

The Effect of Sustainable Marketing on Millennials' Attitudes and Behavior in the Fast Fashion Industry

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Abstract: The fast fashion industry is considered the most polluting industry in the world due to environmental pollution and overproduction. To address environmental concerns, retailers in the industry have promoted sustainable marketing and offered sustainable clothing to consumers in recent years. As the target consumer of fast fashion brand, Millennial's perception of sustainable clothing in the fast fashion industry influences the development of sustainable marketing in the industry. The purpose of this study is to explore the correlations between consumer awareness of sustainable marketing and consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing. Using sample data of 209 Millennials in Canada, the findings indicate that consumer awareness of sustainable marketing has a direct effect on consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing. However, price sensitivity has direct effects on consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing. Consumers with a higher willingness to buy sustainable clothing are more likely to pay more for sustainable clothing. Furthermore, the preference of durability affects price sensitivity which in turn affects consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing.

Keywords: fast fashion, Millennials, Sustainable marketing, purchase intention

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I. Introduction

The paper aims to contribute a better understanding of the effect of sustainable marketing on Millennials' attitudes and behavior in the fast fashion industry. The fast fashion industry is considered to be the most polluting industry in the world because of environmental pollution and the vast overproduction. Consumers today typically have mixed or unfavorable attitudes towards marketing practices (Yodelpop, 2020). Sustainable marketing is the development and marketing of environmentally safe products to address ecological concerns by minimizing negative effects on the physical environment in production, promotion, and packaging. Sustainable marketing is the development and marketing of environmentally safe products to address ecological concerns by minimizing negative effects on the physical environment (The American Marketing Association, 2020). Retailers can use sustainable marketing to create value, which can meet consumer demands for corporate social responsibility. Promoting sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry can boost sales if sustainable clothing drives a significant change in consumers' clothing purchase habits. The paper focuses on consumer attitudes and behavior in a sustainable marketing context.

Understanding the nature of consumer purchase decisions is important for fast fashion retailers. In recent years, fast fashion brands have become increasingly concerned about environmental issues and have adopted sustainable marketing. Fast fashion brands have also set up ambitious plans to become sustainable. For example, Zara has announced that 100% of the cotton, linen, and polyester used in the production will be sustainable, organic, and recycled by 2025 (Conlon, 2019). H&M (Hennes & Mauritz AB) launched its worldwide Garment Collecting initiative to close the loop on fashion by collecting used garments and textiles (H&M, 2017). Sustainability is becoming a common brand value and more and more fashion brands are adopting sustainable marketing practices. However, consumer perceptions of sustainability in the fast fashion industry still need to be studied. Are consumers paying attention to the sustainable clothes produced by fast fashion brands? Even if consumers are environmentally conscious, are they willing to buy sustainable clothing? Are price and quality the main factors when consumers purchase sustainable clothing? These are some questions that remain to be answered. For brands in the fast fashion industry, it is important to transform consumers' green thinking into buying behavior.

This study seeks to address the following questions: is consumer awareness of sustainable marketing correlated to consumers' purchase of sustainable apparel products; is consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothes correlated with price sensitivity; does the preference of durability affect the positive attitude towards sustainable clothing and purchasing behavior. The study is based on an online survey conducted in Canada in 2021 on the effect of sustainable marketing on Millennials' attitudes and behavior in the fast fashion industry. The following reviewed the literature on the effect of sustainable marketing on consumers' attitudes and behavior in the fast fashion industry.

II. Literature Review

The fast fashion industry is considered to be the most polluting industry in the world. As more and more consumers are concerned about the environment, sustainable marketing has become a key ingredient. Understanding the impact of sustainable marketing on consumers' attitudes and behavior in the fast fashion industry is important for retailers. Although the literature covers a wide range of information on sustainable marketing and consumer behavior, this review primarily focused on the importance of sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry, consumers' attitudes towards sustainable marketing, and practical implications of sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry.

III. The Fast Fashion Industry

A fashion refers to a style that is widely accepted by large numbers of the population over a period of time (Joung, 2014). As more and more companies in the textile and apparel industry aim to provide the newest styles to their customers, they adopt a fast-fashion business that aims to create a life cycle of fashion in less than a month (Joung, 2014). Fast fashion describes the strategy of adapting merchandise assortments to current fashion trends as quickly as possible in a cost-effective manner by maintaining capital-intensive operations in-house and outsourcing labor-intensive operations (Gamundi & del Mar, 2019). The fast fashion industry provides trendy and qualified products to the consumer at a low cost (Jang et al., 2012). With globalization, the textile and apparel industry could use cheap materials and labor around the world to reduce the time cycle from production to consumption, which enables fast fashion companies to deliver the most updated fashion design to customers every few weeks instead of every fashion season (Joung, 2014).

Fast fashion allows consumers to take advantage of the new fashion trends available at the lowest prices, however, fast fashion clothing is sold and made to be worn fewer than ten times (Joung, 2014). Joung (2014) noted that consumers in the fast fashion industry stop wearing cheap clothing and throw it away because of the low quality or new fashion trends.

Sustainability and Sustainable Marketing in the Fast Fashion Industry

Schaefer and Crane (2005) noted that "sustainability" is an extraordinarily contested concept that is subject to multiple interpretations and meanings. In brief, sustainability focuses on the process that ensures human actions do not impact the Earth or the biosphere to meet the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (Schaefer & Crane, 2005).

The American Marketing Association (2020) explains sustainable marketing is the development and marketing of environmentally safe products to address ecological concerns by minimizing negative effects on the physical environment in production, promotion, and packaging or improving quality. Sustainable marketing provides opportunities for apparel retailers to attract new groups of the customer (Stall-Meadows & Davey, 2013). As more and more consumers are concerned about the environment, marketers of fashion could use environmental marketing claims, including offering green products and engaging in socially responsible activities, to attract more consumers who are concerned about environmental issues (Stall-Meadows & Davey, 2013). Harris et al. (2016) explained that sustainable marketing in the textile and apparel industry incorporates one or more aspects of social and environmental sustainability, such as sourcing organic materials from Fair Trade suppliers. Sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry means manufacturers produce clothing in a way that protects local communities and minimizes environmental impacts while saving natural resources and energy (Disalvo, 2020). Sustainable marketing is important in the fast fashion industry because it is securing the future by focusing on recycled waste in sourcing, free energy in production, and more efficient systems in transportation (Disalvo, 2020).

The Importance of Sustainable Marketing in the Fast Fashion Industry

The textile and apparel industry is considered as the most polluting industry in the world because of the labor-intensive character (Garcia-Torres et al., 2017). Ly and Vigen (2020) argued that the apparel industry has faced an environmental crisis because of the rapid growth since the industrial revolution. Due to ethical issues such as production labor, environmental pollution caused by heavy production of dye, and fashion waste, and consumer understanding issues, the fast fashion industry is being reassessed (Jang et al., 2012). The characteristics of the fast-fashion business strategy that focuses on high volume, rapid lead times, and low prices generate sustainability issues related to social and environment due to human rights violations in workplaces and high levels of pollution and contamination in the production (Garcia-Torres et al., 2017). The environmental implications of fashion are serious as supply chains in the textile and apparel industry are complex, involving a series of activities such as soil condition and care, fiber production, the manufacture and coloration of textiles, and the transportation of different components to assembly lines and global markets (Saunders et al., 2019). To pursue the low cost, companies use low-quality material, which generates a "buy now, throw away tomorrow" culture that potentially encourages a race-to-the-bottom in the industry (Saunders et al., 2019). The fashion industry causes environmental problems due to production, maintenance, and disposal (Gwozdz, et al., 2015). Cotton, one of the most commonly used materials in clothing production, is the most pesticide-dependent crop in the world (Gwozdz, et al., 2015). The use of hazardous chemicals threatens workers and the

environment, and the various processes of fabric preparation consume a lot of water (Gwozdz, et al., 2015). The demand for personal hygiene and cleanliness requires water for maintenance and throwaway fashion culture leads to the disposal of a large number of clothes (Gwozdz, et al., 2015).

The study conducted by Joung (2014) shows that consumers hoard clothing and they do not participate in recycling although they are interested in and concerned about the environment. Joung (2014) argued that education-based sustainable marketing promoted by fast fashion suppliers can help consumers to develop a culture of sustainable consumption. Consumers are unaware of the importance of clothing recycling and do not have enough knowledge about how to dispose of old clothes (Joung, 2014). Following the education-based marketing communications, consumers prefer donations rather than discarding, which indicates the necessity of sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry (Joung, 2014).

Engaging in sustainable practices provides many potential benefits to the company related to customer acquisition, satisfaction, and retention (Gamundi & del Mar, 2019). Brands in the fast fashion industry such as ZARA, H&M, and UNIQLO are building environment improvement plans to be environmentally friendly and gain brand equity through sustainable competitive advantage (Jang et al., 2012). The Inditex Group, the biggest fashion group in the world and the owner of ZARA, has been implementing a strategic environment improvement plan including encouraging its employees to participate in energy saving and using aggressive investment in eco-friendly solutions (Jang et al., 2012). H&M employs a sustainable growth strategy including improving the conditions in collaborating factories around the world to recognize an enterprise's social responsibility (Jang et al., 2012).

IV. Millennials

Millennials are the generation born between 1977 and 2000 (Moreno et al., 2017). Disalvo (2020) argued that anyone born between 1981 and 1996 is considered a Millennial. The two generations that precede millennials are Generation X, who are individuals born between 1965 and 1980, and baby boomers, who are individuals born between 1946 and 1964 (Kurz et al., 2019). The Baby Boomers known as the "Me Generation" are often parents of Millennials (Stein, 2013).

Millennials define themselves by creating personal style (Johansson et al., 2017). Compared to Generation X, Millennials are more open to try new things, which explains why they pay more attention to fashion apparel and are willing to be big fans of new styles and the latest trends in the fashion industry (Vuong & Nguyen, 2018). Millennials are contributing positively to the environment by paying more attention to the products they buy and the social and environmental issues behind those products (Sorensen & Johnson, 2019).

Consumers' Attitudes toward Sustainable Clothing

Self-expression, group conformity, aesthetic satisfaction, and a desire to act ethically are motivations behind fashion consumption, as well as the motivations of sustainable consumption in the fast fashion industry (Ly & Vigren, 2020). Besides, the physiological benefit of buying sustainable clothing is a feeling of accomplishment, which motivates consumers to focus on sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry (Ly & Vigren, 2020).

The theory of reasoned action can explain the purchase intentions of Generation Y consumers on fast fashion items by linking consumers' perceived importance of a company's environmental marketing claims with consumer price sensitivity to green apparel from companies (Stall-Meadows & Davey, 2013). Stall-Meadows, C., & Davey, A. (2013) conducted a study on consumers' price sensitivity to environmental marketing claims and found that most consumers in the fast fashion industry had heard of sustainable marketing and sustainable clothing. About 34% of the respondents had purchased sustainable clothing. The study shows that there is no relationship between a respondent's past awareness of sustainable clothing and the respondent's price sensitivity (Stall-Meadows & Davey, 2013).

However, Saunders et al. (2019) conducted a study on the sensibility for sustainable clothing and found that participants focus far more on the quality of fiber, the quality of manufacture, and locally produced clothing items after participation in workshops which encourage pro-environmental behavior in the textile and apparel industry. The production of clothing should follow environmental and human principles and the design should consider the durability and adaptability of clothing for purchase (Saunders et al., 2019). Price is one of the most determining factors in selling sustainable clothing in the fast fashion industry (Ly & Vigren, 2020). Harris et al. (2016) also pointed out that price affects clothing purchases to a large extent. They found that clothing purchases among environmentally aware consumers are largely determined by economic considerations. Lack of financial resources is one of the barriers for consumers to buy sustainable clothing (Harris et al., 2016).

Stall-Meadows and Davey (2013) found significant relationships between the perceived importance of environmental marketing claims like environmental production techniques and consumers' willingness to pay for sustainable clothing. Consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable clothing as the perceived importance of environmental marketing claims increased. They also found that females show more interests in sustainable clothing.

However, the study conducted by Harris et al. (2016) shows a different fact. Harris et al. (2016) concluded that although some consumers are concerned about the social and environmental impact of their consumption practices, the study shows that providing sustainable clothing alone would not drive a significant change in consumers' clothing purchase habits. Harris et al. (2016) listed three reasons. First, clothing sustainability is a complex concept, which is difficult for most consumers to understand due to a lack of knowledge. Second, consumers' concerns are diverse, which is impracticable for companies in the fast fashion industry to engage all consumers in all sustainability issues such as animal welfare, child labor, and the environment. Third, sustainability lowers consumers' purchase decision criteria (Harris et al., 2016).

Practical Implications of Sustainable Marketing in the Fast Fashion Industry

To mainstream sustainable clothing in the fast fashion industry, fast fashion retailers should normalize the design of sustainable clothing to make it easy for consumers to make a purchase (Harris et al., 2016). Engaging with consumers effectively is an important way for fast fashion retailers to promote sustainable marketing, which requires manufacturers and retailers in the fast fashion industry to improve the transparency of the supply chain and earn customers' trust (Harris et al., 2016).

Joung (2014) suggested that fast fashion retailers should improve the quality of garments while keeping up with fashion trends. Providing more information on education-based sustainable marketing is a good way for fast fashion retailers to develop a culture of sustainable consumption. (Joung, 2014). As consumers who have purchased sustainable clothing have decreased price sensitivity, marketers could provide incentives to them to encourage the purchase of multiple sustainable clothing items. By providing additional information about environmental claims like statements and symbols on social media, fast fashion retailers can attract environmentally conscious customers, build relationships with customers, and create brand loyalty (Stall-Meadows & Davey, 2013).

Focusing on product benefits over product attribute is also a good way for fast fashion retailers to create a purchase motivation. Consumers in the fast fashion industry could understand why a product is good for the environment by understanding "less water consumption" or "less harmful chemicals" rather than "organic" (Ly & Vigren, 2020).

V. Conclusion of Literature Review

This part highlights the importance of sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry and explores relationships between sustainable marketing and consumers' attitudes and behavior. Sustainable marketing is important for the fast fashion industry as people pay more attention to the environment. Sustainable marketing is securing the future, which is important for both fast fashion retailers and consumers (Disalvo, 2020). Manufacturers and retailers in the fast fashion industry could improve customer acquisition, satisfaction, and retention by engaging in sustainable practices (Gamundi, & del Mar, 2019). However, some studies indicate that providing sustainable clothing would not drive a significant change in consumers' clothing purchase habits due to consumer price sensitivity (Harris et al., 2016). As consumers who have purchased sustainable clothing have decreased price sensitivity, marketers could provide incentives for them to encourage the purchase of sustainable clothes (Stall-Meadows & Davey, 2013).

The suggestion for future study is to examine how sustainable marketing affects the consumer behavior of Millennials because Millennials will become the target consumer for fast fashion retailers. It is also important to understand whether there is an attitude-behavior gap in purchase decisions in the fast fashion industry. Most studies do not focus on a specific group of consumers, such as Millennials or Generation Z. More research should be conducted to explore relationships between sustainable marketing and consumer behavior of Millennials. Understanding the effects of sustainable marketing on Millennials consumer behavior is important for the fast fashion industry.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

Homer and Kahle's (1988) Value-Attitude-Behavior Hierarchy (VABH) indicates that consumer values are central to consumer decision making. VABH assumes that consumer behavior is shaped by consumer attitudes. The theory of reasoned action suggests that a person's intention or instrumentality is the best predictor of behavior.

The empirical findings and preceding theoretical arguments in VABH imply that consumer awareness of sustainable marketing influences consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing. However, economic considerations and the durability and adaptability of clothing for purchase may also influence consumer decisions. However, economic considerations and the durability and adaptability of clothing for purchase may also influence consumer decisions.

Figure 1. Research framework

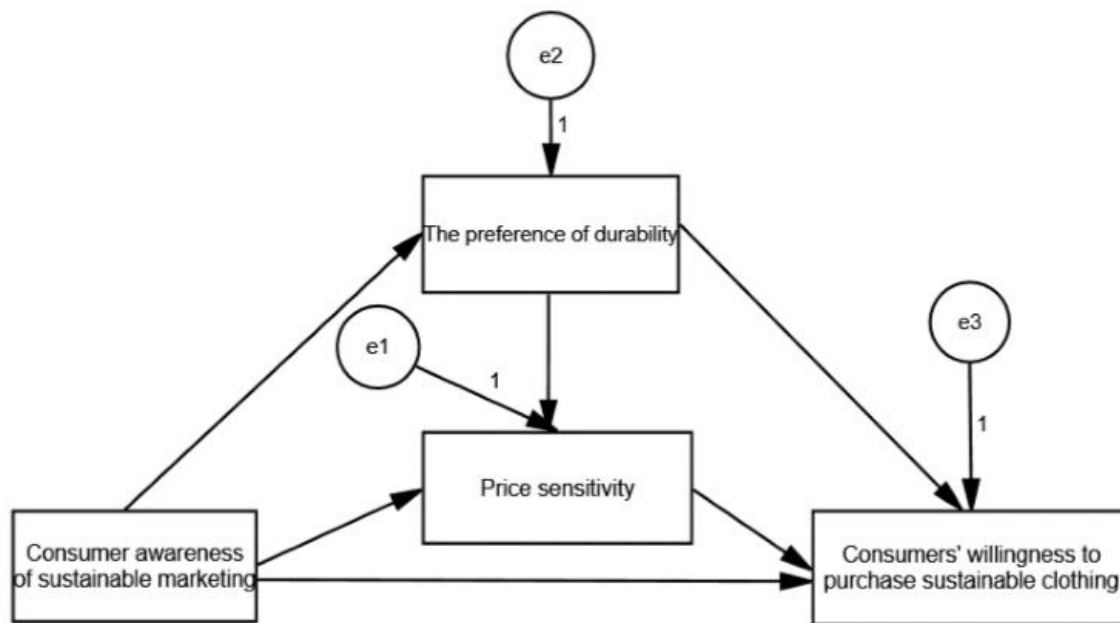


Figure 1 shows a conceptual model of this study. Price sensitivity mediates the relationship between consumer awareness of sustainable marketing and consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing. The preference of durability moderates the link between price sensitivity and consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing. We hypothesize that when consumer awareness of sustainable marketing is high, consumer willingness to purchase sustainable clothing will also be high. The lower the consumer's price sensitivity, the stronger the consumer's willingness to purchase sustainable clothing. In addition, consumers are more likely to buy sustainable clothing if it has a higher level of durability. Thus, the indirect effect of consumer awareness of sustainable marketing on consumer's willingness to purchase sustainable clothing by price sensitivity is strong when the preference of durability is low and weak when the preference of durability is high. Accordingly, the following hypotheses were formulated to guide the research design and the analysis regarding sustainable clothing purchasing behavior.

H₁. Consumer awareness of sustainable marketing is correlated to consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable apparel products.

H₂. Consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing is correlated with price sensitivity.

H₃. The preference of durability affects the positive attitude towards sustainable clothing and purchasing behavior.

Method

Sample and Data Collection

All audiences participated in an online research entitled "The Effect of Sustainable Marketing on Millennials' Attitudes in the Fast Fashion Industry". The online survey was conducted in Canada in March 2021 on SurveyMonkey, a powerful and well-known online survey development cloud-based software. Respondents were profiled as Canadian citizens between the ages of 18 and 40 with household incomes between \$50,000 and \$149,999. They voluntarily completed the questionnaire that included 13 questions related to sustainable marketing, sustainable clothing, and the fast fashion industry. In total, 221 people participated in the survey, of which 209 were eligible with an actual incidence rate of 94.57%. Partial responses and disqualified responses were excluded from the data analysis due to missing values. Respondents were profiled as Canadian citizens between the ages of 18 and 40 with household incomes between \$50,000 and \$149,999. They voluntarily completed the questionnaire that included 13 questions related to sustainable marketing, sustainable clothing, and the fast fashion industry. In total, 221 people participated in the survey, of which 209 were eligible with an actual incidence rate of 94.57%. Partial responses and disqualified responses were excluded from the data analysis due to missing values.

Sample Characteristics

Table 1 presents a profile of the demographic characteristics of respondents who were identified as Canadian Millennials and completed the online questionnaire. 47.85% of respondents were male and 50.24% were female. 1.91% of respondents were transgender. All respondents are Canadian millennials between the ages of 18 and 40. About 23.44% of respondents were aged between 18 to 24, approximately 24.88% were 46 years old or older. The percentage of respondents aged between 25 and 29 and between 35 and 39 was the same,

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both at 24.88%. 5.74% of the respondents were 40 years old, and they were the oldest group of respondents who participated in this study. Most of the respondents have previously purchased clothing from a fast fashion retailer in the past year (74.16%), and only 17.7% have not previously purchased fast fashion clothing.

Table 1. Demographics of respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	100	47.85%
Female	105	50.24%
Transgender	4	1.91%
Age		
18-24	49	23.44%
25-29	52	24.88%
30-34	44	21.05%
35-39	52	24.88%
40-44	12	5.74%
Whether or not previously purchased clothing from a fast fashion retailer		
Yes	155	74.16%
No	37	17.70%
Not Sure	17	8.13%

Note: n = 209.

Measures

The variables in the Likert scale are ordinal variables, from 1 to 5 representing strongly disagree and strongly agree, respectively. For ease of interpretation and meaningful analysis, researchers usually use them as continuous variables for statistical analysis. In the study, all variables were derived from the questions in the Likert scale. Question 12.1

Measurement items in this study were consumer awareness of sustainable marketing, consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing, price sensitivity, and the preference of durability, all of which were adopted in the previous literature. Table 2 shows all the constructs and items in the study. Consumer awareness of sustainable marketing was measured with two items: consumer acceptance of sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry and acceptance of sustainable clothing. The items included "Sustainable marketing is good for the environment," and "Sustainable clothing is clothing that I would recommend to others."

Table 2. Constructs and items

Constructs	Items
Consumer awareness of sustainable marketing	1. Sustainable marketing is good for the environment. 2. Sustainable clothing is clothing that I would recommend to others.
Consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing	If my favorite fast fashion brand sells sustainable clothing, I am willing to choose sustainable clothing for my next purchase.
Price sensitivity	If a sustainable clothing has the same style and quality as regular clothing, I am willing to pay a higher price than usual for it.
The preference of durability	If a sustainable clothing is more durable, I am willing to pay a higher price for it.

Consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing was measured with the item "If my favorite fast fashion brand sells sustainable clothing, I am willing to choose sustainable clothing for my next purchase." It measures consumers' willingness and intention to purchase sustainable clothing in the near future. It measures consumers' willingness and intention to purchase sustainable clothing in the near future.

Price sensitivity regarding economic considerations is the third aspect focused on in the study. Price sensitivity is the degree to which consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable clothing. It was measured with the item "If a sustainable clothing has the same style and quality as regular clothing, I am willing to pay a higher price than usual for it."

The preference of durability was measured with the item "If a sustainable clothing is more durable, I am willing to pay a higher price for it." The more consumers pay attention to the durability of clothes, the more likely they are to pay a higher price. The preference of durability was measured with item "If a sustainable clothing is more durable, I am willing to pay a higher price for it." The more consumers pay attention to the durability of clothes, the more likely they are to pay a higher price.

All measurements scales have been proved to have high reliability and validity in previous literature. The study used a five-point Likert type scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) to measure all items. All measurements scales have been proved to have high reliability and validity in previous literature. The study used a five-point Likert type scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) to measure all items.

Analysis Method

All data and hypothesis were analyzed and tested on IBM SPSS Statistics 25 and AMOS 27. Descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, and reliability analysis of all variables were calculated on IBM SPSS Statistics 25. Descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients and reliability analysis of all variables were calculated on IBM SPSS Statistics 25.

Research Findings

Quantitative Data

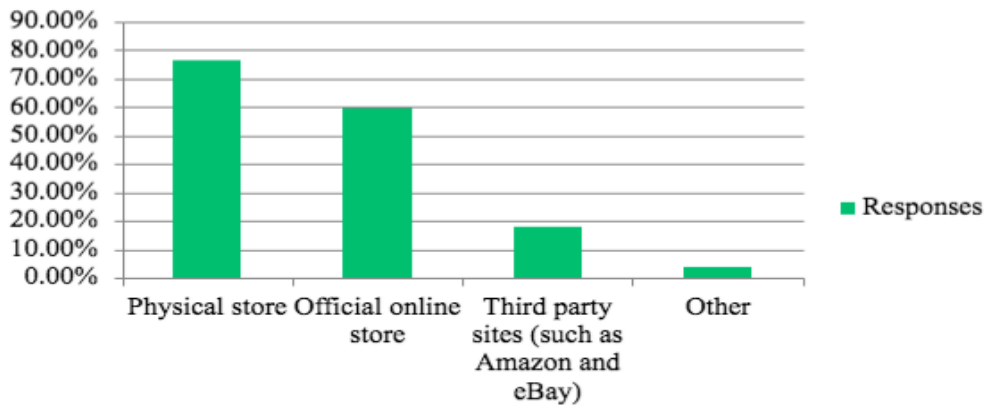
In this section, we shall present the results of the study. The survey was conducted online in 2021 in Canada. A total of 209 respondents participated in the survey. All respondents are Canadian millennials between the ages of 18 and 40. Millennials are potential consumers in the fast fashion industry. They follow the latest fashion trends and have a strong desire to buy fast fashion brands. Although the sample size can be considered small, the purpose is to provide a series of relevant information to reveal the attitudes of Canadian millennial consumers towards sustainable clothing and sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry. Perhaps this research can reflect the consumer attitudes of respondents of different genders towards sustainable marketing and sustainable clothing.

In this study, 74.16% of respondents purchased clothing from a fast fashion retailer in the past year and 17.70% said they did not purchase fast fashion clothing. 8.13% of respondents were unsure if they had purchased fast fashion clothing in the past year. Some of them may also be consumers in the fast-fashion industry. They gave vague answers because they were unable to identify whether the brands they had purchased in the past were fast fashion brands.

H&M is the most popular fast fashion brand among respondents. More than half of the respondents said they had purchased clothing from H&M in the past year. In addition, Gap, ZARA, and Forever 21 were also among several consumers' favorite fast-fashion brands. About 30 percent of respondents have purchased fast-fashion clothing from these brands. Less than 10% of respondents purchased clothing from Topshop. 21.35% of respondents said they had also purchased clothing from fast fashion brands not listed in the questionnaire.

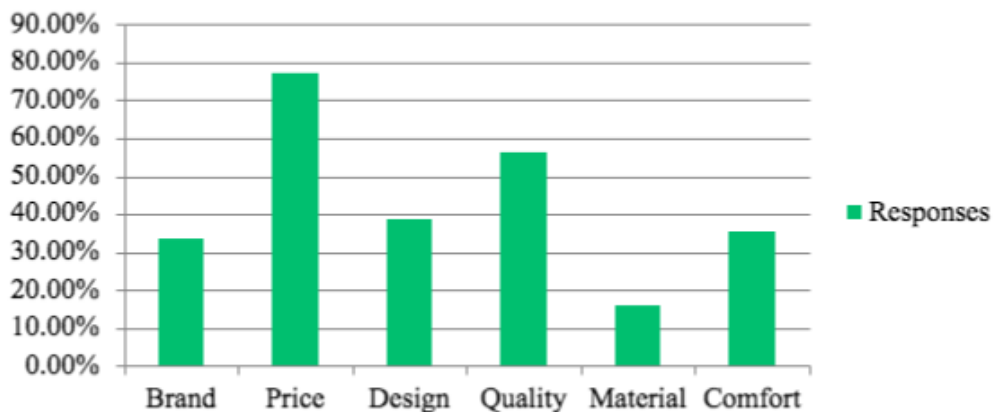
Figure 2 shows the places consumers often choose when buying clothing. The majority of respondents said they had purchased clothing in physical stores. With the rise of online marketing, more and more consumers choose to shop online. More than half of respondents said they had purchased clothing from an official online store in the past year. A small number of respondents said they had bought clothes from third-party platforms such as Amazon and eBay. Digital sales will continue to grow rapidly; however, most sales in fast fashion clothing will still take place in a retail store.

Figure 2. The marketing channels consumers often choose when buying clothes



When asked what the three most important actors were important to consider when making a clothing purchase decision, 77.03% of respondents listed price as a factor. The quality of clothing is the second most important factor influencing consumer behavior in purchasing clothing and 56.46 of the respondents chose it as one of the important factors. 38.76% of respondents cited design as one of the three most important factors to consider when purchasing clothing. About one-third of respondents said that the comfort of their clothing was a factor they would consider. It is worth noting that the brand is not the most important factor for consumers to consider when buying clothes. Only 33.49 of respondents ranked it as one of the three most important factors. 15.79 of the respondents listed materials as one of the factors influencing their purchase decision. The results show that price is the most important factor for consumers to consider when purchasing clothing, followed by quality and design.

Figure 3. The main factors affecting consumer behavior in purchasing clothing



When respondents were asked how they disposed of their old clothing, more than 80% said they had donated old clothing to charity. Nearly half of the respondents said they had given old clothing to family members or friends. However, 21.05% of respondents had chosen to throw away old clothing.

Figure 4. The way consumers dispose of old clothing



Table 3 presents the results to the question “Are you concerned about the environmental impact of the fashion industry on the world?”. Regarding the fashion industry, 74.64% of respondents said they were concerned about the environmental impact of the fashion industry on the world, while 25.36% of respondents said they did not pay attention to it. Specifically for the fast fashion industry, 58.37% of respondents believe that the industry is a polluting industry in the world. However, 14.35% of respondents do not consider the fast fashion industry to be a polluting industry. 27.27% of the respondents are not sure whether the industry is a polluting industry. The question “Do you think the fast fashion industry is a polluting industry in the world?”, has been cross tabulated, with the sustainable fashion consciousness from another question. For those respondents who have heard the term “sustainable fashion”, 72.9% of them believe that the fashion industry is a polluting industry. In contrast, only 39.6% of respondents who had not heard of the term “sustainable fashion” considered the fashion industry to be a polluting industry. Nearly half of the respondents who had not heard the term "sustainable fashion" were not sure if the fast fashion industry was a polluting industry. Nearly half of the respondents who had not heard the term "sustainable fashion" were not sure if the fast fashion industry was a polluting industry.

Table 3. Do you think the fast fashion industry is a polluting industry in the world? * Have you heard of the term "Sustainable Fashion"? Crosstabulation

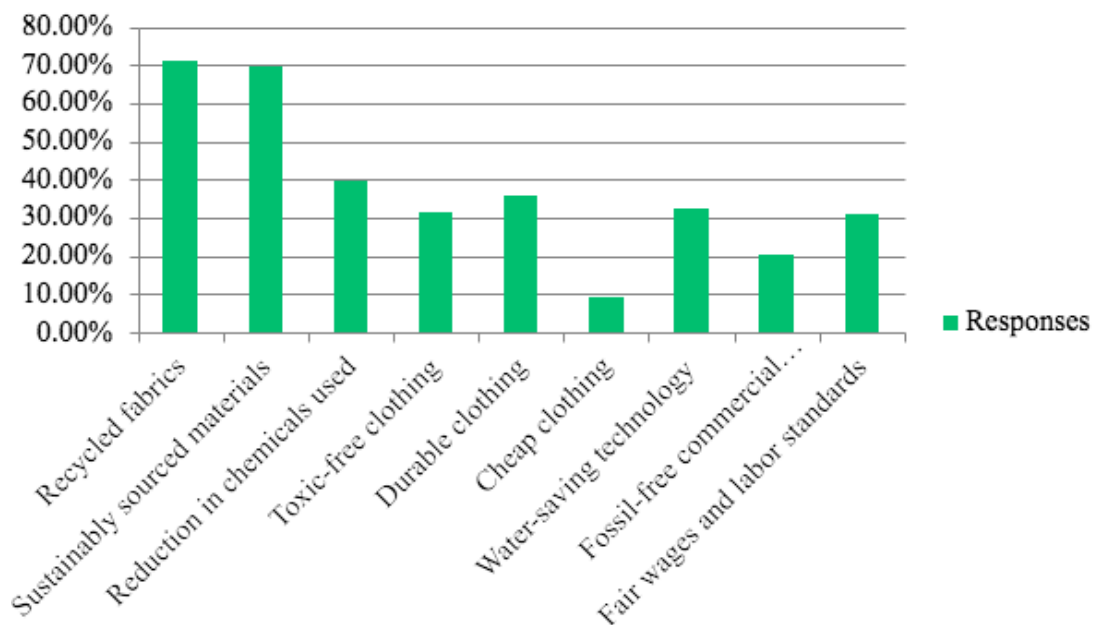
		Have you heard of the term "Sustainable Fashion"?		Total	
		Yes	No		
Do you think the fast fashion industry is a polluting industry in the world?	Yes	Count	86	36	122
		% within Do you think the fast fashion industry is a polluting industry in the world?	70.5%	29.5%	100.0%
		% within Have you heard of the term "Sustainable Fashion"?	72.9%	39.6%	58.4%
		% of Total	41.1%	17.2%	58.4%
No		Count	13	17	30
		% within Do you think the fast fashion industry is a polluting industry in the world?	43.3%	56.7%	100.0%
		% within Have you heard of the term "Sustainable Fashion"?	11.0%	18.7%	14.4%
		% of Total	6.2%	8.1%	14.4%
Not sure		Count	19	38	57
		% within Do you think the fast fashion industry is a polluting industry in the world?	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
		% within Have you heard of the term "Sustainable Fashion"?	16.1%	41.8%	27.3%
		% of Total	9.1%	18.2%	27.3%
Total		Count	118	91	209

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% within Do you think the fast fashion industry is a polluting industry in the world?	56.5%	43.5%	100.0%
% within Have you heard of the term "Sustainable Fashion"?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total	56.5%	43.5%	100.0%

Although about 70% of the respondents have heard the term “sustainable fashion”, we need to understand how much they know about sustainable fashion. Consumers were provided with nine descriptions of sustainable fashion in terms of recycled fabrics, sustainably sourced materials, reduction in chemicals used, toxic-free clothing, durable clothing, cheap clothing, water-saving technology, fossil-free commercial transportation, and fair wages and labor standards. The option of cheap clothing was not a focus of sustainable fashion, and the remaining eight descriptions were all about sustainable fashion. 9.09% of respondents chose the option of cheap clothing. Sustainable fashion promotes recycled and reclaimed materials, thus making respondents believe that costs will go down. In fact, sustainable fashion products cost more. The widespread use of organic raw materials and sustainably sourced materials, fair trade, and water-saving technologies promoted by sustainable fashion all make clothing more expensive than mass-produced products (Khandual & Pradhan, 2019). Nearly 70% of respondents chose the options of recycled fabrics and sustainably sourced materials, which means that sustainable fashion is more about recycling and recovery for them. The application of sustainable fashion and sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry is not only limited to sustainable materials and recycling, but it also involves other aspects such as reducing the use of chemicals, saving water, making garments durable, and reducing carbon emissions in the transportation chain. Descriptions other than recycled fabrics and sustainably sourced materials were selected by about 30% of respondents. In general, the fashion industry is paying more and more attention to sustainability and promoting sustainable fashion, but consumers have little experience and knowledge of sustainability efforts. Kong et al. (2012) argued that consumer awareness of sustainable fashion is limited due to the small selection of sustainable clothing and the disadvantages in aesthetic and functional aspects. Descriptions other than recycled fabrics and sustainably sourced materials were selected by about 30% of respondents. In general, the fashion industry is paying more and more attention to sustainability and promoting sustainable fashion, but consumers have little experience and knowledge of sustainability efforts. Kong et al. (2012) argued that consumer awareness of sustainable fashion is limited due to the small selection of sustainable clothing and the disadvantages in aesthetic and functional aspects.

Figure 4. Consumer descriptions of sustainable fashion

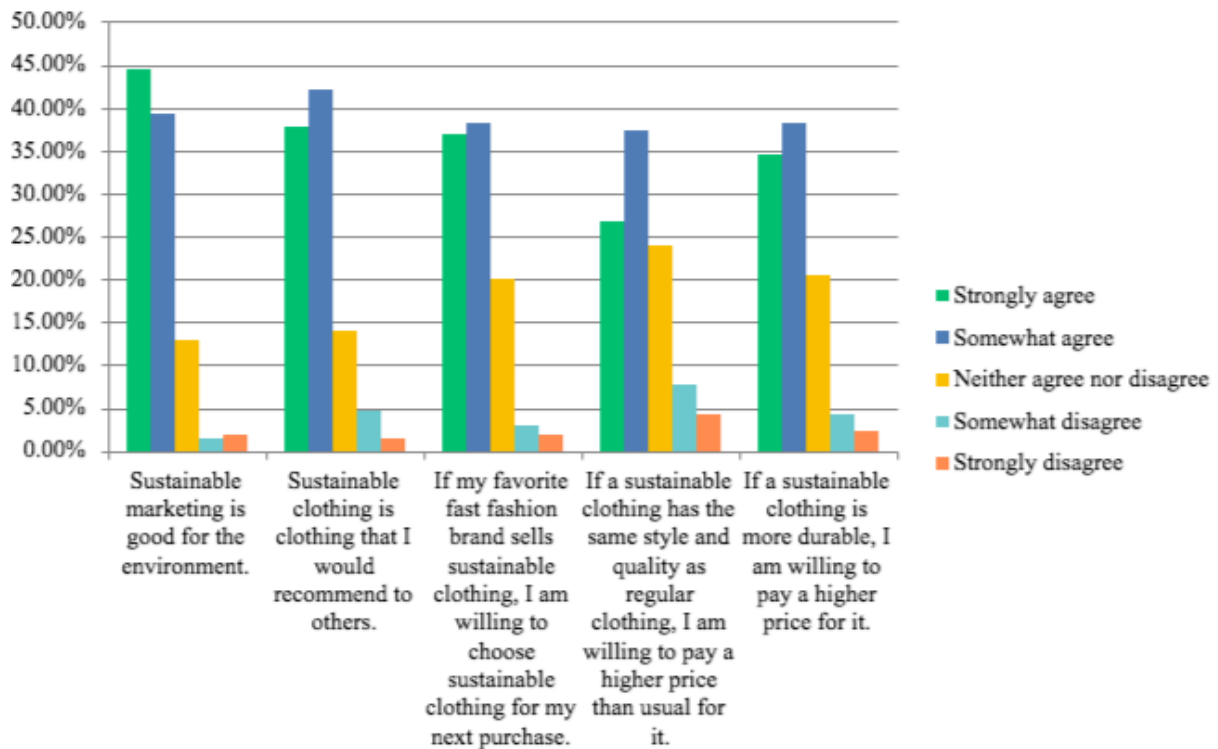


In order to provide respondents with a clearer and more accurate understanding of the research topic, we defined sustainable marketing and sustainable fashion in the fast fashion industry after the respondents answered eleven questions. In this section, respondents were clearly informed that the fast fashion industry is recognized as the most polluting industry in the world due to environmental pollution and huge overproduction. Respondents were also told that sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry aims to urge fast fashion brands to produce clothing in a way that protects local communities and minimizes environmental impact, while

saving natural resources and energy.

In section three, we asked respondents about their level of agreement with statements about sustainable marketing and their purchasing decisions. The statements were: (a) Sustainable marketing is good for the environment; (b) Sustainable clothing is clothing that I would recommend to others; (c) If my favorite fast fashion brand sells sustainable clothing, I am willing to choose sustainable clothing for my next purchase; (d) If a sustainable clothing has the same style and quality as regular clothing, I am willing to pay a higher price than usual for it; and (e) If a sustainable clothing is more durable, I am willing to pay a higher price for it. Figure 5 shows the respondents' level of agreement with the above five statements.

Figure 5. Respondents' level of agreement with statements

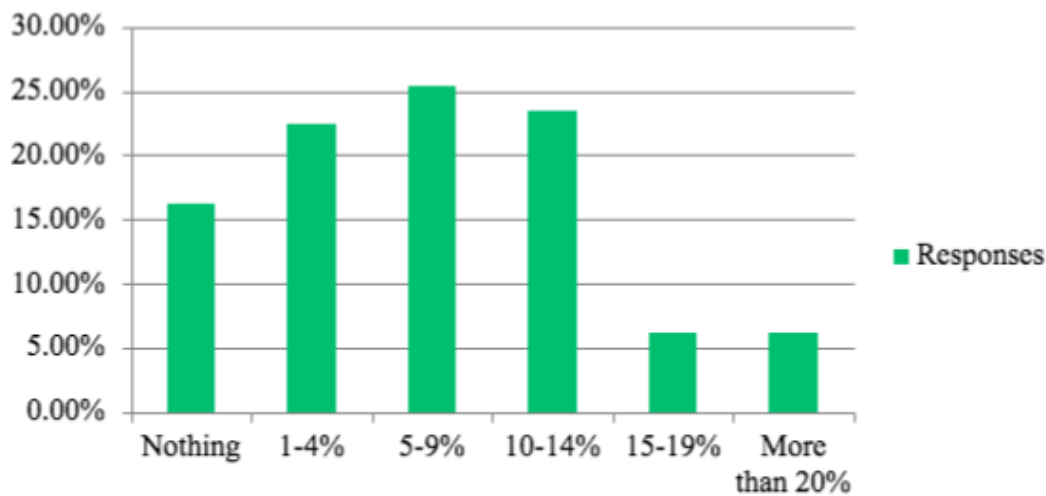


44.50% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that sustainable marketing is good for the environment, while 39.23% of the respondents somewhat agreed. Less than 4% of respondents either somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. About 80% of the respondents strongly agree or somewhat agree with the statement that sustainable clothing is the clothing I would recommend to others. About 75% of respondents in general agreed with the statement that if my favorite fast fashion brand sells sustainable clothing, I am willing to choose sustainable clothing for my next purchase.

Are consumers willing to pay a higher price for sustainable clothing? When asked whether they are willing to pay a higher price than usual for sustainable clothing if it has the same style and quality as regular clothing, 64.11% of respondents in general agreed with this statement. However, 23.92% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. About 12% of respondents said they disagreed with the statement. When asked whether they are willing to pay a higher price for sustainable clothing if it is more durable, 72.73% of respondents in general agreed with this statement. 20.57% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, and 6.7% of respondents generally disagreed with this statement. Two sets of data show that consumers are more likely to pay more for sustainable clothing that is more durable than the regular garment. Niinimäki (2010) pointed that consumers prefer long-lasting, durable, and high-quality clothing, and the preference remains when it comes to buying sustainable clothing.

Figure 6 shows consumers' readiness to pay more for sustainable clothing. 83.73% of respondents were willing to pay more for sustainable clothing. About a quarter of respondents said they would be willing to pay 5 to 9 % more for sustainable clothing, and 23.44 % of respondents were willing to pay 10 to 14 % more.

Figure 6. Consumers' readiness to pay more for sustainable clothing



Factor Analysis

In Second Two, respondents were informed about the definition of the fast fashion industry and a range of specific applications of sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry. These elements provided consumers with further insight into sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry, which is the core of this research. Based on their perceptions of sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry, respondents chose their level of agreement with five statements about sustainable marketing, sustainable clothing, and willingness to buy and pay in Section Three. The above five statements were presented in the form of a Likert scale in Question 12.

The scale is an important part of this research and provides key data to examine the correlations between different variables to test hypotheses. Table 4 presents KMO and Bartlett's Test. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.799 indicates that the sampling was adequate, and the factor analysis could be useful for the data. A significant result of 0 (Sig. < 0.05) indicates the variables do relate to one another enough to run a meaningful exploratory factor analysis.

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.799
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	501.476
	df	10
	Sig.	.000

VI. Descriptive Statistics

The study used AMOS 27 to analyze the data and test hypotheses. Table 5 shows sample correlation between variables. Results show that consumer awareness of sustainable marketing was positively correlated to consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing (r = 0.709). The correlation is high as the value of r is greater than 0.7. Consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing was positively correlated to price sensitivity (r = 0.504). The preference of durability was positively related to consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing (r = 0.472).

Table 5. Sample Correlations

	The preference of durability	Consumer awareness of sustainable marketing	Price sensitivity	Consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing
The preference of durability	1			
Consumer awareness of Sustainable marketing	0.478	1		

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Price sensitivity	0.663	0.503	1	
Consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing	0.472	0.709	0.504	1

Condition number = 9.170

Table 6 presents descriptive statistics of variables. Respondents have a good perception of sustainable marketing. They believe that sustainable marketing is good for the environment and are willing to promote the concept to their friends. Mean value of the variable consumer awareness of sustainable marketing is 4.1651, which is the highest mean value of all measured variables. The variable price sensitivity has the lowest mean of all measured variables with a mean of 3.7464. It indicates that price is the most influential decision driver when consumers are considering sustainable clothing choices in the study. The mean value of the variable preference of durability is 3.9809, which is slightly higher than the variable price sensitivity. This indicates that consumers prefer sustainable clothing with high durability and are willing to pay more for it.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Consumer awareness of sustainable marketing	209	1.00	5.00	4.1651	.82496
Consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing	209	1.00	5.00	4.0526	.92617
Price sensitivity	209	1.00	5.00	3.7464	1.06870
The preference of durability	209	1.00	5.00	3.9809	.97054
Valid N (listwise)	209				

Correlation Analysis

In the study, Spearman rank correlation was used to measure the degree of association between two variables. To ensure the validity of the results, the Spearman correlation needs to satisfy three assumptions: (a) variables should be measured on an ordinal, interval or ratio scale; (b) variables should represent paired observations; (c) There is a monotonic relationship between the two variables. In the following, we will test whether the variables satisfy the above assumptions in turn.

Four variables in the Likert scale are ordinal variables, from 1 to 5 representing strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, and strongly agree. Variables represent paired observations. For example, a single paired observation in H₁ (Consumer awareness of sustainable marketing is correlated to consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable apparel products) reflects a score on consumer awareness of sustainable marketing and consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing for each respondent. Figures 7, 8, and 9 show the scatter plots that represent the values of two variables in three hypotheses. They show that there is a monotonic relationship between the two variables in each hypothesis. Thus, Spearman rank correlation was used to measure the degree of association and test the hypothesis.

Figure 7. Simple Scatter with Fit Line of Consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing by Consumer awareness of sustainable marketing

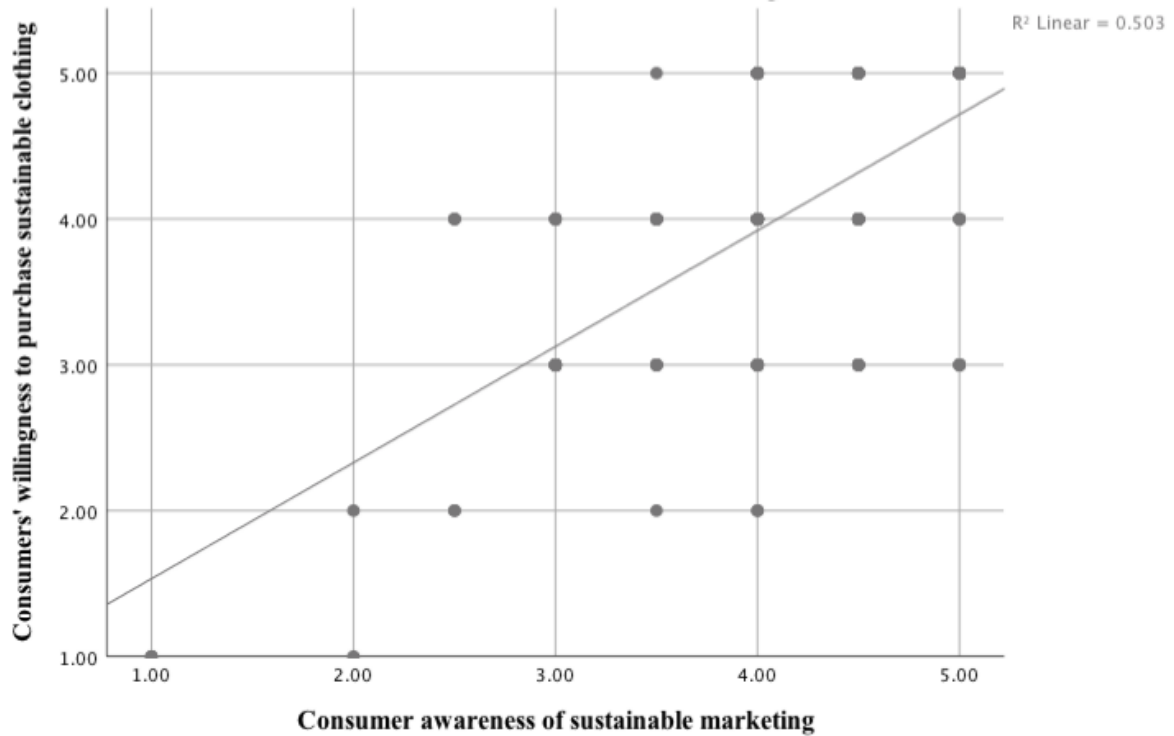


Figure 8. Simple Scatter with Fit Line of Consumer awareness of sustainable marketing by Price sensitivity

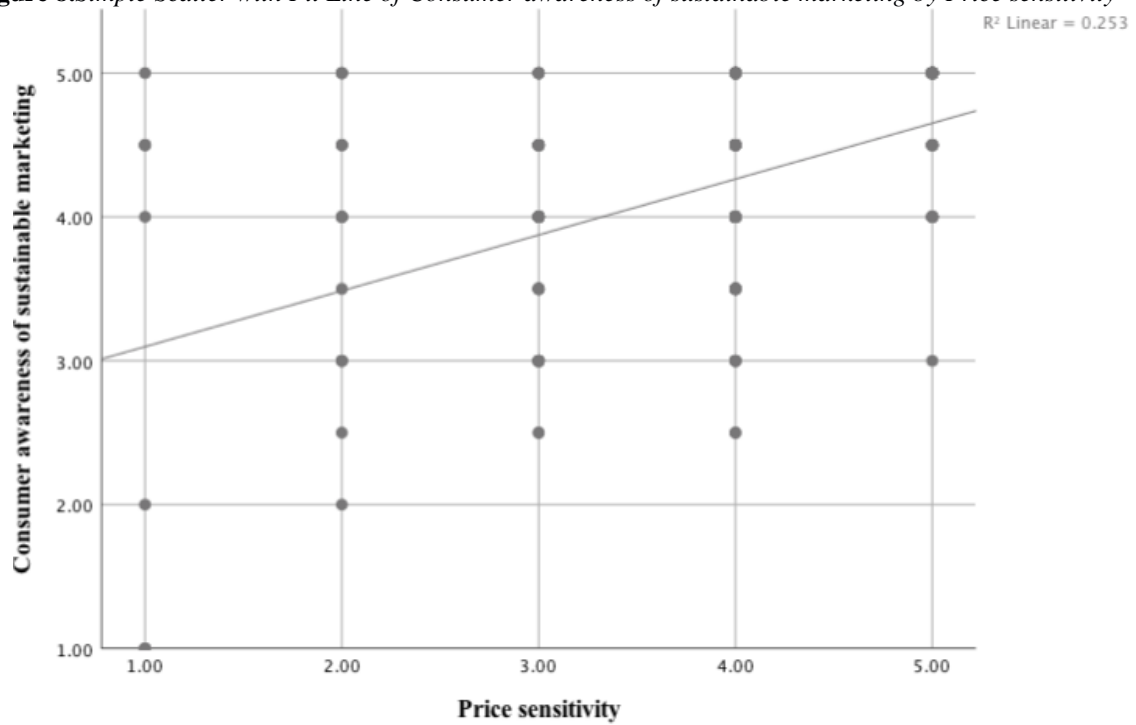
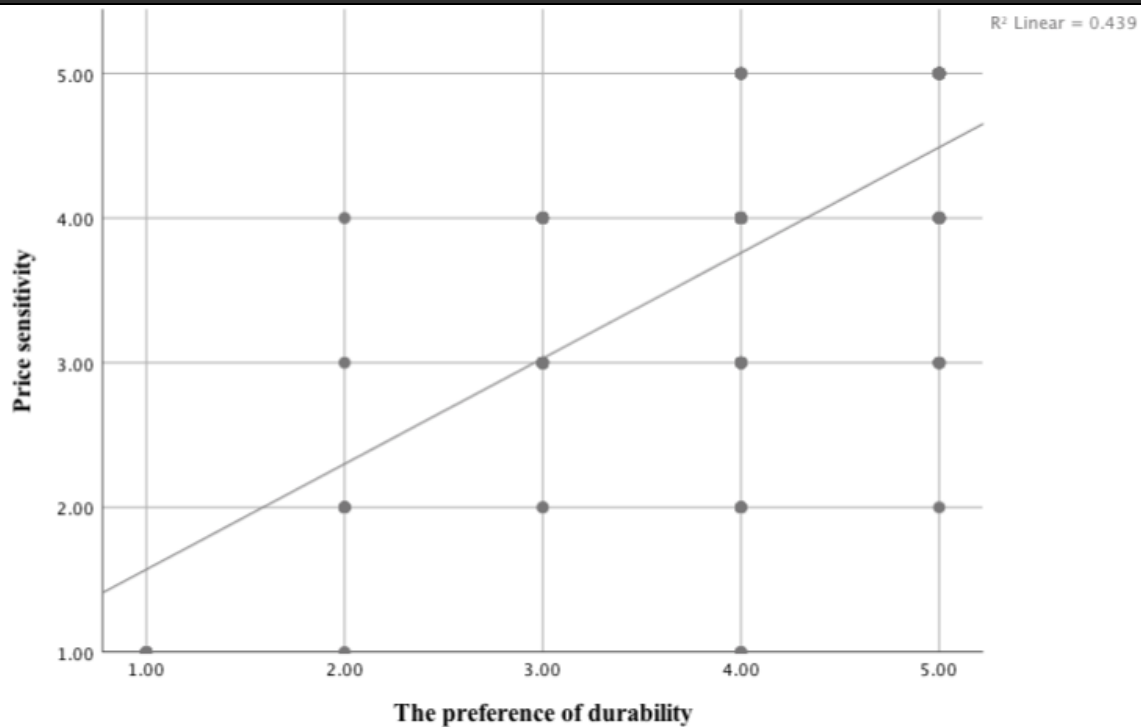


Figure 9. Simple Scatter with Fit Line of Price sensitivity by The preference of durability



Hypotheses Testing

Table 7 shows the results of the non-parametric correlation test for H₁. The p-value (Sig.) for this test as being .000 We have very strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The significant Spearman correlation coefficient value of 0.665 indicates that there is a strong positive correlation between consumer awareness of sustainable marketing and consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing. Thus, H₁ was supported.

Table 7. Correlations

			Consumer awareness of sustainable marketing	Consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing
Spearman's rho	Consumer awareness of sustainable marketing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.665**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	209	209
	Consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing	Correlation Coefficient	.665**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	209	209

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 8 shows the results of the non-parametric correlation test for H₂. The p-value (Sig.) for this test as being .000 We have very strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The significant Spearman correlation coefficient value of 0.502 indicates that there is a moderate positive correlation between consumer awareness of sustainable marketing and price sensitivity. H₂ was supported.

Table 8. Correlations

			Consumer awareness of sustainable marketing	Price sensitivity
Spearman's rho	Consumer awareness of sustainable marketing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.502**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	209	209
	Price sensitivity	Correlation Coefficient	.502**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	209	209

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 9 shows the results of the non-parametric correlation test for H₃. The p-value (Sig.) for this test as being .000 We have very strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The significant Spearman correlation coefficient value of 0.643 indicates that there is a strong positive correlation between consumer awareness of sustainable marketing and price sensitivity. H₃ was supported.

Table 9. Correlations

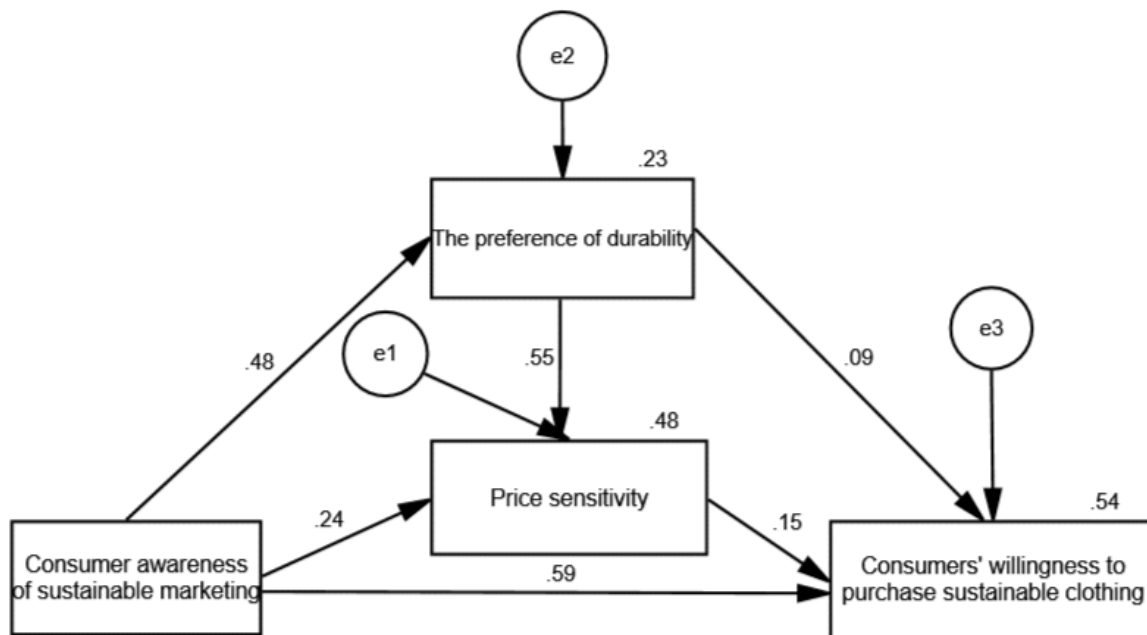
		The preference of durability	Price sensitivity
Spearman's rho	The preference of durability	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.
		N	209
	Price sensitivity	Correlation Coefficient	.643**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	209

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Model Verification

Figure 10 presents the path diagram of causal relationships in the research. The research shows that consumer awareness of sustainable marketing has a direct effect on consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing. Price sensitivity has direct effects on consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing. However, the preference of durability affects price sensitivity which in turn affects consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing.

Figure 10. Path Diagram of Causal Relationships



Based on the correlation analysis, the proposed model is acceptable. The directional arrows show causal relations in the research. There is a strong positive correlation between consumer awareness of sustainable marketing and consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing. Consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing is correlated with price sensitivity. The preference of durability has a direct effect on price sensitivity and consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing.

VII. Implications for Further Research

The research investigated the correlations that exist between consumer awareness of sustainable marketing, consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing, price sensitivity, and the preference of durability. It is important for fast fashion retailers to transform consumers' awareness of sustainability into buying behavior. Therefore, understanding consumer buying behavior is critical to promoting sustainable clothing. The results agree with previous research and support the VABH and the theory of reasoned action. The results indicated that consumer awareness of sustainable marketing has a direct effect on consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing. The study demonstrates a strong positive correlation between

consumer awareness of sustainable marketing and price sensitivity. Consumers are more concerned about the price of sustainable clothing. It is worth noting that although purchase intention is influenced by consumer awareness of sustainable marketing, the durability of the clothing largely influences price sensitivity. The findings of the study sheds light on relationships between price sensitivity and the preference of durability. Although consumers are price sensitive, they are willing to pay more for more durable clothing.

The generalizability of the results is limited by the sample size. Most respondents who participated in this survey have a positive attitude toward sustainable marketing, which may have an impact on the reliability of the data. Only a minority of respondents were neutral or negative about sustainable marketing. The reliability of data is also impacted by the variables in the Likert scale. The reliability of the study would be improved if there could be more measurement items in the scale. The methodological choices were constrained as data is not normally distributed in the research. Future research should take into account consumers who have neutral or negative attitude toward sustainable marketing or sustainable clothing.

VIII. Conclusion

Sustainability consciousness has been widespread among the Millennials due to growing concerns about the environment. Although nearly half of the respondents had not heard of sustainable fashion, they were able to identify the exact focus of sustainable fashion, namely fabric recycling and sustainable sourcing. Most Millennial consumers strongly support sustainable marketing in the fast fashion industry, and they are interested in sustainable clothing.

The research accomplished the objective of finding the correlations that exist between the factors of consumer awareness of sustainable marketing, consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing, price sensitivity, and the preference of durability. By applying the quantitative research method together with factor analysis, regression analysis, and correlation analysis, the study finds that there is a strong positive correlation between consumer awareness of sustainable marketing and consumer willingness to purchase sustainable clothing. It shows that consumers with a positive attitude toward sustainable marketing have a stronger desire to buy sustainable clothing than those who are not environmentally conscious or remain on the fence about sustainable marketing. Furthermore, the study verifies a positive relationship between price sensitivity and consumers' willingness to purchase sustainable clothing. Price is the most important factor affecting clothing purchase decisions. Although sustainable marketing offers a possible solution to environmental pollution in the fast fashion industry, consumers still consider price as an important factor when purchasing sustainable clothing. The findings also show that consumers with a higher willingness to buy sustainable clothing are more likely to pay more for sustainable clothing. Sustainable attitudes and values drive consumers to pay more for sustainable clothing. The study finds that the preference of durability affects the positive attitude towards sustainable clothing and purchasing behavior. The durability of clothing affects consumers' purchasing decisions. Consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable clothing that is more durable.

Finally, based on the research findings, we give some recommendations for fast fashion retailers to help them better promote sustainable fashion and make the industry more environmentally friendly. Consumer awareness of sustainable marketing has a significant influence on the purchase intention to sustainable clothing. It is essential to promote sustainable fashion and sustainable clothing in multiple channels such as physical stores, official website, and mobile applications. Most consumers do not have a comprehensive understanding of sustainable marketing and are often not aware that aspects such as fossil-free commercial transportation, fair wages and labor standards, in addition to recycling, are also part of sustainable marketing. Promotion should not only focus on the fabric itself, but also clearly inform consumers about the definition and significant social impacts of sustainable marketing. Price is a key factor that affects consumer purchase behavior. Although consumers have shown willingness to pay more for sustainable clothing, they are price sensitive. Provides sustainable clothing at reasonable price is an effective way for fast fashion retailers to promote sustainable marketing. Consumers are more willing to pay about 10% more for sustainable clothing. As the durability of sustainable clothing increases, consumers may be willing to pay more.

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