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Do Gen Z Students Love Green? Evidence from Cottonink Consumers

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Abstract
The fashion industry is perceived as having a negative ecological impact. The industry then responded by adapting to the green marketing communication strategy to offer added value to consumers who tend to be critical of environmental issues. One of the brands implementing this is COTTONINK. Drawing from the characteristics of Gen Z, as the main market for the fashion industry, this study attempts to see how green perceived value and brand experience influence brand love as mediated by brand attitude in Gen Z consumers in Indonesia.This study incorporates the theory of green perceived value, brand experience, green brand attitude, and green brand love. This study is quantitative research employing survey method. The research sample are Generation Z students in 4 major cities in Indonesia, namely Jakarta, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and Bandung, with a sum of 200 people. This study suggests that the green perceived value of consumers does not influence their brand love for COTTONINK. On the contrary, brand experience is a compelling factor in building brand attitude and brand love of Gen Z consumers in Indonesia towards the brand.

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Introduction

Some studies mention that consumers indicated a tendency to opt for environmentally friendly products in various lines. Nielsen Global reports that 56% of consumers are willing to pay more to buy products produced by companies that conduct business with sustainability principles (Borah et al., 2023; Gahlot Sarkar et al., 2019) A situation is found in Indonesia, where there has been an increase in the number of consumers who care about environmentally friendly products by 112% (Nariswari, n.d.). This positive trend is most found in food (56.7%), household (47.8%), clothing (37.4%), as well as health and cosmetic products (30.6%) (Jayani, 2021).

Although fashion is one of the main commodities expected to meet environmentally friendly expectations, the industry is still perceived to have a negative ecological impact. This concern is primarily caused by irresponsible waste disposal practices and global environmental pollution (Centobelli et al., 2022) . On the other hand, the market demand for the clothing industry moves rapidly along with seasonal trends, lifestyles, and various other factors, coining the term “fast fashion” (Centobelli et al., 2022) . The fashion industry then addresses this paradox using a green marketing

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communication strategy; an extensive effort to strategically promote products, goods, services or initiatives based on the principles of environmental friendliness and sustainability (Ummah, 2023). This strategy offers added value to consumers who tend to be conscientious of environmental issues. It is such creative way to create message based on contemporary needs. It is because many companies must compete to create creative ways to communicate to attract the public's attention (Maulana et al., 2024).

Meanwhile, from the academic perspective, there are more increasing studies on green products by evaluating Green Perceived Value (Woo & Kim, 2019) . Green perceived value could be important variable because it can influence consumers to have good attitude toward the brand. It is mentioned by Woo and Kim (2019) that this Green Perceived Value has important role in influence Brand Attitude. Similar study in the field of green marketing communications also shows a significant influence of green brand image on green brand attitude, love, and trust (Salehzadeh et al., 2023) .

In Indonesia, COTTONINK, a local clothing brand, is well known for their priorities towards utilization of local and raw materials, originating from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®) or Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC™)-certified industrial forests. COTTONINK strives to convince Generation Z consumers (hereinafter referred to as 'Gen Z') as their main market, that they are dedicated to the environment. The green marketing approach in COTTONINK is in line with the characteristics of Gen Z who are consumptive of fashion products (Perbawaningsih et al., 2022) and are aware of environmental sustainability (Dwidienawati et al., 2021; Katie Jahns, 2021). This study will evaluate the Green Perceived Value of COTTONINK from the perspective of Gen Z consumers.

Another study conducted by Ansu-Mensah (2021) and Salehzadeh et al.,(2023) also highlighted the influence of green brand management on the urge to consume green products. This study analyze the perceptions of green values (also known as green perceived value) (Chen & Chang, 2012) . Meanwhile, other study also mentioned that Gen Z in Indonesia has not fully internalized ecological awareness (Suminar & Raya, 2024). This previous study assessed that Gen Z in Indonesia lacks careful consideration in planning and taking action to avoid risks to humans and nature.

Based on data above, could be seen that green perceived value can influence consumers to consume green products. But on the other hand there is also study which stated that Gen Z in Indonesial lacks careful in ecological awareness. Thus, this study then tries to examine the influence of green perceived value in Indonesia Gen Z. This study also add other variables such as brand consumption experiences which are also known as brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009) as variable independent alongside green perceived value. Brand attitude is added as mediating variable and brand love as dependent variable. Addressing this gap may help scholars to examine the impact of green marketing towards brand affections, such as love and loyalty.

Furthermore, the inclusion of brand experience and brand attitude is essential because contemporary consumers, especially Gen Z, interact with brands through multidimensional experiences across digital and physical touchpoints. Brand experience involves sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli, including communication messages, visual identity, and consumption environments (Brakus et al., 2009). Previous studies have demonstrated that positive brand experiences can strengthen consumer satisfaction and loyalty; however, limited studies

specifically examine how green-oriented brand experiences may foster deeper emotional attachment such as brand love in the sustainable fashion context. In addition, brand attitude is positioned as a mediating variable because attitudes represent consumers' overall evaluative judgments that bridge cognitive perceptions and emotional outcomes.

Reasoned Action Theory mentioned attitude can be influenced by what person believe and evaluate(Perloff, 2017) . In this study, green perceived value is belief, and the experience is the evaluation about the brand. Within the framework of Reasoned Action Theory, attitudes are central predictors that translate beliefs and experiences into behavioural and affective responses toward brands. Therefore, this study want to understand how green perceived value and brand experience can influence brand love mediated by brand attitude?

Methodology

This research employs a quantitative approach. Quantitative research is a type of research that has systematic, measurable, rational characteristics as it involves numbers (Widiasworo, 2019) . Additionally, this research explains the relationship between existing variables. Therefore, this study explores the interaction between one variable and another, specifically the influence of green perceived value and brand experience on brand love mediated by brand attitude on Gen Z consumers in Indonesia.

To collect data, this research uses a survey method through questionnaire which was shared online in google form. The questionnaire uses Likert with scale 1-4. Sugiyono defined survey as a research method that can be carried out in a certain population, but the data taken is data that comes from a sample or part of the population(Sugiyono, 2014) . The research population was generation Z student in Indonesia. The sample was 200 students of Generation Z in 4 major cities in Indonesia (Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, and Yogyakarta), with 50 people from each city selected using purposive sampling techniques based on some requirements. This technique sampling is based on the characteristics of sample which had been selected by the objectives of the research to be conducted (Nabila et al., 2024) . Respondents are male or female aged 18 to 23 years old. This range of age was used because this corresponds to the age of university students. Respondents were university students in 4 major cities in Indonesia (Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, and Yogyakarta). This is based on Ansu-Mensah's argument (2021) that students tend to purchase green products when they already have awareness of the sustainability aspects of the product. Respondents are users of COTTONINK products. The respondent were dominated by women because COTTONINK started its business as women fashion then became unisex fashion. So, the consumer of this brand also dominated by women.

This study used Smart PLS software to analyses the collected data. PLS-SEM was employed to examine measurement and structural models. The using of PLS-SEM for this study was because this technique can handle the data with model complexity, multicollinearity issue, non-normal data distributions, especially in studies with modest sample sizes. Reliability and validity were tested through composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's alpha. The structural model was then analyzed to evaluate path coefficients, R^2 values, and predictive relevance (Ghozali & Latan, 2015b) .

Table 1. Operational Table (Source: (Woo & Kim, 2019; Brakus et al., 2009 ; Safeer et al., 2020; Nayeem et al., 2019)

Variable	Dimention	Scale Likert (strongly disagre: 1 – strongly agree: 4)
Green Perceived Value	Green Social Value	1 – 4
	Green Functional Value	1 – 4
	Green Emotional Value	1 – 4
Brand Experience	Sensory	1 – 4
	Emotional	1 – 4
	Intellectual	1 – 4
	Behavioral	
Brand Love	This is superb brand	1 – 4
	This brand helps me in creating good feelings	1 – 4
	This brand is fantastic	1 – 4
	This brand helps to make me happy	1 – 4
	I am passionate to get this brand	1 – 4
	I have an excellent attachment to this brand	1 – 4
Brand Attitude	The brand is desirable	1 – 4
	The brand is very attractive	1 – 4
	I like the brand	1 – 4

This research focuses on whether Green Perceived Value (GPV) and Brand Experience (BE) influence Brand Attitude (BA) with Brand Love (BL) as the mediation. The link between these four variables was tested on a brand that emphasizes green aspects, namely COTTONINK, as a local Indonesian brand. The hypothesis of this study is as follows:

H1: There is a relationship between Green Perceived Value (X1) and Brand Love (Y).
H2: There is a relationship between Brand Experience (X2) and Brand Love (Y).
H3: There is a relationship between Green Perceived Value (X1) and Brand Attitude (Z).
H4: There is a relationship between Brand Experience (X2) and Brand Attitude (Z).
H5: There is a mediating relationship between Green Perceived Value (X1), Brand Attitude (Z), and Brand Love (Y), where Green Perceived Value (X1) indirectly affects Brand Love (Y) through Brand Attitude (Z).
H6: There is a mediating relationship between Brand Experience (X2), Brand Attitude (Z), and Brand Love (Y), where Brand Experience (X2) indirectly affects Brand Love (Y) through Brand Love (Z).

Results and Discussion

Outer Model: Validity and Reliability Test

This study attempts to examine the influence of Green Perceived Value (GPV) and Brand Experience (BE) on Brand Love (BL) as mediated by Brand Attitude (BA) of the COTTONINK brand. This study observes whether the 'green' attribute, as promoted by the brand, will result in a positive consumer attitude towards the brand. The data for this study were obtained using a survey with nonprobability sampling (n=200) distributed online to Generation Z students in Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Jakarta and Bandung.

The survey was administered online using a Google form. All respondents have met the criteria for this study, which reflected the characteristics of Gen Z as the research population. The respondents in this study were predominantly females (84.1%), who are the main market for the fashion industry in Indonesia. Most of them are students (95%) aged 21-23 years, who according to the report by Perbawaningsih et al., (2022) are the main fashion users in the world and have primary concern for environmental issues like Gen Z. Most respondents also admitted to being COTTONINK consumers.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test on the COTTONINK brand
(Source: PLS Algorithm Data Processing Results)

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha Value	Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Value
Brand Attitude	0.949	0.907
Brand Experience	0.961	0.700
Brand Love	0.923	0.726
Green Perceived Value	0.962	0.839

Table 2 indicates the validity test from application the SmartPLS 3.0. It shows examining the loading factor value and Average Variance Extract (AVE) in the tested outer model using the PLS Algorithm. The data could be considered valid if the loading factor value exceeds 0.70 and the AVE value exceeds 0.50 (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). Based on the table above, each indicator's loading factor value higher than 0.70 and the AVE values for the variables exceeded 0.50. Meanwhile, for reliability testing, Cronbach's Alpha value must be greater than 0.60 (Ghozali & Latan, 2015) and in this study, Cronbach's Alpha values for each variable are higher than 0.60.

Outer model: Measurement Model

The model of the relationship between variables was tested using path analysis assisted by SmartPLS software. The results of this test produced the model shown in Figure 2 below:

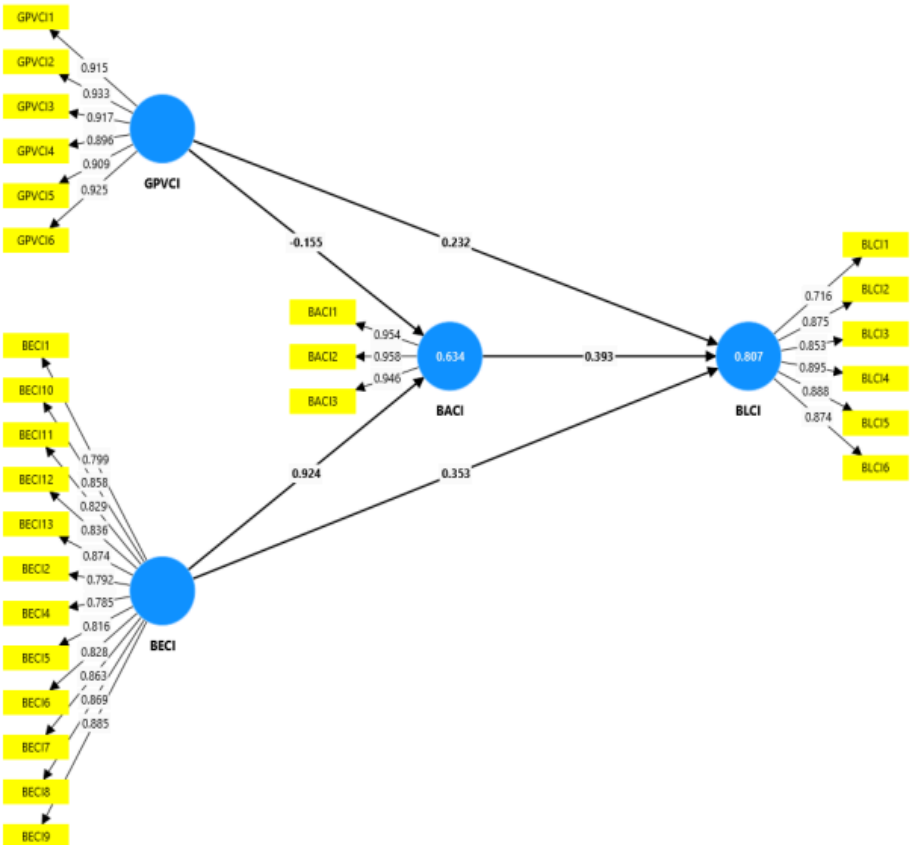


Figure 1. Outer Model
(Source: primary data)

The R-square value in the outer model reflects the predictive power of independent variables toward dependent variables. The outer model describes the extent to which the independent variables explain the dependent variable. For assessing model, there are some threshold values, they are 0.75 for the strong model, 0.50 for the moderate model, and 0.25 for the weak model. Based on the outer model test in Fig. 1, the R-square value for brand attitude is 0.807, indicating that the model is classified as strong. This suggests that the two independent variables and the mediating variables in this study have a strong influence on consumer brand love, explaining they influenced brand love about 80.7%. The remaining 19.3% indicates that other factors outside the research model contribute to shaping consumer brand love. Green perceived value and brand experience collectively influence brand attitude with an R-square value of 0.634 (63.4%). This influence is also considered strong, suggesting that green perceived value and brand experience play important role to shape brand attitude toward Cotton ink.

Table 3, f^2 effect
(Source: primary data)

Predictor □ Dependent Variable	f^2 Value
Brand Attitude □ Brand Love	0.294
Brand Experience □ Brand Love	0.109

Green Perceived Value □ Brand Love	0.076
Brand Experience □ Brand Attitude	0.642
Green Perceived Value □ Brand Attitude	0.018

Table 3 shows the f^2 effect size from each variable. The data shows that brand attitude has medium effect on brand love with f^2 value is 0.294. Besides that, brand experience also has small to medium effect on brand love, with f^2 value is 0.109. Meanwhile, green perceived value has small effect on both brand love with f^2 value 0.076 and brand attitude with f^2 value 0.018. Brand experience has large effect on brand attitude with f^2 value is 0.642. It means that brand experience is the biggest influence on brand attitude.

Inner Model: Hypothesis Test

In SmartPLS, the bootstrap sampling method can be used as a tool to test the hypothesis. The bootstrap technique can minimize potential interference with research data and ensure more robust results. This method is not similar with traditional statistical methods. The SmarPLS allows for freely distributed data without requiring a normal distribution assumption (Ghozali & Latan, 2015) . The t-statistic test in this model is used to assess how significance of parameters is. This study has 200 samples, thus t-value must exceed 1.972, to confirm the statistical significance.

Table 4. R results
(Source: Primary Data)

	R-square	R-square adjusted
BLCI	0.807	0.799
BACI	0.634	0.623

Table 4 shows R-square value from the outer model. It reflects the model's predictive power where the independent constructs explain the dependent construct. The threshold values for assessing model strength are 0.75 for the strong model, 0.50 for the moderate model, and 0.25 for the weak model (Hair et al., 2017). Based on the outer model test in table 4 and Fig. 2, there are results about R-square value of brand love and R-square value of brand attitude. R-square value of brand love is 0.807, and it is classified as strong model. It means that green perceived value, brand experience and brand attitude simultaneously influenced brand love about 80.7%. Meanwhile, 19.3% is influenced by other variables. On the other hand, R-square result of brand attitude is 0.634, it is classified as moderate model. It means that green perceived value and brand experience simultaneously influenced brand attitude about 63.4%. about 36.6% is influenced by other variables.

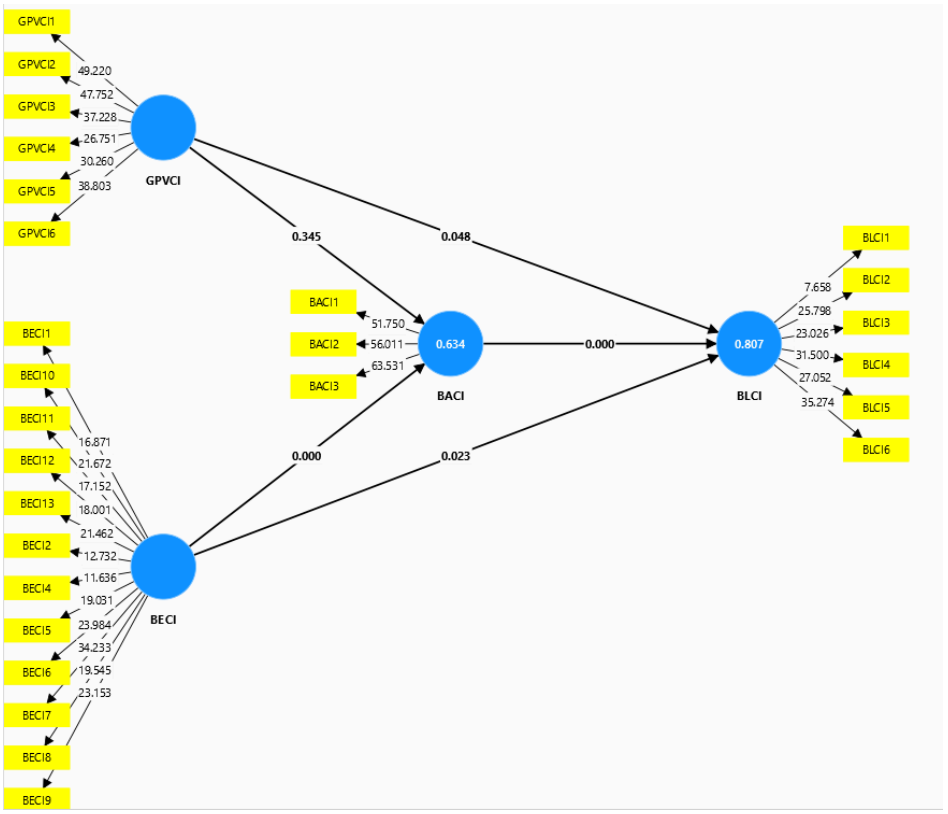


Figure 2. Inner Model
(source: primary data)

Figure 2 also shows that there are some variables which significantly influence, and there are variables which do not significantly influence. The variables which significantly influence are brand attitude toward brand love, brand experience toward brand attitude, and brand experience toward brand love. These variables significantly influence because based on table 5 below, the t-values are >1.972 and p-values are 0.00<0.05. Meanwhile green perceived value doesn't influence toward both brand attitude and brand love, because the t-values are <1.972 and p-values are > 0.05.

Moreover, based on table 5, brand experience through brand attitude toward brand love has positive original sample (O). It means that if the brand experience and brand attitude are getting higher, brand love is also getting higher. Table 5 also shows that green perceived value toward brand love through brand attitude has negative Original Sample (O), and the p-value is 0.403>0.05, it means that green perceived value has no influence toward brand love through brand attitude.

Table 5. COTTONINK Path Coefficient Table
(Source: primary data)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Std. Deviation	T statistic	P Values
			Direct Effect		
BA □ BL	0.393	0.400	0.104	3.791	0.000

BE □ BA	0.924	0.936	0.152	6.084	0.000
BE □ BL	0.716	0.719	0.114	6.291	0.000
GPV □ BA	-0.155	-.0166	0.164	0.944	0.343
GPV □ BL	0.171	0.168	0.127	1.347	0.178
Indirect effect					
BE□BA□BL	0.636	0.377	0.126	2.873	0.004
GPV□BA□BL	-0.061	-0.069	0.073	0.836	0.403

Table 6 COTTONINK Sobel Test Results

(Source: Primary Data, 2024)

Control	***Std. Error***	***T-stat***	***P-Value***
Brand Experience – Brand Attitude – Brand Love	*0.151*	*3.883*	*0.000*

In addition to the results of the coefficient test between variables, there are also the results of the Sobel Test in Table 6. This table shows the results of the Sobel test to identify the significance of the mediation effect on variable X against variable Y. Particularly it tries to explain the mediation effect of Brand Attitude (BA) on the relationship between Brand Experience (BE) and Brand Love (BL) for the COTTONINK brand.

Table 6 indicates that P value is 0.000 (<0.05), which means that the mediation effect of Brand Attitude on COTTONINK in the relationship between Brand Experience and Brand Love on COTTONINK is partial mediator. Brand attitude on COTTONINK is also proven to be a significant mediator. This confirms that a positive experience with a brand will form a positive attitude in consumers, and this positive attitude is what ultimately fosters consumer love for the brand.

This result supports Reason Action Theory which emphasizes that individuals must have reasons or considerations in deciding to take an action (Perloff, 2017) . In this theory, the attitude of a person is influenced by the belief and evaluation of the action he or she will take. Gass and Seiter stated that attitude is a behavioral guideline based on various beliefs about the results obtained from the action and the evaluation of the action to be taken (Gass & Seiter, 2022) . In the context of this study, green perceived value is a belief in consumers towards COTTONINK products. Brand experience is an evaluation of the experiences of consumers with COTTONINK products. Meanwhile, brandaAttitude and brand love are the attitudes themselves. But, in this research brand experience as the evaluation has significant influence toward both brand attitude and brand love.

In this study, the results show that positive consumer attitudes (Brand Attitude) and consumer Brand Love on COTTONINK are based on good experiences with the brand. This is proven by the P value of 0.000<0.05 on Brand Experience on Brand Attitude. At the same time, the P value of brand attitude on Brand Love is 0.00<0.05 which means there is an influence from Brand Attitude on Brand Love. This result is also supported by Rakhmawati & Tuti, 2023 who stated that brand experience effect on brand attitude.

In the context of COTTONINK, brand experience is related to brand identity (logo, image, visual), brand communication, and product experience, either on quality, product comfort according to consumers, and consumer interest in the product. This implies that a positive shopping experience, positive product quality or customer service increase positive consumer attitudes towards COTTONINK products. Furthermore, a higher

positive attitude held by consumers also increases the brand love aspect of consumers towards the brand.

However, although brand experience has a significant influence on brand attitude, this is not the case with green perceived value. According to the influence test, the green perceived value on Brand Attitude variable did not show significant result. This outcome is unforeseen when compared to previous studies that often find a positive relationship between GPV and BL. This study shows that the P value of green perceived value on brand attitude is 0.345>0.05. This indicates that there is no influence of the Green Perceived Value variable on Brand Attitude. Therefore, the attitude of Gen Z in Indonesia towards a product is not based on their assessment of green products. This study is supported with another study which mentioned that sustainability alone is not enough to enhance brand attitude; brands must ensure that their eco-friendly initiatives do not compromise product quality (Tunggal & Amali, 2026) .

The emotional aspect contained in Brand Love in this study is formed from the positive experiences that consumers have with the brand. Experiences that are satisfying, enjoyable, and by consumer expectations will build strong emotional bonds. Brakus et al., 2009; Schmitt, 2003 (as cited in Yeon Jeong & Suk Kim, 2017) also stated that brand love can be realized and can be the basis for the formation of consumer and brand relationships.

Positive experiences with a brand also affect consumer attitudes toward the brand (Amali et al., 2024) (Hwang et al., 2021) . Positive experiences tend to form positive attitudes, while negative experiences form negative attitudes. Based on the Reasoned Action theory, when associated with the aspect of consumer involvement, the level of consumer involvement with a brand affects how consumers process information and make decisions. Consumers who have high involvement tend to seek richer and more meaningful experiences, which in turn can increase brand love. Therefore, consumer experience not only affects feelings of love for the brand, but also how consumers view the brand(Brakus et al., 2009) .

This study concurs that brands need to pay attention to the extent to which brand communication related to green perceived value has been understood by consumers. In addition, it is important to conduct deeper consumer segmentation to see if certain consumer groups are more sensitive to green values. With this consideration, brand's green campaigns can acquire better reach and understanding from their audiences.

Conclusion

This study concludes that consumers' green perceived value does not influence both brand attitude and brand love of consumers for COTTONINK. On the contrary, brand experience is still a strong factor in building brand attitude and brand love for Gen Z students in Indonesia towards COTTONINK. The emotional aspect contained in Brand Love in this study is formed from positive experiences that consumers have with the brand. Positive experiences with the brand also affect the attitudes of consumers towards the brand. Brand attitude itself as mediator variable, can mediate brand experience and brand love partially. This result then becomes an important concern for a fashion brand, which despite the already existing sustainable fashion campaign, the experiential aspect of this campaign needs to be felt more by consumers. Hopefully, the brand can initiate green product campaign by developing programs that offer consumers a tangible, firsthand experience.

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