The Impact of Fashion Line Extensions on Consumers' Valuations of Mainstream and Niche Brands

Examining the Moderating Effect of (Slow-Fashion versus Fast-Fashion) Line Extension on the Relationship Between (Niche versus Mainstream) Brand Type and Consumers' Valuations

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ABSTRACT

The fashion industry has created major social and environmental issues from abusing its workforce to damaging the planet. Over time, these concerns intensified, pushing consumers to reconsider their purchasing behavior. Consequently, many companies have started putting more effort into changing their business models to incorporate the stakeholders' interests. However, mainstream brands have suffered from consumers' skepticism about the ability of large established brands to reach satisfactory levels of sustainability undermining their good deeds. Brand extensions have been a powerful tool, used by major brands, to enhance these valuations. To examine this phenomenon further, the current study evaluates how slow-fashion brand extensions may be a solution to improve consumers' valuations of mainstream brands. Based on prior literature, an experimental study was conducted to test the impact of brand type (niche vs. mainstream) and type of fashion line extension (slow-fashion vs. fast-fashion) on consumers' valuations. Additionally, the mediating effect of brand satisfaction is examined on the relationship between brand type and consumer valuations. Results show that consumers show higher customer-based-brand equity and ethicality perceptions when exposed to niche brands. Additionally, findings show that the exposure to slow-fashion lines will generate more favorable consumers' valuations in comparison to fast-fashion lines. This dissertation provides important theoretical and managerial contributions highlighting the positive impact of both brand type and fashion line type on consumers' valuations. Also, the ability of companies to further enhance these valuations by focusing on brand satisfaction.

Keywords: slow-fashion, fast-fashion, mainstream brands, niche brands, customer-based brand equity, ethicality perceptions, consumers' valuations, brand satisfaction

RESUMO

A indústria da moda criou questões sociais e ambientais. Ao longo do tempo, estas preocupações intensificaram-se, levando os consumidores a reconsiderar o seu comportamento de compra. Consequentemente, muitas empresas começaram a realizar mais esforços para alterar os seus modelos de negócio. No entanto, as principais marcas sofrem o ceticismo dos consumidores quanto à capacidade das grandes marcas estabelecidas de atingirem níveis satisfatórios de sustentabilidade. As extensões de marcas têm sido uma ferramenta, utilizada pelas grandes marcas, para melhorar estas avaliações. Nesta perspetiva, o estudo atual avaliou em maior profundidade esta premissa e propõe que as extensões de marcas de moda lenta como uma solução que poderá melhorar a avaliação das marcas consideradas mainstream, pelos consumidores. Com base na literatura, foi realizado um estudo experimental para testar os impactos do tipo de marca (de nicho versus mainstream) e tipo de moda (*slow-fashion* versus *fast-fashion*) nas avaliações dos consumidores. Adicionalmente, foi testado o efeito mediador da satisfação da marca na relação entre o tipo de marca e estas avaliações. Os resultados mostram que os consumidores mostram melhores percepções de ética e equidade de marca quando expostos a marcas de nicho. Os resultados mostram ainda que as exposições a linhas de moda lenta geram avaliações mais favoráveis pelos consumidores em comparação com as linhas de moda rápida. Esta dissertação fornece importantes implicações salientando o impacto dos tipos de marcas e linhas de moda nas avaliações dos consumidores. Além disso, a capacidade das empresas para melhorar estas valorizações com base na satisfação da marca.

Palavras-chave: Tipo de Moda, Tipo de Marca, Moda Lenta, Moda Fast-fashion, Mainstream, Nicho, Valorizações dos Consumidores, Equidade da Marca baseada no Cliente, Percepções de Eticidade, Comportamento de Compra, Satisfação da Marca

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CPE	Consumer Perceived Ethicality
PI	Purchase Intention

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Problem Definition and Relevance

The global fashion industry revenue was estimated to reach approximately 1.53 trillion U.S. dollars in 2022, and with the continuous growth in consumers' demand, this value will reach around 2 trillion U.S. dollars by 2027 (Smith, 2022). This sector is a substantial economic force and a key contributor to the growth of the global GDP (Deloitte, 2019). Nonetheless, the expansion of this sector has had major social and environmental consequences that arise from the use of energy and toxic chemicals, and the waste and emissions volumes paired with unethical working conditions (Allwood et al., 2006; Madsen et al., 2007).

As environmental concerns intensified over time (Laroche et al., 2001), consumers started making more conscious purchasing decisions. In opposition to *regular* fashion, a recent study found that 37% of consumers are willing to spend 10% extra for slow or sustainable fashion products (Statista, 2020). As a response, many companies have started to put more effort in more sustainable offers and business models. Also, to change their strategies and policies to incorporate the stakeholders' interest (Brown, 2010; Kozlowski et al., 2012). Within the past decade, sustainability has been at the forefront of policy discussions and research agendas for different industries and the fashion sector was no exception (McNeill & Venter, 2019). As individuals became more aware of the urge for businesses and other stakeholders to be more responsible, the concept of sustainable or slow-fashion emerged within the fashion industry (Shen et al., 2012).

Although there is not a single formal definition of slow-fashion fashion concept, it is often referred to as an "antidote" to fast-fashion and considered a *lifestyle* (Zarley Watson & Yan, 2013; Fletcher, 2010; Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Slow-fashion is renowned for its emphasis on product quality along with environmental and social concerns including the attention paid to stakeholders' needs - employees, workers, customers, distributors, producers, and the ecosystem (Gomes de Oliveira et al., 2022; Kahn, 2009; Fletcher, 2008). Slow-fashion condemns overproduction and overconsumption and is intended to reduce the exploitation of natural resources. Similarly, consumers are expected to own and use the products for a longer period of time (Gomes de Oliveira et al., 2022).

The concept of sustainability in fashion is not new. Many fashion brands have been incorporating sustainability in their business practices. Among some of these brands are H&M or Mango which are considered mainstream but soon realized that being socially and environmentally responsible, besides benefiting society and the environment also enhance consumers' valuations, (De Jong et al., 2017; Wood et al., 2018). However, some challenges faced by mainstream fast-fashion brands willing to engage into more slow-fashion practices in comparison to their niche competitors, are also reported by prior research (Wood et al., 2018). That is, mainstream brands often face consumer disbeliefs that question the ability of large established brands to reach the same levels of sustainability niche brands positioned as sustainable since their origin (Pollan, 2006). Brand extensions have been a powerful tool, used by major brands, to enhance consumer valuations. In the area of fashion, many retailers have also started using brand extensions as they are considered as one of the most successful strategies for expanding a brand's reach into new areas, the sustainability area (Liu & Choi, 2009). Whether this tool is effective in improving consumers' valuations of brands that are less versus more oriented toward sustainability, lags behind. To further explore this effect, the current study examines how slow-fashion brand extensions impact consumers' valuations of mainstream versus niche brands in regard to sustainability.

Consumers' brand valuations can be influenced by several elements, some of them being customer-based brand equity, ethicality perceptions and purchasing behavior. Additionally, brands are considered as a decisive factor in consumer choice (Erdem & Keane, 1996). Companies use their brands as a tool to build consumer-brand relationships, heavily influencing perceptions, and behavior (Chang & Chieng, 2006). On one hand, mainstream brands with which consumers are more familiar are usually preferred because consumers have higher knowledge and awareness of them. Similarly, consumers' purchasing behavior, another representative element of consumers' valuations, tends to be more favorable for mainstream brands. Indeed, when it comes to purchase intentions, the average consumer will prioritize attributes such as price, convenience and trendiness that will bring a personal benefit, rather than sustainable attributes (Carrigan & Attala, 2001; Joergens, 2006; Zabkar & Hosta, 2012). On the other hand, ethicality perceptions, also known as consumer perceived ethicality, tend to favor niche brands with slow-fashion lines (Wood et al., 2018). Consumer perceived ethicality (CPE) is an important dimension of consumers' valuations when it comes to sustainability since it measures a set of pre-existing associations with the morality of a brand (Brunk & Blümelhuber, 2011).

Hence, the individual and combined impact of brand type (niche vs. mainstream) and type of fashion line extension (slow-fashion vs. fast-fashion) on consumer valuations dimensions (customer-based brand equity, ethicality perceptions and purchasing behavior) is examined in detail. Specifically, due to some of the existing challenges faced by mainstream brands' efforts to become more socially and environmentally-friendly, the objective of the present research is to understand the extent to which different brand types (mainstream and niche) are impacted by the introduction of brand extensions such as slow-fashion lines, and how the underlying effects may help improving consumers' valuations of large fashion corporations.

1.2. Research Objectives and Questions

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the impact of brand type and type of fashion line extension on consumers' valuations. Subsequently, to investigate how type of fashion line extension interacts with brand type on these valuations. Therefore, the first research question intends to understand how consumers' valuations (customer-based brand equity, ethicality perceptions and purchasing behavior) are impacted by brand type:

RQ1: What is the impact of brand type (mass vs. niche) on consumers' valuations?

The second research question aims to understand the impact of type of fashion line extension on consumers' valuations (customer-based brand equity, ethicality perceptions and purchasing behavior):

RQ2: What is the impact of type of fashion line extension (slow-fashion vs. fast-fashion) on consumers' valuations?

Finally, the third research question intends to analyze whether type of fashion line extension moderates the relationship between brand type and consumers' valuations (customer-based brand equity, ethicality perceptions and purchasing behavior):

RQ3: To what extent does the type of fashion line extension impact the relationship between brand type and consumers' valuations?

Accordingly, the literature review together with the results and findings from former and current investigation will be used to build a more precise and abridged research model for this dissertation.

1.3. Thesis Structure

The present study proceeds to chapter two after addressing the research problem and its relevance, the dissertation objectives, and the research questions in the first chapter. The second chapter examines the previous academic literature on which this dissertation is based, covering the major topics and concepts being studied. Further, in chapter three, the conceptual model and study hypotheses are discussed. Chapter four then describes the methodology followed and the data collection process, followed by chapter five in which the results' analysis is presented. The study's conclusions, implications, limitations, and suggestions for further research are all presented in the final chapter.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.Sustainability in Fashion

Within the 21st century, sustainability has been at the forefront of policy discussions and research agendas (Zhang et al., 2021). It is undeniable that industrial development and globalization, over the past decades, have fueled economic growth and prosperity, lifted trade restrictions, and increased overseas trade (Shrivastava, 1995). Nevertheless, the so-called 'industrial development' by creating opportunities and increasing competitiveness in the marketplace, has pressured many companies to cut their costs by outsourcing their activities abroad (Milanovic, 2003; Weidenbaum, 2005). While some argue that this was a blast for less developed countries, by boosting employment, it also contributed to the dispersion of the companies' supply chains and decreased accountability for their actions (Bly et al., 2015). Consumer excessive consumption behavior was caused by increased product availability and diversity (Gladwin et al., 1995). Unintentionally, human advancement, rapid population increase, and "overconsumption" have had detrimental effects (Milanovic, 2003). The loss of biodiversity, climate change, freshwater scarcity and food insecurity, ozone depletion and deforestation, as well as additional social problems like inequality or poverty, are just a few of the environmental issues that we are currently dealing with (Gladwin et al., 1995; Shrivastava, 1995). As a result, researchers have come to increasingly emphasize the significance of raising awareness on the fact that our planet's resources are finite and encouraging businesses, governments, and consumers to take consequent sustainable measures (Shrivastava, 1995).

Sustainability first originated from the 'sustainable development' concept (Gladwin et al., 1995) and has been defined as the sum of activities that may be continued indefinitely when treating people and the environment with respect and considering the requirements of the present generation without compromising those of future generations (UN, 1987, p. 8; Partridge, 2011). The slow movement was observed in different industries from food (e.g., Slow Cooking) (Štefko & Steffek, 2021) to fashion (e.g., slow-fashion) (Leslie et al., 2014), in response to unsustainable business and consumer practices related to overproduction and overconsumption of goods and services, and as an enabler of social, environmental, and economic balance.

The fashion industry, and its fast-fashion segment in particular, has been categorized as one of the greatest threats to social and environmental welfare due to negative impacts throughout the integral life cycle of a garment, from production until consumer disposal of goods

(McNeill & Venter, 2019). Traditionally associated with linear supply chains and more broadly, a linear economy of take, make and dispose, the fashion industry represented by textiles, clothing, and accessories' manufacturers, is amongst the most polluting industries around the world next to oil and gas (Brewer, 2019). The sector accounted for around 2.1 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2018, or nearly 4% of the total global emissions (Berg et al., 2020). This means that the fashion industry exceeds the combined carbon footprint of international flights and maritime shipping (Ellen Macarthur Foundation, 2017) and that it generates approximately the same number of GHGs annually as the economies of France, Germany, and the UK put together (Berg et al., 2020). Additionally, in 2019, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) reported that one kilogram of cotton requires approximately 20,000 liters of water to get produced (World Wildlife Fund, 2019). Indeed, the fashion business uses over 79 billion cubic meters of water annually, ranking it as the second-highest water-using industry in the world (Global Fashion Agenda & The Boston Consulting Group, 2017; Karssing, 2021).

Consumers are more conscious of their environmental and social impact, particularly regarding the products they purchase, thanks to increased public awareness and knowledge of the unsustainable practices (Finney, 2014). Up to the present time, research has lacked in clearly identifying consumers' perceptions and reactions towards sustainable fashion lines that originate from mainstream versus niche brands. This is important since consumers vote with their purchases. Yet, consumers still lack sufficient knowledge about the sustainable practices of companies and behave according to a set of associations with well-established or mainstream brands and infer from less established or niche brands. Indeed, fashion consumption is still transitioning toward the adoption of more sustainable behaviors with the market share of sustainable products still relatively low, accounting for 16.6% in 2018 (Whelan & Kronthal-Sacco, 2019). Although many customers firmly believe that purchasing sustainable products is crucial, this opinion does not always translate into action (McNeill & Moore, 2015). The priorities of consumers vary; some are just concerned with their own wants, while others believe that consumption should always be driven by needs with the environment in mind. Nonetheless, past research has found that 78% of the fast-fashion and 91% of the slow-fashion customers' perceptions have been positively impacted after they learn about sustainability practices of a company (Gomes de Oliveira et al., 2022).

2.1.1. Types of Brands: Mainstream vs. Niche Fashion Brands

In the light of the sustainable movement, more and more mainstream brands are advocating and promoting their slower practices and more sustainable new collections (Wood et al., 2018). Commonly, mainstream brands are not sustainability-oriented at their core. They are created to cater to the mass market, and for this reason, they are positioned according to the performance of their products (Wood et al., 2018). On another hand, niche brands are created to cater to the needs of a specific market (Kahn et al., 1988). They offer an assortment of specialized products for a narrower customer base which results in higher prices (Kahn et al., 1988). To summarize, the differentiation strategies used by fashion companies determine their brand type, here also referred to "mainstream" vs. "niche" (Zheng et al., 2020).

Past research has demonstrated that although mainstream brands try to take advantage of market niche opportunities, they are rarely good at it (Hsu et al., 2016; Verhaal et al., 2017). In the case of a niche market oriented towards green consumers, the brand will position its strategy towards environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles (Khurana & Ricchetti, 2016). In today's context, these principles have become fundamental for companies to survive and thrive on the long-term as the sustainability market is facing a growing demand (Khurana & Ricchetti, 2016). Hence, niche brands will benefit from higher sustainability or ethicality perceptions as consumers view the brands' products as more performant and qualitative green products than their mainstream rivals (Pivato et al., 2007). Still, there are many consumers who disbelieve that large mass market brands can achieve the same level of environmental and social friendliness of niche brands with smaller operations (Pollan, 2006; Wood et al., 2018). Thanks to their strategy, niche brands are considered by consumers as a better option in terms of green product offerings since they are perceived to operate more strictly on sustainability (Wood et al., 2018). Niche brands that are effective in building a strong brand image do so by being authentic, unique, and opposed to the mainstream brands (Warren et al., 2019). Regardless, several mainstream brands have also been able to launch products and product lines with clear environmental benefits that could convince customers of their honesty. Good examples of this are Nike that made sure to engage in green practices throughout the entire life cycle of the products, with its Fly-Knit sneaker line (Voight, 2013; Wood et al., 2018).

2.1.2. Types of Fashion: Fast-fashion vs. Slow-Fashion Business Models

Fast-fashion has become a mainstream strategy of fashion retailers (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010). It is an accelerated model with globalized supply chains, short product life cycles, imitations, or replicas of catwalk fashion at affordable price points (Brewer, 2019). It rapidly gained popularity among consumers in the mid-1970s because of its low-price points and convenience while copying the latest trends, making fashion accessible to everyone (Zhang et al., 2021). Media's important role in influencing consumers and making them adopt the new trends resulted in the growth in demand for new fashion products (Bruce & Daly, 2006; Barnes, 2008; Mintel, 2007). Zara, among other fast-fashion brands, has copied catwalk and celebrity looks and brought them to the average consumers (Doeringer & Crean, 2006; Sull & Turconi, 2008, Crompton, 2004). Unfortunately, as profitable as it might be for companies, the fast-fashion model is highly unsustainable, generating environmental and social harm.

Alternatively, slow-fashion companies and associated brands have carved out a niche positioning in the highly competitive fashion industry through their innovative designs, and sustainable branding and retail strategies (Brydges et al., 2014). Slow-fashion can be defined as the production of fashion clothing using ethical labor conditions, with respect for the environment, and providing adequate living wages for those involved in the value chain (Shen et al., 2012). It may be considered the antipode of the fast-fashion business model if fully implemented (Mandarić et al., 2022). For consumers, these become exposed to products that reflect more sustainable and ethical fashion practices including production, distribution, and use of clothing (Morgan, 2015). Slow-fashion companies accepted the challenge of bridging uncertainty with profit and creating a new niche market by embracing the values of sustainability and taking on a riskier approach to the production of clothes (Brydges et al., 2014). Thus, their collections constitute more timeless, higher quality garments with longer durability and consequently, higher prices (explained by higher production costs). The associated products are developed with more natural and sustainable components and materials such as sneakers that employ components made of cotton fiber instead of rubber (Voight, 2013). Thereupon, the objective is moving consumers' mindset from quantity to quality (Ozdamar et al., 2014)

However, in recent years fast-fashion clothing brands have been increasingly committed and contributing to sustainable development and communicating their environmental-friendly efforts with consumers. As green-washing memories may fade, mainstream fast-fashion brands are expected to be able to offer green products without suffering from consumers' negative perceptions. Overconsumption attitudes are expected to shift over time (Nyilasy et al., 2013). Collection and branding strategies have been modified to reflect a more sustainable behavior and the use of sustainable materials. Hence, ethical fashion branding presents a new strategy that satisfies both consciousness and trendiness (Joergens, 2006 p.361). One of the main strategies adopted by fast-fashion companies is the launch of slow-fashion brand extensions as it has allowed to partly enhance consumers perceptions towards mainstream fast-fashion brands.

2.2.Brand Extensions

Initially, companies used brand extension strategies to insert new product categories to their existing brands (Keller & Aaker, 1992). This method allows risk reduction associated with the introduction of an unknown by customers product as the strong positioning of the already existing brand is inherited (Keller & Aaker, 1992). Indeed, managers rely on the pre-established mental connection between a brand and the image it reflects, known as brand association (Aaker & Keller, 1990). This serves as a mental connection for consumers when evaluating a new product. Brand extensions have emerged as the most popular strategy for businesses' growth strategies over the past 20 years (Völckner & Sattler, 2006; Milberg et al., 2010). Thus, over 80% of new product introductions in several product categories are brand extensions (Sheinin, 1998; Keller, 2008).

There are namely two types of brand extensions, the horizontal and the vertical brand extensions. In order to promote a new product to a new target market, horizontal brand extensions are used to introduce category and line extensions that make use of the same product category (Choi et al., 2010). The creation of diffusion brands, on the other hand, involves the use of vertical brand extensions, in which a more affordable product is offered to the public under the guise of a more expensive designer brand (Liu & Choi, 2009). In our specific case, we will only explore the concept of horizontal brand extensions as it is the technique commonly used by fast-fashion brands to introduce sustainable efforts.

Benefits of Brand Extensions

Past study results allowed to conclude that consumers' opinions of a parent brand influence how they relate to the new brand extension and how they perceive it (Hill & Lee, 2015). Therefore, slow-fashion brand extensions of mainstream retailers have the potential to be perceived as sustainable even though their initial business model is considered not be fully sustainable (Hill & Lee, 2015). When presenting sustainability as an enhancement to the brand image in the form of a slow-fashion brand extension, consumers' brand knowledge needs to be considered. As explained by Czellar (2003), after a brand extension has been introduced, consumers evaluate it based on their perception of the parent brand and consequently, the line extension.

On one hand, consumers who are unfamiliar with the parent brand, such as a niche brand, will evaluate the new line extension solely based on their prior experiences with such extension (Sheinin, 1998; Czellar, 2003). On the other hand, mainstream brands are characterized by popularity among the consumers. Thus, if the set of associations or perceptions of the already existing mainstream parent brand are positive, it is very likely that consumers opinions and acceptance of the brand extension will be favorable as well.

Engaging into slow-fashion brand extension strategies provide many advantages for the fashion retailers. By introducing these new slow-fashion lines, companies increase their market share, broaden the scope of their target customers, and enrich their product portfolios (Dens & De Pelsmacker, 2015). Furthermore, the ability to lower distribution costs makes expanding into new product categories both cost-effective and profitable (Morein, 1975). The mainstream brands, that are already well positioned and have notoriety, do not need to spend huge amounts on the promotion of the new brand extensions (Völckner & Sattler, 2006). Despite their image deterioration among consumers due to a variety of environmental problems, mainstream fast-fashion companies are increasingly reworking their business models to focus on slower fashion that emphasizes environmental and social sustainability. One of the ways clothing companies have improved is by adding sustainable clothing line extensions. For instance, the mainstream fast-fashion brand Zara has introduced its first sustainable fashion collection, the Join Life Collection (Very, 2016). The new line includes clothing produced using materials like organic or recycled cotton, recycled polyester, or an innovative fiber called "Tencel Lyocel," which is made of recycled cotton and wood from sustainably managed forests (Inditex, 2015; ZARA, 2017). By the end of 2022, the company wanted to expand the collection so that 50% of its products were made in accordance with the Join Life guidelines (ZARA, n.d.). This implies that Zara, which has been until now known for its mainstream positioning and fast-fashion business model, is introducing slow-fashion lines rooted in slower-fashion business models while keeping its mainstream positioning. H&M, another preeminent brand of the fast-fashion industry, also introduced its sustainable line, the Conscious Collection with over 1811 distinct items of clothes in the new line's collection (H&M Group, 2015). The Conscious Collection's clothing is made from materials including organic cotton and recycled polyester (H&M, 2017a; H&M Group, 2015).

2.3.Consumer Valuations

2.3.1. Customer-based Brand Equity valuations

Customer-based brand equity occurs when the customer is familiar with a brand and has some positive, powerful, and distinctive brand associations in memory (Keller, 1993). Studying brand equity is relevant for making better decisions regarding targeting and product positioning, as well as marketing mix related actions (Keller, 1993). Brands are usually developed through time in relation to a product or business concept. Typically, they begin by giving a product or service a name, and then they expand by gaining awareness, reputation, and trust in order to increase their equity (Kapferer, 2008).

In the 1980s, the concept of brand equity was introduced (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). Since then, numerous models and touchpoints have been developed to show how to develop substantial brand equity and how to assess it. For instance, Keller (2020) takes a customer-centric approach to brand equity. Customers' minds are the source of brands' strength and power. According to his model of customer-based brand equity, marketers use what consumers have already learnt, witnessed, experienced, and heard about the brand to create positive feelings, images, beliefs, perceptions, opinions, and experiences (Keller, 2020). There are multiple ways to improve brand equity, one of them being the introduction of line extensions (Keller, 1992). For current research purposes customer-based brand equity dimensions - attitudes towards the brand, attitudes towards the brand extension, brand affect & image, and quality perceptions are analyzed conjointly to assess the impact of fashion line extensions and brand type on consumer valuations.

Brand Image

Herzog (1963) and Newman (1957) define brand image as the set of perceptions about a brand resulting from associations (informational nodes) formed in consumers' memories. Fashion companies' brand perceptions are molded by their marketing and brand management strategies, but they are also becoming more and more influenced by the social and environmental impact they have. Negative consequences can be a deciding factor when developing a brand's image and will have an impact on a consumer's allegiance to that brand, either adversely or favorably, especially if they are more conscious of the impact their purchasing behavior has on the world.

Attitudes Toward the Brand

Brand attitudes are known as the general assessments that consumers have about a certain brand (Wilkie, 1986). They frequently serve as the foundation for customer behavior (e.g., brand choice). Attitudes have three dimensions which are cognitive (in relation with brand trust), affective and behavioral (in relation with brand loyalty). In the sustainability in fashion context, consumers' attitudes form around the knowledge about ethicality or unethicality of a brand. In order to understand consumer perceived ethicality, it is important to dig into attitude formation and its components (Fatma & Rahman, 2017).

Quality Perceptions

Brand attitudes can be linked to perceptions of the functional and experiential benefits of the product as well as product-related attributes, in line with research on perceived quality (Zeithaml, 1988). A brand's perceived quality is defined as a consumer's assessment of its products' excellence or superiority (Zeithaml, 1988). It is simply a customer's overall subjective assessment of a product (Das, 2015). This perception is influenced by a variety of factors. According to research by Zhang et al. (2018), consumer perceptions of product quality may deteriorate because of business greenwashing practices such as the false depiction of goods and services as sustainable. As a result, consumers today seek greater information about the origin and quality of the materials used in products, and they increasingly want transparency along the entire value chain (Gazzola et al., 2020).

Fast-fashion and mainstream brands are usually associated with low quality due to the poor performance of the products but also the lack of traceability and honesty behind their manufacturing. On the other hand, slow-fashion and niche products are associated with high quality (Gomes de Oliveira et al., 2022). Therefore, information about the type of fashion line extension and the brand type a brand belongs to may influence consumers' quality perceptions. For their products to be perceived as qualitative, brands are increasingly sharing information about their ethical and sustainable operations. Overall, identifying products that are both genuinely sustainable and that perform well is challenging for consumers (Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008).

2.3.2. Ethicality Perceptions

Consumer perceived ethicality, CPE, is an important driver of consumers' brand valuations (Rust et al., 2000). This concept has recently been added to the marketing literature (Brunk, 2010). In previous studies, consumers' aggregate perception of a company and its product and/or services morality has been used to describe consumer-perceived ethicality (Brunk & Blümelhuber, 2011). The more a brand is perceived as sincere and transparent, the higher its perceived ethicality. This is often the case for slow-fashion niche brands thanks to their strong brand image evolving around authenticity (Brunk, 2012). Moreover, applying the theory of brand associations and meaning to fashion companies, Keller (2001) argues that customers should associate niche brands with slow-fashion lines with something positive, distinctive, and strong, but this does not necessary apply to mainstream brands with fast-fashion lines, which lack an ethical foundation in their core values (Keller, 2001). However, Brunk and Blümelhuber (2010) added that consumers do not react to all positive information about a brand's ethical behavior in the same way. In order to guide decisions and ensure a favorable effect on revenues, businesses must understand what consumers see as (un)ethical (Shea, 2010). For instance, consumers' perceptions of a brand are not improved by information demonstrating that it simply complies with legal requirements; on the contrary, not complying has a bigger (negative) impact (Brunk & Blümelhuber; Shea, 2010). Consequently, this information may result in a poor perception of the brand, which may have an impact on purchase intentions (Brunk, 2010a), explored further in the literature review.

This raises an important question concerning how to define and assess consumers' ethical attitudes of brands. Additionally, different stakeholders of the brand may have an impact on consumer perceived ethicality. The ethical perception of a clothing company may be influenced by one of the six consumer-perceived ethicality categories: company's interactions with customers, employees, the environment, the business environment, the local community and economy, and the international community (Brunk, 2010b).

2.3.3. Purchasing Behavior

Purchase intention is defined as "consumers' willingness to purchase a certain good at a particular moment or in a particular situation" (Lu et al., 2014, p.261). It is considered as one of "the best predictors of an individual's behavior" as it measures the willingness to carry out that behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In the fashion context, despite the increase of responsible consumption, consumers purchasing behavior is mainly guided by personal motives rather than social and environmental ones (Zabkar & Hosta, 2012). Therefore, consumers will be more preoccupied by attributes such as quality, price, convenience, trendiness, and branding (Carrigan & Attala, 2001; Joergens, 2006). Participants in a study by Joergens (2006) stated that they did not favor or boycott the good or the bad actions of businesses. Even though they were aware of the unethical practices of certain brands, they kept on purchasing goods from these businesses. Findings from this study also imply that buyers prefer to purchase more apparel than fewer items created ethically, which limits the amount of ethical fashion that they will purchase (Joergens, 2006).

2.4.Improving Consumers' Valuations through Brand Satisfaction

Fornell, 1996, has defined customer satisfaction as consumers' overall post-purchase evaluations of the brand's products and/or services in terms of their perceived value and quality, as well as their conformity to their expectations (Cengiz, 2010; Fornell et al., 1996). It is the positive attitude that a customer develops as a result of a pleasant consumption experience

(Erciş et al., 2012). Fashion brands succeed in satisfying consumers' demand as they can shorten the buying cycle and lead time processes for getting fashion products inspired by the latest trends into stores (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). The lack of availability in stores may create inconvenience for customers and thus result in dissatisfaction (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010). Besides, consumers' demand has drastically increased as buyers have become driven by media, exposing them to catwalk styles, celebrity looks and the desire for newness (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010).

Hence, we assume in our research that brand satisfaction can be represented by two elements, trendiness of the products and convenience of the offer. Furthermore, the more satisfied customers are, the more their valuations of the brand improve (Esmaeilpour & Barjoei, 2016). Therefore, one of the brands' main objectives is reaching customer satisfaction as past literature has shown that it heavily influences customer loyalty and retention (Fornell et al., 1996; Oliver, 1980). Companies, particularly in the retail sector, have allocated big budgets on customer satisfaction measurement and research (Sivadas & Baker-Prewitt, 2000; Wilson, 2002).

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

This research closely examines the individual and combined effects of brand type (niche vs. mainstream) and type of fashion line extension (slow-fashion vs. fast -fashion) on consumers' valuations dimensions (customer-based brand equity, ethicality perceptions and purchasing behaviors).

An empirical study will be conducted to examine the impact of the introduction of brand extensions such as slow-fashion lines and how these underlying effects may help enhance consumers' valuations of mainstream brands.

Hypotheses:

As discussed above, prior literature has suggested that brands are a key element used by companies to influence perceptions and strengthen consumer-brand relationships (Erdem & Keane, 1996; Chang & Chieng, 2006). Hence, customer-based brand equity and purchasing behaviors are heavily impacted by mainstream brands due to their high level of consumer awareness and familiarity. On the other hand, past literature has emphasized the higher ethicality perceptions towards niche brands (Wood et al., 2018). The following hypotheses were thus, formulated:

H1: The type of fashion brand will impact consumers' valuations, so that:

H1a: Consumers will show higher customer-based-brand equity when exposed to mainstream rather than niche brands.

H1b: Consumers will show higher ethicality perceptions (CPE) when exposed to niche rather than mainstream brands.

H1c: Consumers will show higher purchase intentions when exposed to mainstream rather than niche brands.

Moreover, prior research suggests that a vast majority of fast-fashion and slow-fashion customers claim that their valuations are positively impacted after they learn about sustainable practices of a company (Gomes de Oliveira et al., 2022). Hereupon, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: The type of fashion line extension will have an impact on consumers' valuations, so that:

H2a: Consumers will show higher customer-based-brand equity when exposed to slow-fashion rather than fast-fashion lines.

H2b: Consumers will show higher ethicality perceptions (CPE) when exposed to slow-fashion rather than fast-fashion lines.

H2c: Consumers will show higher purchase intentions when exposed to slow-fashion rather than fast-fashion lines.

As aforementioned in the literature review, slow-fashion brand extensions are a powerful and successful tool that mainstream brands can use to enhance consumers' valuations (Liu and Choi, 2009). On one hand, customer-based brand equity and purchasing behaviors favor the mainstream brands engaged in slow-fashion lines (Erdem & Keane, 1996; Chang & Chieng, 2006). On the other hand, ethicality perceptions tend to be more favorable to niche brands engaged in slow-fashion lines (Wood et al., 2018). The current study examines how slow-fashion brand extensions impact consumers' valuations of niche vs. mainstream brands regarding sustainability. Based on this prior literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: The type of fashion line extension will moderate the relationship between the type of brand and consumer valuations, so that:

H3a: Consumers will show higher customer-based-brand equity when exposed to mainstream brands engaged in slow-fashion lines rather than niche brands engaged in slow-fashion lines.

H3b: Consumers will show higher ethicality perceptions when exposed to niche brands engaged in slow-fashion lines rather than mainstream brands engaged in slow-fashion lines.

H3c: Consumers will show higher purchase intentions when exposed to mainstream brands engaged in slow-fashion lines rather than niche brands engaged in slow-fashion lines.

Furthermore, as stated by prior literature on brand satisfaction, it has been suggested that prior satisfaction with a given brand enhances consumer valuations (Erciş et al., 2012; Esmaeilpour & Barjoei, 2016). Specifically, customer-based brand equity valuations, ethicality perceptions and purchasing behaviors greatly depend on the level of customer satisfaction (Torres & Tribó, 2011; Uddin et al., 2021; Reichheld & Teal, 1996). Hence, the more customers are satisfied by a brand, the more their loyalty and retention increase, and the more likely is the brand to gain competitive advantage (Esmaeilpour & Barjoei, 2016; Fornell et al., 1996; Oliver, 1980). It is thus hypothesized that the latter will act as a mediator on the relationship between brand type and consumer valuations of fashion lines of clothing. More formally, the fourth hypothesis is suggested as follows:

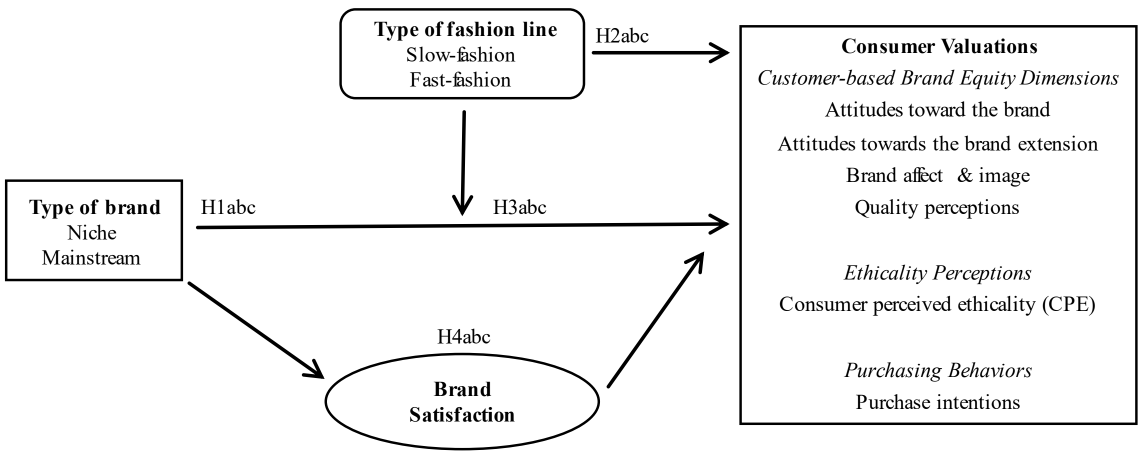
Hypothesis 4: Brand satisfaction will mediate the relationship between brand type and consumer valuations, namely customer-based brand equity, ethicality perceptions, and purchasing behaviors.

H4a: Brand satisfaction will mediate the relationship between brand type and customer-based brand equity.

H4b: Brand satisfaction will mediate the relationship between brand type and ethicality perceptions (CPE)

H4c: Brand satisfaction will mediate the relationship between brand type and purchasing behaviors (purchase intentions)

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework 1: Testing the Moderating Role of Type of Fashion Line Extension



4. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The following chapter gives an insight on the methods used in this thesis to answer given research questions and describes the variables used throughout the research.

4.1.Research Method

Besides selecting relevant secondary data, primary data was collected to answer the research questions of this study. To perform quantitative research, the survey platform Qualtrics was used. Qualtrics is a secure online platform that allows a wide reach of respondents. The survey is shared via a link or a QR code which makes the process convenient and easy for both researcher and participants. Qualtrics questionnaires can be accessed and answered anytime and from anywhere (Evans & Mathur, 2005). This allows us to easily reach an online-based audience within a specific period and with minor costs.

Also, Qualtrics allows researchers to customize their surveys through the various options and tools provided by the platform. Additionally, it ensures the respondents' privacy and personal boundaries and gives everyone an equal chance to take the survey, all of which have been shown to increase respondents' willingness to engage in online studies.

However, the utilization of surveys conducted online carries several hazards. In particular, the researcher cannot dictate the participants' attention or environment or offer them particularly specific instructions. Thus, the survey questions developed by the author were explicit and followed exact reasoning to prevent misconceptions and survey abandonment, thereby minimizing these potential survey downsides.

4.2. Sampling

The convenience sampling method was chosen to conduct this study. It was selected to improve accessibility for the participants and to offer a convenient experience (Trottier, 2010). This sample method also seems appropriate given that the analysis being done is focused on a specific topic and is not yet eligible for generalization. To reach a sufficiently large audience of mainstream consumers, the survey was shared with the private network of the author via the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn.

It should be noted that, each time participants were answering the survey, they were informed that all their responses were anonymous and that they would be treated with complete confidentiality. Participants are expected to give spontaneous and honest answers.

4.3. Research Instruments

A pilot study, followed by a main study, was created using the previously mentioned survey software, Qualtrics. The studies were shared on social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and Instagram) using an anonymous link. The procedures used for the two studies are described below.

Pilot Study: Prior to publishing the main study, a pilot study was undertaken to test whether respondents clearly understood the manipulations and the related questions, as well as the flow of the experimental scenarios. Ninety-nine participants who did not take part in the main study provided responses for this pilot study. After completing the survey, the participants were exposed to manipulation checks intended to understand if all the stimuli and questions were clear and understandable. Their feedback, in addition to the analysis of the pilot study results was used to adjust the main survey, including the manipulations.

In the pilot study, similarly to the main study, participants were first informed that all their responses were anonymous and that they will be treated confidentially. Four manipulations were developed for the purpose of the main study and were used, prior to that, in the pilot study.

The findings were in favor of our assumptions for brand type, as the impact of brand type was more favorably evaluated than the mainstream brand (M_{Niche}= 2.53 vs. $M_{Mainstream}$= 3.91; t =-4.17, p< .001) (See Table 1).

Table 1 Independent-samples T-test Brand Type Manipulation

	Brand Type				
	Niche		*Mainstream*		
	Mean	*SD.*	*Mean*	*SD.*	*t-test*
Brand Type	2.53	1.00	3.91	1.67	-4.17***

Note: ***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$, $^{+}$ $p \leq .1$

Table 2 Independent-samples T-test Type of Fashion Line Extension Manipulation

	Type of Fashion Line Extension				
	Slow		*Fast*		
	Mean	*SD.*	*Mean*	*SD.*	*t-test*
Type of Fashion Line Extension	3.06	1.46	3.88	1.45	-2.34*

Note: ***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$, $^{+}$ $p \leq .1$

Based on the pilot study findings, the manipulations were adjusted in the main study, as explained next.

Main Study:

The main study was published on November 23rd, the survey was open for responses until November 28th.In total 393 responses were gathered, of which 200 were finished and analyzed. A frequent problem with web experiments is the high drop-out rate (Tijdens, 2014). This high dropout rate may be explained by the length of the survey, the repetitive questions, the low respondents' engagement, and the potential distractions that the participant may encounter while taking the online survey.

4.4.Design and Procedure

The purpose of the study was to explore fashion consumers' valuations toward two types of brands: mainstream vs. niche that offer two different types of fashion lines: fast-fashion vs. slow-fashion. The study design followed a 2 (brand type: mainstream vs. niche) x 2 (fashion line type: fast-fashion vs. slow-fashion) between-within subject's design.

To clearly understand the impact of brand type and fashion line type toward consumers' valuations of brands, it was necessary to expose participants to two moments: before and after providing information about the brands' positioning on fast-fashion (vs. slow-fashion). The main goal was to assess actual consumers' valuations of brands before and after exposure to the stimulus. The main study was composed of four main sections (see Appendix 1 for details).

First, participants were presented with a brief text clarifying the scope of the survey and, subsequently, respondents were randomly allocated to one of the four scenarios.

In the first main section, also referred to as "moment 1", only basic information about the brand was given (type of clothing sold by the brand and its target) followed by four questions. Two questions regarding familiarity with the brand, one question about consumer perceived ethicality (CPE) and one about purchase intentions. In the second section, referred to as "moment 2", participants were randomly exposed to one of the four manipulations scenarios. The manipulations were designed to test four different conditions: a mainstream brand with a fast-fashion line, a mainstream brand with a slow-fashion line, a niche brand with a fast-fashion line and a niche brand with a slow-fashion line.

Table 3 Manipulations Scenarios

Moment 1	Moment 2	Scenario			
		1	2	3	4
Mango	Mango	X			
	Mango cares		X		
Nisolo	Nisolo			X	
	Nisolo cares				X

One group of participants was exposed to the *Mango* brand in moment 1 and moment 2. In moment 2, the brand *Mango* was referred to as a fast-fashion brand. A second group of participants was exposed to the brand *Mango* in moment 1 and to a sustainable line extension of the brand Mango in moment 2. The line extension was characterized by a statement that read "*Mango cares*". A third group of participants was exposed to a niche brand called *Nisolo* in moment 1, and in moment 2 the *Nisolo* niche brand was referred to as a niche/fast-fashion brand. Finally, a fourth group of participants was exposed to the Nisolo niche brand in moment 1 and to the sustainable line extension of the niche brand Nisolo in moment 2, via a statement that read "Nisolo cares" (see Appendix 1 for details).

To summarize, in total there were six stimuli; two initial stimuli in moment 1, that gave basic information about Mango and Nisolo, respectively. Then, four different stimuli in moment 2, that provided information about the brand type and the type of fashion line extension- Mango, Mango cares, Nisolo and Nisolo cares. The type of fashion line extension was not explicitly mentioned but inferred to through information about the number of yearly collections, number of stores worldwide, affordability, and the extent to which the brand was following the latest industry trends. The information provided was intended to guide respondents in understanding what type of fashion line extension and what brand type the brands belonged to.

After being exposed to the stimuli, participants were exposed to the manipulation checks' questions, followed by the same questions asked in moment 1, plus additional questions assessing the dependent variables. Comparing moment 1 and moment 2 allowed testing the effects of the manipulations and thus, whether it impacted consumer perceived ethicality, quality perceptions, brand attitudes, image and affect, and purchase intentions, depending on the conditions.

4.5.Stimuli Development

Mango and Nisolo, were selected as the mainstream and niche brand, respectively, both of each already exist in the market. The type of fashion line extensions called Mango cares and Nisolo cares were respectively considered as the mainstream brand with a slow-fashion line and the niche brand with a slow-fashion line. Mango was the brand used as stimulus since it is considered a well-known mainstream brand with a fast-fashion line. The Nisolo brand was included as a stimulus which represents an existing yet less-established brand in the global market. To minimize biases, the two first stimuli (moment 1) showed similar letter-font styles, structure and volume of information, and visual content sizes (see Figure 2). The same holds true for the four stimuli in moment 2 (see Figure 3). To strengthen the stimuli, each paragraph was provided alongside visual content representing the associated brands logos.

Figure 2 Stimuli's Visual Content for Moment 1

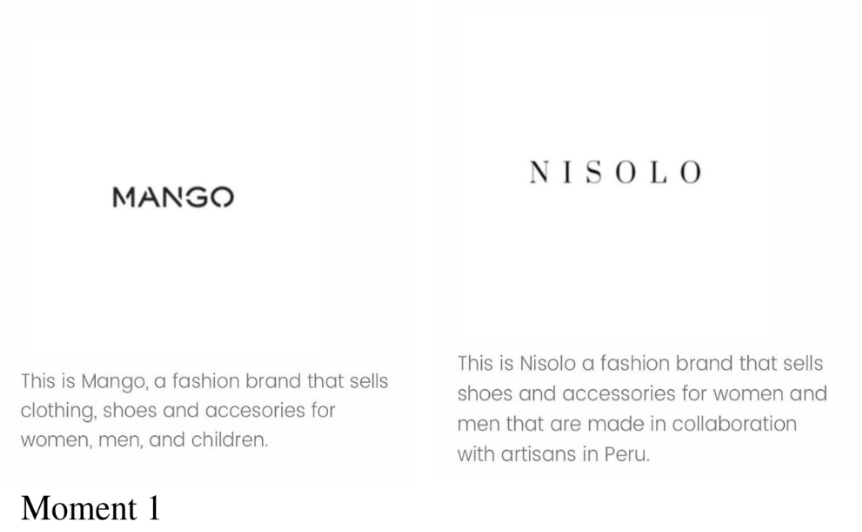


Figure 3 Stimuli's Visual Content for Moment 2

4.6. Variable Descriptions

4.6.1. Manipulation Check

To confirm that Mango, Mango cares, Nisolo and Nisolo cares were respectively perceived by consumers as a mainstream brand with a fast-fashion line, a mainstream brand with a slow-fashion line, a niche brand with a fast-fashion line and a niche brand with a slow-fashion line, participants were asked three questions that served as manipulation checks. Therefore, consumers were asked three multiple choice questions with the sentences: In the brand type manipulation participants were asked “What type of positioning do you perceive this brand to have?” In the fashion line type manipulation participants were asked “How do you perceive this brand to be?”. In the sustainability manipulation participants were asked “How sustainable do you perceive this brand to be?”. This information was assessed on 7-point scales: Very much niche to (7) Very much mainstream for the brand type manipulation, (1) Very much slow-fashion to (7) Very much fast-fashion for the type of fashion line extension manipulation, (1), (1) Very unsustainable to (7) Very sustainable, for the sustainability manipulation questions (See Appendix 1). The manipulation check results are presented in the next chapter.

Additionally, the level of familiarity with the brand was evaluated by asking three questions measured on 7-point scales. The first question asked participants about their level of agreement using two statements “I have seen or heard about this brand” and “I know the products that this brand offers” (1-Strongly disagree; 7-Strongly agree). The second question asked them to rate their level of familiarity with the brand or the brand extension on a 7-point scale statement (1-Not familiar at all; 7-Very much familiar) (See Appendix 2). Familiarity level was assessed, using the exact same questions, in both moment 1 and moment 2 (See Appendix 1).

4.6.2. Independent Variable

Brand type – niche versus mainstream: both manipulated and randomly presented to participants.

4.6.3. Dependent Variables

All the dependent variables, except for purchase intentions were assessed using a 7-point scale (1-Strongly disagree; 7-Strongly agree).

Customer-based Brand Equity was assessed using four different constructs - *attitudes toward the brand, consumer attitudes toward the brand extension, brand affect & image, and quality perceptions,* analyzed and reported in an aggregated manner.

> *Attitudes toward the brand* were evaluated using a scale adapted from Hill & Lee (2015) and included statements like “This brand's products fit the brand's pro-environmental concerns.”; “This brand's image fits the brand's pro-environmental concerns”, etc.). (See Appendix 3).

Consumer attitudes toward the brand extension were evaluated using a scale adapted from Hill & Lee (2015) and included statements like “This brand line's products fit with efforts to consider environmental issues.”; “This brand line conveys the same impression as the brand.”, etc. (See Appendix 4).

Brand affect & image - were assessed using a scale also adapted from Hill & Lee (2015) and included statements like “My opinion of this brand is favorable.”; “My opinion of this brand is positive.”, etc. (See Appendix 5).

Quality perceptions – were assessed using a scale adapted from Erdomuş & Büdeyri-Turan (2012) and included items like: “I would recommend this brand to other people.”; “This brand products are of good quality.”, etc. (See Appendix 6).

Consumer perceived ethicality – was assessed using a scale from Brunk (2012) which included statements like “The brand respects moral norms.” “This brand avoids damaging behavior at all costs.” etc. (See Appendix 7).

Purchase intentions – was assessed by asking participants to rate how likely they were to purchase from the brand, on a 7-point Likert scale (1-Extremely likely; 7-Extremely unlikely) (See Appendix 1).

4.6.4. Moderator

Fashion Line Type – slow-fashion versus fast-fashion: both manipulated and randomly presented to participants.

4.6.5. Mediator

Brand satisfaction – was assessed using two items: “This brand is trendy” and “This brand is convenient”.

4.6.6. Variable code

Table 4 Independent Variables Re-coded

Variables	Values
Brand Type	0 = niche; 1 = mainstream

5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1.Sample Characterization

To accurately portray the final sample, demographic questions were included in the main survey's final section (for more information, see Appendix 7). A total of two hundred participants made up the final sample, with women making up the majority (54.5%). In terms of age, the vast majority (73.5%) of participants were between the ages of 20 and 30, followed by 12% above 40 years old, 7.5% below 20 years old, 6.5% between the ages of 30 and 40, and finally 0.5% preferred not to answer. Concerning occupation, most participants (58%) were university students, followed by 33.5% that were employed, 4.5% that were high school students, 2.5% that were retired and 1.5% that were unemployed.

As for the respondents' highest level of education completed, 51.5% of them completed a master's degree, followed by a bachelor's degree by 30%, a high school degree by 7.5%, a doctorate by 6%, and less than a high school degree by 3.5%. Just 1.5% of the respondents said that they completed a professional degree.

Tunisia accounted for most of the participation (51%) for the nationality question, with the other participants being from Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and the United States of America. The majority (29.5%) of participants answered 'Do not know' to the question regarding their annual income followed by 29% earning under €10.000 that could certainly be explained by most respondents being university students. Accordingly, approximately 13% of participants earned between €10.000 and €19.999, 7% between €30.000 and €39.999, 6.5% between €50.000 and €74.999, 6% between €40.000 and €49.999, another 6% between €20.000 and €29.999, 1% between €75.000 and €99.999, another 1% between €100.000 and €150.000 and finally 1% over €150.000.

5.2.Scale Reliability

The scales used to develop the survey questionnaire were all adapted from literature. Nonetheless, to get the most accurate results, it is still necessary to investigate the scales' reliability. A factor analysis method using a principal component analysis and varimax rotation was performed on attitudes toward the brand, brand affect & image, attitudes toward the brand extension, quality perception, and consumer perceived ethicality. Results show that only one component was extracted for consumer perceived ethicality (moments 1 and 2), attitudes toward the brand, attitudes toward the brand extension, brand affect & image and quality perceptions.

Afterwards, a reliability analysis was run on the dependent variables' scales with 3 or more items. Moreover, to ensure the internal consistency of the scales composed of 3 or more items, Cronbach's Alpha was assessed (See table 5).

Table 5 CPE, Attitudes toward the Brand, Brand Affect & Image, Attitudes toward the Brand Extension and Quality Perceptions Cronbach's Alpha

		Initial number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alfa if item deleted	Items deleted	Final numbers of items
Consumer perceived ethicality	Moment 1	3	.936	.929	-	6
	Moment 2	3	.949	.947	-	6
Attitudes toward the brand		3	.953	.937	-	3
Brand Affect & Image		6	.791	.884	1	5
Attitudes toward the brand extension		7	.944	.942	-	7
Quality perceptions		5	.949	.942	-	5

According to DeVellis (1991), the range for a very good scale is between alphas of .80 and .90, and all the variables presented alphas within this range. Therefore, the six variables in this analysis have a high level of internal consistency. Nonetheless, by removing item 4 ("This brand is harmful"), Cronbach's alpha for brand affect & image can be improved. As a result, item 4 was eliminated from the scale, which changed the brand affect & image variable so that only items 1, 2, 3, and 6 and 8 remain.

After running factor and reliability analysis for attitudes toward the brand, attitudes toward the brand extension, brand affect& image and quality perceptions, and proceeding to scale reduction, another factor analysis using a principal component analysis and varimax rotation was conducted to aggregate these dimensions and create a single customer-based brand equity variable. Results show that only one component was extracted. To ensure internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha was assessed. The variable presented an alpha within the .80 and .90 range, which confirms the high level of internal consistency of the customer-based brand equity variable (See Table 6).

Table 6 Customer-based Brand Equity Cronbach's Alpha

	Initial number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted	Items deleted	Final numbers of items
Customer-based Brand Equity	4	.949	.933	-	4

Concerning brand satisfaction, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to study the correlation between the two items used to measure the construct. The strength of the correlation between the two variables is given by the Pearson correlation value (r). A correlation of 1.0 indicates a perfect positive correlation, a correlation of -1.0 indicates a perfect negative correlation, and a correlation 0 indicates no relationship at all (Ahlgren et al., 2003). The Pearson correlation is significant with $p<.001$ and with an $r >.05$ (See Table 7), which indicates a strong positive correlating relationship between the two items, according to Cohen (1988). Consequently, the scales used to study brand satisfaction have a high reliability level.

Table 7 Brand Satisfaction Pearson Correlation

Variable	*Pearson Correlation (r)*	*Sig (2-tailed)*
Brand Satisfaction	.628	<.001***

Note: $^{***}p < .001$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$, $^{+}p \leq .1$

5.3.Manipulation Check Results

Brand type, fashion line type and sustainability perceptions were used as manipulation check variables in moment 2, after information about type of fashion line extension and brand type were presented (See Table 8). Manipulation checks were performed and worked, as expected, for the type of fashion line extension manipulation, being statistically significant when *t-tests* were conducted at a 95% confidence interval. Results from the brand type manipulation check were significant (M_{niche}= 3.16 vs. $M_{mainstream}$= 5.09; t (198) = -9.16; $p < .001$) (See Table 9). The fashion line type manipulation also worked as expected (M_{slow}= 3.27 vs. M_{fast}= 5.00; t (198) = -8.165; $p < .001$) (See Table 10), allowing to continue the analysis with confidence.

Table 8 Moments Notations

Moment	Description
1	Before the information was presented
2	After the stimuli were presented (niche or mainstream; slow-fashion or fast-fashion)

Table 9 Manipulation Check for Brand Type

	Brand Type				
	Niche		*Mainstream*		
	Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*
Brand Type Manipulation Check	3.16	1.59	5.09	1.38	-9.16***

Note: $^{***}p < .001$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$, $^{+}p \leq .1$

Table 10 Manipulation Check for Type of Fashion Line Extension

	Type of Fashion Line Extension				
	Slow		*Fast*		
	Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*
Fashion Line Type Manipulation Check	3.27	1.59	5.00	1.41	-8.14***

Note: $^{***}p < .001$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$, $+ p \leq .1$

As expected, the level of brand familiarity was also higher for the mainstream (Mango) rather than niche (Nisolo) brand (M_{niche}= 1.79 vs. $M_{mainstream}$= 4.96; t (198) = -13.59; p <.001) (See Table 11).

Table 11 Manipulation Check for Familiarity

	Brand Type				
	Niche		*Mainstream*		
	Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*
Familiarity Manipulation Check	1.79	1.40	4.96	1.80	-13.59***

Note: $^{***}p < .001$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$, $+ p \leq .1$

To further examine the impact of the manipulations specifically on consumer perceived ethicality and purchase intentions, a paired samples *t-test* was conducted to compare results before and after the information about brand type and type of fashion line extension was presented (See Table 12).

In both moments 1 and 2, and for both brand types (niche and mainstream), the CPE mean scores when the slow-fashion line extension is introduced are higher than when the fast-fashion line extension is. Similarly, the purchase intentions mean scores were higher, in moments 1 and 2, for the niche brand with a slow-fashion line extension than for the niche brand with a fast-fashion line extension. As for the purchase intentions of the mainstream brand, they are higher in moment 2, but slightly lower in moment 1, when the slow-fashion line extension is presented versus when the fast-fashion line extension is introduced. Overall, informing consumers about the fast fashion line extension seems prejudicial for the brands as it decreases purchase intentions and ethicality perceptions.

Table 12 Paired Samples T-test (Moment 1 and 2)

	Niche						*Mainstream*					
	Slow-fashion line			*Fast-fashion line*			*Slow-fashion line*			*Fast-fashion line*		
	Mean	*SD*	*t-test*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*
CPE moment 1	4.35	.99	-5.51 ***	4.13	.87	1.28^{+}	3.92	1.06	-5.74 ***	3.60	1.03	-1.11^{+}
CPE moment 2	5.72	1.08		3.96	.96		5.05	.92		3.68	1.18	
PI moment 1	4.25	1.24	-4.56 ***	3.43	1.36	-2.65 **	4.49	1.47	-2.91 **	4.57	1.36	3.25 **
PI moment 2	5.43	1.01		3.91	1.43		5.02	1.58		4.14	1.54	

Note: $***p < .001$, $**p < .01$, $*p < .05$, $^{+} p \leq .1$

5.4.Main Results

5.4.1. The Impact of Brand Type on Consumer's Valuations

Hypothesis 1: The type of fashion brand will impact consumers' valuations, so that:

H1a: Consumers will show higher customer-based-brand equity when exposed to mainstream rather than niche brands.

To test H1a, a one-way univariate analysis of variance ANOVA was performed, and results indicate a marginally significant main effect of brand type on customer-based brand equity (M_{Niche}=4.75 vs. $M_{Mainstream}$= 4.47, F=2.44, p=.1). The difference between the scores of customer-based brand equity are higher when consumers are exposed to the niche brand than to the mainstream brand. Thus, H1a is rejected (see Table 13).

Table 13 Brand Type Main Effect on Customer-based Brand Equity

	Brand Type				
	Niche		*Mainstream*		
	Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*F-test*
Customer-based Brand Equity	4.75	1.31	4.47	1.21	2.44^{+}

Note: $^{***}p < .001$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$, $^{+}\ p \leq .1$

H1b: Consumers will show higher ethicality perceptions (CPE) when exposed to niche rather than mainstream brands.

To test H1b, a one-way univariate analysis of variance ANOVA was again performed, and results indicate a significant main effect of brand type on CPE (M_{Niche}= 4.77 vs. $M_{Mainstream}$= 4.37, F=4.68, p <.05). The difference between the scores of CPE are higher when consumers are exposed to the niche brand than to the mainstream brand, fully validating H1b (see Table 14).

Table 14 Brand Type Main Effect on Ethicality Perceptions

	Brand Type				
	Niche		*Mainstream*		
	Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*F-test*
CPE	4.77	1.34	4.37	1.26	4.68*

Note: $^{***}p < .001$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$, $^{+}\ p \leq .1$

H1c: Consumers will show higher purchase intentions when exposed to mainstream rather than niche brands.

To test H1c, a one-way univariate analysis of variance ANOVA was again performed, and results indicate a non-significant main effect of brand type on purchase intentions (M_{Niche}= 4.61 vs. $M_{Mainstream}$= 4.58, F=.01, p >.1), not validating H1c (see Table 15).

Table 15 Brand Type Main Effect on Ethicality Perceptions

	Brand Type				
	Niche		*Mainstream*		
	Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*F-test*
Purchase Intentions	4.61	1.46	4.58	1.61	.01

Note: $***p < .001$, $**p < .01$, $*p < .05$, $^{+} p \leq .1$

Based on these results, hypothesis 1 is partially validated.

5.4.2. The Impact of Type of Fashion Line Extension on Consumer's Valuations

Hypothesis 2: The type of fashion line extension will have an impact on consumers' valuations, so that:

H2a: Consumers will show higher customer-based-brand equity when exposed to slow-fashion rather than fast-fashion lines.

To test H2a, a one-way univariate analysis of variance ANOVA was performed, and results indicate a significant main effect of fashion type on customer-based brand equity (M_{Slow}=5.26 vs. M_{Fast}= 3.96, F=72.67, p=<.001). The difference between the scores of customer-based brand equity are higher when consumers are exposed to the slow-fashion than to the fast-fashion line extensions. Thus, H2a is validated (see Table 16).

Table 16 Type of Fashion Line Extension Main Effect on Customer-based Brand Equity

	Fashion Type				
	Slow		*Fast*		
	Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*F-test*
Customer-based Brand Equity	5.26	1.05	3.96	1.11	72.67***

Note: $***p < .001$, $**p < .01$, $*p < .05$, $^{+} p \leq .1$

H2b: Consumers will show higher ethicality perceptions (CPE) when exposed to slow-fashion rather than fast-fashion lines.

To test H2b, a one-way univariate analysis of variance ANOVA was performed, and results indicate a significant main effect of fashion type on CPE (M_{Slow}=5.33 vs. M_{Fast}= 3.81, F=101.80, p=<.001). The difference between the scores of CPE are higher when consumers are exposed to the slow-fashion than to the fast-fashion line extensions. Therefore, H2b is validated (see Table 17).

Table 17 Type of Fashion Line Extension Main Effect on Ethicality Perceptions

	Fashion Type				
	Slow		Fast		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F-test
CPE	5.33	1.04	3.81	1.09	101.80***

Note: ****p* < .001, ***p* < .01, **p* < .05, $^{+}$ *p* ≤ .1

H2c: Consumers will show higher purchase intentions when exposed to slow-fashion rather than fast-fashion lines.

To test H2c, a one-way univariate analysis of variance ANOVA was performed, and results indicate a significant main effect of fashion type on purchase intentions (M_{Slow}=5.19 vs. M_{Fast}= 4.04, *F*=31.84, *p*=<.001). The difference between the scores of purchase intentions are higher when consumers are exposed to the slow-fashion than to the fast-fashion line extensions, fully supporting H2c (see Table 18).

Table 18 Type of Fashion Line Extension Main Effect on Purchasing Behaviors

	Fashion Type				
	Slow		Fast		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F-test
Purchase Intentions	5.19	1.38	4.04	1.49	31.84***

Note: ****p* < .001, ***p* < .01, **p* < .05, $^{+}$ *p* ≤ .1

Based on these results, hypothesis 2 is validated.

5.4.3. The Moderating Role of Type of Fashion Line Extension on the Relationship between Brand Type and Consumer's Valuations

Hypothesis 3: The type of fashion line extension will moderate the relationship between the brand type and consumer valuations, so that:

H3a: Consumers will show higher customer-based-brand equity when exposed to mainstream brands engaged in slow-fashion lines rather than niche brands engaged in slow-fashion lines.

To test H3a, a two-way univariate analysis of variance ANOVA was performed, and results show a non-significant two-way brand type x type of fashion line extension interaction effect on customer-based brand equity (*F*=.40, *p*>.1), rejecting H3a (see Table 19).

Table 19 Brand Type x Type of Fashion Line Extension Interaction Effect on Customer-based Brand Equity

	Brand Type Main Effect	Type of Fashion Line Extension Main effect	Brand Type Main Effect * Type of Fashion Line Extension
	F-test	*F-test*	*F-test*
Customer-based Brand Equity	5.00*	75.55***	.40

Note: ****p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05,* $^{+}$ *p ≤ .1*

H3b: Consumers will show higher ethicality perceptions when exposed to niche brands engaged in slow-fashion lines rather than mainstream brands engaged in slow-fashion lines.

To test H3b, a two-way univariate analysis of variance ANOVA was performed, and results show a non-significant two-way brand type x type of fashion line extension interaction effect on CPE (F=1.69, p>.1). Consequently, H3b is rejected (see Table 20).

Table 20 Brand Type x Type of Fashion Line Extension Interaction Effect on Ethicality Perceptions

	Brand Type Main Effect	Type of Fashion Line Extension Main effect	Brand Type Main Effect * Type of Fashion Line Extension
	F-test	*F-test*	*F-test*
CPE	10.28**	111.12***	1.69

Note: ****p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05,* $^{+}$ *p ≤ .1*

H3c: Consumers will show higher purchase intentions when exposed to mainstream brands engaged in slow-fashion lines rather than niche brands engaged in slow-fashion lines.

To test H3c, a two-way univariate analysis of variance ANOVA was performed, and results show a marginally significant two-way brand type x type of fashion line extension interaction effect on purchase intentions (F=2.49, p=.1), supporting H3. (See Table 21).

Table 21 Brand Type x Type of Fashion Line Extension Interaction Effect Purchasing Behaviors

	Brand Type Main Effect	Type of Fashion Line Extension Main effect	Brand Type Main Effect * Type of Fashion Line Extension
	F-test	*F-test*	*F-test*
Purchase Intentions	.19	33.84***	2.49^{+}

Note: ****p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05,* $^{+}$ *p ≤ .1*

To further analyse this effect, an independent-samples *t-test* was performed. However, results reveal non-significant mean differences between the purchase intentions scores when consumers are exposed to the slow-fashion lines from the mainstream brand versus the slow-fashion line from the niche brand ($M_{niche,\ slow}$ = 5.43 vs. $M_{mainstream,\ slow}$ = 5.02; t =1.44, p> .1), leading to reject H3c (see Table 22).

Table 22 Independent-samples T-test Slow-fashion Effect on the relationship between Brand Type and Purchasing Behaviors

	Niche, Slow		*Mainstream, Slow*		
	Mean	*SD.*	*Mean*	*SD.*	*t-test*
Purchase Intentions	5.43	1.01	5.02	1.58	1.44

Note: ****p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05,* $^{+}$ *p ≤ .1*

We conclude that hypothesis 3 is rejected.

5.4.4. The Mediating Role of Brand Satisfaction on the Relationship between Brand Type and Consumer's Valuations

Hypothesis 4: Brand satisfaction will mediate the relationship between brand type and consumer valuations, namely customer-based brand equity, ethicality perceptions, and purchasing behaviors so that:

H4a: Brand satisfaction will mediate the relationship between brand type and customer-based brand equity.

To assess Hypothesis 4, a simple mediation analysis was performed using Hayes' PROCESS macro model 4 (Hayes, 2012). According to bootstrap analysis, a non-significant effect is seen if the confidence intervals contain zero (Hayes, 2012). Additionally, based on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, a mediating effect can either be full or partial. A partial mediation is shown by a significant reduction of the effect, whereas a full mediation is reached if the direct effect between the independent and dependent variables is no longer significant (Bommae, 2016; Field, 2017).

Bootstrapping results (based on 5,000 samples) confirmed a significant and positive indirect effect of brand type through brand satisfaction on the customer-based brand equity variable (indirect effect = .28, SE = .08, 95% CI = [.13, .46]). Both the impact of brand type on brand satisfaction (SE = .19, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [.39, 1.13]) and the impact of brand satisfaction on customer-based brand equity (SE = .06, p=0, 95% CI = [.24, .49]) were significant. When both brand type and brand satisfaction were entered into the regression, the conditional direct effect of brand type on customer-based brand equity remained significant (direct effect = -.56, SE=.08, p<.01, 95% CI = [-.90, -.22]) (see Table 23), showing partial mediation.

These results indicate that brand satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between brand type and customer-based brand equity, partially validating H4a.

H4b: Brand satisfaction will mediate the relationship between brand type and ethicality perceptions (CPE)

Bootstrapping results (based on 5,000 samples) confirmed a significant and positive indirect effect of brand type through brand satisfaction on the CPE variable (indirect effect = .21, SE = .07, 95% CI = [.08, .36]). Both the impact of brand type on brand satisfaction (SE = .19, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [.39, 1.13]) and the impact of brand satisfaction on CPE (SE = .07, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [.14, .41]) were significant. When both brand type and brand satisfaction were entered into the regression, the conditional direct effect of brand type on CPE remained significant (direct effect = -.61, SE=.18, p<.05, 95% CI = [-.97, -.25]) (see Table 24). Therefore, brand satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between brand type and CPE, partially validating H4b.

H4c: Brand satisfaction will mediate the relationship between brand type and purchasing behaviors (purchase intentions)

Bootstrapping results (based on 5,000 samples) confirmed a significant and positive indirect effect of brand type through brand satisfaction on the purchase intentions variable (indirect effect = .34, SE = .09, 95% CI = [.17, .54]). Both the impact of brand type on brand satisfaction (SE = .19, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [.39, 1.13]) and the impact of brand satisfaction on purchase intentions (SE = .08, *p*= .00, 95% CI = [.29, .60]) were significant. When both brand type and brand satisfaction were entered into the regression, the conditional direct effect of brand type on purchase intentions became non-significant (direct effect = -.37, SE=.21, *p*>.01, 95% CI = [-.79, .05]) (see Table 25), showing full mediation. The results of the analysis prove statistical evidence consistent with the H4c, brand satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between brand type and purchase intentions.

Based upon the obtained results, we conclude that hypothesis 4 is partially validated.

Table 23 Brand Satisfaction as a Mediator on the Effect of Brand Type on Customer-based Brand Equity

Outcome	Indirect Effect Paths	Indirect Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
1	Brand Type→Brand Satisfaction	.28***	.39	1.13
2	Brand Satisfaction→Customer-based Brand Equity	.40***	.24	.49
3	Brand Type→Brand Satisfaction→Customer-based Brand Equity	.28	.13	.46
	Direct Effect Paths	Direct Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
4	Brand Type→Customer-based Brand Equity	-.56**	-.90	-.22

Note: ****p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05,* $^{+}$ *p ≤ .1*

Table 24 Brand Satisfaction as a Mediator on the Effect of Brand Type on Ethicality Perceptions

Outcome	Indirect Effect Paths	Indirect Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
1	Brand Type→Brand Satisfaction	.28***	.39	1.13
2	Brand Satisfaction→CPE	.32***	.14	.41
3	Brand Type→Brand Satisfaction→CPE	.21	.08	.36
	Direct Effect Paths	Direct Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
4	Brand Type→CPE	-.61**	-.97	-.25

Note: ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05, + p ≤ .1

Table 25 Brand Satisfaction as a Mediator on the Effect of Brand Type on Purchasing Behaviors

Outcome	Indirect Effect Paths	Indirect Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
1	Brand Type→Brand Satisfaction	.28***	.39	1.13
2	Brand Satisfaction→Purchase Intentions	.38***	.29	.60
3	Brand Type→Brand Satisfaction→Purchase Intentions	.34	.17	.54
	Direct Effect Paths	Direct Effect	Lower CI	Upper CI
4	Brand Type→Purchase Intentions	-.37	-.79	.05

Note: ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05, + p ≤ .1

6. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The dissertation's main purpose was to understand the impact of brand type (mainstream and niche), and fashion line type (slow-fashion and fast-fashion) on consumers' valuations. Additionally, the moderating role of fashion line type on the relationship between brand type and these valuations. Regarding the first research question (RQ1), the results show that brand type impacts consumers' valuations showing that consumers show better customer-based brand equity valuations and ethicality perceptions when exposed to niche brands. Hence, niche brands are gaining exposure and increased perceived ethicality when compared with mainstream brands. The findings support previous research (Chang & Chieng, 2006; Wood et al., 2018).

Concerning the second research question (RQ2), findings show that indeed fashion line type impact consumers' valuations, showing how the exposure to slow-fashion lines generate more favorable customer-based brand equity valuations, ethicality perceptions and purchasing behavior in comparison to fast-fashion lines. These findings support previous research (De Jong et al., 2017; Wood et al., 2018).

Then, to answer the third research question (RQ3), findings show that although brand type and fashion line type separately have an impact on consumers' valuations, their interaction is not significant. That is, fashion line type does not moderate the relationship between brand type and consumers' valuations. Although hypothesis 3 cannot be supported, it still gives an interesting counter-intuitive effect as findings reveal that slow-fashion line extensions can have a powerful impact on consumers' valuations when combined with niche brands, providing interesting directions. The study hereby conducted shows, however, that slow-fashion brand extensions are not strong enough to significantly impact and improve consumers' valuations of mainstream brands.

Moreover, previous research considers that customer-based brand equity is a consequent variable of satisfaction (Hellier et al., 2003). A study conducted in 2014 showed that there were different aspects of brand equity that lead to customer satisfaction (Daneshmand & Haghtalab, 2014). Some of these aspects being brand image, perceived quality, and attitudes toward the brand (brand loyalty and association). Thus, a company's brand equity greatly depends on the level of customer satisfaction (Torres & Tribó, 2011) and varies accordingly (Pappu & Quester, 2006). In addition, Tajfel's Identity Theory, 1982, supports that there is a powerful relationship between CPE and satisfaction (Uddin et al., 2021). Indeed, a company's ethical behavior will contribute to customer retention, building long-term customer relationships (Uddin et al., 2021). For instance, previous research revealed that a company's ethicality perceptions have positive indirect effects on customer loyalty, mediated by customer satisfaction (He & Li, 2010). Additionally, it is thought that consumer purchase intentions and repeated purchasing behavior are influenced by customer satisfaction (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; LaBarbera & Mazursky, 1983; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990). Reichheld & Teal (1996) considered customer satisfaction as a good indicator of purchase intentions. Furthermore, in the pre-purchase phase, customers are satisfied and more likely to buy a product or service if they perceive it to be worth more than it costs. On the other hand, consumers will decide not to make the purchase if the perceived value does not equal or exceed the price. (Dash et al., 2021). Our mediation analysis supports these previous findings (Erciş et al., 2012; Esmaeilpour & Barjoei, 2016; Torres & Tribó, 2011; Ud-din et al., 2021; Reichheld & Teal, 1996) and shows that brand satisfaction plays a mediating role on the relationship between brand type and consumers' valuations.

Overall, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of the consumers' valuations when exposed to mainstream vs. niche brands, fast-fashion vs. slow-fashion lines, and the different combinations of brand type and type of fashion line extension. From a theoretical and managerial view, a few implications can also be drawn up as further discussed.

6.1.Theoretical Implications

The present dissertation contributes to literature on consumers' valuations (Dens & De Pelsmacker, 2015; Erdem & Keane, 1996; Chang & Chieng, 2006; Esmaeilpour & Barjoei, 2016), brand type (Wood et al., 2018; Zheng et al., 2020), brand extensions (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Sheinin, 1998; Milberg et al., 2010; Lin & Choi, 2009; Keller & Aaker, 1992; Hill & Lee, 2015; Czellar, 2003; Choi et al., 2010) and brand satisfaction (LaBarbera & Mazursky, 1983; Erciş et al., 2012; Cengiz, 2010; Fornell et al., 1996, Sivadas & Baker-Prewitt, 2000; Wilson, 2002).

The findings reveal the positive impact of niche brand type on customer-based brand equity and ethicality perceptions (Chang & Chieng, 2006; Wood et al., 2018). Moreover, they confirm the positive impact of slow-fashion type on consumers' valuations (De Jong et al., 2017; Wood et al., 2018).

Regarding the moderating effect of type of fashion line extension on the relationship between brand type and consumer valuations, the findings confirm that in terms of ethicality perceptions, consumers will favor niche brands with slow-fashion lines rather than mainstream brands with slow-fashion lines. Additionally, although results lean into the direction of the niche brand with a slow-fashion line, the mainstream brand with a slow-fashion line, still has a strong effect on consumers valuations' due to the strong associations with the brand type.

Finally, this thesis expands previous literature by studying the mediating effect of satisfaction on the relationship between brand type and consumers valuations. Results confirm that brand satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between brand type and customer-based brand equity, ethicality perceptions and fully mediates the relationship between brand type and purchasing behavior. These findings are in line with Esmaeilpour & Barjoei (2016) who suggest that the more customers are satisfied, the more their valuations of the brand improve.

6.2.Managerial implications

This research provides some important implications regarding the benefits of engaging into a slow-fashion line extension as well as communicating it, on consumers' valuations. Specifically, the pairwise comparison results imply that slow-fashion line extensions should be communicated by both mainstream and niche brands as they have a powerful effect on the enhancement of CPE, and purchase intentions. On the contrary, communicating fast-fashion line extensions has a prejudicial effect on these valuations.

Additionally, this study provides an insight on the favorable individual impact of a niche brand type on customer-based brand equity and CPE. Besides, and although, providing a counter-intuitive effect to the current study, niche brands, with less brand awareness, should consider the highly important impact of slow-fashion line extensions in further improving consumers' valuations of them.

Additionally, the mediating analysis conducted allowed to understand brand satisfaction's mediating role in the observed relationship between brand type and consumers' valuations. Indeed, brands can improve consumers' valuations by focusing on brand satisfaction through two dimensions: convenience and trendiness. This research suggests that brands should put an emphasis on satisfaction, focusing on convenience and trendiness of their offer, to enhance consumers' valuations'.

To conclude, the present study shows that in the fashion industry context, consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of choosing slow-fashion options and that brand satisfaction, if reached, can be an important driver of consumers' positive valuations.

7. Limitations and future research

Despite providing interesting academic and managerial insights on the effect of type of fashion line extension on the consumer behavior towards the different types of brands, this research includes some limitations and gaps to explore for future research.

To begin with, the research instrument that has been utilized, the online surveys give a poor amount of control over the respondents, their responses, and the circumstances of survey completion (Ilieva et al., 2002). Moreover, it is difficult to predict the level of engagement, concentration, attentiveness, and devotion that consumers will devote to the questionnaire to provide truthful answers. Additionally, most of the participants in this research were between the ages of 20 and 30, which is for most university students. Therefore, taking other generations and target groups into consideration to get a broader viewpoint is a suggestion as the concept of sustainability has considerably evolved through time. The difference between various generations and their consumption behavior regarding slow-fashion vs. fast-fashion and mainstream vs. niche brands may be particularly interesting to investigate about the research topic.

The fact that social media platforms were primarily used for distribution of the pilot and main study online surveys is another limitation of this research. There is little enthusiasm among participants to spare some of their time in the surveys because of the high exposure to online surveys on these platforms. As a result, the sample size was somewhat modest, but it was confirmed that a significant portion of the younger generations, participated in the research at a rate of almost 74%. Once again, further investigation is advised to draw broader generalizations for the population since these facts could indicate a biased perspective on the issue.

Another limitation of this study could be that Mango is more famous than Nisolo causing a "biased effect" as explained in the literature about associations between parent brand and brand extension. Thus, according to Czellar (2003), when a new extended product is released, consumers evaluate it based on how they feel about the original brand and the category of extension. If a customer is unfamiliar with the parent brand, they will evaluate the new product extension based only on the type of extension they have previously used (Sheinin, 1998; Czellar, 2003).

Furthermore, it is worth outlining that there is often a common inconsistency between perceptions and attitudes and the actual consumption behavior of consumers (Shaw et al., 2015). The literature frequently refers to this problem as the ethical attitude-behavior gap (Shaw et al., 2016; Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018) which draws participants to answer the survey questions based on their intentions rather than on their actual behavior. As this might have influenced the outcomes of the study, further research, such as field experiments, should be done to examine actual consumption behavior.

8. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Main Study Survey

Dear participants,

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. This questionnaire is part of my master thesis. The survey should take **approximately 5 minutes** to complete. There are **no right or wrong answers,** and the data will be kept **anonymous and confidential**. Therefore, I would like to ask you to please answer honestly.

If you have questions or feedback regarding the survey, please contact: s-cmnakbi@ucp.pt.

Your contribution is highly appreciated!

Thank you.

Cyrine

Block 1 Moment 1

MANGO

This is Mango, a fashion brand that sells clothing, shoes and accessories for women, men, and children.

Familiarity

Q1 On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
I have seen or heard about Mango (1)							
I know the products that Mango offers (2)							

Q2 On a scale from 1 (not familiar at all) to 7 (very much familiar), please rate your **level of familiarity** with Mango.

	1. Not familiar at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Very much familiar (7)
How familiar are you with Mango? (1)	○	○		○		○	

CPE

Q3 Please indicate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
Mango respects moral norms (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mango is honest and transparent (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mango is a socially and environmentally responsible brand (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mango avoids damaging behavior at all costs (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Buying from Mango is considered a sustainable choice (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mango will make a decision only after careful consideration of the potential positive or negative consequences for all those involved (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Purchase Intentions

Q4 How likely are you to purchase from Mango?

Extremely unlikely (1) unlikely (2) Somewhat Unlikely (3) Neither unlikely nor likely (4) Somewhat likely (5) likely (6) Extremely Likely (7)

Block 2 Moment 2: Mainstream/fast

MANGO

Mango is a leading fashion brand that produces all types of clothes and accessories. They have all sorts of categories: men, women and, kids.
Mango releases around 20 different collections every year. The clothes are very fashionable as the brand makes sure to follow the latest industry trends, while being affordable. The brand has presence all over the world with nearly 110 stores.
Mango values fair treatment of people, animals, and the planet along the way.

Based on the new information, please answer the following questions.

Q5 How do you perceive this brand to be?

Very much slow-fashion (1) Slow-fashion (2) Somewhat slow-fashion (3) Neither slow-fashion nor fast-fashion (4) Somewhat fast-fashion (5) Fast-fashion (6) Very much fast-fashion (7)

Q6 What type of positioning do you perceive this brand to have?

Very much niche (1) Niche (2) Somewhat niche (3) Neither niche nor mainstream (4) Somewhat mainstream (5) Mainstream (6) Very much mainstream (7)

Q7 How sustainable do you perceive this brand to be?

Very sustainable (1) Sustainable (2) Somewhat sustainable (3) Neither sustainable nor unsustainable (4) Somewhat unsustainable (5) Unsustainable (6) Very unsustainable (7)

Familiarity

Q8 On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), please rate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
I have seen or heard about this brand (1)							
I know the products that this brand offers (2)							

Q9 On a scale from 1 (not familiar at all) to 7 (very much familiar), please rate your **level of familiarity** with Mango.

	1. Not familiar at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Very familiar (7)
How familiar are you with this brand? (1)							

CPE

Q10 Please indicate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
This brand respects moral norms (1)							
This brand is honest and transparent (2)							
This brand is socially and environmentally responsible (3)							
This brand avoids damaging behavior at all costs (4)							
Buying from this brand is considered a							

sustainable choice (5)	
This brand will make a decision only after careful consideration of the potential positive or negative consequences for all those involved (6)	○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Attitudes Toward the Brand

Q11 Please indicate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
This brand's products fit the brand's pro-environmental concerns (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand's image fits the brand's pro-environmental concerns (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The profile of this brand's customers fits the brand's pro-environmental concerns (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Brand Affect & Image

Q12 Please indicate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
My opinion of this brand is favorable (1)	○	○	○	○			○
My opinion of this brand is good (2)	○	○	○	○			○
My opinion of this brand is positive (3)	○	○	○	○			○
This brand is harmful (4)	○	○	○	○			○

This brand is trendy (5)					
This brand is conscious (6)					
This brand is convenient (7)					
This brand is purposeful (8)					

Attitudes Toward the Brand Extension

Q13 Please indicate **your level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
This brand line's products fit with efforts to consider environmental issues (1)							
The image of this brand line fits with efforts to consider environmental issues (2)							
The consumers of this brand line fit with efforts to consider environmental issues (3)							
This brand line fits with my idea and image of the brand (4)							
This brand line conveys the same impression as the brand (5)							
This brand line is a natural extension of the brand (6)							
My idea of this brand line is favorable (7)							

Quality Perceptions

Q14 Please indicate **your level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly Disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly Agree (7)

"I would recommend this brand to other people" (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"This brand products are of good quality" (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"The materials used in this brand products are of good quality" (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"The reliability of this brand is very high" (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"I expect this brand's products to last long" (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Purchase Intentions

Q15 How likely are you to purchase from this brand?

Extremely unlikely (1) unlikely (2) Somewhat Unlikely (3) Neither unlikely nor likely (4) Somewhat likely (5) likely (6) Extremely Likely (7)

Block 3 Moment 2: Mainstream/slow

Mango is a leading fashion brand that produces all types of clothes and accessories. They have all sorts of categories: men, women and, kids.
Mango is committed to more sustainable practices and is introducing a new line called "Mango cares". The new line has less collections than the regular line; only 2 per year (a winter and a summer collection). The pieces are timeless and more durable.
Sustainable measures are taken across raw materials integrity, process & manufacturing, packaging & distribution, and circularity/post use product lifecycle. The prices of the sustainable line "Mango cares" are higher than the regular line as the people working for and with the brand are paid 100% living wages. Mango values fair treatment of people, animals and the planet along the way.
Based on the new information, please answer the following questions.

Q16 How do you perceive this brand to be?

Very much slow-fashion (1) Slow-fashion (2) Somewhat slow-fashion (3) Neither slow-fashion nor fast-fashion (4) Somewhat fast-fashion (5) Fast-fashion (6) Very much fast-fashion (7)

Q17 What type of positioning do you perceive this brand to have?

Very much niche (1) Niche (2) Somewhat niche (3) Neither niche nor mainstream (4) Somewhat mainstream (5) Mainstream (6) Very much mainstream (7)

Q18 How sustainable do you perceive this brand to be?

Very sustainable (1) Sustainable (2) Somewhat sustainable (3) Neither sustainable nor unsustainable (4) Somewhat unsustainable (5) Unsustainable (6) Very unsustainable (7)

Familiarity

Q19 On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), please rate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
I have seen or heard about this brand (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I know the products that this brand offers (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q20 On a scale from 1 (not familiar at all) to 7 (very much familiar), please rate your **level of familiarity** with Mango.

	1. Not familiar at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
How familiar are you with this brand? (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

CPE

Q21 Please indicate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
This brand respects moral norms (1)	○	○	○	○	○	(	○
This brand is honest and transparent (2)	○	○	○	○	○	(	○
This brand is socially and environmentally responsible (3)	○	○	○	○	○	(	○

This brand avoids damaging behavior at all costs (4)							
Buying from this brand is considered a sustainable choice (5)							
This brand will make a decision only after careful consideration of the potential positive or negative consequences for all those involved (6)							

Attitudes Toward the Brand

Q22 Please indicate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
This brand's products fit the brand's pro-environmental concerns (1)							
This brand's image fits the brand's pro-environmental concerns (2)							
The profile of this brand's customers fits the brand's pro-environmental concerns (3)							

Brand Affect & Image

Q23 Please indicate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
My opinion of this brand is favorable (1)							
My opinion of this brand is good (2)							

My opinion of this brand is positive (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand is harmful (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand is trendy (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand is conscious (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand is convenient (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand is purposeful (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○

Attitudes Toward the Brand Extension

Q24 Please indicate **your level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
This brand line's products fit with efforts to consider environmental issues (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The image of this brand line fits with efforts to consider environmental issues (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The consumers of this brand line fit with efforts to consider environmental issues (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand line fits with my idea and image of the brand (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand line conveys the same impression as the brand (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand line is a natural extension of the brand (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My idea of this brand line is favorable (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Quality Perceptions

Q25 Please indicate **your level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly Disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly Agree (7)
"I would recommend this brand to other people" (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"This brand products are of good quality" (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"The materials used in this brand products are of good quality" (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"The reliability of this brand is very high" (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"I expect this brand's products to last long" (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Purchase Intentions

Q26 How likely are you to purchase from this brand?

Extremely unlikely (1) unlikely (2) Somewhat Unlikely (3) Neither unlikely nor likely (4) Somewhat likely (5) likely (6) Extremely Likely (7)

Block 4 Moment 1

NISOLO

This is Nisolo a fashion brand that sells shoes and accessories for women and men that are made in collaboration with artisans in Peru.

Familiarity

Q27 On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
I have seen or heard about Nisolo (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I know the products that Nisolo offers (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q28 On a scale from 1 (not familiar at all) to 7 (very much familiar), please rate your **level of familiarity** with Mango.

	1. Not familiar at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Very much familiar (7)
How familiar are you with Nisolo? (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

CPE

Q29 Please indicate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
Nisolo respects moral norms (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Nisolo is honest and transparent (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Nisolo is a socially and environmentally responsible brand (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Nisolo avoids damaging behavior at all costs (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Buying from Nisolo is considered a sustainable choice (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Nisolo will make a decision only after careful consideration of the potential positive or negative consequences for all those involved (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Purchase Intentions

Q30 How likely are you to purchase from Nisolo?

Extremely unlikely (1) unlikely (2) Somewhat Unlikely (3) Neither unlikely nor likely (4) Somewhat likely (5) likely (6) Extremely Likely (7)

Block 5 Moment 2: Niche/Fast

N I S O L O

Nisolo is a fashion brand that offers shoes, chukka boots, bags, jewelry, and accessories in collaboration with local artisans in Peru.
Nisolo releases around 20 different collections every year. The clothes are very fashionable as the brand makes sure to follow the latest industry trends, while being affordable. The brand has presence all over the world with nearly 110 stores.
Nisolo values fair treatment of people, animals, and the planet along the way.
Based on the new information, please answer the following questions.

Q31 How do you perceive this brand to be?

Very much slow-fashion (1) Slow-fashion (2) Somewhat slow-fashion (3) Neither slow-fashion nor fast-fashion (4) Somewhat fast-fashion (5) Fast-fashion (6) Very much fast-fashion (7)

Q32 What type of positioning do you perceive this brand to have?

Very much niche (1) Niche (2) Somewhat niche (3) Neither niche nor mainstream (4) Somewhat mainstream (5) Mainstream (6) Very much mainstream (7)

Q33 How sustainable do you perceive this brand to be?

Very sustainable (1) Sustainable (2) Somewhat sustainable (3) Neither sustainable nor unsustainable (4) Somewhat unsustainable (5) Unsustainable (6) Very unsustainable (7)

Familiarity

Q34 On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), please rate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
I have seen or heard about this brand (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I know the products that this brand offers (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q35 On a scale from 1 (not familiar at all) to 7 (very much familiar), please rate your **level of familiarity** with Mango.

	1. Not familiar at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
How familiar are you with this brand? (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

CPE

Q36 Please indicate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
This brand respects moral norms (1)	○	○	○	○	○		○
This brand is honest and transparent (2)	○	○	○	○	○		○
This brand is socially and environmentally responsible (3)	○	○	○	○	○		○
This brand avoids damaging behavior at all costs (4)	○	○	○	○	○		○

Buying from this brand is considered a sustainable choice (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand will make a decision only after careful consideration of the potential positive or negative consequences for all those involved (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○

Attitudes Toward the Brand

Q37 Please indicate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
This brand's products fit the brand's pro-environmental concerns (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand's image fits the brand's pro-environmental concerns (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The profile of this brand's customers fits the brand's pro-environmental concerns (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Brand Affect & Image

Q38 Please indicate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
My opinion of this brand is favorable (1)	○	○	○		○		○
My opinion of this brand is good (2)	○	○	○		○		○
My opinion of this brand is positive (3)	○	○	○		○		○

This brand is harmful (4)	○	○	○	○	○
This brand is trendy (5)	○	○	○	○	○
This brand is conscious (6)	○	○	○	○	○
This brand is convenient (7)	○	○	○	○	○
This brand is purposeful (8)	○	○	○	○	○

Attitudes Toward the Brand Extension

Q39 Please indicate **your level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
This brand line's products fit with efforts to consider environmental issues (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The image of this brand line fits with efforts to consider environmental issues (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The consumers of this brand line fit with efforts to consider environmental issues (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand line fits with my idea and image of the brand (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand line conveys the same impression as the brand (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand line is a natural extension of the brand (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My idea of this brand line is favorable (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Quality Perceptions

Q40 Please indicate **your level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly Disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly Agree (7)
"I would recommend this brand to other people" (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"This brand products are of good quality" (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"The materials used in this brand products are of good quality" (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"The reliability of this brand is very high" (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"I expect this brand's products to last long" (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Purchase Intentions

Q41 How likely are you to purchase from this brand?

Extremely unlikely (1) unlikely (2) Somewhat Unlikely (3) Neither unlikely nor likely (4) Somewhat likely (5) likely (6) Extremely Likely (7)

Block 6 Moment 2: Niche/Slow

Nisolo is a fashion brand that offers shoes, chukka boots, bags, jewelry, and accessories in collaboration with local artisans in Peru.
Nisolo is committed to more sustainable practices and is introducing a new line called "Nisolo cares". The new line has less collections, only 2 per year (a winter and a summer collection). The pieces are timeless and more durable.
Sustainable measures are taken across raw materials integrity, process & manufacturing, packaging & distribution, and circularity/post use product lifecycle. The prices of the sustainable line "Nisolo cares" are higher than the regular line as the people working for and with the brand are paid 100% living wages.
Nisolo values fair treatment of people, animals, and the planet along the way.
Based on the new information, please answer the following questions.

Q42 How do you perceive this brand to be?

Very much slow-fashion (1) Slow-fashion (2) Somewhat slow-fashion (3) Neither slow-fashion nor fast-fashion (4) Somewhat fast-fashion (5) Fast-fashion (6) Very much fast-fashion (7)

Q43 What type of positioning do you perceive this brand to have?

Very much niche (1) Niche (2) Somewhat niche (3) Neither niche nor mainstream (4) Somewhat mainstream (5) Mainstream (6) Very much mainstream (7)

Q44 How sustainable do you perceive this brand to be?

Very sustainable (1) Sustainable (2) Somewhat sustainable (3) Neither sustainable nor unsustainable (4) Somewhat unsustainable (5) Unsustainable (6) Very unsustainable (7)

Familiarity

Q45 On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), please rate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
I have seen or heard about this brand (1)							
I know the products that this brand offers (2)							

Q46 On a scale from 1 (not familiar at all) to 7 (very much familiar), please rate your **level of familiarity** with the brand.

	1. Not familiar at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Very Familiar (7)
How familiar are you with this brand? (1)							

CPE

Q47 Please indicate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
This brand respects moral norms (1)							
This brand is honest and transparent (2)							
This brand is socially and environmentally responsible (3)							

This brand avoids damaging behavior at all costs (4)	○	○	○	○
Buying from this brand is considered a sustainable choice (5)	○	○	○	○
This brand will make a decision only after careful consideration of the potential positive or negative consequences for all those involved (6)	○	○	○	○

Attitudes Toward the Brand

Q48 Please indicate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
This brand's products fit the brand's pro-environmental concerns (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand's image fits the brand's pro-environmental concerns (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The profile of this brand's customers fits the brand's pro-environmental concerns (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Brand Affect & Image

Q49 Please indicate your **level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
My opinion of this brand is favorable (1)	○	○	○		○		○
My opinion of this brand is good (2)	○	○	○		○		○

My opinion of this brand is positive (3)	○	○	○	○	○
This brand is harmful (4)	○	○	○	○	○
This brand is trendy (5)	○	○	○	○	○
This brand is conscious (6)	○	○	○	○	○
This brand is convenient (7)	○	○	○	○	○
This brand is purposeful (8)	○	○	○	○	○

Attitudes Toward the Brand Extension

Q50 Please indicate **your level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly agree (7)
This brand line's products fit with efforts to consider environmental issues (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The image of this brand line fits with efforts to consider environmental issues (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The consumers of this brand line fit with efforts to consider environmental issues (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand line fits with my idea and image of the brand (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand line conveys the same impression as the brand (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand line is a natural extension of the brand (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My idea of this brand line is favorable (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Quality Perceptions

Q51 Please indicate **your level of agreement** with the following statements:

	1. Strongly Disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	7. Strongly Agree (7)
"I would recommend this brand to other people" (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"This brand products are of good quality" (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"The materials used in this brand products are of good quality" (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"The reliability of this brand is very high" (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"I expect this brand's products to last long" (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Purchase Intentions

Q52 How likely are you to purchase from this brand?

Extremely unlikely (1) unlikely (2) Somewhat Unlikely (3) Neither unlikely nor likely (4) Somewhat likely (5) likely (6) Extremely Likely (7)

Block 7 Demographics

Now, please answer some demographics about yourself.

Q53 What is your gender?

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

Q54 What is your age?

○ Under 20 years old (1)

○ Between 20 and 30 years old (2) Between 30 and 40 years old (3) Above 40 (4)

○ Prefer not to answer (5)

Q55 What is your occupation?

○ High school student (1)

○ University student (2) Employed (3) Unemployed (4)

○ Retired (5)

Q56 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

○ Less than high school (1)

○ High school (2) Bachelor degree (3) Master degree (4) Doctorate (5)

○ Professional degree (6)

Q57 Where do you come from?

▼ Afghanistan (1) ... Zimbabwe (1357)

Q58 What is your current annual income?

○ Under €10,000 (1)

○ €10,000 - €19,999 (2) €20,000 - €29,999 (3) €30,000 - €39,999 (4) €40,000 - €49,999 (5) €50,000 - €74,999 (6) €75,000 - €99,999 (7) €100,000 - €150,000 (8) Over €150,000 (9)

○ Don´t know. (10)

End of survey

Thank you for your time spent taking this survey. Your response has been recorded.

Appendix 2: Familiarity Measure

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

1. I have seen or heard about this brand
2. I know the products that this brand offers

Please rate your level of familiarity with the brand:

How familiar are you with this brand?

Appendix 3: Attitudes Toward the Brand Measure (Customer-based Brand Equity Dimensions)

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements

1. This brand's products fit the brand's pro-environmental concerns
2. This brand's image fits the brand's pro-environmental concerns
3. The profile of this brand's customers fits the brand's pro-environmental concerns

Appendix 4: Attitudes Toward the Brand Extension Measure (Customer-based Brand Equity Dimensions)

1. This brand line's products fit with efforts to consider environmental issues
2. The image of this brand line fits with efforts to consider environmental issues
3. The consumers of this brand line fit with efforts to consider environmental issues
4. This brand line fits with my idea and image of the brand
5. This brand line conveys the same impression as the brand
6. This brand line is a natural extension of the brand
7. My idea of this brand line is favorable

Appendix 5: Brand Affect & Image Measure (Customer-based Brand Equity Dimensions)

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements

1. My opinion of this brand is favorable
2. My opinion of this brand is good
3. My opinion of this brand is positive
4. This brand is harmful
5. This brand is trendy
6. This brand is conscious
7. This brand is convenient
8. This brand is purposeful

Appendix 6: Quality Perceptions Measure (Customer-based Brand Equity Dimensions)

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements
"I would recommend this brand to other people"

"This brand products are of good quality"

"The materials used in this brand products are of good quality"

"The reliability of this brand is very high"

"I expect this brand's products to last long"

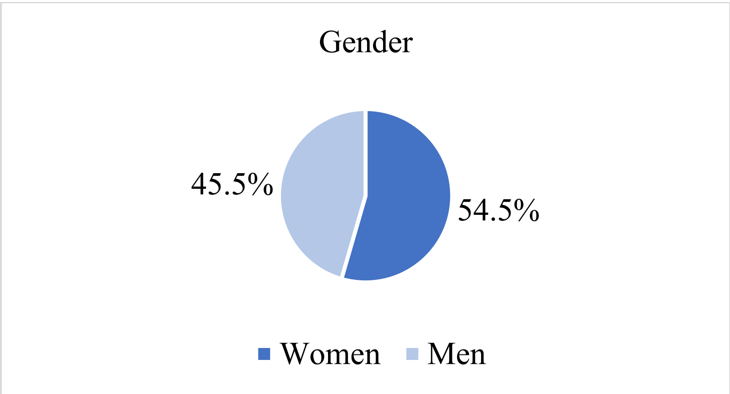
Appendix 7: CPE Measure (Customer-based Brand Equity Dimensions)

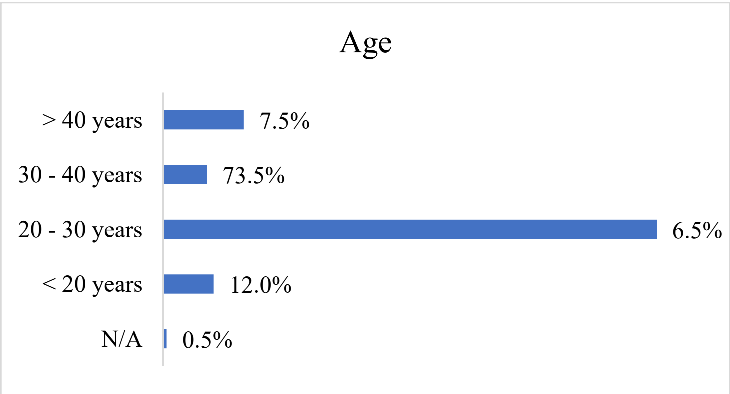
Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements

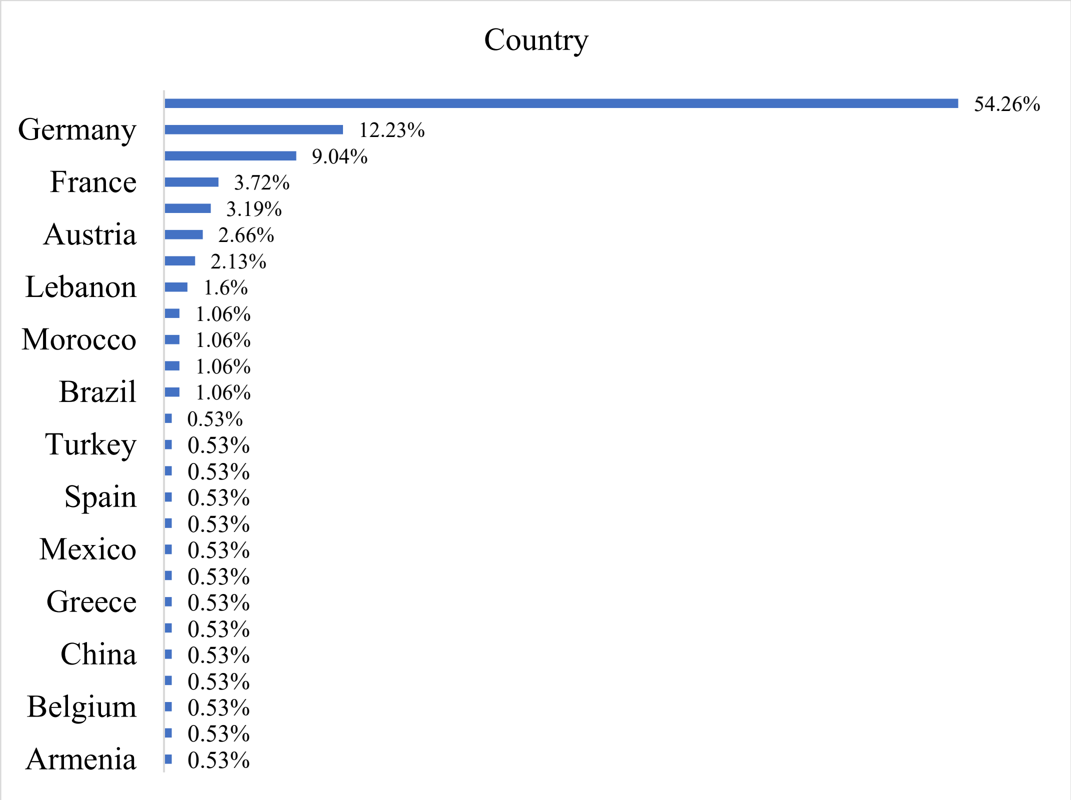
1. This brand respects moral norms
2. This brand is honest and transparent
3. This brand is socially and environmentally responsible
4. This brand avoids damaging behavior at all costs
5. Buying from this brand is considered a sustainable choice
6. This brand will make a decision only after careful consideration of the potential positive or negative consequences for all those involved

Appendix 8: Sample Characterization

Main survey sample characterization






Country
Germany
France
Austria
Lebanon
Morocco
Brazil
Turkey
Spain
Mexico
Greece
China
Belgium
Armenia
54.26%
12.23%
9.04%
3.72%
3.19%
2.66%
2.13%
1.6%
1.06%
1.06%
1.06%
1.06%
0.53%
0.53%
0.53%
0.53%
0.53%
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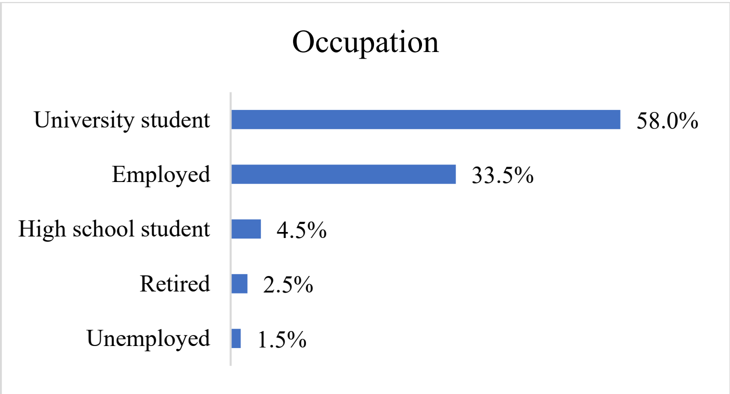
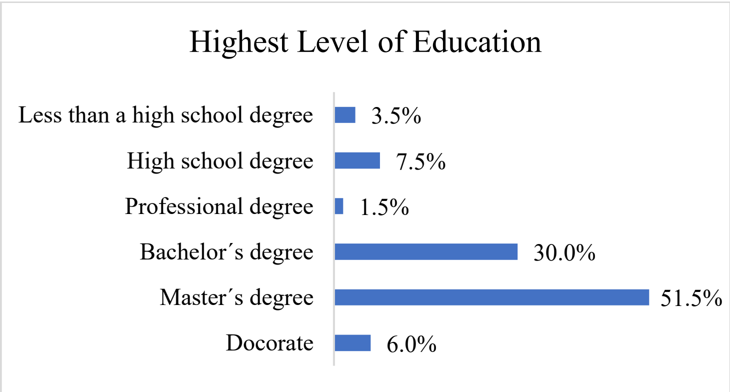
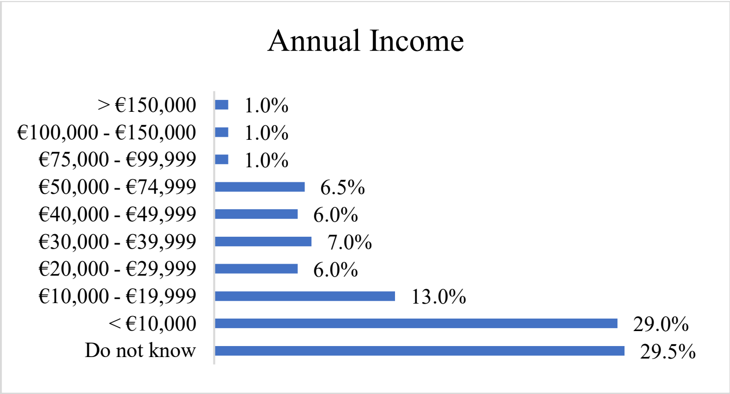
0.53%
0.53%
0.53%
0.53%


Occupation
University student 58.0%
Employed 33.5%
High school student 4.5%
Retired 2.5%
Unemployed 1.5%


Highest Level of Education
Less than a high school degree 3.5%
High school degree 7.5%
Professional degree 1.5%
Bachelor´s degree 30.0%
Master´s degree 51.5%
Docorate 6.0%


Annual Income
> €150,000
€100,000 - €150,000
€75,000 - €99,999
€50,000 - €74,999
€40,000 - €49,999
€30,000 - €39,999
€20,000 - €29,999
€10,000 - €19,999
< €10,000
Do not know
1.0%
1.0%
1.0%
6.5%
6.0%
7.0%
6.0%
13.0%
29.0%
29.5%

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