

## **DETERMINANTS OF GREEN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ACROSS GENERATIONS: EVIDENCE FROM GENERATIONS X, Y AND Z**

**BRINDUSA MARIANA BEJAN**

*LECTURER, PHD., BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA, FACULTY OF  
ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, MARKETING DEPARTMENT*

*e-mail: [brindusa.bejan@econ.ubbcluj.ro](mailto:brindusa.bejan@econ.ubbcluj.ro)*

**CIPRIAN MARCEL POP**

*PROFESSOR, BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA, FACULTY OF ECONOMICS  
AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, MARKETING DEPARTMENT*

*e-mail: [marcel.pop@econ.ubbcluj.ro](mailto:marcel.pop@econ.ubbcluj.ro)*

**COSMIN VOICU NISTOR**

*LECTURER, PHD., BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA, FACULTY OF  
ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, MARKETING DEPARTMENT*

*e-mail: [voicu.nistor@econ.ubbcluj.ro](mailto:voicu.nistor@econ.ubbcluj.ro)*

### **Abstract**

Consumer behaviour is continuously evolving, making it increasingly difficult to predict the actions undertaken by consumers. This study examines green consumer behaviour through the lens of Generational Theory. Specifically, it aims to identify the main determinants that contribute to the development of green behaviour, focusing on three generational cohorts: Generation X, Generation Y (Millennials), and Generation Z. Based on the research conducted, five key factors were identified as having a significant influence on green behaviour: environmental attitudes, green self-identity, social norms and peer influence, perceived behavioural control, and environmental knowledge. From a methodological perspective, the study employed two quantitative surveys, one conducted among members of Generation X and the other among members of Generation Z, as well as a documentary research approach designed to gather information regarding the behaviour of Generation Y. The findings indicate that, although members of Generation X are not indifferent to climate change and environmental issues, their level of concern for green behaviour is comparatively lower. In contrast, Generation Z respondents recorded the highest scores across the analyzed indicators, demonstrating a greater willingness to pay a premium for environmentally friendly products. From a behavioural perspective, Millennials appear to adopt a transitional pattern of behaviour, positioning themselves along a continuum between the two generations situated at the opposite ends of the spectrum. Their attitudes and behaviours reflect characteristics associated with both Generation X and Generation Z, suggesting an intermediate level of environmental commitment and engagement in green consumption practices.

**Keywords:** Green behaviour, Generational Theory, environmental attitude, self-green identity, social norms, environmental knowledge

**Clasificare JEL:** M40, M41, Q01

### **1. Introduction and context of the study**

Environmental degradation, climate change, resource scarcity, and increasing societal concern regarding sustainability have significantly transformed contemporary consumption patterns. In recent decades, consumers have become increasingly aware of the environmental consequences of their purchasing decisions, leading to a growing interest in sustainable consumption and green behaviour. As a result, understanding the determinants of environmentally responsible behaviour has become a major research priority within the fields of marketing, consumer behaviour, sustainability, and environmental management.

Green consumer behaviour encompasses a broad range of actions aimed at minimizing negative environmental impacts, including recycling, reducing waste, purchasing environmentally

friendly products, conserving resources, and supporting organizations that adopt sustainable practices [14] [8].

The increasing relevance of generational analysis is particularly evident in the context of sustainable consumption. Existing studies suggest that younger generations tend to demonstrate stronger environmental concern and greater support for sustainability initiatives than older cohorts [5] [11] [9]. Generation Z, in particular, has been described as one of the most environmentally conscious generations, while Millennials often occupy an intermediate position between older and younger consumers [4] [19]. Conversely, Generation X tends to display a more pragmatic approach to sustainability, often balancing environmental concerns against economic and practical considerations [3].

Despite the growing body of literature addressing green consumer behaviour, several important research gaps remain. First, most existing studies focus on a single generation, particularly Generation Z, without providing a comprehensive comparison across multiple generational cohorts. Second, while numerous studies have examined individual determinants of green behaviour, relatively few investigations have analysed how these determinants vary across generations within a unified conceptual framework. Third, evidence from Central and Eastern European countries, and particularly from Romania, remains limited, despite the increasing importance of sustainability issues in the region. Finally, there is a lack of research integrating Generational Theory with the Theory of Planned Behaviour [2] in order to explain how environmental attitudes, social norms, perceived behavioural control, green self-identity, and environmental knowledge contribute differently to green behaviour among Generations X, Y, and Z.

To address these gaps, the present study adopts a comparative generational perspective and investigates the determinants of green consumer behaviour among Generation X, Generation Y (Millennials), and Generation Z. Drawing upon Generational Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the research examines five key determinants identified in the literature: environmental attitudes, green self-identity, social norms and peer influence, perceived behavioural control, and environmental knowledge.

Accordingly, the study seeks to answer the following research questions: *„Which factors exert the greatest influence on green consumer behaviour across different generations?”*, and *„How do environmental attitudes, green self-identity, social norms and peer influence, perceived behavioural control, and environmental knowledge differ among Generations X, Y, and Z?”*.

The novelty of this study resides in its integration of Generational Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour within a comparative framework that simultaneously examines three generations. Unlike previous studies that focus on a single cohort, this research provides a comprehensive analysis of the determinants of green behaviour across Generations X, Y, and Z. Furthermore, it combines primary empirical evidence from Generation X and Generation Z with documentary evidence concerning Generation Y, thereby offering a broader understanding of intergenerational differences in sustainable consumption. By focusing on the Romanian context, the study also contributes to the limited body of research addressing green consumer behaviour in Eastern European countries.

The findings provide valuable theoretical contributions to the literature on sustainability and consumer behaviour, while also offering practical implications for policymakers, marketers, and organizations seeking to design sustainability initiatives and green marketing strategies tailored to the specific characteristics of different generational cohorts.

## 2. Indicators of green behaviour

In recent decades, increasing environmental degradation, climate change, and resource depletion have intensified scholarly interest in sustainable consumption and green behaviour [10]. As societies become more environmentally conscious, understanding the determinants of green behaviour has become an important research direction in sustainability, consumer studies, and environmental management literature. Green behaviour is widely associated with actions undertaken by individuals to minimize negative environmental impacts and support sustainable development.

According to [14], green behaviour refers to consumer actions that contribute to environmental sustainability through environmentally responsible purchasing, consumption, and disposal practices. Similarly, [8] define green consumer behaviour as the tendency of individuals to adopt environmentally friendly attitudes and behaviours in their daily consumption decisions. The literature [11] [22] frequently uses the concepts of “green behaviour” and “pro-environmental behaviour” interchangeably, emphasizing activities such as recycling, purchasing eco-friendly products, reducing waste, conserving energy, and supporting sustainable companies.

Green behaviour has become increasingly important in the context of sustainable development because consumer choices directly influence production systems, environmental policies, and organizational sustainability strategies [14]. [20] argues that encouraging green behaviour is essential for addressing global environmental challenges, as individual behavioural change can significantly contribute to reducing environmental pressures. Consequently, researchers have sought to identify the factors that stimulate or hinder environmentally responsible behaviour.

One of the most significant factors influencing green behaviour is environmental attitude. Environmental attitude refers to the degree to which individuals hold positive or negative evaluations regarding environmental protection and sustainability. Several studies demonstrate that individuals with strong pro-environmental attitudes are more likely to engage in sustainable consumption practices. [18], applying the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) [2], found that environmental attitudes significantly influence Generation Y consumers’ intentions to purchase green products. Similarly, [12] highlighted that green attitudes positively affect consumers’ green behavioural intentions, particularly when supported by green marketing campaigns and environmentally friendly packaging. These findings suggest that attitudes represent a central predictor of sustainable consumer behaviour.

Drawing upon Generational Theory [25], which explains the behavioural differences among distinct generational cohorts, [5] found that younger generations within the European Union display stronger pro-environmental attitudes compared to older generations, largely due to greater awareness of climate change and sustainability issues. Likewise, [11] observed that younger individuals increasingly demonstrate environmentally conscious orientations, indicating the emergence of a more sustainability-oriented generation.

Generation Z, in particular, has been identified as one of the most environmentally engaged consumer groups. [9] demonstrated that Generation Z consumers are significantly influenced by environmental concern, sustainability values, and ethical consumption principles. Their study highlighted that environmental attitudes strongly shape the sustainable behaviour of Generation Z consumers, influencing purchasing decisions, consumption habits, and support for environmentally responsible brands. Similarly, other studies [13] emphasized that Generation Z consumers exhibit high levels of ecological sensitivity and are more willing to adopt sustainable practices compared to previous generations.

Another important determinant identified in the literature is social influence and social norms. Social norms refer to the expectations, values, and behaviours promoted by social groups, including family, peers, organizations, and society as a whole. [26], in their comprehensive review of social roles in green consumer behaviour, demonstrated that social identity, peer influence, and

societal expectations significantly shape sustainable consumer choices. Consumers are more likely to adopt green behaviour when sustainability becomes socially desirable and positively valued within their communities. [20] also emphasized that behavioural change can be stimulated through social influence mechanisms, particularly when green practices become normalized in society.

Another important indicator of green behaviour identified in the literature is green self-identity. Green self-identity refers to the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as environmentally responsible and sustainable consumers. Individuals who integrate environmental responsibility into their personal identity are more likely to engage consistently in green behaviours. [6] argue that self-perception plays a crucial role in shaping sustainable purchase behaviour, especially among younger consumers who increasingly associate sustainability with personal values and lifestyle choices. Generation Z consumers, in particular, tend to use environmental commitment as part of their social identity, which reinforces their engagement in sustainable behaviours [9].

Generational differences in green self-identity are particularly visible when comparing younger and older cohorts. For example, Generation Z demonstrates stronger ecological self-identification than Generation X, largely because younger generations have grown up in a social context characterized by climate debates, environmental activism, and sustainability-oriented communication. In contrast, older generations tend to display more moderate forms of environmental commitment, often influenced by practical considerations rather than identity-related motivations [19].

Perceived behavioural control is another important factor influencing green behaviour. Derived from the Theory of Planned Behaviour, perceived behavioural control refers to individuals' perceptions regarding their ability to perform environmentally responsible actions. Consumers are more likely to engage in green behaviour when they perceive sustainable alternatives as accessible, affordable, and practical. [6] demonstrated that perceived behavioural control significantly influences sustainable purchase intentions across all generations, although younger consumers generally report greater confidence in adopting sustainable consumption practices.

Generational differences are also evident regarding perceived barriers to green behaviour. [5] found that older generations are more likely to perceive economic and practical obstacles associated with sustainable consumption, such as higher prices and limited accessibility of green products. In contrast, younger generations, particularly Generation Z, tend to prioritize sustainability despite financial constraints, demonstrating stronger willingness to support environmentally friendly alternatives.

Environmental knowledge represents another fundamental indicator associated with green behaviour. Environmental knowledge refers to consumers' understanding of environmental issues, sustainability challenges, and the consequences of consumption choices. The literature consistently shows that higher levels of environmental knowledge contribute to stronger pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours. The studies [11] highlighted that younger generations possess greater exposure to environmental education and sustainability communication, which positively influences their ecological orientation.

Similarly, [19] demonstrated that environmental awareness differs significantly among generations, with Generation Z and Millennials displaying higher levels of sustainability knowledge than Generation X. This increased awareness contributes to stronger ecological commitment and more proactive green behaviours among younger consumers. However, some authors [17] identified the persistence of a “green gap,” indicating that although younger generations often express strong environmental attitudes, these attitudes do not always translate into consistent sustainable behaviours. Their study suggests that despite increased environmental knowledge and concern, behavioural inconsistencies remain present across generations.

The literature also underlines the transitional role of Millennials (Generation Y) regarding green behaviour. [4] observed that Millennials display behavioural characteristics situated between Generation X and Generation Z. While Millennials generally demonstrate stronger environmental concern than older generations, they are less consistently engaged in sustainable practices than Generation Z consumers. This transitional positioning reflects both increased environmental awareness and the persistence of economic and practical consumption considerations.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that green behaviour is a multidimensional construct influenced by psychological, social, educational, organizational, and marketing-related factors. Environmental attitudes, social norms, environmental knowledge, green marketing communication, perceived behavioural control, and organizational sustainability practices emerge as some of the most significant determinants.

### 3. Generational Theory

Generational Theory has become an important theoretical framework for understanding differences in consumer behaviour, social values, and decision-making processes across age cohorts. According to the Strauss-Howe Generational Theory, individuals belonging to the same generational cohort develop similar attitudes, beliefs, behavioural patterns, and value systems due to common exposure to significant societal events [25].

[16] explain that generations should not be understood merely as demographic age groups, but as socially constructed cohorts influenced by collective experiences that shape behavioural orientations over time. The theory suggests that each generation develops distinctive worldviews and behavioural tendencies that influence consumption patterns, social engagement, and responses to societal challenges, including sustainability and environmental responsibility.

Generation X (individuals born between approximately 1965 and 1980) was shaped by economic uncertainty, political transitions, and the emergence of globalization [16]. Generation X experienced the transition from traditional industrial societies to increasingly digital and globalized economies, which contributed to the development of pragmatic and independent behavioural characteristics.

From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Generation X consumers may display comparatively weaker behavioural intentions regarding green consumption due to lower levels of environmental attitudes and subjective norms related to sustainability. According to TPB, behavioural intentions are shaped by attitudes, perceived social expectations, and perceived behavioural control. In the case of Generation X, environmental behaviour may depend more heavily on convenience and economic rationality than on social or identity-based motivations.

Moreover, Generation X consumers were not exposed during their formative years to the same intensity of climate discourse, environmental activism, and sustainability communication experienced by younger generations. As a result, environmental awareness and ecological engagement tend to be comparatively lower among this cohort [3].

Generation Y - Millennials, includes individuals born approximately between 1981 and 1996 [25]. This generation occupies a transitional position between Generation X and Generation Z, combining characteristics associated with both traditional and modern consumption patterns.

According to Strauss-Howe Generational Theory, Millennials grew up during rapid technological development, globalization, and increased access to information [16]. They witnessed the expansion of digital communication and social media, as well as the growing prominence of sustainability debates and corporate social responsibility initiatives. Consequently, Millennials tend to demonstrate higher environmental awareness and stronger ethical concerns compared to Generation X.

From the TPB perspective, Millennials generally exhibit more favourable environmental attitudes and stronger subjective norms regarding sustainable behaviour. Social influence, peer approval, and collective values significantly shape their behavioural intentions. At the same time,

perceived behavioural control remains an important factor, as Millennials may support sustainability ideologically but still encounter practical barriers such as product affordability or accessibility.

Millennials are frequently portrayed as highly socially engaged and ethically oriented consumers, although the extent to which these values translate into consistent behavioural practices remains debated. This observation aligns with the concept of the “attitude–behaviour gap,” often identified in sustainability research, where positive environmental attitudes do not always lead to concrete green behaviours [1].

Generation Z (individuals born after 1997) represents the first generation fully immersed in digital technologies and online communication environments. According to Strauss–Howe Generational Theory, Generation Z has been shaped by globalization, climate change awareness, digital connectivity, and social activism [16].

Compared to previous generations, Generation Z demonstrates significantly stronger ecological awareness and sustainability-oriented values. Environmental responsibility is often integrated into their personal identity, social interactions, and consumption choices. This generation has grown up during a period characterized by intense public discussion regarding climate change, environmental crises, and sustainable development goals.

[7], applying the Theory of Planned Behaviour to Generation Z ethical consumption, found that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control significantly influence ethical and green purchasing intentions among young consumers. Their findings suggest that Generation Z consumers are highly responsive to social influence and peer expectations regarding sustainability. Social media platforms, online communities, and digital activism play a major role in shaping environmentally responsible attitudes and behaviours within this generation.

Furthermore, Generation Z consumers tend to exhibit strong green self-identity, perceiving sustainable consumption as an extension of their personal values and social image. In TPB terms, subjective norms and attitudes appear particularly influential for this generation, as sustainability-related behaviours are often socially rewarded and culturally normalized within peer networks.

#### **4. Methodology**

This study adopts a documentary, quantitative, and comparative research design aimed at analysing green consumer behaviour across different generational cohorts, specifically Generation X, Generation Y (Millennials), and Generation Z. The research is grounded in Generational Theory, which posits that generations develop distinct values, attitudes, and behavioural patterns shaped by shared historical, economic, social, and cultural experiences [16]. The rationale for considering these three generations lies in the premise that all individuals aspire to live in a clean and healthy environment [15], which contributes to the fulfilment of aesthetic and quality-of-life needs.

The present study seeks to identify the main factors influencing green behaviour across generations, with particular emphasis on environmental attitudes, green self-identity, social norms and peer influence, perceived behavioural control, and environmental knowledge. The methodological approach also incorporates elements of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which has been widely applied in studies examining ethical and environmentally responsible consumption [7].

To analyse the behaviour of Generation Z, a quantitative survey was conducted among university students enrolled in one of the largest academic centres in Romania, namely Cluj-Napoca. The study was carried out on a sample of 500 respondents. The primary research instrument was a structured questionnaire administered online. The questionnaire was developed based on the TPB framework and included items related to recycling motivations, recycling frequency, and socio-demographic characteristics used to establish respondents’ profiles. Data collection took place between March and June 2025.

To investigate the behaviour of Generation X, the same questionnaire employed for Generation Z was used. However, given the specific characteristics of this generational cohort, as identified in the theoretical literature underpinning this research, it was deemed appropriate to extend the study to a national level. Consequently, the survey targeting Generation X was conducted throughout Romania, covering all county capital cities. Data collection was carried out between July and October 2025 with the support of trained field operators responsible for questionnaire administration. The decision to employ interviewers was motivated both by the size of the sample (450 respondents) and by the geographical scope of the study. In this case, the questionnaires were administered through face-to-face interviews.

Starting from the assumption that Generation Y occupies an intermediate position between Generation X and Generation Z, having inherited behavioural characteristics from both preceding and succeeding cohorts, a documentary research approach was adopted for this generation. Accordingly, an extensive review of the international academic literature was conducted using major scientific databases to which access was available, including Web of Science, Elsevier, EBSCO, and Springer. The selected sources focused on analysing the behaviour of Generation Y and were chosen on the basis that their methodological approaches were comparable to those employed in the empirical investigation of Generations X and Z. This approach ensured methodological consistency and facilitated meaningful comparisons across the three generational cohorts.

## 5. Results

To facilitate meaningful comparisons between the two generational cohorts under investigation (Generation X and Generation Z), the samples were structured to maintain a relatively balanced and comparable gender distribution among respondents (Figure 1).

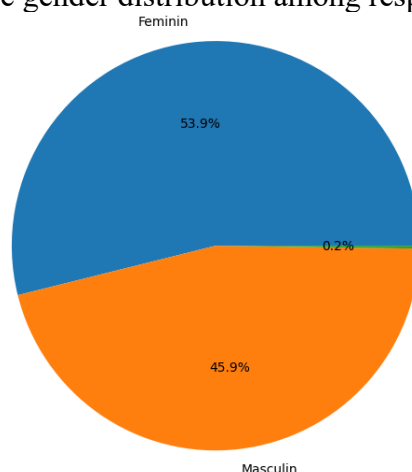


Figure 1: **Gender Distribution of Respondents**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on survey data

With regard to educational attainment, the majority of respondents belonging to Generation X (approximately 65%) had completed higher education studies, whereas among Generation Z, approximately 55% were currently enrolled in undergraduate degree programs.

From a behavioural perspective, approximately 25% of Generation Z respondents actively discuss or post content related to green behaviour on social media or monitor companies' implementation of sustainability principles. In contrast, the corresponding proportion is considerably lower among Generation X respondents (approximately 15%), while Generation Y accounts for approximately 22%.

These findings suggest that the observed differences can largely be attributed to the higher level of engagement among younger individuals, as well as their greater presence on social media

platforms, which further confirms their preference for these communication channels. This trend is not limited to Romania but has also been identified in other countries. For instance, studies conducted in Australia have demonstrated that Millennials are the generation most likely to exhibit environmental consciousness when purchasing new products [23].

A similar pattern can be observed in the United States. Although older generations tend to demonstrate greater awareness of the risks associated with global warming and environmental pollution, Generation Z and Millennials are more actively involved in behaviours that contribute to the conservation and protection of natural resources [21].

The concept of green self-identity was also reflected in respondents' knowledge and perceptions regarding recycling. Approximately 60% of Generation X respondents believed that their views on certain issues, particularly recycling, were better informed than those of others and considered it unusual that people around them did not share the same perspective. By comparison, Generation Y members appeared more receptive to listening to the opinions of others, whereas Generation Z demonstrated a stronger commitment to actively seeking information and expanding their knowledge.

Environmental concern was further examined through the importance attributed to recycling and the motivations underlying this behaviour. While younger respondents reported engaging in recycling primarily out of a desire to protect the environment, Generation X participants showed a greater interest in the financial incentives offered by retailers as a reward for recycling activities (Figure 2). This finding suggests that environmental motivations tend to be more prominent among younger generations, whereas economic considerations play a relatively more significant role in shaping the recycling behaviour of older consumers.

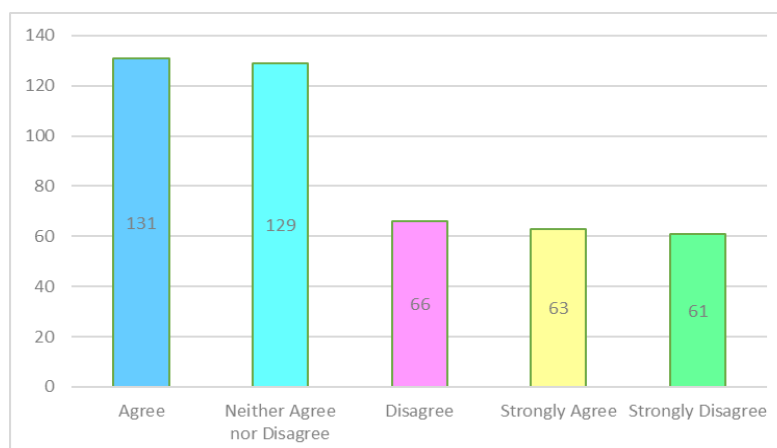


Figure 2: „I recycle for economic reasons, such as receiving vouchers, rewards” – results for Generation X

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on survey data

Unlike the other two cohorts, Generation Y tends to engage in recycling primarily out of a desire to provide a cleaner environment for future generations and to avoid compromising their children's opportunities to live in a healthy and sustainable environment.

The analysis of this question revealed particularly clearly the influence of reference groups and environmental knowledge on recycling behaviour. While younger individuals recycle because those around them engage in similar practices and because they demonstrate genuine concern for environmental protection, members of Generation X often adopt this behaviour by following social models established within their peer groups. At the same time, they may also be motivated by a desire to avoid negative social judgment associated with not participating in recycling activities. Furthermore, recycling can serve as a socialization mechanism, as individuals frequently engage in



such activities collectively with neighbours or members of their local community.

Environmental concern is also reflected in the purchasing behaviour of Generation Z and Generation Y, both of which demonstrate a willingness to pay a premium for environmentally friendly products. For example, within the European Union, approximately one-third of Generation Z consumers indicate a willingness to pay up to 10% more for products manufactured according to sustainable principles [24]. In contrast, although members of Generation X generally support sustainable practices, they express less willingness to translate these values into higher expenditures within their shopping baskets.

Nevertheless, at the declarative level, members of all three generations exhibit a favourable orientation toward green behaviour, expressing positive attitudes toward sustainability measures implemented by retailers and other organizations. Similarly, a substantial proportion of Generation X respondents consider environmental issues to be a major concern, indicating a generally positive attitude toward environmental protection and sustainability initiatives (Figure 3).

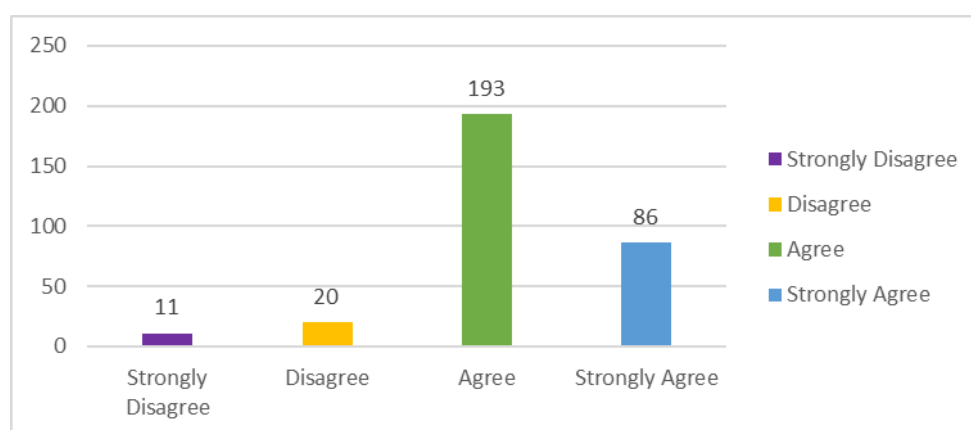


Figure 3: *Environmental issues are a major concern for me – result for Generation X*

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on survey data

The statistical results obtained are consistent with the theoretical foundations of the study and demonstrate that Generation Z consumers and Millennials exhibit a higher level of engagement with environmental issues and place greater emphasis on the implementation of sustainability principles. These cohorts appear to be more receptive to companies that share and actively promote similar environmental values and commitments.

In contrast, although members of Generation X are aware of the consequences associated with environmental degradation and climate-related challenges, their response to the barriers and requirements associated with sustainable behaviour is not always proactive. While they generally acknowledge the importance of environmental protection, this awareness does not consistently translate into active engagement in environmentally responsible practices.

## 5. Conclusions

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of literature on green consumer behaviour by demonstrating that environmental attitudes, green self-identity, social norms and peer influence, perceived behavioural control, and environmental knowledge represent key determinants of environmentally responsible behaviour across generations. Drawing upon both Generational Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the results confirm that generational membership significantly influences the manner in which consumers perceive, interpret, and adopt sustainable practices.

The empirical evidence reveals notable differences among Generations X, Y, and Z regarding their engagement with environmental issues and their propensity to adopt green behaviours.

Generation Z emerges as the cohort displaying the highest level of environmental commitment, characterized by stronger environmental attitudes, greater environmental knowledge, a more pronounced green self-identity, and a higher willingness to pay a premium for environmentally friendly products. Moreover, members of Generation Z appear more receptive to sustainability initiatives promoted by organizations and more likely to actively engage in discussions related to environmental protection through digital communication channels.

Generation X, by contrast, demonstrates a more pragmatic approach to sustainability. Although respondents belonging to this cohort acknowledge the seriousness of environmental issues and recognize the importance of environmental protection, their behavioural engagement is less pronounced. Their sustainable actions appear to be influenced more strongly by practical and economic considerations, including financial incentives associated with recycling activities and the perceived costs of green consumption.

The findings also support the characterization of Generation Y (Millennials) as a transitional cohort situated between the two generations positioned at opposite ends of the sustainability spectrum. Millennials exhibit relatively strong environmental concern and demonstrate a willingness to support sustainable consumption; however, their behaviour reflects a balance between environmental values and practical considerations. This intermediate position confirms previous theoretical assumptions suggesting that Generation Y has inherited behavioural characteristics from both older and younger cohorts.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of social influence and environmental knowledge in shaping green behaviour. Younger generations appear particularly influenced by peer networks, social media environments, and sustainability-related information, whereas older generations rely more heavily on personal experiences and established consumption habits. These findings reinforce the argument that green consumer behaviour should be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by both individual and contextual factors.

Overall, the results validate the explanatory power of both Generational Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour in understanding sustainable consumption patterns. The integration of these theoretical perspectives provides a comprehensive framework for explaining why environmental attitudes and sustainability-related behaviours vary across generational cohorts.

The findings of this study generate several important managerial implications for companies, policymakers, and organizations seeking to promote sustainable consumption and environmentally responsible behaviour.

First, the results suggest that sustainability communication strategies should be tailored to the specific characteristics of each generational cohort. Given the high environmental engagement displayed by Generation Z, organizations should emphasize authenticity, transparency, and measurable sustainability outcomes in their communication efforts. This generation responds particularly well to digital communication channels, social media campaigns, influencer marketing, and interactive sustainability initiatives that allow consumers to actively participate in environmental actions.

Second, companies targeting Millennials should focus on communicating both the environmental and social benefits of sustainable products. Since this generation demonstrates a strong concern for future generations and societal well-being, marketing messages that emphasize long-term environmental impact, social responsibility, and ethical business practices may be particularly effective.

Third, organizations addressing Generation X consumers should recognize the importance of economic and practical considerations. For this cohort, sustainability initiatives may achieve greater effectiveness when combined with tangible benefits such as financial incentives, loyalty programs, discounts, recycling rewards, or cost-saving opportunities associated with environmentally friendly products and services.

Fourth, the findings highlight the strategic role of environmental education and awareness-

building initiatives. Policymakers and public institutions should continue investing in educational programs designed to increase environmental knowledge, particularly among older generations where awareness does not always translate into active behavioural engagement.

Finally, the study demonstrates the importance of leveraging social norms and peer influence as mechanisms for encouraging sustainable behaviour. Organizations can foster green consumption by creating communities of environmentally conscious consumers, promoting user-generated sustainability content, and encouraging public participation in environmental initiatives.

In conclusion, while the present study confirms the existence of significant generational differences in green consumer behaviour, it also highlights the growing importance of sustainability across all age groups. Understanding these differences remains essential for developing effective environmental policies, sustainability programs, and marketing strategies capable of fostering environmentally responsible consumption in an increasingly sustainability-oriented society.

## 6. Bibliography

- [1] **Agati, H.** (2012). The Millennial Generation: Howe and Strauss disputed. *The College of William and Mary*. doi:10.25774/w4-gjnp-xz92
- [2] **Ajzen, I.** (1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179-211.
- [3] **Bejan, B., Pop, C., & Sirbu, G.** (2025). Location Matters: How Recycling Site Features Influence Generation X's Recycling Practices. *Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu Jiu, Economy Series*(6/2025), 666-675.
- [4] **Bernardes, J., Nogueira, M., & Marques, A.** (2022). From Y to Z: A cross-generational study of green purchasing behaviour. *Advances in Science and Technology*, 113, 175-183.
- [5] **Cantillo, J., Astorino, L., & Tsana, A.** (2025). Determinants of pro-environmental attitude and behaviour among European Union (EU) residents: Differences between older and younger generations. *Quality & Quantity*, 59(3), 2623-2659.
- [6] **Casalegno, C., Candelo, E., & Santoro, G.** (2022). Exploring the antecedents of green and sustainable purchase behaviour: A comparison among different generations. *Psychology & Marketing*, 39(5), 1007-1021.
- [7] **Djafarova, E., & Foots, S.** (2022). Exploring ethical consumption of Generation Z: Theory of Planned Behaviour. *Young Consumers*, 23(3), 413-431.
- [8] **Do Paço, A., Alves, H., Shiel, C., & Filho, W.** (2013). Development of a green consumer behaviour model. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 37(4), 414-421.
- [9] **Dragolea, L., Butnaru, G., Kot, S., Zamfir, C., Nuță, A., Nuță, F., . . . Ștefănică, M.** (2023). Determining factors in shaping the sustainable behavior of the generation Z consumer. *Frontiers in Environmental Science*, 11, 1096183.
- [10] **Georgescu, L. P., Barbuta-Misu, N., Fortea, C., & Antohi, V.-M.** (2025). Promoting the circular economy for Sustainable Development and Social Cohesion in the European Union. *Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu Jiu, Economy Series*(2/2025), 137-155.
- [11] **Grønhoj, A., & Hubert, M.** (2022). Are we growing a green generation? Exploring young people's pro-environmental orientation over time. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 38(9-10), 844-865.
- [12] **Jayasinghe, J.** (2022). The influence of green packaging, green campaigns and green attitude on green behavioural intentions of consumers: Evidence from Sri Lanka. *Colombo Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Research*, 6(2), 1-32.
- [13] **Juma-Michilena, I., Ruiz-Molina, M., Gil-Saura, I., & Belda-Miquel, S.** (2024). Pro-environmental behaviours of generation Z: A cross-cultural approach. *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing*, 21(3), 1-29.

- [14] **Khan, M., Saengon, P., Alganad, A., Chongcharoen, D., & Farrukh, M.** (2020). Consumer Green Behaviour: An approach towards environmental sustainability. *Sustainable Development*, 28(5), 1168-1180.
- [15] **Mihălceanu (Stan), E.** (2025). The Transformation of Rural Communities Through Urban to Rural Relocation. Marketing Strategies in Sustainable Development. *Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu Jiu, Economy Series*(4/2025), 335-341.
- [16] **Newcombe, S., & van Eck Duymaer van Twist, A.** (2021). Strauss-Howe Generational Theory. *Critical Dictionary of Apocalyptic and Millenarian Movements*. doi:10.17863/CAM.121455
- [17] **Nilsson Vestola, J., & Kirsten, M.** (2025). A tale of two generations, their environmental attitudes, and combined signs of the green gap. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 1-17.
- [18] **Ogiemwonyi, O.** (2022). Factors influencing generation Y green behaviour on green products in Nigeria: An application of theory of planned behaviour. *Environmental and Sustainability Indicators*, 13, 100164.
- [19] **Pinho, M., & Gomes, S.** (2024). Environmental sustainability from a generational lens—A study comparing generation X, Y, and Z ecological commitment. *Business and Society Review*, 129(3), 349-372.
- [20] **Thøgersen, J.** (2013). Induving green behaviour. *Nature Climate Change*, 3(2), 100-101.
- [21] **Tyson, A., Kennedy, B., & Funk, C.** (2021, 05 26). *Gen Z, Millennials Stand Out for Climate Change Activism, Social Media Engagement With Issue*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center: <https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2021/05/26/gen-z-millennials-stand-out-for-climate-change-activism-social-media-engagement-with-issue/>
- [22] **Utomo, M., Suharti, L., Sasongko, G., & Sugiarto, A.** (2023). Developing green behaviour in Indonesia: Why does Adiwiyata school matter. *Journal of Sustainability Science and Management*, 18(5), 33-51.
- [23] **Watty, F.** (2025, 11 25). *Generation most likely to be environmentally conscious consumers Australia 2022*. Retrieved from Statista: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1330835/australia-environmental-consciousness-by-generation-buying-disposing-items/>
- [24] **Watty, F.** (2025, 11 25). *How much Gen Z are willing to pay for sustainable products in Europe 2024*. Retrieved from Statista: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1613394/gen-z-willing-to-pay-more-for-sustainable-products-in-europe/>
- [25] **Williams, K., & Page, R.** (2011). Marketing to the Generations. *Journal of Behavioral Studies in Business*, 3(3), 1-17.
- [26] **Xiao, J., Yang, Z., Li, Z., & Chen, Z.** (2023). A review of social roles in green consumer behaviour. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 47(6), 2033-2070.