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Document Version
Final published version

Published in:
Business Strategy and the Environment

DOI:
10.1002/bse.3728

Publication date:
2024

Received: 13 April 2023 | Revised: 30 January 2024 | Accepted: 11 February 2024

DOI: 10.1002/bse.3728

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Business Strategy and the Environment

WILEY

The perfect combination to win the competition: Bringing sustainability and customer experience together

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Abstract

Understanding the connection between how consumers perceive sustainability and how they experience the offered products or services can make a big difference for companies to stay ahead of the competition. When companies work to make their products and services align with what their customers value, like being eco-friendly and socially responsible, it may not only draw in new customers but also make the existing ones stick around. Using behavioral reasoning theory, we attempt to explore the impacts of perceived benefits and skepticism on attitude toward sustainability and the moderating role of customer experience on the relationship between these variables and loyalty. Findings (n = 660) showed that attitude toward sustainability mediates the relationship between perceived benefits, skepticism, and customer loyalty. Furthermore, our findings highlighted that customer experience moderates the relationship between attitude toward sustainability and loyalty. The details of the moderation analysis suggest that cognitive, affective, physical, and social experiences have a stronger effect than sensory experiences in reinforcing the impact of perceived benefits and attitude on consumer loyalty in a sustainability context. The article concludes with implications and research directions for further investigation.

KEYWORDS

behavioral-reasoning-theory, customer experience, CX, perceived benefits, skepticism, sustainability

1 | INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, social, environmental, and economic problems around the world raised considerable public awareness, and companies' incorporation of sustainability into their business strategies as a response to these problems has become a major marketing agenda since the integration of sustainability in their business orientations affects consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and reactions toward the corporations (Hult, 2011; Sheth et al., 2011). While many big corporations try to show their commitment to sustainability causes by publishing sustainability reports, launching sustainability-themed campaigns, or offering sustainable products and services (Alsayegh et al., 2020), a

Abbreviations: AVE, average variance extracted; BRT, behavioral reasoning theory; CFA, confirmatory data analysis; CMB, common method bias; CR, composite reliability; CSR, corporate social responsibility; CX, customer experience; EFA, exploratory data analysis; ESG, environmental, social, and economic governance; HTMT, heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations; SEM, structural equation modeling; TPB, theory of planned behavior; TRA, theory of reasoned action.

We have no conflict of interest to disclose.

growing body of academic research demonstrates the strong link between corporations' sustainability practices and favorable behavioral outcomes such as satisfaction (Olya et al., 2021), loyalty (Ahmad et al., 2021), increased trust and reduced perceived risk (Unal & Tascioglu, 2022). Consequently, sustainability initiatives have come to be acknowledged as a vital way of gaining a competitive advantage (Bataineh et al., 2023; Bhuiyan et al., 2023) and even surviving in today's marketplace (Lubin & Esty, 2010). Therefore, the exploration into the dynamics of sustainability and consumer behavior relationship holds immense value for both academia and the business world.

Likewise, customer experience (CX), which is not a new, but a recently reconceptualized concept with a broader and more comprehensive array of aspects, has drawn renewed interest from business leaders and marketing researchers in the last decade. Scholars refer to CX as an essential strategic tool for long-term competitive advantage (Keiningham et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2020; Pekovic & Rolland, 2020) and executives rank it as a top priority (HBR, 2021). For example, a recent survey conducted by SuperOffice with 1920 business professionals shows that customer experience is seen as the number one priority for the next five years, surpassing price and product (MacDonald, 2023). The same report indicates that 81% of organizations cite CX as a competitive differentiator. However, although these two concepts, sustainability, and CX, are expected to bring companies to the forefront in today's competitive environment, studies examining them in conjunction have been limited. The literature emphasizes the importance of aligning sustainability and customer experience, as both are crucial for delivering value and satisfaction to customers (Calza et al., 2023; Signori et al., 2019). Nevertheless, these topics have been mostly studied independently in the past (Calza et al., 2023; Homburg et al., 2017; Shukla & Pattnaik, 2019). While sustainability and customer experience can be effective tools to stand out in the market, the challenge is to understand how they interact and how to integrate them into the decision-making process. It is essential for companies to know what customers expect and how their experience affects their actual behavior. This calls for more research on how customer experience contributes to the overall sustainability picture. Considering the strategic importance of competitive advantage for companies, examining CX in a sustainability setting creates a significant research opportunity.

It is evident that when companies prioritize creating a positive CX, it comes with distinct benefits for the customers: it makes the customer journey more enjoyable (Liang, 2016), satisfactory (Palmer, 2010), and valued (Calder et al., 2018). A CX-driven practice places the customer at the center of value creation and focuses on how the firm and product capabilities can be harnessed to the highest benefit and delight of the customers (De Keyser et al., 2015). Similarly, it is well documented in the CX literature that building a favorable customer experience yields certain benefits for the firms as well, such that it positively affects the purchase decision of the customers (Ebrahim et al., 2016), enhances the customer loyalty (Fernandes & Cruz, 2016) and promotes positive WOM (Chahal & Dutta, 2014). However, CX research so far has mostly ignored the societal benefits that can be reaped through the formation of favorable CX (Jain et al., 2017). We intend to fill this gap by bringing together customer experience and sustainability concepts and answering whether the impact of sustainability practices can be magnified through positive consumer experiences.

As evident in the systematic literature reviews that attempt to identify focal research areas of CX (e.g. Becker & Jaakkola, 2020; Kranzbühler et al., 2017; Mahr et al., 2019; Waqas et al., 2021), it is a field that is still trying to become mature (De Keyser et al., 2020; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). When it comes to the empirical studies, they mainly focus on the direct causal linkages affected by or affecting CX (e.g. Rather, 2019; Roy et al., 2020; Wibowo et al., 2021). In contrast to these studies, the current research goes deeper into the moderation aspect of CX. The majority of the few studies examining this very crucial yet surprisingly understudied role of CX have taken it in the forms of the number of purchases, visit frequency, or duration of cliency (e.g. Joshi & Garg, 2021; Yang et al., 2019; Yi & Gong, 2008). Such an approach focuses on the 'quantity' of the consumer experiences rather than their quality. These studies are of course precious in explaining how long-term or repeated experiences shape consumer behavior. Nevertheless, they fall short of answering the much more critical question of how an impactful experience shapes consumers' behavior. Only a few studies have taken CX as a 'qualitative' moderator (Nyamekye et al., 2021; Trivedi & Sama, 2021). However, these studies oversimplify CX as a construct consisting of only a few questions. Kuppelwieser et al. (2022) employed a more extensive scale of CX in their study that examines the moderation effect of CX on the value-WOM relationship, but their construct ignores the multifaceted structure of CX as conceptualized by Schmitt (1999). This is an evident deficiency in the literature, considering that CX's most generally accepted quality is its multidimensionality (De Keyser et al., 2020; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). In contrast, in this study, we employed a comprehensive measurement scale encompassing all the subdimensions of CX, i.e. cognitive, affective, behavioral, sensory, and social, providing a moderation analysis of CX in the widely established and real sense of the construct and tested whether CX influences how attitudes toward sustainability and reasons for/against of sustainability, i.e. perceived benefits and skepticism, impacts consumer loyalty. With that, this study answers several calls for identifying critical linkages and moderators (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Yi & Gong, 2009), testing the effects of CX on loyalty (Homburg et al., 2017; Rather, 2020), examining the role of CX in sustainability context (Jain et al., 2017).

Another contribution of this study to the literature comes from the theoretical framework it is built on. Following the behavioral reasoning theory (BRT) that highlights reasons for and against as important connectors between beliefs and global motives (Westaby, 2005), this study examines the direct and indirect effects of perceived benefits and skepticism on loyalty. Even though there is extant research showing the perceived benefits' affirmative (Lin et al., 2017) and skepticism's detrimental effect (Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013) in the sustainability context, most of them do not offer an empirical answer to the question which side of the scale outweighs the other. This study, on the other hand, instead of taking only favorable or unfavorable factors in isolation, incorporates both positive and negative

factors simultaneously in the research in line with BRT, which enables us to see both sides of the coin and have a more complete picture by drawing a comparison between the two sides. As per the BRT framework, we also examine the mediating role of attitude in perceived benefits-loyalty and skepticism-loyalty relationships in a sustainability setting.

2 | THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 | Behavioral reasoning theory and sustainability

Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT) represents a significant advancement in our understanding of the interplay between beliefs, reasons, motives, intentions, and behavior within the context of consumer behaviors (Dhir et al., 2021; Sahu et al., 2020). As distinct from the traditional behavioral theories, which emphasize the direct relationships between attitudes, intentions, and behavior, BRT incorporates the critical role of reasons into this equation (Westaby, 2005). The prior established theories, such as the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), have undoubtedly enriched our comprehension of behavior. However, BRT, as a more recent theoretical framework, builds on those theories and provides a richer understanding by examining the role of values and reasons in forming attitudes (Claudy et al., 2015; Sahu et al., 2020). BRT investigates the complex nature of human motivation by elaborating on the factors that can either facilitate or inhibit a person from an intended behavior, which are called motivators and demotivators or, more commonly, reasons for and against (Claudy et al., 2015; Westaby, 2005). BRT posits that values shape our behavioral reasons, which, in turn, drive our overarching motives toward behavioral intentions. In this framework, reasons serve as a critical conduit, connecting thoughts, global motives, intentions, and actions (Gupta & Arora, 2017). Divided into reasons for and reasons against a particular behavior, BRT introduces the concept that these categories need not be exact opposites. Consequently, Behavioral Reasoning Theory provides a more comprehensive perspective by combining them into a unified model and clarifying their distinct roles. Furthermore, BRT, unlike TRA and TPB, enables the employment of context-specific values and reasons and, by doing so, sheds light on the inner dynamics and cognitive processes peculiar to unique settings (Sahu et al., 2020).

As sustainability garners increasing attention in both academia and the corporate world, the need to integrate new theoretical lenses, such as BRT, with sustainability becomes evident (Bettinazzi et al., 2019; Constantino et al., 2021; Topal et al., 2021). BRT's unique research design has made it a widely applicable theoretical framework in management and marketing studies across diverse contexts, including e-waste recycling (Dhir et al., 2021), renewable energy adoption (Claudy et al., 2013), and consumers' green choice behavior (Mansoor & Paul, 2022).

This study endeavors to offer a distinctive perspective on sustainable purchasing while introducing mediating and moderating variables into the BRT framework. In our research, we adopted the widely recognized concept of sustainability, which embraces the three pillars of sustainability: economic, social, and environmental (Purvis et al., 2019). The environmental dimension is centered on responsible natural resource utilization and aims to mitigate the adverse effects of human activities on the environment (Moliner et al., 2019). The economic dimension is viewed as a normative concept, emphasizing the importance of efficiently and responsibly utilizing available resources to maximize profitability over time (Osburg, 2017). On the other hand, the social dimension is defined by a society's capacity to fulfill its members' needs, maintain social cohesion, and safeguard the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, ensuring a harmonious and enduring societal balance (Partridge, 2014).

Drawing on individuals' sustainability-oriented values, the present study examines perceived benefits as reasons for and skepticism as reasons against sustainable products and services. These reasons coalesce to form customers' attitudes, subsequently influencing their loyalty toward sustainable products and service offerings. Here, introducing customer experience (CX) as a moderating variable brings depth to the causal relationships among these constructs, promising to contribute valuable insights into the literature on sustainability, customer experience, and Behavioral Reasoning Theory.

2.2 | Hypothesis development

2.2.1 | Values, perceived benefits, and skepticism

Values, an integral component of individual belief systems, assume an essential role in the context of Behavioral Reasoning Theory (BRT). Rokeach (1973) defines values as general standards through which attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are formulated. His categorization of values into terminal and instrumental has been a topic of focus in marketing and business areas for a long time (Kautish & Sharma, 2018). While terminal values are ideal long-term end-states that consumers desire to accomplish over a longer period, like a life-long goal, instrumental values are short-term desired modes of actions or goals that customers seek to achieve (Amatulli et al., 2018). This distinction has been applied to the sustainability context by several studies (e.g. Kautish et al., 2020; Kumar & Sreen, 2020; Shields et al., 2002) such that sustainability-oriented values may be driven to achieve a desired end-state such as happiness or be aspired to accomplish specific tasks related to that end state such as boosting one's self-image.

Following a hierarchical path of influence, values shape the formation and impact of attitudes, which, in turn, develop into behavior (Falke et al., 2022). Accordingly, values manifest as potent determinants of reasons for and against adopting and using new products or services (Claudy et al., 2015). When contextualized within the sphere of sustainable product usage, the significance of values becomes even more pronounced (Kim & Hall, 2020; Manchanda et al., 2023). In line with the principles of Behavioral Reasoning Theory, we contend that sustainability-oriented values affect the reasons individuals hold for and against sustainable products and services.

Perceived benefits, referring to reasons for sustainable consumption in the present study, are the advantages that consumers believe

they will receive by using a sustainable product or service (Arora & Aggarwal, 2018). Prior literature associated sustainable products and services with environmental (Tandon et al., 2020), economic (Liu et al., 2021), and social (Meng et al., 2022) benefits. Since the perceived benefits are subjective, vary from person to person, and can include functional, emotional, social, or other benefits that the consumers themselves associate with a product or service (Ahn & Kwon, 2022), the individual values and beliefs of the consumers affect the formation of these perceptions profoundly. In the sustainability context, several studies point out the positive link between sustainability-oriented values and perceived benefits (e.g. Dhir et al., 2021; Kautish & Sharma, 2018). Individuals tend to find reasons to engage in more sustainable behaviors when they perceive that their actions contribute positively to the environment and society at large, aligning their values with conscientious consumption (Arun et al., 2021).

On the other hand, skepticism, defined as doubt or distrust toward a person, activity, or organization, accounts for a crucial demotivator in the context of sustainable products and services (Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013) such that companies' claims of social and environmental responsibility may be viewed with suspicion (Nazir & Islam, 2020). While activities like greenwashing may initially evoke positive consumer sentiments due to their association with sustainable products and services (Hartmann & Apaolaza Ibáñez, 2006), they can engender skepticism in the long term (Lin et al., 2017). Therefore, due to the suspicion sown in their minds, consumers may feel that the activities of a company misalign with their sustainability-oriented values, start to question the authenticity of these activities, and form reasons to abstain from consumption or purchase of products and services that are asserted to be sustainable (Wallach & Popovich, 2023). In the literature, the negative relationship between sustainability-oriented values and skepticism is well documented (Chatterjee et al., 2021; Sreen et al., 2023).

In our framework, perceived benefits emerge as reasons for such choices, while skepticism represents reasons against them. Based on the literature as mentioned above, we hypothesize:

H1. Values are positively related to perceived benefits.

H2. Values are negatively related to skepticism.

2.2.2 | Attitude

One of the most critical tenets of BRT is that reasons form the basis of global motives (Westaby, 2005), which we refer to as "attitude" in the present study. In consumer behavior, attitudes refer to the psychological tendencies or evaluations that consumers have toward a product, brand, service, or other marketing stimulus (Park & Lin, 2020). Justifying the reasons behind these perceptions in consumers' minds leads to adaption or resistance behavior.

Accordingly, the perceived benefits of sustainable products and services influence people's attitudes toward them (Dhir et al., 2021). When consumers recognize that these offerings result in positive environmental, economic, and social outcomes, they are more likely to adopt a positive attitude (Liu et al., 2021; Meng et al., 2022; Tandon et al., 2020). For example, if a consumer believes that purchasing a sustainable product will help to clean up the environment, save them money in the long run, and support fair labor practices, they may favor that product or service. This alignment of perceived benefits and personal values frequently results in a stronger inclination to choose sustainable options, as consumers see them as a means to achieve their environmental, economic, and social goals, resulting in a more positive attitude (Chen, 2015).

Notwithstanding, when consumers have doubts or distrust about the authenticity of sustainability claims, this can lead to a negative attitude (Lin et al., 2017; Sahu et al., 2020). For example, if people suspect that a product labeled "green" is merely a marketing ploy with no genuine environmental benefits, they are likely to be skeptical (Chen et al., 2018). This skepticism may stem from concerns about greenwashing, in which businesses exaggerate their environmental efforts that are found unauthentic by consumers (Nazir & Islam, 2020). Such uncertainty can increase skepticism about sustainable offerings, leading to a more critical and hesitant attitude (Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013). On the other hand, when consumers believe that sustainable products and services are sincere in their efforts to be more sustainable, it can promote a positive attitude based on perceived benefits and the thought that their choices genuinely contribute to a more sustainable future (Wang et al., 2021).

The intricate interplay of values also extends to the formation of consumers' attitudes, a key precursor to their subsequent behaviors (Kautish & Sharma, 2018). This attitudinal component further fuels the consumer's propensity to act in accordance with their beliefs and values, confirming the positive influence of attitudes on consumer behavior (Tandon et al., 2020).

Building on the effect of values and perception of positive and negative associations consumers build in the context of sustainability on their decision-making process, we hypothesize:

H3. Values are positively related to attitude toward sustainability.

H4. Perceived benefits are positively related to attitude toward sustainability.

H5. Skepticism is negatively related to attitude toward sustainability.

2.2.3 | Loyalty

Loyalty, a fundamental pillar of competitive advantage for sustainable products and services, denotes a customer's inclination to repeatedly patronize a particular brand or company (Panda et al., 2020). It stands as a critical component in the construction of a thriving business, as loyal customers often emerge as brand advocates, sharing their positive experiences (Nyamekye et al., 2021) and providing valuable feedback (Gelderman et al., 2021; Jung et al., 2020). Extensive research has unveiled a substantial nexus between sustainability and loyalty,

underscoring that customers tend to remain steadfast to brands that exhibit a genuine commitment to environmental and social responsibility (Tascioglu et al., 2019).

The perceived benefits of sustainable products and services have consistently emerged as positive drivers of loyalty in previous research (e.g. Chen, 2015; Claudy et al., 2013; Sreen et al., 2021). These perceived benefits, stemming from the conscientious consumption of sustainable offerings, forge a deeper bond between customers and brands, heightening the likelihood of sustained loyalty.

While perceived benefits build a positive relationship with loyalty, skepticism has a negative connection with it. Regarding a brand's sustainability claims, skepticism is a critical determinant of loyalty, as customers are less inclined to remain loyal if they perceive a brand's sustainability assertions as unauthentic (Nguyen et al., 2014; Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013). Additionally, a customer's attitude toward a brand exerts a discernible impact on their loyalty, with favorable attitudes fostering heightened loyalty and negative attitudes potentially eroding it (Chen et al., 2018).

Based on this, we hypothesize:

H6. Perceived benefits are positively related to loyalty.

H7. Attitude toward sustainability is positively related to loyalty.

H8. Skepticism is negatively related to loyalty.

2.2.4 | Mediating role of attitude

Even if there is extant literature on the direct effect of attitude on loyalty, indirect effects have not been investigated enough. Indeed, the BRT framework could have effectively responded to this gap in the literature as the theoretical framework inherently comprises mediation relationships. However, a recent meta-analysis by Sahu et al. (2020) shows that most BRT-based studies omit or ignore the mediation analyses and remain limited to the direct causal relationships even though the research model has inbuilt mediation pathways. Nevertheless, when the studies that have responded to this call are examined, it is seen that they have identified various mediational relationships, enhancing the understanding of the role of attitude in behavioral outcomes. For example, Tandon et al. (2020) found that the green attitude partially mediates the relationship between reasons and intention of green consumption. Similarly, Chatterjee et al. (2021) investigated the mediating role of attitude toward green products on the relationship between green products and purchase intention.

The present study aims to elongate these efforts by examining the mediating role of attitude in the relationship between reasons for/against sustainability and loyalty. Therefore, we hypothesize (Figure 1):

H9a. Attitude toward sustainability mediates the relationship between perceived benefits and loyalty.

H9b. Attitude toward sustainability mediates the relationship between skepticism and loyalty.

2.2.5 | Moderating role of customer experience (CX)

Within the context of consumer behavior and sustainability, customer experience (CX) emerges as a crucial factor in achieving sustained competitive advantage, emphasizing its significance as a process to

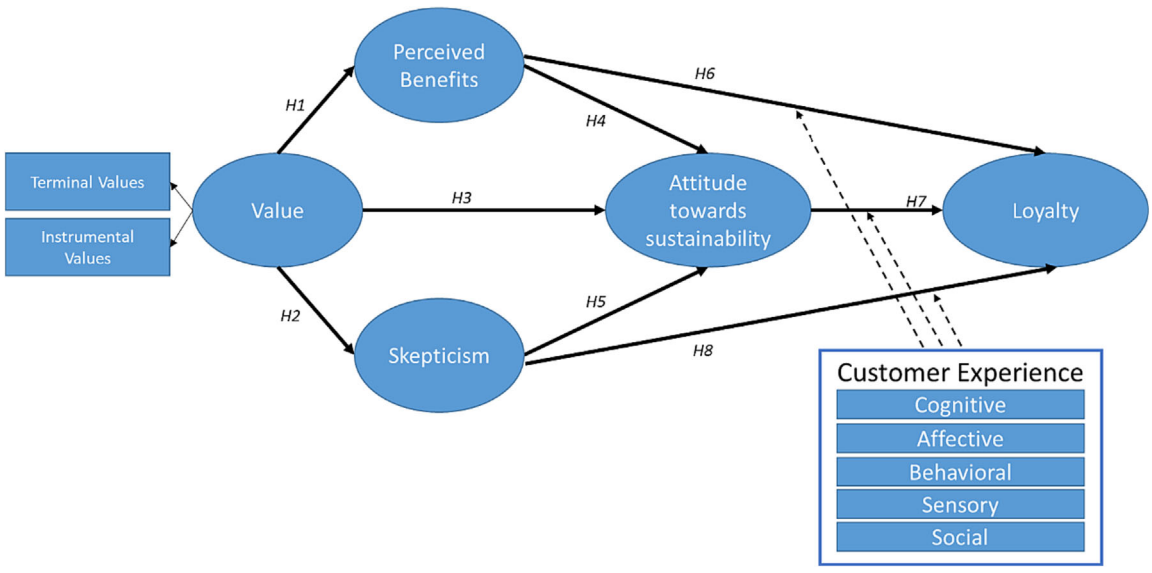

FIGURE 1 Research model.

deliver customer value (De Keyser et al., 2020; Pekovic & Rolland, 2020; Roy et al., 2020). Understanding CX in meticulous detail becomes imperative in this context (Jain et al., 2017; Waqas et al., 2021). CX is inherently a multi-dimensional concept, centering on the various touchpoints where customers engage with a product, a company, or a representative throughout their consumption journey (Keiningham et al., 2020). Accordingly, Verhoef et al. (2009) have identified five essential elements that constitute the foundation of CX: emotional, sensory, cognitive, social, and behavioral experiences, which serve as the base model for the present study.

Emotions, a salient facet of CX, wield considerable influence over customer behavior (Manthiou et al., 2020), acting as robust indicators that positively impact preferences, judgments, recommendations, and loyalty (Lin et al., 2020; Nart et al., 2019). Cognitive processes gain prominence as customers become more acquainted with products and services, significantly shaping their consumption behaviors (Kranzbühler et al., 2017). Customers embark on cognitive assessments, encompassing considerations such as pricing, search processes, and product or service selections before making a purchase (Brun et al., 2017).

The sensory aspect of CX, as defined by Gentile et al. (2007), hinges on sensorial perceptions associated with the shopping environment, encompassing elements like ambiance, products, or services, which evoke aesthetic pleasure, excitement, and satisfaction. This sensory experience fundamentally relies on the interaction of the five human senses—smell, sound, sight, taste, and touch (Hultén, 2011). According to Lusch and Vargo (2021), individuals may build up attitudes based on sensory experiences and evaluations.

Social experiences, another dimension of CX, encapsulate interactions among individuals, such as coworkers and customers, and are intrinsically tied to the social circumstances and interactions that evolve throughout the consumption process (Liang et al., 2020; Nadeem et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2021). Behavioral experience, a vital dimension in customer experience (CX), encompasses observable actions, responses, and lifestyle interactions (Schmitt, 1999). It reflects the level of customer involvement in the service creation process, actively participating in value consumption and production (Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014; Pekovic & Rolland, 2020). Beyond transactions, behavioral experience signifies the alignment of a customer's values and beliefs with the brand, indicating a deeper resonance (Gentile et al., 2007).

While recent research has increasingly emphasized the importance of CX in marketing, particularly for its direct impact on behavioral outcomes such as word-of-mouth behavior (Kuppelwieser et al., 2022), loyalty (Shahid et al., 2022), and brand love (Trivedi & Sama, 2019), limited studies have examined its moderating role, with most of them focusing on one-dimensional aspects of CX, such as purchase frequency, visit counts, and similar metrics, neglecting its nuanced multi-dimensional nature (Joshi & Garg, 2021; Yang et al., 2019; Yi & Gong, 2008).

The present study fills this void by exploring the moderating role of CX within the sustainability context, unveiling the intricate dynamics between customer experience and the decision-making processes underpinning behavioral choices, loyalty, and sustainable practices within the framework of BRT and sustainability. Therefore, we hypothesize:

TABLE 1 Profile of respondents.

Demographics	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	303	54%
Female	357	46%
Age (years)		
18–30	117	18%
31–40	364	55%
41–50	123	19%
51 or more	56	9%
Level of education		
Primary school	47	7%
High school	116	18%
Associate degree	68	10%
Bachelor's degree	310	47%
Graduate degree	119	18%
Level of income (monthly)		
0–5,000 TI	144	22%
13,001–17,000 TI	96	15%
5,001–9,000 TI	174	26%
9,001–13,000 TI	157	24%
More than 17,000 TI	89	13%
N Total	660	100%

H10a. CX strengthens the positive relationship between perceived benefits and loyalty.

H10b. CX strengthens the positive relationship between attitude toward sustainability and loyalty.

H10c. CX weakens the negative relationship between skepticism and loyalty.

3 | METHODOLOGY

3.1 | Sampling and measures

In the present study, the data were gathered via an online five-point Likert scale questionnaire distributed with the help of undergraduate marketing students recruited to collect data. This technique has been frequently implemented as an effective data collection means in a variety of consumer research to reach a broader range of participants (Bove et al., 2009; Moon & Armstrong, 2020). The students were asked to share the survey link with five non-student adults around them, such as their family members, relatives, etc. Hence, compared to similar studies using student-only samples (e.g., Borin et al., 2013; Shobeiri et al., 2018), we reached a sample with a more comprehensive demographic profile. At the beginning of the survey, the participants, who were informed that the survey would be used for

academic research and that their answers would be confidential and not be used for any other purpose, gave their consent for their answers to be used for the purposes of this study. The initial sample consisted of 691 respondents; however, unreliable 26 cases were eliminated from the dataset due to careless responses. Although the survey includes reverse coded items (e.g. "I do not feel that the sustainability claim of this company is sincere," "I feel that I can trust sustainable products/services of this company") some respondents consistently respond with the same highest (5: strongly agree) or lowest (1: strongly disagree) answer for all statements in the survey package. A further 5 cases were removed due to inadequate answers. In total, 31 responses were discarded, and 660 valid questionnaires were kept in the final sample. Considering the number of observed and latent variables in our research model, this sample size is adequate based on the widely accepted rule suggested by Bentler and Chou (1987) asserting that the ratio of observations to estimated parameters (N:q) should be 5 to 10.

The demographics of the participants are shown in Table 1. Even though there is an uneven distribution in terms of gender, there is no big difference: 54% of the respondents are female, while 46% are male. Out of the four age groups in the study, most of the participants concentrates within 31–40 years old (55%). Likewise, regarding the level of education, one group has a considerably higher share than the others, with 47% of the participants having a bachelor's degree. Monthly household income shows a balanced distribution, with 5,001–9,000 Turkish liras, having the biggest share with 26% (see Table 1).

At the outset of the survey, we defined sustainability in simple terms and provided a few typical examples for each sustainability dimension so that the participants could understand sustainability correctly and respond to the questions having an accurate notion of the term in their minds. Next, following the definition and examples shared at the beginning, the participants were asked to think of a 'sustainable' company from which they have purchased a product or service. A list of companies was shared, including the companies taken from Borsa Istanbul (the Istanbul Stock Exchange - BIST) Sustainability Index, where companies in the stock exchange market are rated by their sustainability performance based on international environmental, social, and economic governance (ESG) criteria. Fifteen companies at the top of the index were included in the list. Participants could either pick up one company from the list or type in another company's name inside an empty text box placed at the bottom in case the company they thought of was not included in the list. Next, they were requested to answer the questions in the next section considering the company they picked and their experiences with it. With this method, we intended to ensure that the participants had a more concrete image in their minds and could relate to their past experiences more easily when responding to the questions. Examining the effect of CSR communication on corporate reputation, Kim (2019) used this method while collecting data for her study. In recent work, (Unal & Tascioglu, 2022) adapted it into a sustainability context. We followed their example in this study.

The current study utilized well-established scales in the literature to measure the constructs. Customer experience, consisting of five sub-dimensions, which are cognitive, affective, behavioral, sensorial, and social, was measured through items adapted from Ebrahim et al. (2016), Pekovic and Rolland (2020), Rather (2019), and Wibowo et al. (2021). In the literature, there is no consensus among the researchers on whether customer experience should be regarded as a reflective or formative construct (Jain et al., 2017). While some studies consider it formative (e.g., Bustamante & Rubio, 2017; Hsu & Tsou, 2011; Kamath et al., 2020), some others take it reflective (e.g., Gahler et al., 2023; Moliner et al., 2019; Srivastava & Kaul, 2016). In the face of this inconsistency, considering that these sub-dimensions, while distinctive, share certain commonalities (Brun et al., 2017), we decided to employ CX as a second-order reflective construct following the explanation by (Moliner et al., 2019) that the sub-dimensions of customer experience are interdependent, have a mutual theme, generally share a common antecedent and any change in one indicator belonging to one dimension affects the other dimensions due to the high covariance among them, all of which point out to the reflective nature of the construct. Similarly, values are modeled as another second-order reflective construct consisting of terminal and instrumental values, measured by items adapted from Kautish and Sharma (2018). The EFA of both constructs is presented in Appendix 1. Perceived benefits were measured using items adapted from Claudy et al. (2015), Kim et al. (2013), and, Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2011). Items used to measure skepticism were taken from Wang and Strong (1996) and Banikema and Roux (2014). Attitude was measured by the items adapted from Do Valle et al. (2005) and Wu and Chen (2014). Finally, items adapted from Gelderman et al. (2021) and Wibowo et al. (2021) were employed to measure loyalty. All the items, with their factor loadings, are included in Appendix 2.

3.2 | Data analysis method

In the present study, the data analysis is performed using structural equation modeling (SEM), a second-generation multivariate statistical technique, marked by its unique capability to examine intricate webs of connections among numerous variables (Weston & Gore, 2006). SEM, which is, in essence, a combination of factor analysis and regression (Bollen, 1989), overcomes some major limitations that first-generation analysis techniques suffer from (Hair et al., 2021), which are, briefly, postulating a simple model structure, requiring all variables to be considered observable, and working under the assumption of neither systematic nor random measurement error (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004). Regarding the first limitation, the multi-layered structure of SEM enables it to incorporate second, even third-order factors into the research model (Astrachan et al., 2014) and to simultaneously perform data analyses that can only be realized in a piecewise and sequential manner by first generation analysis methods such as multiple regression. As for the second limitation, unlike the first-generation regression-type techniques, which are mainly limited to the processing of observable variables, SEM integrates observed and latent variables into the measurement model, which allows the estimation of theoretical and unobservable concepts (Hair et al., 2021). Regarding the third

TABLE 2 Construct validity analysis (AVE and HTMT values).

Construct	AVE	HTMT ratio					
		(I)	(II)	(III)	(IV)	(V)	(VI)
(I) Perceived benefits	.53						
(II) Scepticism	.59	.12					
(III) attitude	.60	.85	.16				
(IV) loyalty	.58	.77	.11	.76			
(V) Value	.86	.79	.11	.73	.74		
(VI) customer experience	.82	.79	.04	.80	.87	.79	

limitation, contrary to the first-generation analysis methods that assume no error in the measurement, SEM accounts for the potential measurement errors and unexplained variances when evaluating the model (Astrachan et al., 2014). Thanks to such advantages, researchers have increasingly been using structural equation modeling, especially in the social sciences where recently proposed theories, thus the research models, have evolved into increasingly complex structures (Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996). Several SEM reviews also highlight the growing popularity of SEM in recent years (Martínez-López et al., 2013; Unal, 2021). Therefore, we concluded that SEM is the most appropriate data analysis method for intricate models like the one in the present study, consisting of multiple observed and latent variables.

3.3 | Measurement model results

As the first step of data analysis, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to see whether the collected data fit our theoretically proposed model. The initial results obtained by CFA were close to but slightly below the acceptable model fit thresholds. After three items with poor factor loadings (one from values and two from customer experience) were removed, the model fit levels improved and met the criteria recommended by Baumgartner and Homburg (1996) and Hu and Bentler (1999) ($\chi2 = 3264.26$, $df = 1{,}143$, $\chi2/df = 2.86$, $CFI = 0.91$, $IFI = 0.91$, $TLI = 0.90$, $RMSEA = 0.053$, $p < 0.001$).

Next, we tested the reliability and validity of the constructs. Reliability, referring to the internal consistency within a group of items measuring a construct, is customarily evaluated using Cronbach's alpha value (Martínez-López et al., 2013). However, this coefficient has a major limitation: it operates under the wrongful assumption that all indicators are equally reliable (tau-equivalence) and fails to weigh as an indicator (Bollen, 1989). On the other hand, composite reliability (CR), the most commonly applied reliability measure as an alternative to Cronbach's alpha, does not assume tau-equivalence and prioritizes each item according to its individual reliability (Hair et al., 2019). Thus, to test the reliability of the constructs, we checked CR values, which were fairly higher than the recommended cut-off point of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2021). Next, the validity of the constructs was examined. For convergent validity, meaning that all the items under each construct, which are theoretically related, are related to each other, average variance extracted (AVE), and for discriminant validity, meaning theoretically non-related items are indeed not related, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) were calculated. First, the AVE values of each construct were above the threshold of 0.5 suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981); therefore, convergent validity was established. Second, the HTMT values were less than the threshold of 0.90 proposed by Gold et al. (2001); thus, discriminant validity was also established (see Table 2).

Next, before proceeding to hypotheses testing, we checked for common method bias (CMB), which refers to the artificial variance caused not by the network of relations and effects in the model but by external factors such as implicit social desirability (Jordan & Troth, 2019). It is surprising that even though it is widely acknowledged in the research literature that CMB is a serious problem that can cast doubt on the validity and reliability of the analysis results (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012), many studies fail to address CMB or take precautions against it (Jordan & Troth, 2020; Unal, 2021). Rodríguez-Ardura and Meseguer-Artola (2020) emphasize the gravity of this phenomenon in their study and recommend several methods to prevent CMB. Following their suggestions, as mentioned earlier in the previous section, we defined the sustainability concept that may have been unfamiliar or complex for the participants and illustrated it with examples to prevent the respondents from misinterpreting scale items. Moreover, as an effective countermeasure against CMB, we assured the participants that their responses would be anonymous to ensure the authenticity of the responses. Then, as a post hoc technique to see if there is common method bias in the data, we applied Harman's single factor test and checked whether a single factor can explain the majority of the total variance. The results showed that the cumulative variance extracted by one factor was 40.8%, significantly lower than the 50% threshold suggested by Podsakoff and Organ (1986). Therefore, we confirmed that CMB is not an issue in this study. Finally, we tested the distribution of the data in terms of normality through skewness and kurtosis, which were between +3 and −3, indicating a normal distribution (George & Mallery, 2019).

3.4 | Structural model results

Having obtained adequate results in the measurement model tests, we moved on to the structural model analysis. Table 3 shows the standardized coefficients between the paths estimated in the model. First, the effect of values on benefits, skepticism, and attitude was tested, and each path was found statistically significant. Therefore,

TABLE 3 Structural equation model results.

Hypothesis	Path	β	t	Support
H1	Value --- > perceived benefits	.83***	12,52	Yes
H2	Value --- > skepticism	−.13**	−3,00	Yes
H3	Value --- > attitude	.22***	3,38	Yes
H4	Perceived benefits --- > attitude	.66***	8,91	Yes
H5	Skepticism --- > attitude	−.06*	−2,10	Yes
H6	Perceived benefits --- > loyalty	.41***	5,48	Yes
H7	Attitude --- > loyalty	.42***	5,70	Yes
H8	Skepticism --- > loyalty	.01(ns)	−0.39	No
CFI = 0.92 IFI = 0.92 TLI = 0.91 RMSEA = 0.06				

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, and *p < 0.05.

TABLE 4 Mediation analysis.

Hypothesis	Path	β	p	LLCI	ULCI	Mediation
$H9_a$	Perceived benefits --- > attitude --- > loyalty	.318	.001	.182	.470	Yes
$H9_b$	Skepticism --- > attitude --- > loyalty	−.020	.022	−.042	−.005	Yes

H1, H2, and H3 are supported. Secondly, the impact of positive and negative factors toward sustainability i.e. perceived environmental and socio-economic benefits, and skepticism, was tested on attitude toward sustainability. While perceived benefits have a relatively higher influence on attitude ($\beta = .66$; $t = 8.91$; $p < 0.001$), skepticism has a significant effect as well ($\beta = -.06$; $t = -2.10$; $p < 0.05$). Thus, H4 and H5 are supported, too. Finally, the effect of perceived benefits, attitude, and skepticism on consumer loyalty was tested. The results showed that while perceived benefits and attitude positively influence loyalty (respectively $\beta = .41$, $t = 5.48$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = .42$, $t = 5.70$, $p < 0.001$), the relationship between skepticism and loyalty is statistically insignificant. Hence, H6 and H7 are supported, whereas H8 is rejected.

3.5 | Mediation and moderation analyses

Next, we conducted the mediation analyses. Following Zhao et al. (2010), we performed bootstrapping and checked the mediation effect between the constructs through the indirect effect estimands using the IBM SPSS Amos version 24 software package (Gaskin & Lim, 2018). First, we tested whether attitude mediated between perceived benefits and loyalty. The results show that attitude toward sustainability significantly mediates the relationship between perceived benefits and loyalty ($\beta = .32$, $p < 0.01$); thus, $H9_a$ is supported. The second mediation analysis, which tests the mediating role of attitude between skepticism and loyalty, demonstrated that the relationship between skepticism and loyalty is mediated by the attitude at a $p < 0.05$ significance level ($\beta = -.20$) supporting $H9_b$ (see Table 4). It should be noted that these results point out two different types of mediation. The first one, perceived benefits-attitude-loyalty, is a partial mediation structure since the independent variable, benefits, has both a direct, as shown with H4, and an indirect effect through mediation on the dependent variable, loyalty. The second one, on the other hand, is a full mediation example since even though the mediated path of skepticism-attitude-loyalty is significant, the direct relationship between the independent and dependent variables is statistically insignificant (as shown with H8).

Finally, we conducted moderation analyses to see if and how CX governs the effect perceived benefits, attitude, and skepticism have on loyalty. In the moderation analyses, we tested the effect of overall customer experience and also the impact of each individual dimension. First, the findings show that while overall CX moderates the relationships between perceived benefits-loyalty and attitude-loyalty, it does not moderate the relationship between skepticism and loyalty. When it comes to the detailed analysis of each dimension, the results indicate that each CX dimension has a significant moderation effect on the perceived benefits and loyalty relationship. However, it is important to note that among all the dimensions, the effect of sensory customer experience is the least, having an impact only miniscule ($\beta = .06$, $t = 2.02$, $p = .044$) while affective customer experience has the strongest effect ($\beta = .10$, $t = 3.95$, $p < .001$). When it comes to the moderating role of the CX dimensions in the attitude and loyalty relationship, all the dimensions except for sensory customer experience ($\beta = .03$, $t = 1.14$, $p = .25$) have a significant effect. Finally, the results show that none of the CX dimensions has a moderation effect on the skepticism-loyalty connection. The detailed results are shared in Table 5.

4 | DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

4.1 | Discussion of key findings

This study aims to explain the roles of encouraging and discouraging factors in consumers' behavior toward sustainable products and

TABLE 5 Moderation analysis.

	Path	β	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	Moderation
$H10_a$	P. Benefits x CX--- > loyalty	.06	2.22	.027	.003	.056	Yes
$H10_{a1}$	P. Benefits x CX-COG-- > loyalty	.09	3.04	.002	.018	.082	Yes
$H10_{a2}$	P. Benefits x CX-AFF-- > loyalty	.10	3.95	.000	.032	.096	Yes
$H10_{a3}$	P. Benefits x CX-BEH-- > loyalty	.09	3.06	.002	.019	.089	Yes
$H10_{a4}$	P. Benefits x CX-SEN-- > loyalty	.06	2.02	.044	.001	.063	Yes
$H10_{a5}$	P. Benefits x CX-SOC-- > loyalty	.07	2.23	.022	.006	.074	Yes
$H10_b$	Attitude x CX --- > loyalty	.06	2.41	.016	.006	.058	Yes
$H10_{b1}$	Attitude x CX-COG-- > loyalty	.11	3.90	.000	.032	.097	Yes
$H10_{b2}$	Attitude x CX-AFF-- > loyalty	.08	3.10	.002	.018	.080	Yes
$H10_{b3}$	Attitude x CX-BEH-- > loyalty	.07	2.54	.011	.010	.080	Yes
$H10_{b4}$	Attitude x CX-SEN-- > loyalty	.03	1.14	.254	−.013	.049	No
$H10_{b5}$	Attitude x CX-SOC-- > loyalty	.10	3.48	.001	.027	.096	Yes
$H10_c$	Skepticism x CX --- > loyalty	.02	0.71	.943	−.037	.040	No
$H10_{c1}$	Skepticism x CX-COG-- > loyalty	.05	1.75	.080	−.005	.096	No
$H10_{c2}$	Skepticism x CX-AFF-- > loyalty	−.03	−0.88	.379	−.071	.027	No
$H10_{c3}$	Skepticism x CX-BEH-- > loyalty	−.01	−0.33	.741	−.065	.046	No
$H10_{c4}$	Skepticism x CX-SEN-- > loyalty	.03	.087	.382	−.028	.073	No
$H10_{c5}$	Skepticism x CX-SOC-- > loyalty	.01	.226	.821	−.047	.059	No

services and how consumer experience (CX) governs the relationship between such factors and loyalty. We conducted three types of analyses: structural model, mediation, and moderation tests, each of which yielded several important findings. The results show that consumers' values significantly affect reasons for and against sustainability and attitudes toward sustainability as well, which are in line with similar studies in the literature (Falke et al., 2022; Kim & Hall, 2020; Kumar & Sreen, 2020). In this study, we incorporated perceived benefits and skepticism as reasons for and against sustainability, both of which significantly impact attitude, too. These findings are also in consonance with previous studies (Chen, 2015; Lin et al., 2017). The novelty of our findings lies in the ability to gather these scattered conclusions in the literature within a single research model thanks to the dichotomous structure of the BRT framework. This approach enables a thorough comparison between the constructs, especially the contrasting factors of reasons for and against. The perceived benefits and skepticism, however, both have statistically significant effects on attitude, markedly differ in their statistical power: The effect of perceived benefits on attitude far exceeds that of skepticism. Therefore, our study makes a genuine assertion that in the sustainability context, consumers' attitude is shaped by perceptions of benefits to a greater extent than by doubts about authenticity. As the last three of the direct causal relationships within the research model, we tested the impact of perceived benefits, attitude, and skepticism on loyalty. Perceived benefits and attitudes have a statistically significant influence on consumer behavior in the sustainability context, loyalty in the case of our study, supported by the previous studies (Kautish & Sharma, 2018; Panda et al., 2020; Sreen et al., 2021). On the other hand, skepticism was found to have no significant direct effect on loyalty. This result is not consistent with previous studies examining the effect of skepticism regarding sustainability on consumer behavior (Chen et al., 2018; Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013). However, the next phase of data analysis, the mediation tests, provides a fundamental explanation for this prima facie inconsistency. Our findings show that although the research hypothesis asserting the influence of skepticism on loyalty is not supported, skepticism does have an indirect effect on loyalty, fully explained through its impact on attitude. Therefore, the relationship that we found between skepticism and loyalty does not exactly contradict the previous studies, but it only incorporates the mediating effect of attitude. As a simulation, we tested the relationship between skepticism and loyalty in isolation and found that the relationship between the two becomes significant without any mediator ($\beta = -.090$, $p < 0.01$). This result clearly shows that skepticism, either directly or indirectly, does exercise an impact on loyalty.

Another robust finding of our research is the moderating effect of CX. In the literature, various studies have examined CX as a moderator and shown that it influences how consumers' perceptions and values shape their behavior such as word-of-month (Kuppelwieser et al., 2022), loyalty (Nyamekye et al., 2021), and brand love (Trivedi & Sama, 2019). Our findings, while consistent with this previous research body, fundamentally differ by delving into the moderation role of CX in a more detailed manner. First, many of these earlier studies that analyzed the moderating effect of CX treated it as a unidimensional and oversimplified construct, often missing one or more dimensions completely, despite the prevailing acceptance of its complex multidimensional nature in the literature (De Keyser et al., 2015; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Nevertheless, our study probes into the moderation role of overall CX in a more comprehensive way by

encompassing all of its different aspects. Our findings suggest that in addition to the direct impact CX has on various constructs such as satisfaction (Moliner et al., 2019), purchase intention (Ebrahim et al., 2016), and relationship quality (Wibowo et al., 2021), it may also influence how these constructs are affected by their antecedents. Moreover, while scrutinizing the impact of overall customer experience on the one hand, the current study provides a significantly nuanced exploration as to the moderating role of CX by examining the individual impact of each of its dimensions on the other hand. In testing the moderating effects of different dimensions of customer experience (CX) on the relationships between perceived benefits, attitude, and loyalty, our study unveils noteworthy insights. Emotional experience emerges as a potent moderator, significantly influencing the positive relationship between perceived benefits, attitude, and loyalty. This finding aligns with the conclusions drawn by previous research (Lin et al., 2020; Nart et al., 2019), reinforcing the importance of emotional engagement in shaping customer loyalty. Similarly, consistent with prior research, cognitive experience (Brun et al., 2017; Kranzbühler et al., 2017) and social experience (Nadeem et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2021) also exhibit considerable effects on behavioral outcomes. Behavioral experience, in line with the works of Nysveen and Pedersen (2014) and Schmitt (1999), proves to be a significant moderator, further emphasizing the multifaceted nature of customer experience in influencing loyalty. Intriguingly, sensory experience diverges from our expectations, showing minimal moderation between perceived benefits and loyalty, and no moderating role in the positive relationship between attitude and loyalty. This contradicts established research emphasizing the impact of sensory elements on customer behavior (Hultén, 2011). Lastly, against our initial assumptions, none of the CX dimensions exhibit a moderating role in the negative relationship between skepticism, attitude, and loyalty. This unexpected finding challenges prevailing notions and underscores the complex interplay between customer skepticism, attitude, and loyalty that warrants further investigation.

4.2 | Theoretical implications

Our study offers several theoretical implications for the researchers, especially through the moderation and mediation interactions that it tests. Our research model is built on the BRT framework that was developed by Westaby (2005). In the study that he proposed and tested BRT as a new theoretical structure, Westaby (2005) highlights that the web of connections between the constructs inherently posits mediation hypotheses. However, many studies using BRT as their theoretical framework only focus on the direct relationships and ignore the mediation tests. A recent systematic literature review work by Sahu et al. (2020) shows that the majority of the BRT-based studies, despite the suggestion of Westaby himself, choose not to employ mediation analyses. Our study clearly shows the drawbacks of this misapplication. As elaborated in the results section, if it were not for the mediation analysis, we would mistakenly conclude that skepticism has no impact on loyalty whatsoever. By the same token, the literature review that we did during this study showed us that a surprisingly high number of studies exclude very crucial parts of the BRT framework from their research model. While some studies exclude the 'beliefs and values' part (e.g. Delgosha & Hajiheydari, 2020), some others leave out global motive, which is mostly 'attitude' (e.g. Probst & Graso, 2013) or omit the direct linkages between reasons and intentional behavior. (e.g. An et al., 2021). Each of these constructs has a unique role in explaining the underlying cognitive processes behind the formation of consumer behavior. Therefore, researchers are discouraged from such practices and suggested to follow the theoretical framework as a whole.

Secondly, our study paves the way for future CX research by employing customer experience as a moderator construct that is built following multi-dimensional conceptualization in the literature. Despite the call by Becker and Jaakkola (2020) for the usage of CX measures encompassing the most common experience dimensions used in the extant research—cognitive, affective, physical, sensorial, and social—studies that take CX as a moderating factor fail to answer this call. As the first study employing CX as a moderator with its multi-dimensional structure, we set an example for future studies.

4.3 | Practical implications

This study provides several implications for practitioners, strategists, and marketers. Skepticism is an unignorable phenomenon in the sustainability context. Even though practitioners may be reluctant to exercise sustainability initiatives due to the worry that it might lead to skepticism, our findings cogently assert that perceived benefits remarkably outweigh the doubts in consumers' minds. The tension between doubt of authenticity and expectation of certain benefits can be navigated though a successful corporate policy (Nazir & Islam, 2020). Tesla, for instance, has successfully incorporated sustainability aspects into its marketing strategy. They emphasize the environmental benefits of electric vehicles, such as reduced carbon emissions and the use of renewable energy sources. They also highlight the long-term cost savings associated with electric cars, as they require less maintenance and no gasoline. Therefore, this study encourages practitioners to incorporate sustainability aspects of their products and services into their marketing strategies and underline the benefits to be achieved as a result of using such products and services.

Secondly, this study shows a very effective way for practitioners to position their products and services in the market. In the last decades, companies started looking for new ways of creating a competitive advantage. Both sustainability (Lubin & Esty, 2010) and CX (Verhoef et al., 2009) are believed to be very crucial contemporary marketing weapons for enhancing firm competitiveness. Our findings suggest that effective customer experience (CX) strategies should be designed to evoke emotional, cognitive, social, and behavioral experiences, as opposed to relying solely or exclusively on sensory aspects when promoting sustainable products and services. The IKEA "Second Life for Furniture" campaign serves as a noteworthy example,

strategically promoting sustainable consumption by urging customers to recycle old furniture and opt for new, sustainable products. The campaign skillfully appeals to consumers' emotions, emphasizing the environmental benefits of recycling and the positive impact of sustainable choices on the planet (Kvalsund & Tamaehu-Plovier, 2022). Simultaneously, it engages consumers' cognitive and social values by underlining the importance of sustainability and individual contributions to promoting eco-friendly practices. Similarly, Patagonia "Worn Wear" campaign advocates sustainable consumption, encouraging customers to repair and reuse old clothing instead of buying new items (Balch, 2023). This campaign, too, skillfully taps into emotional connections, highlighting the sentimental value of old clothing and the positive environmental impact of repair and reuse. It aligns with consumers' cognitive and social values, emphasizing the role individuals play in fostering sustainability. These examples highlight the significance of comprehensive CX strategies that encompass diverse dimensions of consumer experience.

In conclusion, our study offers a unique combination of these strategic tools such that sustainability initiatives, which positively affect consumer behavior, are even more influential when accompanied by a favorable CX. So, sustainable products and services, reinforced with a delightful experience, can be the key to winning the competition.

5 | LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

The main interests of this study are to provide an understanding of consumers' behavioral intention toward sustainability and test the moderating effect of CX on the proposed relations. We chose to utilize an extensive measurement scale for CX so as to encompass each subdimension, as suggested in the literature. This resulted in a high number of measurement items, and in order to keep the surveys concise and reduce participant burden, we decided to include only perceived benefits and skepticism in the model as the reasons for and against. The research model can be extended by incorporating other positive factors frequently scrutinized in the sustainability context, such as trust, self-fulfillment, and altruism, or negative factors, such as perceived risk, price barrier, and perceived quality loss.

Secondly, in this study, we did not employ industry differentiation. However, it can be an interesting future research opportunity to incorporate industry differentiation as a control variable. Previous research showed that type of industry is an essential factor affecting consumers' level of appreciation toward sustainability initiatives (Grewatsch & Kleindienst, 2015). A sustainability practice, highly regarded for a clean industry, can be seen as not a favor but a duty for a dirty industry. Comparing the customers' attitude toward sustainable products produced by dirty and clean sectors and examining the change in the moderating effect of CX in these two distinct settings may yield very insightful results for both sustainability and CX works of literature.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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How to cite this article: Ünal, U., Bağcı, R. B., & Taşçıoğlu, M. (2024). The perfect combination to win the competition: Bringing sustainability and customer experience together. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.3728

APPENDIX 1. EFA OF SECOND-ORDER CONSTRUCTS A

A. Customer Experience

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
CESEN3	.91				
CESEN4	.76				
CESEN2	.76				
CESEN1	.63				
CEAFF2		.87			
CEAFF3		.84			
CEAFF1		.79			
CEAFF4		.64			
CECOG2			.89		
CECOG3			.82		
CECOG4			.67		
CECOG1			.65		
CESOC3				.81	
CESOC4				.73	
CESOC2				.60	
CEBEH2					.97
CEBEH3					.77
CEBEH4					.55

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

B. Values

	Component	
	1	2
TV1	.90	
TV2	.87	
TV3	.83	
TV4	.69	
IV4		.90
IV3		.77
IV5		.76
IV2		.61

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

APPENDIX 2: MEASUREMENT ITEMS B

Item	λ
Values (CR: 0.92, AVE: 0.86)	
Terminal value (λ:0.87; CR:0.87; AVE: 0.62)	
I purchase sustainable products/services for feeling physically and mentally good	.76
Purchasing sustainable products/services is relieving for me	.77
Purchasing sustainable products/services is pleasing and satisfying for me	.82
Purchasing sustainable products/services makes me happy	.80
Instrumental value (λ:0.98; CR:0.81; AVE: 0.52)	
I think use of sustainable products/services is easy	.73
I think use of sustainable products/services is logical and reasonable	.69
I do not feel wasting my money when I purchase sustainable products/services	.74
I think use of sustainable products/services is beneficial for both individuals and society	.68
Perceived benefits (CR: 0.87, AVE: 0.53)	
I think using sustainable products/services protects the environment from toxic chemicals	.72
I think using sustainable products/services cuts down the emission of greenhouse gases	.74
I think using sustainable products/services enables source saving	.78
I think using sustainable products/services reduces the dependence on exhaustible sources	.77
I think using sustainable products/services increases the life standards	.74
I think using sustainable products/services increases welfare of the society	.72
I think using sustainable products/services increases employment	.60
Skepticism (CR: 0.89, AVE: 0.59)	
I think using sustainable products/services is not safe and secure	.67
I do not think the sustainable products/services will be successful	.74
I doubt that sustainable products/services can actually do what they promise	.76
I think using sustainable products/services is difficult and cumbersome	.83
I think sustainable products/services are often too complicated to be useful	.84
I have an image that sustainable products/services are difficult to adapt	.78
Attitude (CR: 0.89, AVE: 0.60)	
I think that use of sustainable products/services by me will help in reducing pollution and also help in improving the environment.	.80
I think that use of sustainable products/services by me will help in reducing wasteful use of natural resources.	.77
I think that use of sustainable products/services by me will help in conserving natural resources.	.85
I think practicing using sustainable products/services is valuable.	.82
I think practicing using sustainable products/services is delightful.	.61
I think it is wise to use sustainable products/services	.78
Customer experience (CR: 0.95, AVE: 0.82)	
Affective experience (λ:0.93; CR:0.88; AVE: 0.63)	
I feel that I do a good thing when I buy sustainable products/services	.76
I get a nice feeling when I buy sustainable products/services	.83
I am content when I buy sustainable products/services	.80
I feel a sense of harmony when I buy sustainable products/services	.74
Behavioral experience (λ:0.92; CR:0.83; AVE: 0.63)	
I think sustainable products/services fit my view of life	.73
Sustainable products/services get me to think about my behavior	.76
Sustainable products/services remind me of the contribution I can make to the society and the environment	.83
Cognitive experience (λ:0.92; CR:0.86; AVE: 0.60)	
I feel that I can trust sustainable products/services	.83

Item	λ
I think the advertising of sustainable products/services provides consumers with essential information about environmental and socio-economic problems	.77
I feel that the sustainable products/services stimulate my curiosity.	.78
I do not feel that the sustainability claim of this company is sincere.	.74
Sensory experience (λ:0.86; CR:0.89; AVE: 0.66)	
The sustainable products/services excite my senses	.78
The sustainable products/services make a strong impression on my visual sense	.80
The appearance of sustainable products/services is interesting	.81
This visuality of the sustainable products/services does not lack appeal for me	.82
Social experience (λ:0.90; CR:0.84; AVE: 0.63)	
I can relate to other customers who purchase sustainable products/services	.73
I think sustainable product/service providers are interested in customer needs	.78
The sustainable products/services get me to think about relationships with the society and the environment	.81
Loyalty (CR: 0.87, AVE: 0.58)	
Sustainable products would be my first choice if I have the opportunity to choose	.76
I will continue purchasing sustainable products in the future	.85
I intend to keep sustainable products as one of my shopping choices	.79
I am willing to recommend sustainable products to others	.77
I can accept the higher price for sustainable products, even if there are cheaper other (non-sustainable) products	.61