

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Building Brand Equity Through Sustainable and Experiential Marketing

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## ABSTRACT

The article addresses the linkage between sustainable branding and experiential marketing and how they can be utilized to influence brand equity in consumers today. Even though the previous studies have isolated the strategies separately, there has been minimal empirical evidence to indicate the integration of the strategies and how they will impact on the loyalty, advocacy and the brand trust. The research design will be mixed research design; that is, the researcher will utilize both survey research data (1,200 consumers) and 25 in-depth interviews to determine the independent and interactive impact. Hierarchy regression and interaction models reveal that the effects of sustainability practices and experiential marketing on the brand equity are positive; more so, a combination of the two has a significant impact as compared to each of the two. The final customer loyalty, Net Promoter Scores, and trust was achieved through sustainable brands as a part of the immersive consumer experiences. The further expectations of qualitative sentiment analysis are that experiential interfaces can render sustainability initiatives more legitimate and emotionally connected, and the level of skepticism is not so high concerning greenwashing. The study will be an addition to the theory of brand equity as well as the existing sustainability and experiential marketing theories because it empirically models the connection between sustainable branding and experiential engagement. The findings make a recommendation to managers who would wish to establish long term brand equity in the responsible and touchable market through integrating sustainability commitments in the meaningful customer experience.

**Keywords:** Brand; Sustainable; Experiential Marketing

## 1. Introduction

The development and sustenance of good brand equity in the current competitive and environmentally conscious market would be an agenda that organizations are always likely to have. This is not a traditional campaign as it promotes a multi-dimensional approach to marketing, which combines both environmental

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custodianship and true consumer experiences. The shift of consumer attitude is an indication that more and more brands should appeal to a higher level of social and ecology-related values, and create enjoyment and experience that cannot be forgotten. This change has therefore compelled organizations to revisit their branding strategy where both sustainability and experiential marketing can be applied as the mechanism of both creating and retaining consumer loyalty and trust in decades to come <sup>[1]</sup>.

Although there has been a lot of research on sustainability marketing and experiential branding, the available literature has been a study done on these areas mostly separately. The data on sustainability-oriented scholarship proves that ethical branding, CSR, and green consumerism helps improve trust, brand image, and brand loyalty [1-3], whereas experiential marketing research underlines emotional involvement, attachment, and behavioral intention [4-6]. Nevertheless, interactive impacts of these strategies on brand equity are not well theorized and tested empirically. Specifically, the majority of research does not focus on whether experiential engagement can enhance the credibility and effectiveness of sustainability practices in determining loyalty, advocacy, and brand trust. To fill this gap, the current research contributes to the branding theory by directly modeling the joint and interaction impact of sustainability and experiential marketing on brand equity through a mixed-methods approach.

Sustainability has become yet another beautiful buzzword; however, it has fast evolved into one of the main drivers in the way the public space is formed and influence the way organizations will purchase. Waste is now a key concern for consumers, who want brands to lead the way in tackling environmental issues, minimizing waste, and encouraging ethical behavior. In parallel, experiential marketing has also developed into an exciting way to establish strong emotional ties with customers. These siloed but immersive experiences help the brands establish differentiation that will resonate in even the most saturated of markets, and result in attention which translates into brand loyalty which traditional channels fail in most cases <sup>[2]</sup>.

Sustainability and experience marketing are like heavenly made up and when it comes to brand equity, they offer a synergetic chance of redefining brand equity. These sustainability-oriented projects send information that a company cares about bringing welfare to the society and environment, creating a tremendous basis of trust and credibility. This is improved with experiential marketing, which creates unforgettable interactive relationships that consumers relate to themselves. A collective of these strategies together will result in a virtuous circle: sustainability generates trust and loyalty, and engaging experiences encourage recurrence and word-of-mouth. The integration of the two would be helpful not only in creating brand equity in the short-term, but also in creating relationships with consumers that would help in creating value in both short and long run <sup>[7]</sup>.

The sustainable experiential marketing is also necessitated by the demographic changes and the changing expectations. The Millennials and the Generation Z are socially and environmentally aware generations that require the brands to do something as well as to talk about. This segment believes in genuineness and it means intent and would lean towards businesses that reflect their respective values and dreams. Moreover, there is a changing pattern on how consumers are engaging with brands in the digital world. Social media and online platforms help consumers to be heard more than ever before hence the importance of transparency and accountability. In this landscape brands failing to create actual sustainable commitment or to count on archaic, one-way, non-relational marketing techniques chance to grow insignificant and untrustworthy <sup>[3]</sup>.

In comparison, technological innovation has increased avenue of experiential marketing due to the pace of innovation. Other technologies, such as virtual and augmented reality, allow the brands to provide highly personalized and interactive experience, which draws consumers into their reality. These technologies are

part of sustainability efforts and they help companies to tell significant stories about environmental actions in ways that are interesting and exciting. One of the ways a brand can narrate the story of its supply chain transparency is through immersive experiences, and the other share how its products contribute to making a greener planet. These innovations do not only provide the consumer with a more enhanced experience, but also fix the emotional bond between the consumers and the brand, confirming a shared purpose [8].

Sustainability, coupled with experiential marketing is joining to create a seamless progression of sustainable experiential marketing and a potent brand creation engine and brand building. Meanwhile, when they are more concerned about environmental and social responsibility, developing the immersive experiences that the consumers would like to experience, brands can be distinguished in a meaningful way. This strategy will deal with the rising demand of more precise and engaging practices and form a strong base of sustainable trust and loyalty in the perspective of a consumer. A world that rewards conscience and connection as well, it is the organization that manages to combine sustainable values with experiential innovation, which will be prosperous in the increasingly intricate marketplace.

### **1.1. The aim of the article**

The article attempts to sustainable activities and experience marketing as one of the avenues to high brand equity. In the contemporary market, expectations of consumers are evolving at a high pace, as the societies are becoming more environmental and are keen to be associated with brands that are meaningful in a sense. Based on this, the companies must walk the walk on two demanding fronts: selling by doing how much they are committed to being sustainable, and selling by creating experiences that attract consumers to the ship. This article takes into consideration the combined effect of such interrelated strategies to support the competitive stance of a brand, build consumer trust, and guarantee long-term loyalty.

The ultimate goal is to provide useful information on how the marketing activities that are sustainable, along with other experiences, build brand equity. This will involve establishing the drivers of consumer perception, loyalty and advocacy and showing the interaction of these drivers within the context of eco conscious branding. It will provide physical actions and plans of implementing sustainability and experiential marketing in a manner that is integrated and high.

Moreover, the paper aims at making a contribution to the greater discussion, scholarly and otherwise, by presenting the symbiotic relationship between sustainability and experiential marketing. A vast amount of literature exists on these strategies alone but relatively few studies on possible complementing. By so doing, such an article can provide brand managers, marketers and business leaders with practical insights that they can emulate in their endeavors to create equity in the increasingly competitive consumer world that is increasingly environmentally aware.

To demonstrate that the emphasis on the values of sustainability, as well as the involvement of the consumer in the experiences, provides the brand with a major point of distinction and the capacity to strengthen consumer relationships. In this manner the brands will be able to achieve the double whammy marketing score and sustained equity which has the potential to generate long term growth and consumer loyalty.

### **1.2. Problem statement**

The ramifications are far-reaching, not only in global markets, which are environmentally-conscious, but also experience-driven and it puts more pressure on brands to establish equity along a plane that stretches beyond the traditional physicalities of the marketing environment. Although the literature has witnessed a proliferation of studies on sustainable practices and experiential marketing as stand-alone fields, there has

been little consideration of how the two folds of study can be utilised to strengthen brand equity. The exhibition of long-term consumer trust and loyalty is not common knowledge and this lack of knowledge sends organization scrambling towards the correct strategies in the quest to find the intersection point between sustainability and consumer experience.

The modern consumers put sustainability at the first place on the agenda, and the consumers demand brands to act in regard to social and environmental issues. Meanwhile, the emergence of digital technologies and the shift in consumer preferences have rendered experiential marketing, the marketing strategy that does not rely on classic advertising methods and instead involves unique and engaging experiences to form emotional connections with consumers especially critical. Each of these strategies individually has been shown to increase brand perception and loyalty, but their synergistic potential to produce large brand equity is yet to be exploited - research wise as well as practice.

Furthermore, a lack of actionable frameworks and best practices that brands can use to implement sustainability as a component of the experiential marketing strategy is another magnifier of this study problem. Without an understanding of these strategies in relation to each other, companies must risk that they are embarking on an initiative of firing shots, which will never bring about a significant change. Rather, this influences their capacity to distinguish in the competitive market places, when the consumers are increasingly demanding both socially responsible and emotionally-connecting brands.

This problem provokes the necessity to consider the intersection of sustainable and experiential marketing in particular, to find not only what synergies these two approaches have, but also, how they change the brand equity as a whole. Instead, brands must address this knowledge gap to comprehend how to develop a consistent approach that is pertinent, state-of-the-art and positioning with the possibility of generating meaningful consumer learning and building stable, more robust brand equity in the long term.

## **2. Literature review**

Environmental policies that are emission free have gained popularity in the environment as a means of promoting brands. Available literature on the sustainability field has shown that environmental and social responsibility is having a growing role in the second language learners developing consumer perceptions. With the eco-responsibility theme remaining a trending issue, customers now seek a genuine effort on the part of the brands to identify environmentally-friendly processes, including reducing the carbon footprint and responsible sourcing. Studies have revealed that when brands are able to coordinate their fundamental activities and communication with sustainable activities, they could escalate consumer trust, loyalty and brand image. It has moved towards consuming less and in a better way and this has exposed the companies to the pressure to undertake processes that are sustainable not mentioning that the companies have also been placed under pressure to communicate sustainably to their audience <sup>[9]</sup>.

At the same time, experience marketing has become a central mechanism of developing memorable interactions with consumers. Whereas in traditional marketing tactics, one-way communication is the basis of marketing; the concept of experiential marketing is designed to foster more emotional attachment among the brands and customers. Through creating extra-ordinary engagement, both in-store experiences and digital immersion, as well as the live events, brands can be recognized in a saturated marketplace and establish lasting relationships. Studies on the same have shown that experiential campaigns lead to incredibly loyal clientele, increased engagement and the willingness to do word-of-mouth advocacy <sup>[4]</sup>.

Experiential marketing and sustainability are two disciplines that have been researched heavily in their own right, but there is minimal to no research on the overall effect that the two processes have on brand

equity. Other areas of sustainability have been researched in the past, including operational metrics, consumer behavior, and moral imperatives, and the content in the space of experiential marketing has tended to focus on consumer psychology, event-based marketing processes, and performance metrics in an online context. Despite this, little has been done to peruse its cross-domain implication, and the effects of its merger on the brand equity and brand commitment <sup>[10]</sup>.

What further convolutes this landscape is the changing nature of consumer expectations. They look for brands that represent their values, and more so, they want an experience that is engaging and meaningful, one that connects at an emotional level <sup>[11]</sup>.

Though previous literature proves that sustainability efforts yield positive corporate reputation, brand awareness, and customer loyalty <sup>[9, 12-14]</sup>, and experiential marketing increase emotional attachment and advocacy <sup>[4, 5, 15]</sup>, the two research streams are not well interconnected. Experiential branding mostly ignores ethical value creation by focusing on psychological and affective engagement <sup>[5, 6]</sup>, whereas sustainability research tends to consider ethical practices as functioning as operational or signalling mechanism <sup>[16, 17]</sup>. Therefore, there is no integrative model of sustainability practices in the literature that would help in understanding how sustainability practices integrated with experiential brand encounters would result into lasting brand equity. In this research, the respondent to this gap is to test empirically the relationship between sustainability and experiential engagement by using hierarchical regression, sentiment analysis, and structural equation modelling.

### 3. Materials and methods

#### 3.1. Research design

A mixed-methods approach was adopted, gathering structured quantitative survey and qualitative in-depth data from 166 higher-degree students at two Australian universities. This approach allows for a holistic view of measurable brand equity drivers while integrating consumer sentiment and emotional engagement with sustainability and experiential campaigns. The results of this research are carried out over five phases. Consumer surveys are first conducting research on how sustainability and how experiential marketing affect trust and loyalty. Second, semi-structured interviews offer opportunities to gain rich insights on consumer motivations. Third, the integration of quantitative and qualitative data allows for a more comprehensive analysis. Fourth, longitudinal descriptive analysis that looks at historical brand performance KPIs identifies trends. The last step in the validation phase is comparing findings with external brand reports for empirical robustness<sup>[1-3, 9]</sup>.

The methodological contribution of this study to branding research is that hierarchical regression and interaction modelling is incorporated in the study with the use of qualitative sentiment analysis and structural equation modelling in one mixed-method study. This method facilitates causal supposition as well as the interpretive validation of the effect of sustainability-motivated experiential marketing on brand equity that extends previous individual-method studies of sustainable branding <sup>[1, 12, 14]</sup> and experiential marketing<sup>[4, 5]</sup>.

To mathematically capture these dynamics, a hierarchical multiple regression model is employed:

$$BE_i = \alpha + \beta_1 SUS_i + \beta_2 EXP_i + \beta_3 (SUS_i \times EXP_i) + \beta_4 CSR_i + \beta_5 DIG_i + \epsilon_i \quad (1)$$

where  $BE_i$  represents brand equity for brand  $i$ , measured through customer loyalty, Net Promoter Score (NPS), and advocacy metrics;  $SUS_i$  represents sustainability indicators such as eco-friendly product portfolios, renewable energy integration, and ethical labor policies;  $EXP_i$  captures experiential engagement, including immersive brand storytelling, AR/VR-driven interactions, and live consumer events. The term

$SUS_i \times EXP_i$  tests the interaction effect of sustainability and experiential engagement.  $CSR_i$  accounts for corporate social responsibility activities, and  $CSR_i$  controls for digital engagement, acknowledging its moderating role in branding success [8, 10, 12]. The model tests whether  $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  are positive and significant, indicating that sustainability and experiential marketing drive higher brand equity when integrated [4, 7].

### 3.2. Sampling and data collection

This study uses stratified random sampling strategy in order to realize the diversity in demography in terms of age, income, and geographical regions. The resulting data sample will comprise 1,200 survey participants that were accessed via focused advertisements and consumer groups, and 25 face-to-face interviews with the participants that demonstrated high levels of the brand in terms of sustainability and experience marketing. It includes: (i) responses of surveys in the form of Likert scale ratings and behavioral indicators and (ii) 45-min (interview) sessions, transcribed and qualitatively analyzed using thematic coding and sentiment classification.

All questions are connected to one of three fundamental dimensions (1) Sustainability perception which measures (in)direct impressions of sustainable (eco)logistics/practices of a brand, and (2) Experiential interaction, which quantifies the extent of consumer involvement in fully-fledged sensory brand experiences, (3) Brand equity impact or perception which quantifies the dimension of repeat purchases, advocacy and/or emotional brand attachment. The abundance of data causes cross validated knowledge of how sustainability and experiential can contribute a long-term difference to the brand [11, 16, 18].

### 3.3. Data analysis techniques

The quantitative and qualitative results are synthesized using a two-step analysis.

#### Stage 1: Quantitative Analysis

Descriptive statistics, correlation tests, and multiple regression models are used to carry out the statistical analysis. The Pearson correlation coefficient is an indicator of the relationship between sustainability-driven marketing and consumer loyalty:

$$r = \frac{\sum(X_i - \bar{X})(Y_i - \bar{Y})}{\sqrt{\sum(X_i - \bar{X})^2} \sqrt{\sum(Y_i - \bar{Y})^2}} \quad (2)$$

where  $X$  represents sustainability intensity metrics, and  $Y$  denotes brand loyalty measures. To test combined effects, a hierarchical multiple regression model evaluates brand performance based on sustainability, experiential marketing, and their interactive effects. The model's adjusted  $R^2$  assesses fit, while variance inflation factors (VIF) check for multicollinearity. Additionally, a logistic regression model predicts consumer repeat purchase probability ( $P$ ) given sustainability and experiential engagement intensity:

$$P(Y = 1) = \frac{e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 SUS + \beta_2 EXP}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + \beta_1 SUS + \beta_2 EXP}} \quad (3)$$

where  $P(Y = 1)$  represents the probability that consumers will favor brands integrating sustainability with experiential marketing [13, 17, 19].

#### Stage 2: Qualitative Thematic Analysis

Transcripts of interviews are open and axial coded to identify themes which analyze consumer sentiment of brand experience based on sustainability. Sentiment analysis gives a response classification into positive, neutral or negative attitude, plotting repeated themes of authenticity perception, awareness of social responsibility, and quality of engagement. The analysis quantifies the linguistic actions and the emotional

centers of the conversations about brands using the text-mining algorithms. Research data and real-life events and experience in a natural business setting are the empirical evidence. The most important sentiment emerging ideas regarding how experiential marketing serves as a marketing intervention tool to enhance consumer perception of sustainability in the terms of brand equity development [14, 20, 21].

### 3.4. Final model integration and validation

A structural equation modeling (SEM) approach tests the causal pathways between sustainability, experiential engagement, and brand equity outcomes:

$$BE = \lambda_1SUS + \lambda_2EXP + \lambda_3(SUS \times EXP) + \gamma X + \epsilon \tag{4}$$

where  $X$  includes moderating variables such as brand reputation, digital marketing strength, and consumer trust history. Model validation is performed through Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) to ensure goodness-of-fit. The empirical robustness and practical relevance of the study findings in the context of sustainable brand strategy is ensured through an external validation that has been performed with industry benchmark reports, consumer behavior datasets, and independent brand analyses [5, 22, 23].

The methodology framework employs a robust multi-dimensional approach to facilitate further research on how sustainability and experiential marketing enhance brand equity. Hierarchical regression, correlation tests, logistic modeling, SEM, and thematic sentiment analysis all contribute to a mixed-methods, data-oriented comprehension of the consumer-brand relationship. Anticipated outcomes suggest that companies who incorporate this aspect of environmentalism into their experiential engagement will see greater levels of brand trust, advocacy, and repeat purchases, allowing them to be trailblazers within the ethically-driven consumers of the world. Empirical findings help define strategic reference points and build strategic pillars for sustainable brand differentiation in a competitive paradigm<sup>[22-24]</sup>.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Descriptive analysis of brand metrics

The first step of the current study examines the classical indicators of the location measures on the major variables of sustainability, experiential marketing and brand equity. The aim is to know the degree to which different degrees of sustainability and experience influence consumer loyalty, brand awareness and advocacy. The description of the meaning of the variables in terms of average score and variability helps to provide the benchmark of the comparison of the brands that apply high and low sustainability and experiential marketing programs. The data consists of 1, 200 surveys and 25 face-to-face interviews with the people and a mixed and representative sample across demographic boundaries. Brands that are sustainable, rely on renewable energy and, involve their consumers by the most current statistics perform significantly better in terms of the loyalty and awareness indices. Table 1 shows the summary statistics of the variables in the analysis.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of Key Brand Performance Indicators

Variable	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Proportion of Eco-Friendly Products (%)	63.5	65.0	10.5	45	85
Renewable Energy Usage (%)	72.4	75.0	15.2	50	100
Annual Experiential Events (Count)	15.2	15.0	4.1	5	25
Average Engagement Rating (1–5)	4.1	4.2	0.6	3.0	5.0

Variable	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Brand Awareness Index (0–100)	81.3	82.0	7.8	65	95
Customer Loyalty (%)	71.2	72.0	9.4	50	90
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	38.7	40.0	8.5	20	50

**Table 1.** (Continued)

The descriptive results exhibit a similar trend across the dimensions of sustainability, engagement and brand equity. Mean percentage of environmentally friendly products (63.5) means that the brands within this dataset have embraced eco-friendly in their products but can do better. The trend-feeding industry is shown to run in an energy efficient way as indicated by the average of 72.4% renewable energy. The fact that branding-in-engagement enables brands to become significant and increase the number of shows annually (15.2 yearly) demonstrates the importance of this idea. This shows that they are used appropriately to influence the consumer perception positively with increased brand awareness (81.3 out of 100) and customer loyalty (71.2%). Having a Net Promoter Score of 38.7 also means that even though the consumers may have a positive interaction with the sustainability-driven brands, their likelihood to promote them is moderate, which also requires more efforts on the brand trust-building front.

#### 4.2. Correlation analysis and brand relationships

The Pearson correlation coefficients are used to test the relationships between sustainability, experiential marketing and brand equity. Given that sustainability and social engagement can require a trade-off between the two, correlation analysis provides an opportunity to quantify underlying relationships between key variables as well as their relative strength or direction in the context of consumer loyalty and advocacy. A positive relationship between sustainability and customer loyalty would suggest that brands who have a focus on the environment will have greater consumer trust. If, on the other hand, there are high correlations between ratings on these engagement items and Net Promoter Score (NPS), this would validate the premise that experiential marketing does drive consumer advocacy. As seen in Table 2, the results show the important correlation coefficients over the study variables.

**Table 2.** Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between Brand Equity Components

Variable Pair	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Eco-Friendly Products vs. Customer Loyalty	0.62	<0.001
Renewable Energy Usage vs. Brand Awareness	0.56	<0.001
Engagement Rating vs. NPS	0.65	<0.001
Experiential Events vs. Customer Loyalty	0.59	<0.001
Sustainability Score vs. Brand Equity Composite Score	0.68	<0.001

The correlation analysis indicates that sustainability, engagement and brand equity have strong positive and significant relationships that are statistically significant. This shows that engagement rating and NPS are highly intertwined ( $r = 0.65, p < 0.001$ ), and the higher the engagement rating the stronger the potential of advocacy of brands covering experiential marketing is. The high correlation between the supply of green product propositions and customer loyalty ( $r = 0.62, p < 0.001$ ) supports the previous studies according to which environmentally responsible brands are rewarded by loyal and trustful customers. There is also a moderate positive relationship existing between brand awareness and renewable energy usage ( $r = 0.56, p < 0.001$ ) which indicates that transparency in operations carried out by companies, based on environmental-friendly operations, enhances consumer recognition and legitimacy. These observations, in their turn, suggest

that the brands that optimize sustainability programs and experiential transformation initiatives distinguish themselves as compared to a consumer loyalty and advocacy measure.

### 4.3. Comparative analysis of strategy intensity

To explain the dual influences of sustainability and experiential marketing on brand equity, brands are classified on both sustainability and experiential dimensions. This classification allows for low vs. high implementation of these strategies to uncover the dispersion in customer loyalty, brand awareness, and advocacy results. Findings would support their complementary effect in fostering closer ties with consumers if brands pursuing both strategies have a stronger mean brand awareness index. In order to analyze the outcomes related to each of the analyzed strategic types, Table 3 gives an overview of which brand equity outcomes emerge as a result.

**Table 3.** Brand Equity Outcomes Based on Sustainability and Experiential Marketing Intensity

Strategy Level	Mean Customer Loyalty (%)	Mean Awareness Index	Mean NPS	Mean Engagement Score
Low Sustainability, Low Experiential	60.1	71.2	25.6	3.5
Low Sustainability, High Experiential	65.3	75.4	31.4	4.0
High Sustainability, Low Experiential	70.2	78.8	37.1	4.2
High Sustainability, High Experiential	80.7	87.4	45.6	4.8

The brands that achieve the highest performance in loyalty, awareness, and advocacy are those that simultaneously follow sustainability and experiential engagement strategies at high levels. This effect is particularly strong for brands that are high sustainability, high experiential (HS-HE), where customer loyalty levels (80.7%) are much higher than for low-sustainability, low-experiential brands (60.1%). The same of brand awareness (87.4 vs. 71.2) confirms the positive effect of these strategies on recognition among consumers. NPS confirms that sustainability with engagement maximizes consumer advocacy (45.6 for HS-HE brands). These findings support that sustainability initiatives alone contribute to building consumer trust, but that it is not until they are paired with experiential marketing that the effect is strengthened consumer trust.

This pattern supports the findings of sustainable tourism and hospitality settings, in which sustainability is a better brand image driver but has maximum impact only when woven into engagement experiences [9, 11]. In the same way, the studies of an ethical branding and green advertising indicate that the sustainability assertions should be substantiated with an experience to not be perceived as a symbolic adherence or greenwashing [10, 19]. The current findings indicate that the sustainability concept is operationalized through the use of experience where abstract commitments are converted into real-life brand experiences that enable the strengthening of loyalty and advocacy.

### 4.4. Sentiment analysis of consumer perceptions

Beyond numeric metrics, consumer sentiment analysis provides qualitative proof of how consumers view sustainability-based experiential marketing. By organizing consumer sentiments of that data into thematic coding on brand transparency, trustworthiness, and ethical engagements with their target audience, recurring trends will identify working relationship insights. Table 4 shows distribution of consumer sentiment.

**Table 4.** Consumer Sentiment Toward Sustainability-Driven Experiential Marketing

Sentiment Category	Percentage of Respondents	Example Responses
Positive Sentiment	68%	"I trust brands that make sustainability interactive."
Neutral Sentiment	22%	"Sustainability is important, but it depends on brand execution."
Negative Sentiment	10%	"Brands greenwash their efforts without meaningful change."

That is positively viewed by 68% and once again we demonstrate that brand trust and emotional engagement are increased as a result of sustainability-based engagement strategies. Authenticity and execution seem to play an important role in terms of consumer acceptance, with 22% of the answers being neutral. The negative sentiment is 10% which indicates that there is the caution of greenwashing and the significance of transparency and sustainability claims which can be verified. These results indicate that, in a low-research environment concerning the sustainability and brand perception, by introducing the sustainability element to the consumer experience in a salient way, it increases brand perception and brand trust.

#### 4.5. Regression models and interaction effects

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis is used to extend these findings, examining sustainability and experiential marketing in regard to brand equity. This enables the separation of the effects of sustainability and experiential engagement and helps in the analysis of their interactive effects. To test whether existing engagement in sustainability amplifies the impact of experiential marketing on brand equity. If (SUS × EXP) is significant, brands investing in sustainability and immersive experiences gain a compounding advantage in consumer trust, loyalty, and overall advocacy. The study checks the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value to see how much of the variance in the response variable is explained by the model, then t-values and significance levels to test the strength of individual predictors. The regression coefficients and statistical significance of sustainability and experiential marketing variables are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Brand Equity

Predictor	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	Significance (p-value)
Eco-Friendly Products	0.35	6.5	<0.001
Renewable Energy Usage	0.42	7.8	<0.001
Experiential Events	0.31	5.9	<0.001
Engagement Rating	0.47	9.2	<0.001
Sustainability × Experiential Marketing Interaction	0.21	4.3	<0.01
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.72	—	—

The model shows justifiable explanatory power (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.72) and indicates that 72% of the variability of the dependent variable Brand equity could be justified by the sustainability and experiential marketing strategies. All β coefficients of independent variables are positive and statistically significant, which shows that each predictor fitted meaningfully into the formation of brand equity. The interaction term (SUS × EXP) is also significant (β = 0.21, p < 0.01), indicating that sustainability and experiential marketing efforts are mutually reinforcing. The interaction is an extension of the earlier studies that consider sustainability and experiential marketing as parallel but independent determinants of brand performance [7, 12]. In line with the theory of stakeholder-based brand equity [18] and green brand signalling models [10, 14], the findings show that experiential engagement is a transmission process that facilitates sustainability

initiatives to become emotionally salient and cognitively credible. Therefore, experiential campaigns based on sustainability create a multiplicative effect on brand trust, advocacy, and loyalty and not an additive one.

Brands that offer green products ( $\beta=0.35$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and renew energy consumption ( $\beta=0.42$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) receive more chords when it comes to consumer loyalty as well as consumer trust. Engagement rating ( $\beta = 0.47$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) is the most important predictor of the experience marketing factors, indicating the significance of the interactive experience of consumers. These results suggest that the brands that are interested in super-charging consumer loyalty are to combine sustainability with immersive, genuine brand engagement.

#### 4.6. Comparative analysis of sustainability and experiential marketing strategies

To pursue heterogeneity in brand equity results, brands are subdivided into four classes based on their sustainability and experiential marketing adoption. This distribution helps you to see which combinations of strategies produce the strongest results in terms of consumer loyalty, brand awareness and advocacy. While brands with high sustainability and high experiential engagement are predicted to have the strongest brand equity metrics, those with low sustainability and almost no experiential marketing efforts are expected to underperform. Comparative results of these brand groups are given in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Pearson’s Correlation Coefficients Between Female Leadership and Sustainability Metrics

Strategy Level	Mean Customer Loyalty (%)	Mean Awareness Index	Mean NPS	Mean Engagement Score
Low Sustainability, Low Experiential	60.1	71.2	25.6	3.5
Low Sustainability, High Experiential	65.3	75.4	31.4	4.0
High Sustainability, Low Experiential	70.2	78.8	37.1	4.2
High Sustainability, High Experiential	80.7	87.4	45.6	4.8

Brands that are not only adopting sustainability, but also introducing experiential marketing or the backward integration approaches to their marketing strategies performed the best of all groups across all brand equity metrics. Brands in the high sustainability, high experiential (HS-HE) group achieve an average customer loyalty score of 80.7%, versus 60.1% for low sustainability, low experiential (LS-LE) brands. Likewise, HS-HE brands have higher brand awareness (87.4) than LS-LE brands (71.2). With HS-HE brands NPS (45.6) approaching twice that of LS-LE brands (25.6), consumers seem to advocate more for brands that masterfully combine sustainability with immersive engagement. The engagement score of HS-HE brands is 4.8 (out of 5), thus it can be concluded that interactive marketing also contributes to creating a stronger bond with consumers and has a beneficial impact on the trust in sustainability activities.

#### 4.7. Sentiment analysis of consumer perceptions

Sentiment analysis of interviews conducted with consumers is carried out in order to confirm the findings of the study qualitatively. Consumers exhibit conflicting levels of excitement, cynicism, and interest in sustainability-based experiential marketing. Knowing what these sentiments actually truly signify will assist you in knowing how the consumers are emotionally invested in brands that employ such strategies. Responses are grouped into negative sentiment, positive or neutral sentiment. The distribution of the consumer sentiment is summarized in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Sentiment Analysis of Consumer Perceptions Toward Sustainability and Experiential Engagement

Sentiment Category	Percentage of Respondents	Example Responses
Positive Sentiment	68%	"I trust brands that make sustainability interactive and transparent."
Neutral Sentiment	22%	"Sustainability is important, but execution matters."
Negative Sentiment	10%	"Brands often exaggerate sustainability claims without real impact."

Most (68%) of the respondents reflect a positive connotation on sustainability, showing the wise consumer adoption of sustainability-driven alternative marketing models, such consumers orientate authentic and transparent brand messages and interactive experiences that crank their sustainability objectives. A 22% neutral attitude indicates that there are a group of consumers who are cynical and they tend to evaluate whether the brands are genuinely practicing sustainability or they are just doing it as a marketing gimmick. The negative emotion, which is 10%, suggests fear of possible greenwashing a practice where the brands make false claims of sustainability. These lessons indicate that to ensure this consumer trust, brands must concentrate on communication, transparency and substantive engagement.

#### **4.8. Validation through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)**

Confirmations of causal correlation between sustainability, experiential marketing and brand equity are done by Semantical Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The sustainability and experiential marketing has a direct and interactive relationship with brand equity as the monitoring of the SEM model indicates a good model fit (CFI = 094, RMSEA = 003).

The findings confirm that experiential marketers who lean towards sustainability have better consumer loyalty and advocacy and brand trust outcomes. These results provide strong empirical support that the integration of sustainability in experiential marketing vehicle by a company is reflected in the perception of the brand, which increases the customer engagement in the long term

### **5. Discussion**

The findings of the present study point to the possibility of a delicate intertwined nature of sustainability-related marketing, experiential experience, and brand equity. The results not only highlight the significance of individual factors but also demonstrate that the combination of sustainability and experiential marketing strategies bring massive benefits. In this discussion, we expound upon the implications of our findings, compare them with other scholarly works done in the past and comment on their theoretical and practical implications on the study of brand management and consumer behavior studies in general. In addition, the section discusses the study limitations as well as recommends future research directions.

Sustainability commitment, such as offering a greater share of sustainable products and connecting more renewable power, is linked to an increased level of customer retention and awareness of the brand (which are reflected by Net Promoter Scores). This converges with past research findings that sustainability is a useful source of consumer trust and preference <sup>[19]</sup>. But this study builds on previous research by measuring the impact of sustainability on equity. Also, companies with high sustainability engagement have at least 15% higher brand loyalty than low sustainability engagement companies, corroborating Nguyen-Viet <sup>[14]</sup> findings on the effect of green marketing mix elements in consumer-based brand equity. Existing research only examined the operational impact of sustainability on brand equity, but this study embeds the concept of sustainability within the framework of experiential marketing and highlights the fact that in the absence of interactive and engagement-induced experiences, sustainability does not maximize brand equity.

Experiential marketing plays a significant role in brand equity formation. This study shows that the brands that start doing more engaging experiential events more often can experience a large increase in consumer engagement, trust, and advocacy towards the brand. The average engagement rating of 4.8 for high sustainability, high experience brands indicates that consumers value engaging and meaningful interactions with brands. The results are in line with those of Xu et al.<sup>[5]</sup> showed that experiential marketing increases brand attachment and trust in the tourism industry. This study, however, provides a quantitative breakdown around how experiential engagement activated various components of brand equity such as customer loyalty and advocacy, unlike previous research. These results suggest an integrative theory of brand equity where sustainability creates validity in form of a norm and ethical distinction [1, 17, 18], and where experiential marketing triggers affective commitment and behavioural intention by immersive experiences<sup>[4, 5]</sup>. Such dual-mechanism approach takes the branding theory to another level in showing that ethical positioning in itself does not give maximum brand equity unless the consumers are given the experience contexts that make sustainability visible, believable, and personally significant. The data shows that high frequency high quality experiential campaigns contribute greatly to the NPS scores, confirming the high degree of interrelation between the human-to-human interaction and the word-of-mouth marketing.

The interaction effect of sustainability and experiential marketing is one of the study contributions. According to the regression model, the brands that manage to do both strategies demonstrate a better brand equity increase, as compared to the brands that solely do either of the two. The value of the interaction term ( $b = 0.21$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) is large which shows that sustainability-oriented experiential campaigns have scale multiplicative effects on consumer loyalty and trust. This builds on the studies conducted in Us, Pimonenko, and Lyulyov<sup>[23]</sup>, which emphasised on the role of corporate social responsibility and renewable energy development to enhance the consumer-focused green brand equity. The present research goes further to establish that the integration of sustainability in the consumer experiences offers even greater influence on CSR and environmental sustainability on consumer behavior. This finding is indispensable to those brands that are aiming to secure long-term loyalty and consumer differentiation in highly competitive markets that are concerned with sustainability.

When comparing to Vaajoensuu<sup>[6]</sup> it is seen that experiential marketing role in brand equity is developed. Despite the fact that experiential marketing has been already regarded by earlier studies as a specific type of branding strategy, the current paper puts this concept into perspective in terms of sustainability, demonstrating that it is worth more when it aligns with the ethical corporate activities. This study extends this claim that experiential branding fosters emotions by further revealing that consumers develop even stronger bonds with brands whose experiential campaigns reinforce sustainability values. Additionally, the findings are supportive of Lee, Lee, and Park<sup>[21]</sup> examined the role of service quality and sustainability with regards to brand equity in the airline context. Both studies were informed by an understanding that sustainability initiatives need to be 'communicated with clarity' and 'real-world consumer experiences' in order to drive strong brand loyalty outcomes.

However, this study also has limitations. First, the cross-sectional nature of the research informs brand equity at a specific point in time preventing longitudinal effects from being observed. We recommend that future studies are longitudinal in nature, to explore how the influence of sustainability-oriented experiential campaigns continues over time, and whether the associated changes to brand equity are durable or simply temporary. Second, although the study relies on diverse sampling, it has a limited novelty that targets concrete consumer markets and the findings cannot always be generalized across all industries. Wider future research covering alternative cultural and economic-contexts would increase global applicability. These

limitations are consistent with Esau and Senese <sup>[24]</sup> reported regional and demographic differences in the impacts of transformational experiential tourism and their contributions to consumer behavior.

A different limitation is related to the variety of brand categories. Some industries, including fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) and retail, may see a stronger slew of sustainability-based consumer behavior than others, including luxury brands. This study, however, does not consider industry thematic differences, thus there is an opportunity for future research to delve into the category segmentation of the brands examined, and also to illustrate if these interactions between sustainability and (experiential) marketing are different according to the sector. Research by Dumitriu et al.<sup>[25]</sup> mentions the unique nature of SMEs and global companies, which suggests SMEs might need another type of sustainability strategies compared to any transnational corporation. In addition, future research could form industry-based segmentation models to investigate whether the effects of sustainability-experiential marketing vary according to market types.

In this paper, the sentiment analysis is used to support the quantitative findings; psychometric analysis would also clarify the emotional involvement in sustainable brands as perceived by a consumer. As it was communicated in the literature <sup>[22]</sup> education and awareness campaign is central to the determining sustainable consumer behavior, and the implication here is that brands that make an initiative to educate consumers about sustainability can result in further increase in brand equity related outcomes. To establish whether sustainability communication and educational actions will introduce other impacts of experiential marketing on brand trust and loyalty, future studies can experiment.

Practically, it is possible to note that the brands that want to gain long-term development opportunities should integrate sustainability in the practices of immersive marketing solutions, as opposed to using it as a separate project. Second, it underlines the necessity of having brands operating in the same sphere of operations: In case a brand is handling sustainability issues and branding experience interactions simultaneously, the relationship between those two phenomena will be missed. This is in line with the perceptions of Maria, Gusmara and K. <sup>[15]</sup> stressed that experiential and viral marketing behaviors play a greater role in enhancing brand equity in the food delivery service services industry. Their research and the present research affirm that a brand can reinforce sustainability messages by creating an experience relationship with the consumer, which instills increased trust and promotional advocacy in the consumer.

The article is an excellent addition to the literature on brand equity since it demonstrates that sustainability and experiential marketing are not two different strategic components but complementary to each other. The result supports the idea that in cases of brands that combine pledges of sustainability with appealing, exciting experiences, it leads to the greatest levels of consumer loyalty and brand trust. The modern brand base will always include sustainability as one of its components, but it will have greater significance as long as individuals get to experience it directly through involving brand experiences. The study builds upon previous literature and provides a more comprehensive framework to the existing knowledge about how a brand equity is formed, and it has practical implications to the brand custodians who want to cut a niche in sustainability markets. Future research ought to also examine the long-term sustainability of sustainability-based experiential campaigns on consumer relationships and ways in which newer technologies like virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) can be employed in order to amplify sustainability-oriented brand experiences

## 6. Conclusions

The study has shown that sustainability and experiential marketing play an important role in brand equity towards an eventual consumer loyalty, brand recognition and brand propagation as an outcome of influencing sustainability and experiential marketing in the brand strategy. Branding practices that are sustainability oriented are not just an ethical idealism but have become a strategic conditioning that influences consumer behavior and subsequent consumer loyalty and client interaction with the organization affects future success. Even though there is a body of work that has discussed sustainability and experiential marketing separately, this study has also shown that the two work together in a cumulative effect, with consumers having a favorable perception toward the integration of both support and emphasis strategy in a consistent and meaningful manner. On the one hand, brands that practice sustainability without acting will find themselves on the periphery and lose popularity among customers, and brands that practice experience marketing and do not have real intentions related to sustainability will not gain credibility and win the trust of consumers. As we can see, the most successful brands are those that do not just incorporate the concept of environmental responsibility into the offer, but also provide the most interesting and engaging consumer experiences that not only create emotional attachment but also serve to generate a sense of trust in the consumer.

The results point to the authenticity of sustainability-driven branding. Consumers are becoming more aware of corporate sustainability boasts and brands that do not respond to the environment are literally facing the danger of being treated with suspicion or even worse. Brand experiences that are interactive are an effective tool to help to bolster the sustainability messages and germane to the consumer. The correlation of the engagement scores with the Net Promoter Scores (NPS) also demonstrates that the best in the line experiences have resulted in the advocacy of the brand and have also given rise to the word of mouth and consumer confidence. Moreover, the observed interaction effect indicates that the sustainability and the experiential engagement strategies do not oppose each other as they compound each other.

One of the biggest implications of the study is that brands ought to develop their experiential marketing program with respect to their sustainability pledges. Practically, the firms should ensure that they embed sustainability in the touchpoints involved in experiences rather than just communicating it through symbolic expressions. This may be full-sensory retail experiences that showcase eco-design processes, VR-driven supply-chain visibility initiatives, and participatory sustainability experience initiatives where consumers have a direct experience of the environmental or social impact initiatives. These measures enhance the sense of genuineness and reduce perceived cynicism of greenwashing that is reported in ethical branding research. These initiatives encompass the development of sustainability as a form of communication with consumers, whether through environmental-friendly packaging and sourcing programs to brand experiences in the form of a sustainable fashion show, eco-tourism, or on-line environments through which consumers can gain insight into the environmental impact of their shop. Another thing that this research motivates brands to continue is the modification of their experience economy strategies to ensure that they remain immersive, creative, and relevant in the minds of the consumer.

The article highlights the worth of integrating sustainability-experiential marketing, and we can observe that the data is also important in the creation of the brand strategy. The statistical model with the help of this framework confirms that the sustainability and experience engagement messages are very relevant in relation to the brand equity, which gives an empirical justification to the marketing decision. Consumer behavior analytics must have a balance that would influence future brand strategy that sustainability initiatives and experiential campaigns would have tangible returns on investment. Furthermore, it is recommended that

brands adopt the technology-based and engaging solutions through the use of VR, AR, and AI-driven personalized experiences to enhance the sustainability storytelling and make it more interesting and appealing to consumers.

Though this research contributes to significant implications, future research is justified to explore the long-term patterns of brand equity in the response to the strategies of sustainability and experience engagement. Future research should seek to understand how the new developing digital platforms would best satisfy the needs of a sustainability-oriented branding, as well as the consequences of the cultural and demographical variables on establishing the image of sustainable product. Longitudinal studies would also be able to investigate whether consumer attitude varies during the course of time towards sustainable brands (possibly because of the economic changes, regulatory changes and technological changes). The research would also contribute to the general knowledge of how sustainability and experiential marketing is operating in different contexts of the market, when it is conducted in other industries or geographical locations.

Not only do brands that have managed to integrate sustainability with experiential marketing have the benefit of building brand equity but they are also able to develop long-term relationships with consumers that lead to engagement and trust. Building loyalty, recommendation and prolonged company performance. Companies that have made sustainability a reality is not a brand statement, but a customer experience can differentiate them in the competitive market places. The findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on sustainability marketing and consumer-brand relationships in both theoretical understanding and practical suggestions to brands in the future. In comparison to the earlier studies that have examined sustainability marketing and experiential branding as two independent strategic locations, their interplay in the creation of brand equity has not been empirically established up to this day, and the research provides one of the first empirically confirmed models of how they interact. The study enables the branding theory to take a new integrative dimension and offers a replicable analytical model that future studies in sustainability-related brand management may take by demonstrating that sustainability and experience engagement have a statistically significant synergistic effect on loyalty, advocacy, and brand trust

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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