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The New Digital Dress Code: A Generational Study of Digital Fashion Adoption

Safa Medimagh,

Department of Business Management, Institut Supérieur de Gestion, ARBRE, University of Tunis, Tunisia

medimagh.safa@gmail.com

Abstract— The fashion industry is under pressing sustainability crisis, amplified by fast fashion and social media-fuelled consumption. Digital fashion (DF) emerges as sustainable alternative conciliating with self-expression and waste. It constitutes a real potential solution. However, key drivers of DF adoption across generational cohorts remain underexplored. This study develops a comprehensive framework integrating the Theory of Consumption Values and the Diffusion of Innovation Theory. The aim is to explore how sustainability attitude and consumption values trigger the intention to purchase and shape the attitude toward DF, within Gen Y and Gen Z. A structural model was tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) on 240 valid responses. The findings reveal that sustainability attitudes significantly influence perceived usefulness, enjoyment, exclusivity, and subjective norms, which in turn enhance perceived hedonic, social, and utilitarian values driving purchase intention. Generational nuances emerged: while Gen Y is driven primarily by utilitarian and functional aspects, Gen Z emphasizes hedonic enjoyment and social visibility. Consumer innovativeness demonstrates moderating role in the relationship between perceived values and purchase intention for both groups. To conclude, research illustrates the generational mechanisms of sustainable adoption and offers tailored DF strategies to distinct generational motivations.

Keywords— Consumption values, Digital Fashion, Generational Cohorts, Sustainability attitude, PLS-SEM

I. INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry constitutes a critical contributor to global environmental issues, generating approximately 92 million tons of textile waste each year projecting to reaching 134 million tons of textile waste globally by 2030 [1]. This overproduction is fuelled by the fast fashion industry and unsustainable consumption behaviors associated to social media, such as “haul culture” or “wear-and-turn” phenomenon where consumers purchase clothing primarily for a single social media post- such as an “outfit of the day: OOTD”, before returning the item [2].

The emerging metaverse market which is valued at up to $900 billion by 2030 [3] has introduced a cutting-edge concept consisting in Digital Fashion (DF): non-virtual garments (clothing and accessories). DF can be worn by avatar or superimposed onto human image in virtual environment. DF provides a new paradigm offering a opportunities not only for creativity but also for sustainability by eliminating physical materials and traditional manufacturing process. From customer standpoint, DF offers personalization and expression. It permits gaining agility and responsiveness, in contrast to fast fashion [4]. However, despite its significant potential and the growing interest, DF remains underexplored particularly motivations and generational factors driving its adoption [5], [6], [7].

This study aims to fulfill this gap by providing a comprehensive framework integrating consumption values theory [9] and diffusion of innovation theory [28] to explore how sustainability attitude and consumption values explain the DF adoption, mediated by key psychological variables, with a particular focus on generational differences between millennials and Gen Z.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Digital Fashion (DF)*

DF arises as an innovative trend to maintain the leadership of some luxury brands (e.g., Guess, Balenciaga) in trendsetting within the luxury fashion industry. According to [4], DF refers to "virtual clothing created in 3D applications that can be augmented to a person's or avatar's body in a photo or virtual space". DF encompasses digital design as a virtual creation, and production garments used to manifest one's identity in the virtual environment [8]. This study adopts the definition proposed by [8] and extent it by introducing sustainable alternative, framing DF as a viable and natural alternative to dress one's online self in on-screen representations striking content for social platforms.

B. *Theory of consumption values*

Through the theory of consumption values, [9] explain the consumer decision-making and choices are driven by a combination of five values: functional, emotional, social, epistemic and conditional values. This study operationalizes utilitarian, hedonic and social values each influenced by mediating variables linked to sustainability attitude.

- **Utilitarian value** is derived from functional utility and driven by perceived usefulness, price sensitivity and value appreciation.
- **Hedonic value** is influenced emotional states such as enjoyment and sense of exclusivity associated to DF self-expression.
- **Social value** emerges from association with social recognition and belonging.

C. *Theory of Diffusion of Innovation*

According to the theory of Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) [28], consumers who have high innovativeness are more likely to embrace new technologies as valuable especially when these allow distinctive benefits, and advanced features and functionalities. Conversely, when they fail to recognize such advantages, resistance to purchase may occur [10]. This study posits it as moderator variable between perceived values and purchase intention. It stresses to capture differences between generational cohorts' openness to DF.

D. *Generational perspectives*

Gen Z (born: 1997-2012) are known as digital natives. They constitute the most technology immersed and innovation-driven cohort [11]. For them, sustainability constitutes a critical issue. They prioritize social engagement, authenticity and ethical consumption [12].

Gen Y (born: 1981–1996) are known as pragmatic. Embracing a n innovation goes through evaluation of financial benefits, utility and quality [13].

The following generational cohorts' orientations yield differing mechanism explaining effect of sustainability attitude on intention to purchase.

E. *Hypothesis summary*

H1. Perceived usefulness positively influences perceived utilitarian value.
H2. Price sensitivity positively influences perceived utilitarian value.
H3. Value appreciation positively influences perceived utilitarian value.
H4. Perceived utilitarian value positively influences the intention to purchase
H5. Perceived utilitarian value positively influences the attitude toward DF.
H6. The relationship between sustainability attitude and perceived utilitarian value is mediated by: (a) perceived usefulness, (b) price sensitivity, and (c) value appreciation.
H7. Subjective norms positively influence perceived social value of DF.
H8. Subjective norms mediate the relationship between sustainability attitude and perceived social value of DF.
H9. Perceived social value positively influence the intention to purchase DF.
H10. Perceived social value positively influences the attitude toward DF.
H11. Enjoyment positively influences perceived hedonic value of DF.
H12. Sense of exclusivity positively influences perceived hedonic value of DF.
H13. The relationship between sustainability attitude and perceived hedonic value is mediated by: (a) Enjoyment, and (b) Sense of exclusivity.

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H14. Perceived hedonic value positively influences the intention to purchase of DF.
H15. Perceived hedonic value positively influences attitude toward DF.
H16. Consumer innovativeness moderates the relationships between: (a) perceived utilitarian value and intention to purchase DF, (b) perceived hedonic value and intention to purchase DF, and (c) perceived social value and intention to purchase DF.
H17. Sustainability attitude positively influences: (a) perceived usefulness, (b) price sensitivity, (c) value appreciation, (d) enjoyment, (e) sense of exclusivity, and (f) subjective norms, in the context of DF.
H18. Attitude toward DF positively influence the intention to purchase.
H19. The influence of sustainability attitude and other consumption values on digital fashion (DF) purchase intention differs between Gen Y and Gen Z.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Sampling and Data collection

A mixed-method approach was employed consisting of an online survey (n=80) and in-person panels (n= 160; Gen Z=80; Gen Y=80), conducted at a university in early 2025. Questionnaire starts with introduction to DF and AI-generated visual examples to ensure conceptual understanding. Finally, the sample contained 240 responses.

B. Research instrument

Research instruments are presented in the following table:

TABLE I
RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Construct	Number of Items	Key Adaptation Sources
Sustainable Attitude*	3	[29]
Perceived Usefulness*	3	[14]
Price Sensitivity*	3	[15], [16]
Value Appreciation*	3	[17]
Enjoyment*	3	[18]
Sense of Exclusivity*	3	[19]
Subjective Norms*	3	[20]
Perceived Utilitarian Value*	4	[21], [22]
Perceived Hedonic Value*	4	[21]
Perceived Social Value*	4	[21]
Consumer Innovativeness*	3	[23]
Attitude toward Digital Fashion**	5	[24], [25]
Purchase Intention*	3	[18]

Note: *All construct s using a 5-point Likert scalewere measured from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)
****Semantic differential (five bipolar scales, 5-point)**

C. Data analysis and findings

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted using PCA in order to examine the factor structure. The KMO and Bartlett's sphericity test show satisfactory values.

A confirmatory analysis based on PLS-SEM was employed using Smart-PLS 4.0 in order to assess measurement and structural model. PLS-SEM is selected due to its potential of robustness in predicted-oriented models and suitable for complex and exploratory studies with medium sample sizes [26].

D. Results

The measurement model demonstrates satisfactory CR (rho_a >0.7) for all constructs, convergent validity (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.7$; AVE > 0.5). Also, the measurement models met acceptable thresholds standards of R2 and R2 adj (>0.1 and > 0.2, respectively). The discriminant validity is assessed using Fornell and Larcker's criterion [27]. AVE of each factor is higher than inter-construct correlations. Test proves that there is no common method bias concern.

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The structural model evaluation is verified through SRMR fit index (0.073<0.1), NFI standard (0.948>0.9) and the high and positive Chi-Square value (X2=1632.697). All factor VIFs are below threshold value (<3) which means that there is no multicollinearity.

TABLE II
MEASUREMENT MODEL

Constructs	Items	Outer Loadings	VIF	C. Alpha	CR	AVE
Sustainability attitude	Sust_Att_1	0.835	1.12	0.719	0.718	0.613
	Sust_Att_2	0.735	1.53			
	Sust_Att_3	0.776	1.54			
Perceived usefullness	Perc_Usef_1	0.821	1.94	0.747	0.747	0.664
	Perc_Usef_2	0.814	1.53			
	Perc_Usef_3	0.809	1.71			
Price sensitivity	Price_Sens_1	0.731	1.31	0.769	0.834	0.679
	Price_Sens_2	0.832	1.02			
	Pric_Sens_3	0.901	1.3			
Value appreciation	Val_Appr_1	0.724	2.32	0.702	0.721	0.527
	Val_Appr_2	0.605	1.34			
Enjoyment	Enjoymt_1	0.841	1.84	0.811	0.820	0.725
	Enjoymt_2	0.825	1.56			
	Enjoymt_3	0.888	2.27			
Sense of exclusivity	Exclty_1	0.926	1.46	0.822	0.869	0.738
	Exctly_2	0.882	1.56			
	Exctly_3	0.759	1.87			
Subjective norms	Subj_Nor_1	0.846	1.34	0.792	0.838	0.703
	Subj_Nor_2	0.888	1.54			
	Subj_Nor_3	0.779	1.58			
Perceived utilitarian value	Perc_Ut_Val_1	0.650	1.27	0.764	0.724	0.620
	Perc_Ut_Val_2	0.722	1.05			
	Perc_Ut_Val_3	0.821	2.33			
	Perc_Ut_Val_4	0.826	2.31			
Perceived hedonic value	Perc_Hd_Val_1	0.661	1.36	0.740	0.759	0.662
	Perc_Hd_Val_2	0.801	1.36			
	Perc_Hd_Val_3	0.708	1.15			
	Perc_Hd_Val_4	0.818	1.35			
Perceived social value	Perc_Soc_Val_1	0.825	2.19	0.793	0.802	0.616
	Perc_Soc_Val_2	0.767	1.97			
	Perc_Soc_Val_3	0.793	2.18			
	Perc_Soc_Val_4	0.752	1.96			
Consumer innovativeness	Cons_Innov_1	0.719	1.72	0.7	0.733	0.542
	Cons_Innov_2	0.642	1.47			
	Cons_Innov_3	0.836	1.8			
Attitude toward DF	Att_DF_1	0.836	2.09	0.825	0.983	0.721
	Att_DF_2	0.819	2.47			
	Att_DF_3	0.898	2.81			
	Att_DF_4	0.781	2.88			
	Att_DF_5	0.906	2.89			
Intention to purchase	Int_Purch_1	0.874	2.89	0.833	0.841	0.751
	Int_Purch_2	0.905	2.68			
	Int_Purch_3	0.818	1.5			

Note: VIF: Variance inflation factor; AVE: Average of Variance Extracted; C.Alpha: Cronbach's alpha; CR: Composite reliabitlity (rho_a), Sust_Att: Sustainable attitude; Perc_Usef: Perceived usefulness; Pric: Price sensitivity; Val_Appr: Value appreciation; Enjoymt: Enjoyment; Sens_Exclty: Sense of exclusivity; Subj_Nor: Subjective norms; Perc_Ut_Val: Perceived utilitarian value; Perc_Hd_Val: Perceived hedonic value; Perc_Soc_Val: Perceived social value; Att_DF: Attitude toward DF; Cons_Innov: Consumer innovativeness; Int_Purch: Intention to purchase.

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TABLE III
INDICATORS FIT OF THE MEASUREMENT MODELS

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Att_DF_	0.131	0.103
Enjoymt_	0.109	0.100
Int_Purch_	0.302	0.246
Perc_Hd_Val_	0.277	0.264
Perc_Soc_Val_	0.170	0.163
Perc_Usef_	0.217	0.210
Perc_Ut_Val_	0.314	0.294
Pric	0.263	0.256
Sens-Exclty	0.107	0.099
Subj_Nor_	0.102	0.094
Val_Appr	0.169	0.161

TABLE IV
STRUCTURAL MODEL FIT

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.073	0.071
d_ULS	4.784	26.481
d_G	2.593	3.336
Chi-square	1367.800	1632.697
NFI	0.956	0.948

E. Test of hypotheses

1) Effect of sustainability attitude

For both cohorts, sustainability attitude has positively significant effect on: perceived usefulness, Price sensitivity, Value appreciation, Enjoyment, Sense of exclusivity and Subjective norms ($p < 0.01$). However, generational contrasts emerged: Gen Z displayed stronger paths toward enjoyment and social influence, while Gen Y emphasized perceived usefulness and price sensitivity. Sustainability attitude serves as a strong foundational driver, having an impact on all the other perceptions.

2) Perceived utilitarian value and its antecedents

Perceived usefulness (H1: β~Y~=0.688, β~Z~=0.371) and value appreciation (H3: β~Y~=0.311, β~Z~=0.269) significantly drive utilitarian value for both generations, while price sensitivity (H2) is non-significant. Utilitarian value increases purchase intention for both cohorts (H4: β~Y~=0.110, β~Z~=0.112), but only shapes Gen Y's attitude (H5: β~Y~=0.606).

These findings strongly support the role of perceived usefulness and value appreciation in the formation of utilitarian value of DF for the two generations. A key finding is the non-significance of price sensitivity (H2), which implies that traditional cost-value heuristics may not yet apply to this new category of digital products, as consumers focus on its functional and sustainability benefits.

3) Subjective norms and perceived social value relationship

Subjective norms significantly drive perceived social value for both generations (H7: β~Y~=0.266, β~Z~=0.491). In turn, social value positively influences both attitude toward DF (H9: β~Y~=0.425, β~Z~=0.077) and purchase intention (H10: β~Y~=0.226, β~Z~=0.433), supporting H9 and H10.

The strong support for H7, H9, and H10 underlines that DF is inherently a social product. Peers drive the perceived social value of DF through subjective norms, which in turn fuels the intention to buy. This effect is much stronger for Gen Z, further solidifying their identity as digital natives who consume within a social framework.

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4) Perceived hedonic value and its antecedents

Enjoyment (H11: β~Y~=0.289, β~Z~=0.448) and sense of exclusivity (H12: β~Y~=0.321, β~Z~=0.196) significantly drive perceived hedonic value for both generations. Hedonic value, in turn, positively influences both purchase intention (H14: β~Y~=0.135, β~Z~=0.231) and attitude toward DF (H15: β~Y~=0.217, β~Z~=0.316), supporting H14 and H15. This confirms that the appeal of DF is not simply practical but deeply experiential. The potential for DF to allow fun, pleasure, and a perceived uniqueness serves as a fundamental driver for adoption across both cohorts.

Attitude toward DF has a significant and positive influence on intention to purchase DF in both cohorts (Gen Y: β = 0.478, p = 0.002; Gen Z: β = 0.457, p = 0.004). Thus, H18 is supported.

5) Mediating effects (H6, H8 and H13)

Mediation tests confirm that Perceived Usefulness (H6a: β~Y~=0.357, β~Z~=0.175) and Subjective Norms (H8: β~Y~=0.153, β~Z~=0.195) are significant mediators for both generations. The significant mediation of perceived usefulness (H6a) further indicates that a pro-sustainability mindset actively enhances the perception of DF as a functionally useful tool.

Enjoyment mediates only for Gen Z (H13a: β=0.161). Price sensitivity (H6b) and sense of exclusivity (H13b: β=0.178, p=0.085) show weak or non-significant mediation.

Findings demonstrate that sustainability attitude feed into purchase intentions primarily through rational paths (perceived usefulness) and social influence (subjective norms) for both generations, whereas the emotional and economic pathways (enjoyment, exclusivity, and price sensitivity) play a more limited or generation-specific role.

6) Moderation by consumer innovativeness (H16)

Consumer innovativeness significantly moderates the utilitarian (β~Y~=0.565, β~Z~=0.077), social (β~Y~=0.439, β~Z~=0.236), and hedonic (β~Y~=0.470, β~Z~=0.029) paths to purchase intention for both generations, fully supporting H16. It shows that a consumer's innate innovativeness plays a catalyzing role in reinforcing the link between the perceived value of DF-be it utilitarian, social, or hedonic-and the ultimate purchase decision.

7) Generational Differences (H19)

Multigroup analysis confirmed significant differences for several relationships, particularly in how perceived utilitarian value influences attitude toward DF ($p < 0.05$) and how sustainability attitude influences price sensitivity ($p < 0.01$). Thus, H19 is supported, confirming the core hypothesis of this research-that Gen Y and Gen Z, though both interested in DF, are driven by different value hierarchies and thus need distinct strategic approaches.

TABLE V
MUTLIGROUP ANALYSIS AND PATH COEFFICIENTS

	Original (Gen Y)	Original (Gen Z)	Mean (Gen Y)	Mean (Gen Z)	STDEV (Gen Y)	STDEV (Gen Z)	t value (Gen Y)	t value (Gen Z)	p value (Gen Y)	p value (Gen Z)	Decision
Sust_Att_ -> Perc_Usef_	0.519	0.472	0.511	0.484	0.208	0.086	2.698***	5.482***	0.003	0.000	H17 Supported
Sust_Att_ -> Pric	0.451	0.560	0.468	0.573	0.216	0.080	2.592***	6.979***	0.006	0.000	
Sust_Att_ -> Val_Appr	0.273	0.420	0.289	0.420	0.190	0.100	2.839***	4.192***	0.005	0.000	
Sust_Att_ -> Enjoymt_	0.278	0.360	0.291	0.367	0.250	0.106	2.912***	3.383***	0.006	0.000	
Sust_Att_ -> Sens-Exclty	0.251	0.401	0.253	0.417	0.198	0.101	2.764***	3.959***	0.006	0.000	
Sust_Att_ -> Subj_Nor_	0.200	0.396	0.208	0.407	0.306	0.109	2.874***	3.626***	0.003	0.000	

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Perc_Usef_ -> Perc_Ut_Val_	0.688	0.371	0.690	0.386	0.191	0.150	3.609***	2.684***	0.000	0.004	H1 supported
Pric -> Perc_Ut_Val_	-0.250	0.092	0.219	0.097	0.229	0.167	1.092	0.550	0.275	0.582	H2 Rejected
Val_Appr -> Perc_Ut_Val_	0.311	0.269	0.311	0.268	0.190	0.108	2.639***	2.943***	0.001	0.003	H3 supported
Enjoymt_ -> Perc_Hd_Val_	0.289	0.448	0.338	0.455	0.248	0.122	2.575***	3.677***	0.004	0.000	H11 supported
Sens-Exclty -> Perc_Hd_Val_	0.321	0.196	0.301	0.198	0.248	0.118	2.924***	2.653***	0.006	0.008	H12 supported
Subj_Nor_ -> Perc_Soc_Val_	0.266	0.491	0.280	0.510	0.190	0.087	2.603***	5.668***	0.001	0.000	H7 supported
Perc_Ut_Val_ -> Att_DF_	0.606	0.058	0.534	0.028	0.331	0.173	2.831***	0.335	0.007	0.056	H5 partially supported (Gen Y)
Perc_Ut_Val_ -> Int_Purch_	0.110	0.112	0.059	0.036	0.482	0.153	4.022***	3.079***	0.000	0.007	H4 supported
Perc_Hd_Val_ -> Att_DF_	0.217	0.316	0.214	0.270	0.302	0.217	3.718***	2.453***	0.000	0.006	H14 supported
Perc_Hd_Val_ -> Int_Purch_	0.135	0.231	0.134	0.203	0.381	0.148	2.354**	2.660***	0.023	0.009	H15 supported
Perc_Soc_Val_ -> Att_DF_	0.425	0.077	0.383	0.094	0.330	0.156	4.285***	3.493***	0.000	0.000	H9 supported
Perc_Soc_Val_ -> Int_Purch_	0.226	0.433	0.278	0.400	0.564	0.156	4.401***	4.775***	0.000	0.000	H10 supported
Att_DF_ -> Int_Purch_	0.478	0.457	0.379	0.062	0.342	0.109	2.893***	2.588***	0.002	0.004	H18 Supported

Note: t > 1.64 at p value <0.1; t > 1.96 at p** value <0.05; t> 2.57 at p*** value <0.01; t> 3.29 at p**** value <0,001,*

TABLE VI
TEST OF MEDIATION EFFECTS

	Original (Gen Y)	**Original (Gen Z)**	**Mean (Gen Y)**	**Mean (Gen Z)**	**STDEV (Gen Y)**	**STDEV (Gen Z)**	**t value (Gen Y)**	**t value (Gen Z)**	**p value (Gen Y)**	**p value (Gen Z)**	**Decision**
Sust_Att_ -> Perc_Usef_ -> Perc_Ut_Val_	0.357	0.175	0.362	0.192	0.180	0.091	1.980**	1.965**	0.048	0.045	H6a supported
Sust_Att_ -> Pric -> Perc_Ut_Val_	-0.113	0.051	-0.103	0.058	0.130	0.098	0.869	0.522	0.045	0.062	H6b rejected
Sust_Att_ -> Val_Appr -> Perc_Ut_Val_	0.085	0.113	0.099	0.116	0.100	0.060	0.848	1.875*	0.097	0.061	H6c (supported for Gen Z)
Sust_Att_ -> Enjoymt_ -> Perc_Hd_Val_	0.180	0.161	0.087	0.171	0.123	0.076	0.652	2.130**	0.025	0.033	H13a supported (Gen Z)
Sust_Att_ -> Sens-Exclty -> Perc_Hd_Val_	0.181	0.178	0.068	0.086	0.101	0.059	0.798	1.677*	0.025	0.085	H13b partial support (Gen Z)
Sust_Att_ -> Subj_Nor_ -> Perc_Soc_Val_	0.153	0.195	0.059	0.213	0.098	0.082	1.644*	2.367**	0.017	0.018	H8 supported

Note: t > 1.64 at p value <0.1; t > 1.96 at p** value <0.05; t> 2.57 at p*** value <0.01; t> 3.29 at p**** value <0,001,*

TABLE VII
TEST OF MODERATION EFFECTS

	Original (Gen Y)	**Original (Gen Z)**	**Mean (Gen Y)**	**Mean (Gen Z)**	**STDEV (Gen Y)**	**STDEV (Gen Z)**	**t value (Gen Y)**	**t value (Gen Z)**	**p value (Gen Y)**	**p value (Gen Z)**	**Decision**
Cons_Innov_ x Perc_Hd_Val_ -> Int_Purch_	0.470	0.029	0.337	0.030	0.497	0.174	1.995**	2.196**	0.045	0.029	H16 supported
Cons_Innov_ x Perc_Soc_Val_ -> Int_Purch_	0.439	0.236	0.300	0.146	0.605	0.187	2.726***	2.264**	0.008	0.026	

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Cons_Innov_ x Perc_Ut_Val_ -> Int_Purch_	0.565	0.077	-0.490	0.052	0.564	0.155	2.000**	1.943*	0.017	0.042	

Note: t > 1.64 at p value <0.1; t > 1.96 at p** value <0.05; t> 2.57 at p*** value <0.01; t> 3.29 at p**** value <0,001*

IV. DISCUSSION

The study's findings reveal that DF adoption is a multi-faceted mechanism driven by consumption values, moderated by innovativeness, and segmented by generation.

First, we highlight the price paradox. The non-significant role of price sensitivity explains that for a new digital product like DF, traditional cost-value heuristics are not yet established. Thereby, perceived utility value is driven by technological benefits and symbolism, yet not price.

Second, we underline, the pragmatic vs. social divide effects. Gen Y's adoption is widely influenced by perceived utilitarian value and functionality. For Gen Z, perceived social value and perceived hedonic value (i.e., enjoyment) are paramount. These findings are in line with their identities as pragmatic digital immigrants versus values-driven digital natives.

Third, we become fully aware that the sustainability is a social currency. In fact, the sustainability attitude is a key driver that runs primarily through perceived social and hedonic values, in particular for Gen Z. Subjective norms mediate this relationship, turning eco-consciousness into a form of social capital.

Finally, we scrutinize the role of innovativeness. Findings show consumer innovativeness acts as a crucial catalyst, strengthening the link between perceived value and the decision to purchase DF for all consumers.

V. CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The research presents several theoretical and managerial contributions. From theoretical perspective, additional insights particularly to consumption values theory, DOI and enriching literature related to generational cohorts, in a new area such DF have been provided. The study demonstrates the dominant driving role of social values in DF adoption as sustainable alternative. The comparative analysis reveals the differences in consumption values across the two generations. Finally, the sustainable attitude emerges as a key conditional value that able to trigger other consumption values, especially in the DF context.

From managerial standpoint, to successfully market DF, tailored strategies should be cared out. As we shown significant difference between generations (i.e., Gen Y and Gen Z), a segmentation should be drawn. Gen Y are driven by functionality, quality and exclusivity. They are sensitive to cost-effectiveness and premium nature of DF. Strategy appealing this generation should highlight a clear utility as a sustainable alternative and show alignment with efficiency and modern lifestyle. Conversely, the Gen Z are merely concerned with community, social visibility and immersive experiences. Strategy destinated to this generation should underline the shared social value of such sustainable alternative using user-generated content and influencers and platforms focused on inclusivity, collectivity and creativity.

We suggest a phygital strategy to better introduce DF with physical fashion. It goes through offering DF items as loyalty rewards or allowing consumers from Gen Y to try items digitally before purchasing the physical version counterpart at a discount. Consumers from Gen Z are invited to select DF items from a platforms destinated for digital collections rewarding the social sharing.

Earlier adopters and trendsetters are primary targeted with campaign of messages of exclusivity and innovation. Mainstreams follow practical utility and affordability.

VI. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is limited by focusing only on two generations (Gen Y and Gen Z), its single-culture context and its cross-sectorial design. Further research may include other generations, conduct cross-cultural studies to scrutinize cultural nuances in sustainability perception. Longitudinal methods will also constitute a relevant insight to track how attitudes evolve as the DF market matures. Finally, larger, more balanced samples could enhance generalizability.

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