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Effect of Sustainable Marketing Activities on Customer Loyalty among Young Generations: Case of Fashion Industry in Greater Jakarta-Indonesia

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Received: July 30, 2024Accepted: September 18, 2024Published: October 31, 2024	ABSTRACT: This research discusses the importance of sustainable marketing activities for the long-term success of companies. The research highlights the need for a multidimensional and systematic approach to understanding sustainable marketing by including the cultural dimension.
Citation: Yusuf, A, S, N., Ferdy., Hendriana, E. (2024). Effect of Sustainable Marketing Activities on Customer Loyalty among Young Generations: Case of Fashion Industry in Greater Jakarta-Indonesia. Ilomata International Journal of Management, 5(4), 1413-1433. https://doi.org/10.61194/ijjm.v5i4.1369	Due to the lack of studies looking at the effect of four dimensions of sustainable marketing activities on customer loyalty, this study aims to test the effect of sustainable marketing activities on brand image, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. This research focuses on Generation Y and Z consumers in Greater Jakarta who are more concerned about sustainability issues and are aware of global fashion brands that have implemented ESG. Data from 218 samples selected using judgmental sampling were analyzed using PLS- SEM. The findings show that all dimensions of sustainable marketing activities significantly affect brand image, which sequentially influences customer satisfaction and loyalty. This study finds that cultural dimension has the greatest effect on brand image, while social dimension has the lowest effect. The positive brand image is found to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. These findings confirm the application of signaling theory, and further practical implications are provided based on the findings.
	Keywords: Brand Image, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Sustainable Marketing Activities
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INTRODUCTION

There has been a recent increase in climate change (Monroe et al., 2017). Since 1850, global temperatures have risen by around 1°C, and estimates show that they may grow by up to 4°C by the end of the century (IPCC, 2018). Temperature increases are associated with increased emissions from manufacturing, transportation, and animal husbandry. These factors lead to more extreme weather events, droughts, floods, and forest fires, among other serious environmental effects (Kung & McCarl, 2018; Lawrance et al., 2022; Rocque et al., 2021). The activities that require energy, land, and changes in land use are the cause of these changes. About 24% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions in 2019 (14 GtCO2-eq) came from the industrial sector alone

Effect of Sustainable Marketing Activities on Customer Loyalty among Young Generations: Case of Fashion Industry in Greater Jakarta-Indonesia Yusuf, Ferdy, and Hendriana

(<u>Calvin et al., 2023</u>). Comprehensive climate action is desperately needed, as evidenced by the continuous trend of rising emissions and environmental degradation (<u>Ciccarelli & Marotta, 2021</u>).

According to Pereira et al., (2021), the fashion sector is one of the most polluting and the primary cause of environmental damage. Climate change, rising greenhouse gas emissions, hazardous chemical discharge, textile waste, and poor working conditions are just a few of the environmental issues that the fashion industry has recently come under heavy fire for failing to take seriously enough (Gazzola et al., 2020; Hur & Faragher- Siddall, 2022; Niinimäki et al., 2020). Compared to 15 years ago, the amount of times a garment is worn before being thrown away has dropped by 36% (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). An significant quantity of chemicals are used in the production of dyes and fibres, which is bad for the environment (Pereira et al., 2021). Due to its high CO2 emissions, major waste output, chemical use, and water consumption of 93 billion cubic meters (m3), or approximately 4% of the world's yearly freshwater use, the fashion sector has a significant impact (Sigaard & Laitala, 2023). It is predicted that the production of garments will rise by at least 50% by 2030 (Beall, 2020; Peters & Simaens, 2020). In addition, the fashion industry's working conditions are subpar (Niinimäki et al., 2020). According to Kvasničková Stanislavská et al., (2023), these activities encourage consumers, particularly the younger generations, to demand that the fashion industry follow ESG policies. In order to satisfy consumer preferences and achieve long-term commercial success, businesses consequently begin implementing sustainable marketing and production methods (Nekmahmud & Fekete-Farkas, 2020). These tactics include developing a stronger brand identity and fostering customer loyalty (Jung et al., 2020; Sarmad & Ali, 2022).

Research on sustainable marketing activities mainly focusses on the environmental, sustainability, and social aspects (Rudawska, 2019; Sun et al., 2020). However, Jung et al., (2020) argue that the cultural dimension should also be considered in this concept. Since then, several academics have used these four characteristics to describe how they affect customer satisfaction, loyalty, and brand image (Gong et al., 2023; Jung et al., 2020; Sarmad & Ali, 2022). Signaling theory explains these relationships by explaining how businesses communicate their sustainable marketing efforts to shape customers' perceptions, which in turn enhances the company's competitive advantage and image (López-Santamaría et al., 2021; Simoni et al., 2020).

This study aims to explore how sustainable marketing activities affect customer loyalty, with a specific focus on Generation Y and Z consumers in the fast fashion industry in Greater Jakarta. By analysing the impact of sustainable marketing on brand image and customer satisfaction, this study seeks to fill a significant gap in the literature, where the nuances of this relationship are still underexplored. While there is research on the environmental, social, and cultural dimensions of sustainable marketing, its direct impact on customer loyalty, particularly among younger and more environmentally conscious consumers, is not well understood. This study contributes to this field by providing insights into how sustainable practices can enhance brand loyalty and satisfaction, which offers valuable implications for academics and practitioners in the sustainable fashion industry.

Sustainable Marketing Activities

In the fashion industry, sustainable marketing consists of designing, sourcing, producing, and selling in a way that maximizes benefits to society while minimizing negative impacts on the environment (Garg, 2020; Rukhaya et al., 2021). The impact of sustainable marketing activities on consumers can be explained by signaling theory, because it has been widely used in various fields to explain the phenomenon of customer choice (Boateng, 2019), including in the green marketing literature (Liao et al., 2020). Due to information asymmetry and market imperfections, companies often use signals as a way of communication and reducing consumer uncertainty, so that customers can assess product quality (Grigoriou et al., 2016) and generate brand perceptions (Jia et al., 2023). By conveying information about the company's sustainable marketing activities, companies can obtain a favorable brand image and positive consumer behavior towards their products (Jia et al., 2023).

At the beginning, sustainable marketing activities are classified into three dimensions, namely economic, social, and environmental (Rudawska, 2019; Sun et al., 2020). Cultural sustainability was initially considered a component of social sustainability (Hawkes, 2001). Due to the increasing awareness of the role of culture in sustainable development (Hawkes, 2001), culture has become the fourth pillar of sustainable development models, equivalent to social, economic, and environmental (Hawkes, 2001).

Economic marketing activities in the fashion industry encompasses technological and financial systems that ensure long-term financial viability and competitive advantage (Chabowski et al., 2011; Fetzer & Aaron, 2010). Economic marketing activities are the distribution of economic benefits through economic support in an area by providing economic benefits to customers, employees, partners, and stakeholders in society; this should also encourage company growth through profits (Choi & Park, 2015). This dimension is integral to enhancing economic performance and fostering business resilience (I. Kim et al., 2015). Concurrently, the social dimension addresses the improvement of community life through charitable activities, public relations, and educational support, transcending mere profit pursuits (Ahmadi et al., 2017; Kong & Ko, 2017). The fashion industry faces significant challenges related to resource depletion, chemical usage, and labor exploitation (Allwood et al., 2015; Fletcher, 2008). Addressing these issues requires a strong focus on environmental sustainability, which involves managing operations to conserve natural resources and mitigate negative environmental impacts (J. Kim et al., 2015; Kumar et al., 2017). Fashion brands adopt environmentally friendly marketing concepts by offering environmentally friendly products and engage in social activities to attract more sustainable conscious consumers (Jung et al., 2020; Park et al., 2017). In the context of fashion, integrating cultural considerations into sustainable marketing activities helps maintain brand relevance and consumer engagement amidst constant industry shifts (Featherstone, 2018; Xie et al., 2019). Cultural marketing activities are related to the company's role in society, explicitly create culture, and help promote various corporate cultural characteristics that can be applied to its society (Jun et al., 2016).

Relationship Between Sustainable Marketing Activities and Brand Image

Brand image is a customer's perception and belief in the activities and personality of a company that is embedded in their minds, whether the image and memory of a company is good or bad (Araújo et al., 2023; Dam & Dam, 2021). A good brand image has positive consequences for the company (Barbosa et al., 2023), such as increased recognition and memory of the brand, stronger customer loyalty, repeat purchasing behavior, increased employee motivation and loyalty, as well as strengthening the company's reputation among competitors (Almeida & Coelho, 2019). Brands must take certain steps to meet customer needs (Azizan & Yusr, 2019). Consumers choose brands that offer great value, good quality, and high satisfaction (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). Customers can recognize the demands that a business meets and tell it apart from competitors when the brand has a strong brand image. Therefore, consumers are more likely to purchase a brand they believe positive (Cuong & Long, 2020; Hsieh et al., 2004).

The relationship between sustainable marketing activities and brand image can be understood through signaling theory. According to research on eco-friendly signalling and consumption theory, consumers find sustainable products more appealing when they allow them to show off desirable personal traits through product consumption and display, such as social status or prosocial values (Babutsidze & Chai, 2018; Iredale & Vugt, 2011; Thaler et al., 2008; Whitfield, 2011). This theory also argues that a company's positive activities, including those targeting sustainable issues, may alter consumer perceptions toward the company reflected by its brand image and corporate reputation, which sequentially enhance its competitive advantage (López-Santamaría et al., 2021).

Economic sustainability marketing practices have a beneficial effect on brand image processing, development of company benefits, and resilience (Sarmad & Ali, 2022). Social activities also positively affect consumer trust in a company and help customers stay attached to their behavioral intentions, such as their reactions and attitudes toward the company's products (Lee & Sung, 2016; Park et al., 2017). Like social sustainability activities, environmental-friendly practices may also help companies build a positive image, maintain relationships with customers, and create brand loyalty (Jung et al., 2020). Marketing initiatives that are culturally appropriate and consider diversity can improve brand image (Almeida & Coelho, 2019; Kong & Ko, 2017). Previous research by Gong et al., (2023) proved a positive relationship between sustainable marketing activities and brand Image.

Relationship Between Brand Image, Customer Satisfaction, and Customer Loyalty

An intangible function known as brand image depicts how customers feel about a brand in terms of their self-expression, societal approbation, or self-esteem Click or tap here to enter text.[Johnson et al., 2001]. Brand image helps customers to assess the advantages and disadvantages of the product, the price they must pay, and the overall assessment (Ryu et al., 2008). When customers think about a brand, the customer's positive mindset will be encouraged because the brand image builds the character of the brand's products (Dewi et al., 2020). Usually, expectations, disconfirmation of expectations, performance, influence, and equity are used to model the level of buyer satisfaction (Martenson, 2007).

Customer satisfaction has become a very important strategy for companies over the last two to three decades (Kim et al., 2020) and a fundamental goal for companies (Waluya et al., 2019).

Satisfaction is the result of customers' feelings or assessments by comparing actual purchases and their expectations toward the products or services' potential benefits and enjoyment (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2021; Hadi et al., 2019; Hunt, 1991). Customers will be satisfied if the brand's performance matches their expectations; if performance exceeds their expectations, they will be very happy and excited, and vice versa (Kotler & Keller, 2021). Satisfaction is measured through preand post-purchase experiences (Khan et al., 2022).

Consumers will prefer to choose a brand that offer great value, good quality, and high satisfaction (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012). Customers can recognize the demands that a business meets and tell it apart from competitors when the brand has a strong image. Consumers tend to believe that products offered by a company with positive brand image are superior and may better satisfy their needs (Pranata et al., 2020; Zehra & Arshad, 2019). Therefore, consumers are more likely to purchase a brand they believe positive (Cuong & Long, 2020; Hsieh et al., 2004). The effect of brand image on customer satisfaction is evident in Vietnamese fashion market context as reported by (Cuong & Long, 2020). Rahi et al., (2020) and Syah & Olivia, (2022) also confirm that brand image has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

A firm basis of satisfied and loyal consumers is essential to the success of companies. According to (Zaini et al., 2020), customer loyalty is the willingness of a customer to maintain a relationship with a business and use its products going forward. Additionally, it has been determined that companies with loyal customers typically have a competitive edge (Chikazhe et al., 2021). One of the key elements that boosts a company's profitability is having loyal consumers (Arslan, 2020). A firm basis of satisfied and loyal customers is essential for successful brands (Chikazhe et al., 2021). They must invest time, money, and effort to attract in new customers in order to build brand loyalty (Izogo, 2017; Nyadzayo & Khajehzadeh, 2016; Tseng et al., 2017).

Customer loyalty is influenced by customer satisfaction with the product <u>(Beerli et al., 2021)</u>. When customers are satisfied with a brand, they tend to be loyal to it, and their probability of switching brands becomes smaller <u>(Abbas et al., 2020)</u>. Customer satisfaction is expected to have a positive impact on loyalty <u>(Ali & Kaur, 2021; Chen & Wu, 2022; Dcunha et al., 2017; Palos-Sanchez et al., 2018)</u>.

From the relationships above, we can conclude the hypothesis of this study:

- H1: Economic Sustainable Marketing Activities positively affects Brand Image
- H2: Social Sustainable Marketing Activities positively affects Brand Image
- H3: Environment Sustainable Marketing Activities positively affects Brand Image
- H4: Culture Sustainable Marketing Activities positively affects Brand Image
- H5: Brand Image positively affects Customer Satisfaction
- H6: Customer Satisfaction positively affects Customer Loyalty

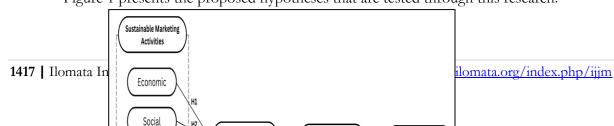


Figure 1 presents the proposed hypotheses that are tested through this research.

Figure 1.1 Research Framework

METHOD

Subjects of this study are upper- and middle-class Greater Jakarta, Indonesian Millennials (born 1982–1994) and Gen Z (born 1995–2010) who are already familiar with sustainable fashion. Compared to other older age groups, millennials and Gen Z are more open-minded and culturally knowledgeable, and they are recognised as active consumers in the market (Stylos et al., 2021; Van den Bergh & Pallini, 2018). Deloitte (2023) and Pew Resarch Centre (2023) surveys indicate that environmental concerns are a major concern for Millennials and Gen Z, leading to a high level of interest in environmental issues. As a centre of the country's economy and the region with the highest GDRP in Indonesia, Greater Jakarta has a large percentage of middle-class and upper-class residents (Siahaan, 2024). In order to make sure that the respondents match the target market for environmentally friendly fashion products and have sufficient purchasing capacity to purchase the product, these segments and geographies were chosen.

This study's is quantitative research with a non-probability sampling. From many types of nonprobability sampling, this research uses purposive sampling (judgmental sampling) to determine the targeted respondents. They have to be aware of the brand's activities on sustainability issues and have purchased sustainable fashion brands within the last six months. Using a 5:1 ratio, the sample-to-item ratio technique yielded a minimal sample size of 140 (28 items x 5) (Hair et al., 2020). This sample size exceeded the number of samples determined by the a priori G-power analysis using 108 samples, a significance level of 0.05, a power size of 0.9, a medium effect size of 0.15, and four predictors. Questionnaires with screening questions, behavioural and demographic elements of the respondents, and measuring items for every variable were distributed in order to gather data.

Data collection was conducted through a survey method using an online questionnaire created using Google Forms to facilitate data distribution and collection. This method was chosen because of its efficiency and effectiveness in reaching a wide audience quickly. The questionnaire was designed to capture comprehensive information about the research variables and was distributed through social media platforms including Instagram, X, and WhatsApp. Data collection was conducted in one phase, ensuring that information was collected in an up-to-date and relevant condition. Every item was measured on a 5-point Likert scale and was taken from the literature. Bansal (2005) and Jung et al., (2020) provided the items for the sustainable marketing activities related to the economy, society, and environment, while Jung et al., (2020) and Maignan & Ferrell, (2001) provided the items for the cultural aspects. Items related to brand image were taken from Glaveli, (2021), Jung et al., (2020), Kim and Kim (2005), and Mansouri et al., (2022). Items related to customer satisfaction from Glaveli (2021), Jung et al., (2020), Mansouri et al., (2022). Items regarding customer loyalty were taken from Beerli et al., (2021), Jung et al., (2020), and Nyadzayo and Khajehzadeh, (2016).

The validity and reliability of the research instrument were rigorously tested. Convergent validity was assessed through factor loadings, requiring a minimum of 0.6, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values of 0.5 or higher. Discriminant validity was confirmed using Fornell-Larcker criteria, where AVE should exceed construct correlations, and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios should not exceed 0.9. Reliability was evaluated using composite reliability, with values of 0.7 or higher indicating consistent measurement across items. These tests ensured that the instrument accurately and reliably measured the intended constructs, providing robust data for analysis (Ramayah et al., 2018).

Considering the complexity of the structural model of this study that involves variables of four dimensions of sustainable marketing activities, brand image, customer satisfaction, customer trust, price sensitivity, and switching intention, this study used PLS-SEM to maximize the predictive power of the relationship between these variables. Furthermore, PLS-SEM could be applied with small sample size, while to obtain consistent and accurate results in CB-SEM requires a minimum 250 samples (Rigdon et al., 2017).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From 218 of the 223 respondents that met the predefined requirements successfully completed the cleaning procedure. Well-educated, over-26-year-old female millennial consumers with average monthly incomes of above IDR 15 million dominated this survey. Many respondents said they bought more than seven pieces of clothing a year from companies like Zara, H&M, and Uniqlo that sell sustainable fashion lines.

Table 1. Respondents' Profiles

Effect of Sustainable Marketing Activities on Customer Loyalty among Young Generations: Case of Fashion Industry in Greater Jakarta-Indonesia

Yusuf, Ferdy, and Hendriana

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender			
Male	86	39.4%	
Female	132	60.6%	
Age			
17 – 21 years old	5	2.3%	
22 – 26 years old	43	19.7%	
27 – 31 years old	84	38.5%	
32 – 36 years old	68	31.2%	
37 – 42 years old	18	8.3%	
Education			
Senior High School or Equivalent	3	1.4%	
Associate Degree	21	9.6%	
Bachelor's Degree	145	66.5%	
Master's Degree	43	19.7%	
Doctoral Degree	6	2.8%	
Monthly Income			
IDR 10,000,000 – 14,999,999	44	20.2%	
IDR 15,000,000 – 19,999,999	52	23.9%	
IDR 20,000,000 – 24,999,999	46	21.1%	
IDR 25,000,000 – 29,999,999	31	14.2%	
IDR 30,000,000 – 34,999,999	29	13.3%	
IDR 35,000,000 – 39,999,999	11	5%	
IDR 40,000,000 and above	5	2.3%	
Frequency of purchasing fashion products in a year			
1 – 3 times	13	6%	
4 – 6 times	73	33.5%	
7 – 9 times	82	37.6%	
10 times or more	50	22.9%	
Fashion Brands that are frequently purchased			
Adidas	6	2.8%	
Cotton Ink	3	1.4%	
H&M	62	28.4%	
Levis's	4	1.8%	
Timberland	3	1.4%	
Uniqlo	69	31.7%	
ZARA	71	32.6%	

Convergent and discriminant validity, in conjunction with construct reliability, were used to assess the measurement model. Table 2 demonstrates that all items met the convergent validity standards (<u>Hair et al., 2020</u>) with factor loadings more than 0.7 and average variance extracted (AVE) greater than 0.5. According to Hair et al., (2011), all constructs satisfied the minimum Cronbach's alpha

and composite reliability requirements of 0.7. HTMT was used to examine discriminant validity, and as shown in Table 3, all constructs had ratios smaller than 0.9 (<u>Ramayah et al., 2018</u>).

Construct	Item	Factor	AVE	Cronbach's	Composite
		Loading		Alpha	Reliability
Economic	SMec1	0.768	0.591	0.770	0.852
Sustainable	SMec2	0.711	-		
Marketing Activities	SMec3	0.780	-		
(SMec)	SMec4	0.811	-		
Social Sustainable	SMs1	0.806	0.735	0.881	0.917
Marketing Activities	SMs2	0.899	-		
(SMs)	SMs3	0.889	-		
	SMs4	0.830	-		
Environmentally	SMen1	0.834	0.684	0.847	0.896
Sustainable	SMen2	0.749	-		
Marketing Activities	SMen3	0.819	-		
(SMen)	SMen4	0.900	-		
Cultural Sustainable	SMc1	0.703	0.598	0.773	0.855
Marketing Activities	SMc2	0.829	-		
(SMc)	SMc3	0.845	-		
	SMc4	0.705	-		
Brand Image (BI)	BI1	0.825	0.714	0.867	0.909
	BI2	0.828	-		
	BI3	0.882	-		
	BI4	0.845	-		
Customer	CS1	0.740	0.662	0.829	0.886
Satisfaction (CS)	CS2	0.834	-		
	CS3	0.853	-		
	CS4	0.823	-		
Customer Loyalty	CL1	0.782	0.649	0.821	0.881
(CL)	CL2	0.821	-		
	CL3	0.786	-		
	CL4	0.832	-		

Table 2. Construct Validity and Reliability

According to Table 2, it could be observed that the convergent validity, the results show that the factor loadings of the items range from 0.703 to 0.900 (higher than 0.6), while the AVE from 0.591 to 0.881 (higher than 0.5). Meanwhile, the composite reliability of the items ranges from 0.852 to 0.917 (higher than the requirement 0.7), which implies that the items were considered reliable. Since the items met the convergent validity and composite reliability requirement, a discriminant validity test was performed as presented in Table 3.

Variable	BI	CL	CS	SMc	SMec	SMen	SMs
BI							
CL	0.655						
CS	0.815	0.697					
SMc	0.708	0.631	0.506				
SMec	0.620	0.485	0.517	0.571			
SMen	0.494	0.281	0.470	0.342	0.714		
SMs	0.525	0.322	0.466	0.501	0.682	0.703	

Discriminant validity was assessed by HTMT, which the maximum ratio was 0.9 (Ramayah et al., 2018). As shown in Table 3, all HTMT ratios were less than 0.9 indicated the instrument passed the discriminant validity test.

A bootstrapping procedure was performed to test the hypotheses, and the results are presented in Table 4. All proposed hypotheses were supported as shown by the t-value greater than 1.645 and p-value less than 0.05. The four dimensions of sustainable marketing activities could explain brand image by 45.6 percent, with culture having the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.415$; p < 0.001), followed by economic ($\beta = 0.179$; p = 0.014), environmental ($\beta = 0.141$; p = 0.022), and social ($\beta = 0.012$; p = 0.044). Brand image could explain customer satisfaction by 49.1 percent, where the effect was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.701$; p < 0.001). Customer satisfaction could explain customer loyalty by 38.7 where the effect was positively significant ($\beta = 0.372$; p = 0.000).

Hypothesis	Path Coefficien	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	Result
	t				
H1: SMec → BI	0.179	0.081	2.202	0.014	Supported
H2: SMs →BI	0.120	0.071	1.706	0.044	Supported
H3: SMen → BI	0.141	0.070	2.020	0.022	Supported
H4: SMc → BI	0.415	0.064	6.457	0.000	Supported
H5: BI → CS	0.701	0.047	14.855	0.000	Supported
H6: CS →CL	0.372	0.081	4.574	0.000	Supported

Table 4.	Hypothesis	Testing
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The findings of this study offer a nuanced understanding of how various dimensions of sustainable marketing activities influence brand image, corroborating and expanding on existing theories and research. According to this study, brand image is significantly improved by all aspects of sustainable marketing initiatives, including the social, cultural, environmental, and economic ones. This research differs slightly from that of Jung et al., (2020) and Sarmad and Ali, (2022), who found that the only sustainable marketing activities that significantly improved brand image were those that were cultural, environmental, and economic. These results support the signalling hypothesis,

which holds that businesses frequently communicate through signals to shape consumers' opinions of their brands (Nyagadza et al., 2021). Businesses can build a positive brand image and encourage favourable consumer behaviour towards their products by sharing information about their sustainable marketing initiatives (Jia et al., 2023).

Specifically, H1 confirms that economic sustainable marketing activities significantly enhance brand reputation by showcasing a commitment to environmental responsibility. This result aligns with the work of Choi and Park (2015) and Sarmad and Ali (2022), who emphasized that economic sustainability efforts can distinguish brands and bolster their competitive advantage through improved public perception. This reinforces previous research by Jung et al., (2020) and Sarmad and Ali (2022), which highlighted the positive impact of economic sustainability on brand image. In contrast, H2 reflects a more complex dynamic concerning social sustainability. Unlike the studies by Jung et al., (2020) and Sarmad and Ali (2022) which failed to prove the relationship between social marketing activities and brand image, this study proves this hypothesis. While the hypothesis supported a positive effect on brand image, the trend also indicates that challenges such as consumer skepticism about greenwashing and persistent social issues within brands can temper this effect. This finding aligns with theories by Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) and Park et al., (2017) that posit effective social responsibility enhances brand perception and fosters consumer attachment. However, it also echoes the concerns raised by (Roozen and Raedts (2020) about the difficulties in translating social initiatives into a uniformly positive brand image.

Furthermore, H3 reinforces existing theories linking environmental responsibility with enhanced brand perception. This supports the view that strong environmental practices, such as meticulous waste management and use of eco-friendly materials, significantly boost brand image, as noted by Jung et al., (2020) and Sujanska and Nadanyiova (2023). Similarly, H4 validates the importance of cultural sensitivity in marketing strategies, underscoring that brands demonstrating respect for local and global cultural values foster stronger consumer connections and a favorable brand image. This is consistent with research by Hsu et al., (2011) and Jia et al., (2023), and highlights the appeal of culturally authentic practices, especially to Gen Z consumers. Overall, these results align with the signaling hypothesis, suggesting that businesses can build a positive brand image and encourage favorable consumer behavior by effectively communicating their sustainable marketing initiatives. This comprehensive approach enhances understanding of how various facets of sustainability contribute to brand image, extending insights from Jung et al., (2020) and Sarmad and Ali (2022) by incorporating the impact of cultural sensitivity and consumer expectations regarding sustainability (Jia et al., 2023; Nyagadza et al., 2021).

This study also supports the beneficial relationship between brand image and customer satisfaction. This is consistent with studies Chao et al., (2015), Rahi et al., (2020), and Syah and Olivia (2022) that show positive word-of-mouth (WOM) and sustained brand relationships as reasons why brand image boosts customer happiness. The findings from H5 confirm that a positive brand image significantly boosts customer satisfaction, aligning with theories that emphasize the link between brand perception and consumer contentment. This relationship is particularly pertinent for Generation Z, who prioritize brands that authentically commit to sustainability and reflect their values (Deloitte, 2023). The study demonstrates that when a brand

Effect of Sustainable Marketing Activities on Customer Loyalty among Young Generations: Case of Fashion Industry in Greater Jakarta-Indonesia Yusuf, Ferdy, and Hendriana

is perceived positively and meets consumer expectations for quality and ethical practices, it enhances customer satisfaction. This is consistent with previous research, including studies by Jung et al., (2020), Song et al., (2019), and Syah and Olivia (2022), which highlight how a favourable brand image leads to increased customer satisfaction through positive word-of-mouth and lasting brand loyalty. Essentially, when customers believe in the quality and integrity of a brand, they are more likely to be satisfied with their purchase, reinforcing the importance of maintaining a strong and positive brand image to ensure consumer satisfaction and loyalty. H6 aligns with established theories and research, which indicate that satisfied customers are more likely to exhibit loyalty and reduced brand-switching behavior (Abbas et al., 2020; Kotler & Keller, 2021). Satisfied customers perceive greater value and quality, which enhances their commitment to the brand (Hsieh et al., 2004; Zehra & Arshad, 2019). This supports the notion that effective satisfaction strategies lead to increased customer loyalty, crucial for long-term business success (Beerli et al., 2021).

H6 reinforces established theories that link customer satisfaction with increased loyalty, reflecting findings from Abbas et al., (2020) and Kotler and Keller (2021). When customers are satisfied, they perceive higher value and quality, which fosters their commitment and reduces brandswitching behavior (Hsieh et al., 2004; Zehra & Arshad, 2019). This aligns with previous research by Islam et al., (2021) and Taoketao et al., (2018), confirming that satisfaction directly contributes to customer loyalty. Satisfied customers are more likely to endorse the brand, make repeat purchases, and resist switching to competitors (Abbas et al., 2020; Beerli et al., 2021). The statistical analysis of this study, which included path coefficients and significance tests, underlines the robustness of this relationship and highlights the importance of satisfaction strategies in building long-term customer loyalty. This detailed reporting supports the conclusion that enhancing customer satisfaction is crucial for sustaining brand loyalty and overall business success.

CONCLUSION

This study effectively addresses its research objectives by demonstrating that sustainable fashion brands enhance their brand image through four critical dimensions: cultural, economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Among these, cultural sustainability was identified as having the strongest impact on brand image. This aligns with the hypothesis that sustainable marketing activities positively influence brand perception, supporting signaling theory by showing that sustainability practices can significantly shape consumer views. The findings answer the research question by confirming that positive brand image leads to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, particularly among Millennials and Generation Z who value authenticity and sustainability.

Theoretically, the study contributes to existing knowledge by validating signaling theory in the context of sustainable fashion, offering empirical evidence of how sustainability signals influence brand image and consumer behavior. This extends previous research by Jung et al., (2020) and Sarmad and Ali (2022) by establishing a direct link between sustainable marketing activities and brand image, enriching the understanding of how various sustainability dimensions impact consumer perceptions.

Effect of Sustainable Marketing Activities on Customer Loyalty among Young Generations: Case of Fashion Industry in Greater Jakarta-Indonesia Yusuf, Ferdy, and Hendriana

This study highlights several managerial implications for fashion brands aiming to leverage sustainable marketing. First, brands should adopt a comprehensive sustainability strategy that encompasses economic, social, environmental, and cultural dimensions to enhance their image. For example, brands should ensure that sustainability integrates fair labor practices and community engagement alongside environmental initiatives. Second, transparent and active communication about these practices is essential to building a positive brand image. Effective promotion of social responsibility, environmental impact reduction, and cultural engagement should be central to marketing strategies. Third, because a strong brand image enhances customer satisfaction, investing in brand-building activities that align with consumers' values is essential. Finally, customer satisfaction is critical to loyalty. Thus, brands should prioritize feedback mechanisms and continuous improvement in products and services. Implementing loyalty programs with personalized service and maintaining consistent product quality can encourage repeat purchases and customer advocacy, ultimately strengthening brand loyalty.

However, the study has limitations, such as the use of judgmental sampling and survey-based data, which could introduce bias and limit generalizability. Future research should consider probability sampling and multi-method approaches to provide a more nuanced understanding of customer loyalty. Additionally, exploring diverse generational and geographical contexts could offer broader insights into sustainable marketing practices.

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