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The Impact of Eco-Friendly Practices on Generation Z's Green Image, Brand Attachment, Brand Advocacy, and Brand Loyalty in Coffee Shop

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Abstract: This study examined eco-friendly practices (EFPs), green image, and brand attachment to identify antecedents that affect coffee shop consumers' brand advocacy and brand loyalty, targeting Generation Z, who are emerging as the primary agents of eco-friendly consumption. In particular, we applied only the tangible EFPs that consumers can observe to identify a clear relationship between perceptions of EFPs and consumer behavior. This is the most significant difference from previous studies. In this study, 287 people who responded that they had visited Starbucks, which was selected as the coffee shop brand to be investigated through a pilot test, were used as a sample. As a result of the verification, EFPs demonstrated a positive influence on green image and brand attachment, and green image appeared to have a positive effect on brand attachment. Brand attachment was confirmed to be an antecedent that strengthens brand advocacy and brand loyalty. This study contributes to the literature on environmental friendliness in the hospitality industry and can be used to establish sustainable, eco-friendly marketing strategies in the food service business.

Keywords: Generation Z; eco-friendly practices; green image; brand attachment; brand advocacy; brand loyalty; coffee shop

1. Introduction

As consumers recognize the importance of environmental sustainability, environmental protection has become an essential issue [1]. Accordingly, eco-friendliness is gradually being emphasized as an important component of the core branding strategy of many companies pursuing environmental sustainability [2]. The restaurant industry is a major waste producer of food and other resources, resulting in significant resource waste, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and business costs [3]. In particular, due to COVID-19, demand for plastic containers has also increased explosively as online delivery and take-out services for restaurants and coffee shops have increased [4]. Additionally, the global growth of coffee shop brands has accelerated the increase in waste generation, including packaging materials and coffee grounds [5]. Environmental sustainability issues in the coffee shop industry related to single-use waste, focusing on coffee cups and grounds [1]. In total, 80% of the weight of extracted coffee beans remains as coffee grounds and becomes waste, which is usually incinerated or landfilled, causing environmental problems [6]. Regarding environmental pollution, plastics (especially single-use plastics) are a major concern due to their ubiquity and harmful environmental effects [4].

However, as corporate and consumer awareness of eco-friendly practices (EFPs) and sustainability increases, the restaurant industry is following a trend toward becoming more environmentally friendly [7]. EFPs include pollution prevention, recycling programs, water conservation, energy efficiency, green materials, green purchasing, green design, and

green food programs [8,9]. Starbucks, one of the most representative eco-friendly coffee shop companies, practice EFPs by using recycled take-out cups, organic food, and reusable mugs [10]. Additionally, by recycling and regenerating waste materials generated in stores, including coffee grounds and plastic, McDonald's has reduced carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 150,000 kg (330,700 pounds) [11].

Customers are also concerned about the true motivations behind the environmental initiatives communicated by tourism and hospitality service providers [12]. This concern arises from the deceptive practice of using eco-friendly promotions or marketing tactics to create the perception that a company's products, goals, and/or policies are ecofriendly [13]. This practice, known as "greenwashing", involves the dissemination of disinformation by organizations to portray an environmentally responsible public image [14]. Greenwashing tactics ma include renaming or re-labeling harmful products to evoke the natural environment and spending considerable amounts of money on advertising to portray polluting companies as eco-friendly [13]. Rahman et al. [15] showed that customers who perceive that a hotel's environmental claims have ulterior motives are less likely to engage in environmental conservation efforts and are less likely to return. However, recent EFPs in the tourism and hospitality sectors have been welcomed by customers because they are less likely to be perceived as green washing [12]. Many companies are implementing environmental certification programs to reduce environmental damage and encourage the participation of consumers interested in green issues [16]. These certifications are an attempt to encourage companies' commitment to the environment and differentiate truly eco-friendly companies from greenwashed companies [17].

Restaurants' EFPs are considered important to environmentally conscious consumers [18]. Therefore, restaurants that adopt EFPs not only contribute to environmental conservation but also gain benefits that help them gain a competitive advantage [9]. Despite the interest in environmentally friendly practices among consumers and restaurants, understanding sustainable restaurant practices has not been adequately examined in the context of coffee shops. Indeed, an essential question for coffee shop brands seeking to generate economic and environmental benefits by adopting sustainable EFP is how such practices affect customers' loyalty toward coffee shops.

Through marketing and corporate social responsibility research, EFPs have long been considered an essential element of corporate reputation and a key element of corporate image [19]. A green image is even more critical for companies, such as those in the tourism and hospitality industry, at a time when environmental awareness is increasing, and international regulations on environmental protection are advancing [20]. A restaurant's tangible green attributes (e.g., in-store recycling bins, recyclable take-out containers, green menu options) can influence customers' green image of a particular restaurant [21]. Likewise, coffee shop operators are highly interested in EFPs that enhance the brand's green image [22].

Customers have emotional attachments to brands, places, and companies they find meaningful [23]. Consumers who care about the environment are more likely to identify with environmentally friendly stores representing their self-image or values and form greater emotional attachment by experiencing higher congruence [5]. Additionally, the brand attachment for eco-friendly consumers will be stronger if they believe the eco-friendly brand image matches their self-value [24].

Loyal customers are a prerequisite for securing higher market share for a business [25]. One of the best ways to create loyal customers is to turn them into assets through brand attachment [26]. Consumers with high emotional brand attachment engage in activities such as promoting the brand, participating in the brand community, and spreading positive word of mouth [27]. Consumers with strong emotional attachment become brand advocates who defend and preserve the brand [28]. Therefore, an in-depth investigation is needed into the factors that lead to EFPs, green image, brand attachment, brand advocacy, and brand loyalty.

Meanwhile, Generation Z (Gen Z) accounts for approximately 32% of the global population [29] and is the youngest generational group of active consumers, making

it one of the fastest growing segments and an important target market for the tourism industry [30]. Gen Z, known as the "Facebook Generation" or "Internet Generation" are people born between 1995 and 2010 [31,32]. Gen Z tends to be eco-friendly, prioritize health when making food choices, and desire a higher quality of life compared to other generations [33]. A recent report confirmed that 35% of Gen Z care about the environment and consider sustainability a priority, and there is a growing tendency to embrace healthy daily life and adopt more ethical choices [34]. Compared to other generations, Gen Z tourists are also more likely to fall into the "environmental" or "mixed environmental" sectors, which makes them more likely to engage in sustainable practices related to resource conservation and purchasing local food [35]. In particular, Gen Z represents a sustainable food service market segment with much potential, so understanding this consumer group is essential for tailoring effective approaches to sustainability marketing [36]. Therefore, this study considers Gen Z to understand consumer behavior toward EFPs [31].

Previous studies of EFPs in hospitality mainly focus on hotels [36–38] and restaurants [3,9,39–41]. Research on EFPs in coffee shops [5,21] is still limited. Therefore, this study targets coffee shops in line with the growing consumer interest in environmental responsibility and the growing need for eco-friendly marketing within coffee shops [10]. In addition, consumer behavior regarding EFPs in coffee shops was confirmed, targeting Gen Z, which is emerging as the primary agent of eco-friendly consumption. The importance of Gen Z was overlooked in previous studies of EFPs in the hospitality industry mentioned above. Therefore, this selection of research subjects is the most significant difference from previous studies.

Many of the restaurant's product and process activities, including those with eco-friendly characteristics, occur at the back of the house. Therefore, many practices are invisible to customers [22]. Nevertheless, previous studies [3,7,9,19,24,41,42] verified consumer behavior by constructing a single dimension of intangible EFPs that are difficult to observe when customers eat at eco-friendly restaurants and tangible EFPs that can be observed. However, the results may be less clear than when only tangible EFPs are applied [19]. Therefore, we applied only the tangible EFPs that consumers can observe to identify a clear relationship between perceptions of EFPs and consumer behavior.

Additionally, no research to date has examined the relationship between EFPs and green image, brand attachment, brand advocacy, and brand loyalty in the context of restaurants and coffee shops. Therefore, this study integrated each variable and identified the relationships between variables. The design of this study is different from previous studies [3,5,7,9,19,24,41] that applied EFPs to restaurants and coffee shops. The analysis results presented important factors and how their roles can predict consumer behavior toward coffee shops in an eco-friendly context. Our study also provided strong practical implications for coffee shop brand managers to guide them in developing sustainable business strategies.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1. Eco-Friendly Practice

Eco-friendly marketing has become one of the most important marketing concepts [42], and encouraging the application of EFPs on the part of companies and regulating them on behalf of consumers is an important marketing strategy that can gain a competitive advantage [43]. EFPs refer to activities that provide environmentally friendly products and services or provide products and services to consumers through systems and processes that can improve and protect the environment [44].

Recently, the restaurant industry has begun eco-friendly management to fulfill social responsibilities through environmental protection, resource conservation, and removal of environmental pollution [10]. The Green Restaurant Association (GRA), a non-profit organization, has promoted the implementation of EFPs in restaurants since 1990 [45]. In a coffee shop context, EFPs have a tangible dimension, such as products or activities that occur front-of-the-house and can be observed by customers. For example, using recyclable

take-out containers, recycling bins for cups and sleeves in stores, serving drinks in reusable glasses or mugs, or serving organic foods [5].

Waste reduction is currently a key focus for governments and the restaurant sector due to concerns about the waste of edible food, the link between waste and carbon emissions, and the impact of plastics on the environment [3]. Previous studies on EFPs include various sub-items, but rather than a commonly used factor, various eco-friendly practice factors have been presented depending on the business and field being investigated. Looking at research in the restaurant field, Baloglu et al. [9] presented energy, waste, water, and food as factors for EFPs in casual restaurants, and Kim and Hall [3] classified food sustainability practices and waste reduction practices as restaurants' EFPs. Wang [41] suggested recycling and composting, eco-friendly cleaning products and packaging, energy and water-efficient equipment, and menu sustainability as factors for coffee shops' EFPs. Jang et al. [5] and Jeong et al. [19] structured the eco-friendly practice factors of coffee shops into a single dimension, which was based on tangible products and activities that customers could observe. In this study, considering the coffee shop situation, we focused on EFPs at the tangible level proposed in the studies of Jang et al. [5].

Some benefits of restaurants going green include promoting a positive brand image, providing a competitive advantage over other restaurants, and reducing costs [7]. According to corporate image research, especially in the field of marketing, EFPs can be a component of corporate image development [22]. EFPs are an effective tool to support corporate image because they portray a positive image of the company and demonstrate the organization's commitment to society [46,47]. Several hospitality studies have confirmed that EFPs are a prerequisite for a green image. According to a study by Namkung and Jang [22], both types of EFPs in upscale casual and casual dining restaurants significantly improved consumer awareness of green brand image and behavioral intention. Jeong et al. [19] provided practical guidelines for effective green marketing and building a green image for coffee shops. Of the four green practices tested in their study, the three that significantly impacted forming customers' green image were recyclable take-out containers, energy-efficient lighting, and recycling waste. A study by Martinez Garcia de Leaniz et al. [20] demonstrates that customer awareness of EFPs of environmentally certified hotels positively affected the company's green image and customers' behavioral intentions. Therefore, this study proposes EFPs as an essential predictor of strengthening green image in coffee shop situations. Thus, the following set of hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *Eco-friendly practice positively influences green image.*

A company's EFPs or social responsibility actions can be important in forming consumers' emotional attachment to a company or store [5]. According to Jang et al. [5], coffee shops' EFPs positively affected the formation of consumers' emotional attachment to the store. This result confirms that EFPs are important for building a lasting relationship between coffee shops and consumers. Khan et al. [48] confirmed the positive relationship between EFPs and green brand attachment in fast food restaurants. They also identified recyclable take-out containers, recycling waste, and energy-saving lighting as important EFPs that significantly contribute to customers' emotional brand attachment. Bekar et al. [43] confirmed that EFPs implemented in coffee shop stores have a positive effect on customers' emotional attachment and a positive effect on eco-friendly loyalty to stores and products. Thus, the following set of hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *Eco-friendly practice positively influences brand attachment.*

2.2. Green Image

In the hospitality research field, corporate image is one of the most common concepts because it influences customer responses [17]. Corporate image is very important because it reflects how one organization differentiates itself from others, and helps maintain friendly

relationships with customers [19]. When an organization invests in EFPs, it can improve not only productivity but also corporate image [47,49]. Green image is defined as a set of perceptions about a company/brand in the minds of consumers, linked to its commitment to and concern for the environment [50]. Wang et al. [51] defined green image as perceptions related to environmental commitments and concerns resulting from the company's associations in consumers' memories. Therefore, a company's green image includes the company's environmental or eco-friendly attributes as perceived by stakeholders [20,52]. A restaurant's tangible green attributes can influence customers' green image of a particular restaurant [22]. As consumer demand for environmentally responsible products and services increases in the hospitality industry, green images are beginning to replace the importance of overall image [53]. Additionally, a positive green image serves as a clear signal of a company's environmental commitment to key stakeholders and represents an effective means of improving environmental differentiation and profitability [20]. Therefore, for a company to build a successful green brand image, it must induce consumers to perceive that the brand is eco-friendly [24].

The concept of corporate and brand image has shown great interest among tourism industry scholars due to its impact on customer behavioral decisions [20]. In a study by Kim et al. [54], festival brand image was positively and strongly related to festival attachment and brand loyalty. Researchers emphasized the importance of a positive image of the festival. According to Manyiwa et al. [55], the brand image of a city was confirmed to be an essential factor that strengthens tourists' emotional attachment to the city. Jawahar et al. [56] identified event image as an important antecedent in creating city attachment and brand equity. They said that if visitors develop a positive attachment to the event host city, their favorable attitude toward the city as a whole improves. Chen et al. [24] confirmed that in an eco-friendly context, the stronger the green brand image of a product perceived by consumers, the stronger their attachment to the brand. Thus, the following set of hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *Green image positively influences brand attachment.*

2.3. Brand Attachment

Attachment is a relationship-based concept that reflects the emotional bond that links an individual to a specific object [57], brand attachment results from a long-term relationship between oneself and the brand [24]. While previous psychological research has emphasized individuals' attachment to other people (e.g., romantic partners, mothers, infants), marketing literature has demonstrated that customers become attached to specific brands [57]. Therefore, marketing literature defines brand attachment as a consumer's long-term, emotional disposition toward a brand [58]. Greenwald and Pratkanis [59] argued that customers can become attached to a brand in such a way that it becomes an extension of the self by giving strong emotions, such as when the brand becomes a part of the customer's daily life. Brand attachment is, therefore, characterized by a strong connection or connectedness between the brand and the self [60]. Thomson et al. [61] first developed the emotional brand attachment scale to measure attachment, conceptualizing it as an emotional bond, degree of affection, passion, and connection. Subsequent research demonstrated that brand attachment, which reflects brand and self-connection, includes both emotional and cognitive bonds [58,62,63].

Previous research has demonstrated that brand attachment positively affects consumer behaviors such as brand loyalty. In particular, consumers with strong brand attachment are more resilient to negative brand information, ignore the brand's shortcomings, and defend the brand [28,62]. A study by Ahmadi and Ataei [28] identified that the more experiences an individual has with a brand, the greater the positive relationship between emotional attachment and brand advocacy. Laophon and Khamwon [64] identified that emotional brand attachment, directly and indirectly, affects brand advocacy. In a study by Natarajan

and Veera Raghavan [65], shoppers' store attachment was found to positively affect various online brand advocacy behaviors. Thus, the following set of hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *Brand attachment positively influences brand advocacy.*

Additionally, Jang et al. [1] found that consumers' attachment to green stores positively affected green store loyalty and green product loyalty. When consumers experience an emotional attachment to a green store, they will become loyal to a specific green store [5]. Bahri-Ammari et al. [58] identified that brand attachment to luxury restaurants is an antecedent in forming consumer loyalty because it contributes to maintaining relationships in terms of repeat purchase behavior. Kim and Stepchenkova [57] confirmed the positive role of brand attachment in strengthening brand loyalty among Korean family restaurant customers. According to a study by Jang [23], it was confirmed that customers form a strong emotional attachment to the green service environment of coffee shops and that this attachment significantly increases loyalty. Thus, the following set of hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5 (H5). *Brand attachment positively influences brand loyalty.*

2.4. Brand Advocacy

Brand advocacy is one of the important variables in consumer-brand relationships [66]. Brand advocacy is defined as the promotion or defense of an organization, product or brand by one consumer to another consumer [28]. Brand advocacy is a core component of brand equity and differs from loyalty, which refers to repeat purchases, because it involves peer-to-peer communication. Advocacy is a unique combination of attitude, loyalty, and engagement. Loyalty focuses on the intention to revisit and can influence brand choice, whereas advocacy involves actively promoting the brand to others [67]. Additionally, it differs from positive word of mouth in that it is based on a consumer-brand relationship [68]. These advocacy behaviors include spreading positive word of mouth and defending the brand against criticism [69]. Some scholars argue that this goes beyond simply recommending a brand and disseminating information about the brand through word of mouth and goes to the level of customers forgiving suppliers for poor service situations and providing service opportunities [70]. In other words, brand advocacy means that there is a high level of trust and affection between the consumer and a brand [71]. From a business perspective, brand advocacy can undoubtedly serve as an influential source of corporate value creation because favorable recommendations or communication can promote the adoption of a product or service [72,73].

2.5. Brand Loyalty

A strong brand is important in creating brand loyalty, especially in competitive business environments [74]. Aaker [25] argued that brand loyalty, a key element of brand equity, is considered one of the important measures for the success of business marketing strategies [75]. Brand loyalty is a behavioral response to preferred products or services, which involves preferring, recommending, and repurchasing the products and services of that brand [76]. Loyal customers will repeatedly purchase the same brand or set of brands despite situational influences that drive switching behavior and the potential influence of other brands' marketing efforts [57].

Common ways to measure brand loyalty are willingness to pay more, word of mouth, and repurchase intention [77]. Specifically, willingness to pay more and word of mouth are classified as attitudinal loyalty, and revisit intention is classified as behavioral loyalty [75]. Companies with more loyal customers enjoy more revenue and market share and get a higher return on investment [63]. In particular, consumers who form a strong sense of connection, belonging, and emotional attachment to the brand in a service environment have higher levels of loyalty [23].

Figure 1 depicts the research model, which involves a total of 5 hypotheses regarding the causal relationships among the five latent constructs.
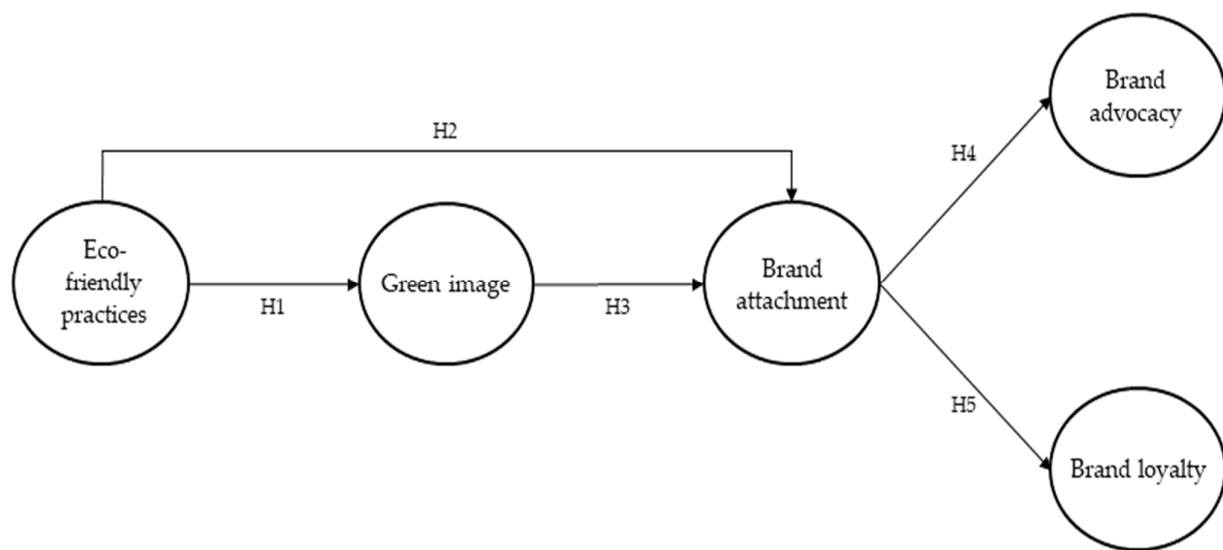

Figure 1. A Conceptual Research Model.

3. Methods

3.1. Measures

This study consisted of five factors: EFPs, green image, brand attachment, brand advocacy, and brand loyalty. All factor items were adopted from existing literature and modified to suit the coffee shop context. The five questions regarding tangible EFPs that were judged to be directly observable by customers in stores were adopted from Jang et al. [5], Kim and Hall [3], and Kwok and Huang [40]. The four questions about green image were quoted from Jeong et al. [19], Mahasuweerachai and Suttikun [53], and Martinez Garcia de Leaniz et al. [20], and the four questions about brand attachment were quoted by Jang et al. [5] and Khan et al. [48]. The four questions on brand advocacy were quoted from Aljarah et al. [70], and the three questions on brand loyalty were quoted from Jang et al. [5]. The measured items used a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

3.2. Data Collection Procedure

The survey subjects for sampling were selected as Gen Z customers who had experience using chain coffee shop brands within the past month. We conducted a pilot test using online convenience sampling through social network services to determine the awareness level of Gen Z coffee consumers regarding the EFPs of coffee shop brands. The respondents who participated in the pilot test were provided with the concept of EFPs and examples of coffee shop brands. We also asked respondents to answer screening questions regarding whether they were aware of the EFPs of these coffee shops, and which brand among the Korean coffee shop brands they believed to be practicing the best EFPs. A total of 112 respondents met the requirements of the screening questions and provided responses that could be used for analysis. The sample size for the pilot study was considered sufficient following the suggestion of a minimum sample size of 100 or a 5:1 subject ratio for the items provided by Gorsuch [78]. In the pilot test, 98 (87.5%) of the 112 respondents selected Starbucks as the coffee shop brand that best practices EFPs. The remaining brands account for less than 10% of the total. Therefore, we judged that Starbucks was representative of coffee shop brands that practice EFPs and ultimately selected it as the coffee shop brand to be investigated.

Data collection was conducted from 25 January to 9 February 2024, and was conducted through online research company. Respondents were administered three screening ques-

tions before being invited for an interview. "Is your year of birth after 1995?" "Have you visited Starbucks within the past month?" "Are you aware of Starbucks' EFPs?" If any of the three answers were no, the survey was closed. Of the 5000 people who responded to the survey, 321 answered 'yes' to the three questions. The research institute explained the purpose of this study to 321 respondents, and the survey was conducted after obtaining informed consent. Among the 321 collected questionnaires, 34 with extreme outliers were removed, and 287 valid questionnaires were used for analysis. A demographic characteristic of participants is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants.

Demographic Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	136	47.4
	Female	151	52.6
Marital status	Single	226	78.7
	Married	61	21.3
Educational level	High school	49	17.1
	2-year university	45	15.7
	4-year university	148	51.6
	Graduate school	45	15.7
Monthly income	Below 2000	76	26.5
	USD 2000–2999	71	24.7
	USD 3000–3999	44	15.3
	USD 4000–4999	37	12.9
	USD 5000–5999	16	5.6
	Above USD 6000	43	15.0
Occupation	Student	69	24.0
	Office workers	80	27.9
	Sales and Service	42	14.6
	Technician	7	2.4
	Professional job	57	19.9
	Self-employed	16	5.6
	Others	16	5.6

3.3. Statistical Analysis

We applied Anderson and Gerbing's [79] two-step approach to data analysis using AMOS 25.0. In the first step, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to test the suitability of the measurement model and estimate reliability and validity. In the second step, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to examine the relationships between the five latent constructs proposed in this study.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A measurement model consisting of all construct items and five latent variables was created through the CFA using the maximum urethral estimation method. Table 2 indicates the results of the CFA after removing one item (i.e., "Visiting this coffee shop says a lot about who I am") related to brand attachment, which reduces the goodness of fit of the model based on the squared multiple correlations (SMC > 0.4) value. The results of the CFA demonstrated that the measurement model was an adequate fit to the data (χ^2 = 260.933, df = 135, χ^2/df = 1.933, RMR = 0.047, GFI = 0.913, NFI = 0.924, IFI = 0.962, CFI = 0.961, RMSEA = 0.057). We additionally examined the measurement model to verify construct validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. First, standardized loading estimates are above the minimum requirement of 0.5 [80]. Construct validity was achieved because the standardized loading estimates of all items were greater than 0.5, and each item loaded significantly ($p < 0.01$) on its associated latent construct. Second, the AVE of the structure ranged from 0.616 to 0.788, which is larger than the minimum threshold of 0.50 suggested by Hair et al. [80]. Additionally, the composite

reliabilities of constructs were above 0.70, indicating that all constructs in the model had acceptable internal consistency. Therefore, convergent validity for each construct was achieved [80] (See Table 2). Third, to evaluate discriminant validity, the AVE square root of each latent variable was compared with the corresponding correlation coefficient between latent variables [81]. Table 3 indicates adequate discriminant validity in that the AVE square root of each latent variable is greater than the corresponding correlation coefficient.

Table 2. Results of confirmatory factor analysis.

Construct and Scale Item	Loading	CR	AVE
Eco-friendly practice (EFP) (α = 0.863)			
This coffee shop offers responsibly grown/eco-friendly products (e.g., fair trade/organic coffee, teas, local/organic foods).	0.681	0.887	0.616
This coffee shop uses eco-friendly materials (e.g., recycled napkins, paper straws).	0.945		
This coffee shop uses recyclable take-out containers.	0.647		
This coffee shop uses reusable cups rather than disposable plastic cups in the store.	0.767		
This coffee shop recommends using your own cup to minimize harmful waste.	0.701		
Green image (GIM) (α = 0.875)			
I think that this coffee shop is responsible regarding environmental issues.	0.792	0.914	0.726
I believe that this coffee shop is concerned about environmental conservation.	0.810		
I think that this coffee shop is not only care about generating profits but also about the environment and consumers.	0.774		
This coffee shop behaves in a socially responsible way.	0.804		
Brand attachment (BAT) (α = 0.831)			
I feel this coffee shop is a part of me.	0.682	0.917	0.788
I identify strongly with this coffee shop.	0.869		
This coffee shop means a lot to me.	0.832		
Brand advocacy (BAD) (α = 0.864)			
I will try to get my friends and family to buy this coffee shop's products and services.	0.869	0.910	0.717
I will tell others about the good things about this coffee shop.	0.764		
I will defend this coffee shop to others if I hear someone speaking poorly about this coffee shop.	0.795		
I will bring friends/family with me to this coffee shop because I think they would like it here.	0.800		
Brand loyalty (BLO) (α = 0.920)			
I will say positive things about this coffee shop to others.	0.891	0.914	0.780
I will use this coffee shop more often.	0.961		
I will choose this coffee shop first among several coffee shop.	0.825		

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of variables.

Construct	1	2	3	4	5
1. EFP	0.785				
2. GIM	0.284	0.852			
3. BAT	0.253	0.336	0.888		
4. BAD	0.260	0.438	0.268	0.847	
5. BLO	0.266	0.327	0.226	0.610	0.883
Mean	3.682	3.839	4.303	3.642	3.035
S.D.	0.741	0.693	0.601	0.726	1.000

Note: The diagonal values represent the square roots of AVE for each construct.

4.2. Common Method Bias

According to Podsakoff et al. [82], data collected from the same source may raise potential concerns that common method variance (CMV) is due to the method of measurement rather than the construct it represents. Therefore, we applied Harman's single factor test [83] to examine whether CMV biased the data. To this end, we loaded all items of the variable into a single factor without rotation and performed an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). EFA was conducted by injecting 19 measurement items of EFPs, green image, brand attachment, brand advocacy, and brand loyalty. As a result of the analysis, it was confirmed that there was no common method bias problem because the variance of the single factor was explained at 34.5%, satisfying the criterion of less than 50% [82].

4.3. Structural Model and Hypothesis Tests

A SEM analysis was conducted in order to identify the 5 hypotheses, which are presented in Table 4. The results of the SEM indicated an adequate fit of the model to the data (χ^2 = 298.358, df = 138, p = 0.000, χ^2/df = 2.162, RMR = 0.070, GFI = 0.905, NFI = 0.913, IFI = 0.951, CFI = 0.951, RMSEA = 0.064). H1 was supported because EFPs positively affects green image (β = 0.277 and t = 4.000). H2 was supported because EFPs positively affects brand attachment (β = 0.186 and t = 2.838). H3 was supported because green image positively affects brand attachment (β = 0.309 and t = 4.292). H4 was supported because brand attachment positively affecrts brand advocacy (β = 0.183 and t = 2.751). Lastly, H5 was supported because brand attachment positively affects brand loyalty (β = 0.231 and t = 3.519).

Table 4. Results of structural model.

	Hypotheses	β	t-Value	*p*-Value	Decision
H1	EFP → GIM	0.277	4.333 **	0.000	supported
H2	EFP → BAT	0.186	2.838 **	0.005	supported
H3	GIM → BAT	0.309	4.292 **	0.000	supported
H4	BAT → BAD	0.183	2.751 **	0.006	supported
H5	BAT → BLO	0.231	3.519 **	0.000	supported

Note: ** *p* < 0.01.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

As a result of the study, it was confirmed that coffee shops' EFPs had a positive effect on green image and brand attachment. This is a result that supports previous studies that investigated the relationship between EFPs and green image [19] and the relationship between EFPs and brand attachment [5] targeting coffee shops. In particular, EFPs demonstrated a stronger influence on green image than brand attachment. These results mean that encouraging eco-friendly products, the use of eco-friendly materials, recyclable take-out containers, reusable cups in stores, and personal cups are very important in increasing Gen Z consumers' perception of green image and emotional brand attachment. Additionally, the green image formed by EFPs was found to have a positive effect on consumers' brand attachment. This is a result that supports Chen et al.'s [24] study on eco-friendly foods. This means that consumers' emotional attachment to the coffee shop brand is further strengthened when the coffee shop brand cares about environmental preservation and responds to environmental problems in a responsible manner.

Brand attachment was found to have a positive effect on brand advocacy. This result supports previous studies [28,64,65,69] that identified the relationship between brand attachment and brand advocacy. Additionally, brand attachment was found to have a positive effect on brand loyalty. This supported previous studies targeting restaurants and coffee shops [5,23,57,58]. Consumers who have a strong emotional attachment to a brand formed by EFPs and a green image not only have positive word-of-mouth and revisit intentions but also demonstrate resilience to negative information about the brand and take action to defend the brand [28,62].

5.1. Theoretical Implications

EFPs have been applied to restaurant situations and identified consumer behavior in a number of studies. However, previous studies [3,7,9,19,40,41,48] confirmed customers' intentions and relationships by applying intangible EFPs (e.g., efficient lighting and water use, use of renewable power, composting program, recycling waste in the back of the store, use of eco-friendly detergents, in-store temperature control system, leftover food donation, employee training) that customers could not actually perceive when eating at eco-friendly restaurants. Previous studies [3,7,9,19,40,41,48] examined consumer behavior using tangible and intangible EFPs as a single dimension. As our results may not be as clear as tangible practices [19], we applied only the tangible EFPs that consumers could observe to identify a clear relationship between perceptions of EFPs and consumer behavior. The composition of this eco-friendly practice scale is consistent with some studies [5]. However, this study [5] has limitations in that it does not reflect consumers' heightened environmental awareness due to the COVID-19 pandemic and does not reflect the awareness of Gen Z, who are growing into the mainstream of food service consumption. To overcome these limitations, this study identified Gen Z's perception and consumer behavior by applying an eco-friendly practice scale that can be observed in coffee shops.

This study is the first to investigate the relationship between Gen Z consumers' awareness of EFPs in the hospitality industry and green image, brand attachment, brand advocacy, and brand loyalty. As a result of the study, it was identified that the role of EFPs is important in improving Gen Z consumers' green image and brand attachment to coffee shops. In addition, the relationship between the green image positively formed among Gen Z consumers and brand attachment, which is the emotional response of consumers, was confirmed. The relationship between these two variables has theoretical significance in that it has rarely been addressed in the eco-friendly restaurant context. Lastly, it was confirmed that this brand attachment is an important antecedent to increasing brand advocacy and brand loyalty. The design and results of this study contribute significantly to the hospitality literature.

5.2. Practical Implications

Coffee shop brands have been adopting EFPs in response to consumers' concerns about protecting the environment. Through this, we expect to improve the company's green image, increase brand attachment, and build long-term relationships with Gen Z customers who value eco-friendliness. We offer the following suggestions for EFPs in coffee shops. From a practical standpoint, coffee shops will need to reinforce tangible EFPs that customers can observe. As demonstrated in the research results, tangible EFPs (e.g., organic products, recycled napkins, paper straws, recyclable take-out containers, use of reusable cups in store, use of personal cups encouraged) are a useful way to strengthen the green image and brand attachment toward coffee shops. These practices send a direct message to customers that the coffee shop is engaging in EFPs. We also suggest creating an eco-friendly environment within stores to strengthen tangible EFPs. Coffee shop brand managers or marketers must provide environmentally friendly clues that customers can recognize, such as eco-friendly interiors, colors, scents, and lighting, to convey an eco-friendly image to customers.

We assessed the EFPs of coffee shops by applying a simple tangible practice tool. However, we also recommend more proactive measures, namely the implementation of intangible green practices (e.g., efficient energy use, coffee grounds composting program) that customers say are difficult to observe. These practices must be accompanied by advertising and promotions so that consumers are aware of them even outside the store. In fact, Starbucks has pledged to achieve carbon-neutral green coffee and conserve water use in green coffee processing by 50% by 2030 for a resource-friendly future [84]. However, these EFPs may not be well known to consumers. In particular, Gen Z consumers have been living in a digital environment since birth. You can improve your company's green image by actively promoting the tangible and intangible EFPs of coffee shops through social network

services familiar to Gen Z. This kind of promotion will have the effect of awakening the importance of the environment to Gen Z consumers who are somewhat indifferent to eco-friendliness. These active environmental campaigns will improve consumers' attachment to the brand, advocacy against negative information, and loyalty.

5.3. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

As with any study, the current study has some limitations that suggest directions for further research. First, because it only targeted coffee shops, there are some limitations in applying the results of this study to other restaurant sectors, such as fine dining restaurants, casual dining restaurants, and quick service restaurants. Second, to clearly identify the influence of brand attachment on coffee shops, brand loyalty must be divided into loyalty to eco-friendly stores and products. However, as this study sets brand loyalty as a single dimension, a more detailed relationship could not be determined. Lastly, in terms of practical implications, the service environment was suggested as a tangible eco-friendly practice, but it was not actually measured in this study. Therefore, it would be an interesting extension of the research if future research were conducted by adding measures of the service environment.

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