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# Fashion Fluidity: A Study on Gen Z's Awareness, Acceptance, and Sustainable Purchase Intentions of Androgynous Clothing

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**Abstract**

Despite its creativity, the fashion industry remains one of the most environmentally unsustainable sectors. Genderless (androgynous) fashion has emerged as a potential solution, reducing overproduction, extending garment life, and challenging gender norms. This study investigates how Generation Z in Ahmedabad, India, perceives and adopts genderless fashion, focusing on awareness, acceptance, and purchase intention. Data from 542 respondents were analysed using PLS-SEM. Findings reveal limited awareness (45.4%) and early-stage adoption, though many believe it promotes inclusivity and sustainability. Social acceptance remains a significant barrier, creating discomfort in the public adoption process. Purchase intentions are influenced by peers, sustainability awareness, and branding, yet moderated by affordability and cultural norms.

The findings reveal that while awareness remains limited and adoption is still in its early stages, Gen Z demonstrates a dual orientation—simultaneously resisting and embracing genderless fashion depending on contextual and psychological factors. Importantly, the study highlights that social acceptance and cultural comfort act as significant barriers, while peer influence, sustainability consciousness, and brand communication have a positive influence on adoption intention.

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## Introduction

The fashion industry stands out as both highly dynamic and one of the most environmentally burdensome sectors, contributing significantly to resource depletion, waste production, and greenhouse gas emissions (Niinimäki et al., 2020). These concerns have elevated sustainable fashion consumption as an essential area of academic inquiry, with prior research focusing on practices such as second-hand purchasing, engagement with slow fashion, and participation in circular models of consumption (Han et al., 2017; Wiederhold& Martinez, 2018; Park & Lin, 2020). Not only the environmental facet is shifting, the industry is also facining growing demands for unity in difference openness and variety, which are redesign conventional gender-based clothing. Within this budding circumstance, androgynous (genderless) or gender-fluid fashion is up-and-coming as a convincing alternative that challenges dual distinctions while at the same time presenting pathways for additional sustainable consumption (McNeill & Venter, 2019; Bennett et al., 2022).

Generation Z, broadly encircling folks born between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s, has emerged as a consumer group that is vigorously reshaping the fashion setting. Contrasting previous generations, their consumption patterns are time and again guided not only by style and price but also by deeper concerns about sustainability and social accountability. Research indicates that Gen Z is intensely conscious of the consequences of environment change, the exploitative nature of fast fashion, attached to mass consumption (Francis &Hoefel, 2018; Dabija et al., 2020). This realization translates into firm demands for accountability from fashion brands bring forward the practice of firm environmentally friendly consumption.

Concurrently Gen Z's attitudes toward identity and self-expression reflect a shift in culture openness, inclusivity, and fluidity towards fashion. Clothing is now receptiveness to gender-neutral and have become a tool for expressing values and individuality over it just being and a functional or aesthetic concern—it (Djafarova& Foots, 2022). Prominently, these values often line up with their spending behaviors. Studies show that Gen Z is more to be expected to knit environmental and social ideology into their purchasing decisions, by preferring sustainable alternatives, or brands and opting for second-hand clothing, that evidently cuddle ethical practices (Li et al., 2022; Vazquez et al., 2023). Yet, despite the growing visibility of genderless and gender-fluid fashion in mainstream markets and popular culture, research consideration to this vicinity remains limited. Although second-hand and slow fashions have time-honored noteworthy research interest, the role of androgynous clothing in Gen Z's sustainable consumption patterns has been chiefly unnoticed.

Genderless (androgynous) fashion has progressively more been acknowledged as an significant development within the broader conversation of sustainable consumption. By eliminating the stiff division between gendersegregated product lines, it has the potential to lessen overproduction, giving extended garment life-cylcle, and add to sustainable circular practices within the industry (Joy & Peña, 2017; Niinimäki et al., 2020). Furthermore, gender-fluid style enables consumers to coherent personal uniqueness and societal morals all the way through the choices of clothing they make, reflecting wider shifts in the direction of ethical consumption, inclusivity and authenticity (McNeill & Venter, 2019; McKinsey & Company, 2021). These fashion transitions are predominantly salient in the frame of Generation Z, whose consumption patterns are gradually more tied to value-driven decisionmaking and sustainability (Francis &Hoefel, 2018; Vazquez et al., 2023).

Global trends in the indian fashion market interconnects with unique cultural and economic dynamics. India's fashion industry, one of the expeditiously-growing industries globally, faces rising inspection for its environmental footprint, due to fast fashion and mass production caused by the availability of cost-effective workforce and diverse raw materials like cotton and silk (Gupta & Hodges, 2012; Bhaduri, 2019). Recent studies indicate that Indian consumers—chiefly younger cohorts in metropolitan areas—are becoming more socially and environmentally conscious, progressively more bearing in mind ethical attributes in their fashion consumption (Dhir et al., 2021; Bhatt et al., 2020). Even as buying habits such as second-hand shopping and usage of sustainable fabrics are slowly gaining grip, the recognition of genderless garments remains uninvestigated, despite of India's ancient cultural patterns of gender-fluid attire such as unisex draping styles, kurtas, dhotis and regionally quite more (Sinha, 2017; Radhakrishnan, 2021).

The limited research consideration to gender-fluid fashion in India creates a significant research gap. Although sustainable fashion research has addressed second-hand, ethical, and slow fashion (Wiederhold& Martinez, 2018; Dhir et al., 2021), hardly any studies have investigated how inclusivity and sustainability interconnect in the acceptance of androgynous apparel. Addressing this gap requires exploring several key dimensions: Gen Z's awareness and knowledge of androgynous fashion and its sustainability potential; their attitudes and perceptions of gender-neutral clothing as a means of challenging stereotypes and supporting inclusivity; the degree of social acceptance of such clothing in shaping progressive and sustainable lifestyles; and their actual purchase intentions, particularly in relation to sustainability-driven choices and eco-friendly behaviors.

Building on these insights, the present study investigates Generation Z's awareness, acceptance, and sustainable purchase intentions regarding androgynous clothing in the Indian context. By integrating perspectives on

sustainability, inclusivity, and consumer identity, this research contributes to the emerging literature on sustainable fashion consumption. It further provides actionable implications for fashion retailers, marketers, and policymakers seeking to balance cultural traditions, market expansion, and global sustainability goals within the Indian fashion industry.

**Aims and Research Focus**

Building upon the gaps evident in existing research on sustainable fashion and inclusivity, this study advances the argument that androgynous fashion represents a critical yet underexplored dimension within the broader sustainability discourse. While prior research has predominantly examined practices such as second-hand consumption, slow fashion, and ethical sourcing, limited attention has been given to gender-fluid clothing as both a cultural expression and a sustainable alternative. Within the Indian context—where sustainability concerns, youth-driven consumerism, and evolving gender norms are converging—this study seeks to examine how Generation Z engages with androgynous fashion. **The key research questions are:**

**RQ1:** How aware are Generation Z consumers of androgynous fashion, and in what ways do they connect it with sustainable fashion practices?

**RQ2:** What are Generation Z's attitudes and perceptions toward androgynous fashion as a means of breaking gender stereotypes, fostering inclusivity, and supporting sustainability?

**RQ3:** To what extent is androgynous fashion socially accepted among Generation Z, and how is it perceived in shaping progressive and sustainable lifestyles?

**RQ4:** What factors influence Generation Z's purchase intentions and buying behavior toward androgynous fashion, particularly in relation to sustainability-driven choices and eco-friendly consumption?

**Literature Review**

The fashion industry is acknowledged as one of the world's major polluters, contributing to environmental degradation through overproduction, waste, and resource-intensive processes (McNeill & Venter, 2019). Awareness of sustainable fashion first appeared in the 1960s, when certain consumer cohorts recognized the industry's environmental impact and sought change in clothing production (Jung & Jin, 2014). Initially viewed negatively, sustainable fashion gained traction in the 1980s–1990s with anti-fur campaigns advocating against animal cruelty. Although sustainability was not central to fashion earlier, leading players now endorse more ecological production and consumption (Henninger et al., 2016). Sustainable fashion is increasingly associated with fair working conditions, sustainable business models (Joergens, 2006), and environmentally friendly materials, certifications, and traceability (Henninger, 2015).

In recent years, the industry has shifted from fast fashion toward sustainability-driven slow fashion. Some consumers purchase excessively, driven by FOMO, while others embrace minimalism and slow fashion principles. Such divergent consumption patterns shape evolving industry trends. Inclusivity and identity expression have also grown globally, significantly influencing apparel choices. Generation Z, described as digital natives with strong socio-environmental consciousness, is leading these shifts (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Declining apparel prices have encouraged mass ownership of cheap, low-quality textiles (Niinimäki, 2011), which are easily discarded. Extending garment lifespans through resale, donation, rental, or community initiatives is thus critical for sustainability (Niinimäki, 2015), though often overlooked in consumer behavior (KPMG, 2019). Research highlights a paradox between rising acceptance of sustainable fashion and low actual purchasing, known as the attitude–behavior gap (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018).

Sustainable fashion includes eco-friendly materials, ethical production, circular models, and conscious consumer behavior (Han et al., 2017). The rise of slow fashion signals a shift away from fast-fashion disposability toward mindful consumption (Niinimäki et al., 2020). However, inclusivity and design innovation remain underexplored in sustainability discourse. Rahman and Gong (2016) noted that research largely addresses environmental and economic aspects, neglecting cultural and social dimensions—creating a gap around alternative styles such as androgynous fashion. While recycling, second-hand use, and ethical sourcing receive attention (Joy & Peña, 2017), limited studies examine androgynous or genderless fashion, defined by its blending of masculine and feminine elements (Saha et al., 2021).

Gen Z has emerged as a key consumer group valuing authenticity, inclusivity, and sustainability (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; McKinsey & Company, 2020). They are not only environmentally conscious but also outspoken on social justice and identity politics (Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018). Yet research shows a gap between Gen Z's intentions and actual purchases, constrained by affordability, availability, and cultural barriers. Understanding how they connect sustainability with androgynous clothing requires deeper study.

Gen Z is rejecting traditional gendered clothing norms, favoring oversized and neutral apparel. Fashion today is less constrained by convention, with celebrities like Billie Eilish challenging traditional styles (McKinsey, 2023). Androgynous fashion, defined as clothing without binary distinctions, has evolved from subcultural expression to mainstream adoption. Globally, brands are launching unisex lines under inclusivity and sustainability agendas. Consumer acceptance varies across countries due to cultural conservatism and generational outlooks (Han et al., 2017).

The shift in society toward inclusivity and equality is reflected in androgynous fashion. At public gatherings, celebrities like Zendaya, Janelle Monáe, Tilda Swinton, and Kristen Stewart have made it more fashionable and raised awareness of gender-neutral attire (McKinsey, 2023). The trend is further amplified by social media and influencers, while classic and adaptable gender-neutral styles support sustainability by prioritizing quality over quantity. As important factors influencing adoption, consumer psychology emphasizes awareness, attitudes, social acceptance, and purchasing intentions (Ajzen, 1991; Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018). Research relates Gen Z consumption to identity, especially in the areas of inclusion and sustainability (McKinsey & Company, 2020).
However, real purchasing is hampered by behavioral hurdles including peer pressure and affordability (Niinimäki et al., 2020). Theories of planned behavior and value-belief-norm frameworks provide useful tools for analyzing Gen Z's relationship with androgynous fashion. In India, re on this topic remains scarce, revealing a significant gap. Based on the above discussion, the following objectives were identified for the research study.
**Objective 1:** Assess Gen Z's awareness of androgynous fashion and its link with sustainable practices. Joy and Peña (2017) noted rising sustainability awareness, but connections with gender-neutral fashion remain unclear, especially in India.
**Objective 2:** Examine Gen Z's attitudes toward androgynous fashion as a tool for breaking stereotypes, promoting inclusivity, and supporting sustainability. Gen Z views inclusivity as integral to identity (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Androgynous fashion disrupts stereotypes while resonating with Gen Z's values (Adomaitis et al., 2021).
**Objective 3:** Analyze social acceptance of androgynous fashion and its role in shaping progressive, sustainable lifestyles. While Western Gen Z increasingly embraces it (McKinsey, 2023), Indian consumers face societal conservatism and generational divides. Nonetheless, Gen Z often resists such norms. Fashion choices, as Song (2023) observes, reflect personal preference rather than gender. Gender-neutrality is now a trend expanding brand portfolios and revenue, aligning with sustainability through a "one product, one identity" approach (Suradhar, 2024). Although Gen Z may not explicitly seek gender-neutral fashion, they engage with brands in less restrictive ways than earlier generations (McKinsey, 2023).
**Objective 4:** Explore consumer preferences and purchase intentions toward androgynous fashion, and its role in sustainable choices and stereotype disruption. While consumers show willingness to buy green products, positive attitudes often fail to translate into action—a phenomenon known as the attitude–behavior gap (Zhuo et al., 2022). Despite interest in sustainable, biodegradable, and eco-friendly goods (ElHaffar et al., 2020), behavior often contradicts stated intentions (Zhuo et al., 2022).
Overall, literature indicates that Gen Z actively engages with sustainability and inclusivity. However, the role of androgynous clothing in this discourse is underexplored, particularly in India. Awareness, attitudes, social acceptance, and purchase intentions emerge as critical variables for evaluating its potential as both a cultural and sustainable alternative.

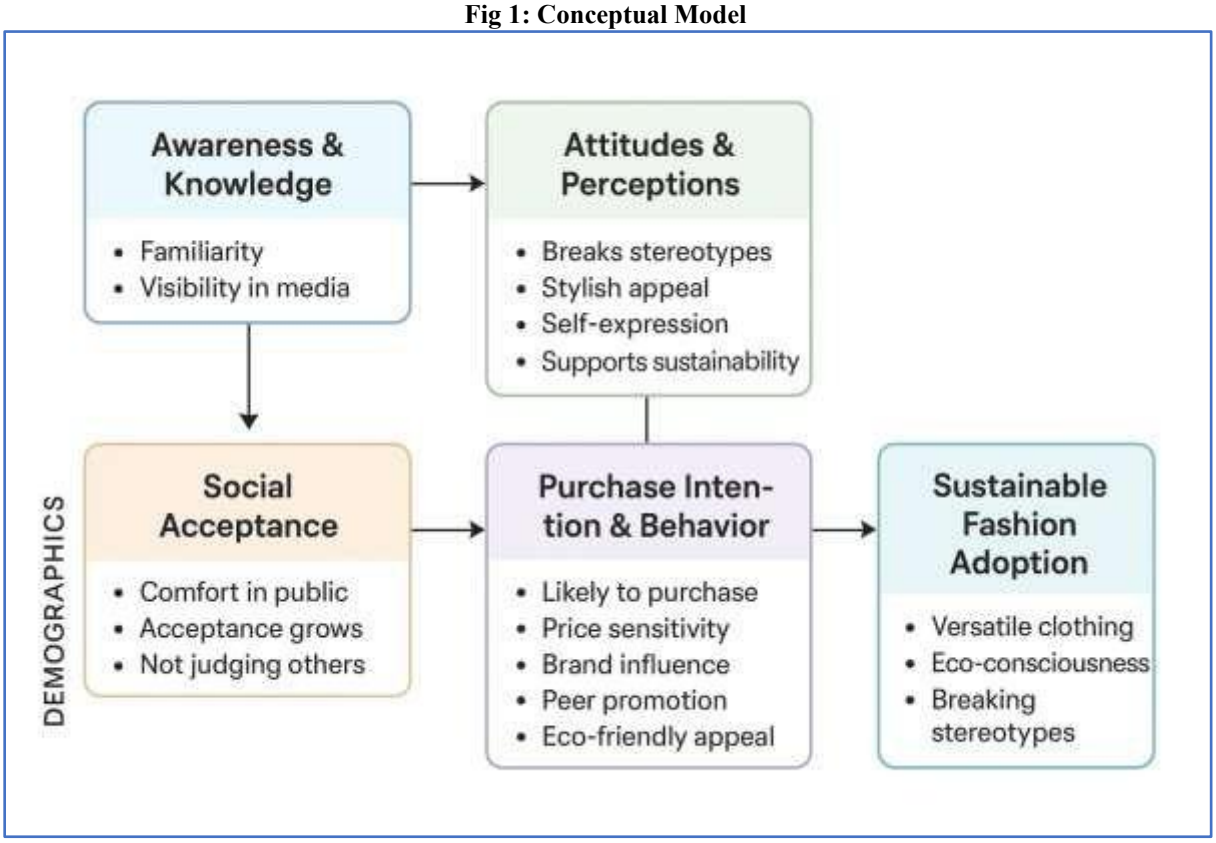
## Research Methodology

**Research design and data collection:**
To collect data for this research, we designed a structured questionnaire informed by prior studies on fashion, gender expression, and sustainable consumption. The survey items were developed after an extensive review of literature related to androgynous fashion, social acceptance, gender inclusivity, and eco-friendly purchase behaviours. Validated measurement scales from pertinent studies were modified and customised where necessary to fit Gen Z's concept of androgynous fashion. The survey consisted of four sections as mentioned below:
***Awareness and Knowledge Section:*** Items examining respondents' exposure to androgynous fashion and knowledge, followed by items leading to sustainable practices, were part of the survey. "Have you ever heard of androgynous fashion?" is one example. Likert-scale items such as "I am familiar with the concept of androgynous fashion" and "I believe androgynous fashion is becoming more visible in mainstream media and brands" were included, as were questions like "Are you aware of any brand selling androgynous clothes?"
***Attitudes and Perceptions Section:*** Respondents' feelings on how androgynous design can help dismiss gender stereotypes, encourage inclusivity, and support sustainable lifestyles were gathered through the questions in this section. They included statements like "I think androgynous fashion helps in breaking traditional gender stereotypes" and "I believe androgynous fashion contributes to sustainability by promoting versatile and timeless clothing."
***Social Acceptance Section:*** This section analysed how comfortably where the respondents' in public about androgynous fashion. Statements like "I would feel comfortable wearing androgynous clothing in public" and "Society is becoming more accepting of androgynous fashion" were used.
**Purchase Intentions and Behaviour Section:** The final section measured respondents' intent to buy androgynous clothing, the influence of peers, price considerations, and eco-friendly preferences. Example items included "I am likely to purchase androgynous clothing in the future," "Price influences my decision to buy androgynous clothing," and "I am more likely to purchase androgynous clothing if I know it supports eco-friendly and sustainable practices."

For all of the above 4 sections, a five-point Likert scale was adopted for the attitudinal items, where participants indicated their agreement ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The final part collected demographic data, including age, gender, and region, to examine potential differences among groups. For testing hypotheses—especially regarding how awareness and attitudes affect purchase intentions—a binary logistic regression was conducted. The dependent variable was "Have you ever worn androgynous clothes?" while independent variables included age, gender, education, familiarity with androgynous fashion, attitude toward inclusivity, and eco-friendly preferences. This method enabled an analysis of how knowledge, beliefs, and perceived social acceptance impact consumer behavior toward androgynous fashion.

**Fig 1: Conceptual Model**




**Data Collection and Sampling Procedure**

This study examines the factors that shape Generation Z's awareness, perceptions, social acceptance, and purchase intentions toward androgynous fashion, with a special emphasis on its link to sustainability and eco-friendly practices in Ahmedabad, India. For the research, purposive sampling was used, focusing on individuals born between 1997 and 2012, who fall under the Gen Z category. This method was selected to ensure that the respondents matched the purpose of the study and could provide meaningful insights into fashion trends, gender expression, and sustainable consumption habits (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

Data was collected through online forms. Online distribution was considered particularly suitable since Generation Z is known for its heavy use of technology and social media (Klein & Sharma, 2022). The purposive sampling method was chosen as a practical and reliable way to capture insights from this specific demographic (Kautonen et al., 2013).

The survey was structured to gather detailed information across four main areas: knowledge and awareness of androgynous fashion, attitudes and perceptions toward inclusivity and sustainability, levels of social acceptance, and purchase intentions. A pilot test with 30 Gen Z respondents from Ahmedabad was carried out to check the clarity and face validity of the questionnaire. Based on their feedback, minor revisions were made before administering the main survey. The final data collection took place online between February and May 2025. Only those who reported being born between 1997 and 2012 were included to ensure that the study was focused solely on Generation Z. After data cleaning and validation, 542 usable responses were retained for analysis. Of these participants, 44.8% identified as male, 53.9% as female, and 1.3% chose not to disclose their gender. Since the research aimed to explore fashion behaviour within an urban Indian setting, purposive sampling provided meaningful insights into Gen Z's views on androgynous fashion and its connection to sustainability. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the survey process to encourage open and honest responses.

**Data Analysis Procedure**

To address potential common method bias, we applied the full-collinearity test (Hair et al., 2023) and confirmed that it was not a concern, as the highest variance inflation factor (VIF) value was well below the recommended limit of 5 (Table I). The proposed research model was then analyzed using PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2023) in SmartPLS 4. Structural equation modeling was considered appropriate because it allows for the simultaneous examination of multiple constructs, making it well-suited to investigate the relationships among awareness, attitudes, social acceptance, and purchase intentions in the context of fashion (Basile et al., 2023).

This was particularly beneficial given the moderate sample size and the diversity of survey measures (Hair et al., 2023). The evaluation of the model was carried out in two stages. First, we assessed the measurement (outer) model by testing reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Next, we examined the structural (inner) model to evaluate predictive relevance and the strength of path relationships (Hair et al., 2023).

**Demographic Data Analysis**

The survey was conducted on 542 respondents, across different demographic categories. The majority of participants were between 19 and 21 years old, making up 46.5% of the sample. This was followed by 36.9% of respondents aged 22 to 24 years, while 16.6% fell into the 25 to 27 age group.

When it comes to gender distribution, slightly more than half of the respondents, or 53.9%, were female, while 44.8% were male, and a small portion, 1.3%, identified as other. This suggests a fairly balanced representation across genders, with a marginally higher participation from female respondents.

Educational qualifications also varied, with the majority of participants being well-educated. Over half (53.9%) had completed post-graduate studies, while 42.8% had pursued undergraduate education, and a small fraction of 3.3% held doctoral degrees. This reflects a sample with a strong academic background.

The type of accommodation where respondents resided was also diverse. A significant majority, 64.4%, were living at home, indicating that family support structures may play an important role in their lives. Other living arrangements included 15.3% staying in paying guest accommodations, 9.6% in rented spaces, 9.4% in hostels, and 1.3% residing with relatives or friends.

**Objective 1: To assess Gen Z's awareness and knowledge of androgynous fashion and its connection with sustainable fashion practices.**

The survey looked into how aware people are of androgynous fashion, whether they've tried it, and what they think about its presence in media and fashion. When asked if they had ever heard of androgynous fashion, 45.4% of the respondents said yes, while 39.7% said they hadn't, and 14.9% were unsure. This shows that less than half of the participants are familiar with the concept, meaning awareness is still limited.As for wearing androgynous clothes, a large portion of respondents 68.1%—said they had never worn such clothing, while 31.9% said they had. This suggests that although some people are open to trying androgynous fashion, it hasn't been widely adopted among the group surveyed. When asked about their familiarity with the concept, most respondents didn't feel they knew much about it. A striking 70.7% strongly disagreed that they were familiar with androgynous fashion, and 14.9% disagreed. Only a small group, 3.3%, agreed, and 2% strongly agreed that they knew about it, while 9% stayed neutral. These numbers confirm that knowledge about this fashion style is quite low.The survey also explored whether people feel androgynous fashion is becoming more visible in mainstream media and brands. Here, opinions were mixed. While 12.2% strongly disagreed and 36.7% disagreed with the statement, 26.4% were neutral. At the same time, 12.7% agreed and 12% strongly agreed that such fashion is becoming more noticeable. This indicates that while some believe it's gaining traction, the majority are either unsure or disagree with this idea.

**Objective 2: To examine Gen Z's attitudes and perceptions toward androgynous fashion as a means of breaking gender stereotypes, promoting inclusivity, and supporting sustainability.**

When asked whether androgyny is a major global trend, 20.1% of respondents felt that it is indeed a major trend worldwide. A larger portion, 46.5%, believed that it is somewhat of a trend but still remains a niche style. Meanwhile, 33.4% of the respondents felt that androgyny is not a macro trend at all. These results suggest that while some see it as gaining momentum, most believe it's still in its early or limited stages.

Regarding the suitability of androgynous clothing, 44.3% of respondents felt that such clothing is equally suitable for both men and women. However, 36.5% believed that androgynous styles are more appropriate for one gender than the other, and 19.2% felt that it's not suitable for either gender. This indicates that almost half of the participants are open to the idea of fashion without gender boundaries, while others are more hesitant.

When asked if it matters whether their friends wear androgynous clothing, 20.1% of respondents said it matters a lot to them, while 45.8% admitted it matters somewhat. On the other hand, 34.1% stated that it doesn't matter at all. These responses reveal that while many are indifferent, a significant portion is still influenced by how others dress.

A variety of opinions were expressed about whether androgynous fashion helps challenge gender norms. About 14.9% strongly disagreed and 16.8% disagreed, suggesting they do not see it as impactful. At the same time, 29.3% remained neutral. Meanwhile, 23.2% agreed and 15.7% strongly agreed that androgynous fashion does play a role

in breaking traditional gender stereotypes. This shows that while some are skeptical, many believe it contributes positively toward social change.

When asked how they feel about the style and appeal of androgynous fashion, 20.1% strongly disagreed and 27.3% disagreed, indicating that nearly half of the respondents don't find it appealing. However, 19.2% were neutral, while 23.4% agreed and 10.0% strongly agreed that they do find it stylish and attractive. These results suggest that while some people are unsure or unconvinced, there is still a notable group that appreciates its aesthetic. Opinions were mixed when it came to seeing androgynous fashion as a way to express oneself. About 10.7% strongly disagreed and 24.2% disagreed, meaning that over a third of the respondents do not see it that way. At the same time, 23.8% of respondents took a neutral stance, whereas 21.2% agreed and 20.1% strongly agreed that androgynous fashion represents a form of self-expression. These findings suggest that although some participants remain hesitant, a significant portion see it as a personal and creative means of expressing individuality.

**Objective 3: To analyse the level of social acceptance of androgynous fashion among Gen Z and its perceived role in shaping progressive and sustainable lifestyles.**

When asked about the occasions on which they would choose to wear androgynous clothing, most respondents (70.1%) said they would wear it to a party. 23.2%, mentioned they would wear it to an event, while only 6.6% indicated they would choose such attire for a date. This suggests that people feel more at ease experimenting with androgynous fashion in casual or social settings, such as parties, rather than in more intimate or formal situations.

When asked to the participants about their comfort level for wearing androgynous clothing in public spaces. Most of them (53%) reported discomfort, with 29.2% disagreeing and 23.8% strongly disagreeing, indicating that wearing androgynous clothing in public places still remains a major challenge for many. Meanwhile, 16.4% remained neutral, and 30.6% either agreed (22.1%) or strongly agreed (8.5%) that they would feel comfortable. This suggests that while some are open to it, a majority still hesitate when it comes to public acceptance.

When asked whether society is becoming more accepting of androgynous fashion, a significant portion of respondents expressed scepticism. About 41% strongly disagreed and 23.2% disagreed with the statement, meaning that more than half feel that society is not yet accepting. Meanwhile, 22% stayed neutral, and only 13.9% agreed (10.9%) or strongly agreed (3.0%) that acceptance is growing. This reflects that most people feel societal norms have yet to catch up with changing fashion trends.

Finally, when asked if they would refrain from judging others for wearing androgynous clothing, the responses were again mixed but leaned toward hesitation. A combined 55.7% of respondents strongly disagreed (26.9%) or disagreed (28.8%), suggesting that many still hold reservations or biases. On the other hand, 12% remained neutral, while 32.3% either agreed (15.5%) or strongly agreed (16.8%) that they would not judge others. This indicates that while a portion of people are open-minded, a majority still struggle with fully accepting fashion that challenges conventional norms.

**Objective 4: To explore consumer attitudes, preferences, and purchase intentions toward androgynous fashion, and its connection with breaking gender stereotypes and supporting sustainable choices**

**Table 1: Measurement Model Results**

| Constructs | Items | FL | α | CR | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive Attitude toward Androgynous Fashion | I am familiar with the concept of androgynous fashion. | 0.629 | 0.6608 | 0.89 | 0.54 |
| | I believe androgynous fashion is becoming more visible in mainstream media and brands. | 0.654 | | | |
| | I think androgynous fashion helps in breaking traditional gender stereotypes. | 0.661 | | | |
| | Supportive but conscious toward Androgynous Fashion | I see androgynous fashion as a form of self-expression. | | | |
| | I would not judge someone negatively for wearing androgynous clothes. | I would feel comfortable wearing androgynous clothing in public. | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I am likely to purchase androgynous clothing in the future. | Society is becoming more accepting of androgynous fashion. | | | |
| | Price influences my decision to buy androgynous clothing. | I would purchase androgynous clothing if my favorite brand introduced it. | | | |
| | I am more likely to try androgynous fashion if my peers or influencers promote it. | I believe androgynous fashion contributes to sustainability by promoting versatile and timeless clothing. | | | |
| | | I am more likely to purchase androgynous clothing if I know it supports ecofriendly and | 0.707 | 0.71 | 0.86 |
| | | sustainable practices. | | | |
| | *Notes: FL = Factor loading. α = Cronbach's alpha. CR = Composite reliability. AVE = Average variance extracted* | 0.783 | | | |
| | | 0.622 | | | |
| | | 0.699 | | | |
| | | 0.633 | | | |
| | | 0.818 | | | |
| | | | | | |

The measurement model provides a structured approach to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs under study. By applying PLS-SEM, this research carefully examined important indicators such as Cronbach's alpha (α), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE), along with the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the heterotrait-monotrait(HTMT) ratio, and the variance inflation factor (VIF). Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's α and CR, which are essential for assessing how well the items within each construct are related. A benchmark of 0.6 has been widely accepted as the minimum standard for reliability. As the results show, each construct surpassed this benchmark—Cronbach's α was found to be 0.6608 for 'Positive Attitude toward Androgynous Fashion' and 0.707 for 'Supportive but Conscious toward Androgynous Fashion'. Table 6 illustrates that all constructs achieved Cronbach's α and CR values greater than 0.6, indicating a strong level of internal consistency.

Convergent validity was assessed by examining both the outer loadings of the constructs and the AVE values. The AVE for 'Positive Attitude toward Androgynous Fashion' was 0.54, while that for 'Supportive but Conscious toward Androgynous Fashion' was 0.86. Both values exceed the commonly recommended threshold of 0.5, confirming that the constructs demonstrate convergent validity. Furthermore, factor loadings were considered, as they explain the extent to which each item contributes to its respective construct. In line with SEM best practices, loadings above 0.6 are desirable. As seen in Table 6, all variables meet this expectation, providing additional support for the model's convergent validity.

Discriminant validity was ascertained using the Fornell and Larcker criteria, which ensures that each variable is distinctly separate from all others within the same construct. A stringent threshold requires that the square root of the AVE must surpass the correlation values among competing variables. As Table 2 attests, the discriminant validity of each variable exceeded 0.7, thereby fulfilling the stipulated criteria. Additionally, this study employed the HTMT ratio to evaluate the similarity among latent constructs. With a standard HTMT range between -1 and

+1, the research confirmed discriminant validity for all variables, as indicated in Table 2. These HTMT ratios, Table 3, were all less than 0.85, adhering to best practices for discriminant validity.

**Table 2: Discriminant Validity assessment through Fornell-Larcker**

| Construct | AVE | √AVE | Correlation with other constructs | Fornell-Larcker criterion satisfied? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive Attitude toward Androgynous Fashion | 0.54 | 0.735 | 0.65 | |
| Supportive but Conscious toward Androgynous Fashion | 0.86 | 0.927 | 0.65 | |

**Table 3: Discriminant validity assessment through Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio.**

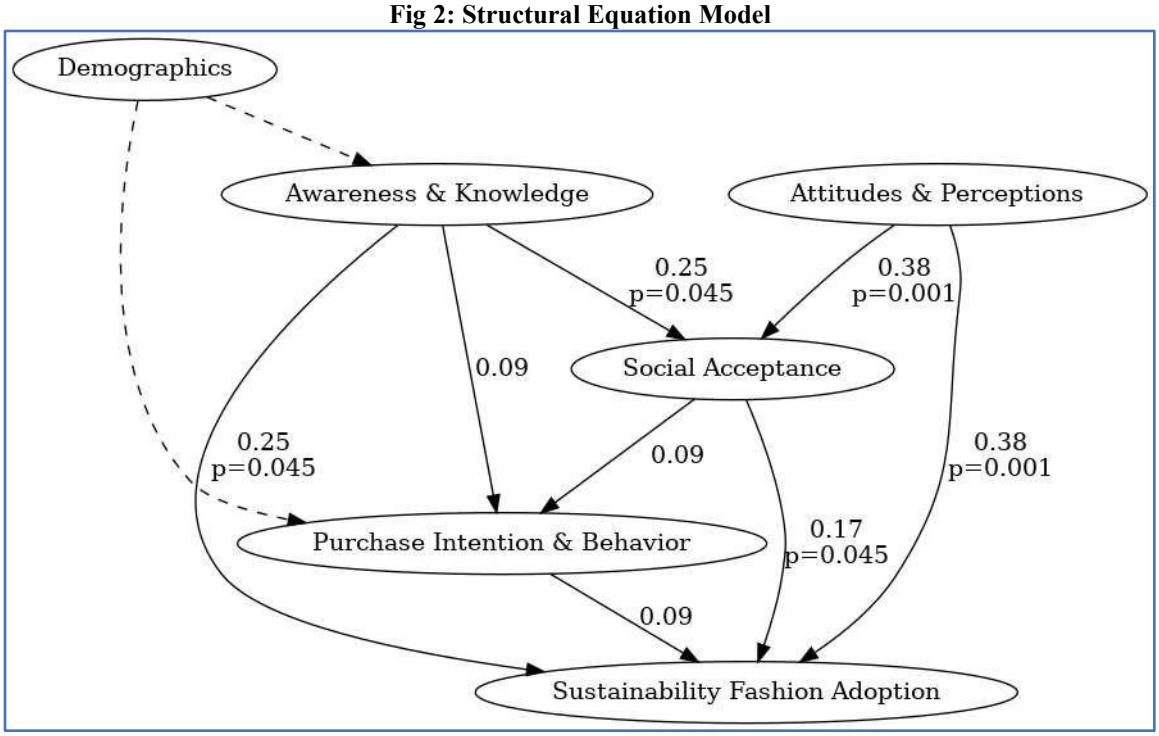
| Constructs Pair | HTMT | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PAF – SCF | 0.65 | | |

HTMT Test result: HTMT < 0.85 → discriminant validity confirmed.
Taken collectively, the measurement model in Table 4, passed rigorous tests for reliability and validity, positioning it as a robust measure for evaluating the relationships among the constructs or variables under investigation. Fig. 2 graphically elucidates the detailed factor loadings and measurement model.

**Table 4: Structural Model**

| Relationship | Beta | Standard Deviation | T Statistics | P Values | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive Attitude | 0.8 | 0.05 | 18.18 | 0.011 | Supported |
| Supportive but Conscious | 0.77 | 0.06 | 16.34 | 0.021 | Supported |

**Fig 2: Structural Equation Model**




**Hypothesis Testing**

**Hypothesis 1 (H1): Gen Z's awareness of androgynous fashion is positively associated with their awareness of brands selling such fashion and their belief in its increasing visibility in mainstream media.**

The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 1.254$, df = 4, p = 0.009) shows a significant association between age and awareness. Awareness is highest among the 19–21 age group (118 aware) and lowest among the 25–27 age group (37 aware).

Marketers should target specific segments with educational campaigns and influencer collaborations while reinforcing engagement with younger audiences through trend-driven content.
The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 4.285$, df = 2, p = 0.017) shows a significant relationship between gender and brand awareness. Among females, 180 respondents (71.4%) were aware of such brands, while 72 (28.6%) were not. Among males, 128 respondents (64.0%) were aware, while 72 (36.0%) were not. Among those who prefer not to disclose gender, 67 respondents (74.3%) were aware, and 23 (25.7%) were not. The higher awareness among those preferring not to disclose gender points to a segment that values gender-neutral or inclusive fashion. Brands should focus on campaigns that highlight diversity, acceptance, and non-binary identities.

**Hypothesis 2 (H2): Gen Z's perception that androgynous fashion helps break gender stereotypes is positively related to their belief that it contributes to sustainability.**
The analysis reveals a significant positive correlation between Gen Z's belief that androgynous fashion promotes sustainability and its role in breaking traditional gender stereotypes, particularly across gender identities (p = 0.008 and p = 0.045). This indicates that gender perspectives strongly influence these views. Brands should leverage this by creating inclusive campaigns that emphasize sustainability and challenge stereotypes, using diverse representation and authentic storytelling to build trust and engagement.

**Hypothesis 3 (H3):Gen Z's attitude toward the inclusivity of androgynous fashion differs based on their opinion of whether androgyny is a macro trend.**
On examining whether androgynous fashion is perceived as a macro trend and its suitability for men and women, the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 143.977$, df = 4, p = 0.001) indicates a highly significant association between these perceptions. A large portion of respondents who view androgyny as a macro trend also believe that the fashion is suitable for all genders. This suggests growing acceptance and openness toward gender-neutral styles. Marketers should build campaigns that emphasize inclusivity, challenge traditional norms, and promote the adaptability of such fashion through influencer partnerships, targeted social media content, and sustainable, versatile product lines.

**Hypothesis 4 (H4):Gen Z who are more accepting of androgynous fashion (as measured by comfort wearing it, not judging others, and perceiving societal acceptance) are also more likely to wear such clothing. Model Summary**: Shows -2 Log Likelihood as 666.342, Cox & Snell $R^2$ value as 0.756, and Nagelkerke $R^2$ value as 0.734. A higher $R^2$ suggests that comfort, judgment, and acceptance explain variation in wearing androgynous clothes.
**Interpretation**: The predictors explain about 75% of the variation in whether someone wears androgynous clothes according to Cox & Snell, and about 73% according to Nagelkerke—showing a fairly strong model fit, especially for social and psychological behaviours. With moderate to high $R^2$ values, this suggests comfort, judgment, and acceptance are meaningful factors influencing adoption. Strategies should include: Creating campaigns that enhance comfort in public settings, promoting messages that reduce judgment and stigma, and highlighting social acceptance through influencers and community initiatives.
**Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients**: Tests whether the model with predictors is better than the intercept-only model. A significant p-value in this case, 0.045 <0.05, means the model is a good fit. In terms of independent variables, 'Comfort in public' has an Exp (B =1.45)> 1 and is significant; greater comfort increases the odds of wearing androgynous clothes. 'Not judging others' is significant with Exp (B = 1.78) > 1, suggesting that more open-minded people are more likely to wear androgynous fashion, and 'Society acceptance' with significant positive Exp (B = 1.89) means higher perceived acceptance is linked with wearing such clothes.

**Hypothesis Testing Summary**

| Hypothesis | Key Variables | Test Type | Test Value | Test Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $H_{1.1}$ | Gen Z's awareness [age groups] of androgynous fashion is positively associated with their awareness of brands selling such fashion and their belief in its increasing visibility in mainstream media. | Chi-Square | 0.009 | Hypothesis supported |
| $H_{1.2}$ | Gen Z's awareness [gender] of androgynous fashion is positively associated with their awareness of brands selling such fashion and their belief in its increasing visibility in mainstream media. | Chi-Square | 0.017 | Hypothesis supported |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $H_2$ | Gen Z's perception [gender] that androgynous fashion helps break gender stereotypes is positively related to their belief that it contributes to sustainability. | Chi-Square | 0.045 | Hypothesis supported |
| $H_3$ | Gen Z's attitude [gender] toward the inclusivity of androgynous fashion differs based on their opinion of whether androgyny is a macro trend. | Chi-Square | 0.001 | Hypothesis supported |
| $H_4$ | Gen Z who are more accepting of androgynous fashion (as measured by comfort wearing it, not judging others, and perceiving societal acceptance) are also more likely to wear such clothing. | Binary Logistic Regression | 0.045 | Hypothesis supported |

## Conclusion

In summary, the results show that awareness and understanding of androgynous fashion among the respondents are quite limited. Few have experience wearing it, and opinions on its popularity are divided, suggesting that there's still a lot of room for increasing knowledge and acceptance of this style. Gen Z's perceptions of androgynous fashion present a duality: while some respondents resist the concept, others actively embrace it as a medium for self-expression, identity construction, and creativity. Beyond its stylistic appeal, androgynous fashion serves as a significant instrument for challenging entrenched gender stereotypes, advancing inclusivity, and promoting sustainability. In the case of social acceptance of androgynous fashion among Gen Z and its perceived contribution to progressive and sustainable lifestyles, reveals that while some demonstrate openness, a significant portion continues to struggle with fully embracing fashion that challenges conventional norms. The study further confirms that Gen Z's awareness of androgynous fashion aligns with brand recognition and perceived media visibility, with highest awareness among the 19–21 age group and lower awareness in the 25–27 group; females and gender-non-disclosing individuals show higher awareness, highlighting the need for brands to promote inclusivity, diversity, and non-binary representation in their campaigns.

The findings show that Gen Z's interest in androgynous fashion is shaped by a mix of perception, attitude, and social influence. Many young consumers see this style as more than just clothing—they view it as a way to challenge gender stereotypes while also connecting it to sustainability. This suggests that gender perspectives strongly influence how these choices are formed. When people are more aware of androgynous fashion as a growing trend, they are also more likely to see it as suitable for everyone, reflecting the increasing acceptance of gender-neutral styles. Comfort in wearing such outfits, open-minded attitudes, and social acceptance were all strong factors driving actual adoption.

For brands, this means there's a clear opportunity to encourage adoption by creating inclusive campaigns that challenge stereotypes, highlight the sustainability angle, focus on comfort, and showcase the versatility of genderneutral fashion. Authentic representation and collaborations with influencers can also help make these campaigns resonate more deeply.

Looking ahead, acceptance could be strengthened through awareness campaigns that highlight both the social and environmental benefits of androgynous fashion, partnerships between designers and youth-led platforms to cocreate relatable styles, and educational efforts that normalize non-binary clothing choices. Together, these strategies can foster cultural openness, bring androgynous fashion into the mainstream, and support more sustainable consumer behavior.

Research on androgynous fashion is significant not only because it challenges traditional gender norms and promotes inclusivity, but also because it encourages environmentally conscious consumption. Understanding how Gen Z engages with this style provides valuable insights into reducing fast-fashion waste and supporting sustainable consumer choices. Few suggestions that help promote androgynous fashion for sustainable practices are to promote thoughtful and responsible shopping, that is to be more conscious during purchase decisions, second is to promote clothes that lasts long and suits everyone, that is supporting slow fashion where quality is preferred over quantity. Thirdly, we need to encourage reuse and recycling practices among Gen Z, as it leads to opportunities for renting, swapping, or proper reselling by reducing waste and promoting circular approach to fashion. Next, we can encourage less of trend driven purchase as this will encourage more sustainable and thoughtful purchasing habits. Lastly, brands should ensure that they communicate sustainability effectively by highlighting environmental benefits of androgynous fashion

**Future scope**

As Gen Z, is the future of fashion, they should be envouraged to make more conscious and environmentally responsible decisions when it comes to buying clothes. Brands and retailers should create a roadmap for positioning androgynous fashion as stylish and responsible, helping companies align creativity with consumers'

demand for meaningful, long-lasting products. Communication strategies should focus on designing advertising messages that reflect sustainable values. It supports marketers in developing campaigns that highlight not only aesthetics but also ethical production, inclusivity, and conscious consumption, making sustainability feel relevant and attainable. Industry leaders should rethink the design, production, and distribution of fashion items. By focusing on sustainable design, product lifecycle management, and ethical supply chains, businesses and policymakers can reduce environmental impact while meeting modern consumer expectations. Finally, the study lays the foundation for exploring how androgynous fashion spreads across cultures and how attitudes toward it evolve. It can also open ways to investigate how social media and influencer campaigns influence sustainable shopping behaviours, helping businesses engage audiences in meaningful, long-term ways.

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