A Comparative Study of Consumer Perceptions and Purchase Intentions of Sustainable and Non-sustainable Luxury Apparel Brands

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A R T I C L E I N F O

A B S T R A C T

Purpose: The research aims to understand consumer preferences and purchasing behaviors related to sustainability in high-end apparel businesses. It seeks to compare perceptions of sustainable and non-sustainable luxury brands while providing insights into industry practices and future exploration in the field of sustainable fashion.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This research employs a comparative approach to study consumer preferences and behaviors within the high-end apparel sector, focusing on sustainability. The data analysis involves assessing 335 responses, with 300 deemed suitable for the study's objectives.

Findings: The research reveals that sustainable luxury apparel brands are perceived more favorably in terms of reliability, trustworthiness, style, and quality compared to non-sustainable counterparts. These findings offer practical insights for luxury brands to adopt and communicate sustainability practices effectively. Moreover, the study suggests potential future research directions that address broader industry challenges and contribute to the sustainable luxury domain.

Research Limitations: The study's cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point, limits establishing causal relationships and tracking changes over time. The reliance on a sample of 300 individuals might not fully represent diverse luxury fashion consumers, impacting the findings' generalizability due to demographic factors like age, gender, and location.

Managerial Implications: The study suggests that luxury brands can enhance their image by promoting sustainability, which positively affects reliability, trustworthiness, style, and quality perceptions, ultimately boosting purchase intentions.

Originality/Value: It adds original insights to the interface of sustainability, brand perceptions, and consumer behavior, catering to the growing demand for ethical products.

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Introduction

A countertrend to quick fashion is sustainable fashion. According to Chevalier & Gutsatz (2012), the word "encompasses a variety of terms, such as organic, the color green, fair trade, sustainable, slow, eco, and so forth, each attempting to highlight or correct a variety of perceived wrongs in the fashion industry". The phrase "sustainable fashion" refers, according to Lundblad & Davies (2016) to a group of initiatives aimed at redressing a "variety of perceived wrongs in the fashion industry".

Sustainable fashion (also known as "eco-fashion") is a growing creation, manufacture, and usage philosophy and trend towards maintainability, to develop a system that is supportable eternally in terms of human influence on the environment and social responsibility. The viewpoints of designers, producers, and buyers on sustainability issues, as well as their intents and actions in that regard, make up the three main parts of this definition.

The research firm Global Data states that the market for sustainable fashion will rise by $9.81 billion between 2020 and 2025. A report from a different study conducted by Nielsen, states consumers' purchase decisions are increasingly taking sustainability into account. To lessen their influence on the environment, 75% of consumers worldwide claim they either plan to or may change their purchase patterns. The Global Fashion Agenda created research estimating that 92 million tonnes of garbage are produced by the fashion sector. Many well-known apparel firms have adopted environmentally friendly practices to lessen their negative environmental impact.

For instance, the Indian fashion brand Fabindia has been using traditional textile techniques and natural dyes to create sustainable apparel for over 60 years. Another Indian fashion brand, Bhu: sattva, uses organic cotton, bamboo, and linen to create sustainable clothing. Internationally, fashion brands like H&M, Levi's, and Adidas have also been implementing sustainable strategies such as introducing ethical industrial practices, recycling products, and cutting waste. Adidas has pledged to use entirely recycled polyester in all of its goods by the year 2024, while H&M has committed to being completely circular and climate-positive by the year 2030.

Luxury brands are facing increasing tensions caused by consumer activists who have criticized them for lack of transparency in their supply chains and denounced the exploitation of animals and labor (Dekhili & Achabou 2018; Henninger et al., 2017). As a result, the market for luxury products has started to acknowledge its obligation and chance to encourage sustainability in product sourcing, production, and marketing. Due to the variety of sustainability concerns, which is represented in the products, services, and experiences offered in the luxury market, this sector is particularly essential. Examples include clothing, vehicles, travel, food and drink, and the visual arts (D'Arpizio et al., 2016; Wiedmann & Hennigs, 2013).

Studies on the connection or coherence between sustainability and luxury are becoming increasingly prevalent. As well as the sustainability of the luxury items they buy, social and environmental problems are becoming more important to luxury consumers. As a result, luxury enterprises have v. The degree to which luxury and sustainability can coexist, as well as the true views of luxury buyers on sustainability, are still up for debate.

The research on how young people feel about expensive and ecologically friendly products is still in its nascent stages. After developing a conceptual framework of the problems related to sustainable luxury, this study intends to fill the information gap of the consumption orientation of purchasers.

Review of Literature

- According to Tungate (2014), as customers become more conscious of how negatively fashion affects society and the environment, sustainable luxury companies have grown in significance in the fashion business.

- A study by Kim & Ko, (2012) examined how luxury apparel sector consumers see sustainability. According to the report, luxury firms should consider adopting sustainable practices to boost their brand's reputation and attract more clients.

- Liao et al., (2012) conducted an exploratory study on consumer perceptions of sustainable fashion. The study used a survey to collect data from 216 participants in Taiwan, and the results showed that consumers have a positive

perception of sustainable fashion. The study indicates that consumers are interested in sustainable fashion and are willing to purchase it if it meets their needs and is affordable. The study highlights the importance of affordability and the need to communicate the benefits of sustainable fashion to consumers.

- Ngai & Cho (2012) this paper emphasizes the need for luxury brands targeting China's youth market to comprehend the complexity of this consumer generation. The study proposes a classification based on consumer similarities and differences, aiming to enhance targeting and positioning strategies for better product design, branding, and profitability.

- A study by Kim, H. & Damhorst (2010) examined how luxury apparel sector consumers see sustainability. According to the report, luxury firms should consider adopting sustainable practices to boost their brand's reputation and attract more clients.

- Mandariæ et al., (2021) The study examines consumer perceptions of sustainable fashion, noting gender disparities in perceived sustainability awareness. Despite positive attitudes, a gap exists between awareness and sustainable actions in purchasing decisions. Emphasizing the need for systematic research in Croatia, the paper advocates for education and marketing strategies to promote sustainability.

- Bhandari et al., (2022) This study investigates Sustainable Sourcing (SS) barriers in the fashion industry through a comprehensive analysis of 154 global SS professionals. Using methods like Exploratory Factor Analysis and analytical hierarchy process, it identifies and prioritizes 20 key barriers categorized into six dimensions. 'Management, Government Support, and Infrastructure Barriers' emerge as most crucial. It suggests future research to explore interrelations among these barriers for more robust SS implementation.

Research Objectives

1. To understand consumer perceptions of sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands.

2. To explore consumer purchase intentions of sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands.

3. To investigate the relationship between consumer perceptions of sustainability and their purchase intentions for luxury apparel brands.

4. To identify which factors significantly influence consumer perceptions and purchase intentions.

Research Methodology

The study employed a quantitative research approach, utilizing an online survey to gather data from a representative sample of 300 participants. The survey consisted of three sections: demographic information, consumer perceptions of sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands, and inquiries about purchase intentions. Informed by existing literature, a five-point Likert scale measured responses. Statistical techniques included t-tests for mean comparison, Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation to understand variable relationships, regression analysis to assess sustainable luxury brands' impact on purchase intentions, and ANOVA to explore score differences across factors. This primary research approach focused on analyzing direct survey responses to investigate the intricate relationships between consumer perceptions and purchase intentions regarding sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands.

Hypotheses

H1: No significant difference exists in mean perception scores between sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands.

H2: No significant difference exists in mean purchase intention scores between sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands.

H3: No significant relationship exists between consumer perceptions and purchase intentions for sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands.

H4: No significant difference exists in the mean perception and purchase intention scores among the different factors of sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands.

Data Analysis

The SPSS software programme was used to analyse the data that had been gathered. The participant demographics were investigated using descriptive

statistics. The mean and standard deviation were calculated to compare customer perceptions of luxury fashion brands that are sustainable and those that are not. These means were contrasted using the independent t-test. The Cronbach's alpha test was used to assess the survey's reliability. Pearson's correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were used to investigate the relationship between customer perceptions and purchase intentions for luxury clothes brands that are sustainable and those that are not.

Goodness of Fit Test
The goodness of fit for the collected data was assessed using the Chi-square goodness of fit test. The results of the test demonstrated that the acquired data fit the anticipated distribution with a Chi-square value of 14.23 and a p-value of 0.125 (Table 1).

Cronbach's Alpha Test
Cronbach's Alpha test was used to gauge the questionnaire's dependability. A Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.875, which denotes strong internal consistency among the questions, was obtained from the test (Table 1).

Result and Interpretation

Descriptive Analysis
The means and standard deviations of the variables under study are presented in Table 1.

The mean values for all the variables were above 4, indicating that respondents generally agreed that sustainable luxury apparel brands are perceived as environmentally and socially responsible, trustworthy, fashionable, of high quality, and are more likely to intend to purchase and pay more for them.

Factor Analysis
The data is acceptable for factor analysis, as shown by the KMO value of 0.87. Bartlett's test of sphericity yields a p-value of less than 0.05, indicating that component analysis may be used since the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix.

Interpretation and Findings

Factor 1: Environmental and Social Responsibility
High loadings on Factor 1 for variables like "social responsibility" (0.88) and "environmental responsibility" (0.86) show a significant

Table 1: Goodness of Fit Test and Cronbach's Alpha

Test	Result
Goodness of Fit	$X^2 = 14.23$, df = 12, p = 0.125
Cronbach's Alpha	0.875

Source Primary Data

Table 2: Demographic Information of The Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	96	32%
Female	204	68%
Age group		
18-25	90	30%
26-35	114	38%
36-45	66	22%
46+	30	10%

Source Primary Data

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD
Environmental and Social Responsibility	4.64	1.03
Trustworthiness	4.46	1.08
Fashionability	4.58	1.05
Quality	4.54	1.06
Purchase Intention	4.6	1.03
Willingness to Pay	4.12	1.15

Source Primary Data

Note: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Table 4: Factor Analysis

Variables	Factor 1: Environmental and Social Responsibility	Factor 2: Trust-worthiness	Factor 3: Fashion-ability	Factor 4: Quality
Environmental Responsibility	0.86	0.12	0.18	0.09
Social Responsibility	0.88	0.09	0.15	0.1
Trustworthiness	0.12	0.94	0.09	0.08
Brand Reputation	0.1	0.92	0.11	0.13
Fashionability	0.18	0.15	0.91	0.1
Trendiness	0.15	0.18	0.88	0.11
Quality	0.09	0.08	0.1	0.96
Durability	0.13	0.11	0.09	0.94
Purchase Intention	0.28	0.32	0.4	0.26
Willingness to Pay	0.25	0.28	0.38	0.29

Source: Primary Data

relationship with the idea of social and environmental duty. According to this, customers are more likely to see companies favorably in terms of their commitment to social and environmental responsibility when such firms have a significant focus on sustainability.

Factor 2: Trustworthiness
Variables like Trustworthiness (0.94) and Brand Reputation (0.92) have high loadings on Factor 2, indicating that these variables are strongly associated with trustworthiness.

This suggests that consumers trust brands that have a positive brand reputation and are perceived as trustworthy.

Factor 3: Fashionability
Variables such as Fashionability (0.91) and Trendiness (0.88) have high loadings on Factor 3, indicating that these variables are strongly associated with fashionability. This suggests that consumers perceive brands as trendy when they offer stylish and up-to-date apparel options.

Factor 4: Quality

High loadings on Factor 4 indicate a significant correlation with quality for variables like Quality (0.96) and Durability (0.94). This shows that customers have a more favorable opinion of firms that offer sturdy, high-quality goods.

Factor 5: Purchase Intention and Financial Capacity

Purchase Intention (0.40) and Willingness to Pay (0.38), which both have modest loadings across several factors, may be impacted by a variety of variables, including environmental and social responsibility, reliability, fashion-ability, and quality. This suggests that several variables work together to influence customers' buying intentions and willingness to pay rather than just one component acting alone.

Overall, the findings from the factor analysis reveal the underlying dimensions influencing consumer perceptions in the luxury apparel industry. Brands that emphasize environmental and social responsibility, trustworthiness, fashionability, and quality are likely to have a positive impact on consumer perceptions, purchase intentions, and willingness to pay.

H01: No significant difference exists in mean perception scores between sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands.

HA1:There is a significant gap in mean perception scores of sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands.

Based on the results of the independent samples t-test, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the average perception ratings of sustainable luxury clothing brands and non-sustainable luxury clothing brands

(t(298)=10.57, p>0.001). The mean perception score for sustainable luxury clothing companies (M=3.12, SD=0.81) was significantly higher. These results support the alternative hypothesis, suggesting a meaningful distinction in perception ratings between sustainable and non-sustainable luxury clothing labelsAs a result, the null hypothesis is rejected.

H02: No significant difference exists in mean purchasing intention scores between sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands.

HA2:There is a significant difference in mean purchasing intention scores between sustain-able and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands.

According to the results of the independent samples t-test, the mean purchasing intention scores for sustainable luxury clothing brands were found to be significantly higher than those for non-sustainable luxury apparel brands (M=2.92, SD=0.83, t(298)=8.31, p0.001). These results provide credence to the alternative hypothesis by indicating a significant difference in mean purchase intention scores between luxury apparel labels that are sustainable and those that are not. Consequently, rather than accepting the null hypothesis, the alternative hypothesis might be used.

H03: There is a significant relationship exists between sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands with regard to purchase intention.

HA3: There is no significant relationship exists between sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands with regard to purchase intention.

Table 5: Independent Samples t-Test for Perception Scores

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Sustainable Luxury Apparel Brands	3.92	0.72	10.57	<0.001
Non-Sustainable Luxury Apparel Brands	3.12	0.81		

Source: Primary Data

Table 6: Independent Samples t-Test for Purchase Intention Scores

	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Sustainable Luxury Apparel Brands	3.75	0.87	8.31	<0.001
Non-Sustainable Luxury Apparel Brands	2.92	0.83		

Source: Primary Data

Table 7: Correlation Analysis

	Perception Score	Purchase Intention Score	Correlation Coefficient	p-value
Sustainable Luxury Brands	4.28	4.12	0.54	0.032
Non-sustainable Luxury Brands	3.96	4.06	0.32	0.128

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The correlation analysis found a strong association (r = 0.54; p 0.05) between consumers' perceptions of sustainable luxury goods and their intentions to purchase them. For premium non-sustainable enterprises, however, the correlation is not statistically significant (r = 0.32, p > 0.05).

Findings: The data show a strong correlation between customer views of sustainable luxury products and their intentions to buy them. For non-sustainable luxury brands, however, there is no statistically significant correlation between impressions and intent to buy.

H4: There is no significant difference exists in the mean perception and purchasing intention scores among the different factors of sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands.

HA4: There is a significant difference in the mean perception and purchasing intention scores among the different factors of sustainable and non-sustainable luxury apparel brands.

The t-value and p-value from the t-tests, as well as the mean perception and buy intention ratings for sustainable and non-sustainable luxury clothing companies, are summarised in the above table. The findings indicate a substantial difference between the two groups in terms of mean impression and buy intention ratings, with sustainable luxury clothes brands scoring better than non-sustainable ones.

According to the regression analysis in Table 4, sustainable luxury clothes companies significantly increase customers' likelihood to make purchases (r = 0.372, p 0.01) and have a favorable impact on buying intentions.

Conclusion

According to this study, there is a considerable correlation between consumer views and purchase

**Table 8: Comparison of Mean Scores for Sustainable and
Non-sustainable Luxury Apparel Brands**

Variable	Sustainable	Non-sustainable	t-value	p-value
Perception	4.2	3.5	3.23	<0.001
Purchase Intention	4	3.2	2.87	0.005

Source: Primary Data

Table 9: Regression Analysis

	Coefficient	SE	t	p
Constant	2.538	0.105	24.134	0
Sustainable Luxury	0.372	0.057	6.495	0
Non-Sustainable Luxury	-0.119	0.061	-1.947	0.052

Source: Primary Data

intentions for luxury garment labels that are both sustainable and non-sustainable. Customers are more likely to have good buying intentions for sustainable luxury clothes businesses if they believe that these companies are trustworthy, trendy, high-quality, and have a strong brand association. Consumers are also more likely to have good purchase intentions if they are prepared to spend more for sustainable luxury clothes companies and think that doing so would benefit society, the environment, and their self-image.

The results of this study have ramifications for luxury clothes manufacturers since they imply that highlighting their items' sustainability and social responsibility in addition to their quality and brand association may enhance consumers' propensity to make purchases. Luxury firms should, however, take care to make sure that their sustainability claims are reliable and supported by data since customers are becoming more wary of greenwashing and deceptive marketing techniques.

Future studies might examine the efficacy of various marketing plans for luxury garment firms that are committed to sustainability as well as how various sustainability communication techniques affect consumer views and intents to buy. It would also be intriguing to look at how different cultural settings and demographic groupings affect consumers' views of and intentions to buy sustainable luxury fashion businesses.

Future Recommendations

Increasing Focus on Sustainability
According to the survey, customers see sustainable luxury clothes businesses favorably, and this viewpoint is linked to stronger purchase intentions. There-fore, luxury clothes companies might gain by putting more of an emphasis on sustainability, such as by supporting ethical labor practices, employing eco-friendly materials, and cutting waste.

Communicating Sustainability Efforts
Consumers place a high value on actions that are socially and environmentally responsible, according to the report. As a result, luxury clothes companies should inform customers about their sustainable initiatives through marketing campaigns, labeling, and social media.

Pricing Strategies
According to the survey, customers are more prepared to pay for luxury clothing labels that are sustainable as opposed to those that are not. To represent the value produced by sustainable practices, luxury clothes businesses should employ pricing strategies, such as charging more for sustainable goods.

Continued Research

While this survey offers insightful information on customer attitudes and buying intentions for sustainable luxury goods manufacturers, more investigation is required to fully investigate this issue. The effectiveness of various sustainability plans, the impact of pricing strategies on consumer behavior, and the contribution of other factors like product design and brand reputation might all be examined in future studies.

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