

# The Influence of Consumer Attitude on Purchasing Behaviour Towards the Premium Fashion Apparel in Gujarat: The Moderating Effect of Sustainability – A Quantitative Study

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## ABSTRACT

The discrepancy between attitudes and behaviours is a significant topic in social research. This study aims to pinpoint the primary obstacles that affect the intention to buy sustainable clothing, with the goal of understanding why consumers fail to translate their pro-sustainable attitudes into actual purchasing actions. Grounded in Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour, the research employs a quantitative approach. The results indicate that trust and environmental knowledge are the key barriers contributing to the attitude-behaviour gap. The findings offer comprehensive insights for stakeholders to better grasp the factors affecting sustainable purchase intentions, enabling them to plan accordingly. Consequently, companies can leverage these insights to craft effective strategies that promote sustainable choices among younger generations, who are expected to be the primary market for sustainable fashion in the future. To analyse this we have tried to understand the influence of attitude towards premium apparel on purchasing behaviour towards premium apparel we have used regression analysis and to understand the moderating impact of sustainability on the influence of attitude on purchasing behaviour we employed SEM and Jamovi.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Apparel, Premium, Attitude, Purchasing Behaviour

## INTRODUCTION

In many developing nations, apparel companies primarily focus on basic assembly or OEM production for foreign clients, often neglecting design and quality aspects. This gives international brands a competitive edge over local apparel products in terms of design and quality (Hwang & Jung, 1993; Min et al., 1986). As a result, international brands typically enjoy a premium status in developing countries, even if they are not considered premium in their home markets. For instance, Levi's and Tommy Hilfiger are viewed as premium brands in India, despite having lost this image in the United States.

The preference for international brands over domestic ones in developing countries is well-established in research (e.g., Batra, Ramaswamy, Alden, Steenkamp, & Ramachander, 2000). For example, Indian consumers evaluated the Levi's brand more positively for quality and emotional benefits compared to local jeans (Kumar, Lee

& Kim, 2009). This preference was particularly strong when international brands first became available, as they were scarce and served as status symbols (Ger, Belk, & Lasca, 1993). The use of international brands to display social standing is more prevalent in developing countries with greater status mobility (Kottak, 1990). Owning an international brand is seen as a sign of success and empowerment among consumers (Willis, 2006). In India, international brands are associated with "foreign envy", setting owners apart from their peers (Kavilanz, 2007, May 1).

Media coverage frequently reports consumers' willingness to purchase international brands despite high prices. In India, working women often spend about half of their salaries on international brand apparel (Hasan, Issar, Ojha & Singh, 2006, November 6). The popularity of international brands encourages domestic companies to develop their own brands for local markets, as explained by the Flying Geese Model. However, the premium

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image of international brands may not be permanent, as countries develop their own national brands and improve the quality and design of domestic products. In the Indian context, this trend is evident, with consumers showing a strong preference for international brands and domestic companies striving to compete in the market.

National brands in India emerged during the Golden Age phase, following the introduction of international brands—in the early 1980s for Korea and the mid-1990s for India. This phenomenon can be attributed to both demand and supply factors. On the demand side, the introduction of international brands coincided with a growing middle class, which increased the appetite for branded apparel.

This economic boom led to the hosting of major sporting events and a shift in consumer preferences towards sportswear and casual clothing. India's economic liberalisation in 1991 spurred growth, prompting the establishment of organised retail formats in the mid-1990s and boosting demand for high-quality branded goods (Tewari, 2008). On the supply side, major apparel manufacturers and exporters acquired knowledge for brand development through direct production for foreign buyers or by observing international brand management. This aligns with Gereffi's GCC model, highlighting the role of learning through GCC participation in enabling Asian NIEs to progress from OEM to OBM (Gereffi & Tam, 1998). National brand development became a viable growth strategy due to increasing international brand penetration and pressure to establish domestic brands. In India, a common trend was the initial development of national brands in high-end men's suits, followed by expansion into women's apparel and mid-priced casual wear. The rise of national brands in India has been ongoing since the mid-1990s, with the top 20–30 textile and apparel companies introducing their own labels (Tewari, 2005). Examples include Colour Plus in 1993, Flying Machine's relaunch by Arvind Mills in 1997, Parx by Raymond in 1999, and Indian Terrain by Celebrity Fashion Limited (CFL) in 2001 (Arvind Mills, 2012; Colour Plus, 2012; Kamath, 2010, March 5; Raymond Group, 2012). Colour Plus, a pioneering national brand, was created in 1993 by Ambattur Clothing Company, a major apparel exporter, and later acquired by the Raymond Group, India's leading vertically integrated apparel firm (Raymond Group, 2012; Tewari, 2005). The brand has expanded to 350 stores nationwide (Colour Plus, 2012). Flying Machine,

India's iconic jeans brand, was developed by Arvind Mills, the Lalbhai Group's flagship company. Based in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Arvind Mills is India's largest denim manufacturer and the world's fourth-largest denim producer and exporter. The company markets its own brands such as Flying Machine, Newport, and Excalibur, while also licensing international brands like Arrow, Lee, Wrangler, and Tommy Hilfiger through its retail networks (Arvind Mills, 2012). Indian Terrain, another prominent national brand, is a premium menswear label established in 2001 by CFL. Founded in 1988 in Chennai, CFL exports shirts and trousers to brands including Gap, Timberland, Dockers, Nautica, The North Face, Ann Taylor, Armani Jeans, and Eddie Bauer, as well as European Union markets (Kamath, 2010, March 5). In conclusion, national brands emerge during the Golden Age stage, when developing countries achieve sufficient economic growth to generate diverse and sophisticated consumer demand for branded apparel, and when the necessary skills and knowledge for apparel brand development are acquired through export experiences and involvement with international brands operating in the country.

In India, private label brands emerged during the Golden Age period in the late 1990s. Retailers develop private brands (PBs), or store brands, to differentiate their stores and increase profit margins. Both national brands and PBs are stocked in retail stores, with varying ratios. PB development requires substantial sales volumes, making retail concentration crucial (Lincoln & Thomassen, 2009). The early emergence of PBs in India was due to the rapid expansion of department stores and shopping centres in urban areas from the mid-1990s, driven by major retail groups affiliated with Indian conglomerates (Tewari, 2008). From 2001, modern retail space in India increased significantly, with about 10 million square feet added in 2003 (Deloitte Development, LLC, 2007). This proliferation of retail malls created demand for high-quality branded merchandise. As national brand development lagged behind retail growth, department stores created their own labels (Tewari, 2008). Consequently, establishing a department store in India often coincided with introducing a PB. Indian department stores feature a higher proportion of PBs compared to Korean counterparts. For example, Westside offers 90% of its merchandise as a PB, Reliance 80%, and Pantaloons 75% (Muralidharan, 2009, September 1). A distinctive feature of Indian PBs is the identical naming of the PB

and store, such as Pantaloons serving as both store and PB name. PBs in three prominent Indian department stores include: Shoppers' Stop (Chandru L. Raheja Group) established in 1991, Pantaloons (Future Group) launched in 1997, and Westside (Trent, a Tata Group subsidiary) introduced in 1998 (Pantaloon retail India, 2012; Shopper's Stop, 2012; Trent, Ltd., 2020).

The role of attitude in purchasing behaviour of premium apparel in India is significant, as it influences consumer intentions and actual purchasing decisions. Attitude, in conjunction with other factors, shapes how consumers perceive and decide to purchase luxury and sustainable apparel.

### Key Insights on Attitude and Purchasing Behaviour

*Attitude and Premium Apparel:* Attitude is a crucial determinant of purchasing intentions for premium fashion goods in India, although subjective norms are even more influential.

Positive attitudes towards luxury brands are shaped by sensory, intellectual, behavioural, and affective experiences.

*Western Apparel Brands:* Indian consumers' attitudes towards Western apparel brands are positively influenced by Western acculturation and consumer cosmopolitanism. A positive attitude can lead to higher purchase intentions, even in the presence of consumer ethnocentrism.

*Sustainable Apparel:* Attitude plays a mediating role in the intention to purchase sustainable apparel among Gen Z consumers. Positive attitudes towards sustainable apparel are associated with green perceived value and are moderated by materialistic values and consumer knowledge. Furthermore, attitude, along with perceived behavioural control and personal moral norms, significantly influences eco-friendly apparel purchase intentions.

*Organic Apparel:* Attitude, in combination with product knowledge and involvement, influences the intention to purchase organic apparel. Environmental knowledge and scepticism can affect this relationship.

*Green Apparel:* A positive environmental attitude is associated with green apparel purchasing behaviour. This

relationship is supported by green trust and environmental concern.

Attitude is a pivotal factor in the purchasing behaviour of premium apparel in India, influencing both luxury and sustainable apparel markets. While it is a strong predictor of purchase intentions, it often operates in conjunction with other factors such as subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and consumer knowledge. Understanding these dynamics can assist marketers and retailers in tailoring their strategies to better meet consumer expectations and drive sales in the Indian market.

Sustainability is increasingly influencing the purchasing behaviour of premium fashion apparel consumers in India. This shift is driven by a growing awareness of environmental issues and a willingness to support eco-friendly products.

### Key Factors Influencing Sustainable Purchasing Behaviour

- *Environmental Awareness and Attitude:* Indian consumers, particularly millennials, are becoming more environmentally conscious and exhibit a positive attitude towards sustainable apparel. This awareness significantly influences their purchase intentions.
- *Willingness to Pay a Premium:* Contrary to the traditional view of Indian consumers as price-sensitive, there is an emerging willingness to pay a premium for green apparel, indicating a shift towards valuing sustainability over cost.
- *Perceived Consumer Effectiveness:* Consumers who believe their purchasing decisions can positively impact the environment are more likely to buy sustainable apparel. This belief strengthens the attitude-intention relationship.
- *Cultural and Social Influences:* A Collectivist cultural orientation and social norms play a significant role in shaping sustainable purchasing behaviour. Consumers are influenced by their social groups and cultural values, which can enhance their intention to purchase eco-friendly products.
- *Barriers to Sustainable Purchasing:* Despite positive attitudes, barriers such as greenwashing

concerns, perceived aesthetic risks, and the gap between purchase intention and actual behaviour persist. These factors can negatively impact the transition from intention to actual purchase.

Sustainability is becoming a crucial factor in the purchasing behaviour of premium fashion apparel in India. While environmental awareness and a willingness to pay a premium are driving this trend, cultural influences and perceived consumer effectiveness also play significant roles. However, challenges such as greenwashing and aesthetic concerns need to be addressed to bridge the gap between intention and actual purchasing behaviour.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Various elements, such as social status, individuality, and ethical concerns, influence customer perceptions of high-

### Key Factors Influencing Consumer Purchasing Behaviour Across Regions

Factor	Description	Citation
Hedonic Value	Emotional and sensory pleasure derived from luxury purchases.	(Pasricha et al., 2020) (Jain, 2020)
Social Status	Use of luxury brands to signal wealth and prestige.	(Kurt & Kara, 2024) (Makhitha et al., 2024)
Brand Equity	Positive correlation between brand equity and purchase intention.	(Kurt & Kara, 2024) (Vimalnath et al., 2024)
Income Levels	Higher-income consumers are more likely to purchase luxury brands.	(Wang & Tong, 2017)
Cultural Values	Luxury brands often carry symbolic meanings that resonate with cultural identities.	(Sun et al., 2024) (Li, 2023)
Materialism	Desire for material possessions influences luxury purchasing behaviour.	(Hien et al., 2024) (Agarwal & Gera, 2023)
Self-Identity	Luxury purchases often reflect consumers' self-concept and individuality.	(Singh, 2023)

### Factors Influencing Consumer Purchasing Behaviour Towards Premium Fashion Apparel

Consumer purchasing decisions regarding high-end fashion clothing are shaped by a variety of factors, including psychological, social, economic, and demographic influences. For marketers and brands targeting the luxury market, grasping these elements is essential for attracting the interest of selective consumers. This section delves into the primary factors affecting consumer purchasing behaviour in the realm of premium fashion apparel, drawing on insights from pertinent research.

end fashion clothing. Studies suggest that consumers increasingly regard premium brands as emblems of prestige and personal expression, especially in developing markets like India (Kiritinh & Rami, 2022) (Tak & Pareek, 2016). This trend is fuelled by rising disposable incomes and a heightened desire for self-expression through fashion choices. Social Status and Prestige i.e., Premium fashion labels are seen as symbols of status, elevating the social position of the wearer. Consumers frequently link the ownership of high-end clothing with uniqueness and fashion awareness, which positively affect their perceptions of these brands (Tak & Pareek, 2016). Ethical Considerations like Ethical issues, such as the use of sweatshop labour, also shape attitudes towards premium clothing. Consumers demonstrate a readiness to pay more for ethically made premium products, indicating a growing consciousness of social responsibility (Phau et al., 2015).

## Psychological Factors

### Hedonic and Utilitarian Values

Consumers frequently buy high-end fashion items for both pleasure and practicality. Hedonic values, which pertain to the emotional and sensory enjoyment gained from a purchase, significantly influence premium purchasing behaviour. Research indicates that consumers in developing markets, like India, are especially attracted to premium brands due to the hedonic value they provide, which resonate with their aspirations and self-image (Pasricha et al., 2020) (Jain, 2020). Conversely, utilitarian

values, which emphasise a product's functional and practical benefits, are less dominant in premium purchases but still affect consumer choices, particularly regarding perceived quality and longevity (Vimalnath et al., 2024).

### **Social Status and Conspicuous Consumption**

Social status is a major factor in premium purchasing habits. People often use high-end fashion to display their wealth and social position. This behaviour, known as conspicuous consumption, is especially common in emerging markets where premium brands are viewed as indicators of success and prestige (Kurt & Kara, 2024) (Makhitha et al., 2024). For example, in South Africa, status is identified as the most influential factor in the intention to buy premium clothing (Makhitha et al., 2024). Similarly, in China, wealthy consumers are driven by social-adjustive motivations, which fuel their desire to purchase premium items to meet societal expectations (Wang & Tong, 2017).

### **Self-Identity and Personal Expression**

Premium fashion also acts as a medium for self-expression and personal identity. Consumers often choose premium brands to showcase their individuality and align with their self-concept. This is particularly relevant for younger buyers, like Generation Z, who prioritise uniqueness and self-congruity in their purchasing choices (Singh, 2023). Moreover, the urge for self-expression is often linked to the need for social approval, as consumers seek recognition and acceptance from their peers (Puri, 2024).

### **Social Factors**

#### **Social Norms and Subjective Norms**

Consumer behaviour towards premium fashion items is greatly affected by both social and subjective norms. Subjective norms involve the perceived pressure from important individuals to perform a certain action, whereas social norms encompass wider societal expectations. In certain settings, like Vietnam, subjective norms appear to have minimal impact on the intention to purchase luxury goods, indicating that consumers in these areas are more influenced by their personal beliefs and values rather than societal pressures (Hien et al., 2024). Conversely,

in other regions such as India, social norms have a more pronounced effect, especially in forming attitudes towards luxury brands (Jain, 2020).

### **Cultural and Symbolic Values**

Cultural and symbolic values significantly influence consumer choices when it comes to premium fashion clothing. Premium brands often embody symbolic meanings that align with the cultural and social identities of consumers. For instance, in Indonesia, millennials perceive Premium fashion labels as indicators of success and social standing, with their purchasing decisions frequently swayed by the symbolic and monetary values these brands represent (Sun et al., 2024). Likewise, in China, cultural elements such as the pursuit of social harmony and the desire to “keep up with the Joneses” fuel the demand for premium goods (Li, 2023).

### **Economic Factors**

#### **Income and Price Sensitivity**

Income levels play a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviour when it comes to purchasing high-end fashion items. Individuals with substantial incomes are more inclined to buy luxury brands, as their financial resources allow them to afford such products. For example, in China, younger affluent individuals with higher incomes and international education backgrounds are more prone to indulge in luxury purchases (Wang & Tong, 2017). Nonetheless, even wealthy consumers remain mindful of prices, often seeking value for their money and being swayed by the perceived quality and exclusivity of luxury brands (Vimalnath et al., 2024).

#### **Economic Stability and Consumer Confidence**

Premium fashion apparel purchasing behaviour is also shaped by economic stability and consumer confidence. In times of economic instability, consumers might lean towards more budget-friendly choices within the same brand's offerings, rather than completely forgoing premium brands (Kurt & Kara, 2024). This underscores the ability of premium brands to retain consumer loyalty even during economic challenges.

## Brand-Related Factors

### Brand Equity and Prestige

Brand equity and prestige are essential elements influencing consumer decisions when it comes to purchasing premium fashion clothing. Premium brands frequently utilise their robust brand equity to justify premium pricing and secure consumer loyalty. Research indicates a positive relationship between brand equity and the intention to purchase, as consumers are inclined to spend more on brands they view as prestigious and of superior quality (Kurt & Kara, 2024) (Vimalnath et al., 2024). Furthermore, brand trust significantly impacts consumer choices, especially in emerging markets where consumers might be more cautious and prioritise brand dependability (Sultan & Setiawati, 2024).

### Brand Image and Design Value

The image and perceived design value of premium fashion brands significantly impact consumer purchasing choices. People often link premium brands with exceptional design, craftsmanship, and exclusivity, which boosts their perceived worth. In Indonesia, for instance, millennials focus on symbolic and financial values, which are frequently mirrored in the design and branding of luxury fashion items (Sun et al., 2024). Likewise, in India, the perceived design value of luxury brands is a major factor influencing purchase intentions, as consumers aim to align their purchases with their self-identity and aspirations (Jain, 2020).

## Demographic Factors

### Age, Gender and Income

Demographic elements like age, gender, and income significantly affect how consumers choose to buy premium fashion clothing. Younger individuals, especially those from Generation Y and Z, tend to favour luxury fashion items more due to their extensive interaction with digital media and their pursuit of distinctive experiences (Puri, 2024) (Singh, 2023). Gender distinctions also contribute, as research shows that men and women often have varying goals and tastes regarding luxury brands (Naaz et al., 2024). As previously mentioned, income levels are a

crucial factor in luxury purchasing habits, with wealthier consumers being more inclined to indulge in luxury goods (Wang & Tong, 2017).

## Regional Differences

### Emerging Markets

In developing regions like India, Vietnam, and South Africa, consumer purchasing behaviour towards high-end fashion clothing is often influenced by swift economic development and evolving consumer ambitions. In these areas, luxury brands are perceived as emblems of achievement and prestige, motivating consumers to make purchases that reflect their social and cultural identities (Makhitha et al., 2024) (Pasricha et al., 2020) (Jain, 2020). Moreover, elements such as materialism and the quest for individuality are more evident in these markets, as consumers aim to stand out through their purchasing choices (Hien et al., 2024) (Agarwal & Gera, 2023).

Various theoretical models have been utilised to explore the link between consumer attitudes and purchasing behaviour in the realm of premium fashion clothing. Among these are the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and Social Identity Theory. The TPB highlights the influence of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control on purchasing intentions. Research indicates that subjective norms, such as societal pressure, significantly impact luxury purchasing intentions, especially in collectivist cultures (Jain et al., 2017) (Jain & Khan, 2017). SDT underscores the significance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Studies suggest that intrinsic elements like brand loyalty and hedonic motivation, along with extrinsic elements like social motivation, greatly affect luxury apparel purchase intentions (Aggarwal et al., 2025). Social Identity Theory suggests that a consumer's affiliation with a social group affects their buying behaviour. Research has demonstrated that social identity and self-identity are crucial factors driving purchase intentions for luxury fashion items (Salem & Salem, 2018) (Jain, 2020). The TRA emphasises the impact of attitudes and subjective norms on behavioural intentions. Studies have found that hedonic and social values are important predictors of attitudes and purchase intentions for luxury fashion products (Jain, 2020).

*Strategies for Shaping Consumer Attitudes and Purchasing Behaviour:* To effectively shape consumer attitudes and influence purchasing behaviour, luxury fashion brands should adopt the following approaches:

*Utilise Social Media and Celebrity Endorsements:* Social media platforms and celebrity endorsements serve as influential means to engage young consumers and boost brand visibility (Zhou, 2024) (Lau et al., 2022).

*Emphasise Brand Storytelling:* Building emotional connections with consumers through brand storytelling and conveying values can strengthen brand loyalty and encourage purchasing intentions (“The Factors of Chinese Consumer’s Perception, Consumer’s Emotional Attitude and Consumer’s Motivation to Luxury Brand Affecting Consumer Purchasing Behaviour: Take Wuhan Consumers as an Example”, 2022) (Fanandaru et al., 2023).

*Personalised Marketing Campaigns:* Crafting tailored marketing strategies that consider consumer self-esteem and cultural values can help brands connect more deeply with their target audience (Zhou, 2024) (Opiri & Lang, 2016).

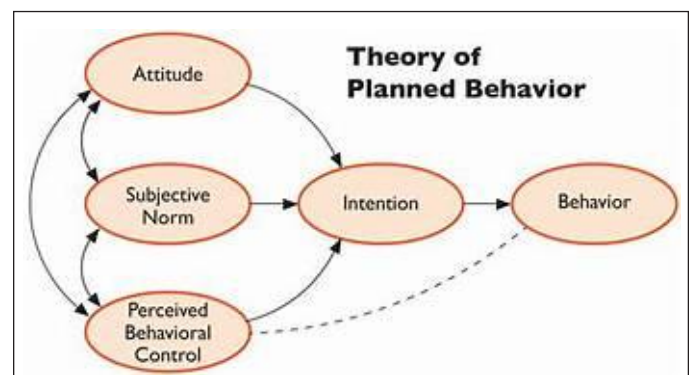
*Highlight Exclusivity and Distinctiveness:* Emphasising the exclusivity and distinctiveness of luxury items can attract consumers seeking self-expression and social acknowledgement (“The Factors of Chinese Consumer’s Perception, Consumer’s Emotional Attitude and Consumer’s Motivation to Luxury Brand Affecting Consumer Purchasing Behaviour: Take Wuhan Consumers as an Example”, 2022) (Jain, 2020).

*Sustainability and Ethical Practices:* Integrating sustainability and ethical practices into brand strategies can appeal to consumers who value these principles in their purchasing choices (Singh, 2023) (Lau et al., 2022).

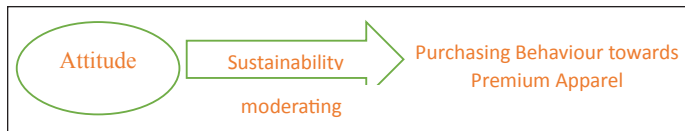
Environmental awareness strengthens the link between attitudes and purchasing behaviour in the realm of sustainable fashion. It serves as a moderator, boosting the influence of electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) and subjective norms on purchasing behaviour (Khan et al., 2024). Consumers who are highly environmentally conscious are more likely to be swayed by positive eWOM and social norms, resulting in a greater likelihood of purchasing sustainable clothing (Khan et al., 2024). Pro-environmental self-identity also moderates the

connection between attitudes and purchasing behaviour. A strong pro-environmental identity amplifies the positive impact of affective attitudes on purchasing behaviour, whereas a weaker identity reduces this effect (Carfora et al., 2024). This identity further interacts with past behaviours, where a robust pro-environmental identity can intensify the effect of previous sustainable purchasing behaviours on current intentions (Carfora et al., 2024). Price consciousness can influence the relationship between environmental knowledge, past sustainable behaviour, and purchase intentions. Even price-conscious consumers may prioritise sustainable clothing if they perceive the environmental benefits to outweigh the costs (Pardeshi et al., 2024). In the context of luxury sustainable brands, brand experience moderates the relationship between sustainable purchasing intentions and outcomes like WOM and satisfaction. A positive brand experience can strengthen the effect of sustainable attitudes on purchasing behaviour (Kokatnur et al., 2024). While sustainability plays a significant role in purchasing behaviour, it is crucial to recognise that not all consumers prioritise sustainability equally. Factors such as price sensitivity and brand loyalty can also be pivotal in purchasing decisions, sometimes overshadowing sustainability concerns. Understanding these dynamics can assist fashion brands in tailoring their strategies to different consumer segments.

Conceptual framework which has been used by me to propose this hypothesis is taken foundation from the conceptual framework of TPB i.e., whose I extended to study the influence of attitude towards premium apparel on purchasing behaviour of premium apparel with moderating effect of sustainability,



So revised conceptual framework according to my hypothesis is:



On the basis of above studies propose a hypothesis as follows:

H0 - There is no relationship between attitude of buyer towards premium apparel and purchasing behaviour of premium fashion apparels with moderating effect of sustainability.

H1 - There is relationship between attitude of buyer towards premium apparel and purchasing behaviour of premium fashion apparels with moderating effect of sustainability.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Gap

The existing literature on consumer behaviour in the premium apparel sector highlights several important factors influencing purchasing decisions, such as, attitude. However, a significant research gap persists in understanding how this factors interact with sustainability as moderating factor to shape consumer purchasing behaviour.

### Research Problem

The rapid evolution of consumer preferences in the premium apparel market poses significant challenges for brands aiming to effectively meet the needs and expectations of diverse consumer segments. With factors influencing purchase behaviour, such as attitude and individual demographic characteristics (age, gender, income, education, and occupation) and sustainability understanding these dynamics becomes crucial for strategic marketing and product positioning. Despite the recognised importance of these factors, there remains a gap in comprehensive studies that systematically explore how they interact and affect consumer purchasing behaviour in the context of premium apparel.

## RESEARCH MODEL

So revised conceptual framework according to my

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To study the impact of attitude towards purchasing premium apparels.
- To investigate the purchasing behaviour of premium apparel among consumers of different income groups.
- To examine the role of educational qualifications in shaping the consumer purchasing behaviour of premium apparel.
- To analyse how age affects the consumer purchasing behaviour of premium apparel.
- To explore the influence of occupation on the purchasing behaviour of premium apparels of premium apparel.
- To examine the moderating effect of sustainability on the relationship between attitude and purchase behaviour.

## HYPOTHESIS TESTED

- *Null Hypothesis (Ho):* There is no significant difference in the consumer Purchasing Behaviour (PB) among different income groups.  
*Alternative Hypothesis (H1):* There is a significant difference in the consumer Purchasing Behaviour (PB) among different income groups.
- *Null Hypothesis (Ho):* There is no significant difference in consumer Purchasing Behaviour (PB) among individuals with different educational qualifications.  
*Alternative Hypothesis (H1):* There is a significant difference in consumer Purchasing Behaviour (PB) among individuals with different educational qualifications
- *Null Hypothesis (Ho):* There is no significant difference in consumer Purchasing Behaviour (PB) across different age groups.  
*Alternative Hypothesis (H1):* There is a significant difference in consumer Purchasing Behaviour (PB) across different age groups.
- *Null Hypothesis (Ho):* There is no significant

difference in consumer Purchasing Behaviour (PB) across different occupations.

*Alternative Hypothesis (H1):* There is a significant difference in consumer Purchasing Behaviour (PB) across different occupations.

- *Null Hypothesis (Ho):* There is no relationship between attitude of buyer towards premium apparel and purchasing behaviour of premium fashion apparels with moderating effect of sustainability.

*Alternative Hypothesis (H1):* There is relationship between attitude of buyer towards premium apparel and purchasing behaviour of premium fashion apparels with moderating effect of sustainability.

## Research Design: Descriptive

### Sampling Plan

*Sample Size:* 1252

*Sample Unit:* Surat, Baroda, Ahmedabad

*Sampling Method:* Non Probability convenience sampling

*Research Instrument:* Structured Questionnaire

*Data Analysis Technique:* Using structural equational modelling for regression analysis and Descriptive statistics

### Demographics

- *Age:* Respondents from various age groups, ranging from young adults (above 18 years) to older consumers.
- *Gender:* Both male and female respondents were included.
- *Income:* Participants from different income brackets, including low, middle, and high-income groups.
- *Occupation:* Respondents from various occupations, including self-employed professionals, entrepreneurs, students, servicemen.

## Data Collection Method

### Primary Data Collection

Primary data was collected through both online and offline methods to reach a diverse sample of respondents.

### Online Data Collection

*Questionnaires:* An online survey was developed using platforms such as Google Forms. The questionnaire was distributed through social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) and professional networks (e.g., LinkedIn) to gather responses from participants across various demographics. This method allowed for quick data collection and facilitated responses from a larger audience.

### Offline Data Collection

*Face-to-Face Interviews:* Offline data was collected through face-to-face interactions at shopping malls, markets, and public spaces in selected cities (Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Rajkot, and Gandhinagar). Trained enumerators administered the surveys to respondents, allowing for clarification of questions and ensuring better understanding.

### Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data sources were also utilised to supplement the primary data and provide context for the research findings.

### Literature Review

A comprehensive review of existing literature was conducted, including books, academic journals, and articles related to consumer behaviour, aesthetics, and premium apparel. This review helped in understanding the theoretical framework and identifying gaps in the existing research.

### Market Reports and Industry Analysis

Secondary data from market research reports, industry publications, and statistical databases was analysed to gather information on current trends, consumer preferences, and market dynamics in the premium apparel sector. This provided a broader perspective on the research topic and helped in validating primary data findings.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis for the research study on consumer behaviour toward premium apparel was conducted using

SPSS Version 26.0 and Jamovi software. These analytical tools facilitated a comprehensive examination of the data, employing various statistical tests to explore relationships and draw meaningful conclusions.

### Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were calculated to provide a summary of the data characteristics. This included measures such as means, medians, standard deviations, and frequency distributions for demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, income, occupation) and key study variables (e.g., purchasing behaviour of premium apparels, attitude). Descriptive analysis helped in understanding the general trends and patterns within the sample.

### Normality Test

A normality test was performed to assess whether the data followed a normal distribution. This is crucial for determining the appropriate statistical tests to use in subsequent analyses. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test were applied to evaluate normality. Visual inspection of histograms complemented these tests to ensure robustness in assessing normality.

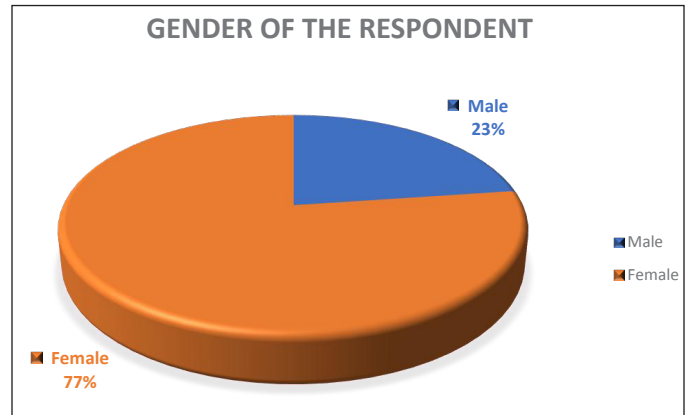
### Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach’s alpha to evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement scales used in the survey. A Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.70 or higher was considered acceptable, indicating that the items within each construct were measuring the same underlying concept consistently.

### Kruskal-Wallis Test

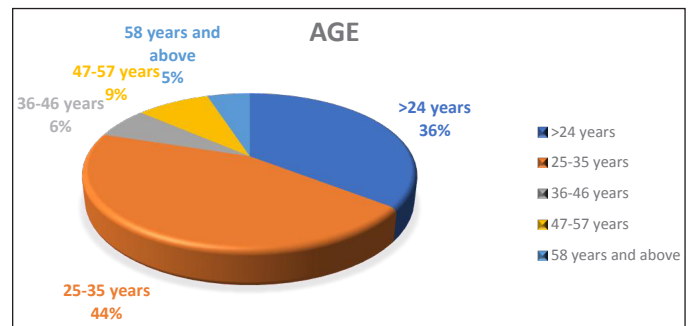
The Kruskal-Wallis test, a non-parametric alternative to ANOVA, was used to assess differences in purchasing behaviour of premium apparels among different income groups, educational qualifications, age groups, and occupations. This test was particularly useful given that the assumptions of normality were not met for some variables, allowing for robust comparisons across the different demographic categories.

### Demographic Analysis



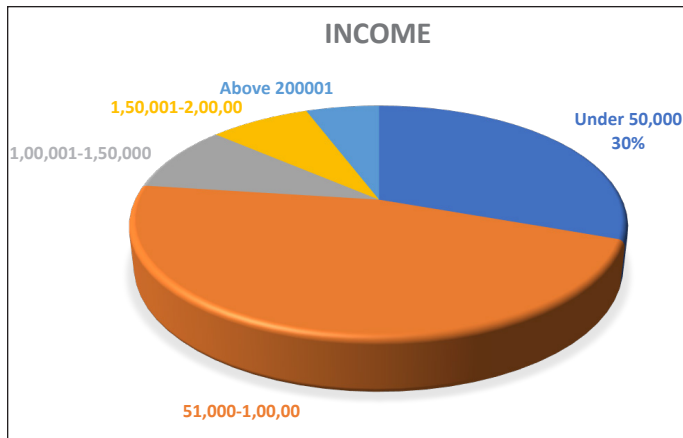
Gender		Percent
Valid	Male	22.8
	Female	77.2
	Total	100.0

The study’s respondents consisted of 22.8% males and 77.2% females, making up a total of 100% of the participants.



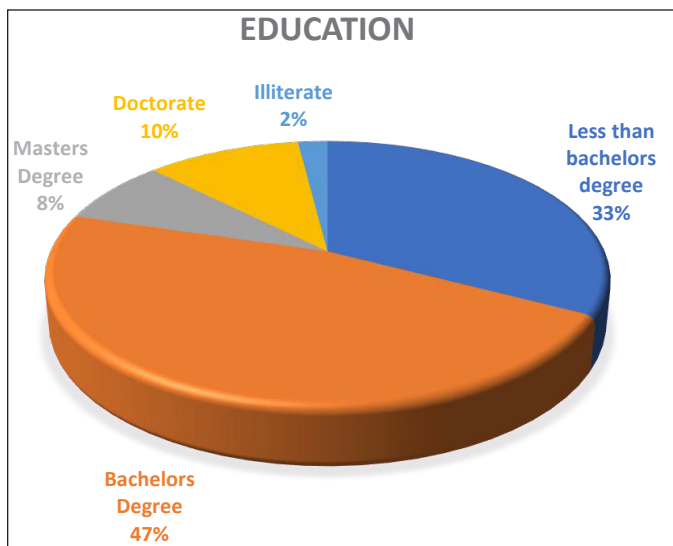
Age		Percent
Valid	>24 years	35.5
	25-35 years	44.4
	36-46 years	6.5
	47-57 years	8.6
	58 years and above	5.0
	Total	100.0

The age distribution of the study’s respondents was as follows: 35.5% were above 24 years, 44.4% were aged 25-35 years, 6.5% were aged 36-46 years, 8.6% were aged 47-57 years, and 5.0% were 58 years and above, totaling 100% of the participants.



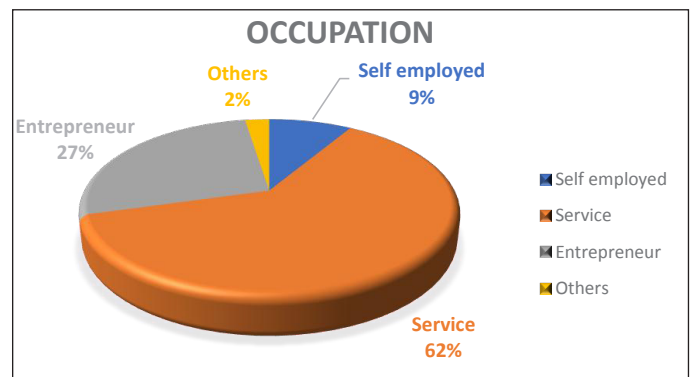
Income		
		Percent
Valid	Under 50,000	30.5
	51,000-1,00,00	46.6
	1,00,001-1,50,000	9.3
	1,50,001-2,00,00	7.9
	Above 200001	5.7
	Total	100.0

The income distribution of the study's respondents was as follows: 30.5% earned under 50,000, 46.6% earned between 51,000 and 1,00,000, 9.3% earned between 1,00,001 and 1,50,000, 7.9% earned between 1,50,001 and 2,00,000, and 5.7% earned above 2,00,001, making up a total of 100% of the participants.



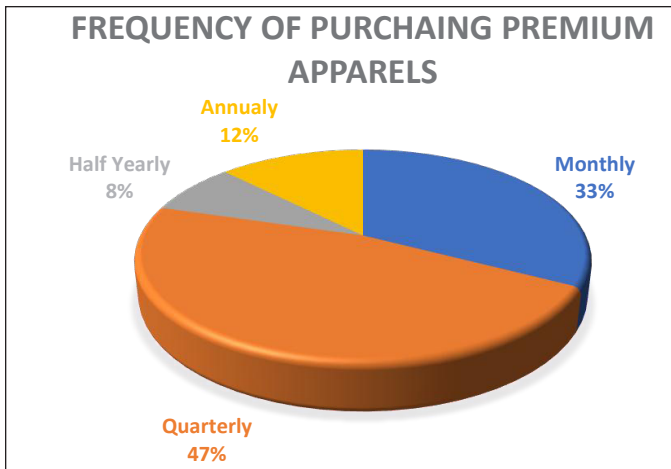
Education		
		Percent
Valid	Less than bachelors degree	32.6
	Bachelors Degree	47.0
	Masters Degree	7.9
	Doctorate	10.5
	Illiterate	2.0
	Total	100.0

The education levels of the study's respondents were distributed as follows: 32.6% had less than a bachelor's degree, 47.0% held a bachelor's degree, 7.9% had a master's degree, 10.5% had a doctorate, and 2.0% were illiterate, totaling 100% of the participants.



Occupation		
		Percent
Valid	Self employed	8.6
	Service	62.0
	Entrepreneur	26.9
	Others	2.5
	Total	100.0

The occupational distribution of the study's respondents was as follows: 8.6% were self-employed, 62.0% were in service, 26.9% were entrepreneurs, and 2.5% fell into other categories, making up a total of 100% of the participants.



Frequency of purchasing of premium apparels		
		Percent
Valid	Monthly	32.6
	Quarterly	47.0
	Half Yearly	7.9
	Annually	12.5
	Total	100.0

The frequency of purchasing premium apparel among the study’s respondents was distributed as follows: 32.6% purchased monthly, 47.0% purchased quarterly, 7.9% purchased half-yearly, and 12.5% purchased annually, making up a total of 100% of the participants.

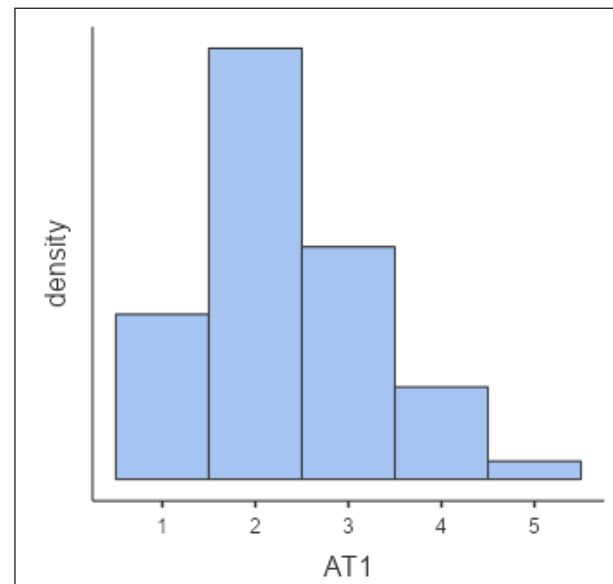
### Demographic Profiles

Demographics	%
Gender	Female
Age	25-35
Income (Monthly)	50,000-1,00,000
Education	Bachelor Degree
Occupation	Service
Frequency of Purchasing Premium apparel	Quarterly

### Descriptive Statistics

Descriptives	
	AT1
N	1252
Missing	0
Mean	2.33
Median	2.00
Standard deviation	0.940

Descriptives	
	AT1
Minimum	1
Maximum	5
Shapiro-Wilk W	0.873
Shapiro-Wilk p	<.001

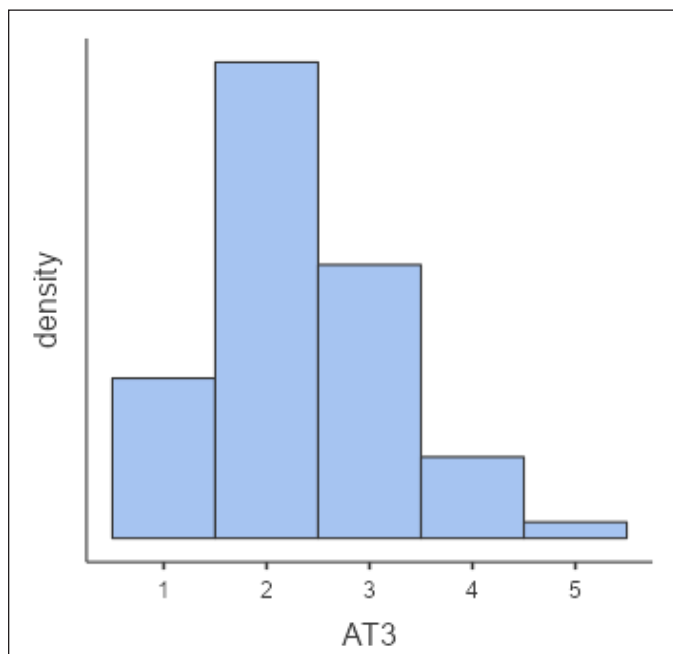


For AT1, the mean is 2.33, slightly above the median of 2.00, indicating a mild positive skew in the distribution. The standard deviation of 0.940 suggests moderate variability in the responses, with scores ranging from 1 to 5 fully represented. The Shapiro-Wilk test statistic is 0.873, and the associated p-value is less than 0.001, indicating a significant deviation from normality. This suggests that the distribution is not normally distributed, with a tendency for responses to cluster more toward the lower end of the scale. Overall, this finding is consistent with previous measures, indicating a general preference for lower scores among respondents.

Descriptives	
	AT2
N	1252
Missing	0
Mean	2.39
Median	2.00
Standard deviation	0.853
Minimum	1
Maximum	5
Shapiro-Wilk W	0.866
Shapiro-Wilk p	<.001

For AT2, the mean is 2.39, which is slightly above the median of 2.00, indicating a mild positive skew in the distribution. The standard deviation of 0.853 reflects moderate variability among the responses, with scores spanning the full range from 1 to 5. The Shapiro-Wilk test statistic is 0.866, and the associated p-value is less than 0.001, indicating a significant departure from normality. This suggests that the distribution is not normally distributed, with a tendency for responses to cluster more towards the lower end of the scale. These findings align with those observed in earlier measures, indicating that respondents consistently show a preference for lower scores in this assessment.

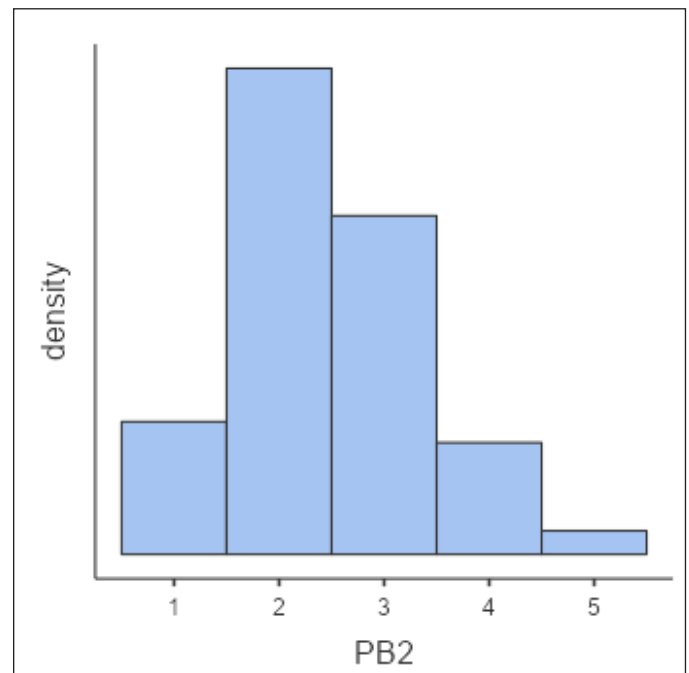
Descriptives	
	AT3
N	1252
Missing	0
Mean	2.32
Median	2.00
Standard deviation	0.891
Minimum	1
Maximum	5
Shapiro-Wilk W	0.869
Shapiro-Wilk p	<.001



For AT3, the mean is 2.32, which is again slightly above the median of 2.00, indicating a mild positive skew in the distribution. The standard deviation of 0.891 suggests moderate variability in the responses, with scores fully

covering the range from 1 to 5. The Shapiro-Wilk test statistic is 0.869, with a p-value less than 0.001, indicating a significant deviation from normality. This suggests that the distribution is not normally distributed, with a tendency for responses to cluster more toward the lower end of the scale. These characteristics are consistent with the trends observed in previous measures, reflecting a general inclination among respondents to favour lower scores in this assessment.

Descriptives	
	PB2
N	1252
Missing	0
Mean	2.46
Median	2.00
Standard deviation	0.909
Minimum	1
Maximum	5
Shapiro-Wilk W	0.878
Shapiro-Wilk p	<.001



For PB2, the mean score is 2.46, which is slightly above the median of 2.00, indicating a mild positive skew in the distribution. The standard deviation of 0.909 reflects moderate variability in the responses, with scores ranging from 1 to 5. The Shapiro-Wilk test statistic is 0.878, and the associated p-value is less than 0.001, suggesting a significant deviation from normality. This indicates

that the distribution is not normally distributed and that responses tend to cluster more towards the lower end of the scale. Overall, these findings are consistent with previous analyses, highlighting a general trend of respondents leaning toward lower scores in this assessment.

### KRUSKAL WALLIS

*Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):* There is no significant difference in the Purchasing Behaviour (PB) among different income groups.

*Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):* There is a significant difference in the Purchasing Behaviour (PB) among different income groups.

Kruskal-Wallis				
	$\chi^2$	df	p	$\epsilon^2$
PB	18.9	9	0.026	0.0151

The results from the Kruskal-Wallis test reveal a chi-square statistic of 18.9 with 9 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.026. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the purchasing behaviour across the different income groups, as the p-value is less than the commonly used threshold of 0.05. The effect size, represented by  $\eta^2$  (eta squared), is 0.0151, which suggests a small to moderate effect of income on purchasing behaviour. This result prompts the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) in favour of the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), indicating that income does play a role in how purchasing behaviour is experienced across the different groups.

*Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):* There is no significant difference in Purchasing Behaviour (PB) among individuals with different educational qualifications.

*Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):* There is a significant difference in Purchasing Behaviour (PB) among individuals with different educational qualifications.

Kruskal-Wallis				
	$\chi^2$	df	p	$\epsilon^2$
PB	21.4	7	0.003	0.0171

The Kruskal-Wallis test results indicate a chi-square statistic of 21.4 with 7 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.003. This p-value, being less than the standard significance level of 0.05, suggests that we can reject

the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) in favour of the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ). This finding implies that educational qualifications significantly influence the purchasing behaviour experienced by individuals.

*Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):* There is no significant difference in Purchasing Behaviour (PB) across different age groups.

*Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):* There is a significant difference in Purchasing Behaviour (PB) across different age groups.

Kruskal-Wallis			
	$\chi^2$	df	P
PB	9.68	9	0.377

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test for the relationship between Age and Perceived Benefits (PB) yielded a chi-square statistic of 9.68 with 9 degrees of freedom, resulting in a p-value of 0.377. Since this p-value exceeds the conventional significance level of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ). This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in purchasing behaviour across different age groups. The findings suggest that age does not play a critical role in shaping how individuals purchasing behaviour they receive, indicating a level of uniformity in perception among different age demographics.

*Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):* There is no significant difference in Purchasing Behaviour (PB) across different occupations.

*Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):* There is a significant difference in Purchasing Behaviour (PB) across different occupations.

Kruskal-Wallis			
	$\chi^2$	Df	P
PB	12.0	7	0.099

In terms of occupation, the Kruskal-Wallis test produced a chi-square statistic of 12.0 with 7 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.099. While this p-value is lower than 0.10, it is still above the standard threshold of 0.05, leading us to also fail to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) for occupation. Thus, we conclude that there is no significant difference in purchasing behaviour across various occupations.

H0: Attitude does not significantly influence purchase behaviour for branded apparel.

H1: Attitude significantly influence purchase behaviour for branded apparel.

Model Fit Measures				
R		R <sup>2</sup>		
0.842		0.709		
Model Coefficients – PB2				
Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	P
Intercept	0.0179	0.0600	0.299	0.765
AT	0.8142	0.0199	40.920	<.001

*AT (Attitude)*: This predictor has a highly significant positive effect (Estimate = 0.8142,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that increased levels of aesthetic trust are strongly associated with enhanced purchase behaviour.

### Analysis of Reliability Indices

Reliability Indices					
Variable	$\alpha$	$\omega_1$	$\omega_2$	$\omega_3$	AVE
Attitude	0.711	0.719	0.719	0.724	0.551
Purchase_Behaviour	0.693	0.694	0.694	0.695	0.513

Parameters Estimates									
95% Confidence Intervals									
Dep	Pred	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper		$\beta$	z	p
	Purchase_Behaviour	Attitude	0.7298	0.1862	0.365	1.0948	0.8055	3.919	<.001

The analysis of the parameter estimates for Purchase Behaviour reveals that Attitude ( $\beta = 0.8055$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) is the strongest significant predictors, indicating that positive attitudes significantly enhance purchasing decisions. Hence, we reject null hypothesis and accept alternative hypothesis.

### MODERATION OF SUSTAINABILITY ON PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR WITH RESPECT TO ATTITUDE

*Null Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>)*: Sustainability does not significantly moderate the relationship between attitude and purchase behaviour.

*Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>)*: Sustainability significantly moderates the relationship between attitude and purchase behaviour.

### Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )

*Acceptable Threshold*: Generally, an  $\alpha$  value of 0.70 or higher indicates good reliability.

### Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

*Acceptable Threshold*: AVE values of 0.50 or higher are recommended, indicating that the construct explains at least half of the variance in its items

- *Attitude*: 0.551 (Good)

AVE values suggest that constructs capture a significant amount of variance, further supporting the constructs' validity.

Moderation Estimates				
	Estimate	SE	z	p
AT1	0.8639	0.0162	53.39	<.001
SUSTAINABILITY	0.0444	0.0162	2.74	0.006
AT1 * SUSTAINABILITY	0.0271	0.0137	1.97	0.049

The results show that attitude (estimate = 0.8639,  $p < 0.001$ ) and sustainability (estimate = 0.0444,  $p = 0.006$ ) both significantly influence purchase behaviour individually. Additionally, the interaction term between attitude and sustainability (estimate = 0.0271,  $p = 0.049$ ) is statistically significant, indicating that sustainability significantly moderates the relationship between attitude and purchase behaviour. This suggests that the effect of attitude on purchase behaviour is enhanced when sustainability is considered, meaning that consumers'

sustainable preferences strengthen the positive impact of their attitude on purchase behaviour. Hence, the null

hypothesis is rejected, supporting the moderating role of sustainability in this relationship.

Statement	Frequency (%)	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neutral/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Reliability Test (Cronbach Alpha)
I have a positive attitude towards premium fashion due to perceived superior quality, social status reflection, and brand loyalty	47.5%	2.33	2.00	0.940	Agree	0.57
I appreciate premium fashion, but don't always buy it due to price, availability, and personal priorities	45.7%	2.39	2.00	0.853	Agree	0.52
I practice sustainable fashion by prioritising eco-friendly materials and ethical production when buying premium apparel, aligning with my values	43.6%	2.32	2.00	0.891	Agree	0.59
I am ready to pay a higher price for brand i like.	44.9%	2.46	2.00	0.909	Agree	0.60

## FINDINGS

- The relationship between sustainability and consumer behaviour in the premium apparel market is complex, influenced by various factors that shape attitudes and purchasing decisions. This analysis explores how sustainability moderates consumer attitudes and behaviours, particularly in the context of purchasing premium apparel.
- There is a statistically significant difference in the purchasing behaviour across the different income groups.
- Educational qualifications significantly influence the purchasing behaviour experienced by individuals.
- There is no statistically significant difference in purchasing behaviour across different age groups.
- there is no significant difference in purchasing behaviour across various occupations.
- The results show that attitude (estimate = 0.8639,  $p < 0.001$ ) and sustainability (estimate = 0.0444,  $p = 0.006$ ) both significantly influence purchase behaviour individually. Additionally, the interaction term between attitude and sustainability (estimate = 0.0271,  $p = 0.049$ ) is statistically significant, indicating that sustainability significantly moderates the relationship between attitude and purchase

behaviour. This suggests that the effect of attitude on purchase behaviour is enhanced when sustainability is considered, meaning that consumers' sustainable preferences strengthen the positive impact of their attitude on purchase behaviour, positive attitudes significantly enhance purchasing decisions.

## DISCUSSIONS

### Key Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour

*Consumer Attitudes:* Positive attitudes towards environmental sustainability significantly influence the likelihood of purchasing sustainable apparel. Research indicates that consumers who prioritise pro-environmental values are more inclined to buy sustainable products, suggesting that effective green marketing strategies can enhance consumer engagement.

*Sustainability Awareness:* Awareness of the environmental impacts associated with clothing production plays a crucial role in driving demand for sustainable fashion. Higher awareness levels correlate with increased sustainable consumption, as consumers become more informed about the negative consequences of fast fashion.

*Environmental Commitment:* A consumer's commitment to sustainable living affects their purchasing behaviour. Brands that align with these values tend to foster loyalty among consumers who prioritise environmental stewardship. Transparency regarding sustainability practices is essential for building trust and encouraging repeat purchases.

*Price Sensitivity:* While many consumers express a willingness to pay a premium for sustainable apparel, price sensitivity remains a barrier. Younger generations, such as Millennials and Gen Z, often face budget constraints that make them more cautious about spending on premium sustainable products.

*Social Influence:* Social norms and peer influences play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards sustainable fashion. Consumers are more likely to purchase from brands perceived as socially responsible or endorsed by their social circles.

### Barriers to Sustainable Purchasing

Despite the positive intentions towards sustainable apparel, several barriers moderate the transition from intention to actual purchase:

- *Retail Barriers:* Factors such as high prices, limited availability, and low visibility of sustainable options hinder consumer adoption of sustainable fashion.
- *Trust Issues:* Scepticism regarding sustainability claims made by brands can diminish consumer motivation to purchase eco-friendly products. Consumers need assurance that brands genuinely adhere to sustainable practices.
- *Knowledge Gaps:* A lack of understanding about the environmental impacts of fast fashion can prevent consumers from making informed choices about their apparel purchases.

### SUGGESTION

The moderating impact of sustainability on consumer attitudes and behaviours in the premium apparel market is shaped by a combination of awareness, commitment, social influence, and barriers to purchasing. Brands that effectively communicate their sustainability efforts and align with consumer values can enhance their appeal in

this increasingly eco-conscious market. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for fashion companies aiming to drive the adoption of sustainable practices while catering to the evolving preferences of consumers.

## IMPLICATION

### Industrial Implications

- Strategic sustainability communication is imperative for premium apparel brands, necessitating the active dissemination of their sustainability initiatives to consumers. Given that sustainability influences the relationship between consumer attitudes and purchasing behaviour, clear and transparent communication can significantly bolster consumer trust and enhance purchase intentions.
- The observation that income and education exert a significant influence on purchasing behaviour, whereas age and occupation do not, indicates that brands should prioritise segmenting and targeting consumers based on income levels and educational attainment rather than relying on traditional demographic variables such as age or occupational roles.
- *Addressing Retail Challenges:* The pronounced price sensitivity observed particularly among younger consumers necessitates that brands investigate cost-efficient sustainable production techniques or consider offering tiered product lines. Enhancing the accessibility and visibility of sustainable options both in physical retail environments and online platforms will contribute to bridging the gap between consumer intention and actual purchasing behaviour.
- *Utilise Social Influence:* The impact of social norms and peer influence is significant. Brands should engage with influencers, employ user-generated content, and develop community-driven campaigns to foster social validation concerning sustainable consumption.
- To enhance consumer trust, particularly in light of concerns regarding greenwashing, it is imperative for brands to implement third-party certifications, disclose life-cycle analysis data, and emphasise concrete sustainability

achievements. These measures are essential to reassure consumers who may be sceptical.

### Academic Implications

- The study advances the academic discourse on sustainability by examining its role not merely as a predictor but as a moderating variable in consumer behaviour. This nuanced perspective facilitates further exploration into the interactions between sustainability and psychological factors such as attitudes, values, and emotions.
- *Demographic-Specific Behavioural Insights:* The pronounced impact of income and education, as opposed to age or occupation, presents a challenge to traditional consumer segmentation models. Future scholarly research could investigate the reasons why certain demographic factors do not predict behaviour in sustainable consumption and assess whether these patterns persist across various markets or cultures.
- The findings advocate for the extension of established consumer behaviour models, such as the TPB, by integrating sustainability as a moderating or mediating construct. This is particularly pertinent in high-involvement purchase contexts, such as premium apparel.
- *Addressing the Intention-Behaviour Gap:* The research highlights enduring obstacles to sustainable purchasing. Scholars can advance this field by formulating behavioural intervention models or evaluating nudging strategies that facilitate the translation of sustainable attitudes into tangible behaviours.
- This study underscores the imperative for interdisciplinary research in addressing the complexities of sustainable consumption. It advocates for the integration of insights from marketing, psychology, environmental studies, and behavioural economics to develop a comprehensive framework for understanding consumer behaviour.

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