

Gen Z: Pioneering Sustainable Fashion Consumption in the Digital Era

Exploring how social media promotional content can bridge the sustainable fashion attitude-behaviour gap among Gen Z fashion consumers

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ABSTRACT

Companies and consumers' emphasis on sustainability and its practices has been on the rise in recent decades following an increased awareness of various environmental issues. This is especially true for fashion companies, as they are part of one of the most impacting industries in the world in terms of emissions, waste, and overconsumption. It seems, however, that consumer demand is not following the important shift towards sustainability. This disparity is particularly and surprisingly notable among Gen Z fashion consumers, who paradoxically represent a demographic known for its concern about environmental issues and social responsibility. Among these younger generations, social media advertising has emerged as a powerful tool in shaping consumer behaviour, although the role of its multiple types of promotion in driving sustainable fashion attitudes and consumption remains unexplored. By using semi-structured interviews as its qualitative collection method, this study aims to tackle this literature gap by investigating the impact of social media promotional content on bridging the sustainable attitude-behaviour gap among Gen Z fashion consumers. That is the divergence between their perception/attitudes towards sustainable fashion consumption, and their actual behaviours towards it.

By shedding light on the effectiveness of the most prominent types of social media promotional content types, namely influencer branded content, entertainment-based promotional content and targeted advertising, in reducing the sustainable fashion gap among Gen Z consumers, this research provides valuable insights for both academia and the industry. In fact, the findings are expected to uncover key points of improvement that would help practitioners and researchers to go towards more effective sustainable consumption promotional communication, hopefully contributing to the growth of sustainable fashion consumption among gen z consumers.

Keywords: Attitude-Behaviour Gap, Consumer behaviour, Generation Z, Social Media Promotional Content, Sustainable consumption, Sustainable Fashion

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1. Introduction

Contemporary western societies are characterized by a culture of consumerism, supported by the constant presence of advertising that promotes the idea that buying new goods will lead to happiness and fulfilment (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2023). This results in vicious cycles of overconsumption, leading to significant negative environmental impacts. Among the sectors that engage the most with this consumerist system, and consequently pollute the most, we find the fashion industry in the second position in terms of carbon dioxide emissions, right behind the petrochemical industry. With over 300 million individuals employed around the globe, and worth around 3 billion dollars it appears that the fashion industry is more polluting than all marine transport and international shipping combined (Wang et al., 2019; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). The main reasons for this are the consumption of energy, water, and chemicals that the production of clothes requires, coupled with excessive consumer purchasing habits. As an example, one shirt made of cotton and polyester respectively have emissions of 2.1 and 5.5 kg of CO₂, and dyeing one pound of textile approximately requires 113 litres of water (Goossensen, 2019). Using these numbers to estimate the impact your closet has on the environment is enough to imagine the colossal effects this industry has on our planet's health. This is without considering raw materials extraction, transport, and the 21 billion tons of textiles ending up in landfills every year (UNECE, 2018). In Europe, the yearly textile waste represents roughly 40% of its yearly production, with only 1% of the garments being recycled into new clothes (European Parliament, 2020). In their research, Todeschini et al. (2017) also point out that the fashion industry keeps growing in an unprecedented way, specifying that in the last 15 years, clothing production almost doubled. To top it all off, with the middle-class rise of some African, Asian and South American countries among other reasons, the fashion industry is expected to keep growing at record rates in the future (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017).

The last decade made clear that this throw-away society, including our consumerism model and unmonitored consumption activities among others, is leading humanity to a severe environmental, social, and economic degeneration crisis (Hume, 2010). In this regard, Earth has been giving us serious vital signs over the last couple of decades and experts are saying that many of them are "flashing red". Clear examples are increasing temperatures with each decade being hotter than the previous one and consequently the last decade the hottest one ever on record, rising sea levels caused by melting ice sheets and threatening coastal as well as island populations, or emissions of carbon dioxide

currently being at their highest with an increase of around 90% over the last 50 years (Ripple et al., 2022; United Nations, 2021). From new sustainable initiatives to rising protests, it is easily observable all around that consumers are increasingly giving importance to these concerns, to a point where sustainability has recently become an important driver for consumers' intention to buy (Gazzola, 2020). Today, companies have understood these new concerns and how they drive purchase intentions and are working towards what the consumers really want by promoting sustainable products and practices. This shift can for example be seen in sustainability research led by the G&A Institute (2020), in which it appears that the percentage of S&P 500 companies releasing sustainability reports went from around 20 in 2011 to over 90 in 2020. As consumers play a significant role in driving demand for sustainable fashion, they could be the solution to make the system shift to a better place, and it seems like this change of perspective is already underway in the fashion industry.

However, it appears that while the industry keeps shifting towards sustainability and organizations increasingly putting their attention on environmental issues, there are relatively small effects on the demand of sustainable fashion and its market is still quite small when compared to other industries (Jacobs et al., 2018). This divergence between consumers' attitudes towards sustainability and their actual consumption of it is typically referred to as the attitude-behaviour gap and can be influenced by factors such as cost considerations, restricted availability, or low awareness (Ronda, 2023). Because this study is primarily concerned with the role of social media in bridging the attitude-behaviour gap, the relevance lies in the latter factor, awareness, which the research is concerned with. In fact, as Ottman notes in his research (1998), strong marketing can influence individuals' perceptions and awareness, making them more willing to spend more, and/or go the extra mile to consume pro-environmental products. This underlines how vital awareness is in bridging the attitude-behaviour gap, suggesting that it can affect other factors such as the ones cited above, cost considerations and availability.

Central to the proliferation of fashion and sustainable fashion consumption is the role of social media promotion. In the digital age, social media platforms have become ubiquitous in shaping consumer behaviour and influencing purchasing decisions, especially among younger generations (Gazzola, 2020). With billions of users worldwide, platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok now serve as powerful channels to share content and participate in conversations within online communities. Considering this paradigm change, research on new consumer behaviours, especially those that occur in a digital setting, must

give particular consideration to the rise of social media promotional content as a decisional factor in purchases (Pereira et al., 2023). It is therefore crucial to dig deeper into how this prevalent consumption driver is impacting the perceptions and behaviours of Gen Z today and exploring how can this influence be positive and effective for the future of fashion consumption.

Despite the growing body of literature on sustainable fashion and consumer behaviour, the current literature lacks efforts to understand the role of different social media advertising types in bridging the attitude-behaviour gap among Gen Z consumers. This demographic represents a pivotal cohort in driving demand for sustainable fashion for two reasons. Firstly, it is uniquely positioned as it exhibits favourable traits to be a prominent audience for sustainable fashion consumption while, at the same time, standing out for its high percentage of fast-fashion heavy consumers (Pérez-Curiel et al., 2021). This point is particularly interesting as it portrays well how the attitude-behaviour gap is in play. Secondly, contributing to increasing sustainable consumption in this generation and the younger Alpha Gen is crucial, as they will both significantly impact our planet's future with their consumption habits (Palomo et al., 2023). Specifically, Generation Z is expected to be the biggest generation of fashion consumers in the coming years (Liu, 2022).

In this context, this thesis investigates the role played by particularly impacting social media content types, specifically influencer branded content, entertainment-based promotional content and targeted advertising, in bridging the attitude-behaviour gap in Gen Z fashion consumers (i.e. reducing the gap by influencing their attitudes and/or their actions towards fashion sustainability consumption). By doing this, the research aims to provide valuable insights that academics and practitioners could use to promote sustainable fashion consumption more effectively for younger fashion consumers, thereby contributing to a more sustainable future in the fashion industry.

1.1 Motivation

The motivation behind this research stems from the urgency of the matter, driven by a personal realization of its author.

In fact, as an advocate for sustainability and a member of the Gen Z cohort, the divergence between attitudes and behaviours towards sustainable fashion was noticed and questioned first-hand during personal fashion consumption.

This personal realization sparked a curiosity to delve deeper into the underlying factors driving this discrepancy between attitudes and behaviours, as well as into effective ways to bridge it in the hope of a better future for our planet. Drawing upon a strong passion for neuro-marketing, the potential of advertising to bridge this gap and catalyse meaningful change in consumer behaviour through this discipline became captivating. The belief that marketing can serve as a force for positive societal transformation further fuelled interest in exploring how social media promotional content can make the attitudes and behaviours towards sustainable fashion get closer among the author's generation, and thus the future of fashion consumption.

The urgency of addressing the matter is stressed by the alarming increasing influence of social media. As of 2024, global social media users amount to an unprecedented 5,17 billion and keep increasing year after year with a current daily average consumption reaching over two hours (Statista, 2024). This reach is known by businesses, which are increasingly allocating substantial portions of their advertising budgets to platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (Hamouda, 2018). By understanding and leveraging how can this impact be channelled to effectively promote sustainable fashion consumption, insights for a better future of fashion consumption are expected to emerge.

2. Theoretical Framework

This section aims to analyse multiple key theories and concepts of the current literature that could build a foundation to investigate the role played by social media promotional content in sustainable fashion perceptions and consumption among Gen Z members.

2.1 Attitude-Behaviour Gap (ABG)

As sustainability becomes an important factor for driving purchase intentions, sustainable consumption has received greater focus in the literature, especially when it comes to consumer decision-making (Ronda, 2023). In fact, as previously mentioned, consumers' attitudes around sustainability, including their interests, judgement, values and perceptions of it has significantly risen in recent decades, becoming an important concern for them in multiple sectors, including fashion. Beyond individual consumer choices, industry practices and policies are also influenced by the current importance of sustainability, as businesses are urged to implement sustainable strategies and integrate sustainability into their company principles (Gazzola, 2020). Yet, despite this increase in interest, the current sustainable fashion literature shows how many consumers fail at translating their positive sustainable attitudes into corresponding behaviours, creating an attitude-behaviour gap (McNeill & Moore, 2015). This disequilibrium phenomenon is observed by many scholars in the fashion industry in the way certain consumers' positive attitude towards sustainable fashion doesn't translate into actual sustainable fashion behaviours, which represents an obstacle to sustainable consumption in this industry (Hassan et al., 2016; Jacobs et al., 2018). In this regard, the concept of the attitude-behaviour gap is a crucial one to be concerned with in the modern pursuit of more sustainable ways to consume (Carrington, Neville & Whitwell, 2010).

Whilst the ABG gap phenomenon has largely been studied in the context of sustainable fashion and many theoretical models built to explain and predict it, a lack of research still exists in understanding what impact promotional content on social media can have on sustainable fashion attitudes and their translation into behaviours among Gen Z members. This thesis draws upon the ABG theory, to explore various new ways this discrepancy can be bridged by using Gen Z and the online world as a foundation.

2.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour

Introduced by Ajzen (1985), the Theory of Planned Behaviour, also referred to as TPB, is presently one of the most used theories to understand and predict human behaviour. It has been extensively studied and applied across various fields, resulting in a valuable framework to investigate viewpoints, beliefs and purchasing decisions in the context of green consumption (Joshi & Rahman, 2015; Liu, 2022). Further, the TPB helps explaining the correlation between people's attitudes towards sustainability and the adoption of sustainable behaviours, especially in sectors such as food and generic green consumption (Nguyen, 2018; Pozharliev, 2022). According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, an individual's behaviour is the product of rational thinking and planning. Its three fundamental constructs are behavioural attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. The first one, behavioural attitudes, consists of their judgement of certain behaviours, such as good or bad, favourable or unfavourable. The second one, subjective norms, are personal expectations placed on other people, as well as the level of consideration given to their opinions. The third one, perceived behavioural control, is the degree of confidence in one's ability to regulate one's behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). The TPB argues that together, behavioural attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control influence actual behaviours mediated by intentions towards a specific behaviour, such as a particular consumption, as observable in Figure 1. In this model, intentions are the most immediate predictors of behaviour and the stronger the intentions, the most likely it will be translated into actual behaviours. This is of crucial importance for this study, as social media promotional content can influence and reinforce these three variables, thus influencing the attitude-behaviour gap.

While these three variables are independently influencing purchase intentions, there is a degree of interrelation between them as well, as they can influence and reinforce each other (Ajzen, 1985). As an example, subjective norms could shape and reinforce attitudes. In fact, important referents such as friends or family members strongly support sustainable fashion, an individual may develop more positive attitudes towards it. In this sense, the Theory of Planned Behaviour has become an established notion in researching how attitudes, moderated by subjective norms and behavioural control, links to consumers' purchase intentions. In the context of this research, the TPB provides a robust framework to understand what factors come into play in the formation of sustainable fashion attitudes and their translation into behaviours by focusing on rational decision-making processes.

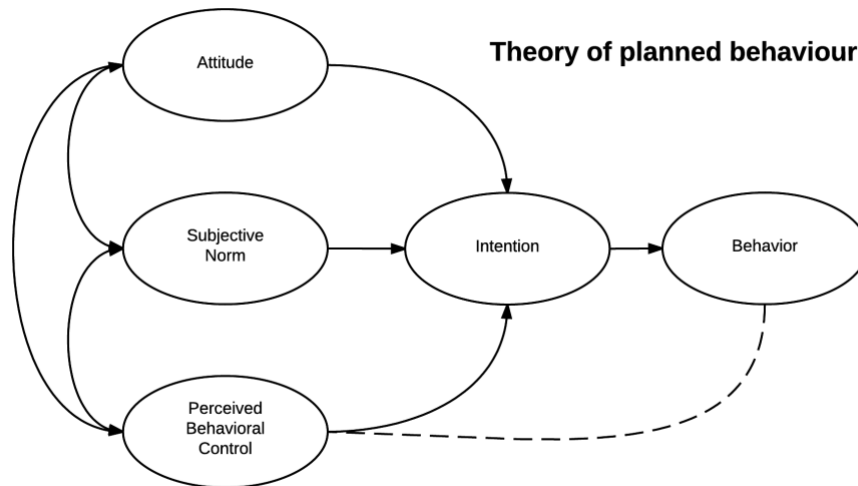


Figure 1: The Theory of Planned Behaviour Model
 Source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/074959789190020T>.

2.3 Value-Belief-Norm theory

Developed by Paul Stern and his colleagues in 1999, the Value-Belief-Norm theory, or VBN, posits that individual environmental behaviours are influenced by a chain of psychological processes beginning with personal values. Conversely to the TPB, this theory deals with less rational aspects of decision-making, delving into deeper value-based motivations and beliefs behind sustainable behaviours (Stern, 1999). According to the VBN theory, values such as biospheric, altruistic and egotistic values shape beliefs about the environment, namely one's own ecological worldview, the awareness of potential adverse consequences for valued objects, and the perceived ability to reduce the threat. In turn, these beliefs create a sense of moral obligation to take pro-environmental action, leading to these green behaviours as can be seen in Figure 2. For individuals, values serve as guiding principles, and sustainability research are often concerned with them (Groot et al., 2012). They appear to be shaped throughout life, are culturally shared, and predictive of consumption behaviours. (Steg et al., 2012). In more detail, biospheric values focus on the worth of the natural environment, motivating individuals to protect and preserve their ecosystems, and the planet for its own sake. Altruistic values concern the well-being of others, driving individuals to engage in environmentally friendly behaviours out of consideration for future generations and broader human welfare. Egoistic values are centred on self-interest, where individuals are motivated to support environmental actions when they

perceive direct positive impacts on their own quality of life or personal health (Burton et al., 2023; Stern, 1999). These values are important to this study to understand how they mediate social media content’s impacts on Gen Z’s beliefs and personal norms, impacting their ABG.

It is important to note that these three value types do not only act in favour of supporting behaviours. In fact, while they can bring some insights into sustainable consumption, egotistic values were for example shown to have a negative correlation with environmental attitudes and behaviours (Steg et al., 2014). This implies that egoistic people tend to be more concerned with themselves rather than ecological problems. In this sense, the VBN was later developed to take into consideration factors such as emotions, trust, satisfaction, or frequency of previous behaviour (Hong et al., 2024).

Within this study, the Value-Belief-Norm theory provides a strong foundation to analyse and make sense of how content can impact values and beliefs from Gen Z, shaping personal norms, eventually resulting in sustainable behaviours.

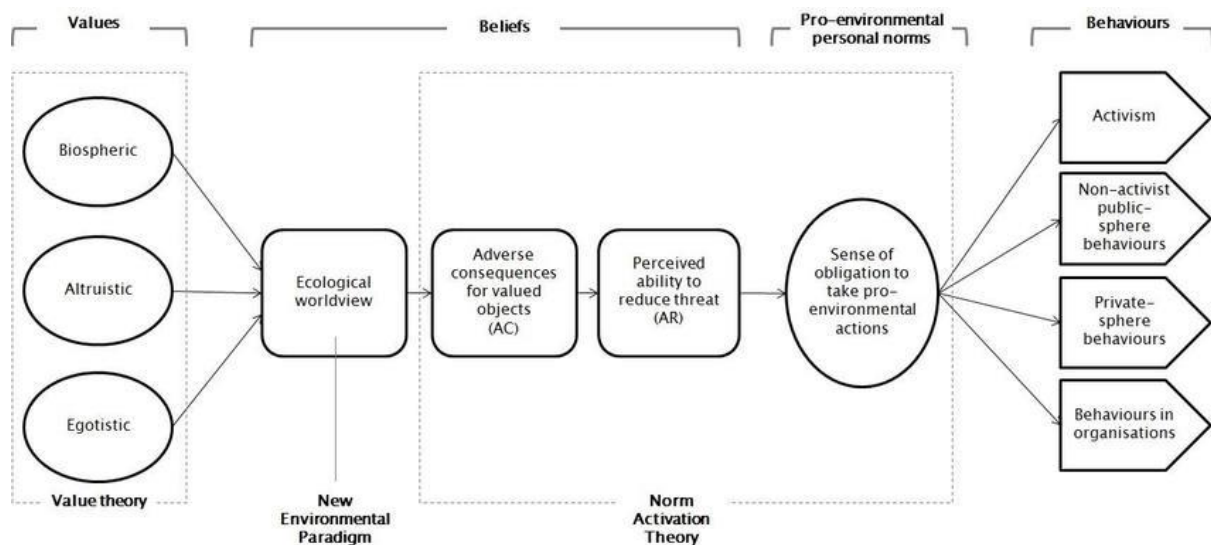


Figure 2: The Value-Belief-Norm Theory Model
 Source: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292449047>.

Jointly, the TPB and VBN help this research capturing a fuller picture of how promotion on social media can impact gen z’s attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable fashion. In fact, they provide a wider range of factors playing a role in the attitude-behaviour link, including both rational aspects as well as deeply held values and beliefs. It is important to note that these two theories are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary, jointly influencing behaviours in a sequential or simultaneous way. Indeed, social media advertising can influence both the rational and value-driven components of consumer decision-making.

For example, a sensibilization sustainability campaign can reinforce environmental beliefs such as the perceived ability to reduce threat (VBN), while simultaneously enhancing attitudes towards sustainable fashion (TPB).

2.4 Social Media Marketing

In the digital age, social media has become a powerful communication tool, revolutionising how companies interact with consumers and advertise their products and services. The advent of social media has changed the communication paradigm by allowing ordinary individuals to actively participate in the process thanks to its collaborative and interactive features (Pereira et al., 2023). This shift of role for consumers from passive to active has created a communication revolution, supported by user-generated content, the presence of digital communities, and the spread of consumers' opinions (Smith, 2009).

This is particularly true for social media fashion content, which has been seeing a steady increase across online channels, followed by a significant rise in the number of text messages and a wider range of format types including posts, stories, ads, reviews, short-format videos, etc (Clarke, Tzavara & Misopoulos, 2019). One important influence on this dynamic was the COVID-19 epidemic, which caused many conventional offline fashion events to shift to live broadcasts on Instagram and TikTok, as well as several fashion brand displays, reinforcing this emerging trend (Pozharliev et al., 2023).

Today, it is safe to say that social media communication is one of the most effective and implemented marketing strategies by agencies and companies worldwide. This point is observable in a study by Scarano (2016), where 98% of companies participating in the survey seem to agree that social media marketing is essential in enhancing their exposure and revenue in the current competitive landscape. In fact, by influencing customers' brand preferences and purchase intentions, advertising through social media plays a central role as a mediator in terms of social media marketing effects (Leung, Bai & Stahura, 2013). In this regard, social media have shown a great deal of interest in the marketing literature and academics have researched several social media marketing-related topics such as its effects on brand equity, brand loyalty or consumer behaviour (Godey et al., 2016).

It appears that products' promotion on social media can take many forms, and this research focuses on content types that have shown to have a great impact on driving consumer consumption, namely influencer-branded content, entertainment-based promotional content, and targeted advertisements. Note that these different types of social media content

forms are not mutually exclusive. For instance, an influencer's branded content can also be entertainment-based, or a targeted ad could also include an influencer. This has to be considered in the research, to understand what exact part of the has the greater impacts for Generation Z.

2.4.1 Influencer-Branded Content (IBC)

Among one of the prevalent types of social media promotional content is influencer-branded content. Nowadays, products' opinions and reviews are easily obtainable, and consumers need the approval and opinions of other consumers to shape their purchasing decisions, this is where influencers come into play. Social media influencers are online micro-celebrity taking the role of an endorsers, shaping their audience's attitudes through their content, which can be pictures, videos, tweets, or other types of media (Pinto & Paramita, 2021). Today, they serve as key communicators providing brand information to their followers, and influencing consumers' brand perceptions, brand loyalty, beliefs and purchase intentions (Smith, Kim & Childs, 2022; Pinto & Paramita, 2021). In his research about social media influencers' perceived authenticity, Lee (2021) goes further by saying that for companies, efficient influencer strategies are a requirement to compete in today's market, no longer just an option to consider.

This research focuses on a generation who is particularly used to this type of promotion, Generation Z. Indeed, influencer endorsements turn out to have a greater impact than traditional advertisements for Gen Z, with a significant role in shaping their purchase intentions and brand preferences (Pradhan et al., 2022). This relationship seems to maintain its significance in the fashion industry, where influencers hold a central role in shaping Gen Z consumers fashion journey and affecting their style decisions and brand choices (Siregar et al., 2023). Because of the scale and importance of this audience, Southgate (2017) highlights the efficacy of investing in social media advertising through influencers, and the necessity for new marketing strategies specifically aimed at Gen Z.

2.4.2 Entertainment-Based Promotional Content (EBPC)

Acting as a second prevalent part of social media promotion, entertainment-based promotional content entails using marketing techniques that offer consumers entertaining and interesting information to grab their focus and foster an enjoyable experience with the brand.

This can be done from brands and users by including humour, storytelling narratives, or information resonating with users' general desire for entertainment and appears to be better evaluated and remembered by viewers (Untarini et al., 2022).

When it comes to advertise on social media, entertainment is vital for building emotional bonds with viewers, drawing them in, and making brands differentiate from the crowded digital market. Current literature on EBPC puts an emphasis on its importance in influencing consumers' attitudes and behaviours, often leading to increased purchase intentions (Paramitha, Yatigamma & Gunathunge, 2021). Furthermore, it has been shown that promotion through entertaining content works particularly well to draw in younger audiences, including Millennials and Gen Z, who value engaging and interactive online content (Najib, Kasuma & Bibi, 2016). Along with the fast-food sector, the fashion industry has been shown to be among the sectors where entertainment demonstrated to be an important part of social media advertising, with a direct influence on consumers' perceptions, purchasing intentions and brand loyalty (Hanaysha, 2022).

2.4.3 Targeted Advertising (TA)

Targeted advertisements are visual/display commercials present on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter whose purpose are to visually captivate and draw in individuals as they browse through their social media feeds. Coming in different formats such as posters, pictures, videos, carousels, stories or slideshows, these ads can help marketers to communicate their message to their audience in a targeted way (Zhang & Mao, 2016). Social media display ads allow brands, notably in the fashion industry, to target audiences in an advanced way, including specific demographic segments, interests, locations, and behaviours among other categories (McInnis et al., 2022). This allows these brands to be extremely efficient in communicating messages to the right audiences, further influencing consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards their offerings (McInnis et al., 2022). Today, it seems that social media's TA are essential for businesses looking to boost their visibility, drive online traffic, create prospects, and eventually increase revenue (McInnis et al., 2022).

As key contributors to consumers' attitudes, beliefs and purchase intentions among others, IBC, EBPC and TA are expected to have an impact on the sustainable fashion attitude-behaviour gap, which is going to be explored both through the TPB and VBN lens. By doing this, the research tries to investigate how this social media content can make the ABG narrower.

2.5 Sustainable Fashion Consumption

In a world where fast fashion is the dominant trend in the clothing industry, and brands are not used to having 2-4 collections a year but instead changing their selection every week such as H&M and Zara, over 60% of all produced clothes are disposed of within a year after their production, ending up incinerated or in dump landfills (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017; McNeill & Moore, 2015; Remy et al., 2017). Lately, as previously touched upon, bigger attention to sustainable concerns from consumers has pushed brands to consider and include environmental responsibility in their priorities. In fact, consumers' interest habits appear to be one of the leading causes of sustainability in the fashion industry (Park & Lin, 2018). Responsible consumption is defined as a purchasing and consumption pattern that can maximize long-term value and minimise unhealthy effects on society (Mohr et al., 2001). Concretely, consumers started engaging in sustainable fashion consumption in different ways including purchasing fewer pieces of clothing of higher quality, going for second-hand fashion goods, and participating in collaborative consumption models like renting, borrowing, or swapping (Bly, Gwozdz & Reisch, 2015; Mandarić, Hunjet & Kozina, 2021).

Although a rise in environmental concerns and emphasis towards sustainability from fashion brands and consumers, no significant correlation exists yet with an increase in sustainable consumption from consumers (Riesgo et al., 2022; Jacobs et al., 2018). For this reason, research has investigated how different factors such as pro-environmental perceptions or fashion engagement affect the consumption of sustainable clothes, and their findings highlight the need for more research in the area of sustainable fashion consumption behaviour (Razzaq et al., 2018). In this sense, this research delves deeper into how prominent types of social media promotional content can make people's attitudes and behaviours towards sustainable fashion closer.

2.6 The Sustainable Fashion Consumer

Although it seems like the sustainable fashion consumer is not fully profiled yet in terms of demographic and behavioural characteristics, some important characteristics are coming out of the current literature. For example, it seems like younger generations and women have a stronger tendency to be fashion-conscious consumers (Riesgo et al., 2022; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008). Moreover, for younger generations, it appears that sustainable fashion consumption is higher among people with greater knowledge of fashion and

environmental matters. Members of these generations expect value for their money and tend to pursue fashion purchases that are in line with their values, in addition to being willing to spend more money for a sustainable piece of clothes (Noble et al., 2009; Moser, 2016).

2.7 Gen Z

Gen Z refers to the generational cohort consisting of people who were born between 1995 and 2009. Also referred to as centennials, they are between Gen Y, the generation immediately older than them, and Alpha Gen, immediately younger (Duffett, 2020). They are known for their independence and confidence, and how diverse they are in terms of environment, lifestyle, and gender. Due to their affinity with the digital world and open information on social media, Gen Z is particularly aware and concerned about environmental issues such as global warming, pollution, and water scarcity (Liu, 2022). However, as highlighted by a national study on Gen Z by The Center for Generational Kinetics (2016), although this generation shows positive attitudes towards sustainable consumption and brands promoting sustainable initiatives, they fail at translating these attitudes into supporting behaviours towards sustainable consumption.

Members of Generation Z are digital natives in terms of media. In fact, social networks, video games played for fun, and VOD platforms for audio-visual material dominate their media consumption patterns. It appears that branded content and hybrid messages, which mask the advertising goal behind an entertaining or educational appearance, are the most effective and persuasive promotional methods in this generation (Carrington, Neville & Whitwell, 2010). As true online natives, members of Gen Z play a significant role as households' main information source and have a considerable influence on overall household consumption decision-making, further confirming their potential in driving sustainable consumption (Morgan & Birtwistle, G, 2009). Consequently, it appears that an increasing number of brands are targeting this cohort. Other reasons for this could be their high receptivity towards eco-friendly products and their propensity to pay more for sustainable products as compared to other generations (Noble et al., 2009). Additionally, it appears that Generation Z has a particular approach to fashion consumption compared to other generations, by perceiving clothes as a symbol of self-enhancement and social status, sometimes shown as representing an extension of their personality (Joshi & Garg, 2020).

Overall, Generational Z's unique characteristics make their attitudes and behaviours crucial to understand in the hope of a less harmful fashion consumption future.

3. Methodology

This section goes over the methodology that this research uses to derive its results. It starts by outlining its research objectives and design, then discusses its data collection, sampling method and data analysis, before diving deeper into its limitations and ethics considerations.

3.1 Research Aim

A research gap was identified, and a topic of interest emerged throughout the review of the literature. Given Gen Z's crucial role in shaping the future of fashion consumption and its impacts on the environment, as well as the significance of social media promotional content in influencing their consumption perceptions and habits, it is crucial to thoroughly explore the nature of this relationship. Looking at the increasing average time spent on social media and the growing budget allocated to online advertisements from brands makes the matter more urgent than ever (Hamouda, 2018; Statista, 2024).

Specifically, this research looks at how social media can narrow Gen Z's gap between positive attitudes/advocacy for sustainable fashion consumption, and their actual behaviours towards it. To do so, this study focuses on the impacts of prevalent types of social media promotional content using the theories of Planned Behaviour and Value-Belief-Norm as frameworks.

The research question of this study is formulated as follows:

How can social media promotional content bridge the sustainable fashion attitude-behaviour gap among Gen Z fashion consumers?

3.2 Research design

Due to the lack of extensive research on the role of social media types of promotional content in influencing the attitude-behaviour gap among Gen Z consumers, this thesis' research design follows a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews as a data collection method. Although a flexible protocol was used to adapt to each participant's answers and let new insights emerge, interviews all followed the discussion on the same themes; fashion consumption habits, social media use and exposure to promotional content,

sustainable fashion attitudes, sustainable fashion consumption, and the attitude-behaviour gap and how to bridge it. This method allows for the deep exploration of new and nuanced insights that are not yet well-documented in existing literature, helping to fill the research gap with detailed and context-rich data.

Qualitative research is well-suited for exploring complex context-specific phenomena and gaining in-depth insights into participants' perspectives and experiences, which aligns well with the theoretical framework's theories of Planned Behaviour and Value-Belief Norm (Lakshman et al., 2000). This approach provides the flexibility to probe deeper into individual experiences and perceptions, yielding rich, detailed data that quantitative methods alone might not capture. By adopting a grounded theory approach, the research allows for the emergence of new theories and concepts based on the data collected.

To do so, an interview guide was created using key theoretical concepts as can be seen in Appendix A. The guide starts by diving into fashion consumption habits, and exposure along with current impacts of social media promotional content on fashion and sustainable fashion consumption. The subsequent questions are designed to assess the participants' sustainable fashion attitudes-behaviour gap, referring back to the TPB and VBN. This is made by estimating their attitudes, perceptions and values towards sustainability, before going into their sustainable behaviours and the causes for this divergence, in most of the cases. After evaluating how social media promotional content impacts their attitudes and behaviours, questions are asked to probe how this content can potentially facilitate the translation of their attitudes into corresponding behaviours. The followed themes were backed by theoretical foundations, ensuring a strong link between the literature and empirical investigation.

The data collection period spans from April to May 2024, during which semi-structured interviews are conducted with the participants. The interviews are audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis, with the goal of exploring participants' opinions and experiences, to provide a nuanced understanding of the factors and dynamics at play when it comes to how social media promotional content can reduce the gap between sustainable fashion attitudes and behaviours.

3.3 Data collection

This thesis' data collection involves conducting semi-structured interviews with 10 fashion consumers who are members of Generation Z. This provides a flexible framework

allowing participants to express their thoughts, experiences, and perspectives in their own words while maintaining a level of consistency across interviews. Although the author shares characteristics which make him part of the studied sample and enable easier access to possible participants, efforts were made to guarantee diversity within the sample. As observable in Appendix B, different genders, ages, ethnicities, and geographical areas were represented in the participant selection process, making sure to gather varied viewpoints on the subject. Four participants were found from the author's entourage using convenience sampling, and the last six from their contacts, following snowball sampling. Most of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, allowing for a more personal and interactive exchange of ideas. The collected data serves as the basis for the subsequent analysis and interpretation, contributing to a deeper understanding of social media promotional content's potential impacts.

3.4 Sampling Method

For this research, the studied sample consists of members of Gen Z who engage in fashion consumption and are active on social media, characteristics that were confirmed before the start of each interview. In order to accurately represent this population, a smaller representative sample is necessary. The goal of this sample is to provide a microcosm of the larger population, as Bryman (2012) suggests. To do so, a combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling was used. The former consists of using interviewees who are readily available and willing to take part in the study. This approach makes the research more practical and facilitates the sampling process for the author as it is relatively easy to make use of it in a short time span. The latter involves finding additional interviewees from initial participants' social networks. This method bears the advantage of making it easier to reach new suitable subjects who would otherwise be more challenging to find.

3.5 Data Analysis

After completing the interviews, the audio recordings were automatically transcribed by a tool called TurboScribe, so that all details were accurately captured. This software was used for its precision and easy usability. The transcriptions were then reviewed by the author to select what information was relevant and not, focusing on the content that helps addressing the research questions.

Then, the data was approached through open coding with the help of a software called Delve. This software made it easier to dive into the data, as it allows to derive and create initial codes and group interviews segments into these codes, letting themes emerge organically. These codes and their significance were then grouped into broader categories, arranged in a meaningful way, and evaluated using existing literature, ensuring a strong analysis. The final themes provided insights into how social media promotional content does influence sustainable fashion consumption attitudes and behaviours among Gen Z, and how it can potentially further narrow the gap between both, underlining practical insights for marketers to bridge the difference in more effective ways.

3.6 Limitations

This research acknowledges several limitations which are described in this section, along with the way they are mitigated by the author, when applicable.

First, the qualitative method based on semi-structured interviews, while valuable for gaining in-depth insights, may limit the generalizability of the findings because of the subjective nature of the data collected (Delmar, 2010). The interpretation of qualitative data is inherently subjective, which may lead to bias coming from the author's personal opinions and perspectives. Contrariwise, it can be said that the author being aware of it, is more likely to notice this bias in play and put additional efforts to correct it and try to maintain objectivity over the matter.

Second, the small sample size, although sufficient for qualitative analysis, may not fully represent the diversity and complexity of the entire population of Gen Z fashion consumers, potentially limiting the broader applicability of the results. By including diversity in terms of backgrounds, genders, nationalities, ages and geographical locations, efforts were made to ensure that different perspectives are captured despite the sample size.

Third, the reliance of this research on reported data from interviewees can potentially introduce biases related to social desirability and personal preferences, potentially affecting authenticity of the responses. In fact, as the study revolves around the use of social media and sustainability attitudes and corresponding actions, which all have a social weight, participants might be inclined to provide answers they believe are expected or more acceptable rather than their genuine opinions and behaviours. This was mitigated by making it clear to the participants that anonymity will be kept around the data, and by explaining to each of them

what the goals of the research represent in terms of the future of sustainable fashion consumption.

Fourth, as digital marketing and social media trends and platforms are in rapid and constant change, the findings of this study may quickly become outdated, necessitating continuous research to remain current.

Furthermore, the theoretical framework is based on existing theories that may not entirely encompass all the factors influencing sustainable fashion attitudes and behaviours. The theory of Planned Behaviour and the Value-Belief-Norm theory both provide a strong theoretical foundation, but they may for example overlook emerging factors specific to Gen Z or new forms of social media influence that are not yet well-documented in the current state of the literature.

Finally, time constraints also posed a limitation, as a more extended period of data collection might have allowed for a bigger and more diverse sample, limiting the ability to conduct more comprehensive research that better represents the population.

These limitations show the need and call for future research to expand on these findings, incorporating larger, bigger and more diverse Gen Z fashion consumers samples, including quantitative approaches, and adapting to the continually changing landscape of promotion on social media.

3.7 Ethics

Ethics is an important consideration and efforts were made for this research to adhere to high ethical standards, ensuring the study's integrity and protection of the participants' rights. First, informed consent was obtained from each participant before their interview, where they were informed about the study objectives, their role in it, and they were asked authorisation to have it recorded. Then, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by only storing and sharing the data by identifying each interviewee with an assigned number, from 1 to 10. Furthermore, participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were given the possibility to not answer to questions they felt uncomfortable replying to.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the main results and discussion derived from the interviews conducted with ten Gen Z fashion consumers. To let results arise, an open-coding analysis process was used, where the data was explored to identify recurring themes relevant to the research question. The results were then compared with existing literature and theoretical frameworks to identify similarities and differences and thus collect valuable insights on the topic and effectively reply to the research question.

As touched upon in the methodology, the study includes a group of ten participants with a balanced gender proportion and range of ages within the Gen Z demographic (See Appendix 2). Indeed, among the participants were six males and four females, with ages spanning from 19 to 27 years old, bringing different perspectives within the Gen Z age bracket. Nationalities represented included Belgian, Indian, Italian, Irish, German, Greek, Swedish and Korean, adding a cultural diversity element to the study. Different background also contributed to bringing different viewpoints, including disciplines such as Business, Marketing, Graphic Design, Fashion, Finance, Arts, and Politics. These points conferred to a nuanced understanding of Gen Z's social media use, and its potential impacts on bridging the ABG towards sustainable fashion consumption.

To give the results and discussion a better readability, this section follows themes in the same order as they were used during interviews and as can be found in Appendix A, starting by dealing with personal background, social media use and fashion consumption habits, followed by promotional content and its impacts, then delving into the sustainable fashion attitudes and perceptions, goes over sustainable fashion behaviours and how to potentially bridge it. After results are presented, a discussion is included whenever they reflect the studied literature, promptly highlighting their link.

4.2 Participants' Profile

The interviews' first questions were about personal background, revealing general information about each participant, such as their age, field of study/work or nationality, which can be found in Appendix B, along with fashion consumption habits and social media use, which this section goes over.

4.2.1 Social Media Use

After initial formalities such as introducing the research to the participants, and questions about their general profile, the interviewees were asked about their social media consumption. The data shows all the participants were active on social media, including Instagram, used by all of them, followed by TikTok used by P1, P3, P5, P6, P8, Snapchat used by P1, P6, P7, P9 and P10, Pinterest by P1, P3, P5 and P7. Only one participant mentioned Twitter. This information reveals what social media are the most used among Gen Z and outlines the representativeness of different social media in this study. This should be considered when interpreting the results to avoid generalizing the impacts of represented social media to all of them. Furthermore, one participant mentioned, “at my age, we don't watch TV news, nor read newspapers ... we get insights into what happens in the world and how things work through social medias” (P3, 2024). Another participant said, “I think everyone is scrolling daily, that’s just what we do in our spare time” (P9, 2024).

These results made it easy to notice how this generation of digital natives commonly shop online and easily navigate through online and physical consumption. This point is in line with the studied literature, discussing the high online media consumption of Gen Z, their familiarity with digital platforms and the presence of these platforms in their consumption habits (Carrington, Neville & Whitwell, 2010). In addition, Participant 4 and 5 both turned out to give great importance to how they dress to express their identity, in line with the touched-upon study from Joshi et al. (2020), describing fashion as an extension of Gen Z’s personality in some cases (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2023).

4.2.2 Fashion Consumption Habits

Participants were then asked about their fashion consumption habits, including their monthly spendings in clothes, which can be found in Appendix B. The latter ranged from around 30 to over 300 euros a month, and four participants mentioned how this amount varies according to collections, occasional events, seasonal needs, or finds. This range reflects the wide range of consumer consumption included in the sample.

It appears that most of the participants prefer shopping online, mostly for availability, convenience and sizing reasons. However, half of them mention shopping at physical stores too (P1, P5, P7, P8, P10, 2024). P5 states “I mostly buy in physical shops, and then second-hand online, I buy from big brands usually, on Vinted”. Specifically, she explains how the search tool on this online second-hand platform, is practical to use when she already knows what she is looking for. P3's also appear to frequently use the platform Vinted, to buy more

affordable luxury items (P3, 2024). P6 seemed to only shop online, consuming on online platforms for second-hand, and on his favourite Asian brands' websites. He states, "To be honest, most of the times I just continue buying from these Korean brands, like Bjorn because I'm used to it, some street design and nothing too special" (P6, 2024). This approach appears to be in line with the Value-Belief-Norm theory, where previous behaviours is a factor influencing on purchase intentions (Hong et al., 2024). Three participants mention shopping in a regular way, either beginning of the month or season (P7, P8, P10, 2024).

When asked about what comes into play in fashion consumption, factors such as style, taste, uniqueness, and price are recurring. Contrarily, sustainability is mentioned once, by P2, who is the participant spending the least of clothing consumption.

4.3 Social Media Promotion Exposure and Influence

Next, questions were asked to assess how familiar participants were to Influencer Branded Content, Entertainment-Based Promotional Content and Targeted Advertisement, and what impact did these have on the way they perceived and consumed fashion and sustainable fashion. In this part, the interview guide starts by asking about general social media influence, before diving deeper into the three different studied types of promotional content.

4.3.1 Social Media Promotion Exposure and Influence

The data reveals that all the participants are exposed to social media fashion promotion daily, with eight participants describing it as omnipresent in their life. For example, P8 describes fashion promotion as "a constant presence" on her social media feeds, while P9 states, "they're there throughout every day pretty much". Similarly, P1 and P4 mention seeing brand advertisements a lot, with P4 specifically seeking out for the latest ads to discover new collections and clothes, staying informed about the industry. P3 also highlights the prevalence of ads from brands he knows along with sponsored posts on his feed. This suggests a high level of exposure to fashion-related promotional content across various social media platforms.

Participants also noted the types and content of these ads, with P10 mentioning a preference for ads that are engaging and in line with his passion, photography, like those from the brand Everlane. P1 notices a lot of promotion around the latest trendy pieces of the

seasons, often advertised by people of her age and similar lifestyle. P5 distinguishes between high fashion and fast fashion advertisements, following major designers on Instagram while finding fast fashion ads more boring. Furthermore, P7 and P8 explain how social media promotion often introduce them to new cool and/or independent brands. P7 specifically appreciates ads for small, local brands on Pinterest, which make her discover unique stores.

The impact of social media on participants' fashion and sustainable fashion consumption is quite present in this part of the data.

Four participants mentioned that they were inspired by social media in what they buy and how they dress. For example, P9 states, "Right now it's the timberlands that is having a huge rise in popularity and sales, if you look at my feed, they're everywhere ... and it only makes me want them, which I did ... I bought a pair recently online.". Additionally, P1 says, "I see people, girls, mostly my age, styling items that I would like, and it gives me inspiration."

Sustainability appeared to be a recurring theme as well. P10 mentioned, "There's a lot of promotion now explaining how bad unsustainable consumption choices are impacting us, and posts about what brands to consume and not consume for example.". P3 observed, "I like that now on social media and on the internet, there's more spread information about sustainability and you can read more, and you can know more about what are the brands that you want to consume or avoid.". P6 points out, "I think ads on social media influence a lot of people in terms of that they only see certain aspects of fashion consumption from the advertisements and less the whole industry behind it and what consequences are for example.", highlighting that social media could influence people to consume in less sustainable ways. Additionally, P5 sees a lot of negative aspects of unsustainable brands through social media, " ... even when for SHEIN ... online you see a lot of content about how bad the fabrics are and how bad they are actually made and how they are produced ... far away countries for a very low price and how the workers are exploited.". P3 shared, " ... it's not like it touches me really well because I already have my values ... and I know how I'm consuming." suggesting that social media doesn't impact him to consume unsustainably as he already has strong sustainable knowledge and values. P2 also acknowledged that social media influence his sustainable consumption, particularly when it features content related to upcycling or promoting sustainable ways of consuming when they are shown in an accessible way. He stated, "It can only positively impact me to see people upcycling or promoting sustainable ways of consuming " (P2, 2024). Conversely, P1 expressed her doubts for some campaigns, namely regarding H&M's latest sustainability campaign, despite frequent

exposure to their advertisements. She noted, "H&M promotes sustainability sometimes ... but I don't feel like they're being honest in this, I don't perceive H&M as being sustainable and I don't think social media will change this" (P1, 2024). This skepticism emphasises a critical perspective among participants, whose perception of certain brands remain unchanged, even after they promote sustainability.

In this regard, several participants mentioned the acquisition of knowledge and values through social media. Four participants discussed how social media platforms have become a source of information and value formation regarding consumption. P1 mentioned, "Advertisement play a big role in my perceptions for sure but I mean, there's so much greenwashing also which confuses me a bit.". P3 also added, "It's a bigger window for me to look at consumption, to learn more about it, and I love it cause basically that's the industry I want to work in and I want to know about it.". P10 emphasized the role of influencers, "I think it has to be a conscious choice for people with an important following online to start using these social media for a positive impact."

In sum, data showed that the use of social media by the participants is extensive and driven by a desire to stay current with fashion and influencers. It appears that social media promotion influences participants in multiple ways: inspiring their fashion choices, shaping their perceptions towards sustainability, providing a source of knowledge and values, and informing them about the fashion industry news.

4.3.2 Influencer Branded Content

From the interviews, it was clear that all participants follow influencers, each for varied reasons.

Many are drawn to influencers because of their fashion aesthetics and styling tips. For example, P3 noted that influencers provide "new ways of wearing and styling some clothes" which offers inspiration for his outfits. This reason was also mentioned by P4.

Others, like P5 appreciates the entertainment and gossip elements, stating, "I follow her, but it's more for the gossip, to know what is happening in her life and around her".

Trust seems to play a significant role; P5 trusts her favourite influencers as she believes they possess expertise in fashion, leading them to know and genuinely recommend their audience based on real information. Thus, she follows their guidance, and they have a considerable impact on her. P2 agreed, stating that he follows influencers who showcase his

life ideals and have the same values as him, which creates a sense of trust and alignment, and make them have a great influence on him.

The precise impact of influencers on their sustainable fashion attitudes and behaviours varies among participants. However, several common themes emerged.

4.3.2.1 Storytelling and Emotional Engagement

It seems like influencers who effectively use storytelling to showcase fashion or consumption practices tend to leave a more substantial impact. P6 described how an influencer's journey of learning and failing at upcycling resonated with him: "This way of showing it really makes you feel with it, and you get inspired to do the same." The emotional connection through storytelling seems to make the idea of sustainability more relatable and achievable. Respondent 5 explains how the storytelling and lifestyle portrayal by an influencer make them trust and follow their recommendations as well.

4.3.2.2 Entertainment and Closeness

The data shows how influencers who are perceived as familiar and close to their audience with sustainable messages can powerfully shift perceptions. P4 mentioned an influencer called Frugal Aesthetic, who uses humour to discuss fashion trends, which indirectly shapes his tastes and perceptions: "He makes it look like he's having a conversation with the audience, making fun of everyone in a really smart way... sometimes I disagree with what he's saying, and other times he shapes my tastes in fashion.". P5 shares similar viewpoints. When talking about one of her favourite influencers, she stated "She's funny. She looks like, I think she's more or less my age. She has good taste. I could be her, and I trust her". P10 stands on the same side, stating that it is like a friendship where he supports the influencer and, in return, receive valuable guidance on dressing well and inspiration for personal life growth.

This combination of fun and perceived closeness fosters the feeling of a real relationship that appears to influence some participants' consumption choices.

4.3.2.3 Conflicting Influences and Overconsumption

Despite the positive influences, some participants acknowledged the contradictory nature of influencer content, which often promotes overconsumption. P2 pointed out this dichotomy, saying "It's a battle between typical influencers, who are pushing people to overconsume and not care about sustainability, and sustainable influencers, who shift

perceptions and behaviours in a good way I think ... I can't imagine a typical influencer shifting sustainable perceptions in a good way". As he further explained, this conflict illustrates a complex landscape where influencers often wear new outfits and pieces every day, making people want to consume more, and making it difficult to work towards sustainability. He detailed, "I don't see a way modern fashion influencers can keep doing their fit pictures and receive their PR packages and then promote sustainability, the whole system is just working the opposite way of sustainable fashion in my perception". P5 agrees with this and seems to live it first-hand, saying, "they are always, you know, changing their outfits and always, having the latest, the coolest, piece, I don't know, even skincare, so they consume and make me consume more" (P5, 2024).

These points suggest a strong link between typical influencers' branded content with unsustainable fashion behaviours. P3 mentions, "they influence my perceptions of consumption as well because these influencers consume and I also like consuming, so I probably continue consuming because they give me the perceptions that there is nothing wrong.". P4 also notes that influencers often set what is perceived as "normal consumption," making frequent purchases seem standard, "these influencers make me feel good about buying and wearing new clothes more often because they kind of set what is normal consumption, and if they can do it and no one says anything, to me it is the normality" (P4, 2024). This could be a typical example of influencers negatively impacting sustainable consumption for Gen Z members, who are then drawn to follow their favourite influencers in unsustainable behaviours such as overconsumption. It appears that influencers seem to normalize certain consumption patterns, which turns out to hinder sustainable behaviour, but could potentially be able to help it. Indeed, P7 states, "I imagine an influencer with my style, but who promotes sustainable practices and wears sustainable clothes, or shows how to consume more sustainably ... this would for sure bring me to consume in a more sustainable way and it would for a lot of people that are already trying to be more sustainable I think.".

This point suggests how influencers could have a potential impact on facilitating how their audiences translate their sustainable attitudes in actual behaviours

4.3.2.4 Selective Trust and Scepticism

Trust in influencers is selective, with participants distinguishing between those they deem authentic and those perceived as commercial. P5 expressed distrust towards the influencer Chiara Ferragni due to her recent scandal involving misleading advertising of her brand, as well as her commercial nature. She explained, "I feel like she does stuff only for

money, not because she really believes in what she's doing, she's too big now and everything feels fake." Respondent 7 seems to agree, explaining how some influencers are doing what they do only for commercial purposes while not touching upon sustainability for example, which she deems unfair.

In contrast, influencers who are seen as genuine and relatable, as mentioned before, appear to have a more considerable impact with their promotion on purchase behaviours.

4.3.2.5 Impact on Long-Term Behaviour

While some participants report short-term changes in behaviour influenced by influencers, the long-term impact is less clear as mentioned by several participants. P3, for instance, acknowledged that his attempt to boycott brands involved in unethical practices, namely the Uyghurs polemic, was short-lived: "I really wanted to stop consuming them, but this didn't last a long time because now I buy from these brands again and don't think about the impact influencers were talking about back then.". This also happened to P3, who explains, "she posted one time where ... she bought like a suit for like four or five euros in a vintage shop and she made a really nice suit out of it for her friend, for a guy ... And I was like, okay, vintage shopping and upcycling, there can be something really great behind it, I think it did make me go for a period of time more into vintage shops."

This could suggest an impact that doesn't last from influencer content, to go towards more sustainable fashion consumption for Gen Z.

In summary, as expected from the literature, influencers hold a crucial power in shaping their followers' perceptions and behaviours towards fashion sustainable consumption, driven by storytelling, entertainment and closeness, but it seems like this impact fails at staying in the long run.

4.3.3 Entertainment-Based Promotional Content

All the participants appear to engage with a great deal of entertainment-based advertisements on a daily-basis, where they encounter various forms of fashion-related content. Only one participant is an exception to this, P10, who is still exposed to entertainment-based content, but never about fashion, as he does not scroll that much on social media, and when he does, he explains. From other participants, EBPC includes influencer videos, content from runway shows, behind-the-scenes videos, try-on hauls, and

storytelling about fashion trends and sustainable practices. The entertainment seems to be important for all participants as it makes the content enjoyable and engaging, which increases its appeal, and eventually its influence. For example, P2 states, “for sure, it shapes my tastes and if I find myself in a store, I will be more inclined to buy that cool product I remember from that video because it made me laugh or entertained in that piece of content ... it positively influences me towards certain products”.

Again, several recurring themes emerged, helping the author making sense of the interviews' data.

4.3.3.1 Practicality

People who demonstrate practical steps towards sustainability in an entertaining way can significantly impact some participants' behaviours. For instance, P2 and P6 were inspired by the entertaining content of a person who upcycled clothes and made it look appealing to them, which made them consider vintage shopping more seriously, hence shifting their sustainable perceptions. However, as mentioned earlier, this effect appears to be temporary, which could highlight the need for consistency of entertainment-based sustainable ads in people's social media feeds for them to keep these perceptions and behaviours.

4.3.3.2 Accessibility and Fun

P5 prefers content that simplifies complex information by being entertaining. She mentions, "It's too long and it's too technical sometimes so it's good to have someone kind of making it accessible and fun ... if not entertaining then I can go read articles about sustainability, you know? And this I don't have the time nor the energy to do", emphasising the need for captivating content that can educate without becoming dull. This form of laziness to read about sustainability was also observed in P6's replies, where he explained that he is too lazy to check if all the brands he consumed are sustainable, which appeared to him as being a complicated task. In the same direction as P5, P1 values content that is both informative and accessible, helping adjust perceptions of sustainability, "I think good informative entertaining content on social media can adjust how I see sustainability, what it means for me.". In certain cases, it looks like this content could make participants more conscious in their fashion consumption. P1 also says, “influencers and entertaining education content in sustainability do make me more aware ... it does make me think twice of like, do I really want this? Do I really need it?”, showing a real impact on their behaviours. In addition, P5 acknowledges that such content can influence her subconsciously, even if not immediately

apparent, " they influence me, you know, on a more, subconscious level, like not something that I take directly or realize immediately."

4.3.3.3 Humour and Engagement

P4 enjoys humorous takes on fashion, such as those by Frugal Aesthetic as touched upon earlier. He says, "Fun content is just enjoyable, and it has some value for me as well in fashion, it's like I can be inspired and know more about the fashion industry, while having fun" (P4, 2024). This also happens for P8, who mentions, "those entertaining ads add a fun twist to the whole fashion consumption thing ... they make it seem like shopping is this exciting, joyful experience".

The entertainment factor here is key to retaining his interest and shaping tastes in a subtle way.

4.3.3.4 DIY and Upcycling

P3 appreciates content that involves DIY and upcycling, finding it appealing not necessarily for its sustainability but for its uniqueness and creativity, stating, "I can upcycle a shirt of my dad and I'm doing this new unique piece with it... I just love it a lot, to be honest ... that's a bit why I do it, not because it's sustainable, but it still drove me to do it, which was sustainable." (P3, 2024). DIY appeared to be appealing for P2 and 6 as well, fostered by entertaining videos about it, which appeared to have impact into their perceptions of it, and directly on their behaviours.

4.3.3.5 Meme and Community factor

P2 engages with meme-based content and enjoys the communal and humorous aspects, he explains about one purchase he made, "That time was as part of a meme wave on Instagram... I bought it just to be part of that community, just for fun.". He explains how buying this product resulted in being part of this online joke, influencing his purchase behaviour.

This could indicate that entertainment-driven trends can drive certain products' consumption even if the primary motivation is fun rather than the product itself.

4.3.3.6 Perception of Cool

Multiple participants mentioned how people online were setting what is "cool", fostering their perceptions of it and intentions to buy that product. This is observed in P9

purchase of Timberlands, which he states, “every streetwear fashion kids is wearing them on my feed, transforming them, putting them on in their own way and it looks cool, it only makes me want to do the same.”. P3 also mentions, “it all comes down to these reels showing fashion products being associated with people I think are cool doing things I also regard as cool, and so my perception of that product becomes cool”.

This is also linked to influencers’ content, showing how great of an influence they have on their following’s consumption intentions through what they promote.

In sum, entertainment-based promotional content was shown to have an impact on sustainable fashion perceptions and behaviours by being fun, enjoyable while making certain practices more accessible and practical, shaping tastes making products regarded as “cool” and engaging people to participate to certain consumption behaviours to be part of a challenge/joke. P4 states, "it shapes my tastes and if I find myself in a store, I will be more inclined to buy that sustainable product that content talked about, especially if that made me laugh or entertained me."

4.3.4 Targeted Advertisements

In the same way as influencers and entertainment-based content, all participants are daily exposed to targeted ads, where algorithms tailor what they see following their interests, locations and behaviours, as highlighted by the literature (McInnis et al., 2022). P8 states, “My feed is filled with sponsored posts from all sorts of brands. It's like they know exactly what I'm into and tailor the ads accordingly.”. P2 agrees on their effectiveness to target consumers, by saying, “I guess the algorithm knows the kind of brands I’m into and shows me their ads and products.” Despite their effectiveness, interviews’ data reveal mixed feelings towards targeted ads contrarily to the previously studied promotion types. Although some participants appreciate the convenience and discoverability they offer, most of them are sceptical or indifferent unless the ad comes from trusted brands or provide engaging content. For example, P2 states, "targeted ads make me feel like they’re just for me ... I can discover brands that fit what I like" appreciating their customized nature (P2, 2024). In contrast, P4 tends to ignore them if they come from unfamiliar brands, saying, "if I haven't followed this thing already, probably I'm not interested in it" (P4, 2024). P10 does not feel impacted by them, stating, “I don’t like these ads that are targeted and just want to sell, I like when it tells a story, and the goal is not only to sell me a product or a style, I like when the ad gives me

value”. In the same way, P4 does not find targeted ads appealing, and P9 precises that, “I usually skip them. It’s too much in your face I think ... even if I look for a product on the internet and then it’s everywhere on my feed through targeted ads, it doesn’t make me want to buy it more because I just feel like it’s forcing me to buy.

Through the data, interesting themes emerges which are delved deeper in this section.

4.3.4.1 Positive Influence on Purchase Behaviour

In some cases, it does seem like targeted ads can immediately bring people to buy, P2 states, "I often used to purchase right away from them and discover new brands or people through them", talking about a period where he used to buy more pieces. This indicates that well-targeted ads can potentially lead to spontaneous purchase decisions. It also happened to P8, although she does appreciate like targeted ads, stating, “they create this sense of urgency to buy ... I'll admit, I've fallen into that trap before, clicking through to purchase something just because it looked nice in the ad.”, highlighting this potential spontaneous effect.

4.3.4.2 Trust and Authenticity

P5's preference for targeted ads including previously known influencers and/or brands highlights the importance of credibility. She mentions, "if it's not personal, so from someone you know, or if it's not entertaining, so in the video, I don't think it would impact me in any way" (P5, 2024). P4 has the same opinion, staying indifferent towards ads from unknown brands, indicating that consumers are more receptive to ads from brands they are already familiar with or follow, making brand recognition a key factor in targeted ads' effectiveness. In this sense, P8 explains how a campaign from Patagonia, which she already liked, made her start thinking about the longevity of her clothes and the possibility of repairing instead of replacing them.

4.3.4.3 Repeated Content

Consistent sustainability messaging in targeted ads could turn out to enhance consumer awareness and consideration of certain sustainable options. P1 notes, "targeted sustainable ads that, like, repeat themselves and that I remember can definitely motivate me more to be a more sustainable consumer" suggesting that repeated exposure to credible sustainability-focused ads can positively influence purchasing decisions towards more eco-friendly products. P5 also explains how she ended up clicking on targeted ads that repeated

themselves. She specifies that the ad was entertaining and intrigued her; otherwise, she would have skipped, in her opinion.

4.3.4.4 Impact of Greenwashing

The prevalence of greenwashing in targeted ads from prominent fashion brands affects consumer trust and perceptions of sustainability. P1's observation, "I know there's so much greenwashing and these targeted ads wouldn't change what, I already know about certain brands" (P1, 2024). This could suggest that for brands whose sustainable reputation is not good, targeted ads would not be effective on Gen Z, who are aware and confident about their environmental knowledge, as seen previously in the literature (Liu, 2022).

4.4 The Attitude-Behaviour Gap

4.4.1 Attitudes towards Sustainable Fashion

As showed in the literature, positive attitudes towards sustainable fashion, consisting of behavioural judgement, interests, values and perceptions, are on the rise in recent decades (Ajzen, 1985). P10 correctly illustrates this fact saying, "you can easily notice it online, but also on brands' discourse lately, there's a lot more advertising and communication around it now, it seems like it's become an effective selling point for companies".

All participants reported an increased exposure to sustainability advocacy, both from individuals and companies, predominantly through digital platforms such as social media. This rising trend in previous years was identified in the studied literature (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). This exposure has influenced their attitudes towards sustainable fashion, though the depth of their engagement varies. Data shows that 9 participants clearly stated that sustainability was important nowadays, examples are P10, "incredibly important", P6, "more sustainability is definitely needed", or P8, stating that sustainable consumption is "non-negotiable for the future of fashion". This proves a great deal of consciousness and awareness about the importance of sustainable fashion.

P1 and P10 expressed scepticism towards the sustainability claims of large fashion brands, often viewing them as greenwashing efforts. P1 emphasized the importance of the brand's credibility in sustainability in sustainable promotion, expecting more transparency in what specific aspects of sustainability are being addressed by companies. She then stressed

the need for genuine commitment from companies, "I really want to see more sustainable-based companies arise, because I feel like when big companies do it it's not real, I don't really trust big companies in this" (P1, 2024). She proceeded by discussing the convenience and accessibility of fast fashion and its conditioning effect on consumer habits, suggesting that more consistent sustainability communication is needed.

P2 underscored the importance of reducing consumption as humans, saying: "I try to limit my purchases as much as I can which is I think the most sustainable way to go. He also expressed frustration with the prevalence of fast fashion despite its known negative impacts.

P3 noted a personal shift towards positive sustainable perceptions and showed an optimistic opinion about the future: "I think how I perceive sustainability in fashion changed for sure ... the more we go on and the more we're going to be exposed and choose sustainable practices".

P5 expressed a desire for higher-quality sustainable items but noted financial limitations, "Vintage and second-hand is an easy way to go sustainable because it's just cheaper, but I like special hand-made pieces ... but way more difficult to get because then you need to spend the money, which I don't have".

P4 mentioned how positive the growth in public awareness about sustainable fashion is, driven by social media and modern trends. P7 also shows positive perceptions of new sustainable practices, appreciating the fact that fashion stores replaced plastic bags by paper ones, for example. Similarly to P5, P4 explained how he prefers vintage shopping as a more affordable as well as more sustainable option: "I think this change towards sustainability is easy when it comes to thrift stores and vintage fashion because it's way cheaper, considered as cool, and even more sustainable than new clothes that respect the environment in my opinion".

Good knowledge about sustainability was seen in participants. For example, P5 explained how the collections are really fast for certain big fashion chains, changing every week. P7 also explains, "for global warming as well ... I know that it's always a better option to go for second hand and not buy new"

Overall, participants shared a considerably high interest, awareness, positive perceptions and concern for sustainability in fashion. Common points are a preference for second-hand shopping, recognition of the increased presence of sustainability online, and the awareness of the importance of reducing consumption and consuming in a more sustainable way. Some participants acknowledged the role of social media in raising awareness and the need for more commitments to sustainability from brands and influencers.

4.4.2 Behaviours towards Sustainable Fashion

Despite the high awareness of sustainability issues among the participants, the actual consumption patterns reveal an ongoing struggle to consistently translate these attitudes into sustainable behaviours, highlighting the persistent attitude-behaviour gap found in the literature (Hassan et al., 2016; Jacobs et al., 2018; Razzaq et al., 2018). In fact, while acknowledging the importance of sustainability, most of the participants admitted inconsistency in their behaviour, showing a degree of awareness around this divergence.

P3, for instance, expressed conflicting feelings about his consumption of fast fashion despite advocating for sustainability. He then rationalized his behaviour by highlighting the affordability and convenience of second-hand shopping, as well as the fact that he is unable to observe the positive consequences of his sustainable behaviour. He explained, "There's a lack of real motivations for me to not buy that piece I want ... If I'm going to an event and I find this piece I really like, I'm not going to check if it's sustainable because this desire to have it is really way stronger than my perceptions of the impacts of consuming it ... buying it means I can wear it and feel good at the event, whereas not buying it means nothing for me except the fact I can't wear it basically, I can't clearly see the impacts of what I buy." (P3, 2024). P10 seems to be in line with that, stating, "these impacts are far from us, the only way to see them is look for them online, and it is easy to skip them when they arise you know, it's not like people go outside every day and notice the impacts of their consumption". This interesting point suggests an issue of perception versus reality, where intangible concepts like unsustainable impacts may not translate into behavioural change.

P7 discusses another factor that could explain this lack of translation from attitudes to behaviours, "these consequences are going to be seen long-term, so it's just easier to prioritize one's short-term well-being or satisfaction over these. I think it's like smoking consequences, people feel good when they smoke, and they know it's bad but these negative consequences are only visible on the long-term". Here, she points out that thinking about future consequences such as impacts on future generation is far from Gen Z, and how looking at the short-term consumption benefits is easier. This could be linked to the VBN, and would suggest low biospheric and altruistic values, for which individuals fail at seeing the potential threat on valued object, which in turn does not foster sustainable behaviours (Stern, 1999).

P1 explained a similar point, acknowledging her tendency to prioritize immediate desires over sustainability concerns. Despite her awareness of the environmental implications

of her actions, she admitted to succumbing to impulse purchases driven by factors like mood and aesthetic appeal. She stated, "It's easier said than done! it's easier for me to sit here and say, yeah, we should consume less, and sustainability is important. And then two hours later, you'll see me check a new website that I found with no shipping costs, and I'll buy what I think is cute because the weather is nice, you know?". She went on to express the difficulty of translating intentions into actions, because of strong consumerist impulses created by a culture that constantly promotes consumption. Similar for P9, who admits, "even though I know these initiatives and changes in consumption from people of my generation, I still consume the way I consume and prioritise looking good and being cool over being more sustainable."

P6 showed a low level of engagement with sustainable fashion, justifying a correct behaviour with his preference for second-hand shopping, but also recognizing significant room for improvement. He expressed his disappointment towards a lack of international regulations, which hinders a greater adoption of sustainable practices, stating, "Sustainability plays a role to an extent in my fashion consumption because I try to buy second-hand... but 80% of what I buy is new clothes". P2 also admitted that sustainability considerations often take a backseat when he encounters fashion pieces he likes, particularly from fast fashion brands. Despite awareness of the negative environmental impacts, immediate aesthetic appeal and affordability often drive his purchasing decisions, similarly to P1.

In the same way, P5, P7 and P8 are aware of it, but feel a certain frustration because they are trying to do better. P8 mentions, "There are definitely times when I slip up and make less-than-sustainable choices ... maybe I'll get caught up in the excitement of a big sale and end up buying something that I know isn't the most eco-friendly option. It's frustrating when that happens because I know better".

While most of the participants admitted the discrepancy between their attitudes and behaviours in environmental-friendly fashion choices, some of them justified and rationalised it by explaining how the fact they were aware about it, and, for some of them, also consumed second-hand, they considered themselves more sustainable than the mass, which they seemed to be content with.

4.6 Bridging the Gap

The gap between sustainable fashion attitudes and behaviours among Gen Z consumers seems persistent and was noticed in and by all the participants. As this research

analysed how Influencer Branded Content, Entertainment-Based Promotional Content and Targeted Advertisements impact attitudes and their translation into sustainable behaviours, potentially promising pathways emerged that could narrow down this gap. By exploring the discussions, valuable insights can be created that could help practitioners and policy makers foster the translation of sustainable attitudes into corresponding behaviours.

4.6.1 Influencer Branded Content

As seen previously, influencers have a considerable impact in enhancing the perceptions and their behavioural translation of their audience and appeared to be the most influential promotional content type for participants.

Firstly, it was noticed that through using storytelling and engaging content that fosters enjoyable emotions, they can spread sustainable knowledge and higher positive perceptions of sustainable practices, making it seem more accessible for their followers. This can positively increase attitudes towards sustainable fashion consumption, but also facilitates their rapid translation into actual behaviours, as discussed previously. For example, P6 and P5 explained that if the followers see the journey of some influencer who upcycles their clothes, they bring desire to copy those sustainable fashion practices. This is also in line with the Theory of Planned Behaviour, where higher attitudes and subjective norms, including the importance given to other people's opinions, for instance the influencer, has a higher likelihood to translate into behaviours. Thus, sustainability products and/or behaviours as an integrated part of the lifestyle and storytelling of these influencers could prove to be an influential point in increasing sustainable attitudes and better translating them into sustainable behaviours for their audience.

This relationship often appears to be mediated by trust and "coolness" that the followers place on certain influencers, as P3, P5 P7, and P9 explain. P9 explains, "I think the more sustainable fashion enters in my following circle, so in what I see with my algorithm or through the people and organizations I follow, and the more I will regard it as a cool thing probably.". P7 agrees, stating, "another thing ... could be if you see other people consuming sustainable, would make it more accessible and cool I think and would make people perceive these things better.". P8 adds an interesting point, mentioning, "For example, when I see influencers and brands promoting stylish sustainable pieces, it challenges the stereotype that eco-friendly fashion is bland or boring." These points show the positive influence on judgement/perceptions of certain products and practices by influencers. These micro-

celebrities, if perceived as cool, or genuine and with good intentions regarding their promotional content, might work exceptionally well to lead to higher attitudes towards what is promoted, making the audience more likely to adjust their behaviours in the same direction.

Another recurring theme in the data is the lack of motivations from the participants to learn more about sustainability and ways to be more sustainable, despite their positive attitudes to do so. It also appears that influencers, through entertaining content that simplifies sustainability information, can educate consumers in a less boring way, which could foster a better translation of sustainable attitudes into behaviours by increasing the perceived ability to reduce the threat, as illustrated by the Value-Belief-Norm theory (Stern, 1999). P1 states, when talking about her favourite influencers, “I mean, if they start educating us about fashion sustainability, and there's explanation behind it, then I don't see why my perceptions wouldn't change.”. P10's opinion seems in line, stating, “I can see influencer content influence my perceptions if it's interesting, giving me value, teaching me something about sustainability, about the effects of unsustainable fashion ... I would be captured by it because it's in line with my goals and values and brings me closer to who I want to become as a person.”. This strongly suggests that the right influencer content would help their audience turning their existing attitudes/perceptions into corresponding behaviours.

4.6.2 Entertainment-Based Promotional Content

Interviews showed how effective entertainment was in influencing Gen Z's perceptions and behaviours.

In the same way influencers influence their audience to perform cool sustainable actions such as DIY garments, entertaining promotional content can make sustainable practices look closer and more accessible, and by doing so, strengthen perceived behavioural control as illustrated by the Theory of Planned Behaviour and thus fostering sustainable behaviours. As P9 outlines, “videos about products they find in thrift stores for example, or what thrift stores to consume at, and this I like because it's easy to follow, and they definitely make second hand clothes look cool, everyone dresses like this now because of that and people like it more, which is a pretty positive spiral I'd say”, when explaining how entertaining videos in his feed brought him to discover new thrift stores in his city.

Humorous and community-driven material also turns out to work effectively on participants. P4 and P2 explain how fun content can make sustainable fashion more fun rather than a burden. This fun content, when linked to community-driven jokes, gives the feeling

that performing a certain behaviour make one's belong to the movement, and thus, his participation in the trend is nurtured. This was highlighted by P4 when talking about the fun promotional content of one youtuber he likes, explaining that, "I know his goals is just to make his advertisement look as entertaining and as immersive as possible, so you can be attracted and, unconsciously have fun while your tastes and likelihood to buy that product just increases a lot probably, but it works on me because ... it's funny to me ... he shapes a bit my tastes for certain products". P2 shows this impact too by telling how a meme-driven joke in the internet made him buy a certain product, "... as part of the joke, and I also bought it to be part of it, for fun ... and that made me laugh cause I was part of this joke people were talking about, and then people were meeting because of that product and there was a whole thing around it".

As seen in the data, entertainment-based promotional content can engage and retains viewers' attention and make people acquire new knowledge and perceptions in an enjoyable way. By having the potential to clearly show the negative impacts of the fashion industry and show the long-term benefits of sustainable consumption, EBPC should be able to make the translation of sustainable attitudes easier for users. P4 specifies, "I feel like I'll be drawn when sustainability I'll get content, or trending videos ... showing how big of a damage". Additionally, P7's previously mentioned analogy about the invisible long run effects of smoking cigarettes brings a potential mitigation by having these consequences seen on screen in the promotion of sustainable products. By showing these issues in a captivating manner, such content can make the consequences of unsustainable practices more relatable, possibly reinforcing perceived behavioural control from the TPB, playing a crucial role in translating intentions into actions (Ajzen, 1985). In sum, when viewers are entertained while being shown the harmful effects of fast fashion and the advantages of sustainable alternatives in the long run, they are potentially more likely to internalize these messages and adjust their behaviours accordingly.

4.6.3 Targeted Advertisements

Although their influence turned out to be less powerful for Gen Z, TA can potentially play their role in reducing the attitude-behaviour gap.

Data revealed how constant exposure to sustainable-based targeted ads could impact users' interest in them, as mediated by the degree of entertainment of the ad, as P5 suggests.

In this case, trust and authenticity of the advertiser seem to play a crucial role in its influence. As P5 and P8 reported, if they see any advertisement from a recognized brand or person, then

most probably, it is going to influence their behaviour, such as with the Patagonia example. That means embedding the brand image in the targeted advertisements could make its influence more significant.

Staying away from “in-your-face” commerciality also came back often during the interviews, where participants such as P9 explained, “I usually skip them. It’s too much in your face ... I know they’re targeting me to buy it which doesn’t make me want to buy it”, highlighting Gen Z’s preference for subtle promotion, and not direct targeting.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed at exploring the potential impacts of social media promotional content on making the sustainable fashion attitudes and behaviours of Gen Z fashion consumers closer. By conducting 10 semi-structured interviews with Gen Z participants from different ages and backgrounds, this research explored how prominent types of social media promotional content, specifically Influencer Branded Content, Entertainment-Based Promotional Content, and Targeted Advertisements, could be able to facilitate the translation of their positive sustainable fashion attitudes in corresponding behaviours

The findings reveal that Gen Z consumers are highly active on social media platforms, with Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat being the most popular. Participants expressed a high level of awareness and positive attitudes towards sustainable fashion. Despite their awareness, a significant attitude-behaviour gap persisted, with many participants struggling to consistently translate their sustainable attitudes into corresponding behaviours. The study identifies key themes that influence this gap, drawing into the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Value-Belief-Norm theory, including the role of emotional engagement, storytelling, perceived closeness, practicality, the perception of "coolness," community-driven trends, trust, authenticity and subtle advertising, all facilitating a translation between positive behaviours and corresponding actions in their specific way.

By shedding light on the effectiveness of the most prominent types of social media promotional content in reducing the sustainable fashion gap among Gen Z consumers, this research provides valuable insights for both academia and the industry. The findings outline key points of improvement that can help practitioners as well as researchers develop more effective promotional communication strategies aimed at fostering more sustainable consumption from young generations. By understanding the nuanced impacts of uncovered factors, this research paves the way for more research in the field, and increasingly spread sustainable fashion practices and consumption.

As Participant 10 said it with hope, "I think social media ads is a powerful tool if we want to close this gap, but I think we should focus more on actionable advice, things that make it easier for people to act more sustainable, and we need to make it not only cool, but the new normal, because we need everyone to do this together. Perceptions are already there and it's a good step, now it's about influencing people to go engage in sustainable practices and ways of consuming fashion, and bit by bit make it the only possible option to consume, and I really believe it can be done."

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview guide

How can social media promotional content bridge the sustainable fashion attitude-behaviour gap among Gen Z fashion consumers?

| Section/Theme | Questions |
|--|--|
| Introduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could you please tell me about yourself? Who are you and what do you do in life? |
| Fashion Consumption Habits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you tell me about your fashion consumption habits? - Can you tell me how often do you purchase new clothes? - Where do you buy them? - What comes into play when you buy clothes? - How much do you spend for clothes per month? |
| Social Media Promotional Content (Influencer, Entertainment, Targeted) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What social media do you use the most? - Do you ever see fashion promotional content/advertisements on social media? - What type? - How do you think these ads influence you? - Do you follow any fashion influencers? - How does their branded content affect your attitudes towards (sustainable) fashion consumption? <i>(define attitudes)</i> - How do they affect the translation of these attitudes into behaviours? - Do you ever see fashion entertainment-based promotional content? <i>(define EBPC if needed)</i> - How does this content impact your attitudes towards (sustainable) fashion consumption? - How do they influence the translation of these attitudes into behaviours? - Do you ever see fashion targeted ads? - How do they impact your attitudes towards (sustainable) fashion consumption? - How do they impact the translation of these attitudes into behaviours? |
| Sustainable Fashion Attitudes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is your opinion on sustainability in fashion? - How important is sustainability in the fashion industry? |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How sustainable do you think people are in general? - How do you think promotion on social media can impact these attitudes you have? What could make them shift or change? - Can you describe one time where an influencer, entertaining content, or sponsored post impacted your attitudes with regard to sustainability change? |
| Sustainable Fashion Consumption | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you consume sustainable fashion? - How sustainable would you say your fashion consumption is? - Does sustainability have a big role in your purchase behaviour? - How do you think social media promotional content could change your fashion behaviour? - Can you describe one time where an influencer, entertaining promotion, or sponsored post translated your attitudes into behaviours in fashion? |
| Bridging the Gap | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you think influencer, entertainment, or targeted advertisement could make this gap narrower? <i>(If not touched upon already, define ABG)</i> - Have you seen any social media content promoting sustainable fashion consumption? - What kind of content was it? - How did it impact you exactly? - To what extent do you think social media promotional content has the potential to bridge your attitudes or behaviours towards sustainable fashion? |
| Conclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional comments or thoughts? |

Appendix B: List of Participants

| | Field | Gender | Age | Nationality | Location | Average Monthly Fashion Spendings (in €) |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------|-----|-------------|-----------|--|
| Participant 1 (P1) | Business (Student) | Female | 20 | Indian | Amsterdam | More than 300 |
| Participant 2 (P2) | Marketing | Male | 23 | Italian | Rotterdam | 30 |
| Participant 3 (P3) | Graphic Design | Male | 24 | German | Köln | / |
| Participant 4 (P4) | Luxury Fashion | Male | 27 | Greek | Umbria | / |
| Participant 5 (P5) | Arts | Female | 27 | Italian | Rotterdam | 200 |
| Participant 6 (P6) | Politics (Student) | Male | 22 | Korean | Rotterdam | 75 |
| Participant 7 (P7) | Management (Student) | Female | 21 | Belgian | Brussels | 200 |
| Participant 8 (P8) | Finance (Student) | Female | 19 | Irish | Rotterdam | 125 |
| Participant 9 (P9) | Economics (Student) | Male | 18 | Belgian | Liège | / |
| Participant 10 (P10) | Fashion | Male | 22 | Swedish | Rotterdam | 50 |

Appendix C: Coding Table

| General Themes | Main Themes | Sub Themes |
|---|---|---|
| Participant Profile | General Background | Age |
| | | Nationality |
| | | Field of study/work |
| | Social Media Use | Specific social media |
| | Fashion Consumption Habits | General consumption |
| Monthly spendings | | |
| Social Media Promotional Content Exposure and Impacts | Social Media General Influence | Exposure |
| | | Influence |
| | Influencer-Branded Content | Exposure |
| | | Influence |
| | Entertainment-Based Promotional Content | Exposure |
| | | Influence |
| | Targeted Advertisements | Exposure |
| | | Influence |
| The Attitude-Behaviour Gap | Sustainable Fashion Attitudes | |
| | Sustainable Fashion Behaviours | |
| | Bridge the Gap | Influencer-Branded Content |
| | | Entertainment-Based Promotional Content |
| | | Targeted Advertisements |