

Consumer Buying Behaviour in Sustainable Luxury Fashion

Sanjana Rohatgi

Abstract

The purpose of this research paper on sustainability in luxury fashion is to analyse the current state of how each gender has a different purchasing behaviour in terms of sustainability practises in luxury fashion, identify challenges, and contribute to a larger discussion on the role of luxury fashion in shaping a more sustainable and equitable global fashion industry. Chi-square test has been used to determine how gender influences the sustainability of luxury fashion. The two variables in this case are luxury fashion sustainability and gender. To achieve this objective, a primary survey was conducted with a sample of 124 participants who were divided into gender group namely female, male, others and prefer not to say.

In this research paper it was found out using data analysis based on the primary survey of 124 respondents on how often do people purchase luxury fashion products that are marketed as sustainable or eco-friendly based on gender. As seen in the table 1, 64% percentage of men always purchase fashion products that are marketed as sustainable, which is 29% more than women. 56% of the of the men never buy luxury goods that are more sustainable compared to 44% women who never buy sustainable goods. 53% of women sometimes purchase fashion products that are marketed as sustainable than 47% of the men. The same has been depicted in chart 1. It can be found out that overall men purchase more sustainable goods than women

Keywords: sustainability, luxury fashion, purchasing behavior, gender differences, Chi-square test, eco-friendly products, consumer behavior

I. Introduction

The current and modern time fashion industry was founded by Charles Fredrick Worth, who is "generally regarded as the father of contemporary couture" (Bhandari et al., 2022). Today, more than a century after Worth's founding, wearing stylish clothing has become a significant means of self-expression. Fashion retailers ignore sustainability and produce at an incredible rate to meet demand, even in the face of serious environmental, economic, and social concerns produced by the industry.

The idea of sustainable development was first presented by the UN in 1987. Its goal is to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. Achieving sustainability on the fronts of the environment, economy, and society is the aim of sustainable development. This definition defines sustainable fashion as the process of creating clothes, obtaining materials ethically, and wearing it all while preserving the environment. With Patagonia using organic cotton for their apparel in 1996 and Esprit releasing its E-collection in November 1991, this may be seen as the start of commercial eco-fashion in the 1990s.

Both brands mirror the current movements regarding the environmental aspect of sustainable fashion (Hayhurst & Szto, 2016). Sustainable fashion depends on a well-balanced approach to fashion manufacturing, which emphasizes transparency, local production growth, and the facilitation of long-term relationships. Despite the increased focus

given to the social sustainability component, consumer buying behaviour has not altered significantly. Consumer buying behaviour (CBB) refers to the behaviours, procedures, or routines that customers in a market environment follow before (and after) making a purchase of a good or service. Consumer buying behaviour is the outcome of these attitudes, preferences, intents, and decisions. When it comes to purchasing behaviour, various factors such as cultural, societal, personal, and psychological variables can have an impact. The influence of cultural variables on consumer behaviour is the greatest. Subcultures are seen as cultural influences because they are made up of various ethnicities, religions, racial groups, and geographical regions. Family, group, social roles, and status are examples of social determinants of health. Gender, age, occupation, financial condition, personality, way of life, and self-concept are examples of personal aspects. Beliefs, learning, motivation, perception, attitudes, and attitudes are examples of psychological variables. The transition from conventional CBB to sustainable CBB models, however, presents numerous obstacles and difficulties that must be noted and taken into consideration. The prospects, barriers, and models of sustainability in the fashion sector have been explored and emphasised in certain research (Tran, 2022), but these studies have generally concentrated on the topic of impulse buying rather than specifically highlighting sustainable CBB. Additionally, past studies on sustainable sourcing have concentrated on the apparel sector. An additional target area has been a specific international region, such as the UK, India, Africa, Vietnam, etc (Nayak et al., 2019). Like the previous study, other studies (Moretto et al., 2018) have attempted to shed light on the practises of the global fashion industry, focusing more on the benefits of sustainable design and models than on CBB, which is thought to be the primary prerequisite for achieving sustainability in the fashion industry. There is a void in the sustainability body of information, nonetheless, about

the obstacles that could prevent CBB in the fashion business. By identifying hurdles and assessing them using a survey-based study that was conducted among a variety of consumers and who contributed to assess their significance in the fashion industry, this paper fills this gap in the literature.

II. Research Questions

The study intends to address the following research topics in this context:

1. How often do you purchase luxury fashion products that are marketed as sustainable or eco-friendly?
2. In comparison to luxury fashion items that are not sustainable, are you willing to spend more for sustainable items?

III. Research Objectives

The aim is to understand consumer buying behaviour with respect to sustainable luxury products.

Investigating customer attitudes, preferences, and decision-making processes based on their gender when purchasing sustainable luxury fashion items is part of the study goal of understanding consumer buying behaviour about such products. In order to understand how consumer behaviour towards sustainable luxury fashion items is influenced, as well as how much customers are ready to spend more for sustainable luxury fashion products than for non-sustainable luxury fashion products, this study purpose attempts to discover the elements that impact consumer behaviour.

To achieve the goals of this study, researchers may use a range of research methods, such as focus groups, questionnaires, interviews, and observation. These techniques may be used to gather qualitative as well as quantitative information on customer attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviours pertaining to sustainable luxury fashion items.

Specific objective that will be explored are:

To ascertain the extent of customer knowledge and comprehension of sustainable luxury fashion products, as well as

to pinpoint the variables that affect this knowledge.

Discover the personal traits of customers who are most likely to be interested in these products, as well as the elements that impact consumers' intents to buy sustainable luxury fashion products.

IV. Research Hypothesis

1. Null Hypothesis: Consumer Buying Behaviour is not affected by gender.
2. Alternate Hypothesis: Consumer Buying Behaviour is affected by gender.

V. Conceptual Framework

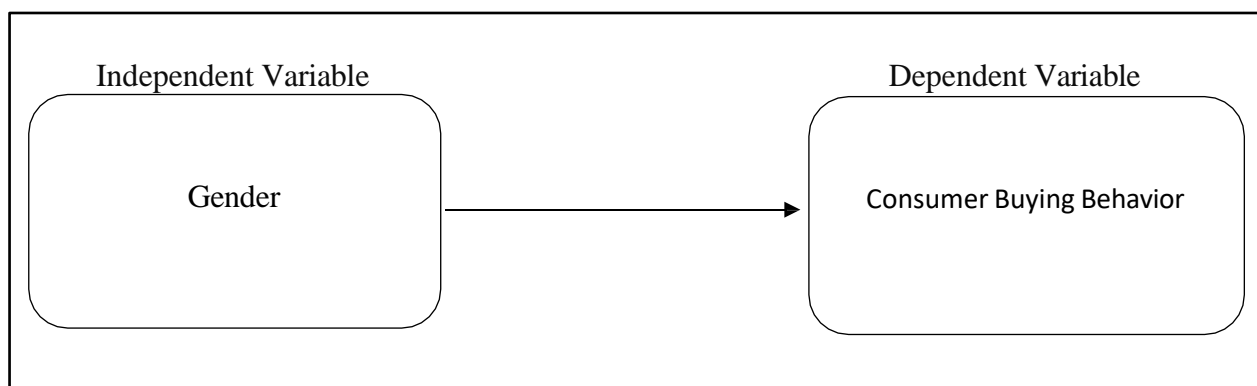


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

VI. Data Sources

In this work, primary data is used and gathered via snowball sampling. Snowball sampling consists of selecting initial volunteers based on their availability followed by asking them to suggest more possible participants to the research, resulting in a snowball effect.

One of the benefits of employing this strategy is its low cost, as it avoids the need for substantial promotion or recruitment efforts, which may be costly. It can also save time since the original volunteers can suggest others to the research, lowering the time needed on recruiting efforts.

As referrals can come from a number of sources, snowball sampling allows for a varied sample of participants, including people with distinctive views or experiences. In the study, data was collected from people of different ages, with the youngest being 12 years old and the oldest being 56 years old. This strategy can also aid in the development of trust between the researcher and the participants, as the original participants can attest to the researcher's objectives and validity.

Finally, because participants may suggest individuals who have unique viewpoints or experiences relating to the study issue, snowball sampling might result in the collection of extensive and thorough data.

VII. Research Design

In this article, single cross-sectional research design is used. A possible rationale for using this design is the fact that it is a cheaper alternative to longitudinal research as it does not require data gathering over time. It is also more efficient since data can be obtained from every respondent at once. Furthermore, this form is appropriate for representing the distribution of a phenomena at a certain moment in time and developing hypotheses regarding variable connections. It may also be used to compare groups and recognise variances or similarities in the occurrence of events across multiple categories such as age, gender, and socioeconomic level. Finally, because the data is collected at a single moment in time, cross-sectional studies are easier to analyse. This eliminates the possibility for confounding variables that may develop in other study designs.

VIII. Methodology

In this study, research data are used to find out how gender, age, the eco-friendliness of products, and how people feel about a brand affect the long-term success of the luxury fashion business. To do this, a message was sent to each recipient inviting them to take part in the study. In the invitation message, the purpose of the study was told to the respondents, and it was made clear that the data would be kept anonymous. Participants were asked to fill out the survey package after offering written informed consent by opening the link handed. This research was carried out using Google Forms. Multiple responses per individual during the study interval were prohibited to prevent repeated system access. As this is a study based on the consumer purchase behaviour of luxury products, a snowball sampling design was used to obtain responses.

Study Sample

In Figure 2, 61 respondents (49.2%) were Female and 60 respondents (48.4%) were of the Male gender identity. The average age for females were 25.2742 years and for Males it was 24.483 years. Youngest participant was of 12 years of age and the oldest was 56 years of age.

Research Methodology

There is a lack of awareness amongst people for sustainable consumption of clothing products (Park & Lee, 2021). Sustainable consumption has not been talked about in detail or explored in terms of ideas. Instead, it is based on the idea of sustainable growth, which is hard to define or explain because it is based on the everyday actions of consumers. It is tough to develop a definition of sustainability that can be used across several disciplines because each study on sustainable consumption offers a unique definition of what it is sustainable. (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/jid.1384>, n.d.). Luxury fashion focuses on things like longevity, sturdiness, authenticity, a unique design aesthetic, craftsmanship, and quality. Because of this, it is easier to think of it as being more sustainable (Ozdamar-ertekin, 2019). However, the non-abundance of sustainable raw materials is a problem, as (<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/fashions-new-must-have-sustainable-sourcing-at-scale>, n.d.) show that only 1% of new items sold in the first half of 2019 by big fashion retailers in countries in Europe, and the United States were labelled as "sustainable." So, well-known fashion and luxury fashion stores need to gradually switch to sustainable methods. But along the way, the business faces problems that make it harder for them to switch to more sustainable practises. It is important to investigate these problems so that the industrial sector and fashion stores can come up with and use good solutions. The paper has tried to give solution as to how big retailers should direct their focus on such that which gender identity is given more importance

in order to have optimum utilisation of scarce resources.

The questions (Table 2) made in the questionnaire were implemented. The questions are as follows and their significance is also implemented. The barriers that have been taken in the questionnaire to add validity of the findings asks respondents to rate on a Likert scale of 1-5 how difficult it is to source green goods, supply chain barriers in luxury fashion industry and price escalation due to going green.

To quantify the responses the weights have been appropriated like 50 to the option of “Always”, 30 weightages has been given to “Sometimes” and 20 weightages has been given to “Never”.

Chi-Square test has been used to analyse the data because it is non-parametric.

Chi-square tests are used in research to determine whether there is significant inconsistency between awaited and actual frequency of collection of categorical data. Because this is a non- parametric test, the data distribution is not assumed. Chi-Square tests are used to evaluate hypotheses about the affiliation between two categorical variables or distribution of single variable across groups or time periods.

The test compares the observed frequencies of each category to the predicted frequencies, which are often calculated using a null hypothesis about data distribution. The chi-square statistic compares observed and anticipated frequency distributions.

Formula of Chi Square is given as:

$$\chi^2_{k-1} = \sum (O_i - E_i)^2/E_i$$

Where,

O_i = Observed frequency of the i^{th} cell E_i = Expected frequency of the i^{th} cell K = Total number of cells

$k-1$ = degrees of freedom

If the chi-square statistic is large enough, the test will reject the null hypothesis. The degrees of freedom are equal to the number of categories minus 1, and the level of significance (α) is typically set at 0.05 or 0.01. In this case, level of significance has been taken as 5%.

Chi-Square Test

SUMMARY		Alpha	0.05		
<i>Count</i>	<i>Rows</i>	<i>Cols</i>	<i>df</i>		
3820	2	3	2		
CHI- SQUARE					
	<i>chi-sq</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>x-crit</i>	<i>sig</i>	<i>Cramer V</i>
Pearson's	72.40188546	0.0000000000000001897	5.991464547	yes	0.13767125
Max likelihood	73.20552118	0.0000000000000001269	5.991464547	yes	0.13843319

Null hypothesis was given as that there is no relation between consumer purchase behaviour and gender and the alternative hypothesis was taken that there does exist a relation between gender and consumer purchase behaviour. The significance using the function came out to be yes and this showed that there is internal validity of the findings.

IX. Salient Findings

Given the findings of the test, the null hypothesis can reject and said that consumer purchase behaviour is not influenced by gender, as the p-value is extremely small (0.0000000000000001897). This means that there is strong evidence that gender does affect consumer purchase behaviour of luxury goods.

The chi-square test statistic value of 72.40188546 indicates a substantial association between gender and consumer purchase behaviour. This value is more than the critical value of 5.991464547 at 5% level of significance (α), which proves that null hypothesis should be rejected.

The Cramer's V value of 0.13767125 suggests that there is a small-to-medium effect size between gender and consumer purchase behaviour. This indicates that gender accounts for a significant but not a very strong influence on consumer purchase behaviour.

These suggest that gender is an important factor to consider when studying consumer purchasing behaviour, and businesses may need to cater and similarly customise their marketing strategies and product offerings based on gender differences.

The analysis from the above study suggests that gender plays a significant role in consumer purchase behaviour. This has important implications for businesses and marketers who want to effectively target their products and services to different genders. Overall, the analysis shows that gender is an important factor in how people buy luxury goods, and businesses should take this into account to reach and keep customers.

X. Discussion

In the context of sustainability in luxury fashion, the study makes novel contributions to the existing literature by presenting a comprehensive analysis of the current status of the sustainable practises which prevail in the luxury fashion industry based on gender. The study identifies the primary challenges and obstacles that impede the industry's adoption of sustainable practises. According to the primary research price escalation due to going green in sustainable clothing is the biggest barrier followed by barrier of supply chain, using good quality textile and lastly procuring green goods in sustainable clothing. While the existing research papers have talked about how even reputation of a brand is also a barrier since they have to incinerate unsold goods and fabrics so that they don't sell it at discount which will change the brand perception in eyes of customer.(Bhandari et al., 2022) and how expensive it becomes.(Blas Riesgo et al., 2022). The research provides fresh insights and perspectives on the role of luxury fashion in fostering a more sustainable and equitable global fashion industry.

In the paper, quantitative research method like surveys have been used, to collect and analyse data, which allowed to provide a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of sustainability in luxury fashion. Single cross section has been used as it is cost effective, most efficient to collect data at once and compare groups based on gender. Primary method of data collection has been used for increased validity, tailored to research objective which is to find how sustainable is luxury fashion according to gender, unique perspective and to ensure timelessness.

Some recommendations for the goods making luxury goods are (Nadia Hasbullah et al., 2020)

1. When promoting their products on a social media platform, luxury companies must be transparent.
2. UGC practices may establish lasting relationship between consumers and organization.
3. In order to captivate the hearts of consumers, it is recommended that luxury companies introduce more creative content and activities.
4. Luxury goods companies can implement a circular economy strategy by encouraging consumers to return products at the end of their lifecycle for recycling or upcycling. This will reduce excess production and encourage a sustainable production cycle.
5. Businesses may use sustainable packaging materials such as biodegradable plastics, recycled paper, and bamboo. This will aid in reducing refuse production and promote environmental conservation.

XI. Limitations

Addressing limitations is essential since it helps to improve future study. It is being observed that where primary source of data is collected, a common limitation is always there which is if respondent correctly reads and interprets what has been asked (Brandão & de Miranda, 2022). The limitations of the research paper are:

1. Demographics: One of the major limitations of the research paper is that it is concentrated based on gender that can affect the overall generality of the findings. Another demographic problem is of culture and language.(Kunz et al., 2020)
2. The research paper is written in English, which means other languages have been ignored which could not provide insights from different cultural groups
3. self-reported data: The study is based on primary data taken through surveys so it may involve bias and may not accurately reflect the actual behaviour of the person filling the survey.

XII. Conclusion

Based on the research paper's findings, it can be concluded that there are gender differences in the purchasing behaviour of sustainable luxury fashion products. Men are more likely than women to purchase sustainable luxury fashion items. The study also identifies the primary challenges and barriers that prevent the luxury fashion industry from adopting sustainable practises, such as price inflation, supply chain barriers, and the procurement of sustainable materials.

The paper makes original contributions to the existing literature by presenting a thorough analysis of the current status of sustainability practises in the luxury fashion industry by gender. In addition, the paper offers recommendations for luxury goods companies, such as implementing a circular economy strategy, utilising sustainable packaging materials, and being transparent when promoting their products on social media platforms.

The gender-based demographics of the participants, however, limit the study's generalizability to other populations. The study is also dependent on self-reported data of the participants, which may lead to response bias and may be difficult to reflect the participants actual behaviour.

Overall, the research paper contributes to a larger discussion on the role of luxury fashion in shaping a more sustainable and equitable global fashion industry and provides recommendations for luxury product manufacturers attempting to implement sustainable practises.

XIII. References

- i. Bhandari, N., Garza-reyes, J. A., Rocha-lona, L., Kumar, A., Naz, F., & Joshi, R. (2022). Barriers to sustainable sourcing in the apparel and fashion luxury industry. *Sustainable Production and Consumption*, 31(November 1991), 220–235. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.spc.2022.02.007>
- ii. Hayhurst, L. M. C., & Szto, C. (2016). *Corporatizing Activism Through Sport-Focused Social Justice ? Investigating Nike ' s Corporate Responsibility Initiatives in Sport for Development and Peace*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723516655579>
- iii. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/jid.1384>. (n.d.).
- iv. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/fashions-new-must-have-sustainable-sourcing-at-scale>. (n.d.).
- v. Moretto, A., Lion, A., Macchion, L., Caniato, F., Danese, P., & Vinelli, A. (2018). Designing a roadmap towards a sustainable supply chain: a focus on the fashion industry. *Journal of Cleaner Production*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.04.273>
- vi. Nayak, R., Akbari, M., & Far, S. M. (2019). Highlights : *Journal of Cleaner Production*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.03.239>
- vii. Ozdamar-ertekin, Z. (2019). *Development Review Can Luxury Fashion Provide a Roadmap for Sustainability ?* 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.23860/MGDR-2019-04-01-03>
- viii. [Park, S., & Lee, Y. \(2021\). Scale Development of Sustainable Consumption of Clothing Products. 1–20.](#)
- ix. Tran, V. D. (2022). Heliyon Consumer impulse buying behavior : the role of confidence as moderating effect. *Heliyon*, 8(August 2021), e09672. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e09672>
- x. Bhandari, N., Garza-Reyes, J. A., Rocha-Lona, L., Kumar, A., Naz, F., & Joshi, R. (2022). Barriers to sustainable sourcing in the apparel and fashion luxury industry. *Sustainable Production and Consumption*, 31, 220–235. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.spc.2022.02.007>
- xi. Blas Riesgo, S., Lavanga, M., & Codina, M. (2022). Drivers and barriers for sustainable fashion consumption in Spain: a comparison between sustainable and non-sustainable consumers. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17543266.2022.2089239>
- xii. Brandão, A., & de Miranda, C. C. (2022). Does Sustainable Consumption Behaviour Influence Luxury Services Purchase Intention? *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 14(13). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14137906>

xiii. Kunz, J., May, S., & Schmidt, H. J. (2020). Sustainable luxury: current status and perspectives for future research. *Business Research*, 13(2), 541–601. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-020-00111-3>

xiv. Nadia Hasbullah, N., Sulaiman, Z., & Mas, A. (2020). User-Generated Content Sources: The Use Of Social Media In Motivating Sustainable Luxury Fashion Consumptions Sustainable Fashion View project MARKET MAVENS IN THE E- WORLD: A REVIEW PAPER View project User-Generated Content Sources: The Use Of Social Media In Motivating Sustainable Luxury Fashion Consumptions. *Article in International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*. www.ijstr.org

XIV. Tables

Sum of Weights	Column Labels			
Row Labels	Always	Never	Sometimes	Grand Total
Female	250	160	1470	1880
Male	450	200	1290	1940
Grand Total	700	360	2760	3820
% of women	36%	44%	53%	49%
% of men	64%	56%	47%	51%

Table 1: Total male and female preferring Sustainable Luxury Products

Table 2 Question Category, Questions, and their Significance.		
Question Category	Questions	Significance
Demographic	Which industry is your organization part of? Please specify size of your organization. Which region is your organization located?	These questions provided the industrial background context of the participants and facilitate enhanced analysis of the data.
SS barriers rating on 5-point Likert type scale	4. Kindly rate these barriers as per their importance in the implementation of sustainable sourcing (1- Not Important; 2- Moderately Important; 3- Important; 4- Very Important; 5- Extremely Important)	These questions provided the current opinions of the experts on the barriers for implementation of SS in the fashion industry and subsequently, validate and analyze the collected data to address research main questions.

XV. Figures

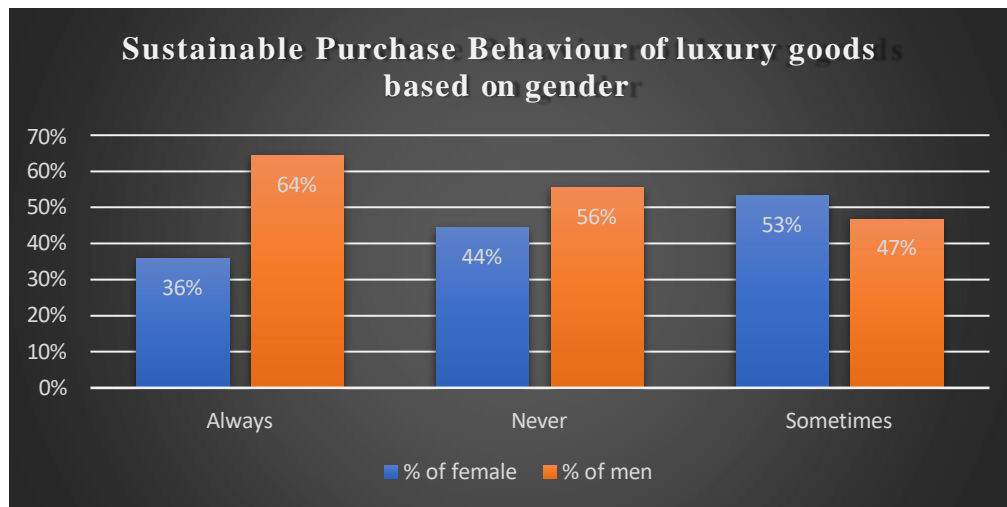


Figure 1. Percentage of male and female preferring sustainable luxury products

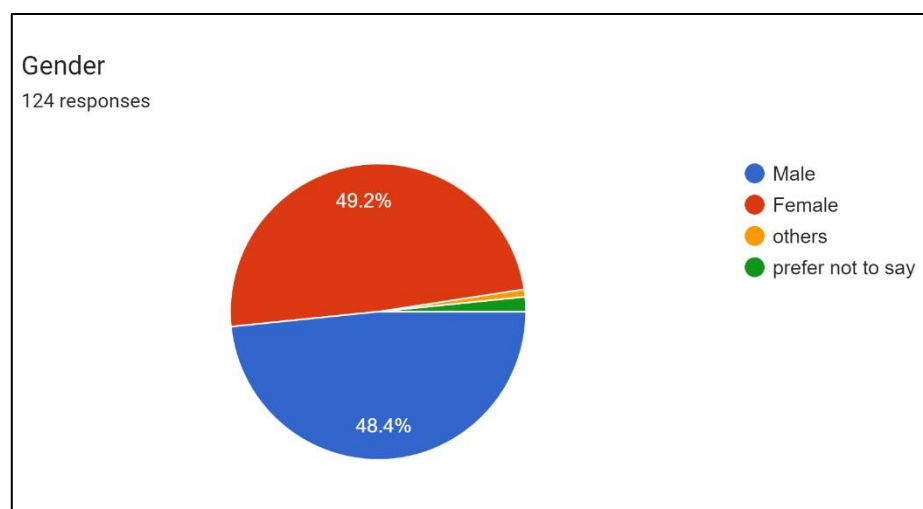


Figure 2. Gender wise division of our sample

XVI. Appendix

1. How often do you purchase luxury fashion products that are marketed as sustainable or eco- friendly?
2. How important is sustainability to you when purchasing luxury fashion products?
3. Have you ever researched a luxury fashion brand's sustainability initiative before making a purchase?
4. In your opinion, is there a significant difference in quality between sustainable luxury fashion products and non-sustainable luxury fashion products?
5. Are you willing to pay a premium for sustainable luxury fashion products compared to non- sustainable luxury fashion products?
6. Do you think sustainable luxury fashion products are priced too high?

7. Do you believe that luxury fashion brands should prioritize sustainability in their production and supply chain processes?
8. How important is transparency in the sustainability practices of luxury fashion brands when making a purchase?
9. Would you switch to a sustainable luxury fashion brand if it meant sacrificing certain design elements or the overall aesthetic of the product?
10. On a scale of 1-5, 1 being lowest and 5 being highest, how difficult do you think it is to implement the barrier of procuring green goods in sustainable clothing?
11. On a scale of 1-5, 1 being lowest and 5 being highest, how difficult do you think it is to implement the barrier of using good quality textile in sustainable clothing?
12. On a scale of 1-5, 1 being lowest and 5 being highest, how difficult do you think it is to implement the barrier of supply chain in sustainable clothing?
13. On a scale of 1-5, 1 being lowest and 5 being highest, how difficult do you think it is to deal with the barrier of price escalation due to going green in sustainable clothing?