

UNDERSTANDING GENERATION Z'S ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE FASHION: A SCOPING REVIEW

Rachel A. Burger, Keiser University, West Palm Beach, Florida, U.S.A.

[dx.doi.org/10.18374/IJSM-24-1.5](https://doi.org/10.18374/IJSM-24-1.5)

ABSTRACT

Background: Generation Z (Gen Z), born between 1995 and 2012 (Balińska et al., 2024), is emerging as a key demographic in shaping sustainable fashion trends. Their purchasing decisions are influenced by environmental consciousness, digital engagement, and economic factors. As digital natives, they use social media to discover trends and expect transparency from brands. However, there is often a gap between their sustainability ideals and actual purchasing behavior. The objective of this scoping review is to examine the factors influencing Gen Z's engagement with sustainable fashion, identify barriers to adoption, and explore the role of digital platforms in shaping their consumption patterns. Additionally, it aims to provide actionable insights for retailers looking to engage this demographic effectively.

Methods: This scoping review followed a structured approach to collate and synthesize existing research on Gen Z's attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion. Relevant studies published between 2021 and 2024 were sourced from ProQuest. The review focused on factors driving sustainable consumption, digital influences, economic considerations, and barriers faced by Gen Z. The research questions include: What factors most significantly influence Gen Z's purchasing decisions towards sustainable fashion? How does the influence of social media and digital platforms contribute to the value-action gap observed in Gen Z's sustainable fashion consumption? What strategies can retailers implement to bridge the gap between Gen Z's stated preference for sustainability and their actual purchasing behavior, particularly in the context of affordability and brand transparency?

Results: The findings indicate that Gen Z demonstrates a strong preference for sustainability and ethical consumption but often struggles to translate this into consistent purchasing behavior due to economic constraints and the appeal of affordable fast fashion. Social media plays a significant role in shaping their fashion choices, with influencers impacting their perceptions of brands. Barriers such as the higher costs of sustainable products and limited knowledge impede their adoption of eco-friendly practices.

Conclusions: Gen Z's approach to sustainable fashion is shaped by a mix of environmental values, economic realities, and digital influences. To effectively engage this demographic, retailers must offer affordable, transparent, and accessible sustainable options. Addressing the value-action gap and leveraging digital platforms for authentic communication are crucial strategies for success.

Keywords: Generation Z, Gen Z, characteristics, sustainable fashion, sustainability, fast fashion, digital engagement, value-action gap, consumer behavior, social media influence, economic barriers, transparency, motivations

1. INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry faces growing scrutiny for its environmental impact, and Generation Z (Gen Z), born between 1995 and 2012, emerges as a key demographic influencing sustainable consumption trends. Characterized as digital natives with heightened environmental awareness, Gen Z's approach to fashion is shaped by a combination of ethical considerations, economic constraints, and the influence of social media (Balińska et al., 2024).

This scoping review examines the extent to which Gen Z engages in sustainable fashion practices, their motivations, the challenges they encounter, and the implications for retailers aiming to attract this demographic.