Lisbon School of Economics & Management
Universidade de Lisboa

MASTER

MASTER'S IN MANAGEMENT (MIM)

MASTER´S FINAL WORK

DISSERTATION

CONSUMER ATTITUDES TOWARDS BRANDS: THE INFLUENCE OF SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES AND BRAND EQUITY

BENTE JULIA JOHANNA BROEKMAN

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List of Abbreviations

CBBE – Consumer-Based Brand Equity

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

CSRD – Corporate Social Responsibility Directive

ESG – Environmental Social Governance

EFRAG – European Sustainability Reporting Advisory Group

ESRS – European Sustainability Reporting Standard

NFRD – Non-Financial Reporting Directive

ABSTRACT

Sustainability has become a key driver in shaping consumer perceptions and brand equity in the fashion industry. As consumers demand transparency in supply chains and business practices, the green market continues to grow (Gazzola et al., 2020; Ciasullo et al., 2017). In response, fashion brands publish ESG reports to build consumer trust (Aureli et al., 2020). However, the broad and often vague concept of "sustainability" has led to unverified claims, increasing corporate greenwashing scandals. Consequently, consumer trust in CSR reports has declined, affecting perceptions of sustainability efforts (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010; Gosselt et al., 2017; He et al., 2020).

This dissertation examines the influence of perceived sustainability and green brand equity on consumer attitudes and behavioral outcomes such as brand recommendations and purchase intentions. By using the CBBE model (Aaker, 1991), in combination with insights on sustainability (Ciasullo et al., 2017; Diallo et al., 2020), this study investigates the role of brand equity dimensions in the formation of green brand equity and the effect they have on behavioral outcomes. A mono-method quantitative research design was employed, with data collected through an online survey distributed among consumers familiar with sustainability-related brand communication.

The study utilized Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess the relationships between perceived sustainability, green brand equity, consumer attitudes, and behavioral outcomes. A sample of 198 valid responses was analyzed to test the proposed hypotheses. The results present a significant influence on consumer attitudes, in which brand loyalty and perceived quality contribute the most to green brand equity. Contrarily, brand awareness and brand associations showed weaker correlations with green brand equity, suggesting skepticism toward sustainability claims. Consumer attitudes were found to strongly predict both brand recommendations and purchase intentions. These findings highlight the need for transparent and credible sustainability communication to enhance consumer trust and engagement.

Keywords: Sustainability Communication; Green Brand Equity; Consumer Attitudes; Purchase Intention; Recommendation; CSRD; Fashion Industry

RESUMO

A sustentabilidade tornou-se um fator chave na formação das percepções dos consumidores e do valor da marca na indústria da moda. À medida que os consumidores exigem mais transparência nas cadeias de suprimentos e nas práticas empresariais, o mercado verde continua a crescer (Gazzola et al., 2020; Ciasullo et al., 2017). Em resposta, marcas de moda publicam relatórios ESG para construir confiança com os consumidores (Aureli et al., 2020). No entanto, o conceito amplo e muitas vezes vago de "sustentabilidade" tem levado a declarações não verificadas, aumentando os escândalos de greenwashing corporativo. Consequentemente, a confiança dos consumidores nos relatórios de responsabilidade social corporativa (CSR) tem diminuído, afetando a percepção dos esforços de sustentabilidade (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010; Gosselt et al., 2017; He et al., 2020).

Esta dissertação examina a influência da sustentabilidade percebida e do valor de marca verde nas atitudes dos consumidores e nos comportamentos, como recomendações de marca e intenções de compra. Utilizando o modelo CBBE (Aaker, 1991), em combinação com estudos sobre sustentabilidade (Ciasullo et al., 2017; Diallo et al., 2020), este estudo investiga o papel das dimensões do valor da marca na formação do valor de marca verde e o efeito que exercem sobre os comportamentos dos consumidores. Foi adotado um desenho de pesquisa quantitativo de método único, com dados coletados por meio de um questionário online distribuído a consumidores familiarizados com a comunicação de marcas voltada à sustentabilidade.

O estudo utilizou a modelagem de equações estruturais por mínimos quadrados parciais (PLS-SEM) para avaliar as relações entre sustentabilidade percebida, valor de marca verde, atitudes dos consumidores e comportamentos. Uma amostra de 198 respostas válidas foi analisada para testar as hipóteses propostas. Os resultados apresentam uma influência significativa sobre as atitudes dos consumidores, nas quais a lealdade à marca e a qualidade percebida contribuem mais fortemente para o valor de marca verde. Por outro lado, a notoriedade da marca e as associações com a marca apresentaram correlações mais fracas, sugerindo ceticismo em relação às alegações de sustentabilidade. As atitudes dos consumidores mostraram forte capacidade preditiva tanto para

recomendações quanto para intenções de compra. As conclusões destacam a necessidade de uma comunicação de sustentabilidade transparente e credível para fortalecer a confiança e o engajamento dos consumidores.

Palavras-chave: Comunicação de Sustentabilidade; Valor da Marca Verde; Atitude do Consumidor; Intenção de Compra; Recomendação; CSRD; Indústria da Moda.

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I would like to express my deepest and most heartfelt appreciation to my family. To my father and eldest brother, whose unwavering support and encouragement over the years have been invaluable at every step of the way.

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Lastly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Santiago, for her invaluable guidance and support throughout this research.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Academic and Business Relevance

In the last two decades, the fashion industry underwent a notable expansion due to the rise of fast fashion (Fletcher, 2010). Fast fashion, a concept known for its low predictability, high impulse purchasing, and short garment life cycle (Fernie & Sparks, 1998), has come with an environmental cost (Gazzola et al., 2020). The United Nations declares the fashion industry the second most polluting industry on the planet. Contributing 8% to all carbon emissions and 20% to all global wastewater (2019). The industry is single-handedly responsible for more carbon emissions than international flights and shipping combined and uses 93 billion cubic meters of water annually (United Nations, 2019).

The environment pays the price for the rapidly growing and ever-evolving industry (Gazzola et al., 2020), and more and more people have started paying attention to sustainable development (Zhang & Dong, 2020). The rising interest in sustainability is reflected by consumers expecting more transparency from retailers and their supply chains. Demanding information regarding the provenance of goods and the quality of materials used (Gazzola et al., 2020). Sustainability has been leading in the consumer's purchasing behavior, making the green market grow (Ciasullo et al., 2017). Consumers started selecting products that closely align with their beliefs and needs, especially in terms of sustainability (Ciasullo et al., 2017). To stay relevant, fashion brands simultaneously started publishing information on their environmental and governance aspects through public reports. In those reports, their ethical practices and environmental claims are communicated (Aureli et al., 2020).

However, due to the generality of the term and concept of "sustainability", many companies and fashion brands were spreading unverified information about their business practices and were at risk of being misunderstood (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). The increase in CSR reports arose together with corporate greenwashing scandals. Consumers no longer trusted companies with their environmental statements and it influenced the way they viewed CSR practices (Gosselt et al., 2017; He et al., 2020). To regulate the communication efforts around sustainability, the European Union adopted the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (2023). This is a directive that aims to provide consumers with the information to make informed purchases and companies with the tools to improve their environmental footprint. When CSR strategies are grounded in daily business operations, a company has a

high chance of achieving positive green brand equity. Accordingly, research shows how CSR signals can increase performance and brand value (Baalbaki & Guzman 2016; Heinberg et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2015) and encourage purchases (Andorfer & Liebe 2011; Ki & Kim 2016; Chen, 2009). The effects of building strong and loyal consumer-brand relationships manifest several outcomes (Dowling, 2002). Positive attitudes toward a brand, and alignment with personal values, increase the likelihood of getting a customer's recommendation. Initiatives like Environmental Social Governance (ESG) practices and consistent quality assurance, not only add to a positive customer attitude but also effectively convert into sales (Saeed et al., 2023).

1.2. Objectives of the Investigation

Sustainability in the fashion industry is becoming a growing factor in consumer brand perception. It builds on green brand equity and results in customer recommendation and purchasing intention. With the CSRD, fashion brands are forced to report on their environmental impact. But to what extent does reporting on sustainability practices influence consumer's perceptions and buying intention? There remains a limited understanding of what "sustainability" means and the influence of openly communicating on environmental practices.

By investigating this relationship, the study aims to provide insights into how consumers perceive sustainability efforts and how these perceptions translate into green brand equity, and behavioral outcomes. To achieve this, the research is guided by three key questions.

1. How do consumers' perceptions of sustainability practices impact their consumer attitudes toward fashion brands?
2. How do the four dimensions of green brand equity, both individually and collectively, shape consumer attitudes toward sustainable fashion brands?
3. To what extent do consumer attitudes drive behavioral outcomes such as brand recommendations and purchasing intentions?

By addressing these questions, this dissertation seeks to untangle the interactions between sustainability communication, brand equity, and consumer decision-making in the fashion industry, offering insights into consumer-brand relationships in the context of sustainability.

1.3. Structure of the Document

This document is composed of six chapters. Chapter one initiates a brief introduction to the subject of this dissertation, the role sustainability practices, and brand equity play in the fashion industry and influence consumer attitudes. Emphasis is placed on the Academic and Business relevant to the main Objective of the Investigation. Chapter two is dedicated to the Literature Review related to the study, examining the rapid growth of the fashion industry, the impact of its changing supply chain, and the rise of sustainability practices and consumer interests. It includes a comprehensive analysis of the independent and dependent variables inherent in the adopted models. Chapter three presents the Structure of the Conceptual model. Subsequently, Chapter Four, the Methodology, articulates the Study design, Sample Selection, and the Data Collection Instruments and Procedures. Chapter Five delves into the Data Analysis. Finally, Chapter Six discusses the limitations of the study and the conclusion of the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Rise of Sustainability in the Fashion Industry

According to Fernie and Sparks (1998), fashion is characterized by several marketing factors, such as high impulse purchasing, shorter life cycles, and high market unpredictability. Fast fashion is characterized as a business model centered on the continuous introduction of affordable, trend-driven products to meet consumer demand, as discussed by Niinimäki (2020). There is an increase in the number of fashion seasons, forcing retailers to long for low-cost production and rapid speed-to-market supply chains (Doyle et al., 2006). The rapid expansion of the industry comes with changing dynamics. To compete and assure profitability in the market, American and European retailers started outsourcing their production to low-wage Asian countries (Harrell-Cook et al., 2001). Enabling a cheap fast-fashion model meeting the more responsive production times with new manufacturing practices (Fernie & Azuma 2004; Niinimäki et al., 2020). The rapid rise of fast fashion is paired with a great impact on the environment, amplifying problems such as a high discharge of precarious chemicals, high water consumption, an increase in waste, and human rights violations. Together, this increases greenhouse gas emissions (Gazzola et al., 2020).

The growing environmental threats led to an increasing number of people paying attention to sustainable development (Zhang & Dong, 2020). Consumers are expecting more and more transparency across the entire value chain. They want more information about the provenance of goods and the quality of materials used (Gazzola et al., 2020). Sustainability has become progressively more important due to its likely ability to influence consumer's perceptions and purchasing decisions. People seem to select products that align with their needs and beliefs, especially when it comes to sustainability (Ciasullo et al., 2017). As a result, the "green market" is growing (Diamantopoulos et al., 2003). The demand for environmentally friendly consumption drives firms to develop green marketing strategies. Those strategies are designed to prove to consumers that brands are socially and environmentally responsible (Zhang et al., 2018). Brands are responding by trying to be more transparent (Gazzola et al., 2020). They self-publish annual CSR reports showcasing their ethical practices. However, most claims are unverifiable by third parties and are of little interest to most consumers (Fieseler et al., 2009; Pomering & Dolnicar, 2008).

The present era of globalization pays great attention to sustainability claims by products and brands, which companies make to meet customer expectations (Cherrier et al., 2011). Many studies attempted to research and define the term sustainability, and whereas some studies are limited in their view of what sustainability means, others state that the concept can only be explained by looking at an interconnection of multiple aspects (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). For instance, literature on Operations Management tends to consider sustainability from an ecological perspective, often overlooking social aspects (Sarkis, 2001; Hill, 2001; Daily & Huang, 2001). In contrast, the study from Carter and Rogers (2008) presents sustainability from a wider point of view, including economic, social, and environmental aspects in addition to the more standard business aspects such as risk management, transparency, and culture. Some consider the definition stated in the Brundtland report as the "leading" meaning of sustainability. The Brundtland Report, officially titled *Our Common Future*, was published and sponsored by the United Nations' World Commission in 1987 and introduced the concept of sustainable development. It emphasized the need to balance economic growth with environmental protection to ensure long-term viability. The report defined sustainability as meeting present needs without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to fulfill their own requirements.

2.1.1. Regulations around CSR

Over the past decade, the pressure on companies to disclose information on their environmental impact has grown (Kim & Lyon, 2014; Marquis et al., 2016). Stakeholders, like investors, consumers, and government institutions, started selecting products and companies that aligned closely with their personal needs and beliefs, especially in terms of sustainability (Ciasullo et al., 2017). Consequently, the green market and communication effort around it grew (Diamantopoulos et al., 2003). Nowadays, organizations worldwide provide information on ESG aspects through integrated reports (De Villiers & Sharma, 2017). These reports are also known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reports. Most of these reports have been voluntary. However, due to the generality of the concept of "sustainability", there is a growing risk with public reporting, which is to be misunderstood, or spreading unverified information (Cherrier et al., 2011). This subsequently can result in greenwashing (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). According to Delmas and Burbano (2011), greenwashing occurs when a company publicly promotes its environmental efforts while failing to achieve meaningful environmental performance.

The increasing number of corporate greenwashing scandals have influenced how consumers view companies' CSR practices (Gosselt et al., 2017; He et al., 2020). Due to the issues of voluntary reporting, the European Union (EU) started to regulate communication efforts. In 2014, the advent of the EU Directive 2014/95, forced large companies to disclose non-financial information. This directive aimed to increase accountability, transparency, and comparability among corporations to inform stakeholders. As part of the EU Green Deal and to further regulate the communication efforts, the EU launched several more directives in 2020. As stated by the EU (2021), the EU Green Deal is constructed on a clean and circular economy. It strives to make Europe the first climate-neutral[1] continent by 2050. On April 21, 2021, the European Commission introduced the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). The CSRD amends the predecessor Non-Financial Reporting Directive[2] (NFRD). The CSRD significantly increases reporting requirements on the companies falling within its scope to broaden the availability of sustainability information for stakeholders. All listed companies[3] must disclose information on their environmental impact. The CSRD covers various areas, including sustainability, human rights, labor practices, charitable contributions, and community involvement. Companies subjected to the CSRD must report according to the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS). The objective of the ESRS is to specify the sustainability information that a company discloses following the Directive (EU) 2023.2772. The ESRS is developed in draft form by the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG). On 22 December 2023, the first set of ESRS was published under the form of a delegated regulation in the Official Journal. The standards specify the information that a company must disclose about its material impact, risks, and opportunities concerning ESG sustainability matters. As stated in Directive 2023.2772, the ESRS aims to enable readers of sustainability statements to make informed and substantiated decisions based on their understanding of the materials' impact on the ESG aspects of the company in question.

From an environmental economics standpoint, CSRD reporting can be interpreted as an initiative to internalize negative externalities, such as pollution and unethical labor practices in

[1] Climate-neutral means net-zero emissions.

[2] The NFRD, is the original EU directive that first required large-public entities companies to publish information on non-financial matters such as environmental impact, social matters, respect for human right and anti-corruption measures (European Parliament, 2021).

[3] The CSRD applies to large public-interest entities with over 500 employees, as outlined in Articles 19a and 29a of Directive 2013/34/EU. It extends reporting requirements to all large undertakings and listed companies (excluding micro undertakings), with small and medium-sized listed entities allowed to follow tailored sustainability standards. Additionally, parent undertakings of large groups are also required to report at the group level.

the fashion industry. The CSRD is a reporting outline that guides companies to inform stakeholders in a clear and structured way. The CSRD should improve the perceived value of sustainability and how consumers perceive a brand. As sustainability becomes a priority, consumers are more inclined to support brands that align with their values and demonstrate a commitment to sustainable practices (Ciasullo et al., 2017; Gazzola et al., 2020). Sustainability has shifted to a primary key driver when deciding to purchase and interact with a brand. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed (H1): *There is a positive relationship between the perceived value of sustainability and consumer attitudes.*

2.1.2. The Economic Impact of NFRD

The rise of sustainability and ESG regulation has had a notable impact on the economy. Cuomo et al. (2022) found that the association between the Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) transparency is stronger for smaller firms and well-known companies. In the case of smaller firms, the adoption of CSR reporting significantly strengthened the effects of CSR. Furthermore, the study by Cuomo et al. (2022) indicates that, following the directive's enactment, firms publishing sustainability reports experienced lower systematic risk. Given the stricter guidelines and broader scope of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), it can be assumed that companies will experience even lower systematic risk, further enhancing their financial stability and brand strength.

The research also highlights the capital efficiency and investment attraction that accompany new sustainability legislation and the broader shift toward ESG-focused corporate practices. According to Ottenstein et al. (2022), firms integrating ESG reporting into their corporate strategies gain a competitive advantage, which enhances brand reputation, consumer trust, and long-term profitability. Their findings suggest that firms covered in their study provided four percentage points more sustainability information than the propensity score, and they were 19 percent more likely to be perceived as credible. However, their research also indicates that the NFRD alone was not the decisive factor in firms' adoption of Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) guidelines.

2.1.3. Implications for the Future Economic Impact

The CSRD is expected to bring further economic implications, influencing financial stability, investment flows, competitive positioning, and compliance costs. With stricter

disclosure requirements, companies are likely to benefit from greater financial stability, reduced market volatility, and increased investor confidence due to improved transparency (Cuomo et al., 2022). This aligns with findings that suggest enhanced capital efficiency and investment attraction, as firms adhering to CSRD standards are expected to gain preferential access to sustainable investment funds and institutional capital, leading to lower financing costs.

Furthermore, Ottenstein et al. (2022) emphasize that ESG integration offers firms a competitive edge, reinforcing brand reputation, consumer trust, and long-term profitability. Companies that proactively comply with CSRD requirements are more likely to differentiate themselves in the market, securing higher valuations and stronger customer loyalty. Additionally, the directive's focus on supply chain transparency may drive innovation in sustainability practices, compelling firms to adopt higher environmental and social standards beyond the European Union (EU).

It can be inferred that the CSRD will further enhance long-term corporate resilience, investor attractiveness, and global sustainability standards, positioning sustainability as a key driver of economic growth.

2.2. The Influence of Green Brand Equity

While definitions of brand equity vary, most researchers agree that brand equity represents the added value a brand provides to consumers (Hanaysha et al., 2013). According to Kim et al. (2003), brand equity can be categorized into three perspectives: financial-based brand equity, consumer-based brand equity, and employee-based brand equity. The financial perspective evaluates a brand's market value and financial impact, often using mathematical models to assess its worth (Simon & Sullivan, 1993). The employee-based perspective considers how brand equity influences employees' engagement and perceptions of a company (King & Grace, 2010). Finally, the consumer-based perspective, which is the focus of this research, examines how consumers perceive and respond to a brand, shaping its overall equity (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996).

In the 1990s, customer-centered brand equity was introduced into business literature and gained significant academic attention (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1998). Aaker & Keller developed complementary models. Keller's (1993)

Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model focuses on how consumers create brand equity through their perceptions. The CBBE model emphasizes the importance of brand knowledge, consisting of brand awareness and image, which consequently drives consumer responses. Aaker's (1991) model takes a broader approach to brand equity. His model is built on five dimensions that contribute to brand value: brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and overall brand equity.

This research examines consumer-based brand equity according to Aaker's (1991) five dimensions. To analyze green brand equity, Aaker's model is adjusted to apply only to brands that are perceived as sustainable. Consumer perceptions of brand equity are influenced by various factors, including sustainability. Sustainability has become a key driver in shaping consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions (Ciasullo et al., 2017). Consumers increasingly favor brands that align with their values, particularly regarding sustainability, and both consumers and stakeholders recognize its influence on market outcomes (Ciasullo et al., 2017).

Embedding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into daily operations has been shown to enhance brand equity (Chandler, 2017). CSR initiatives contribute to brand value by strengthening consumer trust and loyalty (Baalbaki & Guzman, 2016; Heinberg et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2015), ultimately encouraging purchasing behaviors (Andorfer & Liebe, 2011; Ki & Kim, 2016). According to Chen (2009), increasing green brand equity requires efforts to enhance green brand image, green satisfaction, and green trust. Many renowned organizations have integrated sustainability into their business models, recognizing its strategic importance in shaping brand perception (Royne et al., 2011; Ishaq & Di Maria, 2019).

This section of the literature review analyzes academic work relevant to sustainability and Aaker's brand equity dimensions. It examines how brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty are influenced by perceptions of sustainability.

2.2.1. The Impact of Brand Awareness on Green Brand Equity

Brand awareness represents to what extent consumers are familiar with and can recognize a brand under numerous conditions. According to Aaker (1991), awareness serves as an essential pillar for consumer perception. It involves two elements: the recognition of a brand and the capacity to recall it when a specific product is mentioned. Awareness is the ability to confirm prior exposure to a brand. Greater brand awareness enhances the likelihood that a brand will

stay longer and more vividly in the consumer's consideration set during decision-making, thereby increasing the likelihood of purchase. Greater brand awareness positively influences consumer perception of brand equity. It enhances trust and purchase likelihood in green markets and directly impacts perceived green brand equity (Joshi, 2024). A variety of empirical studies demonstrate that brands with greater awareness achieve stronger customer loyalty, positively influencing their attitude towards the brand and likelihood to purchase (Hoyer & Brown, 1990). Brand awareness is believed to directly influence green brand equity by strengthening consumer trust, loyalty, and purchase intentions. The higher levels of awareness that are influenced by the conception of sustainability, the more likely greater green brand equity is achieved. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed (H2a): *There is a positive relationship between brand awareness and overall green brand equity.*

2.2.2. The Impact of Brand Quality on Green Brand Equity

Perceived quality is one of the key attributes of brand equity and central to measuring the concept (Aaker, 1996). It represents the overall assessment of a product and strongly influences consumers' judgments and purchase decisions According to Zeithaml (1988), perceived quality plays an essential role in shaping customer satisfaction and value perceptions. Quality is a subjective factor influenced by elements such as performance, reliability, and consistency. High-quality perceptions allow brands to justify premium pricing and build customer trust. The perception of quality plays an important role for fashion consumers when evaluating the sustainable practices of a brand (Wang et al., 2018). In the fashion industry, sustainable clothing items are often associated with higher costs due to environmentally friendly materials and ethical practices. Brands rely on perceived quality to enhance their value proposition. As Wang et al. (2018) highlights, perceived quality serves as the foundation for nurturing long-term brand equity, particularly in markets where genericization poses challenges to differentiation. Satisfaction with sustainability brings greater customer equity to companies and brands through stronger customer relationships (Liang et al., 2024). High-quality perceptions enable brands to justify premium pricing and build consumer trust (Zeithaml, 1988). Therefore, in this research, it is hypothesized that there is a positive relation between quality and green brand equity (H2b): *There is a positive relation between quality and overall green brand equity.*

2.2.3. The Impact of Brand Association on Green Brand Equity

According to Aaker (1995), brand association refers to a concept that includes factors that come to mind and create a "connection" to the brand. Consumers have a variety of associations with brands. These associations influence the attitudes and purchase intention toward a brand (Aaker, 1995; Low & Lamb, 2000). Their association indicates the most representative experiences, knowledge, feelings, and evaluations related to the brand (Hill & Lee, 2015; Aaker, 1995). It is the link between cognitive and emotional association built from attributes such as benefits and symbolic meanings that makes a brand stand out in the marketplace. Keller (1993) accentuates that a strong and unique brand association is the foundation of customer-based brand equity since it evokes positive emotions and creates value beyond functional benefits. Recent studies have highlighted the important role brand association plays in enhancing the image and equity sustainable fashion brands hold. Consumers associate terms like "eco-friendly" and "eco-friendly fabric" with sustainable fashion brands. Sustainable brands benefit from these associations as they resonate with consumers' growing environmental and ethical concerns. Highlighting the significant role of CSR exposure in consumer perception and brand association (Kim & Oh, 2020). Therefore, the hypothesis proves a positive relation between brand association and overall green brand equity (H2c): *There is a positive relation between Brand Association and overall green brand equity.*

2.2.4. The Impact of Loyalty on Green Brand Equity

Brand loyalty is both behavioral and attitudinal, serving as the backbone of brand equity. It stabilizes revenue streams and reduces marketing costs associated with acquiring new customers (Aaker, 1996). By prioritizing and fostering strong consumer-brand relationships, marketers can achieve their strategic goals (Lau & Lee, 1999). A critical driver of brand loyalty is customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction directly influences the repurchasing intentions of a consumer (Eggert & Ulaga, 2002; Liao et al., 2009). Grubor and Milovanov (2017) emphasize the importance of consumer knowledge in fostering and promoting sustainable consumption behavior. Consumers are more likely to support brands that integrate sustainability into their business model, enhancing loyalty and green brand equity. Consumer satisfaction related to a brand's sustainability practices brings greater customer equity and relations (Liang et al., 2024). Kong et al. (2014) state that incorporating sustainability factors, like eco-labels and green product value, positively influences consumers' purchasing intentions. Brands can leverage their loyal customer base to share sustainability values and

promote environmental messaging (Kumar & Christodoulopoulou, 2013). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis states the following (H2d): *There is a positive relation between loyalty and overall green brand equity.*

2.3. The Impact of Green Brand Equity on Consumer Attitude

Brand equity shapes how customers connect with a brand emotionally and what their perception of a brand is. A higher brand equity creates a more positive relation between a customer's view of a brand compared to one of its competitors (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). The four dimensions discussed in the previous paragraph all contribute to brand equity and in turn, influence the way customers interact with a brand and therefore their attitude. According to Gidwani (2013), sustainability performance and brand value are positively related. CSR contributes positively to a company's reputation (Turban & Greening, 1997). Positive brand experiences enhance consumer-based brand equity, which in turn fosters favorable consumer attitudes and strengthens brand loyalty (Iglesias et al., 2019). Therefore, the literature review supports the following hypothesis (H3): *There is a positive relationship between overall green brand equity and overall consumer attitude.*

2.4. The Consequences of Consumer Attitude

The relationship between consumers and brands goes beyond repurchasing due to satisfaction with the brand's performance or service. It includes consumers attributing personality to brands and forming relationships like those between humans (Liang et al., 2024). The effects of building consumer-brand relationships show in several relationship-building outcomes, such as behavioral loyalty and attitudinal attachment. These outcomes surface as the results of successful consumer–brand relationship-building efforts. The relationship encompasses more than traditional transactional interactions, developing into a more compound and multifaceted connection that mirrors human interpersonal relationships (Dowling, 2002).

2.4.1 Customer Recommendation

Sweeney and Swait (2007) detected that trust in a brand fosters emotional connections, encouraging customer recommendations. Brands active in sectors that are becoming more sustainability-focused, experience a greater likelihood of being advocated by consumers when they are perceived as environmentally responsible (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Brands that align with consumer values have an amplified chance of being recommended, customers see

such advocacy as an extension of their own identity. Recent research by Iglesias et al. (2019) demonstrates that consumer-brand relationships rooted in authenticity and shared values significantly strengthen word-of-mouth advocacy. This indicates that ethical and sustainable practices not only enhance trust but also drive customer behavior, reinforcing brand loyalty and engagement. Positive attitudes towards a brand, built on trust, satisfaction, and alignment with personal values, significantly increase the likelihood of customers recommending the brand to others. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed (H4): *There is a positive relationship between consumer attitude and customer recommendation.*

2.4.2. Purchase Intention

Consumer attitudes, in addition to recommendation intention, directly impact purchasing intentions, reflecting the degree to which positive brand perceptions translate into consumer behavior. Brands with high equity foster trust and reliability, which lower the perceived risk of purchase and encourage customers to choose their products or services over competitors (Hoyer & Brown, 1990). Furthermore, ethical, and sustainable branding has been shown to influence purchasing decisions, particularly among younger and socially conscious consumers (Joergens, 2006; Bray et al., 2010). Studies such as Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau (2019) and Ham et al. (2021) demonstrate that millennials and Gen Z express a strong preference for brands that prioritize sustainability and ethical practices. Amplifying the growing role of ESG aspects in influencing purchase decisions. Consequently, businesses that invest in brand equity through initiatives like ESG strategies and green marketing effectively foster positive consumer perceptions and convert them into sales. Research by Saeed et al. (2023) highlights the positive impact of sustainability perceptions on consumer decisions. Consequently, companies investing in brand equity through initiatives like ESG practices and consistent quality assurance not only shape positive consumer attitudes but also effectively convert those attitudes into sales. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis states that (H5): *There is a positive relationship between consumer attitude and purchase intention.*

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The goal of this study is to evaluate and understand how sustainability practices and green brand equity influence consumer attitudes and how these attitudes subsequently drive behavioral outcomes. The developed conceptual framework builds on Ciasullo et al. (2017) and Dialloi et al. (2020) theory, illustrating the relationships between sustainability and green brand equity and how these two factors drive consumer perceptions and behavioral actions.

The framework identifies the perceived value of sustainability as a critical factor influencing consumer attitudes. Sustainability is a leading factor in modern consumer decision-making. It reflects to which extent brands align with their ethical and environmental practices. Ciasullo et al. (2017) and Gazzola et al. (2020) underscore the role of sustainability in fostering consumer trust, loyalty, and perceptions. Consequently, this study posits that heightened perceptions of sustainability value positively impact consumer attitudes (H1). Building upon Aaker's (1991) conceptualization of brand equity, this study further integrates the multidimensional aspects of brand equity; awareness (H2a), perceived quality (H2b), brand associations (H2c), and loyalty (H2d), within the context of sustainable fashion brands, thereby contributing to the understanding of green brand equity.

Based on the literature review, the dimensions positively influence overall green brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). By examining the overall green brand equity, it is shown that it is a positive driver of consumer attitudes toward brands (H3). Consumer attitudes are central to the framework, connecting sustainability and brand equity to behavioral outcomes. Positive consumer attitudes, reflecting trust, satisfaction, and alignment with personal values, are hypothesized to influence behavioral outcomes such as recommendations and purchase intentions (Iglesias et al., 2019; Turban & Greening, 1997). Aligning with the findings of Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2000), recommendations represent behaviors wherein consumers endorse brands that resonate with their values and ethical stances (H4). Similarly, studies such as Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau (2019) and Ham et al. (2021), presented that purchase intentions reflect consumers' likelihood of choosing sustainable brands, driven by positive attitudes and perceptions of brand equity (H5).

The frameworks proposed by Ciasullo et al. (2017) and Diallo et al. (2020) identify the importance and influence of perceived sustainability and the multidimensional facets of brand equity on consumer attitudes. As mentioned earlier, this research builds upon Aaker's (1991)

foundational conceptualization of Brand Equity and its five dimensions. While Aaker's work serves as the theoretical foundation, this study integrates more recent perspectives from Ciasullo et al. (2017) and Diallo et al. (2020) to adapt the concept to contemporary sustainability-driven branding. The dimensions of brand equity have been adjusted to align with the focus on green brand equity, incorporating insights from both older and more recent academic contributions. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework for this dissertation. The conceptual framework is derived from the literature review and the frameworks proposed by Ciasullo et al. (2017), Diallo et al. (2020), and Aaker (1991). It illustrates the relationships between the perceived value of sustainability, overall green brand equity, consumer attitudes, and behavioral outcomes in the fashion industry. The perceived value of sustainability serves as a key independent variable, influencing consumer attitudes (H1), and reflecting the extent to which consumers perceive a brand's ethical practices. Simultaneously, green brand equity, encompassing awareness (H2a), perceived quality (H2b), associations (H2c), and loyalty (H2d), also shapes consumer attitudes (H3). Consumer attitudes influence recommendation (H4) and purchase intention (H5).

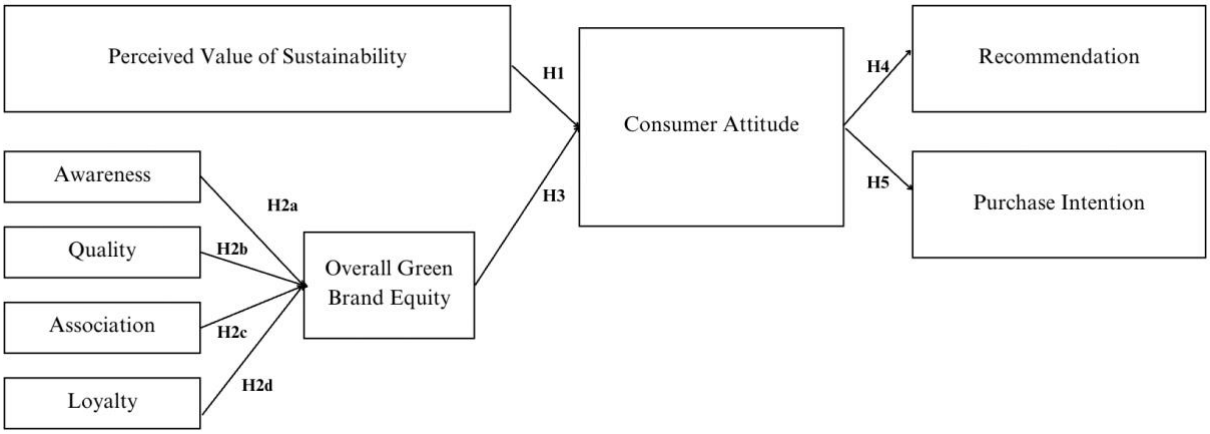

Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

Source: Aaker (1991), Ciasullo et al. (2017), Diallo et al. (2020), and by author's own elaboration.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Study Design

This study followed the Saunders research onion (2009). Based on the philosophy of positivism, it investigated the cause-and-effect relationships between the different variables employing statistical hypothesis testing. This research examines the cause-and-effect relationship where perceived sustainability and green brand equity influence consumer attitude, which in turn affects behavioral outcomes such as recommendations and purchase intentions. Guided by the deductive method, this study aimed to affirm or refine existing theories developed by Aaker (1991), Diallo et al. (2020), and Ciasullo et al. (2017), while considering new dimensions such as the influence of sustainability (Saunders et al., 2023).

This research utilized a mono-method quantitative approach, enabling an in-depth examination of the influence of perceived sustainability, green brand equity, and consumer attitude. The relationship between variables was analyzed through meticulous data collection and statistical analysis (Saunders et al., 2023). The data collection strategy involved a survey by questionnaire, which was open to the public, targeting consumers familiar with sustainability-related brand communications. Due to time constraints and limited resources, the time horizon for this study was cross-sectional. By doing so, the study could capture consumer attitudes and perceptions at a single point in time rather than over an extended period. Given the evolving nature of sustainability practices and their increasing relevance in corporate strategies, this study serves as a timely contribution to understanding how consumers respond to sustainable branding efforts within the current market landscape (Saunders et al., 2023).

4.2. Sample Selection

The population that this study focused on, purchases clothing items and is aware of the term sustainability. Recognizing the impracticality of studying the entire population, this research has strategically gathered data from a representative sample, a methodology aligned with best research practices (Saunders et al., 2023).

The non-probability convenience sampling technique was used in this study. The participants were carefully selected based on their availability, accessibility, and, most of all willingness to participate. Non-probability convenience sampling was preferred over random sampling due to time and budget constraints and the convenience of distributing the survey.

The sampling technique allowed the study to collect data rapidly. It is important to note that the findings of this study cannot be statistically projected to the entire population due to the non-probability sample. After the survey was launched, initial participants were encouraged to, aligned with the snowball sampling technique, forward the survey to others in their circles who purchased clothing before. The snowball sampling technique allows the survey to reach a broader audience, tapping into diverse perspectives (Saunders et al., 2023).

4.3. Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

The questionnaire aimed to test the proposed hypotheses and to answer the main question and the adherent sub-research questions. The survey was divided into 5 sections with, in total, nine variables, as presented in Table I and Annex A. The strategy assured simplicity in control, coding, and analysis and provided an effective way to gather responses from a diverse respondent base, aiming to collect a comprehensive understanding of consumer perceptions from different backgrounds (Saunders et al., 2023).

Table I: Survey Variables

Variables	Reference
Perceived Value of Sustainability Practices	Kim et al., 2015
Brand Awareness	Aaker, 1991
Brand Quality	Aaker, 1991
Brand Association	Aaker, 1991
Brand Loyalty	Aaker, 1991
Overall Green Brand Equity	Aaker, 1991
Consumer Attitude	Paul et al., 2015
Recommendation	Zeithaml et al., 1996
Purchase Intention	Paul et al., 2015

The first segment analyses the participant's perception of fashion brands that communicate about their sustainability practices. It was mandatory to answer all questions to complete the section and advance to the next segment. In the second segment, the four dimensions of brand equity and the overall brand equity according to Aaker's model are proposed in multiple statements. The section is designed to gain insights into the consumer's state related to the dimensions. The statements explicitly mentioned brands that are considered sustainable. In the third segment, the study delves into consumer attitudes toward brands that

are considered sustainable and how customers interact with one. Accordingly, the following two sections gain insights into when a customer would award a brand perceived as sustainable with a purchase or recommendation. Finally, the last section collects socio-demographic details, including gender, age, occupation, education level, nationality, and country of residence.

To measure the variables, the first five sections were dedicated to multiple models retrieved from Q1 labeled academic articles that support this study. Annex B presents an overview of the supporting models according to each section. All statements in the survey were originally structured using a seven-point Likert-type scale in English. However, for the purpose of this study, the scale was adapted to a five-point Likert scale to align with the research scope and the expected number of participants. The five-point scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree,' maintains the reliability and clarity of the responses while simplifying the process for participants. By reducing the number of response options, the survey minimizes cognitive load and avoids overwhelming respondents, ensuring higher response quality and consistency in data collection. Before launching the questionnaire, a meticulous pre-test was conducted. A selected group of individuals from different socio-demographic backgrounds participated in a test round. Subsequently, by examining the questionnaire by a diverse selected group of individuals, adjustments could be made to improve the clarity and overall flow of the questionnaire. Following the double-test phase, the finalized questionnaire was launched on December 19th of December.

The questionnaire was built on Qualtrics and distributed on multiple social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and LinkedIn. In total, the survey collected 287 responses, of which 198 were considered valid (only responses that filled out all the questions and socio-demographics were considered). This data was analyzed with the aid of the software STATA/ SmartPLS.

5. Analysis and Results

5.1. Sample Characterization

With a total of 287 responses, 197 were deemed valid, representing participants who actively participated in the study, and have purchased clothing items before. One hundred responses were deemed invalid due to missing or incomplete information. These responses consisted of participants who either did not complete the survey in its entirety or abandoned it shortly after beginning.

Within these 197 responses, 65,99% identified themselves as female, 32,49% as male, 1,02% as non-binary, and 0,50% Prefer not to say. The age spectrum exhibited a broad distribution, notably featuring a significant response from individuals aged 25 to 34, constituting 34,01%. The two following age brackets were 55 to 64 which accounted for 22,35% of the responses and the age brackets between 18 to 24 which accounted for 17,26%. Occupationally, a diverse landscape emerged – 67,01% of the respondents identified as employed. Followed by 19,80% of the sample identified as students and 13,20% as others.

As for educational level, the section was dominated by 62,44% of the individuals identifying with university followed by 18,78% identifying with college and 12,69% with postgraduate. Only 2% of the individuals identified with Secondary. The multifaceted insight predominantly emanated from Dutch participants, 77,66% followed by individuals identifying as German which made up for 10,66% of the sample. As for place of residence, 74,11% identified as living in the Netherlands followed by 9,14% living in Portugal. Annex C presents a more detailed overview of the sample characterization.

5.2. Measurement Model Assessment

To analyze the influence of brand equity and sustainability on consumer attitude, Partial Least Square Equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed, utilizing SmartPLS version 4.1.0.9. PLS-SEM is a statistical model that utilizes a causality approach. The primary objective of its approach is to optimize the measurements of variables through indicators and explain the variance of dependent constructs (Hair et al., 2011). The method offers advantages in exploring construct visibility and simplifying research, enabling researchers to assess the relationship between indicators and variables to test hypotheses (Urban & Mayerl, 2013). This approach

offers multiple advantages, one of which is its suitability for models involving numerous constructs and indicators, including limited sample sizes (Hair et al., 2021).

5.2.1. Reliability and Validity

The initial step in evaluating the reflective measurement model is assessing to which extent each indicator's variance is accounted for by its corresponding construct. Indicators demonstrate sufficient reliability when the construct explains over 50% of the variance, with indicator loadings surpassing 0.708 (Hulland, 1999). Hulland further recommends removing indicators with loadings falling below 0.4 or 0.5. Consequently, the research model omitted indicators that did not meet this threshold. The outer loadings of this study are presented in Table II, which excludes the items that fell below the threshold.

One of the association indicators, Q10_3, exhibited an outer loading of -0.038. Additionally, three indicators of the consumer attitude variable demonstrate outer loadings that fall below the 0.5 threshold: Q13_5 has an outer loading of 0.370, Q13_6 possesses an outer loading of 0.302, and Q13_7 has an outer loading of 0.285. Therefore, these indicators have been excluded from further analysis and Table II.

Cronbach's alpha scrutinizes the internal consistency reliability on the assumption that all indicators possess equal reliability (Henseler et al., 2009). While Cronbach's alpha is a commonly used metric for reliability, its assumption of equal indicator loadings in the population presents a limitation. PLS-SEM addresses this issue by prioritizing indicators according to their reliability. Henseler et al. (2009) advocate for using Composite Reliability as a more effective measure of internal consistency. PLS-SEM utilizes Composite Reliability (rho_c) as a key metric (Jöreskog, 1971), with higher values indicating stronger reliability. However, Cronbach's alpha may overestimate reliability estimates. To mitigate this issue, Dijkstra and Henseler (2015) proposed the reliability coefficient rho_a. Rho_a is a reliability coefficient, offering an alternative method for assessing reliability. Regardless of the selected reliability indicator, the ideal threshold is a value above 0.7. Upon examining Table II, it becomes clear that all indicators meet this standard. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is a measure of convergent validity, which determines if a set of indicators appropriately represents an underlying concept (Henseler et al., 2009). The meet the acceptable standard, AVE holds a threshold of 0.50. Values at or above this threshold demonstrate that the construct

explains at least 50% of the indicators' variance (Hair et. Al, 2022). Table II shows that all AVE surpass 0.5, confirming the convergent validity of the constructs.

Table II: Construct Reliability

Variable	Item	Outer loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Perceived Sustainability	Q7_1	0.806	0.773	0.798	0.843	0.519
	Q7_2	0.705				
	Q7_3	0.722				
	Q7_4	0.688				
	Q7_5	0.678				
Awareness	Q8_1	0.850	0.833	0.836	0.900	0.751
	Q8_2	0.907				
	Q8_3	0.840				
Quality	Q9_1	0.820	0.858	0.867	0.898	0.637
	Q9_2	0.809				
	Q9_3	0.783				
	Q9_4	0.823				
	Q9_5	0.753				
Association	Q10_1	0.936	0.708	0.842	0.866	0.764
	Q10_2	0.807				
	Q10_3	-0.038				
Loyalty	Q11_1	0.804	0.797	0.814	0.881	0.712
	Q11_2	0.895				
	Q11_3	0.829				
Brand Equity	Q12_1	0.672	0.776	0.805	0.855	0.598
	Q12_2	0.854				
	Q12_4	0.727				
Consumer Attitude	Q13_1	0.759	0.829	0.842	0.873	0.498
	Q13_2	0.753				
	Q13_3	0.609				
	Q13_4	0.607				
	Q13_8	0.738				
	Q13_9	0.592				
	Q13_10	0.774				
Recommendation	Q14_1	0.832	0.892	0.895	0.921	0.699
	Q14_2	0.856				
	Q14_3	0.859				
	Q14_4	0.846				
	Q14_5	0.787				
Purchase Intention	Q15_1	0.768	0.883	0.887	0.914	0.681
	Q15_2	0.857				
	Q15_3	0.793				
	Q15_4	0.850				
	Q15_5	0.856				

5.2.2. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity, as described by Henseler et. (2009), can be evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion or cross-loadings. It assesses how well a construct is empirically distinctive

from other constructs. Nonetheless, Dijkstra et al. (2015) argued that the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading may produce suboptimal results, meaning that they may produce lower reliability. The Fornell-Larcker criterion evaluates shared variance among constructs and should not exceed the construct's respective AVE values (Dijkstra et al., 2015). This criterion is met as illustrated in Table III.

Table III: Fornell and Larcker Criterion

	Perceived Sustainability	**Awareness**	**Quality**	**Association**	**Loyalty**	**Brand Equity**	**Consumer Attitude**	**Recommendation**	**Purchase Intention**
Perceived Sustainability	**0.720**								
Awareness	0.286	**0.866**							
Quality	0.433	0.504	**0.798**						
Association	0.307	0.655	0.452	**0.874**					
Loyalty	0.293	0.519	0.611	0.477	**0.844**				
Brand Equity	0.379	0.330	0.464	0.322	0.563	**0.773**			
Consumer Attitude	0.410	0.408	0.476	0.403	0.639	0.730	**0.706**		
Recommendation	0.409	0.392	0.562	0.423	0.562	0.701	0.703	**0.836**	
Purchase Intention	0.417	0.423	0.589	0.412	0.596	0.709	0.680	0.809	**0.825**

The cross-loadings show that most indicators exhibit a higher correlation with their respective construct. However, for Consumer Attitude some constructs fall short, refer to Annex D: Indicator Items Cross Loadings.

5.2.3. Collinearity

Table IV presents the Inner Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), which is used for collinearity testing. Collinearity occurs when independent variables in a regression model are highly correlated, potentially distorting statistical estimates. The results indicate collinearity validity, as the VIF values are below the threshold of 5.0, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a concern in this model. The outer VIF values are provided in Annex E.

Table IV: Inner VIF

	VIF
Association -> Brand Equity	1.853
Awareness -> Brand Equity	2.008
Consumer Attitude -> Purchase Intention	1.000
Consumer Attitude -> Recommendation	1.000
Loyalty -> Brand Equity	1.801
Perceived Sustainability -> Consumer Attitude	1.168
Overall Green Brand Equity -> Consumer Attitude	1.168
Quality -> Brand Equity	1.745

5.3. Structural Model

To evaluate the structural model, it is necessary to analyze the coefficient of determination (R^2) of the endogenous constructs and the significance of the path coefficients, as depicted below in Figure 2. The significance level of the path coefficient will be analyzed in the hypothesis testing with the bootstrapping procedure, chapter 5.4.

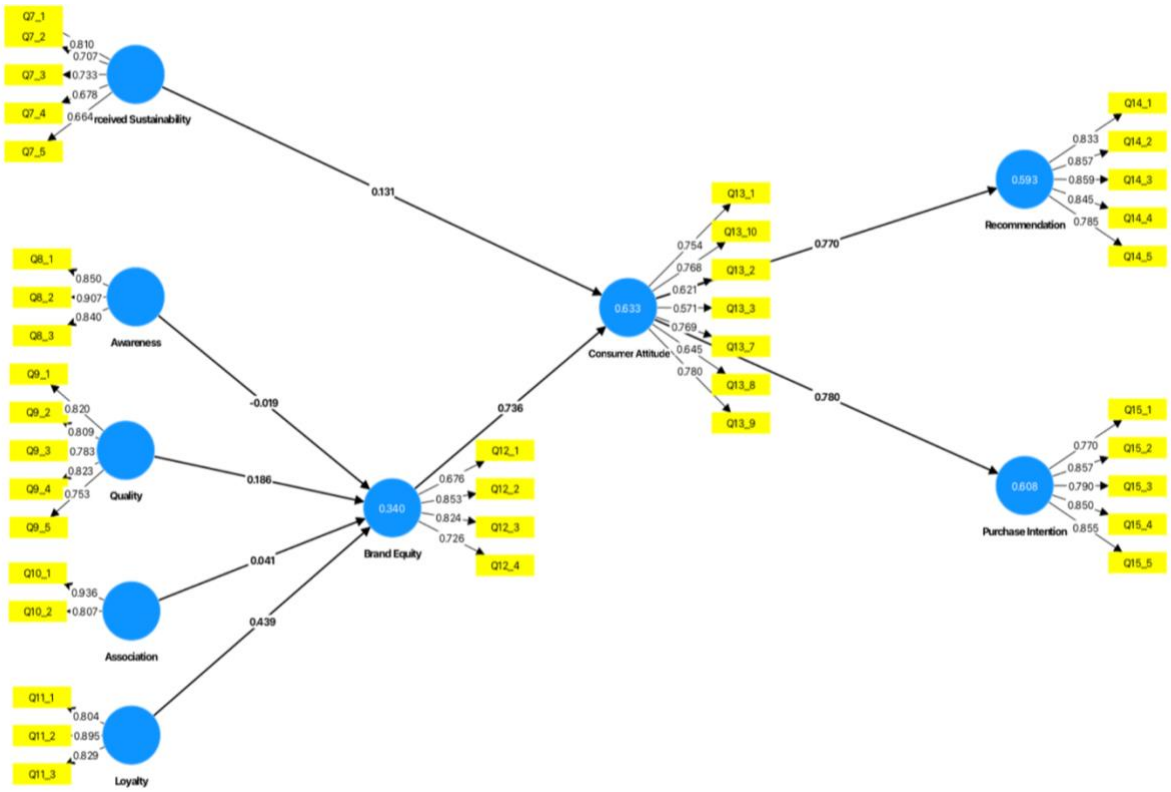

Figure 2: PLS Algorithm Model

To analyze the model fit, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was employed. SRMR is calculated as the square root of the sum of the squared differences between the model-implied and the empirical correlation matrix, representing the Euclidean distance between the two matrices. A perfect fit is indicated by an SRMS value of 0. However, studies have demonstrated that even a correctly specified model can yield SRMS values of 0.06 and higher (Dijkstra et al., 2015). This a more appropriate cut-off value of 0.08, as proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999), is considered. As observed in Table V, the SRMS is 0.067, indicating an acceptable fit.

Table V: Model Fit

	Saturated model	**Estimated model**
SRMR	0.067	0.107
d_ULS	3.543	8.868
d_G	1.314	1.500
Chi-square	1391.147	1485.488
NFI	0.719	0.700
	R-square	**R-square adjusted**
Brand Equity	0.340	0.327
Consumer Attitude	0.633	0.629
Purchase Intention	0.608	0.606
Recommendation	0.593	0.591

5.4. Hypotheses Testing: Bootstrapping

To test the significance of the estimated path coefficients, PLS-SEM employs a nonparametric bootstrap procedure. The significance assessment builds on bootstrapping standard errors as a basis for calculating t-values of path coefficients or confidence intervals. A path coefficient is found significant at the 5% level if the value zero does not fall within the 95% confidence interval. In cases where the path coefficients are found to be insignificant or exhibit a direction contrary to the proposed hypotheses, it indicates a lack of support for the hypotheses. In contrast, if the path coefficients can be found significant and align with the proposed direction, it provides empirical support for the hypotheses (Hair et al, 2021). Bootstrapping involves treating the sample as a representative portion of the population (Henseler et al., 2009). Bootstrap analysis with 5000 interactions of resampling was utilized to calculate t-values, the hypotheses were accepted as statistically significant if the t-value exceeded the critical value (t-value > 1.96) and the p-value was less than 0.05 (Dijkstra et al., 2015).

Table VI illustrates a brief description of the hypothesis test. It presents the path coefficients, t-values, and p-values, which have facilitated the validation of six out of eight hypotheses. Additionally, the table includes a column indicating the determination of whether the hypothesis was accepted or not.

Table VI: Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Original Sample	T-Statistic	P values	Decision
H1	Perceived Sustainability -> Consumer Attitude	0.131	3.096	0.002	*supported*
H2a	Awareness -> Brand Equity	-0.019	0.191	0.848	*not supported*
H2b	Quality -> Brand Equity	0.186	2.165	0.030	*supported*
H2c	Association -> Brand Equity	0.041	0.499	0.618	*not supported*
H2d	Loyalty -> Brand Equity	0.439	5.117	0.000	*supported*
H3	Overall Green Brand Equity -> Consumer Attitude	0.736	18.709	0.000	*supported*
H4	Consumer Attitude -> Recommendation	0.770	24.944	0.000	*supported*
H5	Consumer Attitude -> Purchase Intention	0.780	23.269	0.000	*supported*

5.5. Discussion of the Main Results

The relationship between perceived sustainability and brand equity with consumer attitude was substantiated by six out of the eight proposed hypotheses. Hypotheses H1, H2b, H2d, H3, H4, and H5 demonstrated statistically significant relationships, with p-values below 0.05 and t-values surpassing 1.96. The outcomes confirm that perceived sustainability, quality, loyalty, and overall green brand equity positively influence consumer attitudes, recommendations, and purchasing intentions.

The influence of "Perceived Sustainability" on "Consumer Attitude" (H1) was validated with a path coefficient of 0.131, p-value = 0.002, and t-value = 3.096. The hypothesis builds upon the findings from Ciasullo et al. (2017) and Gazzola et al. (2020) and highlights the importance sustainability communication plays in the decision-making of consumers. The hypothesis supports that consumers are more inclined to support brands that align with their values. Similarly, H2b was supported, with a path coefficient of 0.186, p-value = 0.030, and t-value = 2.165, supporting the research of Wang et al. (2018) and emphasizing the importance of the role quality plays in nurturing long-term brand equity the importance of quality perceptions in enhancing brand equity. H2d exhibited the strongest effect, with a path coefficient of 0.439, p-value < 0.001, and t-value = 5.117, demonstrating the critical role loyalty plays in driving brand equity. The strong statistical significance supports the research of both Liang et al. (2024) and Kong et al. (2014), stating that loyalty is enhanced according to how likely consumers are to support brands that integrate sustainability into their business model. The consumer satisfaction related to a brand's sustainability practices goes hand in hand with customer brand equity (Liang et al., 2024). Overall green brand equity itself significantly influenced consumer attitude (H3), with a path coefficient of 0.736, p-value = 0.000, and t-value exceeding 1.96. This result underscores Aaker's framework (1991), which posits that stronger brand equity fosters more positive consumer attitudes through emotional and behavioral connections. Additionally, positive consumer attitudes were shown to impact both recommendations (H4) and purchasing intentions (H5). H4 yielded a path coefficient of 0.770, p-value = 0.000, and t-value surpassing 1.96, indicating that when brands align with consumers' personal values, customers are likely to recommend them. The strong values support the research of Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), stating that brands active in more sustainability-focused sectors, experience a greater likelihood of being advocated by consumers. Similarly, H5 demonstrated a path coefficient of 0.780, p-value = 0.000, and t-

value exceeding 1.96, confirming that positive consumer attitudes significantly influence purchasing intentions. Confirming the studies from Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau (2019) and Ham et al. (2022) that demonstrated that millennials and Gen Z (the two biggest demographical groups in this research) express a strong preference for sustainably perceived brands. In contrast, hypotheses H2a, which examines the relationship between brand awareness and brand equity, and H2c, which explores the influence of brand associations on brand equity, were not supported by the findings. The results for H2a yielded a path coefficient of -0.019 ($p = 0.848$, $t = 0.191$), suggesting that while brand awareness is a necessary component, it may not be sufficient on its own to enhance brand equity. This insignificant relationship could be attributed to the ambiguity surrounding the concept of sustainability and the increasing skepticism toward sustainable brands. While Joshi (2024) suggests that greater brand awareness positively influences consumer perception of brand equity, thereby enhancing trust and purchase likelihood in green markets, other research highlights that corporate greenwashing scandals have significantly altered how consumers perceive corporate social responsibility initiatives (Gosselt et al., 2017; He et al., 2020). As a result, consumers may struggle to determine the credibility of sustainability claims, making them hesitant to associate brand awareness with genuine brand value (Gazzola et al., 2020). Similarly, H2c, which investigates the impact of brand associations on brand equity, did not demonstrate statistical significance, with a path coefficient of 0.041 ($p = 0.618$, $t = 0.499$). These results suggest that brand associations alone may not strongly contribute to brand equity unless supported by other dimensions such as perceived quality and brand loyalty. While associations can create emotional and cognitive connections between consumers and brands, their impact may be weakened if consumers perceive sustainability-related messaging as vague or unreliable. Consequently, the findings indicate that in the context of sustainable fashion, brand awareness and brand associations must be reinforced by tangible indicators of quality and trust to effectively enhance brand equity.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Discussion of Main Findings

This study was designed within the rising trend of sustainability reporting, specifically in the fashion industry, as there is still limited knowledge about how companies can best communicate their sustainability efforts and the actual impact of sustainability reporting. The primary objective of this research was to examine consumer perceptions of sustainability communication, its influence on green brand equity, and how, in turn, these factors impact consumer attitudes and behavioral outcomes. Despite being accessible to participants of all nationalities, the survey saw a higher participation rate from the Dutch community. The study aimed to contribute to a deeper understanding of the influence of sustainability communication and how fashion companies can best adhere to upcoming legislation. Consequently, based on the obtained results, it is evident that the primary objectives were successfully accomplished, allowing for the resolution of the three research questions posed in the introduction.

To address the first question, “How do consumers' perceptions of sustainability practices impact their consumer attitude toward fashion brands?”, this study confirms that consumer perceptions of sustainability practices significantly influence their attitudes toward fashion brands. Sustainability practices play a key role in shaping consumer attitudes, reinforcing findings from Ciasullo et al. (2017), Gazzola et al. (2020), and Kim et al. (2015). Misleading sustainability claims and a lack of third-party verification can lead to consumer distrust, whereas genuine and credible sustainability efforts integrated into a brand’s core business strategy contribute to a positive attitude and strong green brand equity.

In response to the second question, “How do the four dimensions of green brand equity, both individually and collectively, shape consumer attitudes toward sustainable fashion brands?”, the findings confirmed that the four dimensions of green brand equity play interconnected roles in shaping consumer attitudes, though their influence varies. Brand quality and brand loyalty have the most significant impact on green brand equity, while brand awareness and brand associations showed a less significant effect. While awareness and associations are essential for brand recognition, they do not directly enhance green brand equity, likely due to consumer skepticism regarding sustainability claims and greenwashing, aligning with Gosselt et al. (2020). In contrast, brand loyalty and perceived quality play a crucial role in strengthening consumer trust, long-term relationships, and advocacy for sustainable brands. Thus, while all four dimensions contribute to green brand equity, brand

loyalty, and perceived quality exert a greater indirect influence on consumer attitudes than brand awareness and associations.

Regarding the third question, "To what extent do consumer attitudes drive behavioral outcomes such as brand recommendations and purchasing intentions?", this study underscores the pivotal role of consumer attitudes in determining behavioral outcomes, including brand advocacy and purchase decisions. The strong relationship between consumer attitudes and behavioral outcomes confirms that positive consumer attitudes significantly increase the likelihood of brand recommendations and purchasing intentions, aligning with prior research (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2019; Ham et al., 2022). Trust and shared values are key drivers of consumer advocacy, as consumers are more likely to recommend brands that align with their values. Similarly, purchasing intentions are strongly shaped by consumer attitudes, with millennials and Gen Z, the largest participant groups in this study, showing a strong preference for brands perceived as ethical and environmentally responsible. The study suggests that sustainability perceptions, combined with strong green brand equity, enhance brand recommendations and drive sales.

This research highlights the importance of reliable sustainability communication from fashion brands in encouraging responsible consumer behavior. The findings confirm the need for transparency and credible sustainability information, as consumers remain skeptical about unverified sustainability claims. While the overall green brand equity was significant, the insignificant correlation between brand awareness and brand associations with green brand equity further confirms consumer skepticism toward sustainability communication.

6.2. Study Implications

The outcomes of this study offer both academic and business contributions.

6.2.1. Academic Implications

Academically, it expands research on green brand equity and the influence of sustainability perceptions in the fashion industry. Additionally, it provides insights into how consumers interpret sustainability claims. By integrating the CBBE model with sustainability-specific constructs, this study contributes to bridging the gap between traditional brand equity theory and contemporary environmental concerns. It enhances the theoretical understanding of how perceived sustainability interacts with consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions,

offering a framework that can be applied or tested across different industries and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the findings suggest avenues for future academic inquiry into the credibility of ESG reporting and how varying levels of consumer scepticism shape the effectiveness of sustainability communication.

6.2.2. Business Implications

From a business perspective, the study highlights the importance of transparency, substantiated sustainability claims, and third-party credibility in environmental reporting. Fashion brands that seek to enhance consumer trust and drive long-term brand loyalty must prioritize authenticity, clear communication, and measurable sustainability efforts in their strategies. These findings are particularly relevant in an era where consumers are increasingly discerning and quick to identify greenwashing. Businesses can leverage the results to better understand which dimensions of brand equity have the strongest influence on green brand perception. By focusing on these aspects, brands can refine their communication strategies to not only meet regulatory expectations but also to align more closely with the values of environmentally conscious consumers. This alignment can result in stronger customer relationships, positive word-of-mouth, and ultimately, competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving market.

6.3. Limitations of the Study

This research was subject to numerous constraints. Out of the 297 responses, a hundred were deemed invalid. The hundred invalid responses may limit the applicability of the results and the range of nationalities participating in the survey. The sample was dominated by Northern European countries, in particular Dutch and German participants. The Netherlands and Germany are further developed than southern countries which limits the generalizability of the findings to international markets. Additionally, the research relies on self-report data, which may be subject to social desirability bias, as participants may have overstated their interest in sustainability. The use of a non-probability sampling technique implies that the sample could not fully be representative of the entire population, limiting the generalizability of the results. It is suggested that a mixed-methods approach, incorporating qualitative interviews or focus groups, could enhance the depth of understanding. Lastly, despite the growing interest in sustainability and sustainability reporting, there is still limited information available about the

impact that sustainability perception has on fashion brands and the influence of the EU legislation.

Furthermore, the fashion industry itself has undergone rapid transformation in recent years, especially during COVID-19. Transformation driven by digital innovation, evolving consumer expectations, and the rise of e-commerce. As a result, findings from this study may not fully capture the most recent shifts in industry dynamics or consumer behavior. The pace of change in the industry could mean that perceptions and attitudes examined at the time of the research, and the resources used for this dissertation may already be evolving, limiting the long-term applicability and relevance of the results.

6.4. Suggestions for Further Research

For further research, a qualitative approach employing longitudinal studies on sustainability perceptions is recommended. This study utilized a cross-sectional approach, capturing consumer attitudes at a single point in time. Future research could benefit from a longitudinal study to examine how consumers' perceptions of sustainability and green brand equity evolve over time. This method would track the development of brands adopting CSRD and assess the impact of the new legislation on their communication efforts with stakeholders.

Additionally, a mixed-method approach, incorporating both experimental and qualitative research, could offer deeper insights into how consumers perceive sustainability information and how they respond to it.

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ANNEX

Annex A: Questionnaire

Lisbon School of Economics & Management

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research survey. This study is part of a master's thesis in Management at the Lisbon School of Economics and Management, focusing on the relationship between sustainability, brand equity, and consumer attitudes in the fashion industry. The insights will help understand how sustainable practices impact consumer perceptions, loyalty and purchasing behavior.

Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential. The data collected are intended only for this investigation and will be subject to statistical treatment for the conclusion of the final master's work. The survey will take approximately 5–10 minutes to complete. Please answer each question honestly based on your personal experiences and perceptions. Your participation is invaluable and greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your time and contribution to this study!

For any questions, feel free to contact me via l60564@aln.iseg.ulisboa.pt

Bente Broekman*

In this section, we are exploring your perceptions of fashion brands' sustainability practices. The questions focus on how you evaluate brands based on their transparency, governance, environmental efforts, and social contributions.

What Are Sustainability Practices?
Sustainability practices in fashion include using eco-friendly materials, reducing waste, ensuring fair wages, and supporting ethical production.

What is considered a sustainable fashion brand?
A brand that focuses on reducing its environmental impact and promoting ethical practices. They aim to create clothing that is both responsible and long-lasting.

Perceived Value of Sustainability Practices

	1 - Strongly Disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 - Agree	5 - Strongly agree
A fashion brand that transparently communicates its sustainability practices is trustworthy.	○	○	○	○	○
A fashion brand demonstrates appropriate governance by adhering to ethical and sustainable practices.	○	○	○	○	○
A fashion brand shows accountability when it communicates about its environmental and social impacts.	○	○	○	○	○
A fashion brand actively reduces its environmental impact through sustainable practices.	○	○	○	○	○
A fashion brand fulfills its social responsibilities through ethical and sustainable actions.	○	○	○	○	○

Brand Equity

This section explores your perception and loyalty toward fashion brands. The statements are based on D. Aakers brand equity model developed in 1997. Please answer based on your experiences and impressions.

Brand Awareness

	1 - Strongly Disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 - Agree	5 - Strongly agree
I know what a brand that is considered sustainable looks like.	○	○	○	○	○
I can recognize brands that are considered sustainable among other competing brands.	○	○	○	○	○
I am aware of sustainable brands.	○	○	○	○	○

Brand Quality

	1 - Strongly disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 - Agree	5 - Strongly agree
A brand that is considered sustainable is of high quality.	○	○	○	○	○
The likely quality of a brand that is considered sustainable is extremely high.	○	○	○	○	○
The likelihood that a brand that is considered sustainable would be functional is very high.	○	○	○	○	○
The likelihood that a brand that is considered sustainable is reliable is very high.	○	○	○	○	○
A brand that is considered sustainable must be of very good quality.	○	○	○	○	○

Brand Association

	1 - Strongly disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 - Agree	5 - Strongly agree
Some characteristics of a brand that is considered sustainable come to my mind quickly.	○	○	○	○	○
I can quickly recall the symboll or logo of a brand that is considered sustainable.	○	○	○	○	○
I experience difficulties when imagining a brand that is considered sustainable.	○	○	○	○	○

Brand Loyalty

	1 - Strongly disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 - Agree	5 - Strongly agree
I consider myself to be loyal to a brand that is considered sustainable.	○	○	○	○	○
A brand that is considered sustainable would be my first choice.	○	○	○	○	○
I will not buy other brands if a brand that is considered sustainable is available at the store.	○	○	○	○	○

Overall Brand Equity

	1 - Strongly disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 - Agree	5 - Strongly agree
It makes sense to buy a brand that is considered sustainable instead of any other brand, even if they are the same.	○	○	○	○	○
Even if another brand has the same features as a sustainable brand, I would prefer to buy from the sustainable brand.	○	○	○	○	○
If there is another brand as good as a brand that is considered sustainable, I prefer to buy from the sustainable brand.	○	○	○	○	○
If another brand is not different from a brand that is considered sustainable in any way, it seems smarter to purchase from the sustainable	○	○	○	○	○

The Influence of Sustainability Practises and Brand Equity on Consumer Attitudes

Customer Attitude

This section explores your attitudes toward sustainable fashion brands, including your trust in their practices, general perceptions, and intentions to support them.

Customer Attitude

	1 - Strongly disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 - Agree	5 - Strongly agree
If it were entirely up to me, I am confident that I will purchase from a brand that is considered sustainable.	○	○	○	○	○
I see myself as capable of purchasing from a brand that is considered sustainable in future.	○	○	○	○	○
I have resources, time and willingness to purchase from a brand that is considered sustainable.	○	○	○	○	○
Brands that are considered sustainable are generally available in the shops where I usually do my shopping.	○	○	○	○	○
There are likely to be plenty of opportunities for me to purchase from a brand that is considered sustainable.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel that purchasing from a brand that is considered sustainable is not totally within my control.	○	○	○	○	○
I like the idea of purchasing from a brand that is considered sustainable.	○	○	○	○	○
Purchasing from a brand that is considered sustainable is a good idea.	○	○	○	○	○
I have a favourable attitude toward purchasing a product of a brand that is considered sustainable.	○	○	○	○	○
Even if another brand has same features as a brand that is considered sustainable, I would prefer to buy from the sustainable brand.	○	○	○	○	○

Purchasing Intention

This section explores your likelihood to consider, research, and purchase products from sustainable fashion brands. Please respond based on your usual shopping behavior.

Purchasing Intention

	1 - Strongly disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 - Agree	5 - Strongly agree
I will consider buying products from a brand that is considered sustainable because they are less polluting in coming times.	○	○	○	○	○
I will consider switching to a brand that is considered sustainable for ecological reasons.	○	○	○	○	○
I plan to spend more on products from a brand that is considered sustainable rather than brands that do not communicate about their environmental impact.	○	○	○	○	○
I expect to purchase from a brand that is considered sustainable in the future because of its positive environmental contribution.	○	○	○	○	○
I definitely want to purchase from a brand that is considered sustainable in near future.	○	○	○	○	○

Cusomter Recommendation

This section assesses your likelihood of recommending fashion brands with sustainable practices to others. Please answer based on your experiences and preferences.

If it were up to me I would...

	1 - Strongly disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neutral	4 - Agree	5 - Strongly agree
... say positive things about a brand that is considered sustainable to other people.	○	○	○	○	○
... recommend a brand that is considered sustainable to someone who seeks your advice.	○	○	○	○	○
... encourage friends and relatives to do business with a brand that is considered sustainable.	○	○	○	○	○
... consider a brand that is considered sustainable your first choice to buy clothing.	○	○	○	○	○
... do more business with a brand that is considered sustainable in the next few years.	○	○	○	○	○

Which gender do you indentify with?

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Non-binary / third gender
- ○ Prefer not to say

How old are you?

- ○ 18-24
- ○ 25-34
- ○ 35-44
- ○ 45-54
- ○ 55-64
- ○ 65+

What is your current main occupation

- ○ Employed
- ○ Student
- ○ Other

What is the highest level of education that you have concluded?

- ○ Basic or less
- ○ Secondary
- ○ College
- ○ University
- ○ Postgraduation
- ○ Other

What is your nationality

Which country do you currently live?

Annex B: Summary Table of Constructs

Construct	Reverences	Dimension	Label	Original Items	Adapted Items
Perceived Value of Sustainability Practices	Kim et al., 2015		Q7_1	Corporate transparency in business management is good	A fashion brand that transparently communicates its sustainability practices is trustworthy.
			Q7_2	Corporate governance is appropriate	A fashion brand demonstrates appropriate governance by adhering to ethical and sustainable practices.
			Q7_3	Corporate accountability is good	A fashion brand takes accountability for its environmental and social impacts.
			Q7_4	Corporate environmental performance is good.	A fashion brand actively reduces its environmental impact through sustainable practices.
			Q7_5	Corporation serves social responsibility	A fashion brand fulfills its social responsibilities through ethical and sustainable actions.
Perceived Brand Equity	Aaker, D. A. 1991	Awareness	Q8_1	I know what X looks like	I know what a brand that is considered sustainable looks like
			Q8_2	I can recognize X among other competing brands	I can recognize brands that are considered sustainable among other competing brands
			Q8_3	I am aware of X	I am aware of sustainable brands
		Quality	Q9_1	X is of high quality	A brand that is considered sustainable is of high quality
			Q9_2	The likely quality of X is extremely high	The likely quality of a brand that is considered sustainable is extremely high
			Q9_3	The likelihood that X would be functional is very high	The likelihood that a brand that is considered sustainable would be functional is very high.
			Q9_4	The likelihood that X is reliable is very high	The likelihood that a brand that is considered sustainable is reliable is very high
			Q9_5	X must be of very good quality	A brand that is considered sustainable must be of very good quality
		Association	Q10_1	Some characteristics of X come to my mind quickly	Some characteristics of a brand that is considered sustainable come to my mind quickly
			Q10_2	I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of X	I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of a brand that a brand that is considered sustainable.
			Q10_3	I have difficulty in imagining X in my mind	I have difficulty in imagining a brand that is considered sustainable in my mind
		Loyalty	Q11_1	I consider myself to be loyal to X	I consider myself to be loyal to a brand that is considered sustainable
			Q11_2	X would be my first choice	A brand that is considered sustainable would be my first choice
			Q11_3	I will not buy other brands if X is available at the store.	I will not buy other brands if a brand that is considered sustainable is available at the store.

		Overall Gren Brand Equity	Q12_1	It makes sense to buy X instead of any other brand, even if they are the same.	It makes sense to buy a brand that is considered sustainable instead of any other brand, even if they are the same.
			Q12_2	Even if another brand has same features as X, I would prefer to buy X	Even if another brand has same features as a brand that is considered sustainable, I would prefer to buy from the sustainable brand.
			Q12_3	If there is another brand as good as X, I prefer to buy X	If there is another brand as good as a brand that is considered sustainable, I prefer to buy from the sustainable brand.
			Q12_4	If another brand is not different from X in any way, it seems smarter to purchase X	If another brand is not different from a brand that is considered sustainable in any way, it seems smarter to purchase from the sustainable
Consumer Attitude	Paul et al., 2015		Q13_1	If it were entirely up to me, I am confident that I will purchase green products.	If it were entirely up to me, I am confident that I will purchase from a brand that is considered sustainable.
			Q13_2	I see myself as capable of purchasing green products in future.	Even if another brand has same features as a brand that is considered sustainable, I would prefer to buy from the sustainable brand.
			Q13_3	I see myself as capable of purchasing green products in future.	I see myself as capable of purchasing from a brand that is considered sustainable in future.
			Q13_4	I have resources, time and willingness to purchase green products.	I have resources, time and willingness to purchase from a brand that is considered sustainable.
			Q13_5	Green products are generally available in the shops where I usually do my shopping	Brands that are considered sustainable are generally available in the shops where I usually do my shopping.
			Q13_6	There are likely to be plenty of opportunities for me to purchase green products.	There are likely to be plenty of opportunities for me to purchase from a brand that is considered sustainable.
			Q13_7	I feel that purchasing green products is not totally within my control.	I feel that purchasing from a brand that is considered sustainable is not totally within my control.
			Q13_8	I like the idea of purchasing green.	I like the idea of purchasing from a brand that is considered sustainable.
			Q13_9	Purchasing green is a good idea.	Purchasing from a brand that is considered sustainable is a good idea.
			Q13_10	I have a favorable attitude toward purchasing green version of a product.	I have a favorable attitude toward purchasing a product of a brand that is considered sustainable.
Recommendation	Zeithaml et al., 1996		Q14_1	Say positive things about XYZ to other people.	Say positive things about a brand that is considered sustainable to other people.
			Q14_2	Recommend XYZ to someone who seeks your advice.	Recommend a brand that is considered sustainable to someone who seeks your advice.

			Q14_3	Encourage friends and relatives to do business with XYZ.	Encourage friends and relatives to do business with a brand that is considered sustainable.
			Q14_4	Consider XYZ your first choice to buy --- services.	Consider a brand that is considered sustainable your first choice to buy clothing.
			Q14_5	Do more business with XYZ in the next few years.	Do more business with a brand that is considered sustainable in the next few years.
Purchasing Intetion	Paul et al., 2015	x	Q15_1	I will consider buying products because they are less polluting in coming times.	I will consider buying products from a brand that is considered sustainable because they are less polluting in coming times.
			Q15_2	I will consider switching to environmentally friendly brands for ecological reasons.	I will consider switching to a brand that is considered sustainable for ecological reasons.
			Q15_3	I plan to spend more on environmentally friendly product rather than conventional product.	I plan to spend more on products from a brand that is considered sustainable rather than brands that do not communicate about their environmental impact.
			Q15_4	I expect to purchase product in the future because of its positive environmental contribution.	I expect to purchase from a brand that is considered sustainable in the future because of its positive environmental contribution.
			Q15_5	I definitely want to purchase green products in near future.	I definitely want to purchase from a brand that is considered sustainable in near future.

Annex C: Sample Characterization

Indicator	Answers	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Gender	Male	64	32,49%
	Female	130	65,99%
	Non-Binary	2	1,02%
	Prefer Not to Say	1	0,50%
Age	18-24	34	17,26%
	25-34	67	34,01%
	35-44	16	8,12%
	45-54	10	5,08%
	55-64	44	22,35%
	65+	26	13,20%
Occupation	Employed	132	67,01%
	Student	39	19,80%
	Other	26	13,20%
Education	Basic	0	0,00%
	Secondary	4	2,03%
	Collage	37	18,78%
	University	123	62,44%
	Post-Graduate	25	12,69%
	Other	8	4,06%
Nationality	Dutch	153	77,66%
	German	21	10,66%
	Portugeese	4	2,03%
	American	13	6,60%
	Other	6	3,05%
Location	Holland	146	74,11%
	Germany	15	7,61%
	Portugal	18	9,14%
	America	11	5,58%
	Other	7	3,56%

Annex D: Indicator Items Cross Loadings

	Perceived Sustainability	Awareness	Quality	Association	Loyalty	Overall Green Brand Equity	Consumer Attitude	Recommendation	Purchase Intention
Q7_1	**0.810**	0.279	0.396	0.251	0.344	0.393	0.386	0.370	0.365
Q7_2	**0.707**	0.214	0.215	0.258	0.139	0.272	0.275	0.316	0.248
Q7_3	**0.733**	0.120	0.273	0.179	0.176	0.280	0.328	0.300	0.304
Q7_4	**0.678**	0.212	0.324	0.245	0.135	0.171	0.222	0.214	0.254
Q7_5	**0.664**	0.207	0.361	0.180	0.219	0.176	0.208	0.231	0.321
Q8_1	0.229	**0.850**	0.442	0.544	0.462	0.275	0.298	0.306	0.307
Q8_2	0.249	**0.907**	0.422	0.604	0.443	0.300	0.403	0.413	0.426
Q8_3	0.265	**0.840**	0.448	0.552	0.446	0.282	0.356	0.296	0.362
Q9_1	0.382	0.414	**0.820**	0.369	0.483	0.370	0.393	0.491	0.445
Q9_2	0.384	0.467	**0.809**	0.446	0.508	0.358	0.375	0.458	0.502
Q9_3	0.261	0.382	**0.783**	0.311	0.485	0.341	0.348	0.406	0.455
Q9_4	0.389	0.386	**0.823**	0.381	0.498	0.443	0.424	0.473	0.529
Q9_5	0.297	0.365	**0.753**	0.288	0.466	0.319	0.349	0.408	0.403
Q10_1	0.305	0.583	0.386	**0.936**	0.421	0.337	0.402	0.427	0.390
Q10_2	0.219	0.579	0.428	**0.807**	0.429	0.201	0.284	0.289	0.324
Q11_1	0.325	0.527	0.523	0.492	**0.804**	0.438	0.510	0.479	0.482
Q11_2	0.228	0.380	0.482	0.341	**0.895**	0.543	0.434	0.493	0.560
Q11_3	0.197	0.426	0.557	0.394	**0.829**	0.432	0.494	0.452	0.459
Q12_1	0.256	0.166	0.276	0.193	0.323	**0.676**	0.541	0.478	0.438
Q12_2	0.284	0.354	0.426	0.358	0.592	**0.853**	0.426	0.611	0.619
Q12_3	0.312	0.255	0.387	0.241	0.495	**0.824**	0.275	0.577	0.600
Q12_4	0.337	0.210	0.322	0.164	0.251	**0.726**	0.520	0.485	0.515
Q13_1	0.269	0.420	0.483	0.383	0.648	0.601	**0.754**	0.655	0.663
Q13_10	0.309	0.254	0.337	0.293	0.471	0.650	**0.768**	0.627	0.611
Q13_2	0.322	0.422	0.271	0.377	0.354	0.471	**0.621**	0.477	0.467
Q13_3	0.283	0.359	0.388	0.304	0.555	0.437	**0.571**	0.396	0.448
Q13_7	0.320	0.243	0.303	0.245	0.409	0.589	**0.769**	0.578	0.610
Q13_8	0.283	0.077	0.208	0.089	0.186	0.481	**0.645**	0.479	0.447
Q13_9	0.258	0.249	0.344	0.290	0.500	0.614	**0.780**	0.540	0.560
Q14_1	0.384	0.342	0.446	0.339	0.375	0.561	0.564	**0.833**	0.604
Q14_2	0.329	0.332	0.439	0.352	0.457	0.621	0.328	**0.857**	0.660
Q14_3	0.369	0.379	0.528	0.351	0.452	0.581	0.434	**0.859**	0.672
Q14_4	0.336	0.339	0.497	0.401	0.608	0.625	0.422	**0.845**	0.715
Q14_5	0.298	0.249	0.436	0.317	0.432	0.535	0.349	**0.785**	0.722
Q15_1	0.311	0.280	0.365	0.291	0.341	0.517	0.433	0.601	**0.770**
Q15_2	0.301	0.396	0.535	0.388	0.545	0.668	0.532	0.672	**0.857**
Q15_3	0.334	0.333	0.501	0.311	0.517	0.539	0.498	0.681	**0.790**
Q15_4	0.380	0.328	0.487	0.347	0.446	0.582	0.477	0.672	**0.850**
Q15_5	0.393	0.399	0.529	0.355	0.597	0.610	0.467	0.712	**0.855**

Annex E: Outer VIF

	VIF
Q7_1	1.570
Q7_2	1.396
Q7_3	1.408
Q7_4	1.534
Q7_5	1.497
Q8_1	1.943
Q8_2	2.445
Q8_3	1.791
Q9_1	2.150
Q9_2	1.944
Q9_3	1.808
Q9_4	1.996
Q9_5	1.899
Q10_1	1.430
Q10_2	1.430
Q11_1	1.554
Q11_2	1.997
Q11_3	1.752
Q12_1	1.351
Q12_2	1.858
Q12_3	1.880
Q12_4	1.510
Q13_1	1.703
Q13_2	1.381
Q13_3	1.286
Q13_7	1.934
Q13_8	1.449
Q13_9	1.944
Q13_10	1.733
Q14_1	2.531
Q14_2	2.599
Q14_3	2.556
Q14_4	2.265
Q14_5	1.795
Q15_1	1.827
Q15_2	2.363
Q15_3	1.951
Q15_4	2.287
Q15_5	2.380