforced and mediated through digital platforms where consumers resist to over-consumption and endorse alternative value systems that are environmentally concerned and thoughtfully consumptive (Hoang et al., 2023). Through community and discussion among other users, anti-consumption provides social support for followers to minimize materialistic behaviors and resistance to the pressures imposed by marketplace and social norms.

The rise of anti-haul trend also suggests a growing public concern about environmental sustainability, personal finance and the lack of control consumers face from online shopping activities. Researchers in sustainable consumption suggest that digital platform can provide essential channels for promoting consumption and increasing the awareness of environmental responsibility. Recent studies indicated that social media influencer marketing can positively influence consumers' sustainable purchase intention if the message of sustainability transmitted by the influencer is authentic and social norms in relation to purchase is positive (Buvr et al., 2023). This phenomenon means that dynamism in social norms mediated by influencer is powerful enough to provide the persuasive effectiveness and enhance the intention to consume sustainable behavior.

From the theoretical perspective, social media influence, consumer resistance and social comparison theory can explain the anti-haul trend. Social Influence Theory states that individuals conform to others expectations or behavior. Although influencers on social media promote consumption behavior by sharing their preferences and endorsing products, the reverse is true for anti-haul influencers to stimulate negative consumption preferences through the same social influence mechanisms. The theory of Consumer Resistance conceptualizes consumers' resistance against marketplace ideologies and the influences they are imposed to when such impacts threaten

their values and personal autonomy. And the theory of Social Comparison suggests that although ideals of consumption often increases materialistic desire and purchase behavior through comparison, the existence of anti-haul trend may shift this tendency toward more conscious purchase behaviors due to less exposure to materialistic aspiration.

Previous researches have extensively examined the impact of influencer marketing, social media influence, sustainable consumption and anti-consumption behavior on consumers, however, few scholars focused on: firstly, consumers' resistance and the negative influence of social media rather than positive influences on purchase behavior, brand engagement and expenditure; secondly, the literature on digital anti-consumption and particularly the anti-haul as a trend is very limited; thirdly, lack of empirical research investigating the mechanism how anti-haul engagement influences anti-consumption attitude and rejection behavior, especially the mediating role of perceived social norms; fourthly, the moderating role of consumer self-control in the context of anti-haul. Addressing these gaps will contribute to the growing body of knowledge regarding digital anti-consumption and sustainable consumer behavior, by showing how consumers are urged to resist over-consumption through the influence from digital media.

### Research Question

To what extent do digital influence and anti-haul social media trend on consumers' anti-consumption attitudes and consumption rejection behaviors via the mediating role of perceived social norms and the moderating role of consumer self-control?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Digital Influence

Digital influence is the ability of digital platforms, social media influencers, online communities and user-generated content to shape consumers' attitudes, perceptions, intentions and behaviors through digitally mediated communication (De Veirman et al., 2017). Through the growth of social media, the consumer decision-making

process has been changed, so that customers are exposed to information, opinion leaders and online communities who directly impact their consumption behavior in marketplace (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Different from traditional advertising, digital influence has features such as interactivity, personalized information and perceived authenticity that makes it a very powerful tool for shaping consumer attitude and behavior intention (De Veirman et al., 2017).

As consumption behavior increasingly shifts from store to online, influencers are now considered as the significant sources for marketplace information, particularly in recommending products to the followers. Most influencers have been identified as opinion leaders who not only guide the followers with suggestions and recommendations but also with consuming advice. Studies show that consumers have stronger trust and sense of relationship toward influencers than celebrities, because influencers could have parasocial relationships with the followers, thus it makes consumers have emotional connections with them and increase the credibility of the influencers (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). This kind of relationship is essential to enhance the persuasive ability of the influencers.

Social Influence Theory serves as the theoretical basis of the study on digital influence, which asserts that people would alter their beliefs or behaviors based on others with whom they interact and perceptions about social expectations. The study of digital influence on consumer behavior can be seen as understanding how influencers persuade the consumers through two routes, informational influence and normative influence (Kelman, 1958). Informational influence is the way the customers are persuaded by the experts (influencers), and normative influence means customers conform to others' opinion/behavior for seeking social approval. So the repeated exposure of the influencer-generated content makes the consumption norms and behaviors appear reasonable and expected by the society.

Existing studies proved the significant impact of digital influence on the consumers' attitude, purchase intention, brand trust and consumption

behavior. For example, Lou and Yuan (2019) discovered that message credibility and informational value can positively affect the consumers' trust toward influencers which further leads to a higher purchase intention. Similarly, influencer authenticity can strongly increase consumer engagement towards their recommendations when it comes to its positive role when consumers perceived authenticity and no commercial intention in their consumption-related suggestion (Audrezet et al., 2020). All the finding reveals that the digital influence operates through psychological process where trust, identification and perceived authenticity play an important part.

Besides purchase behavior, the influence also goes beyond. Digital influence has begun to play a vital role in shaping consumers' values and life styles. In the online space, consumers get influenced by all kinds of messages which is about sustainability, ethical consumption, financial health, social justice and so on. By promoting healthy lifestyle, a pro-environmental and conscionable behavior can be positively shaped, thus influencing their pro-environmental attitudes and attitudes towards mindful shopping behaviors (Buvr et al., 2023). All of these are not only focused on the consumption of products but on something more profound.

The rise of anti-consumption movements such as anti-hauls, deinfluencing and under consumption-core can clearly demonstrate how the digital influence starts changing the direction. Traditional influencer marketing strategy tends to encourage consumption. However, with anti-hauls the persuaders, who is also called content creators, utilize the similar communication strategy to persuade consumer rejecting excessive consumption and advocate reduced consumption. Instead of recommending any purchase, anti-haulers intend to foster consumers' awareness, ability and resistance toward commercial messages and promote sustainable consumption through this mechanism. Modern consumer behavior studies find out that it can be possible for digital platforms to facilitate forms of consumer resistance, by allowing people collectively to

oppose marketplace ideologies and generate counter-narratives (Hoang et al., 2023).

Also, digital influence contributes to the emergence of norms within online communities. Users keep observing, evaluating and reflecting behavior of influencers and peers; then they will hold norms regarding appropriate consuming behavior. If the anti-consumption messages are reinforced with the likes, comments, shares, and online community interaction, they are further integrated into their lifestyle, becoming normal and socially acceptable. This could also be explained by the contemporary concept about digital social influence in relation to the emergence of social norms within digital communities (Buvr et al., 2023). Therefore, digital influence is likely an important precursor of engaging in anti-haul behavior by normalising rejection of consumption among others.

#### **Anti-Haul Engagement**

Consumer's involvement in anti-haul contents, which advocates conscious discarding of unnecessary purchases, is termed as anti-haul engagement. The anti-haul contents, primarily prevalent in the beauty and lifestyle communities on YouTube, initially arose as a revolt against the consumerist culture of traditional haul videos, celebrating the acquisition and consumption of various products. While haul videos encouraged consumption of products, anti-haul creators talk about the products they actively choose to not buy, and provide reasons like responsible financial management, product redundancy, environmental consciousness, and resistance to manipulative marketing (Wood, 2021). As a result, anti-haul engagement represents a contemporary expression of the digital anti-consumption behavior that works against established consumerist discourses and principles and encourages mindful consumption.

The increased popularity of anti-haul content signifies a growing discontent with consumerism and influencer-driven purchasing habits. Consumers are inundated with product endorsements, paid advertisements, and aspirational lifestyle marketing from social media which encourage material acquisition and

consumption-driven self-identities. These factors contribute to impulsive purchasing behavior, materialism, and financial stress (Dhir et al., 2021). By producing anti-haul videos, creators provide an alternate platform for social media users to resist excessive consumerism and instead, think critically about what they buy and whether the purchase is necessary. Thus, the anti-haul content offers an alternative consumption script to its followers in contrast to the prevalent acquisition-focused discourse.

Theoretically, anti-haul engagement may be explained via the lens of Consumer Resistance Theory, which proposes that consumers resist marketplace ideologies and marketing tactics when they are perceived as deceptive, excessive, or contrary to personal values (Fournier, 1998). In this sense, anti-haul participants engage in forms of marketplace resistance by refusing purchase, questioning marketing claims and resisting consumption-related social pressures. In a digital landscape like that of social media, this resistance takes on social dynamics as consumers collectively build meanings around consumption and non-consumption, promoting alternative norms and values for consumption behavior.

It has been observed in previous studies that people participate in consumption rejection due to environmental factors, financial gains, ethical issues, or due to self-identity construction (Lee et al., 2009). The anti-haul content also taps into these underlying factors as it aims to encourage consumers to decrease waste and consumption, make intentional purchases based on actual needs, avoid unnecessary buying of items they already possess, or buy items that last longer and have greater functional value compared to those bought for fleeting trends. Anti-haul engagement therefore affects the purchasing decisions and also leads to a change in lifestyle towards the practice of consciously consuming what is essential.

The emergence of anti-hauls has gained further significance in the context of related emerging social media trends like deinfluencing, no-buy challenges, low-buy lifestyles, and underconsumption-core, which have collectively come to challenge the underlying assumptions of materialism about acquiring things to achieve a

state of happiness, status, and self-worth. It has been recently observed that these digital anti-consumption movements have indeed made an impact on the way people think about responsible spending and consuming sustainably (Hoang et al., 2023). It is plausible that with constant exposure to the anti-haul content, social media users are more likely to become aware of subtle marketing techniques and develop increased resistance to marketplace pressures.

The anti-haul engagement has the ability to contribute to the formation of anti-consumption attitudes through processes of observational learning and social influence. According to the theory of Social Learning, people learn behaviors by observing others and the consequences of their behavior. By publicly talking about and practicing the act of consciously avoiding purchases, anti-haul creators influence their followers to do the same, by perceiving consumption restraint as a valuable and rewarding practice. Also, community interactions surrounding anti-haul content provides social approval for not buying, further reinforcing anti-consumption beliefs and behaviors of rejection.

The social and normative aspects of anti-haul engagement is also important in defining its impact on consumer behavior. The creation of a supportive online community for sharing purchase decisions and critical consumerism, coupled with mechanisms for social reinforcement through likes, comments, and shares further validate anti-haul content, which instills the feeling that consuming less is the socially desired norm. As a result, anti-haul engagement may serve as a mechanism to normalize consumption rejection as a behavior.

Moreover, anti-haul engagement can lead to increased capacity for self-regulation among consumers. Through the process of anti-haul engagement, social media users are prompted to pause, think and postpone gratification, all of which are linked to better self-control in buying decisions. Active participation in anti-haul may empower individuals to better resist impulse purchases and achieve higher control over their consumption habits, thereby serving as an important avenue to influence consumer

behaviors towards conscious consumption through digital means.

Thus, considering the rapid popularity and likely influence of anti-haul engagement on consumer decision-making, it is an essential construct for examining the role of digital influence on consumption rejection behavior. As it persuades consumers to question what they buy and why, avoid marketing pitfalls, and participate in a mindful consumption approach, anti-haul engagement may contribute to the formation of anti-consumption attitudes and establish rejection as a common behavior on social media.

Anti-haul content stimulates users to critically examine products, marketing strategies, and avoid wasteful buying. Frequent engagement with this content is expected to reinforce the user's anti-consumption attitudes that promote a deliberate approach to consuming. Thus, it can be concluded that anti-haul engagement will have a positive impact on consumer's anti-consumption attitudes. H2: Anti-haul engagement has a positive effect on the formation of anti-consumption attitudes.

Furthermore, anti-haul community tends to foster a collective ideology about responsible consumption and resistance in the marketplace. Through the process of interaction within the community, consumers build a sense of normative prescription favoring non-consumption. This implies that consumers actively participating in the anti-haul activity will perceive greater social norms related to consumption rejection.

H3: Anti-haul engagement has a positive effect on perceived social norms regarding consumption rejection.

### **Attitude towards Anti-Consumption**

An attitude towards anti-consumption is an individual's favorable disposition towards reducing, foregoing or avoiding consumption on personal, social, ethical, economic, or environmental grounds (Lee et al., 2009). This differs from general consumer attitudes which are characterized by an urge to consume, purchase and participate in marketplace activity. Attitude toward anti-consumption, conversely, exhibits a negative orientation towards hyper-consumption and materialist tendencies. Individuals that hold a

strong negative attitude toward consumerism tend to question whether a product purchase is truly necessary, to reflect on the outcomes of consuming, and are prone to preferring long-term wellbeing to instant gratifications (Lee et al., 2009).

The subject of anti-consumption has been the focus of recent research because many people are aware that they are over-consuming and that this behaviour is damaging for the environment, is an unsustainable use of natural resources and is contributing to the decline of money. Customers today have started to realize that their decisions to purchase and acquire goods may result in the destruction of the planet, the depletion of natural resources and create an unstable financial situation. This is why some customers are currently changing their behaviours and adopting more responsible and mindful purchase patterns (Maseeh & Sangroya, 2022). This has led attitude towards anti-consumption to be a predictor of consumption rejection, sustainability and voluntary simplicity behaviors.

The concept that consuming excessive does not lead to satisfaction in life, happiness or social well-being has a number of psychological and financial consequences. Research indicates that the pursuit of materialism and over-consumption can result in brief gratification but increase psychological distress, financial pressures and destruction to the planet (Johnstone & Lindh, 2018). Consequently consumers that hold strong attitudes towards anti-consumption prefer the practicality and durability of goods rather than the symbolic prestige that an item may represent. These customers are critical toward advertisements that are likely to induce unnecessary purchases.

From a psychological theoretical standpoint, attitude towards anti-consumption is best explained through the framework of Consumer Resistance Theory, which argues that consumption is viewed as an oppositional behavior and consumers may challenge the ideology and practices of consumerism whenever this threatens the consumers' self-identity, values and beliefs (Fournier, 1998). When an individual perceives consumer culture as generating waste, encouraging materialism or being harmful to the

environment, it is likely that this person will form negative attitudes towards excessive buying and will seek other alternative patterns of consuming. These behaviors represent various acts of marketplace resistance toward consumption norms: brand avoidance, ethical consuming and voluntary simplicity etc.

The development of attitude towards anti-consumption is also informed by Social Comparison Theory whereby consumption-focused culture is heavily displayed online, making customers continuously compare and seek products they believe to be aspirational, leading to upward social comparison and materialism. As many consumers discover that these comparisons are largely unattainable in the real world, there arises a rejection of consumerism values and materialism with an increasing focus on sensible decisions (Hoang et al., 2023). Anti-haul content directly addresses this by encouraging consumers to question their purchases and embrace sensible spending, material mindfulness and happiness with current possession.

Recent studies have emphasized the importance of attitudes towards anti-consumption with regard to sustainability and personal well-being as individuals with positive attitudes toward anti-consumption are more likely to adopt pro-environmental behaviors, to reduce consumption, and to support sustainable consumption practices (Maseeh & Sangroya, 2022). Additionally, a favorable attitude toward anti-consumption has also been found to have positive impact on financial self-regulation, decrease impulse purchase tendency and increase personal wellbeing due to a focus on important things rather than material assets (Anderson et al., 2024). Digital platforms can play a critical role in shaping an attitude towards anti-consumption. Through an individual's participation with social networking sites, they gain information about sustainable and ethical consumption or even the negative impacts of consumerism. When they view the content of anti-haul creators or interaction within an anti-consumption online community, they are made to consider an alternative discourse that questions mainstream consumption habits

and form an attitude towards anti-consumption (Wood, 2021).

In turn, attitudes toward anti-consumption can be strengthened through social validation and group identity. As such communities allow the individual to receive social support for abstaining from certain consumption patterns or buying behaviors, it instills a sense of identity as an anti-consumer and a reinforcement of this new behavioral orientation. Anti-consumption attitude would therefore, further solidify itself within one's personal life and behaviors.

Perceived social norms refers to people's perception regarding behaviors, attitudes and practices which are considered appropriate, appropriate and expected in a given social environment. As social norm theory argues, individuals often change their attitudes and behaviors toward perceived norms in order to receive social approval and avoid social rejection from relevant others (people who matter and influential others), groups, communities and organizations (Cialdini et al., 1990). In consumer behavior arena, perceived social norms are proved to be a dominant influence in shaping purchasing behaviors, sustainable consumption, ethical consumption, and marketplace resistance behavior. So social norms serve as one of important channel that social influences play its roles on consumer behavior.

The growing importance of social media makes perceived social norms play a significant influence role in consumer behavior more than ever before. Digital media have created continuous presence of the beliefs, attitudes and purchasing behaviors of opinion leaders, peers and other social members in consumers' life. Based on direct and indirect observation of these social stimuli, individuals' perception towards acceptable and desirable social norms in the social world are formed (Buvr et al., 2023). These norms then influence individual behavior toward and in consumption situations.

In anti-haul communities, social norms is formed through public discussion of mindful consumption, responsible spending, consumption resistance etc. Influencers encourage people to scrutinize products, challenge the marketing message and not to impulsively purchase goods.

Through repeated observation of these anti-consumption activities on the internet, the consumption reduction behavior become perceived as acceptable and desirable. Empirical research indicates that social media communities play a vital role in constructing new set of consumer norms that resist traditional consumption cultures and shape individuals to sustainable consumption behaviors (Hoang et al., 2023).

The reinforcement of social norms is achieved through the visible positive feedback, which is identified through like, comments and share as social approve from online members, through observing the public approval which is given to anti-consumption behaviors in the online community (e.g., consumers frequently comment "like" on anti-consumption content). These social approved feedback help perceived social norms gain more credibility in consumers' belief and they are encouraged to perform according to norms which guide they away from unnecessary spending and toward consumption rejection. Viewed from social influence theory perspective, perceived social norms is one important mediator between social influences and people's behavior. When consumers perceive a strong normative support of consumption rejection, they internalize the anti-consumption values and conform to relevant anti-consumption behaviors. So, perceived social norms would account for how anti-haul engagement actually leads to consumption rejection behaviors.

In more recent research, it has found that perceived social norms have a significant influence on sustainable consumption, pro-environmental behavior, ethical consumption, and responsible spending decisions (Buvr et al., 2023). When people believe that important others accept consumption reduction behavior, they tend to reduce unnecessary purchasing and reject some goods, which in contrast to the traditional consumption behavior. Similarly, the community of anti-haul could offer the normative environment in which the individuals might be able to resist the pressure from market and achieve the thoughtful purchasing behavior. In this present study, perceived social norms is

hypothesized to mediate the relationship between anti-haul engagement and consumption rejection behavior, whereby, engagement in the anti-haul communities would establish individuals' perception toward normative aspect of consumption and increase the tendency of rejecting the purchase of certain goods.

### Consumer Self-Control

Consumer self-control denotes an individual's capacity to control their thoughts, feelings and behavior so that they resist short-term temptations and act on long-term goals while making decisions regarding consumption (Tangney et al., 2004). Within consumer research literature, self-control is a vital psychological mechanism allowing consumer to avoid impulses buying, manage buying behavior, and make consciously-driven purchasing behavior aligning with self-values and goals. Since consumers face persuasive advertising message, promotion incentives, social pressure every day, consumers self-control will be the crucial psychological mediator that determines whether purchase intention will be transformed to purchase behavior.

Consumer self-control has an extremely important status in the digital age. Because consumers are exposed to marketing stimuli constantly, social media platforms force consumers buy things in spite of advertisements, celebrity endorsements, paid posts, life styles promoted, thus causing consumers' need to buy things and urge of purchase. E-shopping platform makes it convenient for consumer to buy thing, and through recommendations targeted the marketing messages consumers will be stimulated to purchase things beyond personal needs, leading to impulse buying and excessive consumption behavior. Therefore, consumers self-control is considered to be one crucial mechanism in predicting consumption behavior in digital world.

In the perspective of self-control theory, individuals generally experience conflicting trade-offs between short-term urges and long-term goals. Although impulse buying is derived from immediate satisfaction from obtaining a product and spontaneous purchase, the long-term goal could be financial well-being, responsible

consumption behavior, sustainable environment or individual health and well-being (Baumeister, 2002). High self-control consumers have more capacity to regulate conflicts between personal desire and social need, in which he is able to assess whether he needs a product or not, delay his gratification, resist all external pressure related to consumption and make wise decision. Instead, self-control deficit consumer is likely to fall in impulse buying and persuade.

There is numerous evidence indicating the inverse relationship between self-control and impulsive buying behavior, compulsive buying behavior and materialism consumption behavior (Tangney et al., 2004; Dhir et al., 2021). Tangney et al. (2004) suggested that individuals high in self-control have better behavioral control, decision-making and resisting the temptation than those with low self-control. Dhir et al. (2021) found that self-control will have a negative effect on impulse buying and reduce the impact of social-induced FOMO (fear of missing out) on compulsive buying behavior. Self-control plays as a buffer of impulse buying and excessive consumption behavior.

In anti-consumption context, consumer self-control help the attitudes turn to behavior. Consumers may hold a positive attitude towards not buying things they don't need, but unless their high level of self-control ensures their resistant to temptation and consistent commitment to the long-term goal of saving money, consumer's consumption rejection behavior is unlikely to achieve. Therefore, self-control will be an important mediating mechanism in determining whether anti-consumption attitude will lead to rejection consumption behavior.

Anti-haul content also helps strengthen consumer's self-control and stimulate a conscious thought process towards buying. Through consumption rejection content, consumers become familiar with critical thought on advertisements, assessment of need for a product, alternative use of old products etc., thus enhances their self-regulation ability and resisting the pressure from external environment (Wood, 2021). Moreover, consumers high in self-control are more likely to focus on long-term benefit than short-term satisfaction when purchasing, therefore

it will cause lower level of buying impulsivity and higher level of commitment to sustainable consumption behavior (Maseeh & Sangroya, 2022). Hence, consumers' decision of sustainable consumption is based on self-control and long-term benefit.

Based on theoretical consideration, self-control serves as a moderator on the relationship between attitudes and behavior. Because anti-consumption attitude promotes consumption rejection behavior through shaping consumer's belief and attitude towards it, however, it is essential that the consumer can resist buying temptations and remain behavioral consistency under all circumstances, thus, stronger self-control can better strengthen the link between anti-consumption attitude and consumption rejection behavior. Therefore, it is predicted that high level self-control consumers with strong anti-consumption attitudes are likely to present stronger relation between anti-consumption attitude and consumption rejection behavior.

In the present study, it is hypothesized that self-control enhances the power of anti-consumption attitude on the explanation of consumption rejection behavior. Consumers high in self-control and anti-consumption attitude are more likely to control impulsive buying behavior and remain on careful consumption behavior, thus it is a significant mediating mechanism for explaining consumption rejection behavior.

### Hypotheses Development

Consumers who actively engage with anti-haul content are exposed to communities that support mindful consumption and discourage excessive purchasing. Such exposure strengthens perceptions that consumption restraint is socially accepted and desirable.

**H5:** Anti-haul engagement positively affects perceived social norms regarding consumption rejection.

Individuals who perceive stronger social support for responsible consumption are more likely to adopt behaviors consistent with those expectations, including avoiding unnecessary purchases and resisting marketplace pressures.

**H6:** Perceived social norms positively affect consumption rejection behavior.

Furthermore, anti-haul engagement may influence consumption rejection behavior indirectly through the development of favorable social norms that legitimize and normalize non-consumption practices.

**H7:** Perceived social norms mediate the relationship between anti-haul engagement and consumption rejection behavior.

### Hypothesis Formulation

Digital influence is believed to alter consumers' attitudes and behaviors through social learning, informational persuasion and normative influence. Consumers are exposed to anti-haul creators who advocate the criticism of consuming, resistance to market environment, etc. As such, consumers will tend to approach and internalize values of anti-haul content when the exposure of digital influence is higher. The greater the exposure to digital influence, the greater the engagement of consumers toward anti-haul content.

**H1:** Digital influence positively influences anti-haul engagement of social media users.

**H2:** Anti-haul engagement has a positive effect on the formation of anti-consumption attitudes.

Furthermore, anti-haul community tends to foster a collective ideology about responsible consumption and resistance in the marketplace. Through the process of interaction within the community, consumers build a sense of normative prescription favoring non-consumption. This implies that consumers actively participating in the anti-haul activity will perceive greater social norms related to consumption rejection.

**H2:** Anti-haul engagement has a positive effect on the formation of anti-consumption attitudes.

**H3:** Anti-haul engagement has a positive effect on perceived social norms regarding consumption rejection.

### Anti-consumption attitude

The relationship between an attitude towards anti-consumption and the act of consumption rejection behavior is crucial in understanding the digital anti-consumption phenomenon. Attitudes

that support certain behaviors are more likely to translate into performing these behaviors. Thus, a positive attitude toward anti-consumption would be expected to result in increased consumption rejection behaviors.

**H4:** Attitude towards anti-consumption is positively influenced by engagement with anti-haul content.

**H5:** Consumption rejection behavior is positively influenced by attitude towards anti-consumption.

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### Consumption Rejection Behavior

Consumption rejection behavior refers to the act of consciously avoiding, reducing, postponing, or refusing to purchase products and services that consumers perceive as unnecessary, excessive, or that are not aligned with their personal values and long-term objectives. Instead of engaging in consumption, which represents the practice of acquisition and possession, consumption rejection behavior focuses on the choice to consciously abstain from the marketplace. Given the rising

consumer concerns about over-consumption, sustainability of our environment, financial security and personal autonomy, consumption rejection behavior has gained considerable interest in consumer research.

For years, consumer culture has encouraged individuals to equate happiness, achievement and social status with materialism. Consumers have consistently been bombarded with messages through advertising, influencer marketing and social media on acquiring products and following a consumption-centric lifestyle (Belk, 1988). Nevertheless, the negative consequences associated with hyper-consumption such as debt, depletion of resources, damage to our environment and psychic distress have encouraged consumers to restrict their consumption and adopt simpler practices (Maseeh & Sangroya, 2022). Consequently, consumption rejection behavior has been observed increasingly often both in offline and online purchasing context.

Consumption rejection behavior is closely associated with the concept of anti-consumption. Anti-consumption is defined as deliberate reduction, postponement or refusal of consumption, for reasons personal, ethical, ideological or environmental (Lee et al., 2009). Scholars have argued that consumers may actively reject products, brands or categories of products that they deem useless, harmful, or conflicting to their values by delaying the purchase or acquisition of the product, decreasing the use of products, or resisting advertising and promotion. These types of behaviors may thus reflect active manifestation of anti-consumption attitudes and marketplace resistance.

Further acceleration of the visibility of consumption rejection behavior has been observed through the rise of online anti-consumption movements such as anti-haul, deinfluencing, no-buy challenges, low-buy lifestyle and underconsumption-core. These practices promote and educate consumers about the necessity of critically reflecting on their purchasing behavior and resisting social pressure for excessive consumption (Wood, 2021). Through anti-consumption online community, consumption

rejection is thus framed as desirable behavior rather than signs of deprivation.

Consumption rejection behavior can be explained by Consumer Resistance Theory which assumes consumers are willing to defy marketplace ideologies and consumption practices if those consumption practices conflict with their values, freedom, and welfare (Fournier, 1998). In the context of consumption rejection behavior, consumers choose to fight the persuasive tactics of marketer and reject the ideology of endless consumption as the means of achieve happiness and social acceptance. Consequently, consumption rejection is expressed as a means of self-determination and empowerment for the consumer.

The concept of Social Influence Theory is also useful for explaining consumption rejection behavior. Whereas the previous understanding of social influence emphasizes a pull towards increasing consumption, the emergence of digital anti-consumption communities is also about introducing new, socially desirable norms associated with restricted consumption behavior. Once consumers become aware of norms relating to consumption restraint from anti-haul and anti-consumption groups, they begin to believe that rejection behavior is the expected standard of consumer conduct and act accordingly (Kelman, 1958). Therefore, individual may reject the products based on their beliefs about what social norms prescribe regarding consumption habits.

Various studies have indicated the positive implications associated with consumptive rejection behavior. A study conducted by Maseeh & Sangroya (2022) has revealed that reducing unnecessary purchases have positive impact on individual financial well-being, consumption-related stress, and enhance consumer self-control, thus further align purchase decision with their values. Reducing consumption also helps to improve the environment quality by decreasing resource use and production of waste and emission of green house gas.

Within the anti-haul context, consumption rejection behavior is the ultimate behavioral outcome from exposure to anti-consumption messages. When consumers are exposed to anti-

haul influencers, they are encouraged to reevaluate the need to purchase the products and avoid impulsive buying. Their anti-consumption attitudes can be further strengthened by social validation through online anti-consumption community which further leads to consumption rejection behavior. Moreover, self-control can also play a moderating role. Though consumers may develop positive attitudes towards reduced consumption, it may not directly lead to actual behavior change due to temptations and lack of self-regulation.

In this current study, consumption rejection behavior is the primary endogenous construct measuring the willingness of the consumers to reject unnecessary purchases although they are exposed to persuasive product marketing message and consumption-driven social media contents. It is also one important variable to explore how digital anti-consumption trends affect modern consumer behavior.

## THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The current research examined the role of digital influence and anti-haul social media trend on normalization of rejection consumption for consumers. Integrating Social Influence Theory (Kelman, 1958), Consumer Resistance Theory (Fournier, 1998) and Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) into an integrated framework, this research provided a better understanding of the social-psychological mechanisms for how the social media-based anti-consumption movement impacts on consumers' purchase behavior.

### Social Influence Theory

Social Influence Theory holds that individuals tend to change their attitude and behavior as a result of their interaction with significant people and perceived social norms (Kelman, 1958). Within the social media environment, influencers have been characterized as opinion leaders who provide information, set norms, and influence consumers' purchasing related beliefs. Traditionally, social media marketing with influencers has always related to positive consumption purchase intention and purchase

behavior. However, current anti-haul social media influencers attempt to leverage similar social influence mechanisms to create attitudes towards positive consumption restraint and resistance to purchase. In terms of informative aspects of anti-haul content, consumers will be informed of their real needs for products and urged towards saving and responsible consumption through constant exposures. Normative aspect of anti-haul content refers to perceived community expectation on responsible purchase behavior that is established through the communication and feedback loop on social media platforms. Hence, digital influence on anti-haul will be expected to positively impact consumers' intention to consume anti-haul content and subsequently develop attitudes supporting consumption rejection.

### Digital influence on anti-haul engagement

Digital influence is the antecedence on anti-haul engagement due to the prominent position of social media influencers as significant sources of information and behavioral guideline. It can be expected that consumers who are most exposed to social media anti-haul influencers and community are likely to involve in anti-consumption buying practices and resistance to consumption activities. H1: Digital influence has a positive effect on anti-haul engagement.

### Consumer Resistance Theory

Consumer Resistance Theory posited that individuals engage in the rejection of consumption or purchasing practices that are deemed manipulative, excessive or contradictory to one's value beliefs (Fournier, 1998). Anti-haul engagement can be perceived as one of the new types of consumer resistance behavior where people strive to resist the materialism value and purchasing habits of hyper consumption. It implies that exposure to anti-haul content will enable consumers to realize their actual consumption needs, be aware of marketing manipulative practices and develop habits that rely less on consumption to form identities and gain self-fulfillment. Hence, consumers' engagement on anti-haul content has positive implication on the development of consumption resistance attitude towards purchase decisions.

### **Anti-haul engagement on anti-consumption attitude**

Anti-haul content challenges the prevailing materialistic and consumptionist ideology with the narrative of frugality and prudent purchasing choices, thus promoting a counter-culture among consumers. This exposure is likely to reinforce consumers' inclination towards alternative values of simplicity and sustainability, eventually shaping their positive consumption resistance attitudes.

H2: Anti-haul engagement has a positive effect on anti-consumption attitudes.

### **Norm formation and consumption rejection**

Perceived social norms reflect an individual's perception about the appropriateness and expectations of behavior within their social network and environment. Social media platforms, by virtue of the continuous exposure and observation of both influencers and followers, have increasingly shaped and spread norms. In terms of anti-haul content, it promotes saving and resists excessive buying, such as rewarding consumption rejection and discouraging impulse buying. With repeated positive reinforcement for anti-consumption behavior from community members (via likes, comments, shares), consumption rejection will be perceived as appropriate and socially acceptable by consumers. Thus, anti-haul engagement is likely to lead to stronger anti-consumption norms and positively affect consumers' consumption rejection behavior.

Anti-haul engagement on perceived social norms  
Consumers who spend time and involve in the anti-haul community will likely report higher levels of perceived social support towards the importance of spending control and not excessively purchasing any goods.

H3: Anti-haul engagement has a positive effect on perceived social norms.

### **Perceived social norms on consumption rejection**

As individuals' purchasing behavior tends to conform to perceived social norms, those consumers who perceive greater endorsement towards anti-consumption practices will be

expected to actually reject goods that are unnecessary.

H4: Perceived social norms has a positive effect on consumption rejection behavior.

### **Mediating role of perceived social norms**

As suggested by the social influence theory, it can be proposed that social norms act as a mediator where by social influence would affect purchasing behavior. In this case, the consumption rejection behavior is influenced by anti-haul engagement indirectly through the development of positive anti-consumption social norms.

H5: Perceived social norms mediate the effect of anti-haul engagement on consumption rejection behavior.

### **Social comparison on anti-consumption attitudes**

Social Comparison Theory suggests that an individual would compare his attitudes, behaviors, or possessions with others (Festinger, 1954). The highly ritualized ideal life represented in social media marketing is always triggering social comparison on materials owned and thus encourage consumers' buying behavior. However, the anti-haul content directly challenge those values of materialism by presenting life styles that emphasize contentment, necessary consumption and resistances to consumerism and purchasing decisions. The attitude towards the critical consumption rejection, can further influence consumer' consumption behavior.

### **Anti-consumption attitude on consumption rejection behavior**

Consumers who develop more anti-consumption attitude would be more likely to resist purchase goods that are considered unnecessary.

H6: Anti-consumption attitudes has a positive effect on consumption rejection behavior.

### **Moderating role of consumer self-control**

Consumer self-control is an individual's ability to override or change undesirable response, to resist temptation, and regulate impulse, in the pursuit of long-term goals over immediate rewards (Tangney et al., 2004). While consumers may maintain positive anti-consumption attitude in their minds,

implementation towards actual buying behavior is constrained by self-control ability to resist temptations and purchase opportunities. A high self-control individual is expected to be more capable to apply his attitude in action, thus strengthen the effect of consumer self-control on consumption rejection behavior.

**Consumer self-control as a moderator**

The positive effect of anti-consumption attitudes on consumption rejection behavior is stronger among high self-control consumers.

H7: Consumer self-control positively moderates the relationship between anti-consumption attitudes and consumption rejection behavior.

H1: Digital influence has a positive effect on anti-haul engagement.

H2: Anti-haul engagement has a positive effect on anti-consumption attitudes.

H3: Anti-haul engagement has a positive effect on perceived social norms.

H4: Perceived social norms has a positive effect on consumption rejection behavior.

H5: Perceived social norms mediate the effect of anti-haul engagement on consumption rejection behavior.

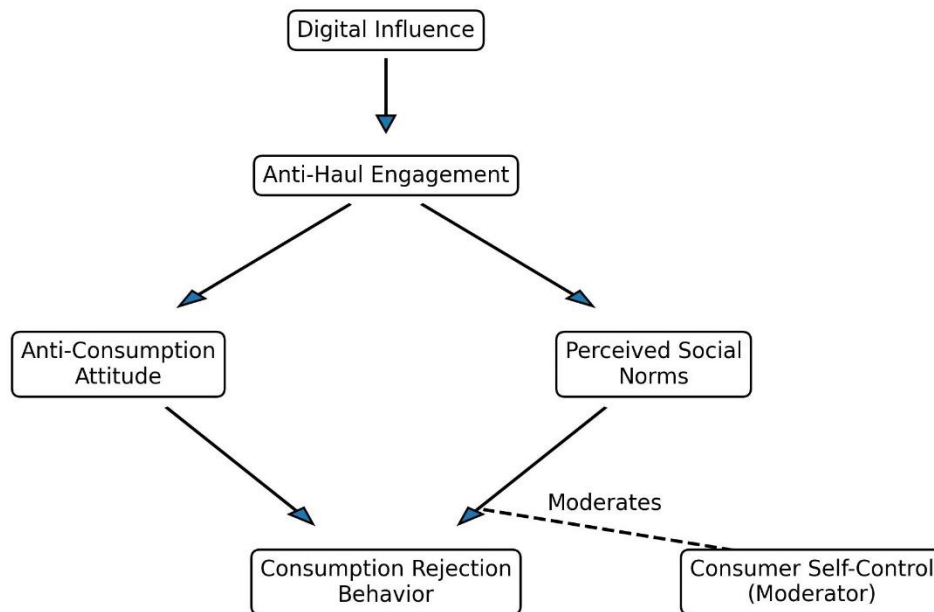
H6: Anti-consumption attitudes has a positive effect on consumption rejection behavior.

H7: Consumer self-control positively moderates the relationship between anti-consumption attitudes and consumption rejection behavior.

**Summary of Hypotheses**

**Conceptual Frame work**

Conceptual Framework



**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Philosophy and Research Approach**

The positivist research philosophy underpins this study, aimed at understanding the effect of digital influence and anti-haul engagement on

consumption rejection behavior among social media users. Positivists assume that reality can be objectified, verified empirically through observations and tested statistically (Saunders et al., 2019). Due to the study's aim of testing

hypothesized relationship among latent constructs, a quantitative research approach was identified as appropriate. Quantitative approach involves collection of numerical data from a sample and examination of relationships between these variables using advance statistical techniques. The study follows deductive research approach whereby theories are first developed on a certain phenomenon and then tested empirically, similar to consumer behavior and social media studies that seeks to identify explanation and prediction using existing theory (Hair et al., 2022).

### Research Design

A cross-sectional survey research design was utilized for the current study. Cross-sectional research design involves collecting data from the respondent's at one single point in time in order to discover what is happening, how frequently is happens and at what rate it is happening and relationship between these occurrences (Hair et al., 2022). As an explanatory study, a research design must be identified capable of identifying causal effect among variables: digital influence, anti-haul engagement, anti-consumption attitude, perceived social norms, consumer self-control and consumption rejection behavior. A cross-sectional design was chosen as it allows for efficient data collection of large number of social media users within a time-frame while providing enough information for testing structural model. It is considered one of the widely used method in social media and consumer behavior research in obtaining response from respondent.

### Theoretical Foundation

Social Influence Theory, Consumer Resistance Theory and Social Comparison Theory form the theoretical foundations of this study's conceptual framework. The Social Influence Theory states that individuals alter their attitudes and behaviors in accordance with their experiences of their relations with significant others and their expectations for behaviors. Influencers on social media can serve as opinion leaders for their follower, thereby shaping their attitudes and behavioral intentions toward certain behaviors.

Consumer Resistance Theory argues that consumers will challenge marketplace ideology, resist materialism and manipulative marketing practices, which violate their belief, about fairness in purchasing (Fournier, 1998). The social comparison theory emphasizes individuals compare themselves with others on a variety of factors such as achievements, appearance and material possession in their social reference groups, which will have an effect on one's attitude and behavior (Festinger, 1954). Together, these theories will explain how anti-haul content influences anti-consumption attitude, social norms and then leads to consumption rejection behavior.

### Population and Sampling Procedure

The target population of the current study includes active social media users, regularly engaged with influencer content across social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook and X (formerly Twitter). The sample was considered suitable for analysis because the anti-haul and deinfluencing trend primarily spread through online platforms. Therefore, purposive sampling was adopted to identify a sample with relevant experiences toward research objectives (Etikan et al., 2016). The inclusion criteria was to be 18 years old, use social media regularly, frequently consumes content of social media influencers, is familiar with anti-haul, deinfluencing, no-buy and etc. With this sampling method, the study can ensure that the respondents selected had direct exposure to the phenomenon under study, making the responses more valid and reliable for the purpose of assessing relationships.

### Sample Size Determination

Sample size for PLS-SEM analysis was determined on the base of general rules. According to Hair et al. (2022) minimum required sample size is greater than 10 times the highest number of structural paths toward any endogenous construct. Although, recently suggested sample size in contemporary PLS-SEM studies for predictive analysis is larger to guarantee higher predictive power, robustness, model stability (Hair et al., 2022). Based on the guideline of statistical power

provided by Cohen (1992) approximately 400-500 respondents is considered appropriate sample size in this study as it has the capability to detect a medium effect size, attain statistical power with low estimation bias, and it helps increase the robustness of moderation and mediation analyses.

### Data Collection Procedure

Data were gathered by using structured online questionnaire created on Google Forms. The link to the survey was disseminated on various social media platforms, university forums and relevant online forums. Before the commencement of data collection, a pilot test of the questionnaire was undertaken involving 30-50 participants to evaluate the clarity of items and readability of the questionnaire as well as testing the scales on preliminary reliability. Feedback from pilot respondents were used to refine the final version of the survey to maximize content validity. Survey completion was voluntary and informed consent was obtained prior to completion of the questionnaire; respondents were assured anonymity and confidentiality.

### Measurement Instrument

Multiple-item scale were adopted and adopted from various studies. All items used were assessed on a 5-point Likert-scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Digital Influence were assessed by items adapted from Lou and Yuan (2019), which represent the influence on the behavior and attitude toward consumption decision made by social media influencer. Anti-Haul Engagement was assessed by items adopted from Wood (2021) representing the behavior related to consume of anti-haul content on social media. Anti-Consumption Attitude were assessed by items adopted from Lee et al. (2009), representing respondent's attitude toward consumption restraint and resistance against excessive spending behavior. Perceived Social Norms were measured by items adopted from Cialdini et al. (1990), which reflects respondents' perception of what is normative, right and proper social behavior when consumers interact in market places. Consumer Self-Control were measured by items adopted from Tangney et al.

(2004), indicating respondent's ability to regulate spending and purchase decision at particular time. Finally, Consumption Rejection Behavior was measured by items adopted from Lee et al. (2009) which reflects respondent's behavior in avoiding unnecessary consumption or reject certain marketplace.

### Assessment of Common Method Bias

The data collected from self-report questionnaire may prone to common method bias (CMB) which will affects findings, hence it was checked. Harman's single-factor test was done as a preliminary diagnose for common method bias; as it is unlikely that common method bias occurs significantly when a single factor explains none more than half of the variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In PLS-SEM framework variance inflation factor (VIF) was employed for detection of potential collinearity issues. Values below 3.3 shows a reasonable level of common method bias.

### Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed by Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique via SmartPLS 4. The use of PLS-SEM was motivated by the need for a method capable of dealing with multi-trait-mult-method, complex research designs, and prediction of endogenous variables. The procedure involved evaluation of the measurement model followed by the assessment of the structural model.

### Assessment of measurement model

Reliability and validity of the constructs were tested. Cronbachs alpha and composite reliability were used for checking the internal consistency reliability where values greater than 0.70 are considered adequate (Hair et al., 2022). Convergent validity was checked using factor loadings (above 0.70) and average variance extracted (AVE) (above 0.50). Factors loadings represent the degree to which indicators reflect the construct, where values above 0.70 indicate that they fit the construct, and AVE measures the average percentage of variation of indicators that is accounted for by construct. Discriminant validity was examined with two approaches namely

Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). The criterion HTMT below 0.85 confirms the empirically distinct nature of constructs (Hair et al., 2022).

**Structural model assessment**

The structural model was evaluated after achieving acceptable measurement model. Evaluating the structural model involves checking path coefficients ( $\beta$ ) and associated T-value, p-value, coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for the endogenous variables, predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) for the endogenous variables and effect size ( $f^2$ ). For this purpose, 5000 resamples of bootstrapping were employed to establish statistical significance of hypothesized relationships. The strength of relationship is indicated by path coefficients, which reflect a change of one standard deviation in predictor variable causes of one standard deviation in dependent variable.  $R^2$  value is used to understand explanatory power of endogenous constructs whereas, blindfolding procedure was used for checking predictive relevance and effect size ( $f^2$ ) to understand practical significance of each path by employing Cohen's guideline.

**Mediation analysis**

The effect of Perceived Social Norms on the relationship between Anti-Haul Engagement and Consumption Rejection Behavior was estimated using the bootstrapping method with 5000 resamples (Hair et al., 2022). Indirect effects were checked to see whether Anti-Haul Engagement leads to Consumption Rejection Behavior through social norms; if the direct effects, indirect effects were significant and 95% bias corrected confident interval does not contain zero.

**Moderation analysis**

The moderating effect of Consumer Self-Control on the relationship between Anti-Consumption Attitude and Consumption Rejection Behavior was tested with product indicator method in SmartPLS. The test of Moderating effect verifies whether the relationship between anti-consumption attitudes and consumption rejection behavior depends on consumer self-control; and whether interaction effect is significant would indicate that consumer self-control reinforces or mitigates the influence of anti-consumption attitude.

**Ethical considerations**

All ethical procedures were followed during the course of the study. Informed consent was obtained from participants for their participation. Participants were informed about the study aims before their participation. Their responses were kept confidential and anonymous; no personal identifiers were collected from the participants. Participants were informed that they could withdraw their consent to participate in the study at any time. All data collected was stored in a secured folder, accessible only to the researcher, and used solely for research purposes.

**RESULTS**

**Respondent Profile**

487 valid responses were collected and added to the final analyses. They were respondents who were active users on social media and followed influencer content on a routine basis. Out of all respondents 52.6% were female and 47.4% were male. 61.8% of all respondents were between 18-30, 31-40 (24.8%), 41-50 (9.2%), and over 50 (4.2%). As far as social media usage is concerned, 78.3% stated they used social networking websites more than 2 hours per day

**Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 487)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	231	47.4
	Female	256	52.6
Age	18-30 Years	301	61.8
	31-40 Years	121	24.8
	41-50 Years	45	9.2

	Above 50 Years	20	4.2
Daily Social Media Usage	Less than 2 Hours	106	21.7
	2-4 Hours	209	42.9
	More than 4 Hours	172	35.4

**Measurement Model Assessment**

Model fit for measurement model was examined by the usage of factor loading, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). As all items were having factor loading greater than the suggested 0.70 criterion, indicator reliability of the measures was good. The Cronbach's alpha values (0.823 - 0.914) were all

above the minimum accepted value of 0.70. The values of composite reliability (0.882 - 0.938) were all above the acceptable level 0.70 which supported the internal consistency reliability. And the values of AVE (0.652 - 0.792) showed that the convergent validity was adequate.

**Table 2 Reliability and Convergent Validity**

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Digital Influence	0.881	0.918	0.737
Anti-Haul Engagement	0.894	0.927	0.761
Anti-Consumption Attitude	0.914	0.938	0.792
Perceived Social Norms	0.867	0.909	0.714
Consumer Self-Control	0.823	0.882	0.652
Consumption Rejection Behavior	0.906	0.934	0.781

The findings indicate that all constructs satisfied the recommended reliability and convergent validity criteria

**Discriminant Validity**

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). All HTMT

values were below the recommended threshold of 0.85, indicating adequate discriminant validity among the constructs.

**Table 3 HTMT Results**

Construct	DI	AHE	ACA	PSN	CSC	CRB
Digital Influence	—					
Anti-Haul Engagement	0.681	—				
Anti-Consumption Attitude	0.512	0.738	—			
Perceived Social Norms	0.474	0.661	0.721	—		
Consumer Self-Control	0.291	0.334	0.446	0.381	—	
Consumption Rejection Behavior	0.412	0.629	0.803	0.762	0.589	—

These findings support that all of these constructs are distinctly different from each other empirically.

**Structural Model Assessment**

The structural model was assessed using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. Path

coefficients, t-values, p-values, and confidence intervals were examined to determine the significance of the hypothesized relationships.

**Table 4 Hypothesis Testing Results**

Hypothesis	Relationship	$\beta$	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	DI $\rightarrow$ AHE	0.623	15.781	< .001	Supported
H2	AHE $\rightarrow$ ACA	0.691	18.294	< .001	Supported
H3	AHE $\rightarrow$ PSN	0.603	14.932	< .001	Supported
H4	PSN $\rightarrow$ CRB	0.297	5.891	< .001	Supported
H6	ACA $\rightarrow$ CRB	0.431	8.226	< .001	Supported
H7	CSC $\times$ ACA $\rightarrow$ CRB	0.174	3.744	< .001	Supported

The outcomes indicates that digital influence predicts the consumer's anti-haul behavior (= 0.623,  $p < .001$ ). The consumer's anti-haul behavior impacts anti-consumption attitudes (= 0.691,  $p < .001$ ) and the perceived social norm (= 0.603,  $p < .001$ ). Also, anti-consumption attitude and perceived social norm influence the consumption rejection behavior significantly. In

**Table 5 Coefficient of Determination**

Endogenous Construct	R <sup>2</sup>
Anti-Haul Engagement	0.388
Anti-Consumption Attitude	0.477
Perceived Social Norms	0.364
Consumption Rejection Behavior	0.612

The model explains 61.2% of the variance in consumption rejection behavior, indicating substantial predictive power according to Hair et al. (2022).

**Mediation Analysis**

The mediating role of perceived social norms between anti-haul engagement and consumption

addition, interaction of anti-consumption attitude and consumer's self-control is significant, confirming consumer self-control as a moderator.

**Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)**

The explanatory power of the model was assessed using R<sup>2</sup> values.

**Table 6 Mediation Analysis**

Relationship	Indirect Effect	t-value	p-value
AHE $\rightarrow$ PSN $\rightarrow$ CRB	0.179	4.984	< .001

The indirect effect of anti-haul engagement on consumption rejection behavior through perceived social norms was significant ( $\beta = 0.179$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This finding indicates that perceived social norms partially mediate the relationship between anti-haul engagement and consumption rejection behavior. Therefore, H5 was supported

**Moderation Analysis**

It was hypothesized that consumers' self-control ability will enhance the relationship between anti-

rejection behavior was examined using bootstrapping procedures.

consumption attitudes and consumption rejection behavior. The interaction was significant (= 0.174,  $t = 3.744$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and thus confirms that consumers who are in the higher range of self-control are more likely to develop anti-consumption attitudes to action. The result from the moderation analysis shows that the higher a consumers' level of self-control ability is, the more effective they can overcome the temptation from the market place and carry out purchasing

activities in line with their anti-consumption beliefs.

### Predictive Relevance ( $Q^2$ )

The blindfolding procedure was conducted to evaluate predictive relevance.

**Table 7 Predictive Relevance**

Construct	$Q^2$
Anti-Haul Engagement	0.274
Anti-Consumption Attitude	0.351
Perceived Social Norms	0.246
Consumption Rejection Behavior	0.428

All  $Q^2$  values exceeded zero, confirming that the model possesses satisfactory predictive relevance

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Demographics of the survey respondents (shown in Table 1) consist of the predominantly young and active social media users, which shows that sample design was appropriate to investigate anti-haul engagement and consumption rejection behavior online. Table 2 indicates that the reliability and validity were supported, as all the measurement scales meet acceptable thresholds of Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE), indicating sufficient internal consistency and acceptable convergent validity. Besides, all HTMT values displayed in Table 3 are below acceptable threshold of 0.85 and hence, satisfactory discriminant validity was ensured. In sum, there was ample evidence that the measurements in this study were constructually distinct. The results for the structural model reported in Table 4 provided sufficient support for all of the hypotheses proposed in this study. That is, digital influence has a significant positive effect on anti-haul engagement, implying that social media influencers can influence consumption behavior and also constrain one's consumption habits. Anti-haul engagement has a significant effect on both anti-consumption attitude and perceived social norms. Anti-consumption attitude and perceived social norms have a significant positive effect on consumption rejection behavior. Consumer self-control has a significant moderating effect on anti-consumption attitude and consumption rejection behavior, which implies that individual with higher level of self-control have stronger influence

in transforming the beliefs toward consumption rejection behavior. The  $R^2$  values in Table 5 suggest good explanatory power, especially, the  $R^2$  value of consumption rejection behavior reached 0.612. It means that all variables can account for a relatively high variance in consumption rejection behavior and it indicates that there are strong relationships between digital influence, anti-haul engagement, anti-consumption attitude, perceived social norms, consumer self-control and consumption rejection behavior. The mediation results presented in Table 6 have demonstrated that perceived social norms mediates the effect of anti-haul engagement on consumption rejection behavior, indicating that digital influence leads to social norm shifts which make consumer accept and value about responsible consumption and limited spending. In addition, the prediction accuracy reported in Table 7 showed that all values of  $Q$  are greater than 0, indicating the model prediction capability is adequate and can predict future observation of consumption rejection behavior well. These finding results provide support for the Social Influence Theory, Consumer Resistance Theory and Social Comparison Theory. Specifically, it provides evidence that the trend of anti-haul and deinfluencing, via the social and psychological processes, make the consumption rejection behavior becoming social normality. Digital influence prompts people to engage in anti-consumption content, which subsequently develops an attitudes and social norms regarding responsible spending, while self-control provides

the psychological support to actually follow those attitudes and behaviors. In conclusion, this study found that social media sites are increasingly functioning as public spaces for marketplace resistance and careful consumption, leading to a shift towards sustainable and sensible consumption habits.

### Theoretical Implications

The present research contributes to literature on digital influence, anti-consumption behavior, and social media marketing. First, by highlighting the two faces of digital influence in the present research, we extend Social Influence Theory by demonstrating that the literature is limited in examining digital influence only to consumption-oriented behaviors (buying and accumulating products), whereas digital influence is also an avenue through which consumers learn to restraint consumption through anti-haul and de-influencing content. This shows that beyond promoting consumption, digital influence can also promote anti-consumption behaviors, adding new meaning to how scholars conceptualized influencer behavior. Second, by finding support for how anti-haul behavior contributes to consumers' anti-consumption attitudes and intentions to reject consumption behavior, the current study confirms Consumer Resistance Theory by supporting the finding that the emergence of online anti-haul behavior could be a contemporary form of marketplace resistance behavior. Third, we extend Social Comparison Theory by indicating how the standards to compare with can change through the mechanism of anti-haul content: Instead of comparing one's consumption to an idealized lifestyle promoted by influencers, consumers who are active in anti-haul communities can learn to compare with ones who can restrain consumption and have a financially sound and responsible life. Lastly, one important theoretical contribution in this research is by identifying perceived social norms as a key mediator and it is largely unexplored in the literature on anti-consumption behavior research; instead, the individual-level attitudes toward consumption is mostly examined in previous studies. Moreover, consumer self-control further

strengthens the link between attitudes and behaviors, suggesting the dual role of individual-level attitudes and higher-level cognitive factors and mechanisms are important.

### Practical Implications

Marketers and influencers should respond to the growing prevalence of anti-haul and deinfluencing behavior on social media, and pay attention to ethical communication that encourages conscious consumption. Those who support sustainable consumption and consumer welfare should use digital platforms and creators to spread awareness of sustainable practices and encourage responsible spending. Social campaigns encouraging mindful consumption can be adopted by government, NGO and consumer advocates to instill better buying habits among the public. It's crucial to address the underlying social norms and foster community spirit in encouraging these behaviors through social media campaigns. Consumer education to improve their self-regulation capabilities should also be a concern to facilitate consumption rejection behavior.

### Future Research

A number of avenues for future research emerge from this study. First, due to its cross-sectional nature, this study is not able to explain the causal relationships between constructs. Future research might adopt longitudinal designs to demonstrate causality and track changes in consumer behavior over time. Second, other cognitive or effectual psychological constructs, such as materialism, environmental concern, financial anxiety, consumer empowerment, digital fatigue, and FOMO, may provide further insights into consumption rejection behavior. Third, cultural differences in anti-consumption behavior may be investigated further through cross-cultural research. Fourth, besides anti-haul behavior, other forms of anti-consumption practices such as low-buy movements, minimalism, no-buy challenges, and under consumption-core can be explored for comparison of effectiveness in affecting consumer behavior. Fifth, to develop a more comprehensive understanding of consumers who practice anti-consumption behavior, it is useful to look into

demographic differences such as age and generation, and other related factors like gender, income, or education. Lastly, further research should try to examine both individual and social level outcomes of consumption rejection behavior.

## CONCLUSION

The current research has examined how digital influence through anti-haul content promotes consumption rejection behaviors by focusing on consumers' attitudes and social norms among the social media community. The study makes significant theoretical contributions to the literature on digital influence, Consumer Resistance Theory and Social Comparison Theory by establishing that consumer' anti-consumption attitude strengthened by the participation of the anti-haul community could be translated into the consumption rejection behavior as social norms play the role as a mediator. Consumer self-control can further contribute to a stronger link between attitudes and behaviors and finally, this study shows that anti-haul and de-influencing on social media does encourage mindful consumption by helping consumers reduce consumption of unnecessary products and acquire more financially sensible buying habits.

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