Exploring Gen'z Influence on Fashion Market Trends

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines Generation Z's impact on fashion market trends, emphasizing their preference for digital engagement, ethical shopping, and innovative retail experiences. Influenced by social media and online influencers, Gen Z gravitates towards sustainable fashion, thrift shopping, and technology-driven retail solutions such as AI recommendations and AR try-ons. Conducted in Coimbatore with a sample of 120 respondents, the research identifies key factors influencing fashion choices, including affordability, uniqueness, and social media presence. The findings provide valuable insights into how brands can adapt to Gen Z's evolving demands to enhance brand loyalty and market competitiveness.

Key words: Generation Z, Digital Engagement, Ethical Shopping, Sustainable Fashion, AI & AR Technology, Social Media Influence
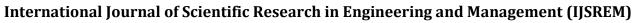
INRODUCTION:

The fashion industry is evolving rapidly under the influence of Gen Z, a generation that values individuality, ethical sourcing, and digital connectivity. Their strong commitment to sustainability, coupled with the power of social media and fast-changing micro-trends, is reshaping design aesthetics and brand engagement. With a focus on eco-friendly materials, transparent supply chains, and circular fashion, Gen Z is driving brands to adapt while navigating challenges like affordability and swift trend shifts. This study examines their impact on fashion trends, the hurdles brands face in meeting their expectations, and the broader implications for the global fashion economy.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

♦ Analyze how Gen Z's preferences, purchasing behaviour, and social media influence shape trends in the fashion market.

♦ Identify the advantages for fashion brands in adapting to Gen Z-driven trends, including stronger brand loyalty, increased sustainabilityand enhanced market competitiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

1. **Sunil Hazari and Beheruz N. Sethna (2022):** This study compares lifestyle marketing and brand influencer advertising on Instagram for Generation Z, focusing on engagement, attitude, and
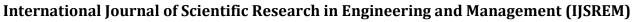
purchase intention. Using a structured framework, it collects, analyzes, and synthesizes existing research while validating the measurement model's psychometric properties, ensuring reliability, convergent and discriminant validity, and eliminating common method bias. The findings confirm Instagram advertising's significant impact on Generation Z and highlight the need for further research across different platforms, demographics, and product categories.

2.   **Capucao Christine B, De Torres Kim Camille O, Criman Sharmel J, Bryan G Lazaro(2024):** This study explores Gen Z's fashion consumer behavior, focusing on sustainability and self-expression. Using a qualitative case study with semi-structured interviews, quota sampling, and thematic analysis, it examines their motivations, influences, and decision-making. The findings reveal that brands can build trust and loyalty by aligning with Gen Z's values through personalized, responsible, and eco-friendly fashion choices.

3.   **Luis Espejo, Nelly Perez, Cecilia Mendoza, Yuri Gagarin (2024):** This study conducts a systematic review and bibliometric analysis to examine Generation Z's unique characteristics and their impact on purchasing decisions. Using quantitative data and strict selection criteria, it ensures reliable insights into their buying behavior. Findings reveal Gen Z's dual preference for online and in-store shopping, strong interest in fashion and tourism, and the influence of digital content, brand awareness, sustainability, and personal values. Technological advancements, social media—especially TikTok—and sustainability play a crucial role in shaping their purchasing choices.

4.   **Joohye Hwang, Li Zhao (2021)**: This study examines how COVID-19 shaped Gen Z's fashion consumption values using the consumption value theory. Through text mining and Automatic Content Analysis (ACA) of 178 articles and reports (March 2020–February 2021) with Leximancer software, key themes like sustainability, digital influence, and adaptability emerge. Findings reveal Gen Z's increased focus on sustainability, digital engagement, pandemic-driven retail shifts, and evolving style preferences, such as loose-fit denim, reflecting their social, experiential, and functional values.

5.   **Elida, T., Rahardjo, W., & Raharjo, A. (2024):** They analysed the Impulse Buying: How Generation Z's Enjoyment of Shopping Affects Their Fashion Buys. Generation Z is often emotionally engaged with the fashion industry, driven by their tendency to follow trends and support particular aesthetics. The results of this study indicate that Hedonic Shopping Motivation, Price Discounts, and Store Atmosphere can influence impulse buying behavior by enhancing Shopping Enjoyment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research design: Descriptive research

Study Area: Coimbatore District

Method of sampling: Convenient Sampling

Sample size: 120

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION
SIMPLE FREQUENCY

S.NO	PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
	AGE		
1	10-14	5	4.4
	15-19	43	38.1
	20-24	61	54.0
	25-29	4	3.5
	GENDER		
2	Female	41	36.3
	Male	72	63.7
	CURRENT OCCUPATION		
3	Business	6	2.8
	Self Employed	25	11.7
	Student	82	38.8
	BUDGET FOR FASHION		
4	1000-2000	39	34.5
	2000-3000	9	8.0
	Above 3000	12	10.6
	Below 1000	53	46.9
	FREQUENCY OF CLOTHING PURCHASES		
5	Monthly	39	34.5
	Quarterly	27	23.9
	Rarely	20	17.7
	Weekly	27	23.9
	SHOPPING PREFERENCES		
6	Online	23	10.7
	Physical stores	74	34.6
	Thrift stores	11	5.1
	Social media platforms	6	2.8

INTERPRETATION:

The data provides valuable insights into the fashion preferences and behaviors of Gen Z consumers. The majority of respondents, 54%, fall within the 20-24 age range. Interestingly, males greater than females, accounting for 63.7% of the group. Students make up the largest occupational group, representing 38.8% of respondents. In terms of fashion expenditure, most respondents (46.9%) spend less than $1000 annually. Additionally, physical stores are the preferred shopping destination for the majority of respondents.

FACTOR ANALYSIS

PARTICULARS	Com	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	GROUP NAME
COMPONENT											
My fashion choices are influenced by Instagram, and other social media trends.	.855	.921								TREND-CONSCIOUS ETHICAL SHOPPERS
I prefer fashion brands that use AI to personalize my shopping experience.	.835	.908								
I frequently shop for second-hand or thrifted clothing.	.856	.905								
I am willing to pay more for ethically made or eco-friendly fashion.	.826	.893								
I actively avoid brands that have been accused of unethical business practices.	.834	.892								
I often adopt fashion trends based on TV shows, movies, or music artists.	.827	.891								
I would consider buying digital fashion items (e.g., NFT wearables) for use in virtual spaces like gaming or the metaverse.	.800	.889								
Viral trends and aesthetics (e.g., Y2K, streetwear, minimalism) influence my clothing choices.	.864		.906							SUSTAINABLE STYLE SEEKERS
I prefer to buy clothing from brands that prioritize sustainability.	.876		.899							
I am more likely to buy clothing if I can use AR to try it on virtually before	.834		.897							

purchasing.								
I actively avoid fast fashion brands due to their environmental impact.	.845		.881					
The environmental impact of a fashion brand is important in my shopping choices.	.817		.877					
I am interested in purchasing custom clothing created through 3D printing or on-demand production to reduce waste.	.818		.874					
I am likely to buy clothing from brands that integrate digital fashion with physical fashion.	.731		.788					
I prefer independent or emerging fashion brands over well-established brands.	.724		.747					
Once I find a fashion brand I like, I tend to stick with it for future purchases.	.741		.736					
I am more likely to purchase fashion items from brands that frequently appear on my social media feed.	.706		.656					
I prefer seeing real customers wearing fashion items over professional models in ads.	.586		.618					**DIGITAL STYLE FANS**
I am interested in trying virtual clothing through AR (Augmented Reality) filters before purchasing.	.719		.572					
I believe digital fashion is an	.651		.546					

important part of the future fashion industry.										
Social media trends influence my interest in digital fashion.	.610				.706					
I am interested in purchasing digital fashion items (e.g., NFT wearables, virtual outfits).	.690				.730					
Fashion brands that engage with customers' posts and reviews on social media are more trustworthy.	.707				.722					**DIGITAL TREND FOLLOWERS**
I would buy digital clothing for use in virtual spaces (e.g., Metaverse, gaming avatars).	.687				.701					
I choose fashion brands based on their trendiness rather than their long-term reputation.	.765				.641					
I am willing to pay a higher price for a brand that I trust.	.768					.719				
I prefer to buy clothing from brands that align with my personal values (e.g., sustainability, inclusivity).	.753					.710				
I actively seek out brands that offer unique or customized clothing options.	.720					.666				**FASHION FORWARD BUYERS**
I have purchased or considered purchasing virtual fashion for gaming, social media, or the metaverse.	.667					.584				
I prefer brands that offer AR (Augmented Reality) try-on experiences.	.632					.562				
I am more likely	.573					.561				

to engage with brands that showcase digital fashion on Instagram, or other platforms.									
I feel pressured to keep up with the latest fashion trends promoted on social media.	.669					.540			
I would recommend my favorite fashion brands to my friends and social circle.	.777						.746		
I am more likely to buy from brands that take a stand on social or political issues.	.800						.888		
I prefer shopping for fashion through AI-recommended styles on social media platforms like Instagram, Pinterest.	.832						.888		**LOYAL ETHICAL SHOPPERS**
I am willing to pay more for clothing made from innovative sustainable materials like bio-fabricated textiles or recycled fabrics.	.836						.878		
I prefer to buy from brands that promote diversity and body positivity.	.818						.877		
I continue supporting a brand even if it increases its prices.	.818						.866		
Influencers and content creators impact my perception of digital fashion.	.756							.759	
I often purchase fashion items through social media platforms.	.771							.741	**SOCIAL MEDIA FASHION SHOPPERS**
I trust fashion brands that sell	.752							.632	

directly through social media platforms.										
Fashion brands should offer more gender-neutral clothing options.	.750							.861		
I am more likely to support brands that feature models of different ethnicities, body types, and genders.	.743							.825		
I am interested in smart clothing with built-in technology, such as temperature control or fitness tracking.	.831							.868		
I am familiar with the concept of digital fashion and virtual clothing.	.751								.672	
Fashion should reflect cultural diversity and personal identity.	.832								.868	
If a brand I love is involved in a controversy, I am likely to stop buying from them.	.808								.866	
I follow influencers and celebrities to stay updated on the latest fashion styles.	.790								.863	**INFLUENCED ETHICAL SHOPPERS**
Ethical labor practices and fair wages influence my purchasing decisions.	.787								.858	
Influencers and content creators play a significant role in my fashion purchasing decisions.	.756								.801	
KMO	0.833									

INTERPRETATION:

The factor analysis reveals distinct consumer groups driving the fashion industry, influenced by digital trends, sustainability, and ethics. These groups prioritize various factors, includingTrend-conscious, Sustainable style seekers, Digital style fans, Digital trend followers, Fashion forward buyers, Loyal ethical shoppers, Social media fashion shoppers, and Influenced ethical shoppers. By recognizing these segments, fashion brands can tailor their strategies to integrate digital innovation, ethical responsibility, and sustainability, ultimately fostering long-term consumer loyalty.

FINDINGS:

➢ Age Distribution: The majority (54%) fall within the 20-24 age group, followed by 38.1% aged 15-19, highlighting a strong presence of young adults.

➢ Gender: Males make up 63.7% of the respondents, while females account for 36.3%, indicating higher male participation.

➢ Occupation: Students (38.8%) form the largest segment, followed by self-employed individuals (11.7%) and business professionals (2.8%).

➢ Fashion Budget: Most respondents (46.9%) spend less than ₹1000 on fashion, while 34.5% allocate ₹1000-₹2000, reflecting cost-conscious spending.

➢ Clothing Purchase Frequency: Monthly shoppers comprise 34.5%, while 23.9% purchase quarterly and weekly, showing diverse shopping habits.

➢ Shopping Preferences: Physical stores remain the top choice (34.6%), with online shopping (10.7%) and thrift stores (5.1%) being less common.

➢ These groups prioritize various factors, includingTrend-conscious, Sustainable style seekers, Digital style fans, Digital trend followers, Fashion forward buyers, Loyal ethical shoppers, Social media fashion shoppers, and Influenced ethical shoppers.

SUGGESTIONS:

✓ Fashion brands should engage with Gen Z on platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, and You tube to boost visibility and customer interaction.

✓ Implementing AI-driven recommendations and AR try-on features can enhance online shopping experiences and customer satisfaction.

✓ Emphasizing eco-friendly materials, ethical sourcing, and transparent supply chains can attract environmentally conscious consumers.

CONCLUSION:

This study highlights Generation Z's significant role in shaping modern fashion trends, driven by digital connectivity, ethical considerations, and cost-consciousness. Their reliance on social media, preference for sustainable fashion, and interest in digital innovations underscore the need for brands to evolve. Companies that successfully integrate technology, sustainability, and personalized experiences will be better positioned to meet Gen Z's expectations, ensuring long-term success and customer loyalty.

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