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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Understanding Green Purchase Intention in Sustainable Fashion: An Integrated Model of Green Product Attributes, Green Marketing Communication, Green Attitude, and the Moderating Role of Generative AI Usage among Sri Lankan Generation Z Consumers

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Abstract

The development of environmental problems related to the fashion field has made sustainable consumption more important in the fashion industry, especially among Generation Z consumers. This study seeks to investigate how green marketing practices (green materials, green labelling, and green advertising) affect green purchase intention in the context of the sustainable fashion industry in Sri Lanka, and to analyse if green attitude can be used as a mediator and generative AI usage can be used as a moderator. Data was collected with a quantitative approach using a positivist philosophy from 165 consumers belonging to Generation Z in Sri Lanka using a structured self-administered questionnaire sent through online platforms. The data were analysed with SPSS software and descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, mediation analysis, moderation analysis and moderated mediation analysis. The results indicate that green marketing practices have a great positive effect on green purchase intention, where green labelling is the most significant one. Green attitude was found to be a significant partial mediator between green marketing practices and green purchase intention. Importantly, the green attitude amd green purchase intention link was negatively moderated by the use of generative AI, showing that as the use

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of AI grows, the link between attitude and intention becomes weaker as consumers become more likely to make decisions using AI. The research builds on the current body of knowledge by merging the classic green marketing elements with the newer technology elements, providing managerial implications for sustainable fashion brands in a developing country context.

Keywords: Generative AI usage, Green attitude, Green labeling, Green materials, Green purchase intention, Sustainable fashion

1. Introduction

The fashion industry is widely recognized as one of the world's most environmentally damaging sectors, contributing significantly to carbon emissions, water waste, and textile pollution (Niinimaki et al., 2020). These growing environmental concerns have intensified the shift toward sustainable fashion, compelling organizations to adopt green marketing practices as a strategy to influence consumer behavior. Among the most significant green marketing tools are green materials, green labeling, and green advertising, all of which communicate a brand's environmental commitment and have been found to influence consumer perceptions and purchase decisions (Chen & Chang, 2012; Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

In parallel, the rapid growth of digital media and generative artificial intelligence (AI) has fundamentally altered how consumers access and process sustainability information. Tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini are increasingly used by young consumers to evaluate sustainability claims, compare products, and make informed purchase decisions (Aldaihani et al., 2024). This shift is particularly pronounced among Generation Z consumers, who exhibit high digital literacy, environmental awareness, and a tendency to verify marketing claims through AI-assisted platforms (Djafarova & Foots, 2022).

While existing literature has explored green marketing in various product categories, limited research has examined the specific influence of green marketing practices on Generation Z consumers within the sustainable fashion sector in developing country contexts such as Sri Lanka. Moreover, the integrating role of generative AI usage as a moderating variable within behavioral models of green purchasing remains largely unexplored (Rauschnabel et al., 2023).

This study addresses these gaps by examining how green materials, green labeling, and green advertising influence green purchase intention among Sri Lankan Generation Z consumers, with green attitude mediating the relationship and generative AI usage moderating the attitude-intention link. The research objectives are:

1. To determine the impact of green marketing practices on Generation Z consumers' green purchase intention.

2. To assess the impact of green marketing practices on green attitude.

3. To evaluate whether green attitude mediates the relationship between green marketing practices and green purchase intention.

4. To investigate the moderating effect of generative AI usage on the relationship between green attitude and green purchase intention.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Green Marketing Practices and Sustainable Fashion

Green marketing practices refer to organizational strategies that communicate and promote environmentally responsible products. In sustainable fashion, these practices encompass green materials which are environmentally friendly textile inputs such as organic cotton, recycled fibers, and biodegradable fabrics, green labeling which provides certified environmental information, and green advertising, which promotes sustainability through marketing communications (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2023; Niinimaki et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2022). These three components serve as core communication tools that shape consumer environmental perceptions and purchasing behavior (Panopoulos et al., 2023).

2.2. Green Purchase Intention

Green purchase intention is defined as the likelihood that consumers will choose environmentally friendly products over conventional alternatives (Joshi & Rahman, 2022). Research has consistently found that green marketing practices positively influence green purchase intention across various industries (Kareklas, Carlson & Muehling, 2014). In the

sustainable fashion context, empirical evidence suggests that visible, credible sustainability cues such as eco-labels and sustainable materials serve as powerful drivers of purchase intention among environmentally conscious consumers (Wang et al., 2021).

H1: Green marketing practices have a significant positive effect on green purchase intention.

H1a: Green materials have a significant positive effect on green purchase intention.

H1b: Green labeling has a significant positive effect on green purchase intention.

H1c: Green advertising has a significant positive effect on green purchase intention.

2.3. Green Attitude as a Mediator

Green attitude reflects consumers' overall positive evaluation and commitment toward environmentally friendly products (Rahman & Reynolds, 2022). Research grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior suggests that green marketing practices influence purchase intention primarily by shaping pro-environmental attitudes (Biswas & Roy, 2015; Wang et al., 2023). The use of sustainable materials, credible eco-labels, and informative advertising has been shown to enhance positive green attitudes, which subsequently translate into stronger purchase intentions. This mediation pathway is particularly relevant among Generation Z consumers, who exhibit heightened environmental sensitivity (Djafarova & Foots, 2022).

H2: Green marketing practices have a significant positive impact on green attitude.

H2a: Green materials have a significant positive impact on green attitude.

H2b: Green labeling has a significant positive impact on green attitude.

H2c: Green advertising has a significant positive impact on green attitude.

H3: Green attitude mediates the relationship between green marketing practices and green purchase intention.

2.4. Generative AI Usage as a Moderator

Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and AI-powered recommendation systems offer consumers personalized sustainability information, product comparisons, and verification of environmental claims (Aldaihani et al., 2024). These tools are increasingly shaping how Generation Z consumers process sustainability-related content and make purchase decisions. While AI usage can amplify attitude-based decision-making by providing targeted information, it may also reduce dependence on personal attitudes by offering external data-driven guidance. This dual role positions generative AI usage as a significant moderator of the green attitude and green purchase intention relationship (Lu et al., 2023; Patel et al., 2023).

H4: Generative AI usage moderates the relationship between green attitude and green purchase intention.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research approach guided by a positivist philosophy and a deductive research design. A structured self-administered questionnaire was developed based on validated measurement scales from prior literature. Data were collected from 165 Generation Z consumers in Sri Lanka aged between 15 and 29 years using non-probability convenience sampling. The survey was distributed via Google Forms to reach digitally active respondents, which is appropriate given that Generation Z's primary mode of information access is through digital platforms.

All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Green advertising, green labeling, green purchase intention, and generative AI usage were measured using items adapted from Aldaihani et al. (2024). Green materials were measured using items adapted from Schiaroli et al. (2025). Green attitude was operationalized through items reflecting consumers' positive evaluation of environmentally friendly fashion products. Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS, employing descriptive statistics, reliability testing, validity testing, Pearson correlation,

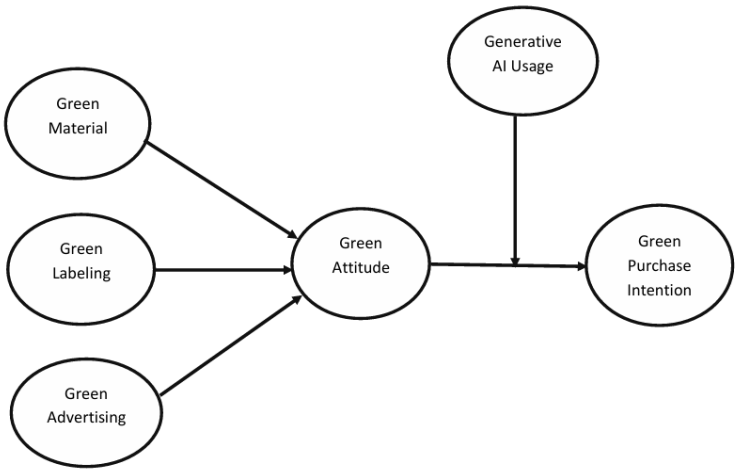
multiple regression, mediation (PROCESS Macro, Model 4), moderation (Model 1), and moderated mediation (Model 14) analyses.

Table 1

Measurements of the Variables

Variable	Items	References
Green Materials	Familiarity with biobased clothing materials; knowledge of sustainable textiles; experience using biobased apparel; self-classification as knowledgeable about eco-textiles.	Schiaroli et al. (2025)
Green Labeling	Labels help identify sustainable products; search for label information; labels are easy to read; labels encourage purchase; label information is accurate.	Aldaihani et al. (2024)
Green Advertising	Advertisements should be credible; ads portray ecological relevance; ads inspire purchase; ads influence buying decisions; ads attract me to sustainable brands.	Aldaihani et al. (2024)
Green Attitude	Positive evaluation of sustainable fashion products; concern for environmental impact; commitment to eco-friendly purchasing.	Aldaihani et al. (2024)
Generative AI Usage	Use AI to search sustainability info; get views on brands; manage information; compare products; identify suitable products; and understand sustainability claims.	Aldaihani et al. (2024)
Green Purchase Intention	Preference for less environmental impact products; willingness to pay more; recommending sustainable products; likelihood of future sustainable purchases.	Aldaihani et al. (2024)

The relationship can be graphically as follows:



4. Data Analysis

4.1. Analysis of Descriptive Statistics

A total of 165 responses were collected and validated for analysis. The sample comprised 52.5% female (85 respondents) and 47.5% male (80 respondents). The majority of respondents (35.2%, n=58) were aged 24–26 years, followed by 27–29 years (24.2%, n=40). Regarding educational status, the largest group were graduates (34.6%, n=57), followed by those with diploma or professional qualifications (24.2%, n=40). The majority of respondents (64.2%, n=106) were full-time employees. In terms of monthly income, 31.5% (n=52) earned above LKR 75,000. Most respondents purchased apparel at least once a month (38.8%, n=64), and 30.9% (n=51) spent between LKR 5,000–10,000 on clothing monthly.

Regarding sustainable fashion behavior, 44.8% (n=74) preferred sustainable or ethical fashion brands, and 80.0% (n=132) had prior experience purchasing sustainable fashion. Social media was the dominant information source (75.8%, n=125). Notably, 31.5% (n=52) of respondents used generative AI tools very frequently for fashion and sustainability information, and 28.5% (n=47) used them frequently, indicating high AI engagement within the sample.

4.2. Reliability and Validity

Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.972 confirmed excellent internal consistency across all 28 measurement items, substantially exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Validity was assessed through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure, which yielded a value of 0.909, indicating meritorious sampling adequacy. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant (Chi-square = 774.129, df = 15, $p < 0.001$), confirming the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. All variable communalities ranged between 0.545 and 0.857, exceeding the recommended minimum of 0.50.

Table 2

Reliability and Validity

Measure	Value	Threshold
Cronbach's Alpha	0.972	> 0.70
KMO Sampling Adequacy	0.909	> 0.80 (meritorious)
Bartlett's Test (Sig.)	p = 0.000	< 0.05

Note. Survey data (2025).

4.3. Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships among all variables. Green labeling showed the strongest correlation with green purchase intention ($r = 0.796$, $p < 0.001$), followed by green materials ($r = 0.721$, $p < 0.001$) and green advertising ($r = 0.732$, $p < 0.001$). High inter-correlations among the green marketing practice variables ($r = 0.745$ to 0.840) suggest that brands employing one sustainable practice tend to employ others concurrently. All VIF values in the regression model ranged from 2.549 to 3.860, well below the critical threshold of 5, confirming the absence of significant multicollinearity.

Table 3

Correlation Matrix

	GA	GL	GM	GPI
Green Advertising (GA)	1	.840**	.745**	.732**
Green Labeling (GL)	.840**	1	.751**	.796**
Green Material (GM)	.745**	.751**	1	.721**

Green Purchase Intention (GPI)	.732**	.796**	.721**	1

***p < 0.01 (2-tailed). Source: Survey Data (2025)*

4.4. Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis revealed that the model explained 67.2% of the variance in green purchase intention ($R = 0.820$, $R^2 = 0.672$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.666$, $F(3,161) = 110.011$, $p < 0.001$). Green labeling emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.508$, $B = 0.553$, $p < 0.001$), followed by green materials ($\beta = 0.251$, $B = 0.213$, $p = 0.001$) and green advertising ($\beta = 0.118$, $B = 0.130$, $p < 0.001$). The Durbin-Watson statistic (1.748) confirmed the absence of significant autocorrelation. The regression equation is as follows:

GPI = 0.750 + 0.553(GL) + 0.213(GM) + 0.130(GA)

Table 4

Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.750	—	3.563	0.000
Green Material (GM)	0.213	0.251	3.490	0.001
Green Labeling (GL)	0.553	0.508	5.732	0.000
Green Advertising (GA)	0.130	0.118	1.342	0.000

Note. Survey data (2025).

4.5. Mediation Analysis (Green Attitude)

Mediation analysis using PROCESS Macro (Model 4) confirmed that green attitude partially mediates the relationship between each green marketing practice and green purchase intention. Green materials had a significant positive effect on green attitude ($\beta = 0.4812$, $p < 0.001$); green attitude in turn positively influenced purchase intention ($\beta = 0.4791$, $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect of green materials through green attitude on purchase intention was significant (Effect = 0.2306, 95% CI [0.0978, 0.3570]), confirming partial mediation alongside a significant direct effect ($\beta = 0.3793$, $p < 0.001$).

Green labeling demonstrated the strongest effect on green attitude ($\beta = 0.7278$, $p < 0.001$), with a significant indirect effect on purchase intention through attitude (Effect = 0.2341, 95%

CI [0.0967, 0.3655]) and a substantial direct effect (β = 0.6313, p < 0.001). Green advertising similarly exhibited a significant positive effect on green attitude (β = 0.7158, p < 0.001), a meaningful indirect effect (Effect = 0.3122, 95% CI [0.1463, 0.4522]), and a significant direct effect (β = 0.4961, p < 0.001). Since all confidence intervals excluded zero and both direct and indirect effects were significant, partial mediation was confirmed for all three green marketing practice variables.

Table 5

Mediation Analysis Summary

Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	95% CI	Mediation Type
GM → GATTI → GPI	0.3793***	0.2306*	[0.0978, 0.3570]	Partial
GL → GATTI → GPI	0.6313***	0.2341*	[0.0967, 0.3655]	Partial
GA → GATTI → GPI	0.4961***	0.3122*	[0.1463, 0.4522]	Partial

****p < 0.001. Source: Survey Data (2025)*

4.6. Moderation Analysis (Generative AI Usage)

Moderation analysis (PROCESS Model 1) revealed that generative AI usage significantly moderated the relationship between green attitude and green purchase intention. The interaction term (Green Attitude × Generative AI Usage) was negative and statistically significant (β = -0.1615, p = 0.0003), explaining an additional 3.59% of variance in purchase intention ($\Delta R^2 = 0.0359$, F = 14.002, p = 0.0003). The overall model was significant ($R^2 = 0.5875$, F(3,161) = 76.443, p < 0.001). Conditional effects showed that the positive influence of green attitude on green purchase intention was stronger at low levels of AI usage (Effect = 0.6405, p < 0.001) and diminished as AI usage increased (Effect = 0.3971, p < 0.001), indicating a negative moderation pattern.

4.7. Moderated Mediation Analysis

Full moderated mediation analysis (PROCESS Model 14) confirmed that generative AI usage moderated the indirect effects of green marketing practices on purchase intention through green attitude. The index of moderated mediation was significant for green advertising (β = -

0.0967, 95% CI [-0.1542, -0.0471]), green labeling (β = -0.0924, 95% CI [-0.1409, -0.0472]), and green materials (β = -0.0786, 95% CI [-0.1205, -0.0406]). These findings confirm that the mediating role of green attitude in transmitting green marketing influences to purchase intention is progressively weakened at higher levels of generative AI usage.

4.8. Hypothesis Testing

Table 6

Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	β / Effect	p-value	Decision
H1a: Green materials → Green purchase intention	0.3793	< 0.001	Accepted
H1b: Green labeling → Green purchase intention	0.6313	< 0.001	Accepted
H1c: Green advertising → Green purchase intention	0.4961	< 0.001	Accepted
H2a: Green materials → Green attitude	0.4812	< 0.001	Accepted
H2b: Green labeling → Green attitude	0.7278	< 0.001	Accepted
H2c: Green advertising → Green attitude	0.7158	< 0.001	Accepted
H3: Green attitude mediates green marketing → GPI	0.2306–0.3122	< 0.05	Accepted
H4: AI usage moderates green attitude → GPI	-0.1615	< 0.001	Accepted

Note. Survey data (2025).

5. Results and Discussion of the Study

This study examined how green marketing practices, specifically green materials, green labeling, and green advertising, influence green purchase intention among Generation Z consumers in Sri Lanka's sustainable fashion sector, with green attitude as a mediator and generative AI usage as a moderator.

The results confirm that all three green marketing practice variables have a significant positive effect on green purchase intention, providing empirical support for H1a, H1b, and H1c. Green labeling emerged as the most influential predictor (β = 0.6313), consistent with prior findings that certified eco-labels reduce consumer uncertainty about sustainability claims and serve as fast, credible decision cues for younger, digitally active consumers (Lopez et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2021). Green materials also demonstrated a robust positive effect (β = 0.3793),

reflecting Generation Z's growing concern with the actual environmental composition of products rather than surface-level marketing messages. Green advertising, while statistically significant, produced a comparatively weaker effect, consistent with the documented skepticism of Generation Z toward promotional content and its predisposition to verify claims through independent sources (Djafarova & Foots, 2022).

With regard to green attitude formation (H2), all three green marketing practice variables exerted significant positive effects. Green labeling and advertising showed the strongest effects on green attitude ($\beta = 0.7278$ and $\beta = 0.7158$ respectively), suggesting that visible sustainability signals and persuasive communication are particularly effective in shaping pro-environmental evaluations a finding consistent with Wang et al. (2023) and Biswas and Roy (2015). Green materials were also significant predictors of green attitude ($\beta = 0.4812$), corroborating Joshi and Rahman's (2015) argument that tangible eco-friendly product attributes reinforce environmental commitment.

The partial mediation of green attitude (H3) confirms that green marketing practices influence purchase intention both directly and indirectly through attitude formation. This dual pathway suggests that Generation Z consumers are simultaneously driven by rational product evaluation and attitudinal responses to environmental cues a multifaceted behavioral pattern that cannot be fully captured by attitude-only or direct effect models. These findings align with the Theory of Planned Behavior and extend it to the sustainable fashion context (Rahman & Reynolds, 2022; Wang et al., 2023).

The negative moderation of generative AI usage (H4) is among the study's most novel and theoretically significant findings. As AI usage increased, the positive influence of green attitude on purchase intention diminished, indicating that consumers who frequently use AI tools tend to rely more on external informational cues such as AI-generated product comparisons and sustainability ratings rather than on their personal environmental attitudes. This finding extends the work of Aldaihani et al. (2024) and Patel et al. (2023) by empirically demonstrating that generative AI not only moderates the direct attitude-intention link but also reduces the mediating role of green attitude across all three green marketing practice pathways. This behavioral shift is particularly significant given that the majority of

respondents (60%) were frequent AI users, suggesting a structural change in how Generation Z consumers make sustainable consumption decisions.

6. Conclusion

This study empirically examined the impact of green marketing practices on the green purchase intention of Generation Z consumers in Sri Lanka's sustainable fashion industry, while incorporating green attitude as a mediator and generative AI usage as a moderator. All proposed hypotheses were supported, revealing a coherent picture of contemporary green consumer behavior.

The findings demonstrate that green labeling is the most effective green marketing tool for influencing both green attitude and green purchase intention, while green materials play a significant role in building authentic sustainability perceptions. Green advertising, though significant, has a comparatively weaker independent impact. The partial mediation of green attitude confirms that marketing practices shape purchase intentions both directly and through attitudinal pathways. Importantly, the negative moderating effect of generative AI usage reveals a significant behavioral shift: as consumers increasingly engage AI-powered tools for sustainability information, their reliance on personal attitudes decreases, and decision-making becomes more technology-driven and information-oriented.

These findings carry important implications for sustainable fashion brands and policymakers in Sri Lanka. Organizations should prioritize transparent, accurate, and credible eco-labeling as the most impactful consumer communication tool. Genuine use of sustainable materials should be communicated authentically to build trust with environmentally conscious Gen Z consumers. Additionally, brands must optimize their digital sustainability content for AI-driven platforms, ensuring that product information is accessible and accurate across AI-assisted search and recommendation systems. Policymakers and educators can leverage these insights to strengthen sustainability literacy campaigns and enhance eco-labeling standards.

7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The research was conducted exclusively within the Sri Lankan context with a convenience sample of 165 Generation Z consumers, which may limit the generalizability of the findings across other cultural and geographic settings. The cross-sectional design precludes causal conclusions and cannot capture changes in behavior over time, particularly given the rapidly evolving landscape of generative AI adoption. Additionally, while generative AI usage was examined as an aggregate moderating variable, the study did not differentiate between specific AI tools or platforms, which may differ in their influence on consumer decision-making. Future research should extend this framework to other geographic and cultural contexts, include diverse generational groups for comparative analysis, and adopt longitudinal designs to capture evolving technology-consumer relationships. Further investigation into specific types of AI tools, including catboats, recommendation engines, and AI-enhanced social media would provide more nuanced insights into how technology mediates sustainable consumption behavior.

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