Exploring Millennials' Attitudes towards sustainable clothing: a summative content analysis approach

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Abstract

This study examines the perceptions and attitudes of millennials (Generation Y) toward sustainable fashion. Using an exploratory qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 17 active fashion consumers aged 29–36 years. Data were analyzed through summative content analysis, combining keyword frequency mapping with interpretive coding to identify patterns in consumer attitudes. Four dominant themes emerged: environmental responsibility, personal well-being, information touch points, and social influence. Respondents associated sustainable clothing with contributing to ecological preservation and reducing guilt over fast fashion. Personal well-being, particularly skin safety and comfort, further reinforced positive attitudes. Multiple information touch points, including sustainability labels, eco-certifications, online filtering tools, user-generated reviews, and in-store messaging, built trust and reduced decision uncertainty. Social influence - through peers, influencers, and brand communities, provided validation and strengthened attitude towards purchasing sustainable clothing. Overall, findings indicate that millennials demonstrate favourable perceptions of sustainable clothing, translating into supportive purchase behaviours when sustainability is communicated transparently and socially endorsed. The study contributes nuanced insights into how sustainability values and information cues intersect with fashion involvement, offering implications for marketing strategies and laying a foundation for future quantitative validation.

Keywords Sustainable fashion, Millennials, Summative Content Analysis, Consumer Attitudes, Purchase Behavior

Introduction

The global fashion industry is undergoing a profound transformation as sustainability becomes an essential strategic priority rather than a peripheral concern. Rising awareness of environmental degradation, excessive resource utilization, and the adverse impacts of fast fashion have placed the industry under intense scrutiny (Papasolomou et al., 2023; Niinimäki et al., 2011). Consequently, fashion brands and stakeholders are shifting from conventional linear production models to circular approaches that emphasize resource efficiency, waste reduction, and ethical consumption (Ki et al., 2021). These structural changes reflect a broader movement toward sustainable consumption patterns, which have become central to global sustainability discourse and policy frameworks, including the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production (United Nations, 2021).

Within this changing context, Generation Y (millennials), particularly its younger segment, represents a critical consumer group for the fashion industry. Born between 1981 and 1996, millennials are characterized by their strong digital engagement, social awareness, and preference for value-driven consumption (Aksar et al., 2025). Millennials, typically aged between 29 and 36 years, are not only active fashion shoppers but also influential in shaping emerging trends. Their purchasing decisions increasingly reflect ethical considerations, environmental concerns, and health-related motivations, making them a focal point for brands seeking to integrate sustainability into their value propositions (Tripathi et al., 2024).

Although sustainability has gained prominence in academic research, empirical studies focusing on millennials' perceptions and attitudes toward sustainable clothing remain limited, particularly in emerging markets. Most prior research has examined general consumer attitudes, leaving a gap in understanding how millennials evaluate sustainable fashion and the extent to which their perceptions and attitudes translate into behaviors (Cairns et al., 2022). Addressing this gap is essential, as Millennials' role as trendsetters and holders of purchasing power positions them as key drivers in the transition toward sustainable fashion consumption.

Moreover, while sustainability-oriented marketing is gaining traction, brands continue to face challenges in effectively communicating sustainability attributes to consumers. Existing literature indicates that consumers rely on multiple information cues, such as product descriptions, eco-labels, and peer recommendations, to evaluate sustainability claims (Kumar et al., 2021; Jeong et al., 2024). However, the specific touchpoints and communication strategies that influence Millennials' decision-making in the context of sustainable clothing remain underexplored. This calls for qualitative insights into how Millennials form attitudes toward sustainability and what informational elements strengthen trust and decision confidence.

To address these gaps, the present study employs summative content analysis of semi-structured interviews with 17 fashion-conscious Millennials aged 29–36 years. The objectives are twofold: (1) to explore Millennials' perceptions and attitudes toward sustainable fashion, and (2) to identify the key informational and value-based factors that shape their purchase decisions. By uncovering these insights, the study aims to provide actionable recommendations for fashion brands and contribute to the theoretical discourse on sustainable consumer behavior.

Literature Review

The concept of sustainability in fashion has evolved considerably over the past few decades. Originating from discussions at the 1972 United Nations Conference, sustainability has consistently been framed around three key dimensions: the interrelationship between people and the natural ecosystem, the integration of economic growth with social and environmental well-being, and the collective responsibility to adopt a global perspective (UN, 2021). Over time, this broad agenda has shaped movements in ethical production, fair trade, and environmentally conscious practices across industries, including fashion (Shen et al., 2013).

Within the fashion sector, the terminology used to convey sustainability remains fragmented. Phrases such as eco-fashion, ethical fashion, green fashion, and sustainable fashion are often

employed interchangeably, although their definitions sometimes vary (Newholm & Shaw, 2007). Fletcher (2014) defines sustainable fashion as apparel produced under ethical labor conditions, designed to minimize harm to the environment, and often incorporating organic or recycled materials, local production, and durable designs for extended use. Despite the existence of such definitions, inconsistent communication and lack of clarity around terminology in both academic literature and brand messaging continue to create consumer confusion, often reducing engagement and diminishing brand loyalty (Evans & Peirson-Smith, 2018).

Sustainable fashion has transitioned from a niche concept to a growing force within mainstream retail markets (Fletcher, 2010). This shift reflects an increasing societal demand for responsible consumption, driven partly by global initiatives such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 12, which promotes responsible production and consumption patterns (United Nations, 2021). Similarly, programs like the European Clothing Action Plan (ECAP) have set actionable targets to promote circularity and reduce waste, including consumer education on garment care and disposal for younger age groups (ECAP, 2019).

Consumers, particularly millennials, are considered a critical demographic in the sustainability discourse. They possess the potential to drive significant behavioral change due to their influence on future consumption patterns (Falke et al., 2022; Bedard and Tolmie, 2018). Despite this, awareness and actual engagement in sustainable fashion practices remain limited within this segment (James and Bardey, 2025). Researchers argue that targeted education and communication strategies are vital for overcoming these barriers (Ronda, 2024).

Mukendi et al. (2019), in their comprehensive review of literature spanning two decades, highlight a persistent emphasis on understanding consumer habits and the role of younger cohorts in shaping sustainable consumption. However, ambiguity in terminology and a lack of standardized frameworks have hindered coherent consumer messaging. This study adopts Reimers et al.'s (2016) consumer-oriented definition of sustainable fashion, which emphasizes environmental responsibility alongside fair treatment of workers, as a reference point for further exploration.

Although consumers express a strong preference for sustainability at an attitudinal level, this does not always translate into purchase behavior—a discrepancy often referred to as the attitude–behavior gap (Jung et al., 2020). Fashion remains deeply symbolic for this group, serving as a key medium for identity formation and self-expression (Chernev et al., 2011). Style and aesthetics, therefore, often outweigh ethical or environmental considerations in purchase decisions (Muhammad & Ghulam, 2019). As a result, sustainable fashion alternatives frequently struggle to compete with fast fashion brands that emphasize affordability and trend responsiveness (Ozdamar Ertekin and Atik, 2015).

Health and safety concerns have emerged as an additional factor influencing preferences among young buyers. Research suggests that the desire to avoid harmful chemicals in textiles often motivates consumers to choose organic fabrics (Ellis et al., 2012). Similarly, perceptions of a

brand's ethical integrity—whether linked to labor practices or environmental initiatives—can shape purchase intentions (Shen et al., 2012). However, even when ethical values are considered, they seldom override primary drivers such as design, comfort, and price (Joergens, 2006).

Fashion consumption significantly impacts both environmental systems and social structures, underscoring the importance of effective marketing strategies to encourage responsible behavior (Jackson, 2005). Providing transparent and accessible information about product attributes, environmental impacts, and sustainability credentials can influence consumer decision-making. This is particularly critical given that the most environmentally intensive phase of a garment's life cycle occurs during its use, through processes like washing, drying, and ironing, which consume water, energy, and detergents and contribute to micro plastic pollution (EPRS, 2019). Consequently, marketers must design campaigns that not only communicate sustainability attributes but also address personal values and lifestyle preferences to foster meaningful behavioral change.

The primary objective of this study is twofold. First, it seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of millennial consumers regarding sustainable clothing and the factors influencing their fashion choices. This understanding is essential for both academic discourse and practical application in strategy development. Second, the research aims to identify the communication barriers and opportunities that sustainable fashion brands and marketers face within the supply chain, with the goal of informing more impactful and consumer-centric marketing strategies.

Based on the theoretical foundation and previous research, the study addresses the following research questions:
RQ1 How do millennial consumers perceive the key aspects of sustainable apparel?
RQ2 What attitudes do they hold toward sustainability-related attributes in fashion?
RQ3 Which positive keywords or associations linked to sustainable clothing can enhance brand messaging and marketing communication?

This study employed a structured yet flexible research design. The process commenced with an extensive review of relevant literature and secondary data to consolidate existing knowledge on sustainable fashion consumption. From this review, research gaps were identified, leading to the formulation of focused research questions. A qualitative approach was subsequently adopted to capture the depth and nuance of consumer attitudes and perceptions. Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews with fashion-conscious participants, ensuring rich and contextually grounded insights. The interview data were systematically analyzed using thematic categorization and content analysis to identify recurring patterns and underlying themes. The final stage involved the interpretation of these findings, highlighting their theoretical contributions and managerial implications within the broader discourse on sustainable fashion.

Methodology
Given the exploratory nature of the research, a qualitative approach was employed (Creswell and Poth, 2016). Jackson and Bazeley,2019). Semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow

participants to express their views in detail while providing consistency across interviews (Kallio et al., 2016). To recruit participants, a combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling was employed. Purposive sampling ensured the inclusion of individuals who fit the research focus, while snowball sampling extended access through participant referrals (Etikan et al., 2016; Naderifar et al., 2017). The inclusion criteria were as follows: respondents were aged between 29 and 36 years (millennials), they engaged in regular fashion purchases, at least once per month, they maintained a personal budget for clothing expenditures and participants were recruited via referrals to ensure relevance to the research focus.

A total of 17 interviews were conducted, comprising 8 male and 9 female respondents. While this sample does not claim statistical representativeness, qualitative research emphasizes depth and meaning over numerical generalization (Patton, 2015).

The interviews lasted between 30 and 40 minutes and were conducted using a structured guide to ensure coverage of key themes, including: fashion consumption habits and behaviours, awareness and perceptions of sustainable clothing, attitudes toward environmental and ethical dimensions of apparel, decision-making processes during purchase.

For analysis, a summative content analysis approach was applied, which combines quantitative keyword frequency with qualitative interpretation of meanings and contexts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The process included: verbatim transcription of interviews, identification of recurring themes and categories related to sustainable fashion, coding into major themes and sub-categories, and quantification of positive/negative keywords associated with sustainable garments to assess their marketing relevance. NVivo software was employed to facilitate systematic coding and data organization, a common practice in qualitative studies (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). This hybrid approach enabled both conceptual exploration and practical implications for communication strategies.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis of 17 semi-structured interviews revealed four dominant themes that shaped millennials' perceptions and attitudes toward sustainable fashion: (1) Environmental Responsibility, (2) Personal Well-being and Health, (3) Information Touch points and Trust-Building, and (4) Social Influence and Peer Validation (Table 1). Each theme was identified through the frequency of key terms and repeated expressions, followed by interpretive coding to uncover underlying meanings in participants' responses.

Theme 1: Environmental responsibility

Environmental awareness emerged as the most frequently cited motivator for sustainable clothing consumption. 83% of participants used terms such as "eco-friendly," "carbon footprint," "recycling," and "saving resources." They expressed a strong sense of moral and collective responsibility toward the environment. One respondent noted, "Buying sustainable clothes feels like I am contributing, even if it is in a small way."

Most of these respondents demonstrated an understanding of how fast fashion contributes to environmental degradation and expressed a preference for eco-friendly fabrics, ethically

produced garments, and recycled materials. 53% specifically mentioned looking for clothing brands that offered circular economy initiatives, such as recycling programs or take-back schemes. Beyond ethical considerations, environmental responsibility also served an emotional function, helping participants reduce guilt associated with frequent purchases. A smaller subset (29%) emphasized lifestyle alignment, stating that choosing sustainable clothing "fits with my values and the kind of world I want to live in."

Theme 2: Personal well-being and health

71% of participants associated sustainable clothing with personal health, comfort, and safety, emphasizing that sustainable choices often intersect with self-care. Keywords such as "organic," "chemical-free," "comfortable," and "skin-friendly" appeared consistently. One participant shared, "I feel better knowing the clothes I wear won't harm my skin or the environment."

Several respondents (59%) described sustainable clothing as having a dual benefit: contributing to ethical or environmental goals while simultaneously enhancing their own physical well-being. Organic fabrics, natural dyes, and non-toxic processing methods were particularly valued. Many participants (47%) also linked these attributes with long-term health benefits, expressing concerns about prolonged exposure to synthetic chemicals commonly found in mass-produced fast fashion.

Interestingly, personal well-being also included psychological aspects. Wearing sustainable clothing was perceived as empowering, giving participants a sense of pride and self-satisfaction. This finding suggests that millennials' attitude toward purchasing sustainable clothing is influenced not only by ethical considerations but also by the personal utility and emotional gratification derived from sustainable choices.

Theme 3: Information touch points and trust-building

Access to credible information emerged as a critical factor in shaping attitudes and facilitating sustainable purchases. 82% of participants cited tools such as sustainability labels, eco-certifications, e-commerce filtering options, online reviews, and in-store signage as central in guiding their decisions. Words like "transparent," "authentic," and "verified" appeared frequently in interviews.

One respondent noted, "If the brand shows certification and user reviews, I am confident about buying." This reflects the importance of perceived credibility in reducing uncertainty and distinguishing genuine sustainable products from misleading claims. Digital platforms played a prominent role, with 65% relying heavily on user-generated content, sustainability ratings, and detailed product narratives before making purchase decisions.

Participants also highlighted the convenience and accessibility of information as important. Those who had easy access to sustainability details across multiple channels—both online and offline—reported higher confidence in their purchase decisions. This finding underscores that effective communication of sustainability practices is not only a marketing tool but also a determinant of actual consumer behavior.

Theme 4: Social influence and peer validation
Social influence emerged as a significant driver of sustainable fashion consumption. 65% of participants mentioned that peer discussions, influencer content, and community-based brand engagement shaped their attitudes and decisions. About half of the respondents (53%) reported sharing their sustainable purchases on social media, framing these behaviors as identity-building and socially validating. One participant remarked, "It feels good when friends appreciate that I chose eco-friendly clothes."

Social influence extended beyond online platforms. 59% frequently consulted peers for recommendations or observed friends' and colleagues' sustainable choices to guide their own purchases. Influencer endorsements and visible participation in sustainability-focused communities reinforced the normative pressure to engage in eco-conscious fashion behavior. This theme highlights the interplay between personal values and social validation, suggesting that peer and community engagement can amplify millennials' commitment to sustainable consumption.

These findings reveal that millennials' attitudes toward sustainable clothing are grounded in a dual motivation of ethical concern and personal benefit. Environmental responsibility and trust in sustainability information emerged as the most widespread drivers, while personal well-being and social influence added significant layers to the decision-making process as shown in Table 2 & Figure 1. This duality expands the understanding of what drives sustainable fashion adoption and offers valuable insights for both theory and practice.

Table 1: Thematic Results of Summative Content Analysis

Theme	Frequent Keywords / Terms	Sample Verbatim	Interpretation
1. Environmental responsibility	eco-friendly, carbon footprint, recycling, resources, circular economy	*"Buying sustainable clothes feels like I am contributing, even if it is in a small way."*	Millennials view sustainable clothing as a moral and environmental responsibility; ethical motivation reduces guilt associated with fast fashion and aligns with personal values.
2. Personal well-being and health	organic, chemical-free, skin-safe, comfortable, long-term health	*"I feel better knowing the clothes I wear won't harm my skin or the environment."*	Sustainable clothing is valued for health, comfort, and psychological satisfaction; intrinsic motivation links ethical behavior with personal well-being.

Theme	Frequent Keywords / Terms	Sample Verbatim	Interpretation
3. Information touchpoints & trust-building	transparency, certification, labels, reviews, filtering tools, in-store messaging	*"If the brand shows certification and user reviews, I am confident about buying."*	Access to credible sustainability information reduces decision uncertainty; transparency across online and offline channels builds trust and facilitates purchase behavior.
4. Social influence & peer validation	friends, influencers, sharing, appreciation, community	*"It feels good when friends appreciate that I chose eco-friendly clothes."*	Social norms, peer recognition, and influencer guidance strengthen sustainable clothing adoption; social validation reinforces ethical and identity-based motivations.

Source: Authors' own work

Environmental responsibility emerged as the most frequently cited driver of sustainable fashion consumption. Participants associated eco-friendly clothing with reducing carbon footprints, conserving resources, and supporting recycling initiatives. These findings resonate with prior studies demonstrating that ecological awareness shapes sustainable purchase intentions (Xu et al., 2019; Tavitiyaman et al., 2024). For millennials, sustainable clothing was not just a market category but a moral choice, often framed as "doing one's part" for the planet.

Table 2: Summative Content Analysis

Theme	Key Focus	Percentage of Participants
Theme 1: Environmental responsibility	Eco-friendly motives, carbon footprint, recycling, ethical supply chains, circular initiatives	
- Circular economy initiatives (within Theme 1)	Recycling programs / take-back schemes specifically mentioned	53%
- Lifestyle alignment (within Theme 1)	Stated sustainable clothing "fits with my values"	29%
Theme 2: Personal well-being and health	Organic, chemical-free, comfort, skin-friendly attributes	
- Dual benefit (ethical + health) (within Theme 2)	Saw both personal and ethical benefits	59%
- Long-term health benefit concern (within Theme 2)	Concern about synthetic chemical exposure	47%
Theme 3: Information touch points & trust-building	Labels, certifications, reviews, transparency, multi-channel access	

Theme	Key Focus	Percentage of Participants
- Reliance on digital/user-generated content (within Theme 3)	Used online reviews, ratings, narratives before purchase	65%
Theme 4: Social influence & peer validation	Peer discussions, influencer content, sharing purchases online	
- Sharing sustainable purchases on social media (within Theme 4)	Reported identity-building and social validation	53%
- Consulting peers/offline influence (within Theme 4)	Looked at friends'/colleagues' sustainable choices	59%

Source: Authors' own work

From a theoretical perspective, this aligns with the attitudinal component of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), where positive evaluations of sustainable behavior strengthen intention formation. Beyond cognitive reasoning, however, participants also described sustainability in emotional terms—such as reducing guilt or aligning with their "way of living." This suggests that environmental responsibility functions as both a rational evaluation and an affective commitment, reinforcing previous arguments that sustainability is deeply tied to lifestyle identity (Mishra et al., 2024). For brands, campaigns emphasizing carbon reduction, circularity, and resource efficiency may therefore resonate strongly with this cohort.
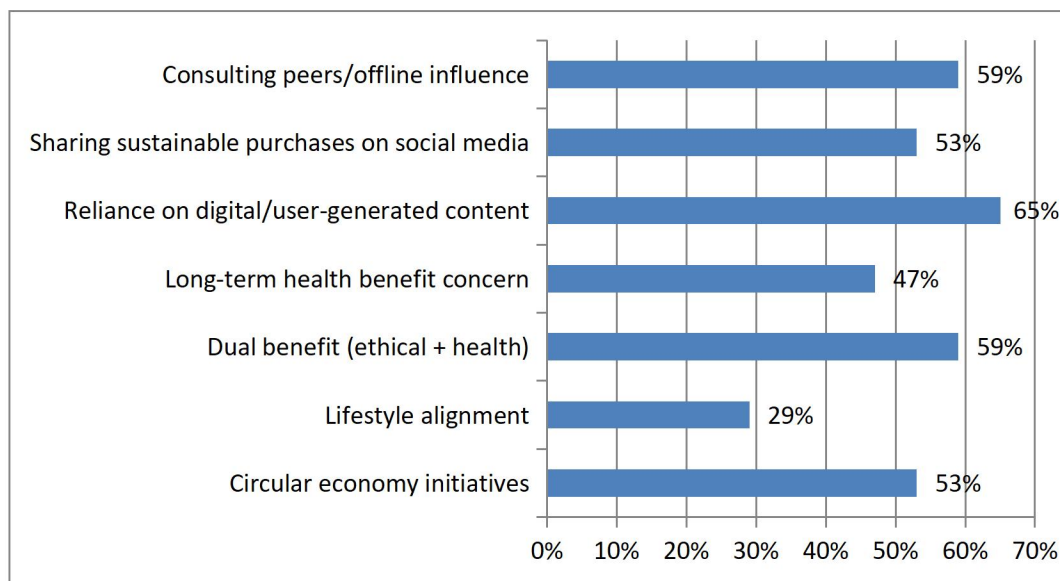

Figure 1: Sub-theme Percentages of Sustainable Clothing Drivers
Source: Authors' own work

A second major finding highlights how millennials connected sustainable clothing to personal well-being and health benefits. Respondents valued attributes such as skin safety, comfort, and the use of organic or chemical-free fabrics. This finding signals a shift from earlier narratives

that framed sustainability primarily around altruistic or environmental outcomes toward a self-oriented dimension of sustainability. As Joy and Peña (2017) observed, sustainable consumption increasingly intersects with lifestyle and wellness trends.

This perspective suggests that millennials' adoption of sustainable fashion is strengthened when ethical benefits are coupled with tangible personal advantages. Within TPB, this extends the scope of attitudes by incorporating health-related and hedonic considerations into purchase motivation. The dual framing—ethical and personal—provides a stronger platform for brand communication, as consumers are more likely to act when sustainability enhances both the planet and their own well-being.

The findings emphasize that information accessibility and credibility play a decisive role in shaping purchase behavior. Participants relied on sustainability labels, certifications, e-commerce filtering tools, online reviews, and in-store cues to guide decisions. Many explicitly linked transparency with confidence, noting that visible eco-certifications and user-generated reviews reduced skepticism about greenwashing. This mirrors earlier research highlighting the role of eco-labels and transparency in building consumer trust (Testa et al., 2015; Kumar et al., 2021).

From a TPB perspective, information touchpoints reinforce perceived behavioral control, as consumers feel empowered to distinguish authentic sustainable products from misleading claims. For digital-native millennials, multiple and consistent sources of sustainability information—across online and offline touchpoints—are not optional but essential. The implication for brands is clear: communicating sustainability must be simple, visible, and verifiable. Failure to provide credible cues risks consumer distrust and disengagement.

Social influence was another powerful factor, with respondents frequently acknowledging the role of peers, influencers, and brand communities in shaping their clothing decisions. Sharing sustainable purchases on social media or receiving validation from friends reinforced eco-friendly behavior. This aligns with Lazaric et al. (2020) and Kang et al. (2013), who noted that peer dynamics and social norms are critical to sustainable consumption adoption.

Within TPB, these findings underscore the significance of subjective norms. Sustainable clothing is not only perceived as an ethical or personal choice but also as a social identity marker, reflecting how millennials seek recognition and belonging through eco-friendly consumption. The implication for marketers is that sustainability campaigns must go beyond factual communication and tap into social validation mechanisms—such as influencer partnerships, peer-to-peer sharing platforms, and community-driven initiatives—to embed sustainable fashion within consumers' identity narratives.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that millennials' sustainable fashion choices are shaped by the interplay of attitudes (environmental and health-related benefits), subjective norms (peer and influencer validation), and perceived behavioral control (trustworthy information cues). This convergence confirms the applicability of TPB while extending it in two ways: By emphasizing the emotional and identity-driven aspects of environmental responsibility. Moreover, by showing

how self-oriented health and well-being motivations amplify positive attitudes toward sustainability.

Thus, the study contributes to theory by revealing that sustainable clothing adoption among millennials cannot be explained by environmental concern alone, it must also account for health-conscious lifestyles and the social construction of identity.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study provide several actionable insights for fashion brands, retailers, and policymakers seeking to promote sustainable clothing consumption among millennials. First, marketing strategies should highlight the dual benefits of sustainability, positioning eco-friendly apparel not only as a contribution to environmental protection but also as a choice that enhances personal well-being. By framing sustainability as both planet-friendly and health-enhancing, brands can appeal simultaneously to millennials' ethical values and their self-oriented desire for comfort, safety, and quality (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018). Campaigns that showcase organic fabrics, chemical-free dyes, and skin-friendly materials could therefore resonate strongly with this generation (Henninger et al., 2016).

Equally important is the need to ensure transparency and credibility in sustainability communication. Millennials in this study demonstrated a strong reliance on eco-labels, certifications, and brand narratives to navigate concerns around greenwashing. This is consistent with prior evidence that credibility and traceability are critical in reducing consumer skepticism toward sustainable claims (Testa et al., 2015; Kumar et al., 2021). For fashion companies, this means adopting clear labeling practices, making certifications easily accessible, and embedding sustainability information across digital and in-store channels. Providing authenticity through traceability tools, sustainability reports, and third-party validations can enhance consumer confidence and strengthen long-term loyalty (Grubor & Milovanov, 2017).

Social influence also emerged as a powerful determinant of sustainable clothing choices, suggesting that brands should actively leverage peer dynamics and digital communities. Studies have shown that social validation through peer approval, influencers, and online communities significantly shapes sustainable fashion adoption (Kang et al., 2013). Collaborations with influencers who embody authentic eco-conscious lifestyles, the promotion of user-generated content that celebrates sustainable purchases, and the creation of interactive community platforms can help position sustainable fashion as both socially desirable and aspirational (El-Shihy and Awaad, 2025). By tapping into the millennial tendency to share experiences online, brands can amplify word-of-mouth effects and build a sense of collective identity around eco-friendly consumption.

Finally, practical opportunities lie in expanding circular economy initiatives. Recycling programs, take-back schemes, and repair services not only reduce waste but also enhance millennials' sense of participation in sustainability (Pedersen et al., 2019). Integrating such initiatives into business models enables fashion retailers to strengthen their environmental credentials while addressing consumer concerns about overconsumption and waste. By embedding circularity into their

operations, companies can transform sustainability from a niche preference to a mainstream expectation in the fashion industry (Kirchherr et al., 2017).

Limitations and Future Research Directions
Like all qualitative studies, this research has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the sample of 17 urban, educated millennials may not reflect the broader diversity of millennial consumers, especially those in rural or less privileged contexts. Second, relying on self-reported interview data may have introduced social desirability bias, where participants present themselves in a more favorable light (Bergen & Labonté, 2019; Nikolopoulou, 2023). Third, focusing exclusively on millennials overlooks generational differences, particularly with Gen Z, whose sustainability behaviors and digital engagement often differ (Savin et al., 2024). Finally, the study's single-country design limits cross-cultural generalizability, as cultural factors significantly influence sustainable consumption (Pérez et al., 2025).

Future research should adopt mixed-method approaches, combining qualitative insights with quantitative validation, such as large-scale surveys or longitudinal designs. Comparative studies across generational cohorts and cultural contexts would deepen understanding of diverse motivations and barriers. Additionally, applying theoretical frameworks like the Norm Activation Model, Self-Determination Theory, or Social Practice Theory could offer nuanced perspectives on how ethical responsibility, intrinsic motivation, and social norms shape sustainable fashion adoption.

Conclusion
This study explored millennials' perceptions and engagement with sustainable fashion through seventy interviews. Findings indicate that environmental responsibility, personal well-being, credible information, and social influence drive sustainable fashion choices, reflecting both ethical and self-oriented motivations. Interpreted via the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), millennials' attitudes are shaped by ecological awareness and health benefits; subjective norms are reinforced by peers, social media, and influencers; and perceived behavioral control is enhanced through certifications, labels, and reviews, which build confidence in making informed purchases. These factors collectively strengthen behavioral intentions, supporting TPB's explanatory power in sustainable fashion adoption. Theoretically, the study validates TPB in this context and highlights the interplay of health and identity motivations with traditional constructs. Practically, brands can promote sustainable fashion by emphasizing dual benefits, ensuring transparent communication, and leveraging peer influence. Millennials' active, informed, and socially embedded engagement suggests a growing market opportunity. Future research could examine generational and cross-cultural variations and assess the relative impact of TPB constructs on actual behavior.

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