Going green and staying loyal: how different are generation Z travellers towards green brand loyalty of hotels

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Abstract
Purpose – This study aims to examine the influence of collectivism, brand prestige and brand identification on green brand loyalty among Generation Z and older generation travellers in India. Loyal consumers are essential for the long-term success of hotels.

Design/methodology/approach – A single cross-sectional design is used in the study, with a total of 277 Generation Z and 299 Older generation travellers surveyed directly at three different tourist destinations in India. The PLS-SEM approach is used to analyse the data.

Findings – The study’s findings showed that among Generation Z travellers, factors such as collectivism, brand identification and brand prestige play a significant role in shaping green brand loyalty towards hotels. Furthermore, we noted that collectivism directly influences brand prestige and identification. Conversely, for the older generation, the study did not substantiate the impacts of collectivism on green brand loyalty nor the relationship between brand identification and green brand loyalty.

Originality/value – This study uniquely contributes to the literature by revealing generational differences in the influence of collectivism and brand factors on green brand loyalty within the Indian hotel industry.

Keywords Green brand loyalty, Collectivism, Brand prestige, Brand identification

Paper type Research paper

走向绿色并保持忠诚：Z世代旅行者对酒店绿色品牌忠诚度有何不同。

摘要
目的：本研究探讨了集体主义、品牌声望和品牌认同对印度Z世代和老一代旅行者绿色品牌忠诚度的影响。忠实的消费者对于酒店的长期成功至关重要。

设计方法/途径：该研究采用单一横断面设计，直接在印度三个不同的旅游目的地对总共277名Z世代和299名老一代旅行者进行了调查。PLS-SEM方法用于分析数据。

研究结果：研究结果表明，在Z世代旅行者中，集体主义、品牌认同和品牌声望等因素在塑造酒店绿色品牌忠诚度方面发挥着重要作用。此外，我们注意到集体主义直接影响品牌声望和认同。相反，对于老一代人来说，该研究没有证实集体主义对绿色品牌忠诚度的影响，也没有证实品牌认同与绿色品牌忠诚度之间的关系。

原创性/价值：这项研究揭示了集体主义和品牌因素对印度酒店业绿色品牌忠诚度影响的代际差异，对文献做出了独特的贡献。

关键词：绿色品牌忠诚度、集体主义、品牌声望、品牌识别

文章类型研究型论文

Ser ecológico y mantenerse leal: qué tan diferentes son los viajeros de la generación Z respecto de la lealtad a las marcas ecológicas de los hoteles

Resumen
Propósito: Este estudio examina la influencia del colectivismo, el prestigio de la marca y la identificación de la marca en la lealtad a la marca ecológica entre la Generación Z y los viajeros de la generación anterior en la India. Los consumidores leales son esenciales para el éxito a largo plazo de los hoteles.

Conflict of interest: There is no conflict of interest between authors.
Introduction

The hospitality and tourism businesses are changing quickly, and there is more competition in the market than ever before. This has led hotel companies to determine what makes customers act as they do towards their brands (Garavan et al., 2022). The concept of “Green Brand Loyalty”, which encapsulates the inclination of customers to choose environmentally friendly brands over less sustainable alternatives repeatedly, has emerged as an essential theme in the evolving landscape of these industries (Chen et al., 2020). Consumers’ evolving demands drive this shift towards sustainable business practices, and increasingly, brands within the tourism and hospitality sectors are expected to deliver tangible contributions to the global sustainability movement (Wang et al., 2020). In the context of this study, it is important to note that promoting sustainable development and reducing the negative effects of the tourism and hospitality industry on the environment is in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12, “Responsible Consumption and Production” (Https://sdgs.un.org/goals, 2023). Navigating this dynamic climate requires a profound understanding of the underlying determinants of consumer behaviour (Rahman et al., 2021). This need is significantly apparent globally, considering the vital role of hospitality industry in the rapidly growing global tourism sector (Rasheed and Nandukrishna, 2023).

Given this backdrop, there is a pressing need to understand the variables shaping these trends. Among them, “collectivism”, “brand prestige” and “brand identification” have emerged as potent determinants, shaping consumer behaviours and influencing brand loyalties (Han et al., 2021). These elements, central to understanding brand loyalties and consumer choices, warrant a deeper exploration. Collectivism, emphasizing communal goals over individualistic pursuits, significantly influences consumer purchasing behaviours, especially in cultures with a solid collective orientation (Xu et al., 2020). Simultaneously, Brand prestige and brand identification, referring to the perceived value and association with a brand, play pivotal roles in customer decision-making processes (Han et al., 2021). Their importance has been magnified with the rising emphasis on sustainability within the hospitality industry. Understanding these constructs concerning green brand loyalty can provide invaluable insights into shaping customer loyalty, especially within the hospitality industry’s shift towards sustainability (Tran et al., 2022).

To provide a holistic understanding, it is imperative to consider the convergence of these constructs. The literature, while vast, needs to address how collectivism, brand prestige and brand identification collectively shape green brand loyalty (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019). Moreover, there needs to be more studies that offer a comparative analysis across different generational cohorts, such as the eco-conscious Generation Z and the more traditional older generations (Prayag et al., 2022). This distinction is pivotal. The nuances in preferences, attitudes and behaviours between these age groups can offer a goldmine of insights for marketers and industry stakeholders (Li et al., 2023). Diving deeper and
exploring how these constructs influence different age demographics is pertinent. The rationale behind comparing Generation Z with older generations lies in their distinct consumption patterns and attitudes (Zhang, 2020). While Generation Z showcases an inherent inclination towards eco-friendliness and sustainable choices, older generations have transitioned from traditional consumption patterns to a growing awareness of green practices (Rasheed and Balakrishnan, 2023a). Understanding these generational nuances is an academic exercise and a pivotal strategy for brands to tailor their approaches, ensuring resonance with diverse consumer groups (Prayag et al., 2022).

This study, therefore, embarks on a dual mission. First, it seeks to blend the perspectives of social identity theory and green consumerism theory, providing a robust theoretical framework to dissect these intricate dynamics. Second, it aims to delve deep into the interplay of collectivism, brand prestige and brand identification in the orchestration of green brand loyalty, particularly accentuating the contrasts between Generation Z and older generations. The value of this research lies in its implications for the hospitality sector within the vibrant landscape of Indian tourism. As this sector strives to balance the demands of a booming industry with increasing environmental responsibilities, understanding the variables that influence green brand loyalty is crucial. Our findings offer hotel brand insights to strategically enhance their green branding efforts, particularly those catering to increasingly influential Generation Z travellers (Zhang, 2020). In light of the above, our research seeks to contribute to green marketing and brand loyalty. By delving into the dynamics of social identity, green consumerism and collectivism within the hospitality industry, especially in the vibrant backdrop of Indian tourism, this study promises a nuanced understanding. This enriched comprehension is poised to guide future sustainability efforts in the industry, especially as the sway of Generation Z travellers grows.

Theoretical framework

**Social identity theory**

Social identity theory revolves around individuals associating their self-identity with particular social groups (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). In consumer behaviour, consumers often perceive the brands they opt for as extensions of these social affiliations. They resonate with brands that mirror their principles, values, and ways of life (Xu et al., 2020). The more robust this resonance, the more probable they are to display loyalty (Han et al., 2021). This theory was particularly appealing for this study because it provides a lens to understand why and how consumers, especially Generation Z, align themselves with certain brands over others (Prayag et al., 2022). Brands that individuals regard as prestigious can augment their social standing, solidifying their loyalty further (Rather and Hollebeek, 2019). In this research, social identity theory is a tool to probe deeper into the intricate relationships between brand prestige, identification, and green brand loyalty. The emphasis is significantly on Generation Z, a cohort recognized for its robust alignment with sustainability, and the goal is to discern how this inclination influences their loyalty towards brands.

**Green consumerism**

Green consumerism posits that consumers choose brands that align with their ecological principles (Sparks, 1999). As an escalating number of individuals make environmentally conscious decisions, this orientation is reforming the market landscape, making green brand loyalty an increasingly pivotal element (Li et al., 2023). The rationale for choosing green consumerism theory lies in its direct relevance to the study’s focus on green brand loyalty. According to this theoretical perspective, if consumers perceive a brand as environmentally considerate, they are likelier to sustain their allegiance because it aligns with their environmental values (Sachdeva et al., 2015). This perspective becomes even
more salient when considering younger generations, who have shown a clear preference for green initiatives (Prayag et al., 2022). For our study, we harness green consumerism theory to examine the nexus between a brand’s green endeavours and the loyalty it garners (Sachdeva et al., 2015). The primary focus remains on Generation Z, widely acknowledged for its pronounced eco-consciousness (Prayag et al., 2022). The objective is to decode the influence of a brand’s green initiatives on its loyalty quotient and provide actionable insights for hospitality ventures aiming to bolster their green branding strategies.

**Literature review and hypothesis development**

In consumer behaviour, cultural values influence decisions and actions, which can invariably mould brand loyalty (Han et al., 2021). These values, deeply embedded within individuals, resonate with their brand choices and determine their level of commitment and loyalty to these brands (Park and Lee, 2019). The social identity theory posits that individuals, associating part of their identity with their groups, align with brands reflecting their group’s values and beliefs (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Within this framework, brands in harmony with a group’s collective values, especially sustainability, can secure stronger loyalty. Collectivism is a paramount cultural value that has garnered attention in the context of marketing and consumer behaviour (Hyun et al., 2023). Within this framework, brands that align with a group’s collective values and beliefs have a higher probability of securing sustained loyalty from their consumer base (Tran et al., 2022). In such scenarios, even if an individual perceives certain discrepancies in brand attributes, the overarching positive perception of their in-group towards the brand can overshadow personal reservations, bolstering brand loyalty.

Translating this to the hotel industry, especially in the light of green brand loyalty, suggests that if a hotel brand aligns its green initiatives with the collective values of a group, it has a higher potential to attain and sustain loyalty from that group (Acampora et al., 2022). Given that the emphasis on sustainability and eco-friendly practices has been magnified in contemporary society, and considering the pivotal role of collectivism in the decision-making process, it is plausible to assert that collectivist values can significantly influence green brand loyalty in hotels (Xu et al., 2020). Therefore, drawing from empirical and theoretical insights, we posit:

**H1.** Collectivism will have a significant positive effect on green brand loyalty of hotels

Consumers’ cultural orientations greatly influence their brand perceptions and consumption behaviours. For instance, as a paramount cultural dimension, collectivism has been consistently linked to how individuals perceive and interact with brands (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019). Collectivists, who prioritize group harmony and shared beliefs, are especially sensitive to the symbolic implications of brands (Han et al., 2021). Such individuals often seek affirmation and acceptance from their reference groups, and this need for social validation and conformity drives them towards brands that resonate with their group’s values and aspirations (Hyun et al., 2023).

Brand prestige plays a pivotal role in this context. In societies with pronounced collectivist orientations, brands carrying a prestigious image not only symbolize quality but also become tools for individuals to showcase their alignment with the desirable traits of their (Acampora et al., 2022). These prestigious brands are status markers, signalling an individual’s position within a group or broader society (Chen et al., 2020). Furthermore, in cultures characterized by high power distance, the allure of prestigious brands is magnified, with individuals leveraging them to assert their power and elevate their social status (Veloutsou and Moutinho, 2009). In such scenarios, prestige brands symbolize wealth, power and societal respect. Given the intricate interplay of collectivism and the appeal of prestigious brands, it becomes imperative to understand how these dynamics shape brand loyalty in the hotel industry, especially concerning green initiatives (Acampora et al., 2022). Drawing from the theoretical foundations presented in the literature and understanding the interplay of cultural dynamics:
Collectivism will have a significant positive effect on brand prestige of hotels.

In the hospitality and tourism research domain, the influence of cultural dimensions, notably collectivism, on patronage and brand affinity is a topic of considerable interest (Arun et al., 2021). Due to their heightened sensitivity to social identities, collectivist individuals are more inclined to seek affirmation and approval from their reference groups (Han et al., 2021). They navigate their consumption choices to mirror a brand’s symbolic representations, thereby seeking alignment with their group’s ideals and beliefs (Lefebvre and Franke, 2013). The brand’s personality and resonance with its intrinsic values become pivotal for collectivists. They aspire for brands that cater to their collective conscience and amplify their affiliation and identification with their in-group (Acampora et al., 2022). This is particularly evident when evaluating brand identification in the hotel industry context (Xu et al., 2022). Collectivist consumers might gravitate towards hotel brands that echo their group’s sustainable and green ethos, reinforcing their identification with such brands.

Moreover, collectivists are intrinsically inclined to prefer brands that resonate with their status symbols (Hyun et al., 2023). This preference is amplified in contexts with pronounced power distances, where brand choices often testify to one’s social stature (Arun et al., 2021). Drawing upon these theoretical insights and empirical findings, we propose the hypothesis:

**H2b.** Collectivism will have a significant positive effect on brand identification of hotels.

Several studies in the marketing literature support the idea that brand prestige has a significant positive effect on green brand loyalty in the Indian hotel business. For example, Han et al. (2021) found that people are more loyal to luxury brands that they think are prestigious because they are high-quality and only available to a small group of people. Brand prestige is paramount in shaping consumer behaviour, directly influencing perceptions of quality, value and the overarching brand image (Köseoglu et al., 2019). Grounded in the social identity theory, there is a profound understanding that individuals gravitate towards affiliations that resonate with their inherent characteristics (Han et al., 2021). Translated into consumer behaviour, individuals manifest loyalty towards brands that align with their sociocultural identity (Hyun et al., 2023). In the context of the Indian hotel industry, the integration of cultural pride and collectivist tendencies suggests a propensity for consumers to be inherently loyal to green brands deemed prestigious (Tse et al., 2023). These brands mirror their societal values and aspirations, strengthening brand loyalty. Given the intricate interplay of theory and empirical findings, we deduce the hypothesis:

**H3a.** Brand prestige will have a significant positive effect on green brand loyalty of hotels.

The theoretical construct of brand identification finds its foundation in the social identity theory, which postulates that individuals shape their identities in congruence with the social groups they affiliate with (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Drawing on this notion, brand identification emerges as the degree to which consumers perceive a congruence between their self-image and a brand’s image (Rasheed and Balakrishnan, 2023b). When consumers perceive that a brand shares attributes akin to their self-definition, a deep-seated emotional connection is fostered (Arun et al., 2021). This emotional connection is pivotal, often transcending mere brand preference, and can lead to enduring loyalty. Such connections are underpinned by feelings of trust, resonance and a sense of belonging that consumers associate with the brand (Köseoglu et al., 2019).

In the hospitality context, the prominence of brand identification must be recognized. An individual’s alignment with a hotel brand, especially in a country with pronounced collectivist tendencies like India, directly influences their loyalty to the brand (Acampora et al., 2022). Given that brand identification and loyalty are intertwined, especially in industries where the consumer’s emotional connection is paramount, such as the luxury hotel sector, it becomes pivotal to explore this relationship in depth (Rasheed et al., 2020).
Notably, the luxury segment of the hotel industry demands a thorough exploration in this regard. Han et al. (2021) emphasized that brand prestige in luxury restaurants, for instance, amplifies brand loyalty as it mitigates perceived risks. This is especially relevant, considering luxury consumers grapple with uncertainties despite shelling out premium prices (Acampora et al., 2022). With these theoretical underpinnings and empirical findings, we deduce the following hypothesis:

\( H_{3b} \). Brand identification will have a significant positive effect on green brand loyalty of hotels.

Based on the above hypothesis, we propose the following conceptual model for this study (Figure 1).

Research methodology

Design and data collection

This study focused on travellers who visited three monuments. 1. Brihadisvara Temple at Thanjavur, 2. Brihadisvara Temple at Gangaikonda Cholapuram and 3. Airavatesvara Temple at Kumbakonam. These three monuments are known as the “Great Living Chola Temples”, which are included in the UNESCO World Heritage Site designation and attract many religious tourists. We chose religious tourist destinations to study green brand loyalty because religious tourists visit these destinations frequently, which makes their green brand loyalty crucial for long-term sustainable practices (Wang et al., 2020). We adopted a single cross-sectional research design and collected data from tourists who had stayed for at least one night in these cities. These sites attract a substantial influx of tourists annually, many of whom use sharing economy-based services for accommodation and transportation.

We used a purposive sampling method with a refined screening question to gather our data. We asked tourists, “Have you stayed in green or eco-friendly hotels when you visited this place?” to ensure the focus remained on green brand loyalty (Table A2 in the Appendix mentions the green initiatives adopted by the hotels where tourists visited). Although not
free from selection bias, this method allowed us to collect data efficiently while accommodating the visitors’ schedules and locations. Our research spanned multiple generations, including Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X and Baby Boomers. Table 1 details the specific age range classifications for these generations. We directly engaged with tourists at these monuments, using a non-probabilistic method to collect data. To ensure comprehension, we conducted surveys in the local language, Tamil. We initially screened 2,000 tourists at these sites with our refined screening question. To those who responded affirmatively, we provided the questionnaire. Out of 631 completed questionnaires, we retained 576 responses as our final data set after discarding 55 due to invalidity. This sample size was validated with the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test, yielding a value of 0.929, signifying its adequacy for multivariate analysis (Hair et al., 2019). Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS software to ensure robust and detailed statistical insights. The respondent’s demographic profile information is presented in Table 1.

**Measurement development**

The variables used in this study were assessed using several instruments. The measurement items were obtained from previous research to ensure their validity (see, Table A1 in Appendix). The green brand loyalty scale was derived from (Chen et al., 2020). The scale for collectivism was derived from (Lefebvre and Franke, 2013). The scale for brand identification is derived from (Kuenzel and Vaux Halliday, 2008). Finally, the scale for brand prestige is adapted from (Veloutsou and Moutinho, 2009). Leveraging insights from an expert panel, we designed a questionnaire to gauge each item’s clarity and applicability. After receiving feedback, minor refinements were incorporated. The questionnaire was structured around a five-point Likert scale. A preliminary run of this questionnaire was conducted with 40 students and 10 research scholars in the marketing field who had recent hotel visits in India, ensuring that this sample reasonably mirrored our target demographic. The feedback from this pilot helped us enhance the questionnaire further, especially in addressing potential common method bias (CMB). The final version of the questionnaire contained various items, along with sections capturing respondents’ demographic data. Participants were guided to complete the questionnaire based on their insights and experiences about green hotels in India.

<table>
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<th>Variables</th>
<th>Categories</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>49.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>15–28 (Gen Z)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>28–43 (millennials)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>44–58 (Gen X)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&gt; 58 (baby boomers)</td>
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<td>Unmarried</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Under graduate</td>
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<td>45.66</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Post graduate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Annual income</td>
<td>Below 300,000</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>17.01</td>
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<td></td>
<td>300,000–500,000</td>
<td>116</td>
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<td></td>
<td>500,000–1,000,000</td>
<td>271</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Above 1,000,000</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>15.80</td>
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*Source: Based on data collected by authors for the study*
Analysis and results

Measurement model

Our model displayed an SRMR value of 0.083 and an NFI value of 0.877, indicating a well-fitting model (Hair et al., 2019). The results showed $R^2$ values: 0.419 for green brand loyalty, 0.422 for prestige and 0.277 for identification. These values above 0.1 validate the predictive capacity of our study (Hair et al., 2019). Outer loading, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) and discriminant validity were all used to test the measurement model. The results show that all construct’s outer loadings exceed the minimum threshold, with high internal consistency (CR and Cronbach’s alpha > 0.7). AVE > 0.5 indicates good convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). Using HTMT ratio values, it was shown that all the values are well below the threshold value of 0.85 (Kock, 2015a) (Tables 2 and 3). Harman’s one-factor test was used to check for CMB. The findings indicated that the one-factor solution explained just 32.81% of the variance, falling well short of the 50% cutoff (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Structural model results

The structural model was looked at after making sure the measurement model used to test hypotheses was reliable and valid. Multi-collinearity was ruled out by analysing collinearity, and results showed a tolerance level in the predictor construct below the VIF 5 threshold (Kock, 2015b). The significance of the path coefficient, confidence interval bias-corrected and T-statistics were used to evaluate the structural model.

The study indicated a significant effect of collectivism on green brand loyalty in hotels ($H_1$) for Generation Z ($\beta = 0.206, p < 0.05$) and the overall sample ($\beta = 0.164, p < 0.05$). However, for the older generations, this relationship was not significant ($\beta = 0.075, p > 0.05$). Hence, $H_1$ was not supported for this group. Interestingly, this shows a more profound inclination for green brand loyalty driven by collectivism among Gen Z than their older counterparts. Collectivism positively affected both brand prestige and brand identification in hotels for all demographic groups ($H_{2a}$ and $H_{2b}$). Specifically, for brand prestige ($H_{2a}$), the $\beta$ values were 0.414 for Gen Z, 0.526 for the overall sample, and 0.620 for other generations. When compared, it is evident that while Gen Z values brand prestige and identification, the older generations show an even stronger alignment, especially with

<table>
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<th>Table 2 Measurement model</th>
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<td>Brand identification</td>
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Notes: CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted
Source: Based on data collected by authors for the study
brand identification. For brand identification (H2b), the $\beta$ values were 0.598 for Gen Z, 0.650 for the overall sample, and 0.699 for other generations. The influence of brand prestige on green brand loyalty (H3a) was confirmed for all groups, with $\beta$ values of 0.194 for Gen Z, 0.389 for the overall sample, and 0.577 for other generations. However, for the effect of Brand Identification on Green Brand Loyalty (H3b), although the $\beta$ values were significant for Gen Z ($\beta = 0.347$, $p < 0.05$) and the overall sample ($\beta = 0.197$, $p < 0.05$), they were not significant for the older generations ($\beta = 0.097$, $p > 0.05$), leading to the rejection of H3b for this group. This highlights a distinct difference between Gen Z’s perspective on brand identification’s role in influencing green brand loyalty and that of older generations (Figure 2 and Table 4).

Discussion

Our research underscores distinct generational nuances in analysing the interplay of collectivism, brand prestige, brand identification and green brand loyalty. By reflecting their generational ethos, Generation Z aligns their green brand loyalty with their collectivist values and identification with the brand. However, older generations did not exhibit this trend, suggesting a unique interpretation or importance concerning green initiatives. This could indicate a potential generational gap in the interpretation of brand identity. Having grown up in a different media environment, older generations might not resonate as deeply with contemporary branding narratives as younger individuals. It is also plausible that for older

<table>
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<th>Table 3</th>
<th>HTMT ratio</th>
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<td>Constructs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Green brand loyalty</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Collectivism</td>
<td>0.542</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Brand identification</td>
<td>0.606</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Brand prestige</td>
<td>0.674</td>
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Source: Based on data collected by authors for the study

Figure 2 | Structural model results

Source: Based on data collected by authors for the study
generations, other factors such as brand trustworthiness or the length of time they have known the brand play a more substantial role than mere identification (Prayag et al., 2022).

Moreover, our findings highlight the importance of a solid and identifiable brand across all demographics. Both brand prestige and identification are significant pillars in fostering green brand loyalty (Lin et al., 2017). Yet, brand identification did not significantly sway the older generations’ green brand loyalty, hinting towards an interesting divergence in how different generations engage with brand identities. One of the most pressing insights from our findings is the rejection of $H_1$ for older generations and $H_3b$ for the older group. While collectivism did not influence the green brand loyalty of older participants, brand identification’s effect on green brand loyalty was also not significant for this demographic. These rejections align with a few past studies where older generations were found to prioritize other factors over brand attributes in their loyalty decisions (Hazari and Sethna, 2023).

These discrepancies underline that there are more than “one size fits all” approaches that may be needed to cultivate green brand loyalty in the hotel industry. This also suggests the intriguing possibility that the core principles guiding green loyalty can differ significantly across generations. Notably, collective values resonate more with Generation Z, whereas traditional aspects of brand prestige might influence older generations. These findings enrich our understanding of how brand factors influence green loyalty and highlight the need for more tailored, generation-specific strategies in the hotel industry.

### Theoretical implications

Our research has noteworthy theoretical implications, specifically within the social identity and green consumerism theories, as we explore the intricate dynamics of green brand loyalty across different generations. By juxtaposing Generation Z with older generations, this study provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between collectivism, brand identification and brand prestige in shaping green brand loyalty. First, the pronounced influence of collectivism on green brand loyalty among Generation Z supports and extends the understanding of social identity theory. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of collective identity in influencing consumer behaviour, especially in the context of brand loyalty (Acampora et al., 2022). It signifies that individual preferences do not just drive this generation’s loyalty but are significantly by collective identity and shared values. This group’s green brand loyalty manifests their social identity, offering a nuanced perspective on the theory (Rather and Hollebeek, 2019).

Second, the variable impact of brand identification on green brand loyalty across generations is intriguing. Brand identification, a core component of social identity theory, significantly impacted Generation Z and the overall sample but not the older generations (Prayag et al., 2022). Such inconsistencies might reflect the evolving nature of brand perceptions across ages or potential gaps in existing theoretical frameworks when intersecting with real-world contexts (Hazari and Sethna, 2023). This highlights the potential
limitations and the need for refinement in theory when applied across different age cohorts. Third, the findings contribute to green consumerism theory. The difference in how brand prestige influences green brand loyalty among different generations shows that environmental consciousness and loyalty may be linked to the perceived prestige of the brand. Our research suggests that social identity and green consumerism theories can effectively explain generational differences in green brand loyalty. However, the divergent responses of different generations also point towards the need for further development and a nuanced understanding of these theoretical frameworks.

Practical implications

The findings of our study have significant practical implications, particularly for the hospitality industry seeking to enhance green brand loyalty among diverse customer demographics. As revealed, Generation Z’s green brand loyalty is significantly propelled by collectivism. This mandates hospitality enterprises to accentuate the communal advantages of their eco-friendly endeavours. As per Monaco (2018), relaying how such endeavours holistically advance societal and ecological health resonates profoundly with the collectivist tendencies intrinsic to Generation Z. Strategic adoption of community-centric promotional campaigns or spotlighting testimonials emphasizing collective benefits could reinforce this collectivist narrative. Conversely, the nexus between green brand loyalty, collectivism and brand identification for the senior age bracket seems attenuated. This divergence intimates that distinct elements potentially galvanize their allegiance to eco-friendly brands. It is paramount for businesses to probe into alternative catalysts that might resonate with this demographic, possibly underscoring facets like intrinsic brand quality or its alignment with time-honoured values, as highlighted by Prayag et al. (2022).

Further, the unanimous influence of brand prestige across demographic spectrums cannot be understated. Han et al. (2021) have emphasized that a brand’s prestige invariably dictates its appeal. In tandem with this, our study substantiates the imperative of maintaining an esteemed brand reputation. Hotels must relentlessly endeavour to amplify their brand’s prestige through unparalleled service quality, memorable guest experiences or unwavering dedication to sustainable practices. In synthesizing these observations, it is evident that a nuanced, generational-specific approach is paramount. Monaco (2018) emphasized the value of tailored marketing strategies in the hospitality domain, and our study reiterates this. Grasping the generational idiosyncrasies in green brand loyalty can empower businesses to devise more incisive, bespoke strategies, thus enriching customer engagement, bolstering brand loyalty and championing ecological stewardship.

Limitations and future research directions

While our study offers valuable findings, several limitations merit consideration. First, the focus of this study was confined to the hotel industry. This specificity limits the generalizability of the results across sectors where consumer behaviour and brand dynamics differ. Future research could extend this examination to various industries to build upon our findings, offering a broader view of green brand loyalty across different markets. Second, our research applies social identity theory and green consumerism theory to understand green brand loyalty. While these theories provide significant insights, other theoretical perspectives may further enrich our understanding of this topic. Thus, future studies could incorporate additional theories and models to provide a more comprehensive perspective. Finally, although our statistical analysis was thorough, the study’s cross-sectional design constrained our ability to draw causal inferences. Future research could adopt a longitudinal design to delve deeper into cause-effect relationships and monitor how these relationships change over time. In short, while our study provides a significant step towards understanding green brand loyalty across different generations, the outlined limitations highlight opportunities for future research to further enrich the field’s knowledge base.
Conclusion

In conclusion, our study sheds significant light on the dynamics of green brand loyalty across Generation Z and older generations within the hotel industry context. We have uncovered that while collectivism and brand identification strongly influence green brand loyalty among Generation Z, the same does not hold for older generations. Moreover, brand prestige has consistently emerged as a significant factor across all age groups, reinforcing its critical role in driving green brand loyalty. The findings provide valuable theoretical implications, refining our understanding of social identity green consumerism theories in the context of different generations. Simultaneously, our research offers actionable insights for businesses, emphasizing the need for a tailored approach to designing strategies to foster green brand loyalty among diverse demographics. While our research has made important strides in elucidating complex landscape of green brand loyalty, there is still much ground to cover. Future research addressing our study’s limitations will continue to build upon this foundation, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of green brand loyalty across generations. Despite these limitations, our study bridges a crucial gap in the literature. It provides a comprehensive outlook on how generations differ in their relationships with green brands in the hotel industry.

References


### Table A1  Items of variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Items</th>
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</table>
| Brand identification | I feel proud when I hear positive feedback about this hotel's sustainable initiatives  
                     | I am curious about others’ opinions regarding this hotel’s eco-friendly practices  
                     | When someone commends this hotel’s environmental efforts, they complement my choice  
                     | It boosts my confidence when others recognize and appreciate this hotel’s commitment to the environment  |
| Brand prestige  | This hotel brand is highly esteemed for its sustainable initiatives  
                   | In general, this hotel brand garners widespread admiration for its eco-conscious practices  
                   | This hotel brand signifies a commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainability  
                   | The eco-friendly practices of this hotel brand set it apart as prestigious |
| Collectivism    | In my travel decisions, the environment’s and society’s well-being takes precedence over individual benefits  
                   | I need to select hotels that resonate with the environmental values shared by my peer group  
                   | I would reconsider my hotel preferences if they don’t align with the collective environmental responsibility  |
| Green brand loyalty | I am eager to revisit this hotel due to its environmental performance  
                     | I prefer choosing this hotel over others due to its environmental features  
                     | I rarely think of opting for other hotels because of this hotel’s commitment to the environment  
                     | I intend to continue patronizing this hotel as it is environmentally responsible  
                     | I trust this hotel’s commitment to environmental responsibility, which influences my loyalty |

### Table A2  Green initiatives adopted by hotels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Hotels</th>
<th>Green initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Thanjavur (Brihadisvara temple) | Hotel A | Solar powered heating system
                                  | Organic in-house garden for restaurant
                                  | Electric vehicle charging stations
                                  | Use of bio-degradable cleaning products |
|                               | Hotel B | Composting and organic waste management
                                  | Promoting paperless check-in and check-out processes
                                  | Installation of energy-efficient lighting
                                  | Solar powered heating system |
| Gangaikonda Cholapuram (Brihadisvara temple) | Hotel C | Community-based eco-tours
                                  | Electric vehicle charging stations
                                  | Eco-friendly guest amenities
                                  | Composting and organic waste management |
|                               | Hotel D | Use of bio-degradable cleaning products
                                  | Use of locally sourced and organic food in restaurant
                                  | Use of eco-friendly building materials
                                  | Electric vehicle charging stations
                                  | Installation of energy-efficient lighting
                                  | Solar powered heating system
                                  | Promoting paperless check-in and check-out processes
                                  | Use of bio-degradable cleaning products |
| Kumbakonam (Airavatesvara temple) | Hotel E | Organic in-house garden for restaurant
                                  | Promoting paperless check-in and check-out processes
                                  | Rainwater harvesting system
                                  | Use of bio-degradable cleaning products |
|                               | Hotel F | Organic in-house garden for restaurant
                                  | Promoting paperless check-in and check-out processes
                                  | Rainwater harvesting system
                                  | Use of bio-degradable cleaning products |
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