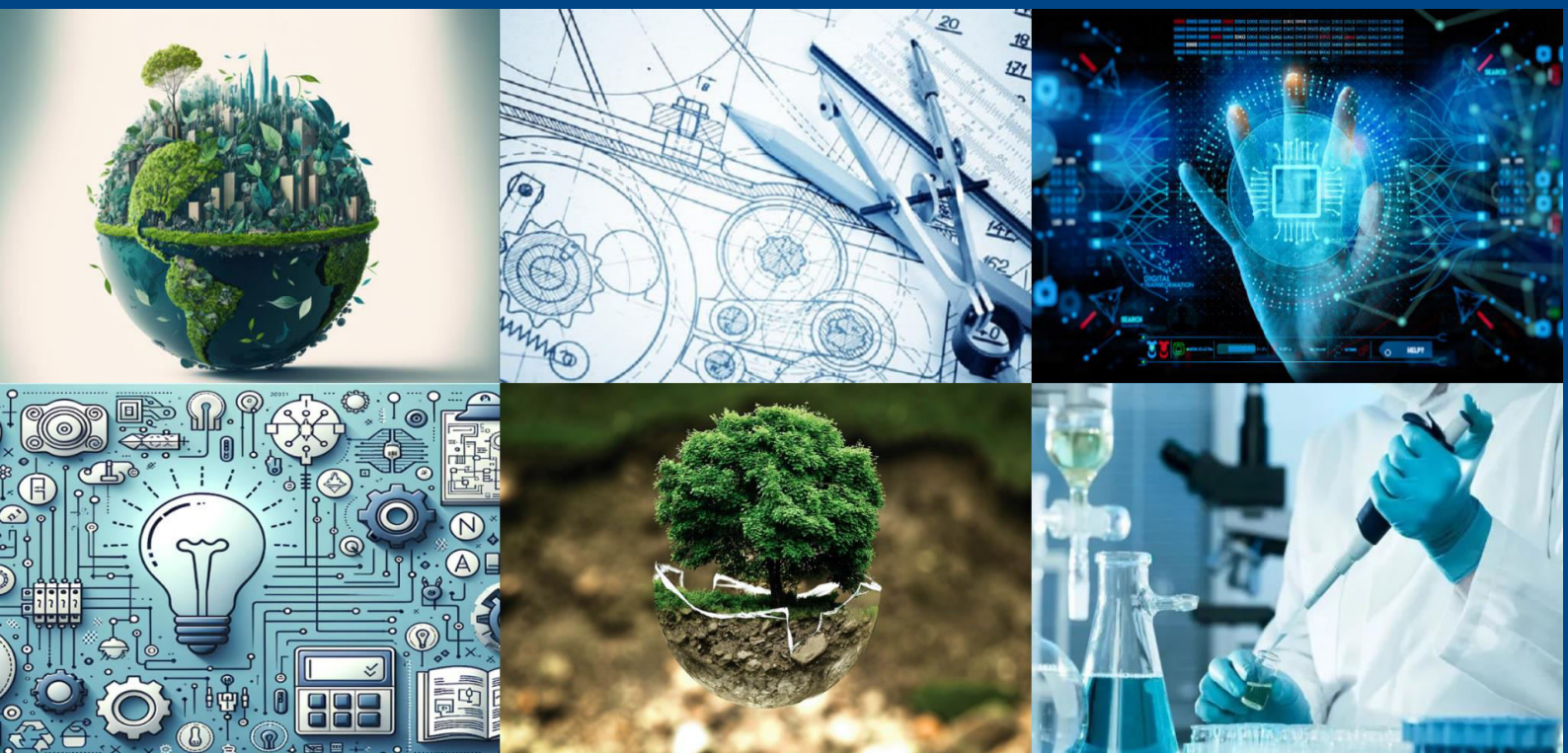




International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)



Impact Factor: 8.206

Volume 9, Issue 4, April 2026



International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

Impact of Sustainability Understanding on Luxury Purchase Intention among Generation Z and Baby Boomers

Sara Ayman, Suparna Ghosal

MBA Student, CMS Business School, Faculty of Management Studies, JAIN (Deemed-to-be-University),
Bengaluru, India

Professor, CMS Business School, Faculty of Management Studies, JAIN (Deemed-to-be-University), Bengaluru, India

ABSTRACT:

Purpose:

This study examines sustainability understanding among luxury consumers and its influence on consumer attitude, purchase intention, and willingness to pay for sustainable luxury products. It further compares behavioural responses between Generation Z and Baby Boomers to identify generational differences in sustainable luxury consumption. As sustainability becomes increasingly integrated into luxury brand strategies, the study develops a conceptual framework to evaluate both direct and mediated relationships among the key constructs.

Design/methodology/approach:

A quantitative research design was adopted using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. Data were collected from 400 respondents equally representing Generation Z and Baby Boomers. Statistical techniques including reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, independent sample t-tests, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and mediation testing were applied to examine the proposed relationships and validate the conceptual model.

Findings:

The findings indicate that sustainability understanding significantly influences consumer attitude toward sustainable luxury brands, while its direct impact on purchase intention is comparatively weaker. Consumer attitude emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase intention, highlighting the importance of emotional engagement and brand perception in sustainable luxury consumption. Generation Z demonstrated higher sustainability awareness, more favourable attitudes, and greater willingness to pay a premium than Baby Boomers, although the differences were moderate. Mediation analysis confirmed that consumer attitude partially mediates the relationship between sustainability understanding and purchase intention.

Originality/value:

The study contributes to sustainable luxury literature by integrating cognitive and attitudinal pathways within a unified generational framework, offering practical insights for luxury brands seeking to align sustainability initiatives with evolving consumer expectations.

KEYWORDS: Sustainable luxury, sustainability understanding, consumer attitude, purchase intention, generational differences.

I. INTRODUCTION

The global marketplace is undergoing a significant shift as sustainability becomes central to consumer decision-making and corporate strategy. Growing concerns around climate change, environmental degradation, and social inequality have pushed businesses to integrate ethical and sustainable practices into their core operations. As a result, sustainability has evolved from a peripheral responsibility to a key determinant of brand credibility, consumer trust, and long-term competitiveness (Jackson, 2014). This transformation is particularly evident in the luxury sector, where brands are redefining traditional notions of exclusivity and prestige by incorporating sustainable materials, ethical



International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

sourcing, and transparent production processes. Rather than diminishing luxury value, such practices increasingly enhance perceptions of quality, innovation, and authenticity (Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2020).

The emergence of sustainable luxury consumption reflects a broader shift in consumer values, where status is associated not only with ownership but also with responsible and conscious purchasing. Consumers now seek products that combine superior craftsmanship with minimal environmental and social impact (Testa et al., 2021). However, these preferences vary significantly across generations. Generation Z demonstrates strong environmental awareness, demands corporate transparency, and is more likely to align purchasing decisions with sustainability values (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Deloitte, 2023). In contrast, Baby Boomers tend to prioritise product quality, durability, and brand heritage, with sustainability playing a more secondary, though increasingly relevant, role (Hwang & Kim, 2018).

Despite the growing importance of sustainability in luxury markets, limited research has comparatively examined generational differences in sustainable luxury consumption. Existing studies often address sustainability or luxury independently, leaving a gap in understanding how sustainability perceptions influence purchasing behaviour across cohorts. Addressing this gap is essential for both academic and managerial perspectives, as it enables a deeper understanding of evolving consumer behaviour and supports the development of targeted strategies. This study therefore explores sustainable luxury consumption across Generation Z and Baby Boomers, providing insights into how sustainability understanding shapes attitudes and purchasing decisions in the luxury sector.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The relationship between luxury and sustainability, once considered contradictory, is increasingly viewed as complementary when sustainability enhances core luxury values such as quality, craftsmanship, and exclusivity (Kunz, 2018; Wang et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2023). Sustainable luxury consumption reflects a shift in consumer preferences toward products that combine premium value with ethical sourcing and environmental responsibility. However, sustainability alone does not consistently drive purchasing behaviour unless it strengthens perceived product value, highlighting the complexity of consumer decision-making in this domain (Grauel, 2025).

Consumer behaviour studies indicate that while attitudes toward sustainability are generally positive, actual purchase behaviour is constrained by barriers such as high prices, limited availability, scepticism toward sustainability claims, and lack of consumer knowledge (Belz & Peattie, 2009; Brandão, 2022; Schiaroli et al., 2024). This gap between awareness and action underscores the importance of sustainability understanding, as deeper comprehension has been shown to enhance trust, perceived quality, and purchase intention (Wang et al., 2021; Brandão, 2022).

Generational differences further shape sustainable luxury consumption. Generation Z demonstrates strong environmental concern and preference for ethical brands, yet often exhibits an attitude-behaviour gap influenced by price sensitivity and brand factors (Palomo-Domínguez et al., 2023; D'Acunto, 2025). In contrast, Baby Boomers prioritise traditional luxury attributes such as durability and heritage, with sustainability acting as a secondary consideration (Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2019; Edberg, 2025).

Overall, existing literature highlights that sustainability understanding plays a critical role in shaping attitudes, purchase intention, and willingness to pay, particularly when aligned with perceived luxury value. However, limited research integrates generational perspectives, indicating a need for further empirical investigation into how different cohorts interpret and act upon sustainable luxury concepts.

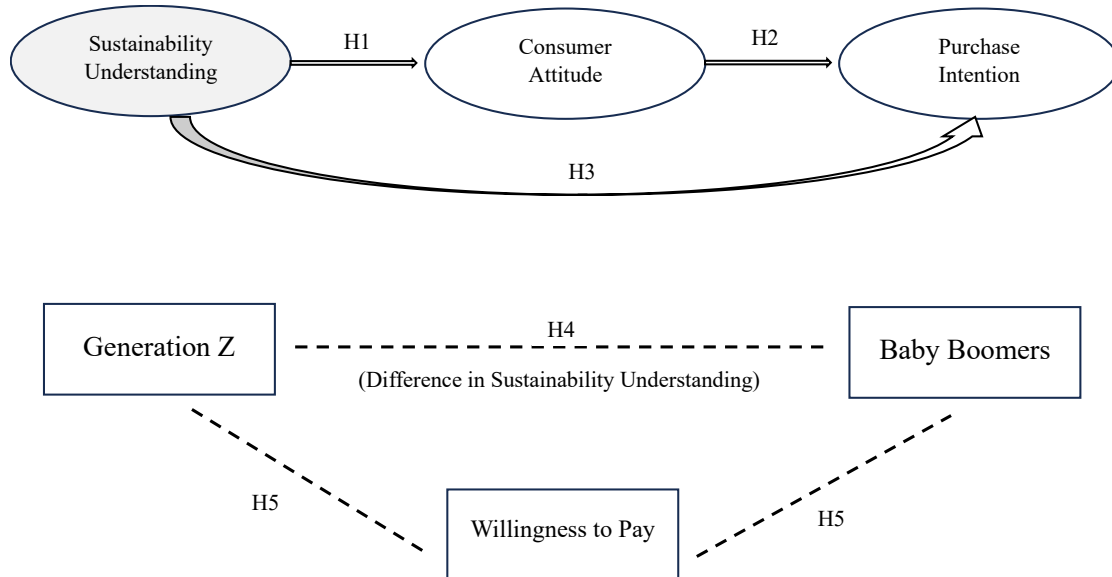
- H1. There is a significant difference in sustainability understanding between Generation Z and Baby Boomers.
- H2. Sustainability understanding is positively associated with attitudes toward sustainable luxury brands.
- H3. Sustainability understanding is positively associated with purchase intention for sustainable luxury products.
- H4. There is a significant difference between Generation Z and Baby Boomers in willingness to pay a premium for sustainable luxury products.
- H5. Consumer attitude toward sustainable luxury brands mediates the relationship between sustainability understanding and purchase intention.



International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

Proposed Research Model



III. METHODOLOGY AND MEASUREMENT

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional, and comparative research design to examine sustainable luxury consumption across Generation Z and Baby Boomers. The design allows for the systematic measurement of sustainability understanding and its influence on consumer attitudes, purchase intention, and willingness to pay. The research is both descriptive and explanatory, as it not only assesses consumer perceptions but also tests causal relationships between key variables. A survey-based approach is employed, supported by a positivist paradigm and a deductive method, enabling hypothesis testing using statistical techniques. The comparative framework is particularly important, as it highlights generational differences in sustainability-driven consumption behaviour.

Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of closed-ended and Likert-scale questions. Data collection is carried out through both online platforms such as Google Forms and offline locations including malls and luxury retail environments, ensuring diversity in responses. A stratified purposive sampling technique is used to ensure equal representation of Generation Z and Baby Boomers, resulting in a total sample size of 400 respondents. The study includes sustainability understanding as the independent variable, while attitude, purchase intention, and willingness to pay serve as dependent variables. Consumer attitude is also examined as a mediating variable. Measurement scales are adapted from existing research, and reliability is confirmed using Cronbach’s alpha, with all constructs exceeding acceptable thresholds.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND KEY FINDINGS

The analysis begins with descriptive statistics, which indicate that consumers possess a moderate level of sustainability understanding, with an overall mean of approximately 3.5. Respondents demonstrate greater awareness of general sustainability concepts and ethical practices, while their understanding of technical aspects such as certifications and eco-labels remains comparatively lower. This suggests that although sustainability messaging is widespread, deeper comprehension is still developing among consumers.

Consumer attitudes toward sustainable luxury brands are generally positive, with a mean close to 4.0. This indicates that sustainability enhances brand perception, attractiveness, and emotional appeal. However, while consumers appreciate sustainability initiatives, it does not always translate into strong personal satisfaction or behavioural commitment. Purchase intention is also moderately positive, with a mean of approximately 3.7, suggesting that sustainability influences buying decisions but is not the sole determining factor. Other variables such as price, brand image, and personal preferences continue to play a significant role in shaping consumer choices.



International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

Generational comparison reveals statistically significant differences between Generation Z and Baby Boomers. Generation Z demonstrates higher levels of sustainability understanding, more favourable attitudes, and stronger purchase intention. However, the differences are moderate rather than extreme, indicating that sustainability is gaining relevance across both cohorts. Similarly, willingness to pay a premium for sustainable luxury products is higher among Generation Z, though both groups exhibit sensitivity to price. These findings suggest that while younger consumers are more sustainability-driven, older consumers are also gradually adapting to sustainability trends.

Relationships Between Variables

Correlation analysis shows that sustainability understanding has a moderate positive relationship with consumer attitude and a weaker but significant relationship with purchase intention and willingness to pay. Notably, consumer attitude exhibits the strongest relationship with purchase intention, highlighting its central role in influencing buying behaviour. Regression analysis further confirms that sustainability understanding significantly predicts consumer attitude, explaining a meaningful proportion of variance. When predicting purchase intention, both sustainability understanding and attitude are significant; however, attitude emerges as the dominant predictor.

Mediation analysis reveals that consumer attitude partially mediates the relationship between sustainability understanding and purchase intention. This indicates that sustainability knowledge influences purchasing behaviour primarily by shaping positive perceptions and trust toward sustainable luxury brands, rather than directly driving purchase decisions.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Sustainability Understanding	5	0.82
Attitude toward Sustainable Luxury	5	0.85
Purchase Intention	4	0.81
Willingness to Pay	3	0.72

All constructs demonstrate acceptable to good reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming internal consistency of the measurement scales.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sustainability Understanding	3.53	0.84
Attitude toward Sustainable Luxury	3.97	0.72
Purchase Intention	3.71	0.83
Willingness to Pay	3.40	0.75

The results indicate moderate sustainability understanding among consumers, while attitudes toward sustainable luxury are highly positive. Purchase intention and willingness to pay show moderate levels, suggesting that sustainability influences but does not fully determine consumer behaviour.

Table 3: Generational Comparison (t-test)

Variable	Baby Boomers Mean	Gen Z Mean	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
Sustainability Understanding	3.33	3.75	4.21	0.000
Attitude	3.58	3.85	3.31	0.001
Purchase Intention	3.50	3.76	3.25	0.001
Willingness to Pay	3.22	3.58	3.47	0.001

The results show statistically significant differences between Generation Z and Baby Boomers across all variables ($p < 0.05$). Generation Z demonstrates higher sustainability understanding, more positive attitudes, stronger purchase intention, and greater willingness to pay a premium, although differences remain moderate.



International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

Table 4: Correlation Matrix

Variable	SU	Attitude	Purchase Intention	Willingness to Pay
Sustainability Understanding	1.00	0.45	0.33	0.28
Attitude	0.45	1.00	0.62	0.41
Purchase Intention	0.33	0.62	1.00	0.46
Willingness to Pay	0.28	0.41	0.46	1.00

All variables are positively correlated. Sustainability understanding shows a moderate relationship with attitude and weaker relationships with purchase intention and willingness to pay. Attitude exhibits the strongest relationship with purchase intention, indicating its critical role in influencing consumer behaviour.

Table 5: Regression Analysis (Purchase Intention Model)

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig.
Constant	1.05	0.24	—	4.38	0.000
Sustainability Understanding	0.19	0.06	0.17	3.17	0.002
Consumer Attitude	0.56	0.05	0.58	11.32	0.000

$R^2 = 0.43$

Both sustainability understanding and consumer attitude significantly influence purchase intention. However, consumer attitude is the strongest predictor, indicating that perceptions and emotional responses play a more dominant role than knowledge alone.

Mediation Result

Mediation analysis indicates that consumer attitude partially mediates the relationship between sustainability understanding and purchase intention. The direct effect of sustainability understanding decreases when attitude is included in the model, confirming that sustainability knowledge primarily influences purchase behaviour through shaping positive brand perceptions.

Overall Interpretation

The findings suggest that sustainability understanding alone is insufficient to drive sustainable luxury consumption. Instead, its impact is largely indirect and operates through consumer attitudes. Emotional and perceptual engagement with sustainable luxury brands plays a more critical role than knowledge alone in influencing purchase behaviour. While Generation Z demonstrates stronger sustainability orientation, the relatively small differences across generations indicate a broader shift toward sustainability in luxury markets. However, traditional factors such as price, quality, and brand image continue to influence consumer decisions, highlighting the need for luxury brands to integrate sustainability without compromising core value propositions.

V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study finds that luxury consumers exhibit a moderate level of sustainability understanding, with stronger awareness of environmental practices than social sustainability aspects such as ethical labour and supply chain transparency. Generation Z demonstrates significantly higher sustainability understanding than Baby Boomers; however, the difference is moderate, indicating that sustainability awareness is expanding across all age groups. Consumer attitudes toward sustainable luxury are generally positive, with sustainability enhancing brand perception and credibility across generations. Purchase intention toward sustainable luxury products is moderately positive, suggesting that while sustainability influences consumer decisions, it does not dominate them. Traditional luxury attributes such as quality, craftsmanship, and brand prestige remain primary drivers. Similarly, willingness to pay a premium is higher among Generation Z but remains moderate overall, indicating persistent price sensitivity.

The findings further reveal that sustainability understanding has a moderate positive impact on consumer attitude but a weaker direct effect on purchase intention. Consumer attitude emerges as the strongest predictor of buying behaviour, confirming that emotional engagement and brand perception play a more critical role than knowledge alone. Mediation analysis shows that attitude partially mediates the relationship between sustainability understanding and purchase



International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

intention, indicating that sustainability knowledge primarily influences behaviour through shaping positive brand perceptions.

Theoretically, the study supports the view that sustainability acts as a value-enhancing attribute rather than a replacement for traditional luxury drivers, aligning with the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the attitude–behaviour gap in sustainable consumption. Managerially, the results highlight the importance of transparent communication, emotional branding, and value-based pricing strategies to effectively integrate sustainability into luxury markets.

VI. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study examined sustainability understanding among luxury consumers and its influence on attitudes, purchase intention, and willingness to pay across Generation Z and Baby Boomers. The findings indicate that consumers possess a moderate level of sustainability understanding, with stronger awareness of environmental initiatives than social responsibility practices. Generation Z demonstrates higher awareness and more favourable attitudes; however, the differences are moderate, suggesting that sustainability is becoming increasingly relevant across all age groups. Consumer attitude emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase intention, confirming that sustainability influences behaviour primarily through shaping positive brand perceptions rather than directly driving purchases. While sustainability enhances brand value, traditional luxury attributes such as quality, craftsmanship, and brand reputation remain central to decision-making. Overall, sustainability functions as a value-enhancing factor rather than a primary driver, and brands that successfully integrate ethical practices with strong brand experiences are more likely to achieve long-term competitive advantage.

Future research can extend this study by including additional generational cohorts such as Millennials and Generation X to provide a more comprehensive comparison. Sector-specific studies in industries like fashion, hospitality, or automobiles could offer deeper insights into sustainability within different luxury contexts. Incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews may further explore consumer motivations and emotional drivers. Cross-cultural research would help understand regional differences in sustainability perceptions, while longitudinal studies could track how attitudes and behaviours evolve over time, providing a clearer picture of the future of sustainable luxury consumption.

REFERENCES

1. Abdelmeguid, A. (2024). Insights into sustainability and circular economy trends in luxury fashion. *Journal of Textile and Apparel Technology and Management*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666784324000615>
2. Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behaviour. *Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211.
3. Belz, F.-M., & Peattie, K. (2009). *Sustainability marketing: A global perspective*. Wiley.
4. Chang, W. Y., & Lee, J. Y. (2022). Sustainable luxury consumers' preferences and segments. *Sustainability*, 14(15), 9551. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14159551>
5. D'Acunto, D. (2025). The Gen Z attitude–behaviour gap in sustainability-framed electronic word-of-mouth. *Journal of Business Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2025.01.024>
6. First Insight. (2023). Gen Z shoppers demand sustainability: Willingness to pay more for sustainable products (Industry white paper). <https://www.firstinsight.com/white-papers-posts/gen-z-shoppers-demand-sustainability>
7. Grauel, C. (2025). Sustainability preferences of luxury consumers: Is all that glitters green? *SN Business & Economics*, 5. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s43093-025-00561-3>
8. Gomes, S. (2023). Willingness to pay more for green products: A critical exploration of Generation Z determinants. *Journal of Cleaner Production*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959652623002500>
9. Henninger, C. E., Alevizou, P. J., & Oates, C. J. (2016). What is slow fashion? *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-07-2015-0061>
10. Kapferer, J.-N., & Michaut-Denizeau, A. (2020). Luxury and sustainability: A common future? *Journal of Brand Management*. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41262-019-00165-7>
11. Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management (15th ed.)*. Pearson.
12. Palomo-Domínguez, I., Elías-Zambrano, R., & Álvarez-Rodríguez, V. (2023). Gen Z's motivations towards sustainable fashion and eco-friendly brand attributes: The case of Vinted. *Sustainability*, 15(11), 8753. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15118753>



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

| Mobile No: +91-6381907438 | Whatsapp: +91-6381907438 | ijmrset@gmail.com |

www.ijmrset.com