

A Study On The Attitudes Of Indian Consumers Towards Upcycled Luxury Fashion

Author

Abstract

Recent trends have shown that luxury fashion is increasingly committed to sustainability, but the response of consumers in unique emerging markets like India is not known. This study addresses this gap in the existing research by attempting to find out Indian consumers' views on upcycled luxury fashion and the extent to which they are influenced by various demographic variables. A structured questionnaire containing close ended questions was administered to 400 consumers and their responses analysed. The findings show that the majority of respondents had a favourable attitude towards upcycled luxury fashion, and they do not vary across groups of demographics such as age, gender, annual income and educational qualifications. The findings of this study can be used by upcycled luxury fashion providers both at national and International level to capture the potential Indian market.

Keywords : *Upcycled luxury clothing, fashion, environment friendly fashion*

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I. Introduction

The luxury fashion sector stands at the crossroads of affluence, desirability, and symbolic value. As defined by Fionda and Moore (2009), luxury fashion epitomizes a brand's pinnacle status, derived from its history, quality, and the exclusivity it offers. Over recent years, the global luxury fashion market has experienced significant growth. In the previous year alone, the global luxury fashion market reached a staggering \$300 billion, with sustainable luxury fashion products accounting for approximately 10%, or \$30 billion, underscoring the burgeoning trend of eco-conscious luxury (Seo, Buchanan-Oliver, & Cruz, 2015).

In contrast to its longstanding aura of opulence, luxury fashion is increasingly aligning with sustainable practices, reflecting the broader global trend towards sustainability (Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2013). Sustainability, often characterized by the integration of social, environmental, and economic considerations, is gradually reshaping the luxury fashion landscape (Kunz, May, & Schmidt, 2020). Woodside and Fine (2019) elucidated how luxury brands weave sustainability narratives into their storytelling, signaling their commitment to eco-friendly practices. Beyond mere narratives, concrete actions are evident in luxury fashion's evolving practices, such as the move towards upcycling. For instance, Wu and Devendorf (2020) explored the design of smart textiles intended for disassembly, reflecting the industry's conscious effort to minimize waste.

Globally, consumers are increasingly aware of the environmental implications of their purchases. Rathinamoorthy (2019) found that consumers are becoming educated about sustainable fashion, demanding responsible choices from fashion brands. Further emphasizing this trend, a study in Poland showed a distinct consumer inclination towards sustainable apparel over non-sustainable counterparts (Rahman & Koszewska, 2020). Similarly, research from Brazil highlighted young consumers' positive attitudes towards circular fashion items, signaling a shift in perceptions related to sustainability in fashion (Hugo, de Nadae, & Lima, 2023).

Despite the global trend, limited research exists on consumer attitudes towards upcycled luxury fashion, particularly in emerging markets like India. While studies like those by Phau, Akintimehin, and Lee (2022) delve into the desirability of upcycled luxury items like designer facemasks, the Indian context remains relatively uncharted.

India, with its burgeoning middle class and a rich history of luxury consumption, offers a unique vantage point for this research. As one of the fastest-growing economies, India's luxury market is expected to grow at an accelerated pace, making insights into consumer attitudes crucial for brands aiming to expand or establish their footprint. Moreover, the Indian market, characterized by its diverse cultural beliefs and values, often exhibits consumption patterns distinct from Western counterparts (Seo et al., 2015). Thus, understanding attitudes towards upcycled luxury fashion within the Indian context can offer invaluable insights for both local and international luxury brands. Additionally, this research can foster sustainable practices among Indian luxury brands and consumers, aligning with global sustainability trends and contributing to environmental conservation.

Thus, while luxury fashion's commitment to sustainability is evident in global trends and practices, a comprehensive understanding of specific consumer markets, like India, remains a gap. This research seeks to address this gap, thereby contributing to the larger discourse on sustainability in luxury fashion.

Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the attitudes of Indian consumers towards upcycled luxury fashion?

RQ2: To what extent are these attitudes influenced by demographic characteristics?

II. Literature Review

Sustainability in Fashion

The fashion business holds considerable prominence within the global economy, boasting yearly revenues exceeding \$450 billion on a global scale. (Resta et al., 2016; B. Wang et al., 2020). It is also the second-most polluting industry in the world (Rathinamoorthy, 2019; Wu & Devendorf, 2020; Woodside & Fine, 2019), which leads to the issue of sustainability in the fashion industry. The topic of fashion sustainability encompasses three interrelated dimensions of equal significance, namely the environmental, social, and economic aspects. The successful operation of a sustainable fashion business necessitates the incorporation of intricate factors into the company's business strategy, mostly through research and development and production with a focus on durability and longevity (Daukantiene, 2023). Researchers have developed the slow-fashion theory in response to the growing concern regarding the issue of overproduction and overconsumption, which has consequently contributed to the formation of excessive trash (Freudenreich and Schaltegger, 2020). Fast fashion has been subject to criticism due to its promotion of inexpensive clothing, large-scale production, shorter fashion cycles, increased rates of disposal, and the utilisation of unsafe and non-standardized production methods (Arrigo, 2020). The transition from the paradigm of "fast fashion" to that of "responsible production" and "responsible consumption" addresses several concerns associated with fast fashion, including issues such as labour exploitation, ethical sourcing practises, textile waste management, and the promotion of recycling and reuse (Mukendi et al., 2020).

Different Ways of Sustainability in Fashion

The concept of sustainable fashion encompasses more than only its environmental, social, and ethical advantages. It also necessitates consideration of its aesthetic, practical, symbolic, and financial dimensions. According to Rahman and Koszewska (2020), sustainable purchasers are persons who demonstrate a conscious consideration of the environmental, social, and ethical issues when engaging in the process of purchasing apparel. To expand the responsible consumer base and promote sustainability through slow fashion, research strategies (both in academia and industry) must incorporate micro-factors such as (1) sensitivity to the issue of sustainable fashion (brands must give equal weight to social and governance considerations of ESG as they do to economic ones). (2) A comparison of the benefits and perceptions of delayed fashion among consumers (analysis of consumer purchase research using cluster-based data) The factors that impact consumer attitudes towards purchasing sustainable clothing are as follows: (3) consumer confidence established through transparent communication; (4) manufacturers prioritising sufficiency-oriented offerings (production and consumption based on needs); and (5) distinctiveness in offerings (supporting regional ingenuity, sourcing handcrafted inputs locally, and utilising recycled raw materials) (Freudenreich and Schaltegger, 2020). According to a study by Henninger et al. (2016), sustainable fashion experts and consumers alike hold the belief that sustainable apparel embodies a variety of qualities. These qualities may include the use of sustainable and ethical designs, fair trade and wage advocacy, and the avoidance of hazardous substances. The fashion industry has adopted a reduction practise known as raw material consumption reduction. This approach aims to maximise the use of material resources by producing only the amount required to minimise waste (Todeschini et al., 2017). To minimise the use of basic materials, one must employ methods for cutting fabric patterns efficiently, such as patchwork, in order to maximise the utilisation of available materials (Mishra et al., 2020). Slow fashion consumption can increase the longevity of garments. Slow fashion companies, in general, reduce production to smaller batches through the use of locally sourced materials and traditional craft techniques, as well as by utilising more regional infrastructures (Blazquez et al., 2020). Another initiative that contributes to the preservation of resources is the reduction of natural resources and chemicals. Fashion enterprises have implemented technological advancements that mitigate the consumption of natural resources, such as water, and compounds employed in manufacturing procedures (Claxton and Kent, 2020). According to research, the perception of recycled garments differs from that of other recycled products. The study's participants, as reported by Diddi et al. (2019), self-identified as being involved in sustainable practises such as recycling. These orientations, nevertheless, did not manifest in apparel consumption. This could be due to the perception among consumers that circular fashion products are of inferior quality, durability, value, or may pose sanitary hazards, given that they are constructed using discarded materials (Kim et al., 2021). An increase in the utilisation of naturally occurring, organically grown cellulose fibres, including protein fibres like silk and wool, cotton and linen, and more recently adopted cellulose fibres like hemp and bamboo, which eliminate undesirable chemicals, contributes to a reduced environmental footprint and aids textile companies in enhancing their sustainability efforts. Zero-waste fashion refers to the creation of garment models in which waste is substantially minimised or eliminated during the pattern-making and trimming phases (Daukantiene, 2023).

Research on Sustainability in Fashion World-wide

In a matter of decades, the average quantity of clothing purchased per person in the European Union has increased by 40%. This increase can be attributed to both a reduction in prices and the acceleration of fashion delivery to consumers (Koszewska, 2016). According to the study conducted by Rahman and Koszewska (2020), a significant proportion of Polish customers exhibited a reluctance to engage in the purchase of sustainable or green products if it did not provide enough aesthetic, functional and financial benefits to satisfy their needs and aspirations. Women were more reliant on garment fit and style than men (Rahman & Koszewska, 2020).

Previous research (Jegethesan et al., 2012; Seock and Bailey, 2008; Zelezny et al., 2000) on marketing and consumer behaviour indicates that age and gender are the two most important predictors in determining purchasing intentions for apparel (Kim and Kim, 2004). Similarly, Bohdanowicz and Clamp (1994) found that gender is an important factor influencing consumer's choice of clothing, and Behling (1985–1986) suggested that age plays a significant impact on the clothing adoption process.

The Concept of Luxury

Although it is difficult to precisely define what luxury is, the literature describes it as something that is related to concepts such as excellence, exclusiveness, expensiveness, uniqueness, aesthetics, hedonism and sensuality (Athwal et al., 2019).

Fionda and Moore (2009) examined the anatomy of luxury fashion brands, emphasising their intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics. In addition to superior quality, exclusivity, and a high price point, luxury fashion carries a substantial emotive and symbolic value in their eyes. Consumers frequently associate luxury fashion with a particular social status, viewing these items as a passport to a particular social or economic class. In addition, the brand identity is entrenched in a narrative that frequently includes heritage, craftsmanship, and a strong brand image, which are managed to ensure market exclusivity and desirability. Fionda and Moore (2009) highlighted the significance of physical characteristics such as quality, exclusivity, and price which work in tandem with intangible characteristics such as heritage, symbolism, and emotional connection to create an all-encompassing prestige brand experience.

On the other hand, Kapferer (2014) argued that the digital age and globalisation have drastically redefined the concept of luxury, posing numerous challenges such as the democratisation of luxury, growing competition, and the struggle to maintain exclusivity and authenticity in a consumer market that is rapidly changing.

Sustainability in Luxury Fashion

An essential attribute of luxury branding is the emphasis on enduring experiences that evoke delight and admiration (Seo, Buchanan-Oliver, & Cruz, 2015; Brun & Castelli, 2013). By doing so, luxury brands provide customers with a perception of superior quality through the use of superior raw materials (Ko, Phau, & Aiello, 2016; Wiedmann & Hennigs, 2013).

Numerous prior studies have failed to establish a correlation between sustainability and luxury (e.g., Achabou & Dekhili, 2013; Davies et al., 2012). Nevertheless, the emphasis that luxury brands place on enduring quality and "hand-made" construction (Byun & Sternquist, 2011; Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang, & Chan, 2012) hinders the reduction of waste generated from the utilisation of natural resources (Guercini & Ranfagni, 2013). As a consequence, this compromises the intrinsic compatibility that exists between sustainability and luxury, particularly in the fashion sector, with regard to durability and quality (De Angelis et al., 2017). In recent times, there has been a notable increase in the dedication of luxury brands to mitigate their ecological footprint (Davies et al., 2012; De Angelis et al., 2017; Janssen et al., 2014).

The growing emphasis of the luxury industry on sustainability is further reinforced by the heightened environmental consciousness that is prevalent among consumers, especially among the younger demographic (Unilever, 2017). Indeed, 85% of global luxury sales growth is attributed to Millennials and Gen Z consumers. In response to this trend, a considerable number of established luxury brands are introducing novel pro-environmental campaigns, products, and initiatives. Luxury firms possess the ability to implement a multitude of sustainable strategies. These include redesigning their production processes to reduce energy and water consumption, developing new environmentally friendly products using innovative sustainable raw materials (e.g.,

mylo, a mushroom root structure utilised as a leather substitute), or implementing environmentally friendly packaging for their products.

While a universally agreed-upon definition of sustainable luxury is still elusive, this notion can be grasped as "a return to the ancestral significance of luxury, characterised by conscientious purchasing, artisanal production, the aesthetic appeal of materials in their most inclusive form, and consideration for social and environmental concerns" (Gardetti and Torres, 2013, p. 58).

There has been a growing awareness among luxury fashion brands regarding the need to strike a balance between maintaining brand appeal and making positive contributions to environmental sustainability (Parker, 2020). As a consequence, these companies have incorporated sustainability into their operational frameworks by placing significant importance on the recycling of fashion items (Radin, 2019; Pencarelli et al., 2019). Fashion upcycling is widely recognised as a highly sustainable circular solution within the waste hierarchy (Cuc and Tripa, 2018). Its objective is to recover materials and components from waste streams, as opposed to utilising new resources for the production of apparel (Sung et al., 2017). For example, sustainable menswear fashion labels including Patrick McDowell, E. Tautz, Bethany Williams, Studio ALCH, and Vinti Andrews showcased their recycled collections during the 2020 London Men's Fashion Week (Shurvell, 2020).

Numerous luxury brands have introduced recycled and upcycled products, which are two representative approaches of the circular economy that have emerged in response to the growing imperative to transition to a "reduce, reuse, recycle" paradigm of manufacturing and consumption. Upcycling refers to the utilisation of discarded objects or materials in a manner that enhances their quality or value beyond the initial product, as opposed to recycling which converts waste into reusable material through their reduction to raw inputs and subsequent incorporation into a new industrial process (Kamleitner, Thürridl, & Martin, 2019; Park & Lin, 2020).

Recycled fashion generally entails the decomposition of materials to their fundamental components before the production of new items, which frequently results in a reduction of both quality and aesthetic appeal. On the contrary, repurposed fashion repurposes pre-existing materials or items to create something of comparable or greater worth. The prestige market finds upcycling to be especially relevant owing to its capacity to produce one-of-a-kind, premium products that exemplifies sustainable principles (Adıgüzel and Donato, 2021).

Upcycling refers to the practise of transforming discarded or used materials, components, and products into a novel product that surpasses the quality of its constituent parts (Sung et al., 2017). Upcycling is commonly recognised as a comprehensive term that includes various artistic techniques such as refurbishment, repurposing, recycling, upgrading, remanufacturing, and reprocessing (Sung et al., 2018). Material efficiency is increased and industrial energy consumption and solid waste are decreased via upcycling (Sung et al., 2017; Zhuo and Levendis, 2014). It is estimated that the repurposed market is worth \$150 million (Yu and Lee, 2019) and that it has the capacity to be financially sustainable (Han et al., 2017) by providing employment opportunities, particularly for the disadvantaged. Upcycling does not necessitate advanced production technologies or sophisticated skill sets; rather, it demands only the most rudimentary abilities, such as the ability to transform apparel items into something new (Sung et al., 2020).

Luxury fashion companies have achieved the ability to produce upcycled luxury fashion by repurposing remnant fabric materials and byproducts from previous collections. In recent years, upcycling has gained widespread acceptance in the fashion industry. Prominent fashion houses are capitalising on the sustainability movement by devising novel methods to repurpose used materials into one-of-a-kind designer items, including facemasks (Petro, 2019). Burberry, for example, has since introduced their recycled designer N95 facemasks, which are constructed from deadstock and repurposed waste materials (Marriott, 2020). Other luxury brands, including Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton, are expected to follow suit. Adam Jones, a British designer, repurposes vintage blankets and tea towels to create ready-to-wear, uncomplicated androgynous apparel that is neither seasonal nor seasonal. Additionally, Vin & Omi is renowned for repurposing refuse materials into novel garments (Shurvell, 2020). By employing fashion upcycling techniques and showcasing innovative upcycled fashion items, luxury fashion labels have managed to improve both sustainability and desirability (Bhatt et al., 2019; Radin, 2019). This has been achieved through the increased patronage of upcycled luxury fashion consumers.

Upcycling, as opposed to recycling, does not involve the degradation of primary resources (Kamleitner et al., 2019). The recycling procedure of downgrading necessitates the consumption of energy and water. Furthermore, it should be noted that a fraction of the basic materials utilised in the production process are still discarded (Wilson, 2016). Upcycling results in the preservation of the material's integrity and prolongs its useful

life. Particularly significant is the need for ingenuity and novelty in order to repurpose the current product into something practical and appealing.

Although considerable research has been dedicated to investigating the correlation between luxury and sustainability (Achabou & Dekhili, 2013), there is still a dearth of knowledge regarding how consumers perceive luxury brands that manufacture repurposed and/or recycled goods (Adıgüzel & Donato, 2021). According to research conducted by McKinsey & Company among ninety luxury consumers in twenty-five countries, the average purchase rate for sustainable luxury products was 23%; this percentage is projected to increase to 40% over the next five years (Muret, 2019).

Park and Lin (2020) discovered that repurposed facemasks are held in high regard by consumers. Despite the luxury fashion industry's reputation for being more hedonistic (Faschan et al., 2020), research has shown that consumers have a comparatively more favourable view of sustainable facemasks (Kong and Ko, 2017). Research has additionally demonstrated that heightened attention towards sustainability and ethical concerns has led to improved consumer attitudes, increased purchase intent, and increased propensity to pay for sustainable products (Amatulli et al., 2018; Lundblad and Davies, 2016). In support of this assertion, Etsy disclosed that it sold repurposed fabric facemasks valued at \$12 million in 2020 (Foussianes, 2021).

Consumers' Attitudes Towards Upcycled Luxury Fashion

The inclination of consumers towards sustainable and repurposed luxury fashion is influenced by a multitude of factors. Perceived scarcity, which corresponds closely with the luxury market's inclination towards exclusivity, influences consumer behaviour in favour of sustainable luxury products, according to Park, Eom, and Spence (2022). In their study, Yang et al. (2022) examine the viewpoints of Chinese consumers and highlight the significant impact that environmental consciousness, perceived consumer efficacy, and social influence have on the formation of intentions to purchase sustainable luxury products. Similarly, Phau, Akintimehin, and Lee examine the desirability of upcycled luxury items among consumers by analysing upcycled designer face masks. They emphasise the diverse allure of these products, which extends from their one-of-a-kind qualities to their environmentally conscious implications.

Moral considerations are becoming a greater factor in consumers' conspicuous expenditure decisions (; De Angelis et al., 2017; Cervellon, 2013). The phenomenon of sustainable consumption in the luxury market is driven by various variables, such as the evolution of consumer tastes and preferences, which are motivated by the pursuit of differentiated products, social approval, emotional needs fulfilment, and other intrinsic consumer values (Gazzola et al., 2017). A multitude of scholarly investigations in the fields of marketing and consumer research have examined the attitudes and intentions of consumers to purchase luxury goods (Chattalas and Shukla, 2015; Aw et al., 2021; Salehzadeh and Pool, 2017). Nevertheless, scholarly research on consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions towards sustainable consumption in the luxury sector has been relatively few (Jain, 2019b). Cervellon and Shammas (2013) employed descriptive and exploratory research methods in order to clarify the socio-cultural, ego-centric, and eco-centric values associated with sustainable luxury. The studies listed above have not sufficiently clarified the elements that impact sustainable luxury consumption (De Angelis et al., 2017). Moreover, it is noteworthy that consumer conduct is subject to influence from cultural background to a certain degree. Nevertheless, there exists a dearth of empirical studies that particularly investigate the inclination towards sustainable luxury purchasing in developing economies, such as India (Gazzola et al., 2017; Zhan and He, 2012).

Both upcycled and recycled products are manufactured through the transformation of pre-existing materials; the distinction rests in whether or not the original materials are decomposed. (Bridgens et al., 2018) Successful repurposed products necessitate the repurposing of materials through the application of creative influence, aesthetic quality, and superb craftsmanship and skills. Due to the absence of material degradation during the upcycling process, consumers may perceive repurposed products as more innovative and creative in comparison to recycled products. Consequently, in contrast to the recycling process, engaging in upcycling as a creative endeavour (Bridgens et al., 2018) may provide individuals with opportunities for personal expression, group membership, cherished recollections, and enjoyment—all of which have the potential to influence product attachment (Yu & Lee, 2019). It is well known that novelty increases product evaluations and perceived value (Andrews & Smith, 1996; Carpenter, Glazer, & Nakamoto, 1994; Mukherjee & Hoyer, 2001). As a result of the possibility that consumers will perceive upcycled new products as more innovative and revolutionary (Bridgens et al., 2018) than recycled products (Braungart, McDonough, & Bollinger, 2007), they may have a more favourable impact on their purchase intent. Consequently, in contrast to recycled luxury goods, repurposed luxury

goods may have a favourable impact on consumers' intentions to make purchases; this correlation could potentially be elucidated by the perception of novelty (Adigüzel & Donato, 2021).

III. Research Methodology

As previously stated, this research article addresses the following research questions: *RQ1: What are the attitudes and preferences of Indian consumers towards upcycled luxury fashion?*

RQ2. To what extent are these attitudes and preferences influenced by demographic characteristics?

To answer these research questions, a survey of customers in Ahmedabad, Gujarat was conducted. The survey had a sample size of 400 people. A Google Form containing the study instrument was shared with participants to conduct an electronic survey. A structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions served as the instrument. A total of 112 replies were received, resulting in a 28 percent response rate. The convenience sampling method was utilised. Responses were analyzed using frequency analysis and Chi Square analysis.

IV. Findings

Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. It can be observed that majority of the respondents were females, 74% while only 26% were males. Most of the respondents (32.15%) were in the age group of above 60, followed by 16% of the respondents in the age group of under 18 years. The majority of the respondents i.e. 50 post graduates, followed by 30% of the respondents being undergraduates. Only 1% of the respondents had a diploma. The majority of the respondents had an annual income of more than INR 600,000 while respondents with an annual income of under INR 1,00,000 and in the range of INR 4,50,000-6,00,00 were approximately the same i.e. 17% and 16%. Only 3% of the respondents had an annual income of Rs. 2,50,001-3,50,000. The majority of the respondents spent INR 75,000-1,00,000 in a month on fashion while 10% of respondents (each) spent under INR 7000 and between INR 55,001-70,000.

Table 4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

1.	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
	Female	83	74
	Male	29	26
	Total	112	100
2.	Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
	Under 18 years	18	16
	18-25 years	11	9.82
	26-30 years	5	4.46
	31-35 years	9	8.04
	36-40 years	5	4.46
	41-45 years	10	9
	46-50 years	7	6.25
	51-55 years	7	6.25
	56-60 years	4	3.57
	Above 60 years	36	32.15
	Total	112	100
3.	Education	No. of Respondents	Percentage
	High school	18	16.00
	Undergraduate	34	30.00
	Postgraduate	56	50.00
	Diploma	1	1.00
	Doctorate	3	3.00
	Total	112	100
4.	Annual Income	No. of Respondents	Percentage
	Under INR 1,00,000	19	17.00

INR 1,00,001-1,70,000	11	10.00
INR 2,50,001-3,50,000	3	3.00
INR 3,50,001-4,50,000	13	12.00
INR 4,50,000-6,00,00	18	16.00
INR Above 6,00,000	48	43.00
Total	112	100
5. Spending		
Spending	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Under INR 7000	11	10
INR 7001-15,000	16	14
INR 15,001-30,000	18	16
INR 30,001-40,000	12	11
INR 40,001-55,000	17	15
INR 55,001-70,000	11	10
INR 75,000-1,00,000	27	24
Total	112	100

Attitude towards Upcycled Luxury Fashion

To answer the first research question about the attitudes of Indian consumers towards upcycled luxury fashion, a descriptive analysis of opinions of respondents towards each statement in the questionnaire are presented in Table 4.2. These statements were derived from factors found to affect sustainable fashion in the existing literature (Kim, Jung, & Lee, 2021).

Table 4.2 Opinions of respondents towards upcycled luxury fashion

Particulars	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am interested in purchasing upcycled luxury fashion.	14	19	35	41	3
I believe upcycled luxury fashion is sustainable and good for the environment	16	14	23	36	23
Upcycled luxury fashion is likely to be expensive in comparison to other fashion products.	13	18	38	29	14
Upcycled luxury fashion is differentiated from general fashion products.	10	11	45	40	6
Purchasing upcycled luxury fashion would make a good impression.	17	15	48	24	8
Upcycled luxury fashion is likely to wear out faster.	15	40	45	6	6
Upcycled luxury fashion will not fit well.	14	41	43	10	4
Upcycled luxury fashion will not reflect the latest trends in design or style.	17	40	41	9	5
I am willing to recommend upcycled luxury fashion to others.	14	11	36	29	22
Purchasing upcycled luxury fashion makes me feel good.	16	17	36	27	16

As Table 4.2 shows, most respondents had a positive attitude towards upcycled luxury fashion. The responses show that respondents were interested in purchasing upcycled luxury fashion as they believed it is good for the environment and that it is differentiated from regular fashion. They also agreed to recommend upcycled luxury fashion as they believed it creates a good impression on other people.

The respondents were found to be neutral towards upcycled luxury fashion being expensive as compared to general fashion. Also, majority of them disagreed that upcycled fashion wears out easily and may not fit well because it does not vary in size. Lastly, most of the respondents disagreed that upcycled luxury fashion will not reflect the latest trends in design or style. Thus, it can be concluded that respondents have a positive attitude towards upcycled luxury fashion.

Table 4.3 shows the mean rating of all the statements in the questionnaire.

Table 4.3 Mean Analysis of Respondents' Opinions about Upcycled Luxury Clothing

Items	Mean
I believe upcycled luxury fashion is sustainable and good for the environment	3.32
I am willing to recommend upcycled luxury fashion to others.	3.30
Upcycled luxury fashion is differentiated from general fashion products.	3.19
Upcycled luxury fashion is likely to be expensive in comparison to other fashion products.	3.12
Purchasing upcycled luxury fashion makes me feel good.	3.09
I am interested in purchasing upcycled luxury clothing.	3.00
Purchasing upcycled luxury fashion would make a good impression.	2.92

Upcycled luxury fashion will not fit well.	2.54
Upcycled luxury fashion is likely to wear out faster.	2.54
Upcycled luxury fashion will not reflect the latest trends in design or style.	2.51

Table 4.3 reveals that there is a moderate level of agreement to the statements that upcycled luxury fashion is sustainable and good, respondents are ready to recommend it while statements such as upcycled luxury fashion being likely to wear out faster and not reflecting latest trends in design and style were moderately disagreed with. Thus, respondents have a positive attitude towards upcycled luxury fashion.

Influence of Demographic Characteristics

In order to examine the extent to which attitudes towards upcycled luxury fashion are influenced by demographic characteristics; an ANOVA test was used. The test examined whether the mean responses of the respondents differed within different groups of demographic variables. The results are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Influence of Demographic Characteristics on Attitudes Towards Upcycled Luxury Fashion

Sr.no	<i>H0</i>	<i>P value</i>	<i>Test Result</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
1.	Respondents' opinion towards upcycled luxury fashion does not vary across age groups.	0.462	$p > 0.05$	H_0 is not rejected
2.	Respondents' opinion towards upcycled luxury fashion does not vary across gender.	0.103	$p > 0.05$	H_0 is not rejected
3.	Respondents' opinion towards upcycled luxury fashion does not vary across education qualifications.	0.098	$p > 0.05$	H_0 is not rejected
4.	Respondents' opinion towards upcycled luxury fashion does not vary across annual income.	0.627	$p > 0.05$	H_0 is not rejected
5.	Respondents' opinion towards upcycled luxury fashion does not vary across monthly spending habits.	0.484	$p > 0.05$	H_0 is not rejected

Table 4.4 shows that the opinion of respondents across various groups of demographic variables such as gender, age, education, annual income and monthly spending on fashion does not vary. The mostly highly observed (mode) opinion for each statement on upcycled luxury fashion is “Agree” or “Strongly agree” demonstrating a consistent positive attitude towards upcycled luxury fashion.

V. Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that the majority of respondents harbour a positive disposition towards upcycled luxury fashion. These sentiments reflect an appreciation for the eco-friendly nature of upcycling, its distinctiveness from mainstream fashion, and the favourable impressions it creates among peers. The potential higher costs associated with upcycled luxury fashion do not seem to deter these attitudes, with responses showing neutrality on the matter. Furthermore, there is a notable rejection of some common misconceptions regarding upcycled fashion, such as its durability, fitting, and alignment with contemporary fashion trends. The unanimous sentiment seems to be that upcycled luxury fashion neither wears out rapidly nor lags in reflecting the latest designs and styles.

The findings also reiterate the positive leanings towards upcycled luxury fashion. Respondents, on a median level, agree that upcycled luxury fashion symbolizes sustainability and positivity and are inclined to endorse it. Contrarily, the notions that upcycled fashion deteriorates faster or does not align with modern fashion trends were countered.

The ANOVA test results further validate the consistency in these attitudes. Irrespective of demographics like gender, age, education, annual income, and monthly spending habits on fashion, the predominant sentiment remained the same. The frequent responses (modes) to statements about upcycled luxury fashion signalled a shared positive attitude.

The findings from the survey of 112 respondents explain the positive attitude of Indian consumers towards upcycled luxury clothing. A significant trend observed was the inclination of respondents towards purchasing these upcycled items, mainly because of the environmental benefits they confer and their distinctiveness from mainstream products. This aligns with the observations made by Adigüzel and Donato (2021) that highlighted the pride associated with sustainable choices, particularly when considering upcycled over merely recycled luxury products.

The respondents also seemed to counter some prevalent notions about upcycled fashion. For instance, they displayed a neutral stance towards the perceived expensiveness of upcycled luxury clothing, suggesting that the price might not be a primary deterrent for this niche. In contrast to the belief that upcycled clothing might not resonate with the latest trends or styles, or that they may wear out faster, the responses largely disagreed with such assumptions. This reflects the findings by Bhatt et al. (2019), who found a growing consumer interest in upcycled techniques and clothing as a sustainable alternative.

Interestingly, the study also found a unanimous opinion across varied demographics – age, education, income levels, and monthly expenditures. This homogeneity in opinion underscores the widespread appeal of upcycled luxury fashion, suggesting that it transcends these categorizations. Such a finding is contrary to the more fragmented consumer behavior described in studies such as Chattalas and Shukla (2015) in the context of luxury value perceptions.

Comparing the findings of this study with earlier research, it is clear that the positive perception of upcycled luxury fashion aligns with the global focus on sustainable consumption (Lundblad & Davies, 2016; Min Kong & Ko, 2017). In addition, the emphasis on the environmental benefits and differentiation from mainstream products recalls the narratives adopted by leading luxury brands in their storytelling (Woodside & Fine, 2019).

The findings of this study are both consistent with and divergent from existing research on sustainable fashion. Fionda and Moore (2009) posited that luxury fashion often occupies a unique space in consumer perceptions. In the light of this, the keen interest of respondents in upcycled luxury fashion could be seen as an intersection of two factors: the allure of luxury and the promise of sustainability. Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau (2013) debated the compatibility of luxury with sustainability, noting that luxury consumers have started to align with sustainability values. This perspective is confirmed by the findings of this study which demonstrate that participants see upcycled luxury fashion as both eco-friendly and distinct from regular fashion.

Kunz, May, and Schmidt (2020) presented an exhaustive exploration of sustainable luxury, hinting at the increasing consumer appetite for eco-conscious luxury products. This is consistent with the inclination of respondents to recommend upcycled luxury fashion, further suggesting the positive peer perception discussed by Woodside and Fine (2019).

Rathinamoorthy (2019) shed light on consumer awareness regarding sustainable fashion, which is also reflected in respondents' positive attitude towards upcycled luxury fashion.

Phau, Akintimehin, and Lee (2022) examined the desirability of upcycled luxury, particularly designer face masks. Similarly, this study emphasizes the broader acceptability and appeal of upcycled products in the luxury segment.

VI. Conclusion

The outcomes of this study reveal a positive shift in consumer sentiments towards sustainable luxury fashion, which is consistent across demographic characteristics such as age, education, income, and monthly fashion consumption, and is consistent with previous research. This study has a few limitations. The sample size is not large enough to cover the diverse opinions of the entire female population in India. Also, since the research relied on self-reported data, it may suffer from respondent bias, with respondents possibly portraying themselves in a socially favorable light.

The study has several implications. Brands operating in the luxury fashion space in India can use these insights to refine their marketing and production strategies, aligning with the evident pro-upcycling sentiment. By curating workshops, webinars, or immersive in-store experiences, brands can debunk myths and misconceptions, particularly about upcycled fashion not aligning with the latest trends. On the pricing front, the neutral sentiment towards the expensiveness of upcycled clothing offers a cue for brands to reevaluate their pricing strategies, possibly introducing a more intricate tiered pricing system aligned with the depth of upcycling involved. Additionally, luxury brands can amplify their sustainable narratives by collaborating with environmentally-conscious celebrities or influencers.

For future research, researchers might conduct cross-cultural analysis to compare the attitudes of Indian consumers against those in other Asian or Western societies. Qualitative research methodologies, such as in-depth interviews, can offer nuanced understandings, diving deeper into motivations and potential reservations linked to upcycled luxury fashion.

The rising appeal of upcycled luxury fashion among Indian consumers is characteristic of a broader, global drive toward sustainable consumer practices. The findings of this study suggest that Indian customers have a favourable attitude towards upcycled luxury clothes. This attitude seems to be anchored deeply in their increased environmental consciousness and the unique value proposition of upcycled products compared to their mainstream counterparts.

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