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Sustainable Marketing Initiatives and Consumer Perception of Fast Fashion Brands

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ABSTRACT

The fast fashion industry has been criticized for negatively impacting the economy, environment, and social justice. Consequently, many brands adopt sustainable marketing practices to promote eco-friendly manufacturing and encourage sustainable purchase behaviour. To explore this trend, a cross-sectional survey was conducted among fashion brand consumers using a quantitative research design. The survey data was analyzed using variance-based partial least squares-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The results showed that sustainable marketing practices can be supported by creating a positive brand image and building trust. Such practices can positively influence consumers' perception of sustainability and promote brand loyalty, which can lead to sustainable purchasing behaviour. The study provides valuable insights into sustainable marketing strategies that fashion brands can adopt to promote sustainable practices and policies in local markets.

KEYWORDS

fast fashion, marketing, sustainability, structure equation modelling, brand loyalty, purchase behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Efforts from both public and private sectors to encourage sustainable consumption, reduce worldwide resource use, and limit emissions are increasing. This study is specifically concerned with the fast fashion industry, which has experienced significant growth in profits and sales. This growth can be attributed to design, production, logistics, and retail advancements encouraging customers to purchase more apparel [1]. The rapid growth of fast fashion has been met with criticism regarding its impact on the environment and social justice. As a result, the industry has introduced sustainability initiatives that tackle environmental, social, and economic issues. These initiatives also consider the various components of the marketing mix, such as product, price, place, and promotion [2,3].

Organizations give great importance to sustainability to sustain their growth. Liu et al. suggest that sustainability includes economic, social, and environmental responsibilities [4]. Companies can show their dedication towards environmental sustainability by implementing demarketing strategies and incorporating eco-friendly products. To maintain their steady growth, businesses

undertake various activities that prioritize sustainability [5].

Over the years, there has been a rise in the adoption of sustainable marketing practices by firms, leading to significant changes in the way we live, produce, market, and consume [6-8]. Today's consumers seem driven by more than just rational considerations when purchasing. They are increasingly prioritizing ideological and symbolic factors. According to a survey by the IBM Global Consumer Study, over half of the respondents, i.e. 51%, claimed that environmental sustainability has become more important to them than a year ago [9]. The same study conducted in 2021, found that 50% of customers were willing to pay more for companies or goods that support sustainability. Additionally, the survey revealed that in 2022, almost half of the consumers, i.e. 49%, had already paid an average premium of 59% for goods with an environmentally friendly or socially conscious label in the previous year. Therefore, implementing sustainable marketing practices is essential for marketers who wish to establish brands that can be sustained in the long run, focusing on building brand trust and image, as suggested by Khandai et al. [10].

Greenwashing has become a significant issue in the sustainable fashion industry. Some companies are taking advantage of the trend towards environmentally conscious consumer preferences. While some fashion brands genuinely adopt sustainable practices, others employ deceptive marketing tactics to create a facade of eco-friendliness. To combat greenwashing, the industry must increase transparency, establish industry-wide standards, and educate consumers. These efforts will help to create a sustainable and ethical fashion landscape, where customers can confidently choose eco-friendly products [11,12].

There is a lack of research on how sustainable marketing initiatives affect the perception of fashion companies' performance and how it influences sustainable purchase behaviour. This highlights the importance of examining the role of brand image and trust in developing sustainable perception and loyalty for purchase behaviour. The study aims to explore how fashion apparel brands implement sustainable marketing activities and how consumers perceive them. It seeks to investigate the relationship among sustainable marketing initiatives, brand image, brand trust, brand loyalty, and sustainable purchase behaviour. Focusing on young fashion consumers in Asian countries, the study aims to understand how sustainable brand image and trust mediate customer loyalty to establish sustainable purchase behaviour.

The study aims to delineate a research model explaining the dynamics between sustainable marketing, perception, loyalty, and purchase behaviour. Additionally, it offers suggestions for marketing practitioners by proposing different marketing strategies for young consumers' consumption trends in developing countries.

Global studies suggest that consumers are increasingly inclined towards sustainable brands and focusing on environmental and societal impacts [13,14]. Sustainable marketing efforts are vital in

encouraging consumers to adopt sustainable practices such as recycling, healthy eating, energy conservation, etc. While marketing and sustainability may not be at odds with each other, it is crucial to understand how these concepts can complement each other to encourage sustainable behavioural changes [15,16].

Sustainable marketing and sustainable perception

Developing a sustainable marketing strategy requires careful consideration of the social environment, the local community's values, and the ethical impact on the environment. This involves assessing corporate practices in areas such as marketing and sales. According to Elkington all sustainable marketing initiatives should consider the economic, social, and environmental aspects [17]. Through distributing financial gains through localized financial assistance, economic marketing initiatives should benefit various parties, including customers, community stakeholders, staff, and partners. Additionally, businesses should be incentivized to expand operations and increase profits [18]. Lee and Sung found that companies' social activities, like responses and attitudes towards their products, positively affect customers' attitudes towards the brand [19]. Social interactions allow consumers to stay connected to their purchasing decisions and intentions. To emphasize the importance of eco-friendly consumption through initiatives such as creating environmentally friendly fashion items, reuse of recycled banners, bag-sharing programs, and wildlife preservation for green development.

A brand's image is shaped by a person's beliefs, ideas, and impressions about a product. This image comprises customers' perceptions of a brand [20,21]. Maignan and Ferrel suggest that marketing strategies focused on sustainability can benefit a brand in various ways [22]. These benefits include enhancing brand image, driving business profitability, and ensuring long-term success. Research shows that customers tend to have a more positive perception of companies that actively practice social responsibility than those that do not [23,24].

Establishing and nurturing trust in a brand is important for businesses as it can offer an edge over competitors, leading to improved performance in the long run [25]. As per Johnson and Graysons, trust is a bond that can evolve and surpass what can be justified based on available knowledge [26]. When a business invests in building relationships it demonstrates a level of confidence in the value of the partnership as the emotional connection, between the one trusting and the one being trusted strengthens over time. According to Hiscock, the ultimate aim of marketing is to create an emotional bond between the consumer and the brand, which is sparked and strengthened through trust [27]. Companies devote significant resources to building brand trust, which gives brands a long-term competitive advantage and ultimately improves organizational performance. According to Morgan and Hunt, trust is created when one entity has confidence in the dependability and integrity of another

entity [28]. They discovered that loyalty and commitment follow trust. Furthermore, Sustainable marketing is a way to improve a brand's reputation by aligning its values with eco-friendly practices, which helps to build consumer trust. Being transparent about ethical choices and environmental responsibility creates a favourable image, making it more appealing to socially conscious consumers. This positive cycle strengthens brand loyalty, as customers start associating the brand with sustainability, leading to long-term success.

H₁: Sustainable marketing (SMA) significantly influences fast fashion apparel's brand image (BIG)

H₂: Sustainable marketing practices (SMA) positively impact brand trust in fast fashion apparel (BTR)

H₃: Sustainable marketing (SMA) positively impacts sustainable brand loyalty (SBL) of fast fashion apparel.

Sustainable perception and sustainable brand loyalty

The effectiveness of pro-environmental messages is still questionable, according to Chan and Hsu [29], even though organizations may use them to enhance their brand image and attract customers [30]. Sustainable perception refers to how entities are viewed in terms of their commitment to sustainability. It involves a person, company, or product's image or reputation regarding their environmental and social responsibility [31]. Yadav et al. [32] suggest that consumers who value the environment are more likely to be interested in brand pro-environmental actions. In a scenario study by Namkung and Jang [33], consumers with higher environmental awareness were likelier to value the green brand image and engage in eco-friendly behaviours than those with lower environmental consciousness. The brand image significantly impacts brand loyalty, as Brunner et al. highlight [34].

Expanding a brand through sustainable marketing techniques positively impacts brand trust. According to a study by Carter, 53% of customers surveyed believe that brands should be genuinely interested in social issues instead of just engaging in social responsibility for marketing purposes [35]. Sustainable marketing strategies also provide organizations with competitive advantages by fostering brand loyalty, as per Hesse et al. [36]. Furthermore, brand trust is crucial in mediating the relationship between social responsibility and brand loyalty, as Khan and Fatma stated [37].

H₄: Brand image (BIG) significantly influences fast fashion apparel's sustainable brand loyalty (SBL)

H₅: Brand trust (BTR) influences sustainable brand loyalty (SBL) of fast fashion apparel.

Sustainable brand loyalty (SBL) and sustainable purchase behaviour (SPB)

Sustainable brand loyalty is when a consumer remains committed to and prefers a brand that demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability in its products, operations, and overall business practices. This means that consumers who prioritize sustainability are more likely to develop a long-lasting and loyal relationship with brands that share their environmental and social values [38]. Brand

loyalty refers to a consumer's attachment to a specific brand. This concept is widely discussed in current literature [39-41]. In Akturan's study, it was found that there is a strong correlation between consumer purchase intent and the value they place on environmentally friendly brands [42]. Researchers have explored attitude-based and behavioural loyalty, determined by how frequently consumers purchase [43,44]. Customers' loyalty to a brand largely depends on their dedication and attitude. This factor is influenced by the level and type of customer purchasing intentions [45]. Sustainable purchase behaviour refers to the choices and actions of consumers that prioritize environmental, social, and economic sustainability. It involves purchasing decisions considering the long-term impact on the planet, society, and the economy. This concept is closely linked to the broader concept of sustainable consumption, which encourages individuals to be mindful of their consumption patterns' environmental and social consequences [46]. Consumers with positive purchasing intentions are likely to exhibit brand loyalty, and how consumers engage with a product category greatly influences their attitude toward a particular brand [47]. With this in mind, it is reasonable to assume that there is a positive connection between brand loyalty and purchase intent regarding eco-friendly products. Therefore, we recommend:

H₆: Sustainable brand loyalty (SBL) positively influences sustainable purchase behaviour (SPB) of fast fashion apparel.

The mediating variable is a variable that connects two other variables in a causal chain. Baron and Kenny [48] describe it as something in the middle. The researchers used a brand's image as a mediating variable [49]. They found that sustainable marketing strategies impacted consumer loyalty, mediated by the brand image. In other words, the more sustainable marketing strategies customers perceive and achieve, the stronger the sense of brand image and brand loyalty will be. Sharma [50] also found that a sustainable marketing strategy can foster a favourable brand image and increase client loyalty. Sustainable marketing tactics can create an exceptional sustainable brand image in the eyes of consumers, especially in the face of escalating environmental problems. Kotler and Keller [51] define brand image as the customer's association with a product. A green marketing approach can increase consumer loyalty by improving the customers' brand image [52]. They posit that a strong, sustainable marketing strategy will boost the brand's reputation and increase customer loyalty. Trust refers to the expectation that two or more parties will collaborate and fulfil their duties and responsibilities. It is the belief that the other person's words or promises will be followed through in a stable and mutually beneficial relationship. This definition, proposed by Lou and Yuan [53], highlights the importance of trust in any exchange-based relationship and the following hypothesis were proposed in the study:

H₇: Brand image (BIG) mediates the relationship between sustainable marketing activity (EMA) and sustainable brand loyalty (SBL)

H₈: Brand trust (BTR) mediates the relationship between sustainable marketing sustainable marketing activity (SMA,) and sustainable brand loyalty (SBL).

The relationship between constructs and the proposed hypothesis is presented in Figure 1.

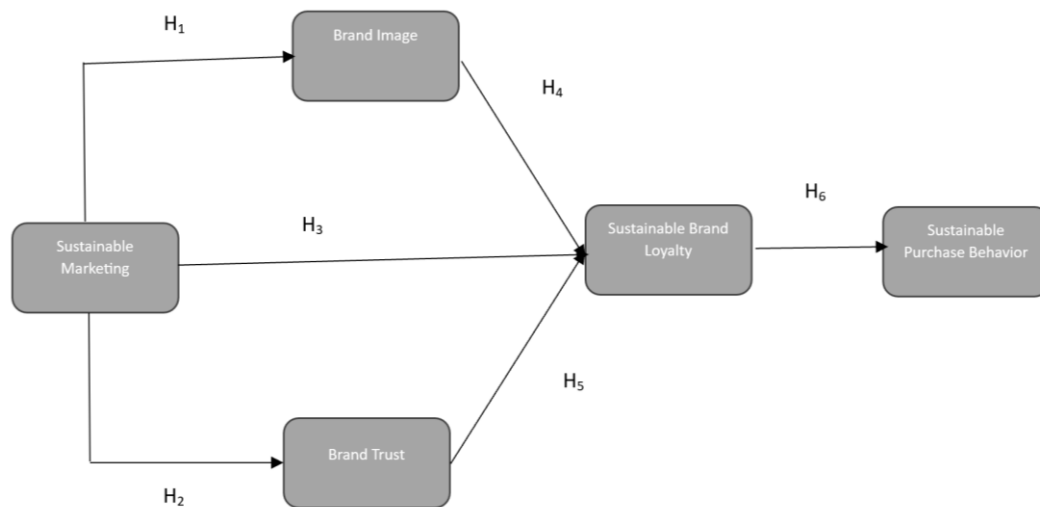


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework (Note: Sustainable perception encompasses the concepts of brand trust and brand image)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Instrument Design

A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted in the Delhi-North Indian Capital Region India. The study involved the use of a self-administered online questionnaire to survey respondents. The participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and only used for academic research purposes. Participation in the survey was voluntary. The survey instrument was divided into two sections. The first section included a briefing on sustainable apparel and demographic profile statements. The second section described indicators for all constructs used to measure millennials' sustainable apparel purchase intention. The survey was distributed through various social media platforms. The description of the measures used in the study and validated by the literature is provided in Table 1. The responses were measured using scale items anchored on a 5-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree to agree 5-strongly).

Table 1. Latent Construct Description

| Construct | Items | Scale | Reference |
|--------------------------------------|-------|---|-----------|
| Sustainable brand loyalty (SBL) | SBL1 | I am excited to buy the brand again because of its environmental performance. | [54] |
| | SBL2 | As a result of the brand's environmental functionality, I choose to purchase it above other brands. | |
| | SBL3 | Due to the brand's environmental attributes, I hardly ever contemplate using other brands. | |
| | SBL4 | Since the brand is environmentally friendly, I want to keep buying it. | |
| Sustainable purchase behaviour (SPB) | SPB1 | I buy the brand because it cares about the environment. | [55] |
| | SPB2 | I'll buy the brand again because it treats the earth well. | |
| | SPB3 | Overall, I'm content to buy the product because it's environmentally beneficial. | |
| Brand image (BI) | BIG1 | The brand is regarded as the leading example of sustainable development. | [56] |
| | BIG2 | The company specializes in building a green reputation. | |
| | BIG3 | When it comes to environmental aspects, the brand excels. | |
| | BIG4 | The brand is credible in environmental performance. | |
| Sustainable marketing (SMA) | EMA1 | The brand uses materials that are good for the environment and society. | [57,58] |
| | EMA2 | Brands with technological innovation and production prevent environmental pollution. | |
| | EMA3 | Brand throughout the design process, takes the surroundings into account and supports efficient management. | |
| Brand trust (BTR) | BTR1 | Brands are truthful with environmentally committed. | [59-60] |
| | BTR2 | The brand offers top-notch products and environmental services. | |
| | BTR3 | I brand keeps its promise and protects the environment. | |

Non-Response Error

The sample was analyzed to evaluate non-response error, dividing it into three categories: (i) early responders who responded without any reminder, (ii) late responders who responded after receiving a reminder, and (iii) non-responders who did not submit the questionnaire at all. Statistical analysis using the 2 test revealed that there was no significant difference among the three groups concerning social, demographic, and study-related factors. This means that the characteristics of the respondents did not differ significantly based on when or whether they responded to the survey. Hence, the statistical analysis ruled out non-response errors in the study.

Common Method Bias

The extent of common method bias in the study was analyzed using two methods. First is Harman's one-factor test, which involves a principal components factor analysis of all items. This analysis showed that each factor explained roughly equal variance, indicating no evidence of common method bias. Second, a partial correlation method was used, adding the highest factor from a principal component factor analysis as a controlling factor in the PLS model for all dependent variables. However, this additional factor did not significantly increase the variance explained in any of the dependent variables, providing further evidence that there was no common method bias in the study [61].

Sample Design

For this study, the sample group consisted of consumers who are residents of the Delhi-North Capital Region and are at least 18 years old. Respondents were selected through a non-probabilistic convenience sampling technique in various malls and retail establishments in Noida, Delhi, and Gurgaon, which were chosen due to the concentration and popularity of the brands there. Out of 630 individuals who were approached, 487 responded. After filtering out empty responses and nearly identical responses to scaled items, 371 responses were used for the final analysis, resulting in a response rate of 59%. To ensure the study's external validity, a non-response error test was recommended for response rates below 85% [62].

Table 2. Respondent Profile

| Category | Number | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 122 | 32.88 |
| Female | 249 | 67.11 |
| Age | | |
| 18-24 | 177 | 47.70 |
| 25-34 | 194 | 52.29 |
| Education Qualification | | |
| Graduate | 140 | 37.73 |
| Postgraduate | 194 | 52.29 |
| Doctorate | 13 | 3.50 |
| Others | 24 | 6.46 |
| Occupation | | |
| Student | 114 | 30.72 |
| Public Sector | 20 | 5.39 |
| Private Sector | 163 | 43.93 |
| Business | 36 | 9.70 |
| Others | 38 | 10.24 |

| Category | Number | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|------------|----------------|
| Monthly Family Income | | |
| 0-3 lakh | 65 | 17.52 |
| 3 lakh-6 lakh | 202 | 54.44 |
| Above 6 lakh | 104 | 28.03 |
| Total | 371 | 100 |

According to the demographic breakdown of respondents shown in Table 2, 32.88% were men, and 67.11% were women. Ages 25 to 34 outperform other age groups by 5%. Most respondents held postgraduate degrees, were employed by private companies, and had monthly family incomes ranging from 3 to 6 lakh Indian rupees. In some nations, a postgraduate degree is equivalent to a graduate degree.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The study utilized the partial least square-structure equation modelling (PLS-SEM) due to its ability to predict and explore data. PLS-SEM is widely accepted due to its robustness to sample size considerations, lack of limiting measurement features, and accurate forecasting of the target variable. The data analysis was performed using software such as Smart-PLS 2.0 and SPSS 18.0. The analysis employed structural equation modelling using the two-step method [63]. Firstly, it was determined whether the measurement model met the requirement of a linear relationship between an explicit variable and the latent construct. Secondly, the structural model of the construct was evaluated for building path linkages.

Measurement model

The study measured the reliability and validity of the concept according to the criteria set by Hair et al. [64]. Indicators with a factor loading of less than 0.7 were excluded from the analysis. The remaining indicators showed their dependability. The internal consistency was tested using Cronbach's Alpha (α) and composite reliability (ρ_c). The composite reliability score was between 0.847 to 0.912 while Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.741 to 0.838, indicating that the reliability indicators were significantly higher than the cutoff point of 0.7 [65]. The study evaluated the concept validity using convergent and discriminant validity methods as advised by Hair et al. [64]. All AVE values, ranging from 0.679 to 0.831, were above 0.5, indicating that the latent concept accounted for more than 50% of the indicators' variance and established convergent validity [66].

Table 3. Result measurement Model

| Construct | Items | Loading | AVE | ρ_c | α |
|--------------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|----------|----------|
| Sustainable brand loyalty (SBL) | SBL1 | 0.863 | 0.715 | 0.902 | 0.841 |
| | SBL2 | 0.775 | | | |
| | SBL3 | 0.852 | | | |
| | SBL4 | 0.837 | | | |
| Sustainable purchase behaviour (SPB) | SPB1 | 0.878 | 0.679 | 0.859 | 0.742 |
| | SPB2 | 0.843 | | | |
| | SPB3 | 0.735 | | | |
| | BIG1 | 0.746 | | | |
| Brand image (BI) | BIG2 | 0.813 | 0.717 | 0.847 | 0.731 |
| | BIG3 | 0.950 | | | |
| | BIG4 | 0.915 | | | |
| | EMA1 | 0.789 | | | |
| Sustainable marketing (SMA) | EMA2 | 0.883 | 0.831 | 0.922 | 0.851 |
| | EMA3 | 0.915 | | | |
| | BTR1 | 0.746 | | | |
| Brand trust (BTR) | BTR2 | 0.774 | 0.805 | 0.912 | 0.848 |
| | BTR3 | 0.964 | | | |

The latent variable correlation matrix (Table 4) diagonally displays the square roots of AVE values. Convergent validity for all constructs is confirmed by the fact that all off-diagonal correlation values are well below the square roots of AVE values [67]. Additionally, the findings indicate that respondents have a very favourable opinion of eco-friendly clothing regarding SPB, SMA, and BT. The measurement model's findings imply enough empirical data to support the constructs' reliability and validity. Kock [65] shows that demonstrating convergent and discriminant validity does not address typical method bias and suggests a comprehensive collinearity test. All of the latent constructs' VIF values were discovered to be lower than 3.3, which completely rules out model contamination by common method bias [68].

Table 4. Descriptive and Discriminant Validity

| | Mean | SD | SBL | SPB | BI | SMA | BTR |
|-----|-------|-------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| SBL | 3.740 | 0.867 | <i>0.845</i> | | | | |
| SPB | 3.450 | 0.794 | 0.343 | <i>0.824</i> | | | |
| BI | 4.418 | 0.946 | 0.367 | 0.461 | <i>0.846</i> | | |
| SMA | 3.450 | 0.794 | 0.343 | 0.435 | 0.452 | <i>0.911</i> | |
| BTR | 3.681 | 0.889 | 0.425 | 0.062 | 0.693 | 0.353 | <i>0.897</i> |

Structural model

Figure 2 illustrates the assessment of the structural model and the outcomes of the path analysis. R^2 values versus indicated ranges of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67, indicating weak, moderate, and considerable effects, respectively, were used to test the model's predictive power [69]. The reported R^2 values were 0.51 and 0.42, justifying the moderate effect of the predictor on the outcome variable. It was decided that Stone-Geisser Q^2 would assess the model's prediction through bootstrapping and cross-validated redundancy. With a default threshold of $Q^2 > 0$, the Q^2 data highlighted the importance of extrinsic constructs in predicting endogenous constructs. The choice to include secondary parameters in the model was supported by the finding that the Q^2 value was determined to be 0.271 using the non-parametric bootstrapping method, and the results are shown in Table. The predictor constructs SMA, BIG, BTR, and SBL predict the outcome variable with significant path coefficients (β) ranging between 0.445 to 0.224. The variance inflation factor (VIF) ranges from 1.336 to 2.832 [70], indicating no multicollinearity issue.

Table 5. Path Model Assessment

| Hypothesis | Relationship | β | t value | Decision | VIF |
|----------------|--------------|---------|---------|----------|-------|
| H ₁ | EMA-->BIG | 0.422 | 8.124 | Accepted | 1.647 |
| H ₂ | EMA-->BTR | 0.445 | 8.344 | Accepted | 1.336 |
| H ₃ | EMA-->SBL | 0.365 | 6.624 | Accepted | 1.684 |
| H ₄ | BIG-->SBL | 0.224 | 4.221 | Accepted | 2.832 |
| H ₅ | BTR-->SBL | 0.294 | 3.271 | Accepted | 1.455 |
| H ₆ | SBL-->SPB | 0.355 | 5.769 | Accepted | 1.671 |

Brand Image and Brand Trust Mediation Analysis

The potential mediating effect of brand image and trust on environmental marketing activity and sustainable brand loyalty was examined following the Preacher and Hayes procedure [71]. The two-step bootstrapping procedure first explores the indirect and then the direct effects. The two-step bootstrapping procedure was applied, as detailed in Figure 2. The direct effect and variance inflation factor (VIF) can examine the mediator effect. Mediation analysis results are represented in Table. The VIF value for both hypotheses is more than 20% of the threshold value, BIG is argued to have a mediation effect on the SMA-SBL relationship. Furthermore, BTR is argued to mediate the SMA-SBL relationship, and its magnitude is considered partial. These findings represented in the table support the hypothesis and confirm the mediating role of BIG and BTR in the SMA-SBL relationship.

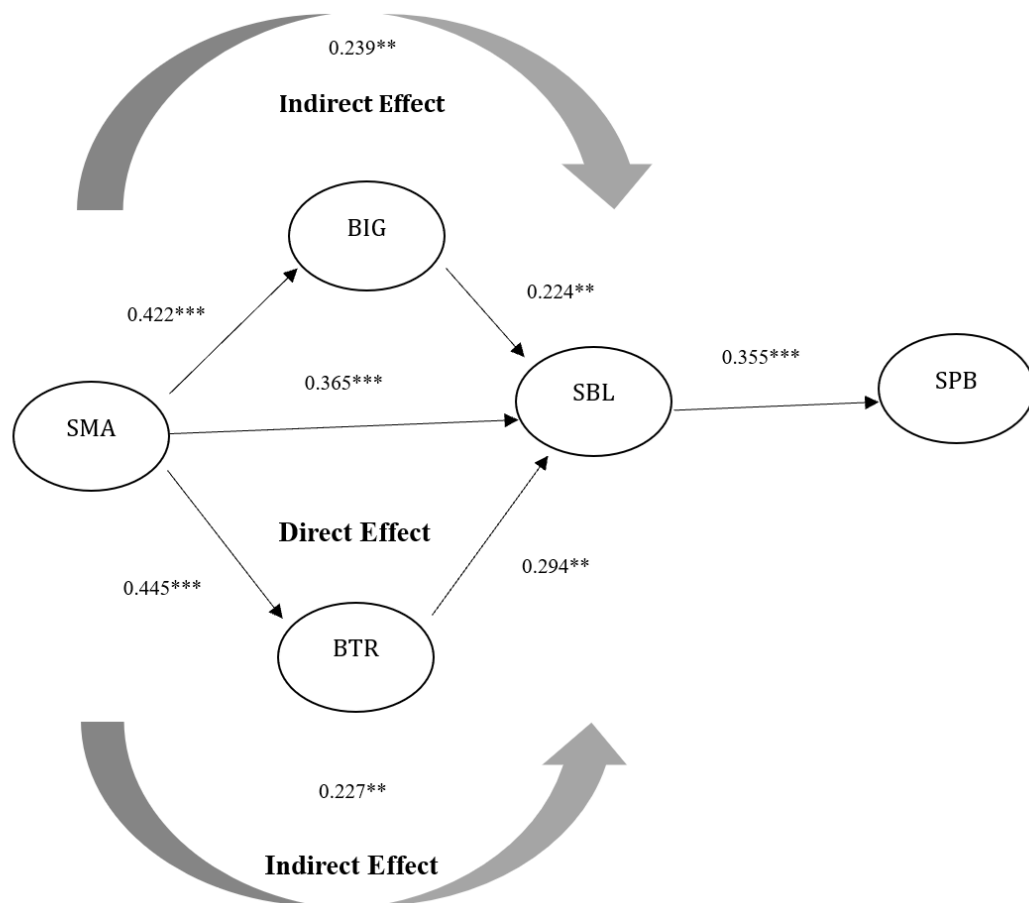


Figure 2. Structural model result

Table 6. Mediation Analysis

| Hypothesis | Effect | Path | Path Coef. | Indirect Effect | SD | Total Effect | VAF | t Value | P Value | Result |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|------------|------------|----------|
| H ₇ | Direct Effect | EMA---->SBL | 0.454 | | | | | 12.391 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| | | EMA---->SBL | 0.365 | | | | | | | |
| | Indirect Effect | EMA---->BIG | 0.422 | 0.239 | 0.024 | 0.554 | 0.239 | 2.029 | 0.020 | |
| | | BIG---->SBL | 0.224 | | | | | | | |
| H ₈ | | EMA---->SBL | 0.365 | | | | | | | Accepted |
| | Indirect Effect | EMA---->BTR | 0.445 | 0.227 | 0.038 | 0.469 | 0.213 | 2.645 | 0.010 | |
| | | BTR---->SBL | 0.224 | | | | | | | |

DISCUSSION

The objective of this research is to investigate the sustainable marketing practices of fashion apparel companies and how consumers perceive these practices. The primary aim is to identify the correlation between sustainable marketing initiatives, brand image, trust, loyalty, and sustainable purchase behaviour. The study emphasizes the behaviour of young fashion consumers and the significance of sustainable marketing activities on sustaining brand image and brand loyalty, which in turn significantly

impact sustainable purchase behaviour. By combining the concepts of brand image and brand loyalty, this research aims to enhance the understanding of sustainable marketing and develop sustainable purchase behaviour through an increase in sustainable brand image and green brand loyalty.

Sustainable marketing activity has been shown to have a significant positive impact on the brand image of established fashion brands. This means that economic activities like upgrading facilities and investing in technology to create a productive retail environment can positively impact customers' perception of brands. In other words, when the financial interests of customers and staff are aligned, it can lead to a better brand image. Furthermore, when a fashion brand adopts sustainable management practices, it demonstrates a global awareness of environmental issues to customers, which can further improve their brand perception [18]. In addition, this text explains how brand trust, sustainable marketing, and brand image affect consumer loyalty. It is known that trust, sustainable marketing, and brand image positively impact brand loyalty. A fashion brand can enhance customer relationships and gain market share by implementing eco-friendly marketing strategies. This approach can also help the brand to stand out from the competition in the fashion industry. By building a strong relationship with customers based on traditional fashion markets and consumer loyalty, the brand's image, consumer satisfaction, and trust will become the driving force, producing significant synergies from sustainable marketing operations [5]. Establishing a strong brand trust is essential for creating a long-lasting relationship between a brand and its customers. Customers' trust in a brand is not just based on logic but also elicits an emotional response. This emotional bond creates customer loyalty and the desire to buy the brand's products. Research indicates that brand loyalty is a market-based resource that can provide sustainable competitive advantages. Moreover, these findings also support the link between sustainable marketing practices and brand loyalty. By using integrated marketing communication, marketers can engage with customers through various touchpoints, creating a chain reaction that strengthens brand trust and loyalty [10]. Furthermore, the study identifies three ways to strengthen sustainable brand loyalty. Firstly, it can be done through the direct impact of sustainable marketing activity on brand loyalty. Secondly, it can be done through strengthening the brand image and lastly through brand trust. Brand loyalty was found to be the strong precursor for sustainable purchase behaviour. Firms can enhance their sustainable brand image and attract customers with sustainable brand loyalty by seizing every opportunity to engage in sustainable activities. Given that resources are limited, firms must allocate their resources effectively to support and invest in sustainability. By doing so, they can develop the two positive determinants of sustainable brand image and brand loyalty, encouraging customers to engage in sustainable purchase behaviour [72].

This study has a few limitations that need to be considered. First, it only included educated young people from the National Capital Region of India. This may affect the generalization of the study

findings. Second, the study used a cross-sectional research design to assess purchase behaviour. It is worth noting that loyalty was a precursor to actual purchase behaviour, highlighting a loyalty-behaviour gap explored within the boundary of limited variables. Third, as a quantitative study, the conclusions were drawn from the information gathered through a closed-ended questionnaire.

CONCLUSION

The research focuses on the influence of sustainable marketing activities on a company's brand image in the traditional fashion market. It considers various factors such as economic, social, environmental, and cultural aspects. The study provides a foundation for future research in related fields. It also confirms the link between sustainable marketing, perception, and purchasing behaviour. This research model is unique as it examines existing fast fashion brands, which is relatively rare. Its contribution to the existing academic literature will aid future research on the traditional fashion market. The research has uncovered significant practical implications. "Firstly, Sustainable marketing practices - incorporating economic, social, and environmental factors - can significantly impact a brand's image, and customer loyalty, and promote sustainable purchasing habits. Therefore, companies looking to improve their customers' sustainable purchase behaviour should work towards reducing scepticism surrounding sustainable products and improving their brand image and loyalty. To achieve customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty, fashion market organizations must improve their brand image. One effective strategy is to engage in sustainable marketing practices that prioritize economic, social, environmental, and cultural concerns. Such practices are vital for the survival of fashion market organizations operating in rapidly changing market environments. Secondly, companies need to focus on building a sustainable brand image as it plays a significant role in influencing consumer behaviour. By improving their sustainable brand loyalty, they can encourage more customers to adopt green purchase behaviour. Marketers should research traditional fashion market strategies while keeping in mind the diverse needs of consumers. For instance, a traditional fashion market can organize festivals and support social, environmental, and cultural events to create a positive image among the locals. Such initiatives are likely to positively impact the brand's image and reputation. Thirdly, companies must raise their consumers' green brand loyalty to encourage sustainable purchase behaviour. To establish consumer loyalty towards a brand that promotes sustainability, a business must undertake sustainable practices in various aspects of its operations. This includes sourcing sustainable materials, adopting eco-friendly manufacturing processes, and investing in innovative green products and services. The company should communicate its eco-friendly initiatives and an authentic sustainability narrative transparently to build trust with consumers. Educating customers about sustainable choices fosters awareness and loyalty. Moreover, involving customers in green initiatives or supporting environmental causes fosters a sense

of community and strengthens the bond between the brand and its eco-conscious audience. In conclusion, a holistic approach to sustainability, clear communication, and active consumer engagement are key strategies for developing and enhancing green brand loyalty.

The study suggests that the findings were consistent with existing research in India. Further studies should be conducted using a wider demographic base and random or stratified sample selection to validate these findings. In the future, researchers can conduct a cross-cultural study to validate the findings and compare different product categories. However, future research could include qualitative elements to capture latent or deep human concerns that cannot be accurately measured through a questionnaire, especially when examining consumers' emotional reactions to sustainable brands and products. The research findings are valuable to academics, professionals, managers, and decision-makers and can be used as a reference for further studies.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization – Neha; methodology – Joshi P; formal analysis – Kumar N and Joshi P; writing-original draft preparation – Neha and Kumar N. All authors contributed to the article equally. The authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

No conflict of interest was reported.

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