

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

Department of Management



Master Thesis

Sustainability as a Theme for the Nykaa Marketing Communication

The case of Indian Fashion Brand Nykaa

Supervisor : Ing. Martina Chalupová, Ph.D.

Author :Rajnandni Selvraj Naidu

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DIPLOMA THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Rajnandni Selvraj Naidu

Economics and Management

Thesis title

Sustainability as a Theme for the Nykaa Marketing Communication

Objectives of thesis

The aim of the thesis is to explore and recommend chosen aspects of sustainability as a theme for the improvement marketing communication strategy.

Methodology

Theoretical part will include the theoretical background of the integrated marketing communication with all used methods and tools, as well as communication mix with focus on the new trends in the area. Practical part will include the analysis of the present communication mix of the chosen firm. Based on own research there will be recommendations formulated for the improvement of marketing communication strategy; with focus on sustainability.

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Keywords

marketing communication, social media, communication strategy, sustainability

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- EGAN, J. Marketing Communications. London: Regent's University London, 2019. ISBN 978-1-52644-689-3
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The Diploma Thesis Supervisor

Ing. Martina Chalupová, Ph.D.

Supervising department

Department of Management and Marketing

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doc. Ing. Ladislav Pilař, MBA, Ph.D.

Head of department

Electronic approval: 24. 03. 2025

prof. Ing. Lukáš Čechura, Ph.D.

Dean

Prague on 24. 03. 2025

Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my master thesis titled " Sustainability as a Theme for the Nykaa Marketing Communication: The case of Indian Fashion Brand Nykaa" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the master thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on date of submission

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Sustainability as a Theme for the Nykaa Marketing Communication

The case of Indian Fashion Brand Nykaa

Abstract

Sustainability has become a defining factor in consumer decision-making, shaping how brands communicate their commitments to ethical and eco-friendly practices. This study examines the effectiveness of sustainable marketing communication for Nykaa, an Indian fashion and beauty brand, to recommend for the improvement of sustainable marketing communication strategy and to understand how clarity, credibility, and engagement influence consumer preference and purchase behaviour. Using a quantitative research approach, data was collected from 318 consumers through an online questionnaire, focusing on individuals interested in sustainability. The findings reveal that clear messaging plays a significant role in shaping consumer perception. When sustainability initiatives are communicated in a simple and direct manner, consumers are more likely to trust and prefer the brand. However, some skepticism remains regarding the credibility of information sources, highlighting the need for verified certifications and expert-backed communication. Engagement also emerges as a key factor, with consumers responding more positively when they feel actively involved in sustainability efforts. Initiatives that encourage participation such as recycling programs and interactive campaigns can strengthen brand loyalty and advocacy. The study proposes the "Clear-Credible-Engaging-Aligned" (CCEA) Framework, offering a structured approach for brands to refine their sustainability messaging. By ensuring transparency, strengthening trust, and fostering deeper consumer involvement, brands can create marketing strategies that go beyond awareness and drive real behavioral change. Sustainability is no longer just a marketing tool—it is an expectation. Brands that integrate ethical commitments into their core identity will be better positioned to build long-term consumer relationships in an increasingly conscious market.

Keywords: *Marketing Communication, Social Media, Communication Strategy, Sustainability*

Doporučení pro udržitelnou marketingovou komunikaci:

Případ indické módní značky Nykaa

Abstrakt

Udržitelnost se stala klíčovým faktorem při rozhodování spotřebitelů a ovlivňuje, jak značky komunikují své závazky k etickým a ekologickým praktikám. Tato studie zkoumá efektivitu udržitelné marketingové komunikace pro Nykaa, indickou módní a kosmetickou značku, k doporučení pro zlepšení strategie udržitelné marketingové komunikace a k pochopení toho, jak jasnost, důvěryhodnost a zapojení ovlivňují spotřebitelské preference a nákupní chování. Pomocí kvantitativního výzkumného přístupu byla data shromážděna od 318 spotřebitelů prostřednictvím online dotazníku, zaměřeného na jedince se zájmem o udržitelnost. Výsledky ukazují, že jasná komunikace hraje zásadní roli při utváření spotřebitelského vnímání. Pokud jsou iniciativy v oblasti udržitelnosti prezentovány jednoduše a srozumitelně, spotřebitelé mají větší důvěru k značce a preferují ji. Přesto přetrvává určitá skepse ohledně důvěryhodnosti zdrojů informací, což zdůrazňuje potřebu ověřených certifikací a odborně podložené komunikace. Zapojení spotřebitelů se rovněž ukazuje jako klíčový faktor – lidé reagují pozitivněji, pokud se mohou aktivně podílet na udržitelných iniciativách. Programy recyklace nebo interaktivní kampaně mohou posílit loajalitu ke značce i její propagaci mezi zákazníky. Studie navrhuje rámec "Jasný-Důvěryhodný-Interaktivní-Zakotvený" (JDIZ) jako strukturovaný přístup pro značky, které chtějí vylepšit svou komunikaci v oblasti udržitelnosti. Transparentnost, posílení důvěry a hlubší zapojení spotřebitelů mohou pomoci vytvořit marketingové strategie, které nejen informují, ale také skutečně ovlivňují chování zákazníků. Udržitelnost již není jen marketingovým nástrojem – stává se očekáváním. Značky, které ji integrují do svého základního poslání, si mohou vybudovat dlouhodobé vztahy se stále uvědomělejšími spotřebiteli.

Klíčová slova: Marketingová komunikace, Sociální média, Komunikační strategie, Udržitelnost

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1. Introduction

Sustainability has emerged as a prevalent theme in contemporary society, particularly within the realms of business, marketing, and consumption. However, it is imperative to recognize that sustainability is not merely a fleeting trend; its significance in the context of production and consumption is poised to remain, if not increase, for brands and consumers globally in the future, mirroring its current importance. The discerning nature of consumers regarding their consumption behaviour is on the rise, necessitating adaptation by brands and marketers to ensure survival and profitability. (Ferreira & Santos, 2020)

In response to global sustainability objectives, institutional pressures, and media influence, brands are compelled to integrate corporate social responsibility practices into their operations to address sustainability concerns. As consumer demand for sustainable products and services intensifies, various industries have elevated sustainability to a paramount position, with the fashion industry coming under scrutiny for its substantial environmental and social impact. The scholars have critically examined whether fashion brands can transition towards sustainability, given the rapid production, consumption, and disposal characteristic of the contemporary fashion landscape. (Bhardwaj & Kontogiorgi, 2020)

Some argue that, with appropriate tools, strategies, and responsible actions, fashion brands can indeed adopt sustainable practices. The current trend in fashion is characterized by the rapid turnover of styles, driven by consumers' desire to keep up with the latest trends. Numerous international fashion brands, including major players like Zara and Nykaa, have responded to this shift by investing in more sustainable practices, altering their production, marketing, and sales approaches. The interface between brands and consumers is predominantly facilitated by marketing. (Fletcher, 2022)

Brand and their marketers leverage the marketing communication mix model, considered fundamental in marketing, is adaptable to target specific consumer groups effectively. Considering the heightened sustainability awareness among today's consumers, a modified version of this model, known as the sustainable marketing communication mix, has gained traction. This model is deemed a more apt representation for marketers aiming to engage environmentally and socially conscious consumers, a growing segment within the fashion industry's target market. (Charter & Polonsky, 2023)

While previous studies have explored the impact of different marketing mix variations on consumption patterns, purchase intention, satisfaction levels, and brand loyalty, scant attention has been directed towards guiding fashion brands on utilizing the marketing communication mix when targeting conscientious consumers or promoting sustainable clothing. This study seeks to address this knowledge gap and contribute valuable insights to the existing literature in the field. (Jay et al., 2021)

1.1 Problem Statement

Considering the growing awareness among today's consumers regarding environmental and social issues, there is an increasing demand for sustainable fashion. However, recent studies reveal that the sustainability claims made by fashion brands are met with scepticism and lack credibility among conscientious consumers. Furthermore, doubts surround the authenticity of corporate social responsibility initiatives undertaken by these brands. A related issue pertains to sustainability labels, which serve as marketing tools to educate consumers, raise awareness, and facilitate the identification of sustainable products. (Sharma & Patterson, 2022)

However, a significant challenge lies in the absence of standardized sustainability labels within the fashion industry, leading to consumer hesitancy and scepticism towards the reliability of currently employed labels. Scholars argue that to establish trust among consumers, fashion brands must prioritize integrated communication, transparency, and traceability. These factors are deemed fundamental to meeting the demands of both current and future consumers. Consequently, a thorough investigation into the future of standardized sustainability labels within the fashion industry becomes imperative. (Rossi et al., 2023)

Additionally, the rise of consumer power through social media has reshaped marketing communication strategies for brands. While consumer influence on brand images and profitability can be both positive and negative, the impact of social media is undeniable, with information spreading rapidly. The era of conscious consumers is here to stay, and their influence on mindful consumption is expected to grow in the short, medium, and long term. Notably, conscious consumers, known for their ability to influence others, are increasingly utilizing social media platforms to both praise and criticize brands. (Willems et al., 2021)

The trend of boycotting unsustainable brands is gaining momentum, emphasizing the need for fashion brands to engage with consumers in a responsible manner. Survival in a competitive market requires more than just adopting sustainable practices; fashion brands must innovate to produce and market sustainable fashion products aligned with their business model. Thus, for success and profitability, brands like Nykaa must not only embrace sustainability but also communicate their commitment in a way that resonates with the growing segment of conscious consumers. This raises essential questions about how Nykaa, and other marketers, should leverage the marketing communication mix to align with consumer preferences. (Crane, N., & McBrien, 2022)

2. Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Objectives

The aim of the thesis is to explore and recommend chosen aspects of sustainability as a theme for the improvement of marketing communication strategy. The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the sustainable marketing communication by Indian fashion brand Nykaa in influencing consumer purchase intention. This will be done by analysing the impact of message clarity and message credibility on consumer preference. Based on the data, the secondary objective of this study is to recommend how fashion brands should refine their marketing communication strategies to better align with consumer expectations regarding sustainability.

2.2 Research Questions

- RQ1 - How does sustainable marketing communication by Nykaa (message clarity and message credibility) influence consumer preference for its fashion products?
- RQ2 - How does consumer preference impact consumer purchase intention for sustainable fashion by Nykaa?

2.3 Research Hypothesis

- H1 - There is no significant relationship between message clarity and consumer preference for sustainable fashion by Nykaa.
- H2 - There is no significant relationship between message credibility and consumer preference for sustainable fashion by Nykaa.
- H3 - There is no significant relationship between consumer preference and consumer purchase intention towards sustainable fashion by Nykaa.

2.4 Methodology

The theoretical part will include the theoretical background of integrated marketing communication with all used methods and tools, as well as the communication mix with a focus on new trends in the area. The practical part will include the analysis of the present communication mix of the Nykaa. Based on results, there will be recommendations formulated for the improvement of marketing communication strategy, with a focus on sustainability.

This research is guided by positivist research philosophy, which provides practical and systematic approach for the effectiveness of sustainable marketing communication (Morgan, 2014). The positivist paradigm is particularly relevant for marketing research as it enables the investigation of real-world phenomena while maintaining scientific rigor (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Within this philosophical framework, the study employs an exploratory research design to examine the effectiveness of sustainable marketing communication strategies at Nykaa, an Indian fashion brand.

The research utilizes a quantitative methodology through a structured online questionnaire. The survey instrument is designed to collect data from 318 respondents, with the sample size determined based on statistical significance requirements for marketing research studies (Saunders et al., 2019). The sampling approach employs convenience sampling, leveraging social media platforms and email distribution for data collection. This approach, while having limitations, is appropriate for the study's context and objectives, particularly given the digital nature of modern consumer interactions with fashion brands.

The questionnaire comprises demographic questions and Likert-scale items measuring various aspects of sustainable marketing effectiveness. The five-point Likert scale is employed to assess consumer perceptions, attitudes, and responses to sustainable marketing initiatives. The questionnaire design follows established marketing research principles to ensure reliability and validity (Malhotra & Dash, 2019).

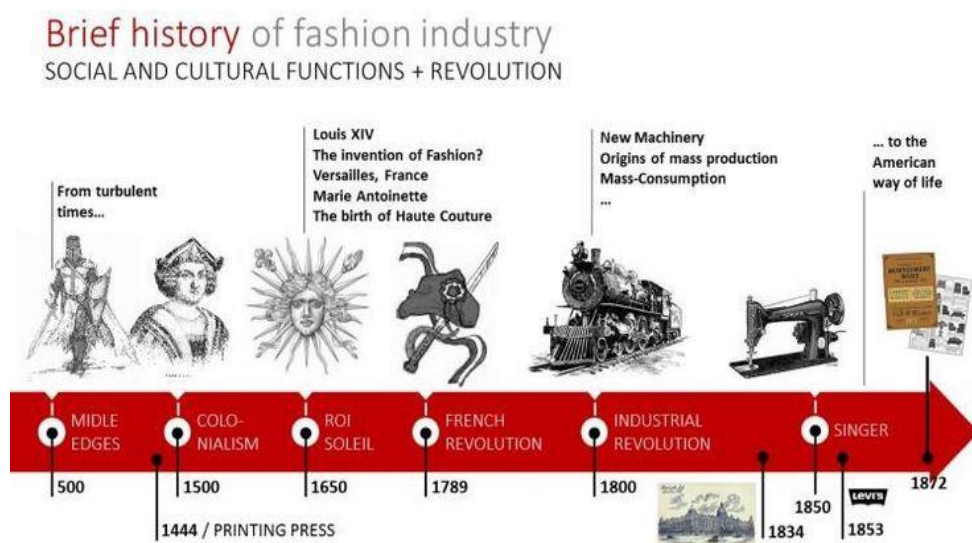
Data analysis will be conducted using Excel and SPSS software, employing various statistical techniques appropriate for quantitative marketing research. The analysis will include demographic analysis to understand the sample characteristics, descriptive statistics to summarize the data patterns, and hypothesis testing to examine the relationships between variables.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Fashion Brands

Fashion is a dynamic and ever-evolving form of self-expression that transcends time and culture, weaving its threads through the fabric of human history. It is not merely the garments we wear but a narrative of identity, culture, and societal evolution (Kosteljik & Alsem, 2020). At its essence, fashion is the visual language of identity. It speaks volumes about an individual's personality, cultural background, and even their aspirations. The choices we make in clothing, accessories, and overall style are like brushstrokes on the canvas of our daily lives, creating a unique masterpiece that reflects our inner selves. (McDowell, 2021)

Figure 1 - Evolution of Fashion Brands



Source - International Fashion School Report, 2020

Throughout history, fashion has been a mirror reflecting the social, economic, and political climates of the times. From the opulent styles of the Renaissance to the rebellious spirit of punk in the 1970s, fashion has mirrored the moods and movements of society. It is a cultural barometer, adapting and responding to the shifting sands of human experience. Moreover, fashion is an industry that spans the globe, connecting diverse cultures through a shared appreciation for aesthetic innovation. Designers, artists, and craftsmen collaborate to create wearable art that not only adorns the body but also tells stories, challenges norms, and pushes the boundaries of creativity. (York, 2016)

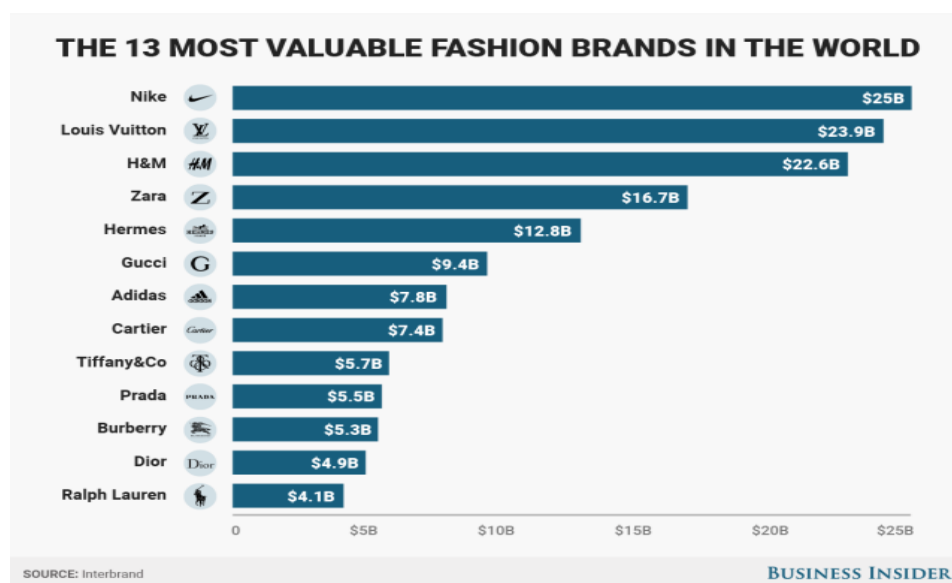
The runway serves as a stage for fashion to showcase its avant-garde side, where designers experiment with shapes, materials, and concepts. However, fashion's impact extends beyond the catwalk. It permeates our everyday lives, influencing the choices we make when we get dressed in the morning and the way we present ourselves to the world. In recent years, the fashion industry has undergone a transformation, with a growing emphasis on sustainability and inclusivity. There is a heightened awareness of the environmental and social impact of fashion, leading to a shift towards ethical and eco-friendly practices. (Fletcher, 2017)

This evolving consciousness is reshaping the industry, challenging traditional norms, and fostering a more responsible approach to style. Fashion is not just about following trends; it is a powerful force that shapes and reflects the zeitgeist of our times. It is an art form, a cultural touchstone, and a means of personal expression. In its myriad forms, fashion weaves a rich tapestry that binds us together across continents and generations, making it an integral part of the human experience. The dimension of fashion boasts a rich history, marked by discernible shifts in design, production, and consumption. (Sharp, 2022)

Presently, the ebb and flow of fashion trends transpire at an unprecedented pace, propelled by the forces of globalization, resulting in a more uniform landscape of trends. Moreover, the surge in global consumption has catalysed an augmented appetite for fresh fashion. This escalating demand has given rise to not only new fashion trends but also advancements in production methodologies, coupled with the integration of global supply chains, fostering the emergence of fashion brands. Fashion brands are not just about clothing; they are storytellers, weaving narratives of style, innovation, and identity. (Knox, 2020)

These labels transcend mere garments, becoming cultural icons that define eras and generations. In a world where personal expression is paramount, fashion brands serve as the visual language through which individuals communicate their identity. At the core of every fashion brand lies a unique design philosophy. Whether it's the timeless elegance of Chanel, the avant-garde creativity of Maison Margiela, or the urban chic of Adidas, each brand speaks a distinct design language. This language is a fusion of craftsmanship, innovation, and a deep understanding of societal trends. (Crane, 2020)

Figure 2 - Top Fashion Brands



Source - Yahoo Finance Report, 2021

The impact of fashion brands extends far beyond the runway. They are architects of cultural movements, reflecting and influencing societal values. Take, for instance, the iconic streetwear culture pioneered by brands like Supreme and Off-White. These labels transformed casual wear into high fashion, blurring the lines between street style and haute couture. Collaborations between fashion brands and artists, musicians, or other designers have become a common thread in the industry. These partnerships not only broaden the creative horizon but also bridge the gap between fashion and other forms of art. (Williams, 2021)

The Nike x Virgil Abloh collaboration, for example, brought a fresh perspective to athletic wear, merging functionality with high fashion. The allure of luxury fashion brands lies in their commitment to exclusivity, craftsmanship, and heritage. Brands like Louis Vuitton and Gucci are not just labels; they are symbols of prestige and status. The meticulous attention to detail, coupled with a rich history, creates an aspirational aura that resonates with discerning consumers. On the other end of the spectrum, fast fashion brands have democratized style, making trends accessible to the masses. (Park & Jang, 2020)

Brands like Zara and H&M rapidly translate runway investigations affordable pieces, democratizing fashion, and challenging traditional notions of exclusivity. The digital age has revolutionized how fashion brands connect with their audience. Social media platforms serve as virtual runways, allowing brands to engage directly with consumers, garner real-time feedback, and stay ahead of rapidly evolving trends. Fashion influencers, often clad in the latest designs, have become powerful brand ambassadors, shaping the industry's narrative in the digital era. (Vries & Aertssens, 2020)

Figure 3 - Fashion Industry Environmental Impact



Source - PACT Report, 2022

The fashion brands are more than just labels; they are storytellers, cultural architects, and trendsetters. Each brand contributes to the rich tapestry of the fashion landscape, influencing how we perceive and express ourselves. Whether through luxury houses, avant-garde designers, or fast fashion giants, these brands are integral to the ever-evolving dialogue of style and identity. Fashion brands refer to affordable fashion produced and swiftly sold in response to the latest trends. To provide these trends at a reasonable cost, a common approach employed by fashion brands is relocating production to countries with low-cost labour. (Alessandro & Howarth, 2021)

Consequently, most fashion brands operate on a global scale. Additionally, the supply chains utilized by fashion brands are highly dynamic, flexible, and responsive to ever-changing trends. Efficient supply chains facilitate the continuous offering of new and trendy fashion to consumers. This has led to an increase in the production and consumption of fashion brands, with the demand for new fashion persistently growing. Fashion brands, known for their weekly changes in offerings, have seen the product life cycle of fashion decrease from months to a matter of weeks or even days. (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2020)

As a result, consumers are prompted to frequently purchase new clothing. Common marketing strategies employed by fashion brands include short-term promotions and discount offers, pressuring buyers to make immediate purchases. Previous studies have drawn parallels between fashion brands and fast food, emphasizing their quick production and delivery, coupled with a rapid deterioration. Authors further support this analogy, asserting that fashion brands are standardized, homogenous, mass-produced, and sold in large volumes at affordable prices. H&M from Sweden and Zara from Spain, both with global operations and quick inventory turnover, serve as prominent examples. (Hollander & Iyer, 2020)

Other established fashion brands include GAP from the US and Top Shop from the UK. The prevailing business model of producing and selling large quantities of fashion products at low prices has become dominant in the industry, resulting in increased global production and consumption of fashion brands. However, scholars note the escalating negative effects on the environment and humans due to the production and consumption of fashion brands. Studies indicate that fashion brands contribute to social and environmental injustice, posing risks to human and environmental health. (Niinimäki et al., 2020)

The environmental cost is evident throughout the product life cycle, starting with the sourcing of raw materials, which requires significant amounts of water and chemicals. Additionally, the production of fashion brands often leads to air and water pollution. For instance, producing regular denim requires many liters of water and chemicals, emitting carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂e). Fashion brand production and consumption also contribute to increased emissions through long-distance transportation of finished products, and tons of textile waste are generated as clothes go out of fashion. (Lauren, 2016)

The fashion brand industry is criticized for unethical labour conditions, including low wages, excessive working hours, and the use of child labour. Despite making the latest fashion trends accessible to a broader audience, policymakers, brands, and consumers are urged to take responsibility and address the negative externalities of the industry. The authors advocate for sustainable business practices to comply with the 12th Sustainable Development Goal defined by the United Nations (UN) on sustainable production and consumption. (Smith, 2021)

They stress the need for innovation in fashion production to reduce environmental and human health issues and emphasize the importance of industry-wide adoption of sustainable practices, internationally recognized and certified by independent organizations. The role of conscious consumers is highlighted, as their awareness and choices can influence brands to act responsibly. However, consumers are advised to be cautious of greenwashing and critically evaluate sustainable marketing by fashion brands. To make the industry more sustainable and eliminate greenwashing, the authors argue that legislation and trade policies are necessary. (Jones, 2022)

Fashion is a universal language, spoken and understood by people across the globe. Major fashion capitals like Paris, Milan, New York, and London serve as incubators for some of the world's most iconic fashion houses. From the classic elegance of French brands like Chanel and Dior to the avant-garde designs of Italian labels like Prada and Versace, the global fashion scene is a kaleidoscope of styles and influences. American fashion brands, such as Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, and Tommy Hilfiger, are renowned for their casual yet sophisticated aesthetics. (Patel, 2023)

These brands have played a pivotal role in shaping contemporary fashion, influencing everything from everyday wear to red carpet ensembles. In recent years, Asian fashion brands have risen to prominence, contributing fresh perspectives and innovative designs. Japanese brands like Comme des Garçons and Issey Miyake are celebrated for their avant-garde approach, while South Korean labels like BTS's collaborative efforts with FILA showcase the global appeal of K-fashion. India, with its rich tapestry of cultures, has a fashion landscape that is as diverse as the country itself. (Sharma, 2022)

Traditional attire, infused with modern sensibilities, coexists seamlessly with cutting-edge contemporary designs. India's traditional clothing, including sarees, lehengas, and sherwanis, continues to be a source of inspiration for designers. Labels like Sabyasachi Mukherjee have gained international acclaim for their exquisite craftsmanship and celebration of Indian heritage. India's fashion industry is witnessing a surge in emerging designers who blend traditional craftsmanship with a global aesthetic. Designers like Anamika Khanna and Rahul Mishra are redefining Indian fashion on the global stage, earning recognition for their innovative designs. (Gupta, 2023)

Bollywood, India's vibrant film industry, has a significant impact on fashion trends. Designers often collaborate with Bollywood celebrities, and their red-carpet appearances shape public perceptions of style. Brands like Manish Malhotra are synonymous with Bollywood glamour. India is celebrated for its diverse range of textiles. Designers are increasingly focusing on sustainable and eco-friendly practices, incorporating traditional Indian fabrics into contemporary designs. Labels like Raw Mango exemplify a commitment to both tradition and sustainability. (Malhotra, 2021)

Figure 4 - Indian Fashion Industry Trends



Source - Unicommerce Report, 2023

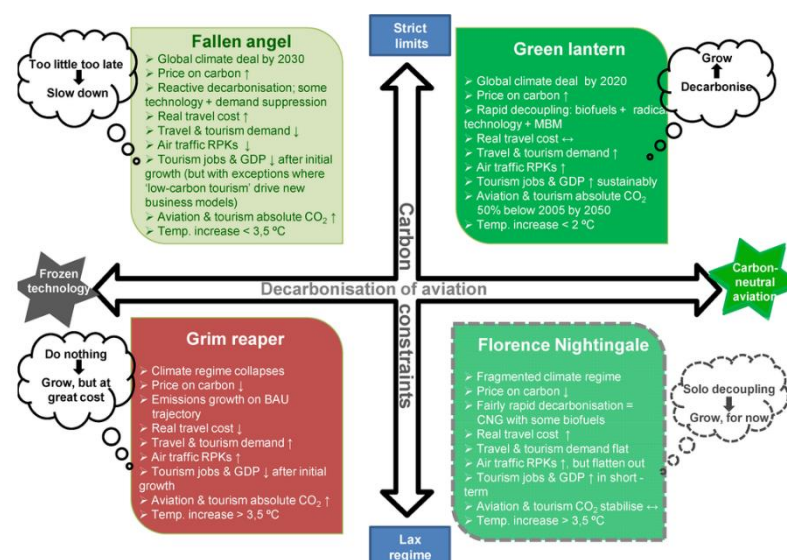
Urban centres in India, especially among the youth, have seen a rise in street wear and casual fashion. Home-grown brands like KOOVS and Bhane capture the essence of urban India, offering trendy, affordable clothing that resonates with the youth. The advent of e-commerce has transformed the accessibility of fashion in India. Online platforms showcase a mix of international and domestic brands, providing consumers with a wide array of choices. The global and Indian fashion scenes are intricately connected yet distinct in their narratives. While global brands set international trends, India's fashion landscape is a dynamic fusion of tradition and modernity, with a burgeoning emphasis on sustainability and innovation. (Hollander & Iyer, 2020)

3.2 Sustainability Overview

Sustainability encompasses the preservation or extension of both environmental and human well-being. According to the authors, it involves a shift towards utilizing renewable materials and minimizing or eliminating pollutants, toxins, and hazardous waste. They argue that contemporary businesses must adopt sustainable practices not only to adhere to stricter regulations but also to thrive amidst competition and meet the demands of increasingly conscientious consumers. Emphasizing the urgency, they underscore that sustainability must be a priority because there is no business viability on a planet of life. (Elkington, 2020)

Therefore, the imperative of sustainable development, recognized as the kind of development that satisfies present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own, cannot be overstated. Navigating the complexities of sustainable development poses a significant challenge for brands. Nonetheless, the scholars contend that with appropriate marketing strategies and tools, a sustainable future within the business realm is attainable. Despite the evident rise in awareness and concern for sustainability, its interpretation remains contextual. (Willard, 2020)

Figure 5 - Global Sustainability Scenario



Source - Haul et al., 2020

While most individuals associate it with consumption and lifestyle, within the business and international business domain, sustainability is synonymous with corporate social responsibility (CSR). CSR entails brands actively participating in activities and implementing practices that address environmental and social issues. The authors stress that due to globalization and the expansion of international business, CSR has gained paramount importance. Brands risk facing severe criticism and jeopardizing their operational licenses if they engage in irresponsible or unethical practices. (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2018)

Consequently, the popularity of CSR has surged, becoming a focal point for brands across various industries. Responsible brands, according to the authors, adopt a broader stakeholder approach, considering not only their employees but also their suppliers and the broader society. However, the concept of CSR remains the subject of intense debate. Some argue that a brand's primary responsibility is generating profits for its owners within legal boundaries, while others propose that a brand should be profitable to facilitate positive contributions beyond its core activities. (Freeman, 2018)

Another contentious issue revolves around whether CSR activities can create long-term value for brands. Several scholars, supported by empirical evidence, contend that there is a business case for CSR. Furthermore, some argue that assessing corporate social responsibility initiatives is challenging, given that they should remain voluntary and not serve as a mere tool for enhancing a brand's reputation. Other studies emphasize the necessity for transparency and legitimacy when brands communicate their corporate social responsibility activities; otherwise, they risk being perceived as disingenuous or engaging in greenwashing. (Orlitz & Rangan, 2018)

The surge in corporate social responsibility is primarily driven by the increasing demand from conscientious consumers who, being more attuned to environmental and social concerns, seek sustainable products and services. However, some authors contend that the challenge lies in consumers' ability to effectively evaluate the sustainability of a product or service. Another catalyst for change is the media, which has brought attention to brands acting irresponsibly, behaving unethically, contributing to environmental degradation, and resorting to greenwashing. (Peattie & Charter, 2018)

Brands, in the face of intensified competition for market shares, also exert influence on each other to adopt more sustainable practices. Scholars argue that brands failing to innovate and incorporate sustainability will lag more responsible businesses in the future. Additionally, regulations addressing environmental and social sustainability compel brands to shoulder greater responsibility. To operate and thrive, contemporary brands must align environmental and social sustainability with their financial goals the triple bottom line, encompassing financial, social, and environmental dimensions. (Porter & Kramer, 2016)

Many brands are adopting this strategic approach to become more sustainable while maintaining financial profitability. In recent years, all UN member states have embraced the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The twelfth goal specifically addresses sustainable and responsible production and consumption. It underscores the significance of sustainable production methods, focusing on resource and energy efficiency, poverty reduction, and minimizing economic, environmental, and social costs. (Hart, 2015)

Sustainable production entails a reduction in natural resource usage, extending the focus on sustainability throughout the entire supply chain and the life cycle of finished products. Another pivotal objective related to this goal involves implementing strategies such as reduce, recycle, and reuse to address global waste challenges. The United Nations emphasizes that all nations should take steps concerning the agenda. Therefore, it is essential to prompt businesses, particularly large global corporations, to integrate sustainability into their business practices and reporting cycles to meet the specified targets. (Elkington, 2022)

In recent years, numerous prominent fashion brands, such as Nykaa, have committed to and initiated actions to achieve the agenda's set targets. Achieving these objectives fundamentally relies on raising global awareness of sustainable development, as progress becomes unattainable without widespread awareness. Educating consumers on sustainable consumption, alongside providing accurate information through standards and reliable labels, constitutes a crucial aspect. Brands also hold the power to influence consumers towards adopting more sustainable consumption patterns. (Tukker & Jansen, 2022)

The United Nations underscores that consumers should engage in conscious consumption, support local and eco-labelled products, minimize waste, and maximize recycling efforts. Additionally, they draw attention to the textile industry's environmental impact and the exploitation of workers by many fashion brands in the third world. Consequently, informed consumer choices in favour of sustainable brands exert pressure on others to implement more sustainable practices. Present-day brands are increasingly investing in sustainable business practices, extending to their marketing activities. (Charter & Scott, 2022)

Figure 6 - Sustainable Marketing Concepts

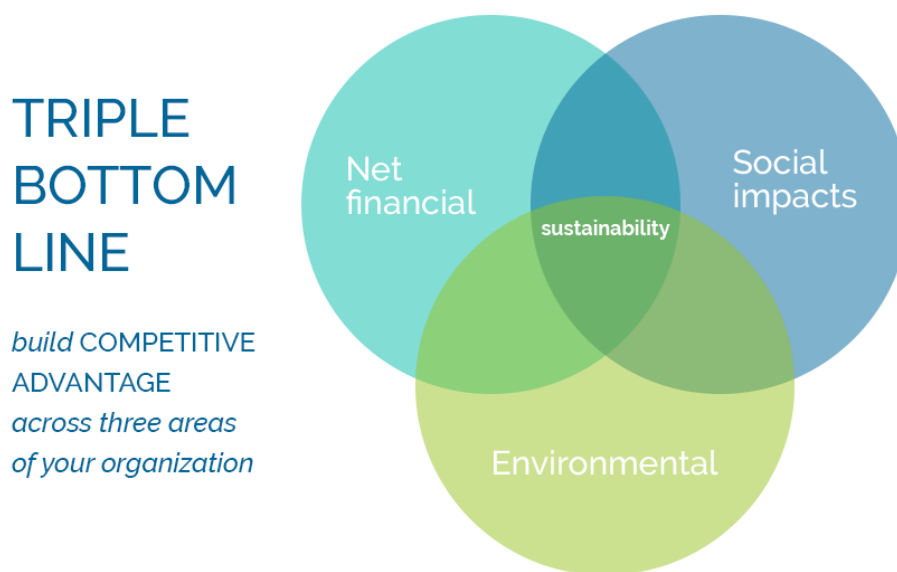


Source - Send Pluse Report, 2018

However, sustainable marketing poses a complex challenge, requiring brands and marketers to balance consumer demand, market competitiveness, and alterations to core business activities, such as adopting new sourcing methods, production processes, and distribution channels. Simultaneously, adherence to sustainability regulations and standards is imperative. Sustainable marketing, also referred to as sustainable marketing, involves producing, packaging, promoting, distributing, or recycling products in an environmentally friendly manner. (Polonsky & Prakash, 2022)

Some argue that sustainable marketing, while encompassing advertising and promotion, has a broader scope. Authors define it as all activities facilitating exchanges to satisfy human needs, minimizing detrimental impacts on the environment. This comprehensive understanding of sustainable marketing is associated with the issue of greenwashing, which has become more prevalent with the rise of sustainable marketing. Greenwashing occurs when brands falsely portray their products, services, or themselves as more environmentally friendly than they are. (Banerjee & Rai, 2022)

Figure 7 - Triple Bottom Line



Source - Yodelpop Report, 2019

This deceptive marketing strategy, also termed as exaggerated or false sustainable marketing, is employed by brands to gain market share, and increase profits. The critical drawback of greenwashing lies in its potential to mislead consumers seeking sustainable options, diminishing actual sustainable consumption. Additionally, greenwashing practices foster confusion and scepticism among consumers towards legitimate sustainable marketing efforts, posing a challenge for brands genuinely committed to sustainability. Ultimately, the integrity of long-term sustainability is jeopardized when greenwashing tactics are employed. (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2022)

3.3 Sustainability & Fashion Brands

Sustainability in the realm of fashion is driven by various factors, with consumer demand, trends, institutions, regulations, and standards playing pivotal roles. The influence exerted by conscious consumers, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, shareholders, the media, and society is tangible. Consequently, for long-term survival, fashion brands find themselves compelled to act responsibly. Scholars contend that given the persistent global demand for new fashion trends, there is an imperative for fashion brands to transition towards sustainability. (Menezes et al., 2021)

Figure 8 - Sustainable Fashion Marketing



Source - Vogue Report, 2020

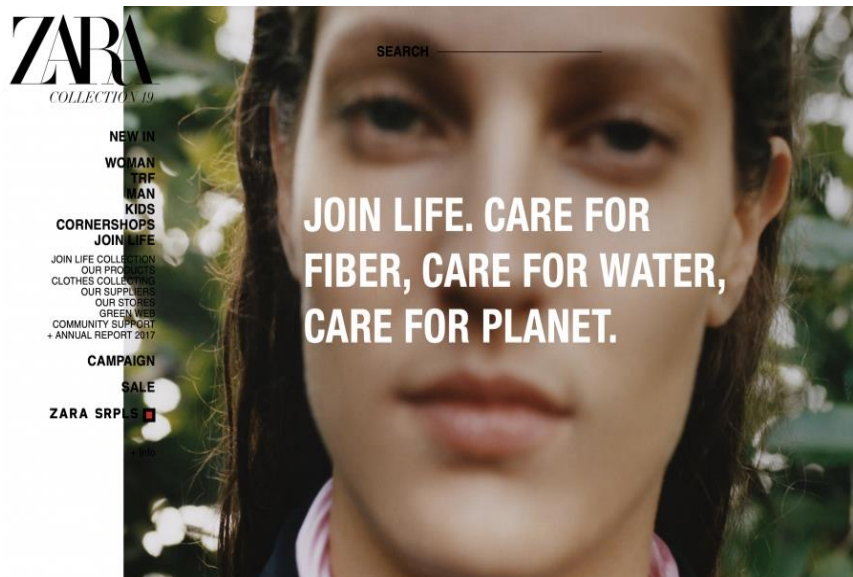
Notably, younger generations and more environmentally aware consumers anticipate responsible corporate behaviour. In the grand scheme, investing in sustainability is posited as a strategy to shield brands from reputational damage and ensure enduring profitability. Authors in the scholarly domain propose strategies for fashion brands to mitigate environmental and social impacts. They advocate for investments in sustainable fibres with reduced environmental footprints. Additionally, establishing standards and practices for designing easily reusable or recyclable clothing is highlighted. Educating consumers on energy-efficient clothing concern practices and promoting durability is considered crucial. (Dias et al., 2022)

Moreover, the authors emphasize the need for fashion brands to adopt responsible practices, setting higher labour and environmental standards. The fashion industry, and major players like Zara and H&M, are progressively steering towards a more sustainable future. These brands are investing in sustainable value chains, emphasizing improved sourcing, production methods, and the utilization of organic and recycled fibres. Zara and H&M, among the world's largest fashion brands, are actively promoting environmentally friendly collections featuring garments made from organic cotton and recycled materials. H&M stands out as a frontrunner in fashion sustainability, envisioning a shift toward a circular and climate-positive industry while maintaining fairness and equality throughout their value chain. (Rahman et al., 2023)

The brand has set ambitious goals, aspiring to achieve climate positivity across their entire supply chain by the year 2040. They endeavour to enhance transparency with stakeholders, establish industry standards, contribute to new innovations, and create fair and ethical working conditions for all involved parties. As a result, the brand has garnered recognition from various external entities for its corporate social responsibility initiatives. Through partnerships and collaborations, the H&M Group is actively pursuing steps toward a more sustainable future. One noteworthy initiative is their collaboration with the global organization I-Collect, focused on collecting old textiles for reuse and recycling. (Lundqvist & Björk, 2021)

Similar programs are also evident in other fashion brands such as Nykaa and Zara. Sustainability is integrated throughout their entire value chain. The brand acknowledges the significant impact its business has on its surroundings and asserts its commitment to making this impact as positive as possible for consumers, employees, society, and the environment. This commitment is manifested through the assumption of responsibility, sustainable practices, and continuous improvement in all aspects of its operations. Studies emphasize the importance of educating consumers on how to concern for their clothes to extend their lifespan. (Singh & Gupta, 2022)

Figure 9 - Zara Sustainable Marketing



Source - Zara Website, 2022

Furthermore, research initiatives are underway to discover new and sustainable innovations. By aligning with global sustainability goals, the brand continually enhances its supply chains and diminishes its environmental footprint. Lindex, another fashion brand, is actively involved in fostering sustainability within the industry. They collaborate with independent organizations to minimize environmental pollution and establish improved labour standards. In summary, additional studies argue that fashion brands are making strides towards a more sustainable industry. Despite investments and efforts by many fashion brands to target the conscious consumer segment, some studies indicate mixed results. (Smith & Heiskanen, 2022)

Several global brands, while launching eco-friendly collections, have faced accusations of child labour and sweatshops. However, addressing these issues has often led to an improved reputation among conscious consumers. Despite their endeavours to adopt sustainable business and marketing practices, fashion brands frequently face criticism. As noted in the introduction, previous studies have revealed consumer hesitancy or criticism towards sustainable marketing by fashion brands, with these activities often perceived as greenwashing. (Blackhurst et al., 2023)

Greenwashing has become a prevalent phenomenon in today's fashion industry. The argument posits that even when a fashion brand introduces a sustainable collection or product or participates in a recycling program, it still qualifies as greenwashing if the brand's core business remains unsustainable. Furthermore, the claim is made that many recycling initiatives, while providing consumers with vouchers for old textiles, ultimately encourage more consumption. The assertion is extended to include the observation that despite the emergence of fashion brands offering clothes made from sustainable materials, these garments are often produced by workers in developing countries facing unethical working conditions. (Battaglia et al., 2021)

In the face of criticism, it is acknowledged that brands addressing environmental and social sustainability are making strides in the right direction. To truly engage in sustainable marketing, full transparency is deemed essential to establish consumer trust. This viewpoint aligns with other studies asserting that comprehensive disclosure of information throughout the supply chain enhances the credibility of sustainable marketing claims in the eyes of consumers. Emphasizing compliance with regulations is presented as a fundamental step in addressing the prevailing lack of consumer trust. (Roo et al., 2022)

Recent times have witnessed a surge in the use of sustainability labels within the fashion industry. However, the proliferation of diverse labels, both proprietary and independent, has the unintended consequence of confusing consumers. The awareness and credibility of sustainability labels in the fashion industry are called into question. Additional authors draw attention to the issue of misleading eco-labels contributing to greenwashing, adding to consumer confusion. The existing lack of standards regarding sustainability in the fashion industry is underscored, along with the limited availability of labels. (Dunaj et al., 2021)

Independent sustainability labels are portrayed as advantageous for brands, enhancing their brand image and reputation. Consumers are more likely to trust brands employing independent labels rather than proprietary ones. Despite the scarcity of independent sustainability labels in the fashion industry, some studies emphasize the significance of established labels such as the EU Eco label, Fairtrade labels, and GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard). These independent labels signify a higher level of environmental and social sustainability. GOTS, described as the international standard for textiles, covers the entire life cycle of the textile, from raw material to finished product. (Stranne, 2022)

Thus, the sustainability of textile processing, manufacturing, packaging, labelling, trading, and distribution is enhanced. Additionally, this standard considers the labour conditions within the factories responsible for textile production. In a study on consumer comprehension of environmental labels, it was discovered that conscientious consumers perceive independent labels on eco-friendly products as more credible than others. For brands, a significant challenge is the additional cost associated with independent labels, and whether consumers are willing to pay a premium for them remains uncertain. (Amato et al., 2023)

Another study revealed that younger consumer generations are well-informed about sustainability labels in general but lack awareness specifically regarding fashion. Consumers also exhibit scepticism towards sustainability initiatives in the fashion industry. Despite an interest in sustainable clothing, consumers often perceive it as expensive and challenging to find. Therefore, institutions play a pivotal role in shaping, standardizing, and certifying sustainability practices, and labels in the fashion industry. A current illustration of this involvement is the European Union's exploration of new environmental requirements. (Williams et al., 2022)

These requirements would necessitate fashion brands to account for the environmental impact of their products, known as the product environmental footprint. The need for improved legislation is emphasized by other authors to assure consumers that clothes are produced sustainably and without the use of toxic chemicals. Business reports underscore the critical importance of radical transparency, as consumers increasingly demand insights into the value chains of fashion brands, including product traceability. Implementing transparency and traceability is a top priority for fashion brands to address the trust deficit many consumers have towards the industry and its marketing strategies. (Reis & Pereira, 2022)

3.4 Sustainability Dilemma

The dilemma surrounding sustainable marketing in the fashion industry is a nuanced and intricate challenge that fashion brands grapple within the modern era. The juxtaposition between profit-driven motives and the increasing call for eco-conscious and socially responsible practices creates a complex landscape that demands careful consideration (Egan, 2019). One of the central issues in this dilemma is the conflict between the traditional fast fashion model and the principles of sustainability. Fast fashion, characterized by rapid production cycles, low-cost manufacturing, and an emphasis on trends, has dominated the industry for decades. (Rönnby & Nilsson, 2023)

However, this model is inherently at odds with sustainable practices, as it often leads to overconsumption, excessive waste, and exploitation of both natural resources and labour. Fashion brands find themselves at a crossroads, torn between maintaining the status quo for profitability and embracing a more sustainable approach. The pressure from environmentally aware consumers has forced brands to reconsider their strategies. Many are now integrating sustainability into their marketing narratives, emphasizing eco-friendly materials, ethical sourcing, and transparent supply chains. (Grobler & Hemetsberger, 2021)

This shift is not only a response to consumer demand but also a strategic move to build a positive brand image in an increasingly conscious market. However, the integration of sustainable practices poses significant challenges (Kostellik et al., 2020). The adoption of environmentally friendly materials and ethical sourcing can lead to increased production costs, impacting profit margins. The fashion industry's reliance on economies of scale and cost efficiency complicates the implementation of sustainable measures, as these often require a fundamental restructuring of supply chains and manufacturing processes. (Fletcher, 2020)

Furthermore, the fashion industry grapples with the issue of greenwashing, where brands may make exaggerated or false claims about their commitment to sustainability. This practice erodes consumer trust and underscores the need for genuine and transparent efforts. To address this, brands must not only implement sustainable practices but also communicate them authentically, backed by measurable and verifiable data. Consumer behaviour adds another layer to the dilemma. While there is

a growing demand for sustainable products, the allure of affordable and trend-driven fast fashion remains strong. (Agarwal & Gaur, 2022)

To bridge this gap, brands need to educate consumers about the true cost of fast fashion and make sustainable choices more accessible, both in terms of affordability and style. Fashion has been a subject of study from various angles over the years. However, the recent surge in attention towards sustainable fashion production and consumption has added a new dimension to the discourse. As previously discussed, the influence of a fashion brand on the environment and society is substantial. Consequently, the debate arises around the inherent dilemma of sustainable fashion, particularly concerning sustainable fashion brands. (Birkin et al., 2020)

Despite earnest attempts to embrace sustainability, there are sceptics questioning whether the corporate social responsibility initiatives undertaken by the fashion brands sufficiently offset the adverse impacts attributed to fashion brands. While commendable progress is reported, a critical examination reveals that, in comparison to environmental and labour conditions, the actual outcomes might not align with the optimistic narratives presented in sustainability reports. Critics assert that the equation involving fashion brands and sustainability is far from straightforward. (Hartmann & Grobler, 2022)

Another dilemma surfaces in the realm of sustainable marketing. In contemporary marketing, a major challenge lies in the perception of marketing as antithetical to sustainability. Business activities related to marketing have faced censure for fuelling increased consumption, a trend evident in fashion brands where marketing efforts and aggressive promotions spur consumerism. Research indicates that implementing sustainable marketing strategies often leads to heightened purchase intention, consumer satisfaction, and brand loyalty. (Corner, 2020)

However, when fashion brands adopt sustainable marketing, consumers tend to be more critical and apprehensive. The scepticism arises from the perceived incongruity between fashion brands and sustainability. Despite this scepticism, consumers frequently overlook sustainability considerations, prioritizing their desires over environmental concerns. Thus, achieving sustainability in the intersection of fashion and marketing remains a multifaceted challenge. However, proponents argue that despite its complexity, making fashion and marketing sustainable is attainable. In contrast to mainstream fashion brands, the concept of slow fashion emerges. (Thomas, 2020)

Scholars posit that the slow fashion movement draws inspiration from the slow food movement that originated in Italy a few years ago. This movement is rooted in sustainable development and seeks to mitigate the negative externalities caused by fashion brands. Slow fashion advocates for sustainable fashion production and consumption and is often synonymous with durable, high-quality clothing. It extends beyond a mere consumer choice and is viewed as a lifestyle, emphasizing reduced clothing consumption and minimal environmental impact. The initiatives promoting clothes sharing or discouraging the consumption of new fashion products align with the principles of slow fashion. (Fletcher, 2020)

Comparing the two fashion systems, namely fashion brands and slow fashion, reveals a dilemma as they pursue divergent paths to their respective objectives. Some argue that the fashion industry can truly attain sustainability only by embracing the principles of slow fashion. While transitioning from conventional fashion brands to slow fashion or sustainable fashion is acknowledged as a challenging process, proponents insist that it is not insurmountable. This transformative journey is not instantaneous but is contingent on various factors within the market and society. (Bhardwaj & Tiwari, 2021)

The dilemma between sustainable marketing and traditional practices in the fashion industry is a multifaceted challenge. It requires a comprehensive and genuine commitment from brands to navigate the complexities of environmental and social responsibility. Striking a balance between profitability and sustainability involves not only changing marketing narratives but also restructuring business models, fostering transparency, and gradually steering the entire industry towards a more ethical and eco-friendly future. One of the primary hurdles for fashion brands is the higher cost associated with sustainable materials. (Ellenbecker et al., 2022)

Fabrics made from organic cotton, recycled polyester, or innovative alternatives can be more expensive than conventional materials. A brand that successfully navigated this challenge is Patagonia. Known for its commitment to environmental responsibility, Patagonia uses recycled materials in many of its products. Despite the higher costs, the brand has built a loyal customer base that values sustainability. Fast fashion has long thrived on a culture of disposable clothing, encouraging frequent purchases of inexpensive items. Shifting away from this model requires changing consumer perceptions and behaviours. (Crane, 2021)

Swedish brand H&M launched its Conscious Collection, featuring sustainably sourced materials. While H&M is a fast fashion giant, this initiative represents a step towards sustainability, encouraging consumers to make more conscious choices within the fast fashion framework. Many brands face scepticism from consumers who question the authenticity of sustainability claims. Greenwashing, or exaggerated marketing of eco-friendly practices, damages trust. Everlane, an American clothing retailer, is known for its transparent business model. (Wedel & Schepers, 2022)

The brand provides detailed information about the factories producing its garments, fostering trust, and demonstrating a commitment to transparency. Consumers may not fully understand the environmental and social impacts of their clothing choices, making it challenging for brands to market sustainable options effectively. The Detox My Fashion campaign by Greenpeace targeted major fashion brands, urging them to eliminate hazardous chemicals from their supply chains. This campaign raised awareness among consumers and pressured brands to adopt more environmentally friendly practices. (Bocken & Boström, 2021)

The linear nature of traditional fashion to produce, consume, discard and contributes to immense waste. Shifting towards a circular fashion economy involves rethinking product lifecycles and encouraging reuse and recycling. Levi's, a denim brand, launched the Levi's Second-hand program, allowing customers to buy and sell used Levi's clothing. This initiative promotes a circular fashion economy, extending the life of garments and reducing overall environmental impact. Individual brands may struggle to effect widespread change in the industry. (Ferrante, M., & Scamardella, 2022)

3.5 Consumption Patterns

Research into consumption patterns has been a well-explored domain, delving into shifts in purchasing behaviours and habits over time. Existing empirical studies have centred on various aspects, including consumer choice, consumption, beliefs, and satisfaction levels. Despite the substantial body of literature, the subject remains complex and dynamic, with ongoing uncertainties. Consumption patterns are intricately linked to societal changes, creating a diverse and ever-evolving field. The complexity of this area has led to the presentation of several issues, one of which is the challenge of precisely defining consumption patterns. (Verganti & Viale, 2023)

Figure 10 - Sustainable Consumption



Source - UNEP Report, 2020

Some argue that it blends elements from psychology, sociology, economics, history, and neurology. On the other hand, opposing views posit consumption patterns as a subset of marketing rather than an independent field. Notwithstanding these debates, the authors assert consumption patterns as the examination of processes when individuals or groups choose, acquire, use, or discard products, services, ideas, or experiences to meet their needs and desires. This field particularly explores the fundamental reasons behind the individual consumption. (Xiao & Kim, 2023)

The primary motivation lies in the functional value of brands, products, or services. Additionally, symbolic meaning plays a crucial role, where consumers aren't solely driven by functionality. For instance, purchasing luxury brands may serve to reinforce a high social status. Ultimately, consumption patterns are influenced by personal beliefs, motivations, and social trends, intertwined with lifestyle and personality. The authors contend that consumption patterns are a form of self-expression. Consumer beliefs, representing positive or negative evaluations and sentiments toward an object or issue, are crucial in understanding consumption patterns. (Carrington & Neville, 2022)

These beliefs are interconnected with broader values and consumption patterns. Despite this connection, the authors note a gap between consumer beliefs and actual consumption patterns. Previous research has identified instances where consumers concerned about environmental and social issues do not consistently align their behaviour with these beliefs. The disparity between attitudes and consumption patterns is apparent in the realm of fashion consumption as well. A recent examination delved into the gap between attitudes and consumption patterns, specifically focusing on sustainable fashion. (Klint et al., 2022)

Researchers discovered that conscious consumers often perceive sustainable clothing as expensive, express doubts about the legitimacy of sustainability labels, and encounter limited availability of sustainable fashion. Consequently, these hurdles impede consumers from embracing sustainable fashion. Another study revealed that Swedish students harbour a predominantly negative attitude toward fashion brands due to their environmental and social costs. This investigation highlighted consumers' critical stance towards sustainability in the fashion industry, citing its adverse effects on the environment. (Park & Kim, 2022)

Various studies emphasize the importance for brands and marketers to comprehend consumer beliefs for effective product positioning and targeted marketing. A common pre-targeting strategy involves psychographic segmentation and grouping individuals with similar consumer beliefs, values, and lifestyles. Through credible marketing strategies and persuasive communication, marketers can potentially alter consumer beliefs and influence purchase intentions. Motivation is defined as a process influencing individuals to act or behave in a particular way, typically arising from a need that needs satisfaction. (Ryan & Deci, 2020)

Some scholarly discussions also touch upon an overlooked facet of motivation and avoidance, manifested as an act of resistance. The authors contend that avoidance motivation is linked to anti-consumption, reflecting the motivation to evade the purchase process altogether. Consumption, intricately tied to the study of consumption patterns, is described by the authors as a cultural, economic, and social process involving product selection. Several studies posit consumption as a means of self-definition and entertainment. The authors delineate various stages in the consumption process, starting with the pre-purchase phase where consumers identify the need for a specific product. (Cheah & Chieh, 2023)

Subsequently, the purchase stage becomes an experiential act, generating emotions such as enjoyment for the consumer. Ultimately, the post-purchase stage is crucial, as consumers evaluate a product's performance and subsequently dispose of it, considering the environmental repercussions. While human consumption is a natural survival instinct, today's consumption levels are heavily influenced by societal cultural norms. Numerous cultures exhibit a trend where individuals derive meaning and satisfaction from their consumption, indicating a prevalent materialistic culture. (Chen & Verhees, 2022)

Compounding this, the contemporary culture tends to favour discarding products, with repairs often proving more expensive than acquiring new items. This throw-away mentality is particularly noticeable in the fashion industry, where people frequently buy and discard clothes in response to ever-changing trends. Affordable and easily accessible fashion brands contribute significantly to this consumption pattern. Globally, consumption rates have surged due to more efficient production processes, increased productivity, and reduced production costs. (Belk, 2014)

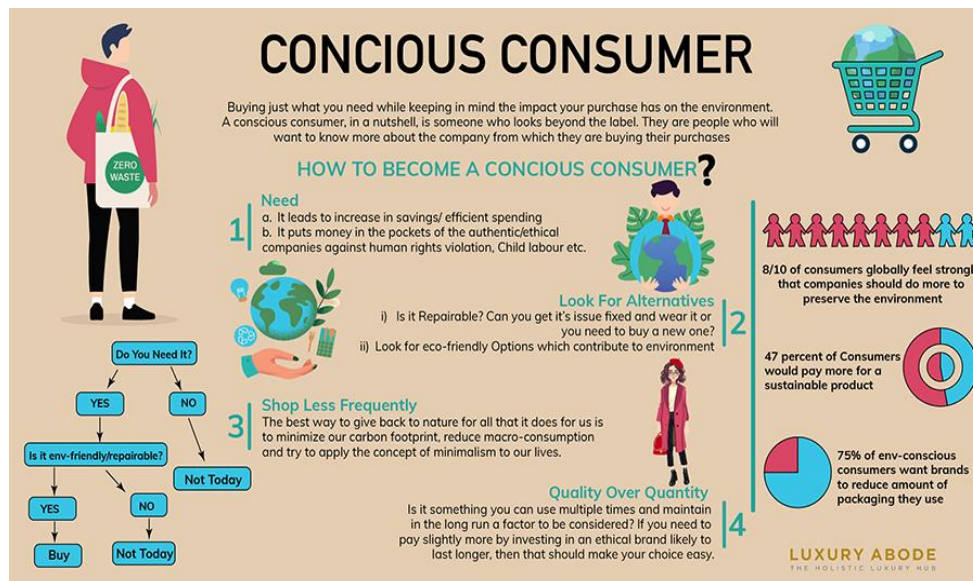
Social media amplifies this trend, promoting excessive consumption, especially in areas like fashion. The consequences of such consumption patterns are far-reaching, causing environmental degradation and social implications. Reports suggest that sustaining current lifestyles would necessitate nearly three planets as the global population continues to grow. Both producers and consumers share responsibility for the negative consequences arising from the production-consumption cycle. The concept of anti-consumption is closely tied to consumer resistance, although some studies distinguish between the two. (Thomas, 2020)

Consumer resistance involves opposition to a specific product or a brand, while anti-consumption revolves around rejecting consumption altogether. Notably, resistance against certain brands or products can escalate into organized boycotts, a tactic wielded to influence brands' marketing strategies. Acts of resistance often lead to negative word-of-mouth promotion. Motivations for anti-consumption patterns can vary, emphasizing the diverse factors that drive individuals to reject conventional consumption practices. The authors delineate these concepts, underscoring how consumers can find motivation in both social and personal factors. (Schor, 2019)

Social issues encompass concerns related to both societal and environmental problems, whereas personal issues are tied to the notion that reduced consumption can simplify life. According to literature findings, adopting an anti-consumption stance need not be as radical as a boycott; rather, it can manifest in more nuanced expressions. Primarily, they assert that consumers may refrain from purchasing specific products for various reasons. For instance, symbolic and ethical considerations can prompt consumers to reject certain consumption practices. (Greaves, 2015)

Additionally, they elucidate that restricting involves a deliberate reduction or limitation of consumption. Lastly, the authors explore the phenomenon of reclamation, signifying a shift in the acquisition, use, and disposal of products. This notion aligns with the circular economy concept, emphasizing the minimization or elimination of waste. The circular economy also advocates for the extended use and reuse of products through repair or remanufacturing. Furthermore, used products should be transformed into resources for new production, often involving the conversion of recycled materials into new items. (Stahel, 2016)

Figure 11 -Conscious Consumer Patterns



Source - Luxury Adobe Report, 2018

This practice has gained prevalence in the fashion industry, exemplified by brands like H&M and Zara producing collections from recycled materials. Previous research has identified three models for the circular economy: second-hand consumption, access-based consumption, and collaborative consumption. Practicality, economic considerations, and environmental awareness are key factors driving consumers to opt for second-hand products, prioritizing high-quality used items over low-quality new ones. Access-based consumption involves renting, hiring, or leasing products instead of outright purchase illustrated by H&M's venture into clothing rentals. Collaborative consumption, a burgeoning trend, reduces consumption by encouraging the sharing or exchanging of products.

3.6 Consumer Perspective

The conscious consumers are mindful consumers who seek for, purchase, and consume sustainable products and services. These consumers concern about where products come from, how they are produced, and the overall sustainability of the items. Furthermore, conscious consumers are concerned about environmental and social sustainability, including ethics, human rights, and animal welfare. The authors specifically state that these consumers are aware about the sustainability aspects of common products like food, beauty and personal concern products, and fashion. (Hartmann & Kester, 2022)

Environmental and ethical reasons are arguably two key reasons why conscious consumers often avoid or boycott fashion brand. Conscious consumers are flexible when making consumption choices. Moreover, the scholarly studies state that conscious consumers are informed and concern about price differences. Hence, they demand value for their money, and seek out the best deals. Despite this, conscious consumers are still found to be willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. In addition, conscious consumers use the internet to search for information, compare, and look at reviews before making a purchase. (D’Innocenzo et al., 2021)

Their purchases are also influenced by recommendations from family, friends, and people on social media. Conscious consumers are also influential and tend to impact others, specifically through social media. Conscious consumers are not only changing their shopping consumption patterns by buying more sustainable products and services, but they also tend to reduce their consumption habits to minimize their environmental footprint. There are few studies which further highlight that conscious consumers are powerful consumers who boycott products or services sold by irresponsible brands. (Dawson & Beirne, 2022)

Hence, the other studies state that since the number of conscious consumers is increasing, brands must innovate, become more responsible, sustainable, and transparent to meet new consumer demand. The scholarly articles claim that conscious consumers can be found in both developed economies and emerging markets. Hence, they exist on a global scale. Moreover, they say that these consumers are found in both middle- and high-income groups. Others studies state that younger generations are

specifically becoming more environmentally and socially conscious. (Hultink et al., 2022)

However, older generations are also found to be more conscious regarding consumption and lifestyle choices. The younger consumers' awareness about social and environmental issues comes from more environmentally focused education, but also the use of internet and social media. Experts therefore argue that it is fundamental to target this group of people as they will become the key consumers, employees, and investors in the future to come. Thus, it is evident that to survive and prosper, brands, including fashion brands, need to adapt and adjust according to the values, needs, and wants of conscious consumers. (Wang & Loiacono, 2022)

Due to technological advances, the world has become more digital. Subsequently, the usage of internet and social media among brands and consumers has increased. Recent studies show that usage of social media often influences the buying consumption patterns of consumers. With social media, fashion brands can for example promote new trends easily, at low cost, and motivate consumers to consume more. Online communication and social media have also given consumers more power, as they can influence others daily, including which brands to consume. (Trudel & Xie, 2022)

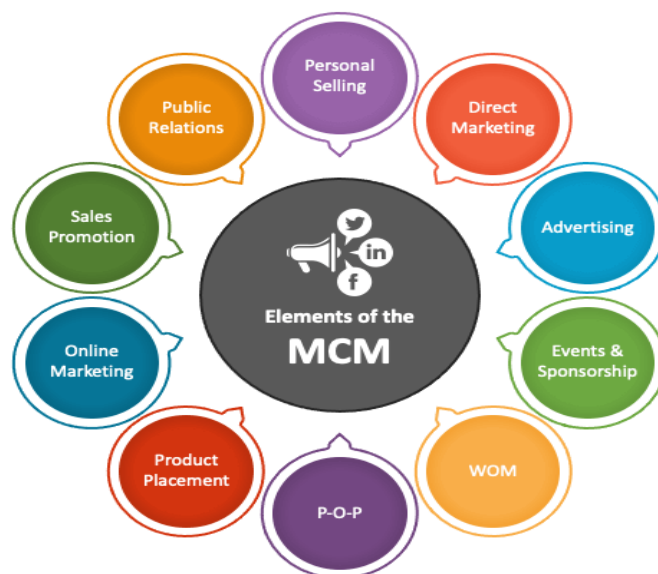
The other studies therefore argue that social media partly explains why consumption of fashion brand has increased. The cross-sectional study further found that social media and online shopping are key drivers for the global overconsumption of fashion. In contrast, conscious consumers often promote sustainable consumption patterns through social media channels. Hence, social media can work in both ways. The studies further argues that the internet and social media is not good or bad, instead it depends on how it is used. Nevertheless, social media gives consumers the power to influence others, which brands need to consider, specifically since consumers are becoming more conscious and feedback, both positive and negative, can go viral within seconds. (Evans & Davis, 2021)

3.7 Marketing Communication Mix

The marketing communication mix, often heralded as the promotional mix, constitutes a multifaceted and strategic amalgamation of communication tools and techniques meticulously orchestrated to establish a brand's presence in the market and resonate with its target audience (Kotler et al., 2021). This comprehensive blend encompasses various promotional elements that collectively serve as the means through which organizations convey messages, cultivate brand awareness, and ultimately influence consumer behaviour. (Kotler et al., 2023)

These communication tools are vital components within the broader framework of a brand's marketing strategy, operating synergistically to craft a cohesive narrative that captivates the attention of consumers and fosters lasting connections. The marketing communication mix acknowledges the diverse ways in which consumers absorb information, recognizing that a singular approach is insufficient to engage a heterogeneous and dynamic audience. By strategically integrating a spectrum of communication channels, businesses can enhance their ability to deliver compelling messages, strengthen brand identity, and, ultimately, cultivate enduring relationships with their target markets. (Schultz, 2023)

Figure 12 - Marketing Communication Mix



Source - Kotler et al., 2023

Advertising is a form of paid, non-personal communication that aims to promote products, services, or ideas through various media channels. This includes television, radio, print, online platforms, and social media. Advertising serves multiple purposes, such as creating brand awareness, informing consumers about product features, persuading them to make a purchase, and reinforcing brand loyalty. It allows businesses to reach a wide audience and control the message they want to convey. (Belch, 2023)

Sustainable advertising involves crafting messages that emphasize the environmental and social benefits of a product or service. Advertisements may highlight eco-friendly features, such as recyclable packaging, energy-efficient production processes, or use of sustainable materials. Moreover, brands may showcase certifications like Fair Trade, organic, or carbon-neutral labels to communicate their commitment to sustainability. The visuals and messaging in sustainable advertising often tell a story, connecting consumers emotionally to the positive impact of their purchase decisions. (Fill, 2023)

Public Relations involves the strategic management of relationships between a brand and its various publics, including customers, employees, investors, and the public. PR activities include media relations, crisis management, and community engagement. PR aims to build and maintain a positive public image for the brand. By generating favourable media coverage, handling crises effectively, and engaging in community initiatives, PR helps establish credibility and trust, contributing to long-term brand success. (Cutlip et al., 2023)

Sustainable PR goes beyond traditional public relations efforts by actively communicating an organization's sustainability initiatives. This can include sharing stories about the brand's efforts to reduce its carbon footprint, initiatives to support local communities, and transparency in reporting sustainability metrics (Kotler et al., 2021). PR efforts may involve collaborating with environmental organizations, participating in industry-wide sustainability initiatives, and issuing sustainability reports to keep stakeholders informed about the brand's progress in meeting its sustainability goals. (DeSanto & Cornwell, 2023)

Personal selling is a direct communication method where a sales representative interacts one-on-one with potential buyers (Martin et al., 2012). This can occur face-to-face, over the phone, or through virtual channels. Personal selling allows for a personalized approach, tailoring the sales message to individual customer needs. It facilitates relationship-building, addresses customer concerns, and guides the customer through the buying process, making it particularly effective for high-involvement products. (Churchill & Peterson, 2023)

In personal selling, the focus is on building relationships and providing in-depth information about a product's sustainable attributes. Sales representatives are trained to communicate not only the features and benefits of a product but also its environmental and social impact. This may involve discussing the brand's commitment to ethical sourcing, fair labour practices, and contributions to community development. Sales pitches often emphasize the long-term value and positive societal contributions of choosing sustainable products. (Patterson & Rains, 2023)

Direct marketing involves reaching out to potential customers directly through various channels, including email, direct mail, telemarketing, and targeted online advertising. Direct marketing aims to establish a direct and personalized connection with the audience. It enables businesses to deliver customized messages, offers, and calls to action, fostering a sense of exclusivity and relevance. (Chaffey & Smith, 2022)

Sustainable direct marketing prioritizes the use of eco-friendly materials and practices to reduce environmental impact. Brands may utilize recycled or biodegradable materials for promotional materials, adopt energy-efficient printing processes, and minimize waste in direct mail campaigns. Personalization in direct marketing can be employed to tailor messages to consumers based on their preferences for sustainable products, encouraging responsible consumption. (Smith, 2021)

Digital marketing encompasses a broad range of online strategies, including content marketing, social media marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), and online advertising. In the digital age, businesses leverage online channels to connect with a digitally savvy audience. Digital marketing enhances brand visibility, allows for real-time interaction, and provides valuable data for analysing consumer behaviour and refining marketing strategies. (Kotler et al., 2023)

Sustainable digital marketing leverages online platforms to communicate a brand's commitment to sustainability. This includes creating engaging content that educates consumers about eco-friendly practices, sharing behind-the-scenes glimpses of sustainable production processes, and utilizing influencers who align with the brand's values. Social media campaigns may encourage user-generated content showcasing sustainable behaviours, fostering a sense of community around the brand's sustainability efforts. (Fill, 2022)

Sales promotion refers to the use of short-term incentives or discounts to stimulate immediate sales. It includes activities such as coupons, contests, loyalty programs, and limited time offers. Sales promotion is designed to create a sense of urgency and drive quick, measurable results. It encourages consumers to take immediate action, leading to increased sales during specific promotional periods. (Belch, 2021)

Sustainable sales promotions go beyond simple discounts. Brands may incentivize environmentally friendly actions, such as recycling or opting for reusable packaging, by offering special promotions or rewards. Loyalty programs can be designed to reward customers for consistently choosing sustainable options, fostering a sense of responsibility and loyalty among consumers. (Weinberg, 2023)

Sponsorship involves associating a brand with a specific event, cause, or entity. Events can include trade shows, sports events, cultural festivals, or community gatherings. Sponsorship and events create opportunities for brands to engage with their target audience in a specific context. By aligning with events that share similar values or interests, businesses can enhance brand visibility, create positive associations, and build meaningful connections with consumers. (Chadwick & Burton, 2022)

Sustainable events and sponsorships involve careful selection to align with the brand's values. Brands may sponsor or organize events that promote environmental awareness, social responsibility, or sustainable practices. Event materials and logistics are managed with a focus on minimizing environmental impact, such as using recyclable banners, eco-friendly merchandise, and offsetting event-related carbon emissions. (Baker & Hart, 2022)

Figure 13 - Sustainable Marketing Mix



Source - *Business Libertext Report, 2020*

Transparency in sustainable marketing communication extends to providing detailed information about a brand's sustainability practices. This includes transparent reporting on key performance indicators (KPIs), such as carbon emissions, water usage, and social impact metrics. Brands may use various communication channels to share this information, including websites, social media, and sustainability reports. (Jones & Khedkar, 2021)

Sustainable marketing communication encourages active engagement with consumers. This can be achieved through interactive campaigns, such as challenges, contests, or social media movements that promote sustainable behaviours. Engaging with customers on social platforms allows for a two-way dialogue, where brands can respond to inquiries, share updates on sustainability initiatives, and incorporate customer feedback into future sustainability strategies. (Fill & Turnbull, 2021)

4. Practical Part

This analysis presents the main empirical findings from the survey items mentioned in the Appendix. The final sample consisted of 318 responses and the data was collected through structure questionnaire and analysed using SPSS software. This part is divided in multiple sections, demographic analysis, descriptive analysis, and hypothesis analysis.

4.1 Respondents Characteristics

In analysing the gender distribution, it is evident that the majority, constituting 72%, identify as female, while 28% identify as male. This gender breakdown underscores the importance of considering diverse perspectives in understanding the distinct preferences, values, and expectations of both male and female consumers.

Table 1 – Gender

| Gender | Absolute Frequency | Relative Frequency |
|------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| (A) Male | 89 | 28 |
| (B) Female | 229 | 72 |
| Total | 318 | 100 |

Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

The data collected indicates a predominantly youthful demographic among the respondents. Of the total sample, 74% fall within the 18 to 25 age range, suggesting a significant representation of younger consumers. The 26 to 34 age group comprises 18% of the respondents, while the 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 age brackets make up 3% and 5%, respectively. This distribution highlights the importance understanding the preferences and values of these age segments to integrate sustainability into their marketing strategies.

Table 2 - Age

| Age | Absolute Frequency | Relative Frequency |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| (A) 18 to 25 Years | 235 | 74 |
| (B) 26 to 34 Years | 57 | 18 |
| (C) 35 to 44 Years | 10 | 3 |
| (D) 45 to 54 Years | 16 | 5 |
| Total | 318 | 100 |

Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

In the analysis of the data from respondents, most participants hold a bachelor's degree, constituting 58% of the sample. Master's Degree holders represent a significant portion at 38%, indicating a well-educated and potentially discerning consumer base. Meanwhile, respondents with Diplomas account for 3%, and those with Certifications make up 1% of the total participants.

Table 3 - Education Qualification

| Education Qualification | Absolute Frequency | Relative Frequency |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| (A) Certification & Diploma | 13 | 4 |
| (B) Bachelor's degree | 184 | 58 |
| (C) Master's degree | 121 | 38 |
| Total | 318 | 100 |

Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

The employment status data of the surveyed respondents, it is evident that the majority fall into the student category, constituting 37% of the sample. Following

closely, professionals account for 30%, while those actively employed make up 32% of the respondents. Notably, only a small fraction, representing 1%, reported being unemployed. Understanding the employment status of the target audience provides insights into the lifestyle choices and preferences of their potential consumers.

Table 4 - Employment Status

| Employment Status | Absolute Frequency | Relative Frequency |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| (A) Student | 118 | 37 |
| (B) Professional | 95 | 30 |
| (C) Working | 102 | 32 |
| (D) Unemployed | 3 | 1 |
| Total | 318 | 100 |

Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

The data on income levels among the surveyed respondents is evident that the majority falls within the middle-income brackets. Specifically, 41% of respondents reported an income ranging from 3000 to 15000 USD, while 15% fell within the 15000 to 25000 USD bracket. On the lower end, 18% indicated an income below 3000 USD. Interestingly, a substantial proportion of participants, 9%, reported an income above 45000 USD. The distribution of respondents across these income categories provides valuable insights for the financial profiles of the target audience.

Table 5 - Income Level

| Income Level | Absolute Frequency | Relative Frequency |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| (A) Below 3000 USD | 57 | 18 |
| (B) 3000 to 15000 USD | 130 | 41 |
| (C) 15000 to 25000 USD | 48 | 15 |

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|
| (D) 25000 to 350000 USD | 38 | 12 |
| (E) 35000 to 45000 USD | 16 | 5 |
| (F) Above 45000 USD | 29 | 9 |
| Total | 318 | 100 |

Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

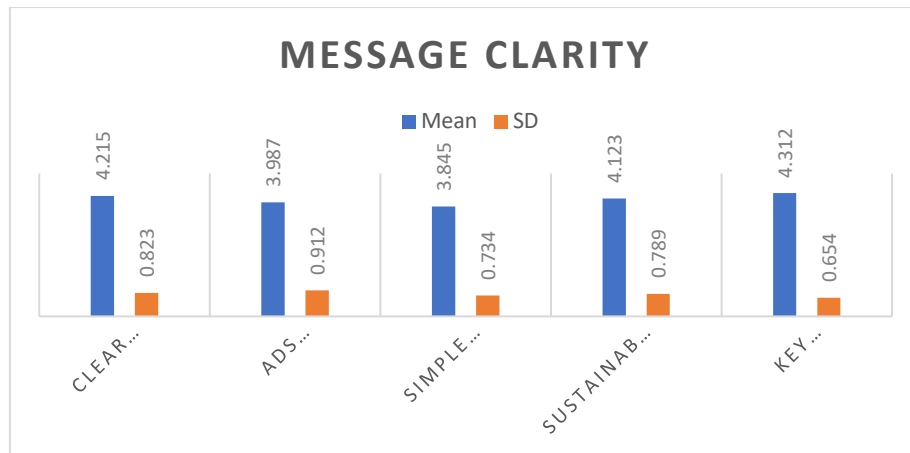
Clarity in sustainability messaging plays a key role in how consumers perceive a brand's commitment to eco-friendly practices. The data reflects strong agreement with Nykaa's ability to communicate these messages effectively. The highest-rated aspect is the ease of identifying key messages, suggesting that consumers can quickly grasp the sustainability focus. Clear messaging about sustainable products also scores well, reinforcing that these efforts stand out in a crowded market. However, while advertisements explaining eco-friendly initiatives receive positive feedback, they rank slightly lower, indicating room for precise storytelling.

Table 6 - Message Clarity

| Message Clarity | Mean | SD |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Clear sustainability messages | 4.215 | 0.823 |
| Ads explain eco-friendly efforts | 3.987 | 0.912 |
| Simple campaign language | 3.845 | 0.734 |
| Sustainable products stand out | 4.123 | 0.789 |
| Key messages easily identified | 4.312 | 0.654 |
| <i>Average</i> | <i>4.0964</i> | <i>0.7824</i> |

Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

Graph 1 - Message Clarity



Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

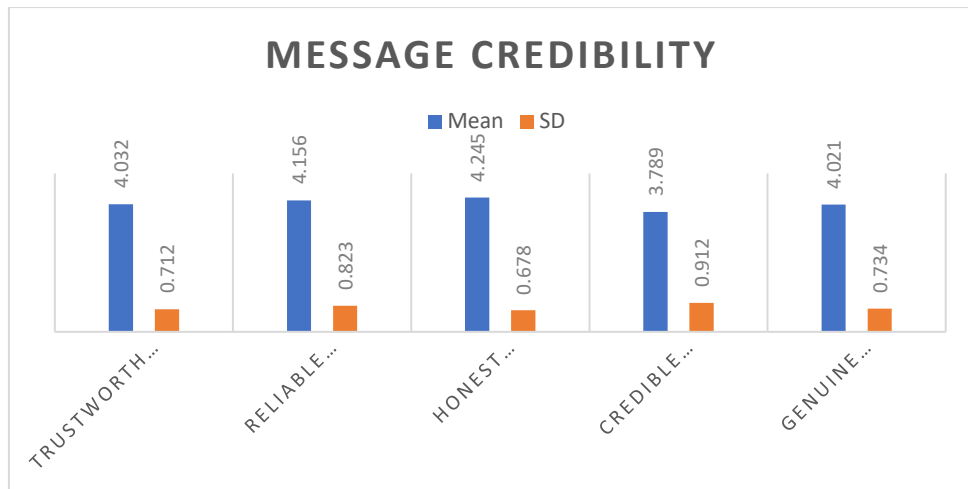
Trust plays a major role in how consumers perceive sustainability efforts, and the data suggests that Nykaa's messaging largely succeeds in building credibility. Honest communication receives the highest rating, indicating that consumers feel the brand is transparent about its sustainability initiatives. Reliable eco-friendly information also scores well, reinforcing the perception that Nykaa provides consistent and dependable details. However, credibility of sources ranks slightly lower, suggesting some skepticism about where information originates. While trust remains strong, strengthening the use of authoritative sources solidify confidence.

Table 7 - Message Credibility

| Message Credibility | Mean | SD |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Trustworthy sustainability claims | 4.032 | 0.712 |
| Reliable eco-friendly information | 4.156 | 0.823 |
| Honest messaging | 4.245 | 0.678 |
| Credible sources used | 3.789 | 0.912 |
| Genuine eco-friendly practices | 4.021 | 0.734 |
| <i>Average</i> | <i>4.0486</i> | <i>0.7718</i> |

Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

Graph 2 - Message Credibility



Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

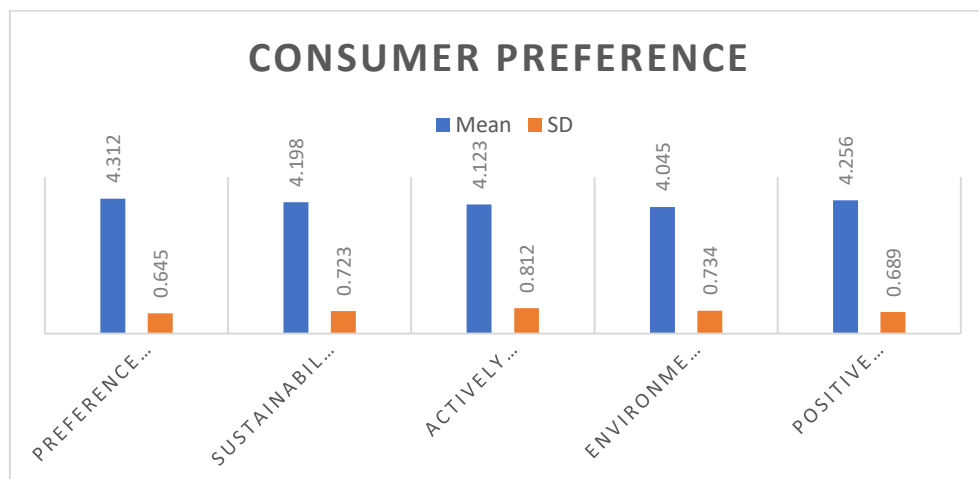
Consumer inclination toward sustainability is evident, with strong preferences for brands that prioritize environmental responsibility. The highest-rated factor reflects a clear favorability toward sustainable brands, reinforcing that ethical practices enhance consumer trust and loyalty. Marketing efforts promoting sustainability also leave a positive impression, suggesting that well-crafted messaging resonates effectively. Actively seeking eco-friendly products and considering environmental efforts in purchasing decisions further confirm a shift toward conscious consumption.

Table 8 - Consumer Preference

| Consumer Preference | Mean | SD |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| Preference for sustainable brands | 4.312 | 0.645 |
| Sustainability increases appeal | 4.198 | 0.723 |
| Actively seek sustainable products | 4.123 | 0.812 |
| Environmental efforts influence choice | 4.045 | 0.734 |
| Positive perception of marketing | 4.256 | 0.689 |
| <i>Average</i> | <i>4.1868</i> | <i>0.7206</i> |

Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

Graph 3 - Consumer Preference



Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

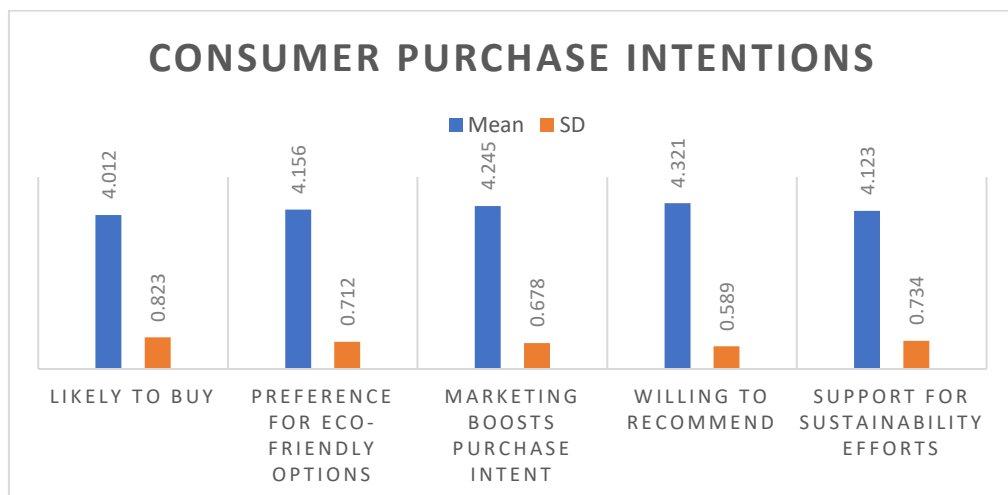
Purchase intentions align closely with sustainability messaging, indicating that Nykaa's eco-friendly positioning positively affects consumer behaviour. The highest rating comes from willingness to recommend, suggesting strong brand advocacy driven by trust in sustainable efforts. Marketing also plays a key role, as it effectively boosts purchase intent, reinforcing the importance of clear and persuasive communication. Preference for eco-friendly options remains high, showing that sustainability is more than just a trend it is a decisive factor.

Table 9 - Consumer Purchase Intentions

| Consumer Purchase Intentions | Mean | SD |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Likely to buy | 4.012 | 0.823 |
| Preference for eco-friendly options | 4.156 | 0.712 |
| Marketing boosts purchase intent | 4.245 | 0.678 |
| Willing to recommend | 4.321 | 0.589 |
| Support for sustainability efforts | 4.123 | 0.734 |
| <i>Average</i> | <i>4.1714</i> | <i>0.7072</i> |

Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

Graph 4 - Consumer Purchase Intentions



Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

4.3 Hypothesis Analysis

H1 - There is no significant relationship between message clarity and consumer preference for sustainable fashion by Nykaa.

Table 10 - Hypothesis 1 (Cross-Tabulation & Correlation Results)

| Message Clarity | Consumer Preference | Frequency | Pearson Correlation (r) | p-value |
|-----------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------------------|---------|
| Low (1-2) | Low (1-2) | 15 | 0.672 | 0.000 |
| Low (1-2) | Medium (3) | 20 | | |
| Low (1-2) | High (4-5) | 5 | | |
| Medium (3) | Low (1-2) | 10 | | |
| Medium (3) | Medium (3) | 50 | | |
| Medium (3) | High (4-5) | 40 | | |
| High (4-5) | Low (1-2) | 5 | | |
| High (4-5) | Medium (3) | 30 | | |
| High (4-5) | High (4-5) | 143 | | |

Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

The analysis reveals a strong positive relationship between message clarity and consumer preference, supported by a Pearson correlation of 0.672. This indicates that when Nykaa's sustainability messages are clear, concise, and easy to understand, consumers are more likely to prefer the brand. Clear communication helps bridge the gap between brand intentions and consumer perceptions, making eco-friendly initiatives more relatable and actionable.

Interestingly, the data suggests that clarity not only builds trust but also enhances the perceived value of sustainable products. When consumers can easily identify and

differentiate Nykaa's sustainable offerings, their preference for the brand grows significantly. This highlights the importance of simplicity and transparency in marketing campaigns, as overly complex or ambiguous messaging can dilute the impact of sustainability efforts. The findings underscore the need for brands to prioritize clarity to connect with environmentally conscious consumers.

H2 - There is no significant relationship between message credibility and consumer preference for sustainable fashion by Nykaa.

Table 11 - Hypothesis 2 (Cross-Tabulation & Correlation Results)

| Message Credibility | Consumer Preference | Frequency | Pearson Correlation (r) | p-value |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------------------|---------|
| Low (1-2) | Low (1-2) | 12 | 0.715 | 0.000 |
| Low (1-2) | Medium (3) | 18 | | |
| Low (1-2) | High (4-5) | 8 | | |
| Medium (3) | Low (1-2) | 10 | | |
| Medium (3) | Medium (3) | 45 | | |
| Medium (3) | High (4-5) | 35 | | |
| High (4-5) | Low (1-2) | 6 | | |
| High (4-5) | Medium (3) | 25 | | |
| High (4-5) | High (4-5) | 159 | | |

Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

The strong correlation of 0.715 between message credibility and consumer preference emphasizes the critical role of trust in sustainable marketing. Consumers are more likely to prefer Nykaa when they perceive its sustainability claims as honest, reliable, and backed by credible sources. This relationship suggests that authenticity in communication is not just a bonus but also a necessity for brands promoting eco-

friendly practices. When consumers believe that a brand genuinely follows through on its promises, their emotional and psychological connection to the brand strengthens.

The data also implies that scepticism around greenwashing can be mitigated through transparent and evidence-based messaging. By consistently providing information and aligning actions with claims, Nykaa can build long-term loyalty among sustainability-minded consumers. Credibility, therefore, acts as a foundation for fostering deeper consumer engagement and preference.

H3 - There is no significant relationship between consumer preference and consumer purchase intention towards sustainable fashion by Nykaa.

Table 12 - Hypothesis 3 (Cross-Tabulation & Correlation Results)

| Consumer Preference | Purchase Intentions | Frequency | Pearson Correlation (r) | p-value |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------------------|---------|
| Low (1-2) | Low (1-2) | 10 | 0.743 | 0.000 |
| Low (1-2) | Medium (3) | 15 | 0.743 | 0.000 |
| Low (1-2) | High (4-5) | 5 | | |
| Medium (3) | Low (1-2) | 8 | | |
| Medium (3) | Medium (3) | 40 | | |
| Medium (3) | High (4-5) | 42 | | |
| High (4-5) | Low (1-2) | 5 | | |
| High (4-5) | Medium (3) | 30 | | |
| High (4-5) | High (4-5) | 163 | | |

Source - Based on consumer data collected by author.

The analysis shows a strong correlation of 0.743 between consumer preference and purchase intentions, highlighting a direct link between liking a brand and the willingness to buy from it. When consumers prefer Nykaa due to its sustainability efforts, they are more likely to translate that preference into actual purchases. This relationship suggests that sustainability is not just a feel-good factor but also a decisive element in consumer decision-making. The data also indicates that positive perceptions of a brand's environmental initiatives can drive both immediate and future purchase behaviours. Additionally, the willingness to recommend Nykaa's sustainable products to others further amplifies the brand's reach and impact. This underscores the importance of aligning marketing strategies with consumer values, as preference alone can significantly influence buying patterns and brand advocacy.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Key Findings

Nykaa's approach to sustainable marketing finds strong support in consumer perception, as reflected in the survey data. The majority of respondents are women, highlighting the brand's appeal among female shoppers, while the presence of male consumers suggests a growing interest across demographics. The age distribution is largely skewed toward younger individuals, particularly those between 18 and 25, indicating that Nykaa's sustainability messaging resonates most with a digitally active, trend-conscious audience.

This younger segment often aligns with ethical consumption, making it an important group for brands seeking long-term loyalty. The educational background of respondents further reinforces this, as a large portion hold at least a bachelor's degree. Consumers with higher education levels often scrutinize brand claims, making clarity and transparency even more significant in shaping their purchase decisions.

Employment and income levels present additional insights into purchasing power and decision-making behavior. A substantial proportion of respondents identify as students or professionals, suggesting that Nykaa attracts an audience with varying financial capacities but a shared inclination toward sustainability. The presence of middle-income earners is notable, as it reflects a group willing to spend on ethical products if they perceive authenticity and value.

Meanwhile, a smaller but important segment of higher-income respondents indicates a niche market that may prioritize sustainability not only as a personal choice but as a lifestyle statement. These factors, when combined, suggest that Nykaa's audience is both aspirational and conscientious, making well-crafted messaging a key component in reinforcing trust and encouraging repeat purchases.

The clarity of Nykaa's sustainability messaging stands out as one of its strongest attributes. Consumers find it easy to identify key messages, reinforcing the effectiveness of the brand's communication strategy. Clear positioning allows consumers to quickly understand Nykaa's commitment to eco-friendly practices, which is essential in market with competing claims.

However, while the brand performs well in making its sustainable efforts visible, advertisements explaining these initiatives receive slightly lower ratings. This signals an opportunity to refine storytelling, ensuring that promotional materials go beyond broad claims and present concrete examples of environmental impact. A more immersive and detailed narrative can help consumers connect on a deeper level, making sustainability feel less like a marketing angle and more like an authentic brand value.

Trust remains a defining factor in consumer perception of sustainability. The data reflects a high degree of confidence in Nykaa's honesty when discussing eco-friendly initiatives. Transparency is key, and consumers recognize the brand's efforts in providing reliable information. However, there is a slight hesitation regarding the credibility of sources, indicating a need for reinforcing trust through third-party certifications or expert endorsements.

In an era where greenwashing remains a concern, brands that go the extra mile to validate their claims can strengthen their position in the market. Consistency in communication and alignment between brand actions and messages will further solidify consumer confidence, turning trust into long-term loyalty.

Consumer preferences lean strongly toward brands that prioritize sustainability. Respondents express a clear inclination toward choosing environmentally responsible options, showing that ethical considerations now play a defining role in purchase decisions. Nykaa's marketing efforts in this space leave a positive impression, reinforcing the idea that well-crafted messaging can shape brand perception.

Consumers are not just passively accepting sustainability claims they actively seek out eco-friendly products and factor them into their buying habits. This shift suggests that sustainability is no longer a secondary concern but a decisive element in brand loyalty. The stronger the commitment a brand shows, the greater the likelihood of consumer retention.

The direct impact of sustainability messaging on purchase intent further strengthens this argument. A significant number of respondents indicate a willingness to recommend Nykaa's sustainable products to others, showcasing the power of brand advocacy. When consumers feel aligned with a brand's values, they naturally become ambassadors, sharing their experiences and influencing their circles.

This word-of-mouth effect can amplify Nykaa's reach, positioning it as a leader in ethical fashion and beauty. Additionally, the correlation between preference and purchase behaviour underscores that consumers are not just expressing interest in sustainability; they are actively integrating it into their shopping habits. For Nykaa, this means that refining and expanding its sustainability narrative can have a direct impact on sales and market positioning.

The data also highlights the strong link between message clarity and consumer preference. When sustainability messages are straightforward, consumers are more likely to favour the brand. Clarity not only aids comprehension but also builds trust, as consumers feel they are being given direct and unfiltered information.

The ability to easily distinguish sustainable products within Nykaa's portfolio adds to this preference, reinforcing the idea that transparency drives engagement. Overly complex or vague messaging can dilute impact, making it essential for brands to communicate their sustainability efforts with precision. The clear, jargon-free approach ensures that consumers feel informed rather than overwhelmed, ultimately strengthening their connection with the brand.

Trust in messaging further cements this relationship. A strong correlation between credibility and consumer preference underscores the importance of authenticity. Consumers are more likely to prefer Nykaa when they perceive its sustainability claims as truthful and backed by reliable information.

Any skepticism regarding greenwashing can be countered by ensuring that sustainability efforts are both visible and verifiable. This means not just communicating commitments but also showcasing tangible actions, from ethical sourcing to reduced environmental impact. When consumers believe that a brand genuinely upholds its promises, their emotional connection deepens, translating into stronger loyalty and long-term engagement.

Purchase intentions align seamlessly with these findings, with consumer preference playing a decisive role in actual buying behavior. Those who favor Nykaa's sustainable offerings are significantly more likely to make purchases, reinforcing the commercial viability of sustainability as a brand strategy.

5.2 Recommendations

Strengthening sustainable marketing communication requires a sharper focus on clarity, credibility, and engagement. The findings highlight that Nykaa's audience, predominantly young and educated, is highly receptive to sustainability messaging. However, maintaining interest requires messaging that is not only clear but also compelling. Consumers value transparency but also seek deeper connections with brands that align with their values.

To reinforce this, sustainability communication should go beyond broad claims and integrate detailed, relatable narratives. Instead of generic statements about eco-friendly initiatives, marketing campaigns should showcase measurable progress—whether through reduced packaging waste, ethical sourcing, or carbon footprint reduction. Consumers respond more positively when they see tangible impact, making factual storytelling a key tool for stronger engagement.

Trust remains a key factor in consumer preference, making credibility an area of focus. While Nykaa's current messaging is seen as largely reliable, some skepticism exists regarding sources of information. Strengthening partnerships with environmental organizations and obtaining third-party certifications can address this concern.

Verified labels and endorsements add weight to sustainability claims, reinforcing trust among consumers who are increasingly cautious about greenwashing. Communicating these affiliations consistently across digital platforms, packaging, and advertisements ensures that credibility is embedded in every touchpoint. Further, incorporating expert voices in content—whether through interviews, collaborations, or testimonials—can elevate the authenticity of brand messaging.

Simplicity in communication remains an essential factor in influencing preference and purchase behavior. Consumers engage more with sustainability efforts when messages are easy to understand and instantly recognizable. This extends beyond advertisements to product labels, social media content, and website descriptions.

Clear indicators for sustainable products, such as distinct icons or badges, can help consumers identify environmentally responsible options without extensive research. Reinforcing this clarity across platforms ensures that sustainability messaging is not confined to campaigns but embedded in everyday interactions with the brand. The goal is to make sustainable choices effortless, removing any barriers that could lead to consumer hesitation.

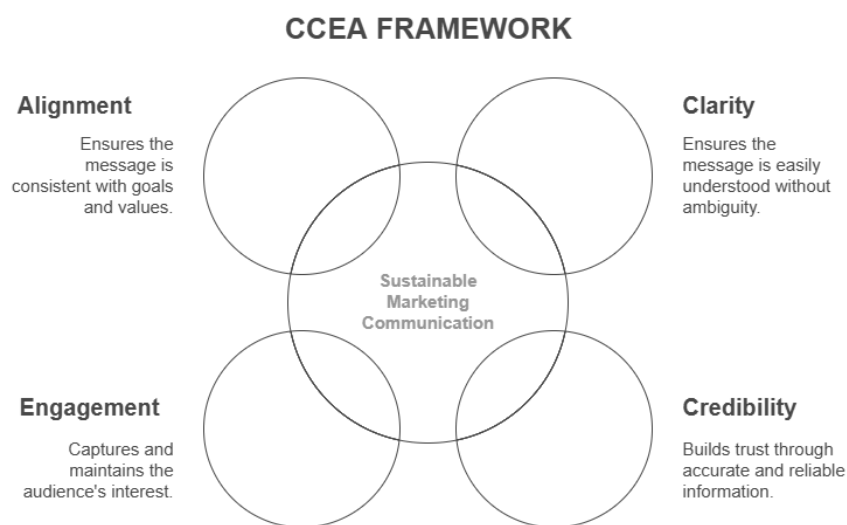
Consumer inclination toward sustainability also presents an opportunity to deepen engagement through interactive initiatives. Younger audiences, in particular, are drawn to brands that allow them to participate in sustainability efforts. Campaigns that invite consumers to be part of the process whether through recycling programs, incentives for sustainable purchases, or digital pledges can create stronger emotional connections. Social media campaigns showcasing user contributions, behind-the-scenes sustainability efforts, or interactive content can further reinforce the message.

Purchase intention and brand advocacy are directly linked to how well sustainability messaging aligns with consumer values. Strengthening this alignment requires a balance between persuasion and proof. Beyond communicating commitments, showcasing real impact through annual sustainability reports or progress updates can build long-term credibility. Consumers want to see that brands are not just speaking about sustainability but actively making a difference. Aligning communication strategies with these expectations ensures that sustainability is not just a marketing angle but an integral part of the brand's identity.

CCEA Framework

Clear-Credible-Engaging-Aligned (CCEA) Framework is designed & developed by the author based on the key findings of this thesis. This framework can serve as a model for brands looking to strengthen their sustainability positioning. By focusing on these four elements, companies can create messaging that not only influences purchase decisions but also drives long-term brand loyalty.

Figure 14 - CCEA Framework



Source: Developed by author based on the key findings

The first pillar is Clarity, which ensures that sustainability messaging is simple, direct, and easy to recognize. Consumers connect better with messages that avoid jargon and focus on specific, measurable actions. Brands should use clear product labels, concise storytelling, and visually distinct indicators to highlight eco-friendly initiatives. The goal is to make sustainable choices intuitive rather than requiring consumers to dig through fine print.

Credibility is the second pillar, addressing the trust gap that often exists in sustainability claims. This requires brands to back their statements with verified data, third-party certifications, and partnerships with reputable environmental organizations. Communicating these aspects transparently across all consumer touchpoints—packaging, websites, social media, and advertising ensures that credibility is not just an afterthought but a core part of the brand's identity.

The third pillar, Engagement, focuses on making sustainability an interactive experience rather than a passive message. Consumers, especially younger ones, are more likely to support brands that allow them to participate in eco-friendly efforts. Initiatives like recycling incentives, community-driven sustainability challenges, and behind-the-scenes content on social media create stronger emotional ties. When consumers feel involved in a brand's sustainability journey, loyalty deepens naturally.

The final pillar, Alignment, ensures that sustainability is not treated as a separate campaign but is embedded in the brand's long-term strategy. This means that beyond marketing efforts, sustainable practices should be evident in product development, supply chain decisions, and corporate policies. Regular updates on progress, transparent reporting, and a commitment to continuous improvement help maintain consumer trust over time.

6. Conclusion

Sustainable marketing communication has evolved into more than just a trend; it is now a defining factor in consumer decision-making. As brands navigate this shift, the balance between clarity, credibility, and engagement becomes essential. The findings indicate that Nykaa, with its strong consumer base of young, educated individuals, has successfully positioned itself as a brand that values sustainability. However, the effectiveness of its messaging depends not just on making claims but on ensuring that those claims are easy to understand, verifiable, and engaging enough to build long-term trust.

Consumer perception plays a significant role in determining the success of sustainability initiatives. When messages are clear, consumers are more likely to connect with them, reinforcing brand preference. Nykaa's ability to communicate its eco-friendly efforts has been well received, yet there remains room to refine its storytelling. Advertisements that explain sustainability initiatives need to be more precise, moving beyond broad statements to include concrete actions and measurable outcomes. This shift would not only strengthen brand credibility but also provide consumers with a stronger reason to align their purchasing decisions with sustainability goals.

Trust is another defining element in the consumer-brand relationship. While Nykaa's transparency is acknowledged, skepticism still lingers around the credibility of information sources. Consumers today seek verification before accepting sustainability claims, making third-party endorsements and expert-backed communication essential. Certifications, partnerships with environmental organizations, and open reporting on sustainability progress can significantly reinforce trust. A stronger foundation in credibility would not only solidify consumer confidence but also safeguard the brand against the risk of greenwashing perceptions.

The influence of sustainability on purchasing decisions is evident. Consumers are no longer passive recipients of marketing messages; they actively seek brands that align with their values. Nykaa's sustainability communication has successfully influenced preference and purchase intent, demonstrating that clear and credible messaging holds commercial value. However, engagement plays a key role in ensuring that sustainability efforts do not just generate awareness but also inspire action.

The direct relationship between sustainability messaging and consumer loyalty further reinforces the importance of long-term commitment. Purchase decisions influenced by sustainability are not just one-time choices; they shape repeat buying behaviour.

Nykaa's ability to maintain this momentum will depend on continuous refinement of its communication strategy. Sustainability should not be framed as an occasional campaign but as an ongoing conversation. Regular updates, transparent disclosures, and visible progress can keep consumers engaged while reinforcing trust.

Sustainability is no longer a separate marketing category it is a defining expectation from consumers. Brands that recognize this shift and refine their communication strategies accordingly are more likely to maintain relevance in an increasingly conscious market. Nykaa's approach serves as a strong example, highlighting the power of clear messaging, credible information, and active consumer engagement. The challenge lies in sustaining this connection, ensuring that ethical commitments remain not just a part of branding but an integral part of business strategy.

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Appendix

1. Name & Mail ID

2. Gender - (A) Male (B) Female

3. Age - (A) 18 to 25 Years (B) 26 to 34 Years (C) 35 to 44 Years (D) 45 to 54 Years

4. Education Qualification - (A) Certification & Diploma (B) Bachelor's degree (C) Master's degree

5. Employment Status - (A) Student (B) Professional (C) Working (D) Unemployed

6. Income Level - (A) Below 3000 USD (B) 3000 to 15000 USD (C) 15000 to 25000 USD (D) 25000 to 350000 USD (E) 35000 to 45000 USD (F) Above 45000 USD

Please state your level of agreement for the below statements related to attitude, behaviour, preference, and marketing communication of Nykaa

(1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly Agree)

Sustainable Marketing Communication

7. Message Clarity

The sustainability messages communicated by Nykaa are clear and easy to understand.

Nykaa's advertisements effectively explain the brand's eco-friendly initiatives.

The language used in Nykaa's sustainability campaigns is simple and unambiguous.

Nykaa's marketing clearly differentiates its sustainable products from non-sustainable ones.

I can easily identify the key sustainability messages in Nykaa's advertisements.

8. Message Credibility

I trust the sustainability claims made by Nykaa in its marketing campaigns.

Nykaa provides reliable and fact-based information about its eco-friendly initiatives.

The sustainability messages in Nykaa's advertisements feel honest and authentic.

Nykaa's marketing uses credible sources to support its sustainability claims.

I believe that Nykaa genuinely follows the eco-friendly practices it promotes.

9. Consumer Preference

I prefer purchasing from brands like Nykaa that promote sustainability.

Nykaa's commitment to sustainability makes it more appealing to me than non-sustainable brands.

I actively seek out products from Nykaa because of its sustainability claims.

I am more likely to choose Nykaa over competitors due to its environmental initiatives.

I feel positive about Nykaa when I see its sustainable marketing campaigns.

10. Consumer Purchase Intentions

I am likely to purchase sustainable fashion products from Nykaa in the future.

I intend to prioritize Nykaa's eco-friendly products over conventional alternatives.

Nykaa's sustainability marketing increases my willingness to buy from the brand.

I would recommend Nykaa's sustainable products to my friends and family.

I plan to support Nykaa because of its commitment to sustainability.