Full length article

Sustainable Brand Extensions of Fast Fashion Brands; the Influence on Parent Brand Attitude

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ABSTRACT

Fashion industry to be one of the largest consumer industries & the second most polluting in the world because only a few industries confront as many sustainability issues as the fashion industry. This sustainability challenge is increasing day by day due to the nature of the fast fashion model, which have accelerated the consumption of fast fashion clothing goods made of poor quality and have short product lifespans. On the other hand, due to consumers' and society's rising demand for sustainable fashion products, fast fashion companies are investing heavily in integrating sustainability into their products or services. Most of these companies are adopting sustainable brand extension strategies for sustainable branding. The purpose of the study is to assess how younger Indian consumers' parent brand attitudes are affected in the case of sustainable brand extension introduced by fast fashion brands. To address this purpose, a literature review was conducted before conducting the primary study by using a quantitative research design via a self- administered questionnaire. The result of primary research indicated that focusing on sustainable branding with a brand extension strategy is not misguided since it positively impacts brand attitude. The result of primary research indicated that focusing on sustainable branding with a brand extension strategy is not misguided since it positively impacts brand attitude. In addition, based on the multiple regression analysis, it concluded that all of the selected variables {brand influence (brand knowledge & brand affect), attitude towards sustainable brand extension (ATSBE), and consumer influence (fashion interest, social belonging, and sustainability concern)} are significantly correlated with brand attitude. In this process, brand influence factors are considered the most important in terms of affecting brand attitude. Therefore, for the effectiveness of sustainable brand extensions, companies should focus on not only brand extension fit but also brand factors such as brand knowledge and brand affect.

1. Introduction

"With a good product based on ecological concerns, the potential for a marketer seems to be impressive."
(Kassarjian 1971, as cited Hesse et al. 2022)

Clothing is a basic human need, enabling the $2.5 trillion fashion market, becoming one of the largest consumer industries around the world (UNECE, 2018; Amed et al., 2021). Following the globalization of the economy in the 1990s, the fashion industry underwent corporate restructuring through the adoption of a new model of industrial production and social circulation of consumer apparel goods known as fast fashion. (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). The fast fashion model is focused on minimizing the consumers' purchase cycles (large volume of sales), reducing the time required for manufacturing, low prices, and faster deliveries by updating products with the latest fashion trends and designs in the market. Due to this concept's shorter lead time, products are almost available instantaneously (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). This fast-fashion paradigm has accelerated the introduction of trends that lead to overconsumption, premature product replacement and fashion obsolescence constant consumption of "new" and discard of "old" (Kozlowski et al. 2012).

It has been identified as being one of the world's most polluting industry (Remy et al., 2016; Amed et al., 2021; Ramirez M., Rao, and Matthew S., 2021) and the fast fashion industry is the 2nd largest global polluter. (SANVT, 2020). 40.3 million People are trapped in "modern slavery", many of whom make our clothes (SANVT, 2020). Recent investigative journalism, including BBC's "Fashion's Dirty Secrets", DW's "Eco-Friendly Fashion", ABC's "Dead White Man's Clothes", "Made in Bangladesh", and "The True Cost", has shown substantial influence on the social aspect of fast fashion's sustainable practices. (Ramirez M, Rao And Matthew S, 2021).

These video studies demonstrate the worldwide fast-fashion industry's terrible human and environmental reper-cussions, as well as the urgent need for a pragmatic shift toward more sustainable and ethical fashion. Consumer's interest inclining sharply towards the social problems and climate changes resulting in as evidence by movements such as Fridays for future and Global Climate Strikes, in 2020 around the world school children & youngsters have led mass walk out, leaving their classrooms to demand climate action for their future during Coronavirus pandemic (Saxena, 2020). Such protest events have turned the climate emergency into a hot topic in the public consciousness. Recent research by Getty Images claims that climate and sustainability are still top concerns despite the coronavirus pandemic (Glenday, 2020). Consumers changing behaviour, with searches for "sustainable goods" increasing globally by 71% since 2016. (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021)

Corresponding to contextual trends, "Nearly every apparel marketer / Fast Fashion brands is following consumer demand by leaping onto the green wagon with sustainable brand extension strategy". (Pasquarelli, A., 2019) Brand extension strategy has to date been a more cost-effective and less risky alternative for modifying a product line or entering a new market, since the business capitalizes on its well-established brand name. Brand extensions are indeed an economical and effective technique of engaging prospective customers and moving into new areas which may cut risks and expenses dramatically. In company's' attempt to attract more socially and environmentally conscious consumers, using Sustainable Brand Extensions (SBExts) is an option firms follow, including companies in fast fashion industry for sustainable branding. Sustainable brand extensions (SBExts) involve the application of an established brand name to new and greener products due to environmental con-siderations of the brand and can be divided into sustainable line extensions (SLExts) and sustainable category extensions (SCExts). For instance, H& M, a fast fashion clothing brand, extended its offer by launching an "eco-conscious collection" for eco-conscious consumers (Tee, et al. 2013; Tee et al. 2015; H&M Group., 2022). There are many examples of such sustainable line extensions (SLExt), such as ASOS Green Room, Zara Join Life, and Boohoo's For the Future. Similarly, brands are using category extension strategies for sustainable branding by introducing new categories in sustainable category extension (SCExt) such as "Lindex-Baby Home" This Swe-dish retailer is famous for its children's wear clothes. However, with "Lindex-Baby Home", they introduced an

interior collection (blankies, soft beds, toys), which are GOTS certified or made from recycled materials (Lindex, 2022). Another example of sustainable interior conscious choice by H&M group made from more sustainable materials (H&M Group, 2022).

Hill & Lee's (2015) claim that with careful and effective implementation of brand extension theory, parent brands can reach new markets in various sectors while continuing to operate in their own sector, as it is a really useful technique to bridge the gap between two incredibly distinct product categories. Moreover, its success depends heavily on the consumers attitudes towards the extended product or service. Also brand attitude, which refers to an overall evaluation of a brand, is mostly affected by new products. The increased awareness of sustainability might cause customers to change their purchasing habits, yet individuals still choose their preferred brand more often than green brands (Dejkam, Shafighi, and Khavari, 2018; Olsen, M. C. etc. 2014). Therefore, understanding consumer attitudes toward the brand is critical as brand attitude shows the state of mind of a consumer about a brand's products or services like the durability of the product, serviceability, and behavior of the company. Brand attitudes are useful in predicting the customer's behavior and attitude can be changed over time.

Reviewing more specific research on the fashion industry, a systematic literature review about sustainability within fashion business models, conducted by Thorisdottir & Johannsdottir, 2019, states that there is limited literature on what motivates the fashion industry's interest in sustainability. In relation to that, Kim et al. (2013) claim that fast fashion retail management has generally received too little attention, and the literature that is currently available primarily focuses on conducting research on supply chain management rather than investigating consumers' attitudes. One research focusing on Generation Y consumers from Hill & Lee's (2015) was conducted to discover how and in what way consumers assess potential sustainable line extensions and if it fits their brand image and attitude towards fast fashion brands. However, the authors contend that in order to update their findings, future studies should concentrate on younger generations. To bridge the gap between consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions towards green options, the authors, Hill & Lee's (2015) advise that more research on consumers' particular perceptions of buying sustainable available options would be helpful for fast fashion brands. Due to identified research gaps concerning how green brand extensions change consumer attitudes, the following research question got developed "How do consumers' parent brand attitudes get affected in the case of sustainable brand extensions introduced by fast fashion brands?"

The primary goal of this research is to create knowledge by understanding consumers' parent brand attitudes in the case of sustainable brand extensions and how this sustainable branding of fast fashion brands helps to create more value for their businesses. As indicated in the research gap, there are few studies undertaken on SBExt, notably in the fashion sector. Previous research on sustainable brand extension by Hill & Lee's (2015) focused on the fast fashion industry was performed in the USA, wherein findings obtained are less likely to be similar to those obtained in Asian countries such as India, especially among the younger generation. This research gives valuable insights into understanding consumers' brand attitudes, which affects brand loyalty, purchase intention, and also brand equity. This study also emphasizes the importance of SBExt by identifying and studying other influencing variables on consumers' parent brand attitude. Additionally, this research will expand our knowledge of the consequences of dilution and loss of credibility while growing a firm using a brand extension strategy. The author believes the outcomes of this study are helpful for all the fast fashion companies—from small to multinational fast fashion brands—and marketing managers to understand the consumers' preferences towards sustainable branding while developing a positioning strategy.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Formulation

With the effort to get insights about understanding consumers' parent brand attitudes in the case of sustainable brand extensions relationship several previous research was reviewed and analyzed. To emphasize the most important conclusions from the provided previous literature, Figure 1 (Theoretical Framework) summarizes the major considerations to be made in the subsequent primary study. The fashion industry, which includes the fast fashion sector, is depicted in the diagram below. The left part of theoretical framework shows the main drivers that are encouraging fast fashion brands to pursue sustainable brand extensions. Reacting to this driver or trend of sustainability, fast fashion companies are strategically opting for sustainable practices by using brand extension strategy. As mentioned, these brands have two options to pursue the SBExt. Firstly, vertical or line extension, and secondly, horizontal or category extension. As per previous literature, brand extensions have a direct effect on brand attitude. Theoretical framework depicts, sustainable line extension (ATSLE) and sustainable category extension (ATSCE) have a direct effect on brand attitude. Similarly, consumer influence factors, namely fashion interest, sustainability concern, and social belonging, also have a direct relationship with brand attitude. Furthermore, brand influence factors, namely brand affect and brand knowledge, also have a direct effect on parent brand attitude. Furthermore, as described in theoretical framework, brand attitude outcomes include brand loyalty, purchase intention, and brand switching, which are dependent on consumers' attitude towards brand extensions. If attitude is positive for sustainable brand extension introduced by a fast fashion brand, which leads to a consumer being loyal to the brand, in addition, he or she is led to buy that offering. In this case, negative attitude towards sustainable brand extension introduced by fast fashion brands leads to brand switching perhaps towards other fast fashion brands such as slow fashion brands or luxury brands.
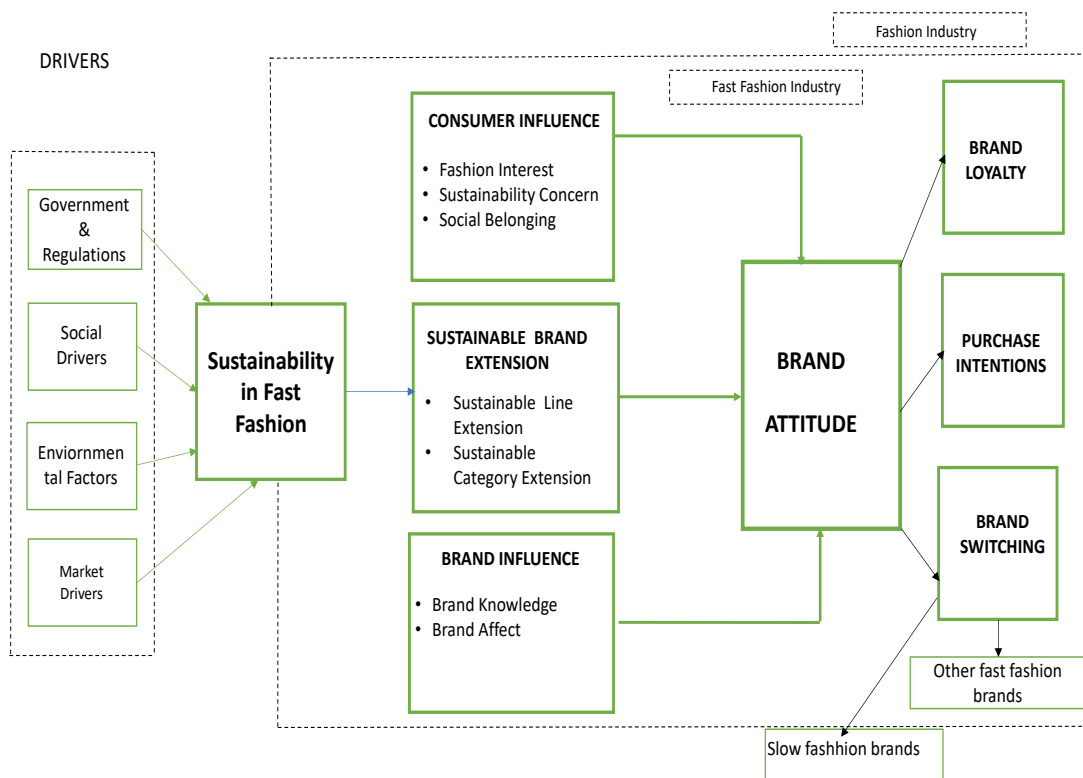

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Above theoretical framework is quite complicated and also incorporates indirect elements that weren't part of the focus of this research study. Hence, author has simplified above framework for primary research study, which is shown in research methodology chapter. This research framework was guided further for primary research.

Hypothesis testing is the most commonly popular method used to carry out the statistical analysis in quantitative research. As the present primary study was in the cause-and-effect relationships, which is causal research form, the hypothesis demonstrates the change of the dependent variable is due to independent variables after conducting extensive literature review author has developed two hypotheses which leads to primary research. For this author has divided variable sustainable brand extension attitude (ATSBE) in to two parts: sustainable category extension attitude (ATSLE), sustainable line extension attitude (ATSCE). And following hypothesis got developed:

- H1: Sustainable line extension attitude (ATSLE) have a positive effect on the brand attitude (BA).

- H2: Sustainable category extension attitude (ATSCE) have a positive effect on the brand attitude (BA).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

In this research study, author is interested in getting inside the mind of the consumers understanding how consumer's parent brand attitude is affected in case of sustainable brand extension introduced by fast fashion brands. Researcher must pass through research onion when developing effective methodology. (Saunders et al in 2019). Below figure depicts a self-explanatory Systematic Approach of current research.

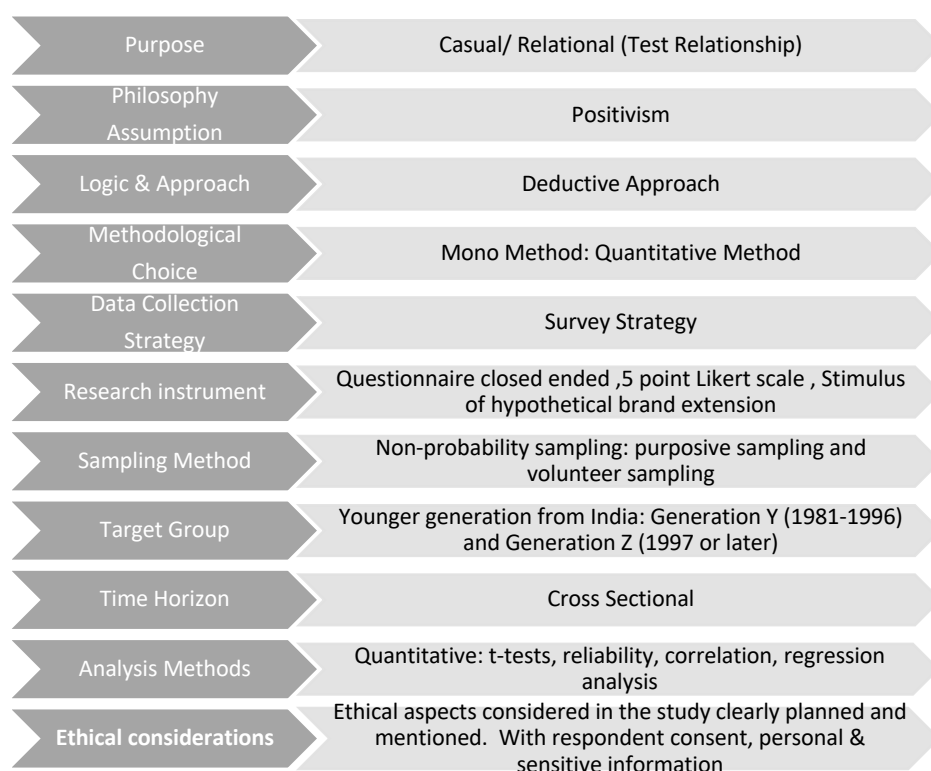|	
Purpose	Casual/ Relational (Test Relationship)
Philosophy Assumption	Positivism
Logic & Approach	Deductive Approach
Methodological Choice	Mono Method: Quantitative Method
Data Collection Strategy	Survey Strategy
Research instrument	Questionnaire closed ended ,5 point Likert scale , Stimulus of hypothetical brand extension
Sampling Method	Non-probability sampling: purposive sampling and volunteer sampling
Target Group	Younger generation from India: Generation Y (1981-1996) and Generation Z (1997 or later)
Time Horizon	Cross Sectional
Analysis Methods	Quantitative: t-tests, reliability, correlation, regression analysis
Ethical considerations	Ethical aspects considered in the study clearly planned and mentioned. With respondent consent, personal & sensitive information

Figure 2: Based on Research Onion: A Systematic Approach to Designing Research Methodology

In summary, the primary research study based on quantitative research design, and adopts a deductive approach with casual research, possesses positivist perspective and, focusing at ontological assumptions, chooses an objectivist approach

3.2 Research Framework

The research framework mentioned below in pictorial format acts as the pivot around which this research study revolves and focuses on. The variables highlighted in the research framework are the major aspects around which this research study revolves. After extensive literature review and performing gap analysis, below research framework was designed, which guided through out primary study. Research framework depicts 3 independent variables (IV) and 1 dependent variable (DV). This research study analyzes this relationship between variables mentioned in the figure below:
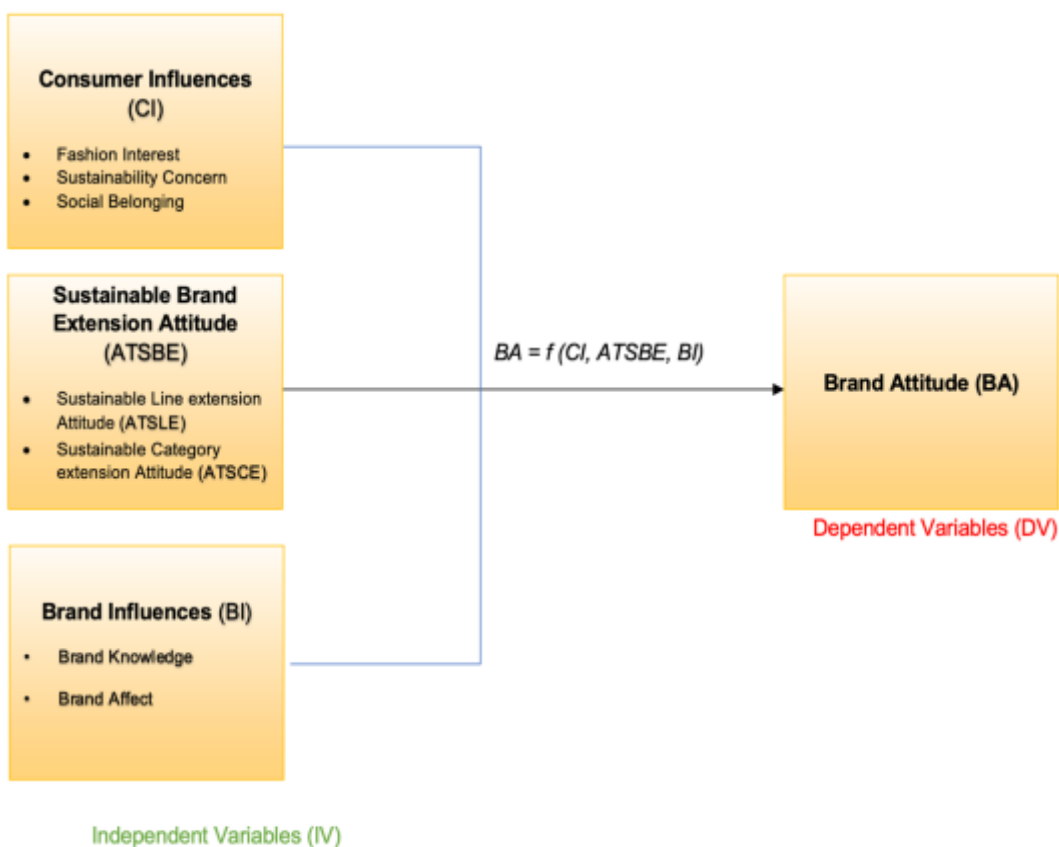
Figure 2: Research framework of this research study

A short illustration of dependent variable and independent variables is stated below:

Brand Attitude (BA): This variable reflects the experience or interaction of a consumer with a brand. This also predicts the future purchases of a brand from the same consumer. Brand attitude is based on the overall evaluation of brands such as beliefs and lasting opinions about a brand. Furthermore, brand attitude shows the state of mind of a consumer about a brand's products or services like the durability of the product, serviceability,

and behavior of the company. Brand attitudes are useful in predicting the customer's behavior and attitude can be changed over time. Therefore, it is really essential to study this variable.

Consumer Influence (CI): For this present study this variable is combination of consumer influence factors namely: fashion interest, social belonging & sustainability concern. All these three factors were considered while designing the questionnaire in order to understand overall consumer influence. all three are chosen because as per previous studies these variables are very linked and have shown greater impact on brand attitude in case of brand extension specifically for fast fashion industry, however these variables are needs to study in the context of sustainable brand extensions.

Brand Influence (BI): For this present study this variable is combination of brand influence factors namely: brand knowledge & brand affect. These two factors were considered while designing the questionnaire in order to understand overall brand influence. And these factors were chosen because as per previous studies these variables are much linked and have shown greater impact on brand attitude in case of brand extension specifically for fast fashion industry, however these variables are needs to study in the context of sustainable brand extensions

Sustainable Brand Extension (SBExt): As sustainable brand extension (SBExt) can be divided in to two, as sustainable line extension scenario (SLExt) and sustainable category extension scenario (SCExt). And Author wants to understand the difference between line and category extension below two variables got developed which was used to perform regression analysis twice.

Sustainable Line Extension Attitude (ATSLE): This variable was used check the actual consumer perspective towards sustainable line extension. The questions were designed by describing scenario and questions was based on cause-extension fit and brand-extension fit as well as other factors such as skepticism and social belongings factor to check the change in attitude after introducing SBExts by fast fashion brands.

Sustainable Category Extension Attitude (ATSCE): This variable was used check the actual consumer perspective towards sustainable category extension. The questions were designed by describing scenario and questions was based on cause-extension fit and brand-extension fit as well as other factors such as skepticism and social belongings factor to check the change in attitude after introducing SBExts by fast fashion brands.

3.3 Stimulus Selection

This research, like other conventional brand-extension studies, utilized a real brand and that brands hypothetical extension as stimuli. The study focused on the Indian fast fashion market. Due to the fact that fictitious brands do not express the strong associations and feelings necessary for brand extension, therefore well-known real brand names were chosen, considering their ability to be extended. Therefore famous fast fashion brands namely H&M, Zara, and Forever 21 were used in this study, as these brands considered as prominent fast fashion brands in India. In questionnaire brand hypothetical extension scenario, sustainable clothing line were chosen as a probable line extension called as Brand X's eco-collection" and the sustainable sunglasses line were chosen as probable category extension Brand X's Green Sunglasses. The reason to choose sustainable sunglasses as a product because fast fashion brands started offering lifestyle solutions too to their consumers. Thus, the hypothetical brand-extension scenario adopted as stimulus in the research was the launch of Brand X's eco-collection and Brand X's green sunglasses.

3.4 Discussion:

The overall purpose of this research was to analyze consumer behavior in the fashion industry, especially to demonstrate how consumers' parent brand attitudes are affected by sustainable brand extension from fast fashion brands. The sustainable brand extension was spitted into sustainable line extensions and sustainable category extensions. To address this aim, previous studies on two key topics of the thesis were studied. The initial part of this study focused on fast fashion and sustainability concerns with the fashion industry and the use of brand extension strategy for sustainability branding. The latter part focused on the consumption pattern of fast fashion consumers, followed by brand influence factors and brand attitude. In order to make it easy for the readers, the author constructed a theoretical framework model, for the purposes of summarizing the aim of the research. Subsequently, the primary research performed via deductive methodological approach using quantitative research to test the stated hypothesis. A survey was designed considering research frameworks, independent variables, and dependent variables. Later, the author used purposive and volunteer sampling methods to collect data from younger Indian fashion consumers, which can be segregated into Generation Y and Generation Z, which was required to address our research questions. Furthermore, the author retrieved data using a quantitative survey questionnaire and when the sample was sufficiently enough for the master's thesis, which had 131 responses, the author analyzed the independent variables brand influence, consumer influence, and attitude towards sustainable brand extension to understand change in brand attitude (dependent variable), which eventually leads to brand loyalty, purchase intention, or brand switching for fast fashion brands. The author first performed a reliability test on the raw data, and later he performed correlation analysis and a paired t test. Finally, a two-time multiple regression analysis was performed using SPPS software for sustainable line extensions and sustainable category extensions scenarios. Additionally, linear regression graphs were drafted to verify and authenticate the survey respondents to the survey questionnaire for each of the independent and dependent variables in the research framework.

4. Empirical Finding

4.1 Demographics

Year: In total, a sample of 131 consumers participated in online survey, in a time horizon of 21 days. The sample size of 131 fashion consumers, 51 were born between 1981 and 1996and so belong to Millennials (Generation Y), while 80 were born in 1997 or later and therefore belong to Generation Z. This results in a 61.1 percent to 38.9 percent ratio.

Gender: The sample of fashion consumers consisted of 91 (69.5%) male, 38 (29.0%) female respondents and 2 (1.5%) did not reveled their gender identities. (N=131).

Indian Consumers: India divided into four regions: Western India, Northern India, Southern India, and East ern India for data segregation. Overall, 58 respondents (44.5%) have been stated to originate from Western India, again 60 (45.3%) respondents from Southern India, 9 respondents (6.9%) from Eastern India and another 4 (3.1%) respondents from Northern India. The above findings are consistent with my expectations to receive the majority of responses from 2 states of India, Maharashtra, and Karnataka, which are located in Western and Southern part of India respectively as my own origins in belongs to same states. This is the reason, only these 2 states are now being especially in comparison due to not sufficient data has been recorded from other states/zones of India.

As year, gender, and country of offers information on the demographics of the participants. This is used to demonstrates interesting distinctions among year gender and other states concerning important insights are now being discussed further

4.2 Reliability

Reliability is the measure of internal consistency of the constructs in the study. A construct is reliable if the Alpha (α) value is greater than .70 (Jabbarzare, E. & Shafighi N., 2019). Construct reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The results revealed that 4 variables were found reliable. Consumer influence scale with ten items (α=0.679), which is very close to 0.7. There are multiple reasons for slightly low value of 0.7. One reason could be questions in consumer influence variable related to fashion interest different respondent have different interest in fashion another reason could sample size of 131 is not enough to measure independent variable consumer influence (CI). According to Griethuijsen, et.al, 2015, the accepted value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.7; however, values above 0.6 are also accepted (Griethuijsen et. al, 2015; Taber, 2018). So, in this particular study all the variables CI, BI, SLExt, SCExt, and BA included. Reliability results are summarized in the Table below

Table1. *Reliability by using Cronbach's Alpha*

Variables	Number of items	Alpha(α)	Std. Deviation	Variance
CI	10	0.679	5.619	31.570
BI	6	0.751	4.049	16.392
SLExt	4	0.731	3.503	12.269
SCExt	4	0.714	3.286	10.797
BA	5	0.797	3.976	15.805

4.3 Correlation Analysis (Pearson's)

Pearson correlation r is designed to determine the strength of correlation betweenindependent variables and the dependent variable. Pearson correlation r can easily interpret using below Table (Jabbarzare, E. & Shafighi N., 2019)

Table 2. *Pearson correlation critical values. (Source: Jabbarzare, E. & Shafighi N., 2019)*

Value of the correlation coefficient	1	0.7-0.9	0.4-0.6	0.1-0.3	0
Strength of correlation	Perfect	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Zero

The results are represented in table 3 below.

Table 3. *Pearson correlation test.*

Variables	r value	Alpha(α)
Consumer influence toward brand attitude	0.510	Moderate positive correlation
Brand influence toward brand attitude	0.705	High positive correlation
Sustainable line extension towardbrand attitude	0.588	Moderate positive correlation
Sustainable category extension toward brand attitude	0.588	Moderate positive correlation

Based on the result in table 3 above, and also based on the critical values (table 2) the Pearson product correlation of brand Influence and brand attitude was found to be high positive and statistically significant (r = .705). However, consumer influence, sustainable line extension and sustainable category extension have a moderate positive correlation towards brand attitude. (r= 0.510, 0.588, .588)

In order to identify the significance effect of the independent variables toward dependent variable, regression analysis is implemented here. The ANOVA result in table 5 indicates that there is a significant difference between the mean of the variables and therefore all variables taken can be included in the regression analysis.

4.4 Regression Analysis

In the current primary research, multiple regression analysis was used to determine the significant influence of the independent variables toward the dependent variable. In this study there was 3 independent variables (IV) are consumer influence (CI), brand influence (BI) and sustainable brand extension attitude (ATSBE) and 1 dependent variable brand attitude. As sustainable brand extension (SBExt) can be divided in to two variables, there will be two regression analysis was carried out (1) for sustainable line extension scenario (SLExt). (2) for sustainable category extension scenario (SCExt)

4.4.1 Regression for sustainable line extension

This first regression analysis assessed the relationship between the dependent variable `brand attitude` and the independent variables are consumer influence (CI), brand influence (BI) and sustainable line extension attitude (ATSLE).

Table 4. Regression for sustainable line extension results

Regression results

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.771[a]	.595	.586	.51188

Predictors: (Constant), SLExt, CI, BI

As indicated in Table 4, that R-square value is 0.595, which means that independent variables i.e., CI, BI, ATSLE causes 59.5% change in the dependent variable i.e., BA.

Table 5. Regression for sustainable line extension ANOVA results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	48.912	3	16.304	62.225	<.001[b]
Residual	33.276	127	.262		
Total	82.188	130			

Dependent Variable: BA
Predictors: (Constant), SLExt, CI, BI

The Table 5, anova results shows that p-value is <0.001 which is less than 0.05,hence there is a significant relationship between independent variable i.e., CI, BI,ALSLE and the dependent variable i.e., BA. Also, Table 5

depicts, there is a significant difference between the mean of the variables, therefore all variables taken can be included in the regression analysis.

The table below shows the overall coefficient generated from multiple regression analyze through SPSS. Coefficients result will be used and explained more for hypothesis testing.

Table 6. *Regression for sustainable line extension coefficients results*

Variables	Coefficients	Std. Error	t-stat	Sig.
(Constant)	-.754	.313	-2.408	.018
CI	.198	.095	2.085	.039
BI	.580	.082	7.077	<.001
ATSLE	.332	.072	4.591	<.001

Dependent Variable: BA

From the table above it can be seen that all variables are significantly affect the Brand Attitude. Hypothesis testing for this study is done through using regression results of all the variables which assumes that there is a significant relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. Following Table 7 shows summary of hypothesis testing.

Table 7: *Hypotheses testing*

Hypotheses	Regression weights		Findings	Results
H1	ATSLE	BA	P (0.001) ≤ 0.05	Supported

4.4.2   Regression sustainable category extension

As indicated in Table 20, that R-square value is 0.583, which means that independent variables i.e CI, BI, ATSCE causes 58.3% change in the dependent variable i.e BA.

Table 8. *Regression for sustainable category extension results*

	Regression results		
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.764[a]	.583	.574	.51919

Predictors: (Constant), SCExt, CI, BI

The Table 9 anova results shows that p-value is <0.001 which is less than 0.05, hence there is a significant relationship between independent variable i.e., CI, BI,ATSCE and the dependent variable i.e., BA. Also, Table 9 depicts, there is a significant difference between the mean of the variables, therefore all variables taken can be included in the regression analysis.

Table 9. Regression for sustainable category extension ANOVA results (Source: Authors finding)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	47.954	3	15.985	59.300	<.001[b]
Residual	34.234	127	.270		
Total	82.188	130			

Dependent Variable: BA
Predictors: (Constant), SCExt, CI, BI

The table below shows the overall coefficient generated from multiple regression analyze through SPSS. Coefficients result will be used and explained more for hypothesis testing

Table 10: Regression for sustainable category extension coefficients results

Variables	Coefficients	Std. Error	t-stat	Sig.
(Constant)	-.591	.309	-1.911	.052
CI	.271	.094	2.876	.005
BI	.536	.089	6.043	<.001
SCExt	.272	.066	4.115	<.001

Dependent Variable: BA

From the table above it can be seen that all variables are significantly affect the Brand Attitude. Hypothesis testing for this study is done through using regression results of all the variables which assumes that there is a significant relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. Following Table 11 shows summary of hypothesis testing.

Table 11: Hypotheses testing

	H2	ATSCE	BA	P (0.001) ≤ 0.05	Supported
Hypotheses		$\longrightarrow$			

4.5   Discussion & Results Comparison

5.5.1   Sustainable Line Extensions

The present study results, as per regression analysis, revealed that all the three variables (BI, CI, and ATSLE) have a positive impact on brand attitude. Consumer influence (CI) factors do have positive impact on brand attitude (DV), although compared to other two variable the impact was minimum. Further, there was a positive impact of attitude towards line extension variable (ATSLC) on brand attitude (DV). While comparing ATSLE variables finding with previous literature, results were in-line with previous studies conducted by Hill & Lee, (2015). Finally, brand influence (BI) factors (brand knowledge & brand affect) also have positive impact on

brand attitude (DV). While comparing, all the three variables (BI, CI, and ATSLE), finding showed that, most impactful factor on the brand attitude (DV), among three variables was brand influence (brand knowledge and brand affect). As per this study analysis, it is clear that, maintaining brand influence factors, result in a higher brand attitude.

4.5.2 Sustainable Category Extensions

In the final analysis of sustainable category extensions scenario, again all the three variables (BI, CI, and ATSCE) have impact sustainable line extension attitude has a significant and positive impact on brand attitude. Consumer influence factors have positive impact on brand attitude (DV), although compared other two variable impact was minimum. Further, there was positive impact of consumer attitude towards category extension (ATSCE) on brand attitude (DV). While comparing ATSCE finding with previous literature, to authors knowledge, no previous research has investigated for ATSCE specifically in fast fashion industry. Therefore, results were compared with other industry for ATSCE, and results was found in agreement with study conducted by Olsen et al. 2014, which was focused on FMCG industry (Olsen et al. 2014). Finally, brand influence factors (brand knowledge & brand affect) also have positive impact on brand attitude (DV). These finding also in line with study conducted by Hesse, et.al (2022)., which was focused on FMCG industry. While comparing, all the three variables (BI, CI, and ATSCE), finding showed that, most impactful factor on the brand attitude (DV), among three variables was brand influence (brand knowledge and brand affect). As per this study analysis, it is clear that, maintaining brand influence factors, result in a higher brand attitude.

5. Conclusion

The overall outcome of the primary research leads to a more positive consumers parent brand attitude after launching the sustainable brand extensions by fast fashion brands. The majority of survey respondents stated that they will enjoy the brand even more when fast fashion brands launch new sustainable brand extensions, and they will see the fit between the brand and the extended sustainable brand. In addition, individuals are likely to appreciate the brand much more when brands are concerned about the environment, yet consumers are also likely to become more skeptical towards the brand. It underscores necessity for fast fashion brands to be truthful and transparent about their initiatives considering sustainability.

Overall, as finding showed positive impact for positive impact of three variables (BI, CI, and ATSBE) in both the scenarios (sustainable line extension scenario and both sustainable line extension scenario). The results reveal that the independent variables were accountable for more than half of the changes in the dependent variable (brand attitude), and thus the author claims that the model is appropriate even if there could be additional factors that cause influence on brand attitude. In conclusion, consumer influence factors do have positive impact although compared other two consumer influence factors influence is less. Furthermore, there is definitely positive impact of consumer attitude towards brand extension, it is does not matter either sustainable line (vertical) or sustainable category (horizontal) by fast fashion brands. However, most importantly, brand or marketing managers should focus more on brand influence factors mainly brand knowledge & brand affect as these factors have shown more impact than other 2 variables. As per this study analysis, it is clear that, maintaining brand influence factors, result in a higher brand attitude and these sustainable extensions will be and more satisfy the consumers' needs.

5.1. Managerial Implications

As organizations increasingly explore methods to react to the increased attention towards environmental sustainability, managers confront various challenging issues in their new products and associated launching strategies. This research study is particularly fascinating for brand managers of fast fashion companies and gives advice that may assist in acquiring deeper market insight into the behavioral patterns of their consumers. Foremost, establishing a green identity for brands through sustainable brand extensions can be helpful since it positively impacts brand attitude. Notwithstanding the benefits of introducing brand extensions, it is very important that SBExt should be introduced with caution, particularly as findings reveal that consumers, those who are very much concerned about sustainability challenges tend to be more skeptical towards sustainable brand extensions by fast fashion brands. As a result, the level of sustainability steps taken by fast fashion businesses is a crucial aspect to evaluate since it affects whether consumers see the initiatives as legitimate or as misleading.

Furthermore, maintaining the brand by incorporating diverse managerial strategies will most definitely assist the organization in their process of building a strong brand in the market, thus constructing themselves as strong competitors against other brands. Brands with weak brand influence factors such as brand image, brand awareness, and brand affect should not be extended towards sustainable brand extensions until these brands have been strengthened and refreshed their parent brand influence factors (brand knowledge and brand affect). As a result, they should concentrate on maintaining brand influence factors that result in a higher brand attitude, which helps them succeed in sustainable brand extensions that will better meet the needs of consumers. Overall, the findings of this primary study might be used by fast fashion firms to better define their overarching strategy for sustainable branding in order to fulfill their consumers demands.

In conclusion, the success of brand extensions appears to be not only depended upon how to fit together with parent brand. It is mostly depending on brand influence factor such as brand knowledge and affect. In nutshell, brand managers should focus on a comprehensive sustainable strategy at the heart of their company, not only focus on promotional activities, but companies should also concentrate on creating a strong customer connection with parent brand existing attributes, which will result in success for sustainable brand extension.

5.2. Theoretical Contributions

The study offers several contributions to the literature on sustainable branding, sustainable brand extensions, fast fashion, and brand extension feedback. This present master thesis touches upon current research priority of 'Cultivation the Customer Asset' set by the Marketing Science Institute for the years 2020–2021, wherein a major goal for managers is to identify and analyze the customer journey and then to find the value the organization can deliver that consumers are willing to pay for. (MSI, 2020). In addition, research has developed the theoretical summary model and tested with variables affecting brand attitudes, which also acts as an important guideline for researchers and executives, is remarkably similar.

5.3. Limitations & Future Scope

The research study is difficult to generalize due to non-probability sampling, a limitation affecting the sample size is the geographic one, since this research examined consumers from India, and a mix of two younger generations in India, generation Y and generation Z, it is difficult to conclude about any specific generation. It is important to keep in mind that the majority of brand extension research is based on hypothetical scenarios rather than real-life experience. Final limitation of existing studies undertaken on the specific subject of sustainable brand extensions in fast fashion, other industries' general brand extension literature was used while defining the theoretic framework model and also used in relation to the theoretical concept in this thesis context.

Further studies should consider the same generation Y and generation Z groups and compare those findings with each other in order to understand whether any different patterns in age groups on brand attitude exist. Also, future research should examine how to replicate the approach across additional product categories in the fast fashion sector. This replication will increase the conceptual understanding of sustainable brand extension effects as well as reach worldwide validity. This research illustrates important implications with regards to how SBExts improves brand attitudes, further research could investigate other brand-level effects, such as sales or brand equity.

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