Handelshøyskolen BI

GRA 19703 Master Thesis

Thesis Master of Science 100% - W

Predefinert informasjon

Startdato:	09-01-2023 09:00 CET	**Termin:**	202310
Sluttdato:	03-07-2023 12:00 CEST	**Vurderingsform:**	Norsk 6-trinns skala (A-F)
Eksamensform:	T		
Flowkode:	202310||11184||IN00||W||T		
Intern sensor:	(Anonymisert)		

Deltaker

Navn:	**Frida Eikeseth og Tianyi Zhu**

Informasjon fra deltaker

Tittel *:	**Underestimated ABG in Sustainable Fashion: Recalling Brand Names Alters the Predictive Power of Attitude on Purchase**
Navn på veileder *:	**Erik Olson**

Inneholder besvarelsen konfidensielt materiale?:	Nei	**Kan besvarelsen offentliggjøres?:**	Ja

Gruppe

Gruppenavn:	(Anonymisert)
Gruppenummer:	256
Andre medlemmer i gruppen:	

Study Programme: Master of Strategic Marketing Management 2021-2023

Underestimated ABG in Sustainable Fashion: Recalling Brand Names Alters the Predictive Power of Attitude on Purchase

Supervisor: Erik Olson
Hand-in date: July 3rd 2023

Acknowledgement

We wish to thank our supervisor Erik Olson for his guidance through this master thesis process. We are truly grateful for Olson´s investment in our thesis, seeing the potential in our topic, framework, method and contributions, providing us with constructive suggestions and expertise.

Oslo, July 3rd, 2023

Abstract

Whether attitude is a good predictor of purchase has been widely discussed in sustainable literature. With an aim to examine if the predictive power of attitude to behaviour is exaggerated in current sustainable fashion consumption literature, this study employs the SOR model to investigate the impact of brand name recalling status (S) on the predicting relationship between green trust (O) and purchase intention (R). A linear regression model has been tested among three fashion brand-product configurations with a sample of 109 Norwegian respondents. The results suggest that recalling a specific brand name reduces the predicting power of green trust toward purchase intention. Different patterns were found between sustainable fashion brands and fast fashion brands. This study provides insights for green researchers on improving research design to attain more precise and reliable outcomes.

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1.0 Introduction

Since 1990, the fashion industry has more than doubled in size, reaching a value of 2.5 trillion dollars in 2019 (McKinsey, 2019). According to the United Nations Environment Programme, the fashion industry generates 92 million tonnes of textile waste annually, making it the third most polluting industry worldwide. It contributes to 10 percent of annual carbon emissions, 20 percent of global wastewater, incurs 100 billion dollars in losses due to underutilization and lack of recycling, and accounts for 9 percent of annual microplastic pollution in the oceans (Adamkiewicz et al., 2022). In response to these environmental damages, the fashion industry has made some changes towards adopting more sustainable business models.

Although “responsible consumerism” was announced as one of six global consumer trends in 2019 by Forbes, the transition towards sustainable consumption in the market is progressing at a sluggish pace (Kim and Oh, 2020). Numerous studies have been conducted to understand the shift from mass consumption to green consumption and consumers' attitudes towards sustainability actions. One important topic in sustainable fashion consumer behaviour research is the attitude-behaviour-gap (ABG), which is defined as the phenomenon of consumers holding positive attitudes towards green fashion consumption, but this intention does not always translate into actual purchase behaviour (Ray and Nayak, 2023).

The studies on the ABG have discussed the barriers to actual purchasing behaviour, but these discussions have been insufficient (Ray and Nayak, 2023). We believe that the results of attitude-behaviour studies themselves are biased and not reflecting the reality due to two factors: 1) Overestimating bias in the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, which result from the use of fictional brands in experiments, and 2) Excessive reliance on abstract attitudes instead of domain-specific attitudes, resulting in unstable and mixed results. Therefore, this study aims to achieve the following objectives: 1) Investigate how a specific brand name or unnamed brand influence the relationship between consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards sustainable fashion consumption, 2)

Examine the predicting power of green trust towards behaviour instead of traditional attitudinal variables, and 3) Repeat above analysis in three brand-product combinations (sustainable fashion products, fast fashion green products, fast fashion regular products) scenarios to identify different patterns.

The study adopts the SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) framework, with brand names recalling status as stimuli, green trust (GT) as the organism, and purchase intention (PI) as the response. A sample of 109 participants was collected through a survey. A paired-sample T-test was used to identify differences of GT across brand names recalling status, and a linear regression analysis was conducted to demonstrate how PI is predicted by GT under different stimuli.

Our findings indicate that the brand names recalling status has an impact on the explanatory power of attitude in predicting Purchase behaviour. Thus, we suggest that the use of fictional brand names or vague brand categories in research designs may yield biased results. Furthermore, we confirmed the weak predictive power of GT for fast fashion brands purchasing behaviour and highlighted the predictive significance of GT for sustainable fashion brands purchases. We argued that GT may be a better predictor of behaviour than general attitudes. Our conclusions also provide practical recommendations for the development of sustainable initiatives for fashion brands.

The paper is structured as follows; the literature review section briefly introduces existing ABG findings, identifies gaps in sustainable fashion literature, and proposes hypotheses within the framework of SOR. The methodology section outlines the process of research design, data collection and data preparation. In the results section, all important statistical findings are presented. The discussion section interprets the findings, provides theoretical and managerial implications. In the final section, limitations and future research directions are discussed.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 Attitude-behaviour gap (ABG) in sustainable fashion

Prior studies have explored the ABG mainly in ethical purchasing contexts (Bocti et al., 2021). Recent research also demonstrated the existence of ABG in sustainable consumption, when consumers who have positive attitudes towards sustainability often fail to convert those attitudes into actual purchasing behaviour (Trudel and Cotte, 2009; Auger and Devinney, 2007; Gatersleben, Steg, and Vlek, 2002; Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002; Young et al., 2010; White, Habib and Hardisty, 2019).

The literature on environmental consumption has yielded mixed results regarding the relationship between consumer attitudes and behaviour, while some studies have found a positive association (Arbuthnot, 1977; Kellgren and Wood, 1986) others have identified weak relationships (Mainieri et al., 1997; Tanner and Kast, 2003; Webster, 1975; Wicker, 1969). Despite holding pro-environmental attitudes, individuals may fail to translate other attitudinal variables to green buying behaviour, such as intentions to recycle, concern about car pollution, and willingness to pay more for environmental-friendly products (Gupta and Ogden, 2009).

ABG also exists in sustainable fashion consumption, however, only a handful of research has been done to understand the reason ABG in this field (Jacobs et al., 2018; Bray et al., 2010; McNeill and Moore, 2015). One popular explanation frames ABG as a social dilemma, involving a conflict between collective social gain and self-interest (Gupta and Ogden, 2009). Personal circumstances and hindering factors like price, availability, transparency, image, information scarcity, inertia, and consumption habits impact the hesitation to purchase sustainable fashion (Ray and Nayak, 2023; Solomon and Rabolt, 2004). Additionally, consumers are often unwilling to compromise on the primary functional values of fashion products, such as aesthetics and novelty, which are more closely associated with conventional fashion products (Niinimäki, 2010; Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006). Another explanation is that scholars fail to measure actual behaviour rather than extensively using behavioural intention (Carrington et al., 2010).

Although previous research has made valuable contributions to understanding ABG and providing recommendations, there are still gaps in academia's understanding of this phenomenon. Firstly, little attention has been given to the impact of stimuli on the accuracy of attitude measurement, as some studies may yield distorted results by employing fictional brands in their research (e.g. Jung et al., 2020), which is an unintentional stimuli that can potentially cause results deviating from reality. The most frequently used theoretical frameworks in green consumption studies are behavioural theories (e.g., Paul, Modi and Patel, 2016), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (e.g., Paul, Modi and Patel, 2016), and the Norm Activation Model (Bamberg and Möser, 2007). The common weakness of these frameworks is overlooking the effects of external stimuli on magnitude of predictive variable performance. To date, no research has examined how such brand stimuli impact the results. Secondly, while many studies in the field of sustainable fashion consumer behaviour predict behaviour using abstract attitudes such as environmental concerns, environmental knowledge, and support for sustainable fashion (Ray and Nayak, 2023; Muposhi et al., 2021; Razzaq, 2018), only a few studies identify domain-specific attitudes in later cognitive processes, which may have stronger predictive power for behaviour.

To fill in the two research gaps, the SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model is used as the main framework of this paper. The model was first proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), who explained that an external stimulus (S) results in internal cognitive and affective states (O), thus favouring a behavioural response (R), according to Zhu et al. (2020). In this study, the recalling status of brand names (recalling a favourite brand name vs. recalling an unnamed brand) serves as the external stimulus, addressing the first identified flaw. GT representing a behaviour-specific attitude, is selected as the Organism construct, addressing the second flaw. The Response construct is represented by PI. Further details on the development of these constructs will be discussed in the following section.

2.2 SOR Model

The SOR model has been frequently employed to elucidate consumer behaviour in various studies (Chang et al., 2015; Arora et al., 2020; Barbu et al., 2021), Recently, the model has been applied in the context of sustainable fashion retail, where socio-environmental responsibility serves as a relevant stimulus. Its impact on consumer perception and value, trust and satisfaction in that study, has been discussed (Dang et al. 2020; Dabija et al., 2022).

2.2.1 Stimuli: Brand Name Recalling Status

The stimulus usually refers to attributes (e.g. product features, brand reputation, promotion, price, layout, music, services) that are present in the surroundings (Park and Lennon, 2009). Mostafa and Kasamani (2020) utilized the SOR model, using brand experience as stimuli (S), and examined its influence on brand passion, self-brand connection, brand affection (O), and brand loyalty (R). Brand name recalling can be seen as recalling of the previous brand experience and brand knowledge related to a specific brand, which has been shown to affect consumer attitudes towards sustainable fashion purchases (Ray and Nayak, 2023). Therefore, whether consumers recall a specific brand name or not can be seen as effective stimuli.

2.2.2 Organism: Green Trust

Trust is widely described as a belief or attitude of great importance in social business interactions. Green trust, specifically, refers to a willingness to depend on an object based on its perceived credibility, benevolence, and competence in terms of environmental performance (Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Marmat, 2023; Chen, 2010). As a cognition status, trust simplifies decision-making and instills confidence in consumers. GT has been approved to have a directly significant impact on purchasing (Dhir et al., 2021; Liu et al, 2020; Ray and Nayak, 2023; Blas Riesgo et al., 2023). When consumers distrust a brand´s sustainability efforts, it becomes a barrier to purchasing SF from that brand (Han, Seo and Ko, 2017; Ray and Nayak, 2023). Therefore, as a cognitive construct that has an

impact on consumer behaviour response, GT is chosen as an organism construct in this study. Another reason to choose GT rather than other attitudes is because it can be seen as a good domain-specific cognition, distinct from abstract cognition.

The distinction between these two concepts is well exemplified in Homer and Kahle's (1988) study. They found that specific values, such as fun and enjoyment (abstract cognition), were more strongly associated with attitudes toward the nutrition of natural food (domain-specific cognition), and these attitudes subsequently influenced shopping behaviours regarding natural food (specific behaviour) (Hong and Kang, 2019). One explanation of the occasional failure of attitude predicting behaviour is that most of the studies employed abstract attitude, such as attitude to protect the environment, which is a vague notion held by consumers (Newman et al., 2012; Peattie, 1999; Song and Ko, 2017, p. 264). To some extent, such attitudes resemble values, as defined by Rokeach (1973) as enduring beliefs representing a specific mode of conduct or personally preferred end-state (Homer and Kahle, 1988, p. 638). According to value-attitude-behaviour theory, value must be translated first into midrange attitudes, which is the mediator, then subsequently influence behaviour (Homer and Kahle, 1988). The importance of the latter is evident even among environmentally conscious consumers who prioritize product sustainability, as they may not necessarily believe in all products that claim to be green and are willing to pay for them, especially in the fashion industry, which is often suspected of greenwashing practices (Adamkiewicz et al., 2022).

Therefore, we believe GT as a cognitive attitude should be measured against a specific object, a fashion brand in this case. This construct we suggest can better predict behaviour towards that specific brand, compared to abstract cognition such as environmental concerns.

2.2.3 Response: Purchase Intention

According to the SOR paradigm, consumer reactions correspond to either approaching or avoiding behaviours, which result from emotional and cognitive states (Eroglu et al., 2001; Park and Lennon, 2009). PI refers to the degree of willingness and inclination of customers to purchase a product or service and serves as a direct determinant and predictor of actual approaching behaviour

toward the target product (Laroche et al., 2001; Paço and Lavrador, 2017; Singh and Verma, 2017; Vittersø and Tangeland, 2015; Yazdanpanah and Forouzani, 2015; Roh et al., 2022). PI has been widely used as a response in SOR in different fields such as game, local dairy and restaurant (Mkedder, Bakir and Lachachi, 2022; Anubha and Jain, 2022; Sari, 2022). Therefore, PI can be used as a good response in this study.

Stimulus	Organism	Response
Brand Name Recalling Status	Green Trust	Purchase Intention

Table 1. SOR model in this study

2.3 Fast Fashion and Sustainable Fashion

Fashion brands that offer sustainable fashion products can be classified based on two taxonomies introduced by Dickson et al. (2009). Fast fashion (FF) brands are *reactive* and demand-led, using social and environmental initiatives as a means to achieve better financial outcomes. FF brands are characterized by fast cycles, rapid prototyping, small batches of clothes with a wide variety of items, efficient and speedy shipping, and presenting merchandise that is "floor ready" with price tags already attached (Skov, 2002). On the contrary, Sustainable fashion (SF) brands operates with a *proactive* ethics-led business model, with a triple bottom line evaluating social, environmental, and financial performances equally. They claimed to commit to sustainability throughout their entire operations (Parker and Dickson, 2009).

Consumers' attitude towards a SF item purchasing may be impacted by their perception of the brand claiming to produce sustainable products (Shen, et al, 2012; Ray and Nayak, 2023). There are some studies on how consumers view sustainable practices by FF and SF brands differently (Papadopoulou et al., 2022). Contradictory findings are presented, while some states that consumers may think sustainability initiatives by FF are as trustworthy as SF brands or good fit to FF retailers, others find FF experienced more scepticism (Park and Kim, 2016; Hill and Lee, 2015). Therefore, it is worthwhile to take this issue into examination again in this paper. While scholars encourage brands in general to employ

sustainable initiatives to enhance brand loyalty and positive brand image, it is important to clarify if those suggestions are equally effective for both FF and SF brands (Dabija et al., 2022). The importance of product specificity is also suggested by Liobikiene and Bernatoniene (2017) and Jacobs et al. (2018) when investigating the determinants of sustainable purchase behaviour.

In this study three brand-product configurations are formed, and we test the S-O-R constructs in these brand-product conditions separately to examine the results for different brands and then provide specific guidelines for brands. Therefore, by taking brand-product types into consideration, we develop our hypothesis in the next section.

2.4 Hypothesis development

Brand name is one of the prerequisites to develop any brand associations with it (Keller, 1993; Washburn & Plank, 2002; Dew & Kwon, 2010). When consumers have limited information about a product's features and feel uncertain about the product, brand names play a significant role in reducing perceived risk and aiding in the assessment of product quality (Dean, 1999; Park and Lennon 2009). Therefore, recalling a specific brand name can bring consumers more certainty when forming a behavioural decision. Recent studies have shown that brand love can lead to greater brand trust (Albert et al., 2009; Marmat, 2023). Kabadayi and Alan (2012) also confirm there is an indirect effect of consumers' brand affect on brand trust. Moreover, in most cases, a brand that consumers like are usually a brand they are familiar with. Consumers evaluate the seriousness of the crisis against a certain brand they are familiar with depending on its relevance and react to the crisis accordingly (Dawar and Lei, 2009). This means a familiar brand is less vulnerable to the crisis in consumer evaluation. Therefore, while the entire fashion industry (or FF industry) is suffering from a sustainable crisis, consumers would think the brands they like and familiar with are more trustable in terms of sustainable claims.

The endowment effect may explain the above-mentioned phenomenon, which suggests that individuals are more likely to overvalue objects that they own. This effect has been demonstrated repeatedly across numerous experiments under a variety of boundary conditions (Thaler,1980). Likewise, the mere possession

effect states that even without actual ownership, simply considering options closely before making a choice can enhance feelings of ownership and elicit the endowment effect (Reb and Connolly 2007). When consumers think of a product from their favourite brand, the endowment effect or mere possession effect is activated. As a result, they may perceive this brand to have a higher level of GT as we propose in our first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: For three fashion brand-product configurations (FF regular product, FF green product, SF green product), consumer develop higher green trust when they recall a specific brand they like, compared to recalling an unnamed brand

Many recent studies have confirmed that GT can positively contribute to green purchase intention directly (Chen, 2010; Amin and Tarun, 2021; Gil and Jacob, 2018). However, no study has been done on the predicting relationship between GT and PI, especially in SF purchasing scenarios. Recent ABG literature found that transparency and doubts about the credibility of information are among the impeding factors within the sustainable fashion industry (Jacobs et al., 2018; Lundblad and Davies, 2015; Bocti, El Zein and Giannini, 2021). In addition, consumers in this study cared more for self-benefits and perceived sustainable fashion as not durable.

Therefore, we proposed our second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: For three fashion brand-product configurations (FF regular product, FF green product, SF green product), green trust will be positively related to purchase intention

In the age of sustainability as a buzzword, consumers tend to express a favourable attitude towards supporting any general concepts related to sustainability with the intention of reducing cognitive energy. Therefore, they easily state they will perform according to their attitude (Marmat, 2023). However, when more cues are provided to consumers, this simple cognition process might be disrupted. Brand names, as a type of retrieval cue according to Keller (1987), can trigger memories and associations that are connected to the brand. When real brand names are used as cues, consumers are more likely to recall various factors that may hinder their

sustainable fashion purchasing decisions, as evidenced by previous studies (Ray and Nayak, 2023). Therefore, when consumers are thinking of translating their positive attitude to purchase in a context without specific brand name, the stated transition relationship may be exaggerated by them. On the contrary, the predicting power is weaker when recalling a real brand name.

Thus, we propose our third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: For three fashion brand-product configurations (FF regular product, FF green product, SF green product), the relationship between green trust and purchase intention is weaker when consumers recalling a specific brand name they like, compared to recalling an unnamed brand

3.0 Methodology

The study mainly aims to investigate within the sustainable fashion field, how brand name recalling status (S) influences the GT (O), PI (R) and the relationship between GT and PI. The analysis is done with three brand-product configurations for providing insights for different brands specifically.

The brand name recalling status have two level: (1) When the fashion product is from respondent´s favourite brands, (2) When the respondents only know that the fashion item is from certain brand categories i.e. SF brands or FF brands. Brand-product configurations are used in the examination which have three levels as following: (1) A sustainable item from SF Brand, (2) A regular item from FF Brand, and (3) A sustainable item from FF Brand. In total four conditions are formed (V1, V2, V3 and V4).

3.1 Instrument development

Consumer trust or suspicion towards certain green fashion items is measured by the construct Green Trust, which was firstly developed by Chen (2010). GT is defined as a willingness to depend on one object due to the perception of its credibility, benevolence, and competence in terms of environmental performance. This study used five measurement instruments of GT originally developed in the

study of Chen (2010). Purchase Intention scale, including three items, is adopted from study from Dodds, Monroe and Crewal (1991). All items were measured on a 10-point Likert scale with endpoints of 1 (strongly disagree) and 10 (strongly agree). *Table 2.* shows the constructs and the items.

Table 2. Constructs and items

Constructs	Items	Reference
Green Trust	GT1: I feel that this sweater's sustainable reputation is generally reliable. GT2: I feel that this sweater's sustainable performance is generally dependable. GT3: I feel that this sweater's sustainable claims are generally trustworthy. GT4: This sweater's sustainable concern meets my sustainability expectations. GT5: This sweater keeps promises and commitments for sustainable goals.	Chen (2010)
Purchase Intention	PI1: I would consider buying this sweater at this store. PI2: I will purchase this sweater at this store. PI3: There is a strong likelihood that I will buy this sweater at this store.	Dodds, et al. (1991)

3.2 Stimulus and Condition development

According to the SOR model, consumer's perception and behaviour can be influenced by external stimuli (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Based on a 3x2 factorial design, six stimuli are developed in this study design to simulate a realistic fashion purchasing environment by providing brand level and product level information of a certain item and to test specific behaviours towards the item (Moisander, 2007; Barbarossa and De Pelsmacker, 2016). Description information fashion retailers usually use in their communication statement is used in the stimuli to simulate what consumers would encounter in real life. Respondents are required to imagine a shopping environment of a physical store. Sweater as a usual fashion item has been used in all stimuli to form a real decision-making context for respondents to base their cognitive thinking on.

The stimuli were carefully designed to ask respondents to recall a shopping scenario when they encounter a fashion product. There are in total three distinct brand-product configurations (1. a sustainable item from SF Brand, 2. a regular item from FF Brand, and 3. a sustainable item from FF Brand). The texts in stimuli are adjusted to fit two different brand familiarity status (a. thinking of a

particular brand they like the most, b. thinking of a particular brand type). Therefore, there are six stimuli in total, with all else kept equal. The six stimuli are labelled as 1a, 2a, 3a, 1b, 2b, 3b. Four conditions V1, V2, V3 and V4 are set in this study. Respondents in each condition are exposed to two stimuli in total. In condition V1 and V2, they are firstly exposed to stimulus 1a: Imagine shopping their favourite SF brand product. In condition V3 and V4, they are firstly exposed to stimulus 1b: Imagine shopping for a fashion item from an unspecified SF Brand. The respondents were asked the same question regarding their perceived GT toward the item and their PI. Then, the respondents were exposed to Stimulus 2a in V1, Stimuli 3a in V2, Stimuli 2b in V3, Stimuli 3b in V4. The same GT questions and PI questions were asked after exposure to the second stimuli. Following, we present the stimuli texts (the underline is used to highlight the difference between stimuli) and *table 3* indicate the order of stimuli in each condition:

Stimuli used in V1

Stimuli 1a: Imagine you go to the store of your favourite sustainable fashion brand that you did recall in the previous question. The brand states that all the products from that brand have certain environmental and social value. You find one sweater that you like."

Stimuli 2a: Imagine you go to the store of your favourite fast fashion brand that you did recall in the previous question. You find one sweater that you like.

Stimuli used in V2

Stimuli 1a: Imagine you go to the store of your favourite sustainable fashion brand that you did recall in the previous question. The brand states that all the products from that brand have certain environmental and social value. You find one sweater that you like."

Stimuli 3a: Imagine you go to the store of your favourite fast fashion brand that you did recall in the previous question. You find one sweater that you like. The description states it was sustainably produced with ethical working conditions and has a 30% lower environmental impact.

Stimuli used in V3

Stimuli 1b: Imagine you drop by a sustainable fashion store. The brand states that all the products from that brand have certain environmental and social value. You find one sweater that you like.

Stimuli 2b: Imagine you drop by a fast fashion store. You find one sweater that you like.

Stimuli used in V4

Stimuli 1b: Imagine you drop by a sustainable fashion store. The brand states that all the products from that brand have certain environmental and social value. You find one sweater that you like.

Stimuli 3b: Imagine you drop by a fast fashion store. You find one sweater that you like. The description states it was sustainably produced with ethical working conditions and has a 30% lower environmental impact.

Table 3**.** Stimuli and Conditions

Condition	First Stimuli	Second Stimuli
V1	Stimuli 1a	Stimuli 2a
V2	Stimuli 1a	Stimuli 3a
V3	Stimuli 1b	Stimuli 2b
V4	Stimuli 1b	Stimuli 3b

3.3 Survey design

We composed a survey design of four sections. The first section explained the aim of the study and gained consent from the respondents. The second part contained two screening questions asking the respondents to recall their favourite SF and FF brand. If they chose "Yes", then they were asked to type the brand in an answer-box. The answers were used to direct them to corresponding conditions. Those who selected "Yes" for both filter questions and typed the brand were directed to V1 or V2 randomly, while those selected "No" for both questions were directed to V3 and V4. The respondents who only answered "Yes" to one of the questions were not being included in the sample for any analysis. Guidelines to complete the questionnaire were then provided after filter questions to give them basic ideas of

the procedures and note to keep underlined texts in mind when answering the questions. In all four conditions, the respondents were firstly exposed to one stimulus in the SF setting and answered five questions regarding GT and three questions regarding PI. Then they were exposed to Stimuli 2a or 3a or 2b or 3b in a FF setting, and answered the same questions regarding GT and PI. The details of stimuli in each condition have been mentioned in the Stimulus and Condition development part. The only difference across all four conditions are the stimuli. All the questions are forced to be answered to ensure validity of the responses. After answering all the questions, all the respondents are asked to answer several demographic questions and reach the end of the survey.

3.4 Sampling and data collection

The study is conducted in Norway due to the overall high environmental concern and awareness among the citizens, inhabiting a greater level of knowledge on sustainable practice by fashion brands (Laitala and Klepp 2013; Olson 2013a, 2018; Olson 2022). However, we acknowledge that this sampling approach may introduce a potential bias towards individuals with higher environmental consciousness and may not fully represent the broader population. Extra caution is required when generalizing the findings beyond the specific context of Norway. The respondents were recruited via various social media channels (Facebook, Instagram and Linkedin) and physical places (i.e. university and common offices). Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and participant confidentiality, were strictly adhered to throughout the sampling process. The IP collection function was unable during the whole process.

A total of 259 responses were collected for this study, of which 109 were decided as valid and included in the final analysis. A balanced distribution of respondents across the different treatment groups was achieved through a random assignment procedure (V1:28, V2:31, V3: 25, V4: 25). Respondents were excluded when not meeting any one of the following criteria: not resident in Norway at the current moment, missing responses exceeding four (25%), not finishing the whole survey, repeating the same answers exceeding four. Regression-based Imputation was used to fill in missing values if the number of missing values is not exceeding 4 in one observation.

Table 4 illustrates the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The samples of V1 and V2, V3 and V4 demonstrate a similar social demographic profile. The age variable reveals that the largest proportion of participants fall within the 24-34 age range, constituting 59.6% of the whole sample (n = 65). A predominant representation of respondents holding a bachelor's degree (n = 48, 44%), closely followed by those with a master's degree (n = 42, 38.5%). The sample exhibits a balanced gender distribution with slightly higher representation of females (n = 57, 52.3%) compared to males (n = 48, 44%).

Table 4. Socio-demographic characteristics of the samples

	Overall	Relative Frequency %	V1	V2	V3	V4
Age						
Under 24	38	34.9%	12	13	7	6
25-34	65	59.6%	14	17	16	18
Over 34	6	5.6%	2	1	2	1
Education						
High school or below	17	15.6%	6	6	2	3
Bachelor	48	44%	15	16	9	8
Master	42	38.5%	7	9	14	12
Doctoral	2	1.8%	0	0	0	2
Gender						
Female	57	52.3%	19	20	9	9
Male	48	44%	9	11	14	14
Other	4	3.7%	0	0	2	2

3.5 Reliability and validity test

The GT construct answered under the SF setting was labelled as SFGT while the one under the FF setting was labelled as FFGT. The PI construct was labelled as SFPI and FFPI in the same way. As recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and (Han et al., 2022), we tested reliability and validity of constructs with Cronbach Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and EFA, and all were found to have satisfactory results except for SFGT2 (I feel that this sweater’s sustainable performance is generally dependable) in Condition 1. This item was dropped from result analysis.

4.0 Results

4.1 Green Trust across different brand name recalling status

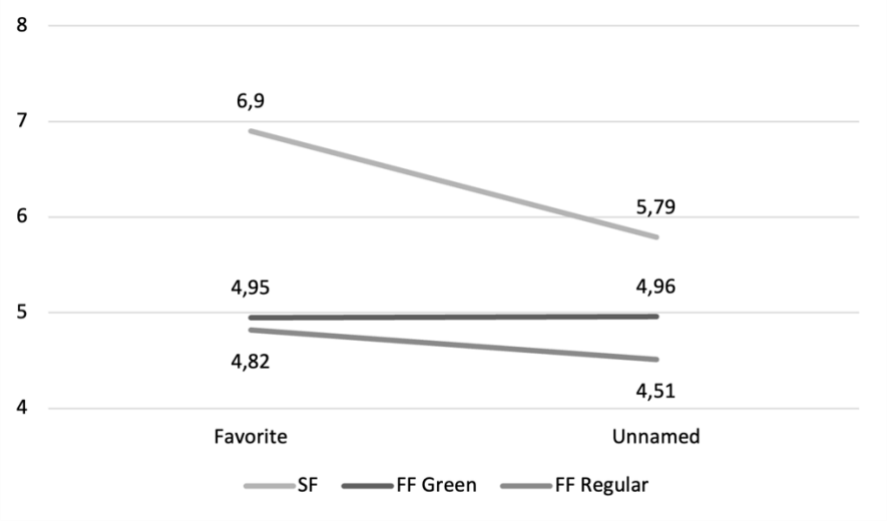
We measured the effects of Brand Name Recalling Status on GT both for SF and FF by using paired-sample T-test. Brand Name Recalling Status is found to have an impact on SF green products' GT. Respondents who recalled their favourite SF brand showed a significantly higher GT compared to those without brand name (Favourite brand: M=6.901, Unnamed brand: M=5.7952; p<.001). However, Brand Name Recalling Status has not been found to have significant impact in GT on the FF products, either regular items or green items. H1 is partially supported. We also cross compared two FF products in two name recalling conditions. No significant difference is found between FF regular product and FF green product in terms of GT, in all Brand Name Recalling Status. Based on this finding, it is no surprise to find an unnamed SF product has significantly higher GT compared to favourite FF product (FF Favourite brand: M=4.89, SF Unnamed brand: M=5.79; p=0.003). Therefore, the favourable effect of recalling a favourite brand name cannot be utilized by FF brands, to mitigate the GT gap between SF brand products and FF products.

Table 5. Green Trust across different brand name recalling status

Brand-Product	Mean		p
	Favorite	Unnamed	
SF	6.90	5.79	<.001***
FF Overall	4.89	4.73	Non-sig
FF Green	4.95	4.96	Non-sig
FF Regular	4.82	4.51	Non-sig
Between FF	Regular **Favorite**	Green **Unnamed**	
	4.82	4.96	Non-sig
	Green **Favorite**	Regular **Unnamed**	
	4.95	4.51	Non-sig
	Green **Favorite**	Regular **Favorite**	
	4.95	4.82	Non-sig
	Green **Unnamed**	Regular **Unnamed**	
	4.96	4.51	Non-sig
Between FF and SF	FF Overall Favorite	SF Unnamed	
	4.89	5.79	0.003**

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. Mean Difference is calculated by First Condition minus Second Condition

Chart 1. Green Trust across different brand name recalling status



4.2 Purchase Intention across different brand name recalling status

Paired-sample T-test is used again to test the impact of Brand Name Recalling Status on PI. PI is significantly improved when consumers recall their favourite brands in all brand-product conditions. We also cross compared two FF products in two name recalling conditions. For FF, Regular Favourite and Green Unnamed, Green Favourite and Regular Unnamed are significantly different (Regular Favourite: M=6.72, Green Unnamed: M=5.43, p=0.004; Green Favourite: M=6.43, Regular Unnamed: M=5.36, p=0.039), while Green Favourite and Regular Favourite, Green Unnamed and Regular Unnamed are the same statistically. These results indicate that FF green product and FF regular product gained the same level of improvement in PI caused by recalling brand names.

We further compared the improvement of SF and FF overall. When in unnamed condition, SF is significantly higher than FF (SF Unnamed: M=5.91, FF Unnamed: M=5.29, p=0.019), same in favourite name recalled condition (SF Favourite: M=7.26, FF Favourite: M=6.57, p=0.02). Furthermore, FF favourite is significantly higher than SF unnamed (FF favourite: M=6.57, SF unnamed: M=5.91, p=0.02).

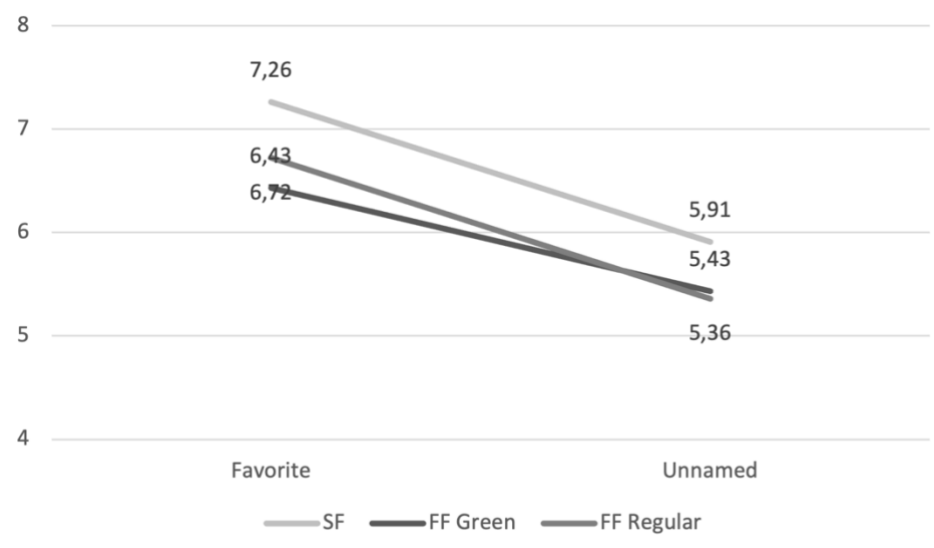
Overall, the results showed that brand name recalling status influences FF and SF differently, in terms of GT and PI. In the next section we further investigate the relationship between GT and PI under two brand name recalling status, for SF and FF.

Table 5. Purchase Intention across different brand name recalling status

Brand-Product	Mean		p
	Favorite	Unnamed	
SF	7.26	5.91	<.001***
FF Overall	6.57	5.29	<.001***
FF Green	6.43	5.43	0.004**
FF Regular	6.72	5.36	0.009**
Between FF	Regular **Favorite**	Green **Unnamed**	
	6.72	5.43	0.004**
	Green **Favorite**	Regular **Unnamed**	
	6.43	5.36	0.039*
	Green **Favorite**	Regular **Favorite**	
	6.43	6.72	Non-sig
	Green **Unnamed**	Regular **Unnamed**	
	5.43	5.36	Non-sig
Between FF and SF	FF Overall Favorite	SF Unnamed	
	6.57	5.91	0.02*
	FF Overall Favorite	SF Favorite	
	6.57	7.26	0.02*
	FF Overall Unnamed	SF Unnamed	
	5.29	5.91	0.019*

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. Mean Difference is calculated by First Condition minus Second Condition

Chart 2. Purchase Intention across different brand name recalling status



4.3 The predicting relationship between Green Trust and Purchase Intention across different brand name recalling status

Table 6. Regression Analysis to test the relationship between SFGT and SFPI, FFGT and FFPI using the whole sample

Independent	Dependent	N	β	T - value	*p* - value	R^2	R^2 Adjusted
Overall							
SFGT	SFPI	109	0.621	9.000	<.001***	0.431	0.426
FFGT	FFPI	109	0.302	2.998	0.003**	0.077	0.069
Favorite							
SFGT	SFPI	59	0.395	3.772	<.001***	0.200	0.186
FFGT	FFPI	59	0.115	0.914	0.365	0.014	-0.003
Unnamed							
SFGT	SFPI	50	0.743	8.932	<.001***	0.624	0.617
FFGT	FFPI	50	0.499	3.534	<.001***	0.206	0.190

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

In order to determine the degree to which GT predicted PI, we firstly ran linear regression. The overall results seem that GT is a significant predictor of PI and is a more important predictor of PI for SF compared to FF. H2 can be supported. SFGT significantly predicts SFPI with a good explanation power (β=0.621, p < .001, R^2=42.6%). FFGT significantly predicts FFPI (β=0.302, p < .003, R^2=6.9%) with a relatively low level of explanation power. SFGT has a larger coefficient (β=0.621) compared to FFGT (β=0.302), indicating a stronger predictive relationship between SFGT and SFPI.

Then linear regression is used again to explore the GT and PI relationship in two brand name recalling conditions separately. Samples of V1 and V2 are combined in the analysis to represent the condition when consumers have recalled their favourite SF/FF Fashion brand, while V3 and V4 represent the condition when consumers only recalled the SF/FF Fashion brand categories.

In most cases, GT significantly predicts PI except one case under unnamed brand condition, GT does not significantly contribute to PI for FF (β=0.115, p<0.365).

The results indicate the relationships between GT and PI are weaker in the favourite name recalling condition for both SF and FF, shown in lower R^2 and lower β. The drop in R^2 is more obvious for SF from 62.4% to 20%, while FF

shows a constant low R^2 (20% to 1%). The results indicate that the degree of exaggeration caused by unnamed brands is greater for SF compared to FF. H3 can be accepted.

5.0 Discussion

Existing ABG studies mainly focus on identifying barriers to purchase and low predictive power of behavioural intentions on actual behaviour, while our study provides a new lens of looking ABG by identifying two research gaps: 1) current study fails to identify a methodological flaw in current research methods, which is the extensive usage of fictional brands as experimental stimuli. This flaw may exaggerate the predictive power of attitudes, and 2) the wide use of abstract attitudes to predict behaviour, resulting in unstable predictive results which are difficult to replicate (Do Paço et al., 2013; Laroche et al., 2001; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Jacobs et al., 2018).

Therefore, this study attempts to fill in these two research gaps. This study adopts the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) framework, which emphasizes the influence of external stimuli on organisms and responses. In this study, two-level brand name recalling status is considered as the external stimulus, GT as the organism, and PI as the response. Our analysis primarily focuses on examining the performance of attitude on behaviour under different brand name recall conditions to address the first research gap. In order to tackle the second research gap, GT, as a domain-specific attitude, is included in the model as a substitute for attitude, which is an abstract attitude commonly used in previous research. In addition, we replicate above tests in different sustainable fashion brand-product scenarios to provide tailored recommendations for different fashion retailers correspondingly.

Our research contribution is threefold, with the first two being theoretical contributions, and the final one providing insights for practice. Firstly, our findings demonstrate that using vague brand categories as research stimuli in studies of sustainable fashion consumption can exaggerate the influence of the GT on PI compared to using real brand names. According to our results, when only vague brand category information is provided, GT significantly influences PI, consistent with previous research findings (Jung et al., 2020; Chen & Chang,

2012). However, when consumers recall specific preferred brands, the predictive power of GT drops, holding true for both SF brands and FF brands. Furthermore, the decrease in the predictive power of GT is more pronounced for SF brands. Therefore, we believe that using vague brand categories or fictional brands to study the predictive power of attitudes on behaviour for SF brands may likely result in significant exaggeration. For FF brands, recalling specific brand names only slightly reduces the predictive power of attitudes on behaviour. Possible explanation is that GT is an irrelevant factor for FF purchasing in any case. Our findings suggest that the magnitude of the attitude-behaviour gap may be larger than what previous research has found, which is likely due to researchers' research methods exaggerating the predictive power of attitudes. After all, in real life, consumers are always confronted with specific brands, usually their preferred ones. Therefore, we provide a recommendation for future research in sustainable fashion to avoid conceptual research designs that involve vague brand categories and fictional brands and to simulate real consumption environments in experimental settings.

The second contribution of this study is that by using GT as a substitute for general attitudes, we find that GT may be a better predictor than attitudes, but this depends on brand types. Previous research on sustainable fashion has found that the explanatory power of attitudes is typically between 10 percentage and 20 percentage (Hassan et al., 2016; Butler & Francis, 1997; Jacobs et al., 2018). These numbers may be even lower when real brand names are evoked, according to our previous discussion. Our results demonstrate that for SF brands, even when real brand names are evoked, the explanatory power of GT can still reach 20 percentage. However, for FF brands, the explanatory power of GT is consistently low regardless of whether brand names are recalled. In summary, this study responds to the call by Gupta and Ogden (2009) for measurement of specificity. This calls for assessing specific behavioural attitudes rather than general attitudes towards the pro-environmental behaviour and fills the gap of no previous application of GT in sustainable fashion consumption research.

The third contribution, as a practical implication, is that we provide specific sustainability practice recommendations for two types of fashion retailers: SF

brands and FF brands. The following discussions are based on the results of the condition when brand names are recalled.

We have enhanced the understanding of the GT crisis in the FF sector. Firstly, we find that green products in FF show consistent levels of GT and PI compared to their conventional products, which are not affected by brand name recalling status. We believe that FF is still affected by the opportunistic use of greenwashing practices in the past (Kim and Oh, 2020). However, from a financial perspective, the impact of this crisis is not as significant as previously emphasized in research and market discussions, as lower GT in FF does not impact consumers' actual purchasing behaviour, or if it does, its effect is relatively small. Secondly, this result also suggests that the solutions proposed in previous research to enhance the sustainable brand image by introducing new sustainable product lines may not be effective for FF (Iglesias et al., 2020; Dabija et al., 2022; Moisescu & Gică, 2020). Consumers seem not to trust incremental improvements applied to the unsustainable fashion retail model. In summary, in the short term, FF brands can still generate profits by offering product values beyond sustainability. In the long run, to rebuild a fully sustainable brand image, FF brands need to take measures beyond sustainable product innovation to reduce the green liability caused by their unsustainable history.

For SF brands, consumers tend to trust their green actions and differentiate them from FF brands in terms of sustainability performance. From a profit perspective, maintaining consumer trust in green initiatives contributes to purchase decisions for SF brands. However, as same as FF, sustainability itself is not the sole determining factor for purchase decisions. Therefore, SF brands need to continue strengthening other aspects of their product offerings to increase sales.

For policymakers, although policies tend to support all the sustainable business practices in the fashion industry, our research suggests that the policymakers may need to take consumers' different responses to FF and SF into consideration, instead of imposing the same policies to these two different brand categories. On the one hand, consumers' doubt of green claims by FF does not influence their continued consumption of it. In order to achieve a sustainable goal for the whole society, the policymakers may need to either force FF industry adopt a more

sustainable production model or encourage consumers to engage in more sustainable consumption. On the other hand, policymakers can facilitate the growth of SF brands by endorsing the trustworthiness of their practices. According to a study by Bocti, El Zein and Giannini, (2021) in Germany found people generally believed that their government supplies them with reliable and transparent information on environmentally friendly products, which make the government a reliable source of trustable information and aid SF accepted by larger consumer groups.

6.0 Limitation and future research

In this study, the expressed intention to purchase was utilized as an indicator for predicting actual buying behaviour. Hines et al. (1986) proposed a model of environmental behaviour that considers the intention to act as a direct influence on pro-environmental behaviour. Intention is regarded as a comprehensive representation of the interplay between cognitive factors (action skills, knowledge of action strategies and issues) and personality variables (attitudes, locus of control, and personal responsibility), which contributes to its effectiveness as a predictor of real behaviour (Bamberg and Möser, 2007). Although the analysis conducted in this study does not identify this as an issue, it is worth noting that there may exist some degree of measurement error since the validity of survey research depends on subjects accurately assessing their level of agreement with the questions, while being aware that their responses are being measured. Future studies can consider using alternative measures as a cross check, such as intention to pay more or measuring actual purchasing in an actual consumption scenario.

A second limitation of the study is the use of a sample solely from Norway, which limits the generalizability of the findings to countries and regions with weaker environmental consciousness. The external validity of this study could be enhanced through future research that replicates the findings using samples from other countries or conducts cross-cultural studies.

The author acknowledges that there may be design flaws in the stimuli provided for SF and FF because explicit descriptions of sustainable values were given for

the former, while more details were provided for the latter. Therefore, the textual differences may lead to differences in the results.

Future research can have a deep look at the result gap in green consumption research between using real brand name and those using fake brand name since this study provides evidence that brand name recalling can be a stimulus that manipulates the results. Future research directions could also involve continuous comparison of the effectiveness of green marketing between FF brands and SF using other specific measurements, further understanding consumers' different perceptions and value perception of these two types of brands. Researchers could also include a wider range of brands for comparisons, such as luxury fashion brands. Additionally, it would be valuable to investigate consumer responses to ongoing green transformations in FF brands.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Cronbach's Alpha in each condition

Construct	V1	V2	V3	V4
SFGT	0.795	0.929	0.926	0.902
SFPI	0.874	0.908	0.933	0.828
FFGT	0.915	0.962	0.929	0.954
FFPI	0.883	0.949	0.928	0.902
Overall	0.782	0.921	0.943	0.921

Appendix 2**.** Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) in each condition

Construct	Items	V1		V2		V3		V4	
		AVE	CR	AVE	CR	AVE	CR	AVE	CR
SFGT	SFGT1 SFGT3 SFGT4 SFGT5	0.710	0.926	0.808	0.930	0.778	0.915	0.802	0.932
SFPI	SFPI1 SFPI2 SFPI3	0.803	0.927	0.861	0.938	0.821	0.930	0.757	0.898
FFGT	FFGT1 FFGT2 FFGT3 FFGT4 FFGT5	0.797	0.933	0.906	0.960	0.855	0.943	0.863	0.953
FFPI	FFPI1 FFPI2 FFPI3 FFPI4	0.876	0.951	0.888	0.953	0.870	0.948	0.837	0.927