

Influencing millennials to embrace sustainable fashion in an emerging market: a modified brand avoidance model perspective

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Abstract

Purpose – This study applies the modified brand avoidance model to examine factors that influence sustainable fashion avoidance behaviour among millennial shoppers in South Africa.

Design/methodology/approach – A positivistic approach and a web-based online survey were employed to collect cross-sectional data from 423 millennial fashion shoppers. Standard multiple regression analysis was used to test proposed hypotheses.

Findings – Unmet expectations, materialism and symbolic incongruence emerged as major predictors of millennials' intention to avoid sustainable fashion. Sustainable fashion avoidance intention was found to have a positive effect on sustainable fashion avoidance behaviour.

Research limitations/implications – This study relied on self-reported data collected from millennial shoppers. Future studies may improve the generalizability of this study's results by conducting a comparative study with other cohorts such as baby boomers and Generation X who espouse different shopping values. Future studies may benefit from the use of longitudinal data in order to understand how millennial shoppers relate to sustainable fashion as it evolves.

Practical implications – The results of this study suggest the importance of developing value propositions that align sustainable fashion with cultural, personality and symbolic cues valued by millennial shoppers. Consumer education on the benefits of sustainable fashion is recommended as a longterm behavioural change strategy.

Social implications – The purchase behaviour of sustainable fashion should be encouraged as it enhances environmental sustainability including safeguarding the livelihoods of future generations.

Originality/value – This study contributes to literature on sustainable fashion avoidance behaviour. This is one of the pioneering studies to empirically examine the influence of unmet expectations, symbolic incongruence and ideological incompatibility in the context of an emerging market, such as South Africa.

Keywords: Sustainable fashion avoidance, Ideological incompatibility, Symbolic incongruence, Unmet expectation, Materialism, South Africa