

Abstract

In recent years, issues such as climate change, pollution of air and water, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, poverty, and others have gained significant attention of the global community, including the fashion industry. Sustainability has emerged as a solution to address environmental, social, and economic problems and is recognized as a fundamental approach to problem-solving by governments, NGOs, businesses, and public. However, implementing plans and achieving goals in this area is a lengthy process, necessitating promotion and advertising of sustainability. Hence, promoting sustainable behavior is crucial to raise awareness and alter consumer habits because waste contributes to pollution, a significant cause of environmental issues. Unsurprisingly, the apparel industry is known as one of the most significant contributors to waste production (Claudio, 2017). Only in Bangladesh, approximately 577,000 tons of waste is generated by the apparel industry, and besides that, the global textiles waste is expected to grow 60% annually between 2015 and 2030 (Niinimäki et al., 2020; Pavarini, 2021).

Recent research has focused on sustainability advertising and its influence on consumer behavior, driven by the growing importance of sustainability and sustainable development in political, public, and business contexts. However, research on the effect of sustainable advertising appeals on consumers' self-efficacy is limited. Furthermore, researchers rarely analyze environmental and social dimensions of sustainability as two different types of sustainable marketing appeals in advertisements. Therefore, this study aims to gain insights into which sustainable advertising appeals have the most substantial impact on consumers' brand attitude, self-efficacy, and, consequently, purchase intention. Furthermore, it would be of great interest to develop and provide, based on the results of the research, recommendations for managers, marketing specialists and sustainability consultants on the effectiveness of different sustainability dimensions application in marketing campaigns.

To bridge this research gap, this study conducted an online experiment with three experimental conditions. The experiment participants were randomly assigned to three groups exposed to neutral, environmental, or socially responsible stimuli represented by composed advertisements of the brand Burberry. The results revealed that sustainable advertising appeals significantly affect consumers' self-efficacy and, consequently, purchase intention. However, no difference was observed between the experimental groups exposed to environmental and socially responsible stimuli. Furthermore, sustainable advertising appeals did not significantly impact brand attitude. Thus, a conclusion can be drawn that sustainable advertising positively influences consumers' self-efficacy and purchase

intention, no matter which sustainability dimension is applied in the advertisement as a marketing appeal.

