

Business Case on
Sustainable Fashion for Aarong: The impact of fashion upcycling,
chief branding officer & fashion e-commerce experience on the
Bangladeshi consumers' brand equity

By

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A business case report submitted to the BRAC Business School in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Business Administration (MBA)

BRAC Business School
Brac University
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The internship report submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The report does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The report does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of support.

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Letter of Transmittal

Dr. Md Shamimul Islam
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Subject: Submission of a business case part of MBA internship course.

Dear Sir,

This is my pleasure to present a business case on “Sustainable Fashion for Aarong: The impact of fashion upcycling, chief branding officer & fashion e-commerce experience on the Bangladeshi consumers’ brand equity” which was developed by your guidance.

I have attempted to give my best effort in this report with essential key findings, relevant marketing strategies & recommended propositions in as significant, compact & comprehensive manner as possible. I am very fortunate for your supervision as it was essential for the completion of this report in a timely manner.

Therefore, I sincerely hope that the report will meet your expectations and you will oblige me by approving this report.

Sincerely yours,

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Date: 7 May, 2023

Non-Disclosure Agreement

In order to conduct an interview, I had to agree to the following terms:

- I will not disclose sensitive information about the textile industry.
- I acknowledge that this report is for the purpose of teaching students.

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank my family and fiancée for their enormous support towards my postgraduate degree at BRAC University. I am thankful to my senior supervisors and peers who supported me to discover new sets of skills and improve my proficiency level during the MBA journey. These opportunities shaped my interactions, observations and performance.

I have learned a lot from reflecting upon these circumstances which I would carry into the next chapter of my life. Especially from Dr. Mohammad Shahidul Islam Sir who is a great inspiration and constant collaborator. He has positively influenced me to improve my research and writing skills by sharing his valuable time, expertise, feedback and knowledge.

I would also like to thank Dr. Md Shamimul Islam Sir who has guided me during this business case writing with much needed information and recommendation. His observation and advice were pivotal for the development of this study.

Most importantly, I express my gratitude to the survey participants for their consideration and valuable input. Their contribution is the framework of this business case.

Abstract

Sustainability has to be assimilated among the Bangladesh fashion brands and textile industry to achieve brand equity. Aarong is a Bangladeshi retail brand that has successfully merged cultural heritage and modern way of living for the consumers through handcrafted clothes, products, and home decorative accessories. From a small beginning in 1978, the brand has been able to strengthen its position as local market innovator by virtue of Sir Fazle Hasan Abed's vision for branding and social growth. The brand has a strong impression on the cultural, social and economic transformation of Bangladesh. A survey was conducted to analyze brand awareness, performance, feelings and loyalty in regards to Aarong. Consumers expressed negative feelings towards perceived-quality, e-commerce shopping experience, brand association and sustainability initiatives. These factors refrain consumers from reaching brand resonance. Followed by a careful strategic analysis, it was observed that Aarong could formulate three approaches: chief branding officer (CBO) placement, fashion upcycling & user-experience (UX) innovation towards fashion sustainability and brand equity. The case persuades students and fashion brand management leaders to consider the implications of being a market innovator and to recommend brand equity to construct sustainable initiatives for fashion products and digital user-experience innovation.

Keywords: Fashion upcycling; brand equity; Aarong; Fashion e-commerce; chief-branding officer; sustainability

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this case, students and fashion brand management leaders should be able to:

- ✓ Discuss the factors involved in establishing a successful brand equity model for the fashion companies in Bangladesh.
- ✓ Explain the significance of fashion upcycling toward sustainability in the local fashion industry.
- ✓ Prioritize digital user-experience innovation of fashion e-commerce to retain consumer relationship management.

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List of Acronyms

FUMA	Fashion Upcycling Manufacturing Approach
CBO	Chief Branding Officer
UX	User Experience
UI	User Interface
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CBBE	Consumer-Based Brand Equity
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association

Chapter 1

Introduction

Bangladeshi consumers acknowledged Aarong's strong brand awareness but they reserved post-purchase experiences, thoughts and motives from repeated purchase of fashion products from the brand. Aarong's inadequacy for consumer intentions, participation and referrals bodes with skepticism for the brand equity among the local consumers. These issues are consistent with the concern for sustainability and derived consumer perception about Bangladesh fashion & textile industry. Senior business analyst, Abdul Rehman has been working for over two decades in the Bangladesh garment industry. He kept a headstrong focus to get from the bottom to reach the top of the management ladder, while experiencing the ins and outs of this industry. The spring evening breeze of March 2023 has not brought serenity for Rehman, as he did not disclose hastily the precedence of his grievance on the weekend of Friday morning. A grimmed facial expression hinted that some deeper thoughts have been dawning on his psyche for a long time. After a brief but deep momentary pause he went on to share an epiphany about the glaring issues of sustainability in the local garment industry and the noticeable impact of a market leader through CBBE model. He added, "Aarong, is a giant in a dormant state, they have a brand model that is far better than the local companies. I wish they'd stop biding their time while the fast fashion companies salvage the leftovers of our garment industry". A thought-provoking commentary by Rehman; his feelings resonated with a lot of consumers who have participated in a survey questionnaire regarding brand equity model and sustainability for Aarong. Consumers acknowledged brand resonance depends on improved product quality, production methods & e-commerce shopping experiences positively affecting social and environmental sustainability.

1.1 Background of Aarong

In 1978, the founder of Aarong Fazle Hasan Abed showed tremendous vision for branding Aarong in a sustainable way in the hearts of Bangladeshi people. Village Fair is a direct translation of ‘Aarong’ the Bengali name, one of the outstanding brand labels in the country. This brand became his zealous project to empower rural artisans especially women with a platform to preserve embroidery & stitching skills to help them with selling their handcrafted products. Aarong’s trade began at a small shop of Shukrabad which a decade later turned out to be momentous for Fazle Hasan to launch the brand’s largest retail store in Dhanmondi of Dhaka City. His strategy was to target the residents of nearby locations who were vastly familiar with Aarong. Today, Aarong has continued to operate with 26 retail outlets within Bangladesh. Despite Aarong’s efforts to reinvent their brand image with modern lifestyle; local consumers have been struggling with e-commerce shopping experience. User interface (UI), product accessibility, stock & size unavailability generates overall uninspired digital user experience. Inconsistency with product differentiation, consumer perceived-quality, price tampering, brand controversy, raw material sourcing, pressure for manufacturing in larger quantities and campaign direction is causing lapse within brand resonance for Aarong. Chief branding officers (CBO) are needed to create sustainable products to influence consumers’ buying habits and brand loyalty in the local market.

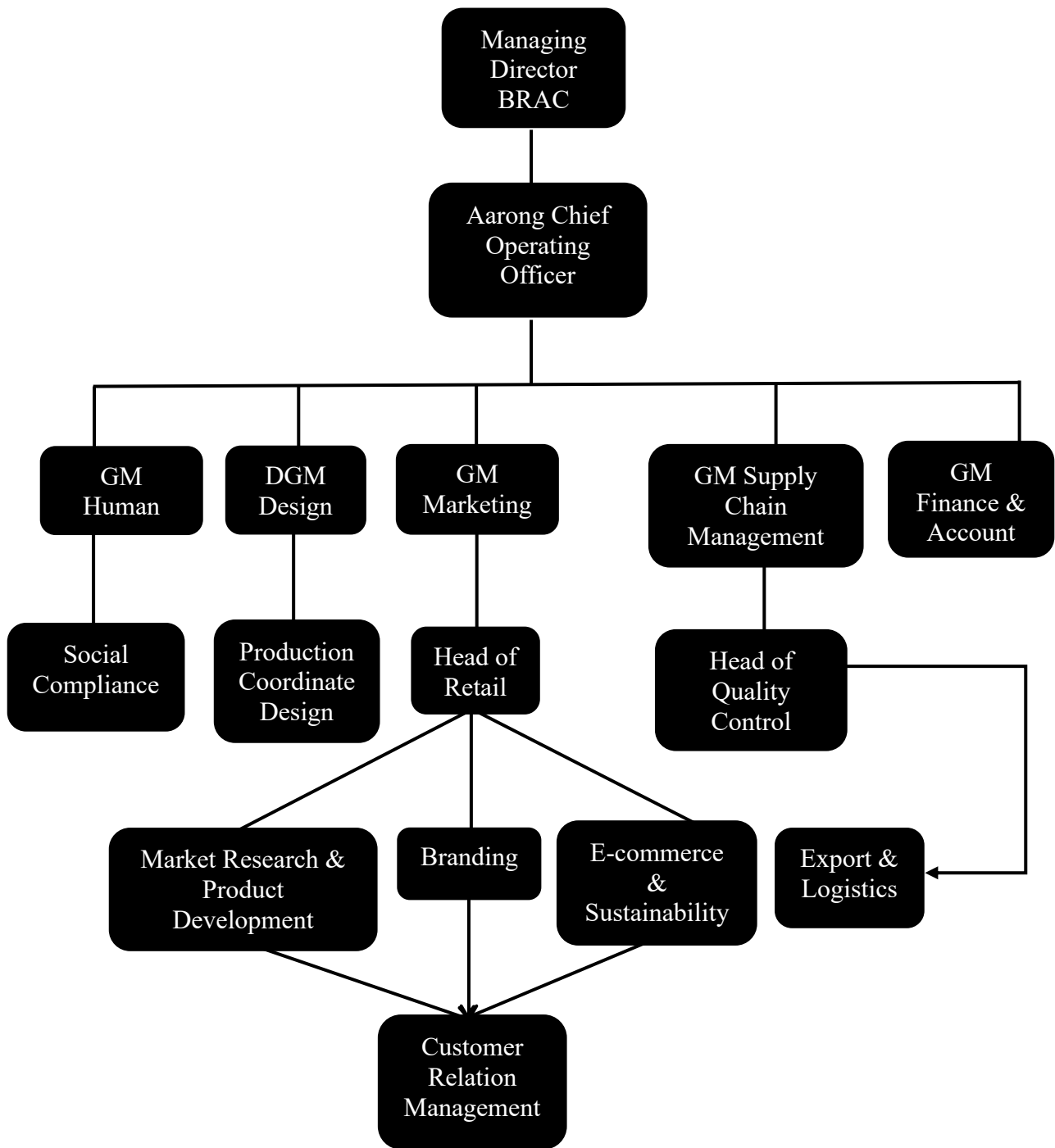


Figure 1: Aarong Organizational Structure; (source: Aarong Website)

1.2 Synopsis of Bangladesh Textile Industry

Aarong had to maneuver their brand positioning at the same time of Bangladesh textile industry's exponential rise in the global platform. Bangladesh textile industry has been climbing the textile exportation ladder since the early 90s; from eighth to the dominant position of third in the market for creating fabric demand (Cheema, 2023). Ahmed (2004) analyzed the effects of globalization within this industry's ascension to the fifty countries export demand in the span of 15 years. Women employment created space for gender influence in the local household income. Their role slowly began to shift the Bangladesh textile industry to higher income of \$19 billion earning in June 2012. This was later unfolded as exclusion of human rights events resulted in- cheap labor exploitation, unpaid working hours and health safety issues (Hoque & Al Faruq, 2009).

The forecast of global export kept materializing in each decade, yet the industry has failed to incorporate sustainability even to this day. According to the Export Promotion Bureau Data (EPBD), Bangladesh garment industry exported \$42.613 billion worth of garments in the fiscal year 2021-22, making it the second-largest apparel exporter. Despite the pandemic travesty, this industry saw yearly growth of 35.47% in the same fiscal year. Bangladesh garment industry employs more than 4 million people (half the population of Hanoi; capital of Vietnam). According to the BGMEA, foreign direct investments (FDI) have soared up to \$3.5 billion in 2021, while garment export earning is aimed at \$100 billion by 2030. The director of BGMEA shared that among the 12 apparel categories- the knitted shirt (16.44%), trouser (15.7%), woven shirt (17.35%) and children's clothes (14.9%) are among the highest export yield shares from Bangladesh (Rubel, 2021). From 2014, the overall revenue of apparel from Bangladesh rose to \$4.43 billion in 2022 (figure 1 below).

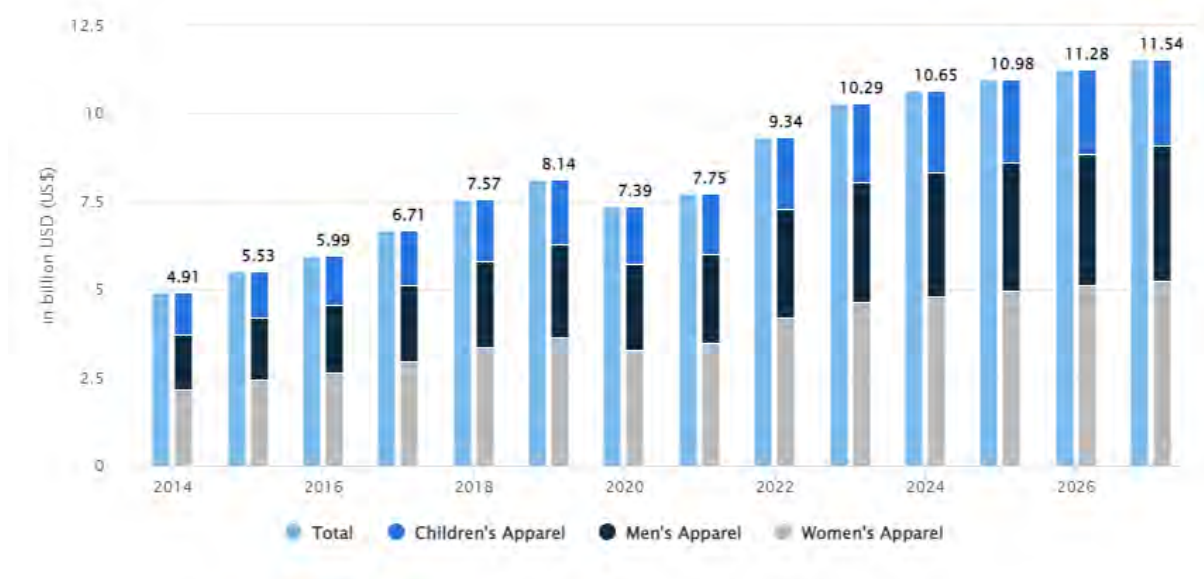


Figure 2: Revenue generated in Bangladesh by segment (source: Statistica, 2022)

The Ukraine-Russia War elevated global inflation and the cost of raw materials, energy & fuels. Gap Inc. and Zara depend on the garment manufacturing hub at Gazipur for fabric dyeing and washing units. These units run on diesel which is three times costlier than fossil fuels. European and US markets defer shipping orders of finished garments to save costs which severely affects the garment manufacturers (Devnath, 2022). Similarly, local brands depend on huge export raw materials for producing clothes to fulfill order demands. This leads to 87% of greenhouse emission comes from fabric manufacturing of shirts, denim, woven trousers, sweaters and t-shirts (Rakib, 2023). The Bangladesh textile industry has accumulated a position with “Made in Bangladesh” tagline clothes, but initiatives with sustainability remains a theoretical concept as of now.

1.3 CBBE Model Among the Bangladeshi Consumers

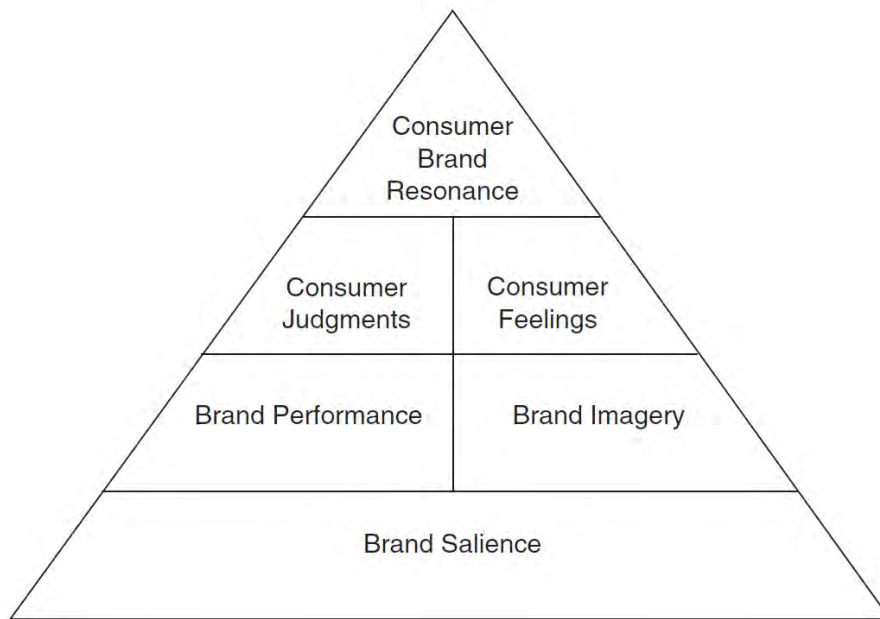


Figure 3: Brand Equity Model by Kevin Lane Keller (2001)

Brand equity model is a criterion by which brands can assess positioning among the consumers as well as provides market research initiatives (Keller, 2001). This model adopts the comprehensive means of planning, enforcing and deciphering brand strategies. Brand salience is at the lower echelon of CBBE Model. Aarong needs to reinvigorate brand identity in the market and convey the messages of breadth & depth through performance and imagery for brand products or services. This would impact consumers' feelings and judgments when they come in contact with Aarong and its product portfolio. The upper echelon of the CBBE model revolves around brand resonance where customers would seek or feel the need to forge active & a meaningful relationship with Aarong.

A recent study by Verma (2020) made use of the brand equity model in the demographic testing of brand engagement & brand loyalty towards customers' purchase motives for brand products. Ferreira et al. (2022) pinpointed that emotional signaling, meaningful context and strategic planning are indispensable for accomplishing brand resonance. Multi-sensory experiences e.g.

feel, sound, visual, smell and subconsciousness inside a retail store are responsible stimuli to directly influence customers' perception and brand equity (Alexander & Nobbs, 2020). Explorative design for regenerating consumer brand experience and CRM has been cited to reinforce brand equity (Verma, 2020; Ferreira et al. 2022).

Based on the survey of 34 respondents equally distributed between male and female customers (student, employed & businessperson); 85.3% were among the 18-33 age groups earning 10,000 to 100,000 bdt per month (Appendix 6-9).

a) Brand Salience: Aarong has a decisive advantage of 73.5% brand awareness among the Bangladeshi consumers (Appendix 1). Their brand awareness campaigns for preserving cultural heritage, artisan skills and ethical sourcing have earned them strong positive imagery among the consumers.

b) Brand Performance & Imagery: 85.3% consumers (Appendix 2) perceive Aarong's ethical brand messages and objectives through their product placements in the store. 64.7% respondents (Appendix 3) have consideration for Aarong products when interacted at the physical outlets.

c) Consumer Judgments & Feelings: Only 41.2% of the respondents (Appendix 4) to discern that when they visit Aarong website, they intent to buy Aarong products. 38.2% of the customers further felt indifferent about Aarong product value. Based on the respondents' conviction of purchase intention, 58.8% of consumers do not wish to buy Aarong products again; this is depending on their past e-commerce buying experiences of Aarong products.

d) Consumer Brand Resonance: Brand loyalty with Aarong generated only 11.8% (Appendix 1) based on positive experience and return for repeated buying decisions. This result derived from customers' interactions with product quality, perceived retail experience, website shopping encounters, delivery timeline, product availability and customer support. 73.5% of

the customers (Appendix 10) believe that brand equity is imperative for Aarong's long-term growth and sustainability. It is imminent that Aarong has not been fulfilling the dots between the manufacturers and the customers to acquire brand resonance.

Klimin et al. (2019) proposed classifications of marketing strategies to understand consumer intentions to improve purchase conversion rates. Business value sets and models concerning economic systems predicate current fashion practices in the textile industry. Implementation and adherence of the CBBE model would be the right path for diminishing consumer incongruity regarding Aarong products.

1.4 Sustainability Mantra

Sustainability is a regulation to support economic, social and environmental goals continuously to preserve growth and well-being for an extended period of time. Cuyper (2022) emphasized on communication, collaboration, control and commitment to the efficiency of sustainability development. Sustainability is difficult to measure without distinguished initiatives; specific managerial initiatives with strategic actions are necessary (Desore & Narula, 2018).

Amed et al. (2022) reported that the global fashion product demands will adapt with brand's manufacturing methods, digital marketing strategies, omni channel and consumers' buying pattern in the next year. Berg et al. (2021) made a comparison between Vietnam and Bangladesh garment industry from European and US imports data, which exhibited an indicator for higher apparel import in favor of Vietnam ready-made garment (RMG) industry. Although, for the past decade Bangladesh RMG industry has seen impressive progress in global demand for cotton t-shirts, in 2020 it rose up to 59% value share (Berg et al., 2021). Fletcher (2010) continued to advocate for slow fashion as it takes into considerations for information, culture, diverse identity and ecological balance producing quality-based products. This approach works towards adopting design ethics which supports designers, buyers, merchandisers and

consumers for positively impacting the employees, and communities and ecosystems. Product innovation, digital technology, strategic operation and sustainability management are crucial factors for the global textile industry in the upcoming years.

67.6% of the customers (Appendix 11) wanted Aarong to adopt the sustainability mantra. Consumer engagement is the key for achieving brand vision. Aarong's social sustainability could be imperative to establish a communication channel between suppliers & customers for value creation. Aarong's influence of fashion upcycling could be resurgence for textile innovation and environmental waste management in the local industry. Aarong could focus economic investment towards brand perception, talent development for innovation and supply chain infrastructure in the local fashion industry.

Chapter 2

Brief Overview of Aarong

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed has differentiated Aarong within a niche market at the beginning of the brand's journey. Later, the local resources and garment industry have affected how Aarong would maintain their business model in the market. Some of these reasons are discussed below in the following sections.

2.1 Rural Artisans of Bangladesh

Bangladesh has a competitive advantage, only behind China & Vietnam in having low-cost labor relative to other developing countries. Although, the garment industry vastly dominates to win foreign contracts to manufacture clothes for a lucrative amount of money. Aarong initiated to commit with 65,000 rural artisans for ethical business practices in the textile industry and incorporating 46.15 % of these artisans to Ayesha Abed Foundation (AAF). Rural artisans not only possess the technical crafting skills passed to them from the previous generation but they are further low-cost in comparison to other channels. According to the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), the minimum labor wage of Bangladesh is one of the lowest in the world.

Year	Bangladesh
2014-2018	\$63.27
2019-2022	\$95.51

Table 1: Labor Cost Changes in Bangladesh, 2014–2022 (USD/Month); not adjusted to inflation [source: Trading Economics]

2.2 Aarong Product Development

Aarong insists on handcraft products by using the finest natural fibers. Aarong handmade products add the subtle variation in color, texture and finishing touches of an artisan's hand. Each product creation is a time-inducing process involving crafts-based traditions of dyeing, weaving, hand spinning, embroidery and wood block printing which has its own characteristics and novelty. Aarong uses vegetable dyes and commercial dyes keeping in mind to reduce impact on the environment, and many of their artisans use AZO free dyes.

Aarong uses hand-woven fabrics such as cotton, silk, rayon and linen. Hand-woven cotton allows more air penetration, absorbent and breathable than machine made fabrics. This fabric also has visible characteristics and textural elegance only present in woven fabric. Cotton sarees require delicate handling as it feels somewhat stiff when newly bought which leads to color bleeding when washed for the first time. Linen and rayon yarns are hand-woven but experience shrinkage due to its distinct characteristics. Hand-woven silk is natural strong fiber with delicate drape and natural crease resistant. Aarong has several combinations of silk products for example- cotton, endi and muslin. Aarong likewise promotes silk fabrics through its 19 production centers across Bangladesh; silk reeling, spinning process supportively engages 3,700 women to work within their homes (BRAC Annual Report, 2018). This initiative produces 900,000 yards of silk every year, which is sold at Aarong stores.

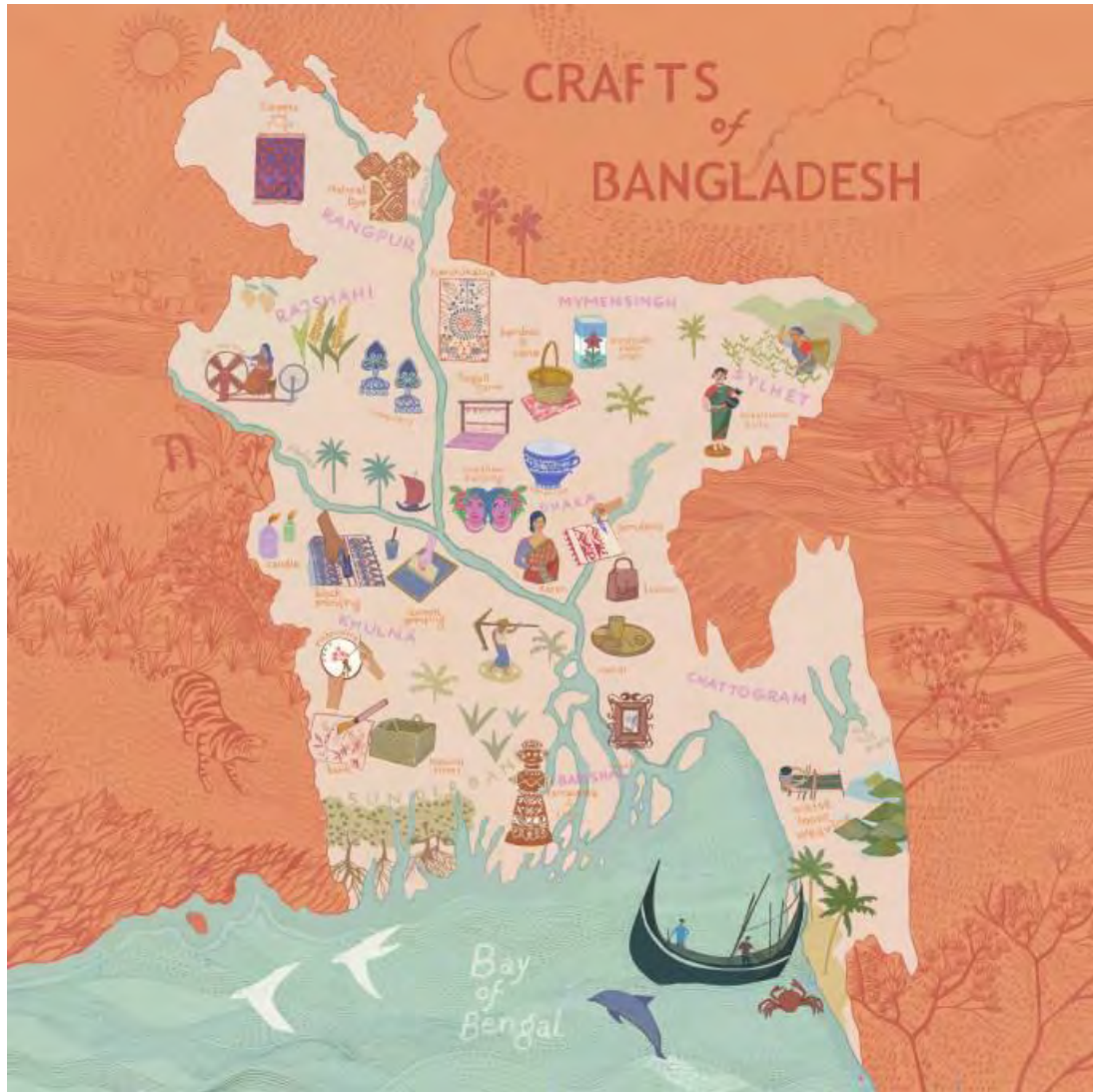


Figure 4: Aarong Product Sourcing

2.3 Procurement Process

Aarong obtains 75% of its raw material from Madhabdi production areas which are exported from global manufacturing hubs as local production only fulfills 2-4% of demand. Cotton fabrics are weaved, spinned, dyed for finished products which are mostly sold in Dhaka and its nearby cities of Tangail and Narsingdi.

East & West Africa	India	USA	Commonwealth of Independent States	Australia	Rest of the World
37.06%	26.12%	11.14%	11.35%	4.65%	9.65%

Table 2: Bangladesh Cotton Import Countries with Percentage (source: IDLC)

2.4 Existing Aarong Products

Segments	Sub-brands	Products
Women	lifestyle clothes Taaga	sarees, tunics, kameezes, tops, jackets, pants, shoes, accessories
	couture collection HerStory	shirts, tunics, tops, pants, skirts, jackets, shoes, shrugs, scarves, bags, purses, jewelries & maternity
Men	lifestyle clothes Taaga Man	shirts, panjabis, jackets, tees, trousers, polos, shoes, bags, waiscoats, wallets, pocket squares, pendants
Kids	N/A	nimas, frocks, nips, shalwar kameezes, ghagra cholis, fatuas, shirts, panjabis, pajamas, t-shirts

Table 3: Aarong Market Segmentation in Bangladesh (source: Aarong)

Aarong maintains their lifestyle clothing segments with mainly 3 sub-brands which are HerStory, Taaga and Taaga Man. HerStory is a blend of modernity and artistic expression product line for women, fusing the handcraft of Bangladeshi artisans into sophisticated couture. HerStory collections are targeted towards women customers keeping social outings at the center of these products. The noticeable difference between HerStory and Taaga is the product pricing. One piece of saree from HerStory could cost up to 110,000 BDT, on the contrary one piece of Taaga jacket is only 5,618 BDT. Although there is a targeted segment for men, kidswear has no sub-brand for their different product categories. There are more product categories during festival seasons or events e.g. wedding, eid & pahela boishakh for men, women and kids. Aarong home décor products include- bed accessories, dining tablewares, wall hangings, photo frames, vases, mirrors, decorative items, candles, lamps & shades, stationery items, indoor plants etc.

Chapter 3

Challenges for Aarong

There are various challenges for Aarong in the local and international market especially with sustainability and brand resonance. The most significant challenges faced by Aarong with their products toward the consumer-based brand equity, e-commerce experiences and fast fashion products are discussed in this section.

3.1 Production & Quality

Aarong has begun to shift away from the handcraft production approach beginning with kidswear to fulfill consumers' overwhelming demand. The pressure for increased production number has led Aarong to move away from controlled manufacturing approach causing to perception of decreased product quality among the consumers. The BGMEA is directly responsible for generating pressure on Aarong to re-shift from their business model of making only handcrafted textile clothings and accessories for the current market. Noyon and Rayhan (2022) reported that Monirul Haque Parvez, the head of another fast fashion brand "RANG" at elephant road branch asserted on producing more than 750 variations of clothes for Bengali New Year and Eid. Their report continues to reveal that similar local brands- Kay Kraft, Yellow, Twelve Clothings, Deshi Dosh and Sailor have also increased production numbers to sell more products. Interestingly, Bangladeshi consumers disregard Aarong's current product quality as they could directly make a comparison based on their past experiences. Only 47.1% (appendix 5) of customers believed that Aarong's raw material sourcing and production methods were positively impacting repeated purchase at Aarong.

3.2 E-commerce Experience

Since the launch of Aarong website in 2014 nationwide, they have been able to adapt with the Government's vision for Digital Bangladesh. Yet a decade later still Aarong web experience is occupied by uninspired UX for browsing product categories, website function, usability, brand experience and purchasing products online. Aarong has to address the issues with UI development for better interactivity, response time, integrated design elements, website features for their creative direction for branding.

There were also flagrant concerns with product order, delivery timeline, product size & availability, and service quality faced by the local customers of Aarong. Aarong e-commerce experience is not yet sufficiently robust to attract citizens from the developed countries to shop religiously on their website, when they are failing on a regular basis to engage Bangladeshi customers. In comparison with Nike, H&M, Zara and Adidas web experience, Aarong e-commerce requires massive reconstruction for quality in the UI & UX categorical of the technological proficiency. Which would again undoubtedly position them as a market innovator against the competitors in the Bangladeshi market.

3.3 Sustainability Issues with Fast Fashion Products

In accordance with the BRAC Annual Report (2018), Aarong retains two garment factories with supervision of its producer in Demra (Dhaka division) which employs 500 people and produces 2 crore BDT worth of childrens' clothes in a year. This initiative is supportive of national economic growth and income earning per capita. However, targeted consumers do not anticipate Aarong's differentiation for sustainability in the garment factories in contrast to the methods of BGMEA. Fast fashion business models are responsible for manufacturing large quantities of waste; approximately more than \$500 billion is lost due to clothing

underutilization and lack of textile upcycling (Herrmann, 2017; Brewer 2019). Aus et al. (2021) confirmed that Bangladesh produces 240 million garments every year for dozens of international brands.

Young Bangladeshi consumers' frequent buying habits and disposal of fashion goods negatively affect the local landfills and overall environment. Social media trends, cheap product availability & pop-culture influences are responsible for the universal increased consumption of fast fashion. Inadequate protection to intellectual properties additionally encourages fast fashion brands to pillage design elements from luxury brands to increase their own brand sales (Brewer, 2019). Workman et al. (2020) gathered empirical data from a United States university that millennial consumers validated social media platforms to influence fashion trendsetter mentality towards buying decisions. "The trendsetter culture" identifies with the disposal of clothes which were not intended to be worn more than once resulting from customers' impulsive buying decisions. Besides, these trendsetter individuals are proactive on upcycling hardly worn clothes and making donations.

Average Bangladeshi consumers are required to show active concern for garment industry's adoption of upcycling practices and willingness to participate in the local brand campaigns (Mashuk, 2022). Call for sustainability has forced H&M, Adidas, Gap and Nike to reiterate own brand model to include fair regulations for the product manufacturing process in the Asian factories. Recycling plastic and polyester apparel has been part of these brand's sustainability initiatives which seeks customer engagement in the brand campaign. Desore and Narula (2018) stated managerial initiatives are necessary for corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability awareness in the textile manufacturing facilities. Jestratišević et al. (2020) disclosed that clarity with supply chain among the mass marketed brands could become a point of reference for sustainability.

Chapter 4

Recommendations

4.1 Discussion Questions

- a) What could Aarong do to increase consumer resonance for brand equity?
- b) What challenges do Aarong anticipate for e-commerce UX innovation and how would they overcome those?
- c) Which manufacturing approach could Aarong embrace toward sustainability?

4.2 CBO Placement

Steve Jobs expressed concern for mindfulness regarding customers want; Katie Dill, Design VC for Lyft also emphasized on user research & qualitative data prior to designing products for the customers (Smith, 2019). Creative vision is fundamental for creating higher consumer engagement towards brand resonance. Chief branding officer would redefine Aarong's brand values, principles, ideas, direction and purpose in the market. Neumeier (2003) stated that the CBO communicates and distributes brand knowledge to initiate external brand collaborations and engage internal employees. Portal et al. (2018) insists brand anthropomorphism through their analysis for creating a brand that possesses the attributes of human feelings and intentions.

Aarong CBO could guide internal PR managers to protect brand image and reinvent contents for the customers. CBO public appearance for kindling relations with consumers & media to share brand leadership, direction and vision are fundamental for Aarong's tie with sustainability. Aarong could initiate to cultivate a brand culture with strong creativity and vision to differentiate products within sub-brands and developing art direction supportive of sustainability.

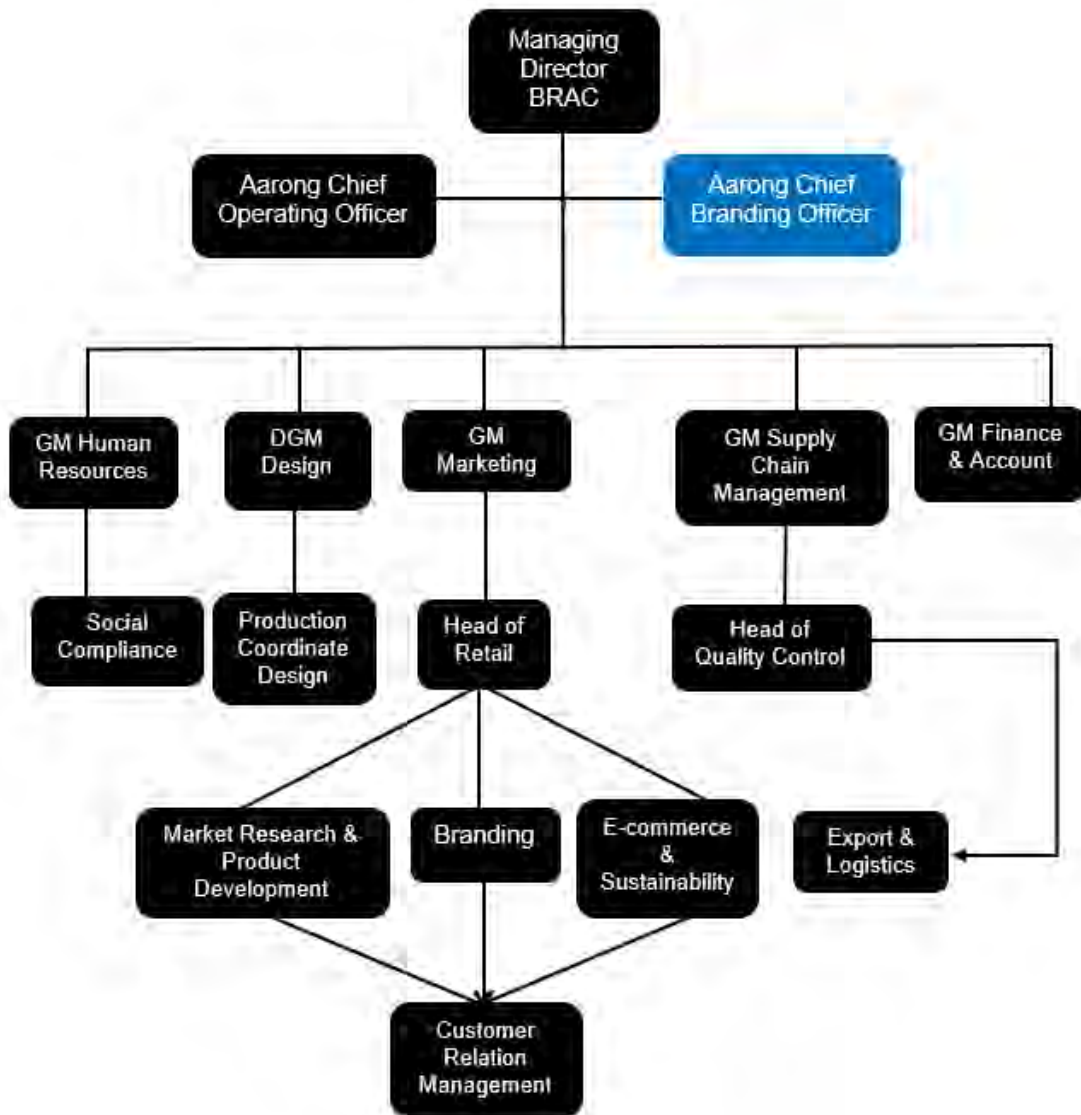


Figure 5: Aarong Organization Structure Reimagined

4.3 E-Commerce UX Innovation

Van de Sand et al. (2020) analyzed the factors with practical evidence of developing new user-experience (UX) propitiously identifying by testing brand values in contrast to user needs & value structures. Robust design elements emanate rare but definitive brand user-experience is essential for brand innovation (Roto et al., 2015). Nowadays the CBO focuses more on creating a chic brand experience for the consumers rather than simply releasing an uninspired product or service on their website. Aarong CBO could accentuate user interface (UI) & UX on the website for a comprehensive brand experience by generating sharper, focus and attractive images & videos for the seasonal campaigns.

Media channels to engage with consumers changed with the consecration of social media platforms and its limitless reach for advertisements (Zhang et al., 2017). Aarong could organize a survey research on the popular global brands' web experience among the consumers and incorporate similar experience for their targeted consumers. Karampournioti and Wiedmann (2022) verified that brands are able to build a connection with the targeted audience in a relatively shorter period of time by focusing on UX features to adjust storytelling elements to influence brand equity and purchase intentions e.g. premium pricing. Positive e-commerce experience among the consumers is undeniably necessary for CRM. Affordable social media advertisements could additionally contribute to overall brand objectives for increasing profit and creating brand resonance.

4.4 Fashion Upcycling Manufacturing Approach

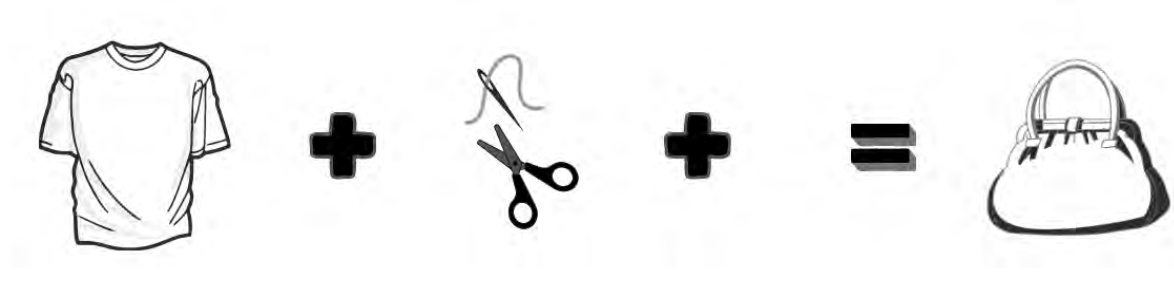


Figure 6: Example of Fashion Upcycling Manufacturing Process

FUMA involves creating a new piece of fashionwear by cutting and sewing existing garments and textile fabrics from past consumption. This method is supportive of artisan and consumer creativity for textile waste reduction (Bhatt et al., 2018). Which makes it possible to remodel and update the look of the previous garment by further extending its lifecycle and usage. Upcycled clothes are biodegradable or recyclable by the responsible manufacturing bodies. Yoo et al. (2021) gathered data on the consumers of China indicating that environmental concerns and consciousness behavior were viable for the buying intentions of upcycled fashion products. Saepudin et al. (2023) attested with their report that handcrafted FUMA products of Indonesian batik fabric affected Indonesian & foreign consumers' buying motives and attitudes; altruism, pricing, perceived-value are among the considerate factors.

Brands are primarily responsible to initiate movements for social welfare and engage consumers by offering exchangeable value to trigger real interests. Aarong handcrafted fashion products would be quintessential for FUMA. Adopting this method would lessen Aarong's input on production and consumption waste. Aarong has to generate consumer awareness and consumer participation for FUMA. Customers could directly contribute by donating used garments for upcycling in exchange for discount coupons for their participation with sustainability. According to Uddin (2023), Bangladesh Textile Millers Association (BTMA)

seeks government authorities' approval for banning garment waste export to utilize those raw materials for local recyclers. However, continuous direct threats with local recyclers as they essentially know how to process only cotton waste materials and lack the technical skill sets to process fiber blends & non-woven waste items. It was estimated that 62% fibers used in the textile industry are synthetic material (Common Objective Data, 2021). Aarong could step in to utilize textile wastes with FUMA and help with exporting textile products in the overseas market. Progressive long-term branding goals would also help Aarong to achieve brand equity among the consumers. Aarong must be able to trace and maintain transparency for their own production number and waste contribution. Consumers would be able to identify & assess Aarong's sustainability status for product benchmarking.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to emphasize the impact of fashion upcycling & fashion e-commerce experience among the Bangladeshi consumers for Aarong. Based on the findings, the CBO would be able to rehabilitate Aarong's brand objectives for long-term growth, social balance and environmental sustainability.

Aarong has to focus on creating perceived-value products for the customers. Their cost for differentiation in building a competitive advantage for new product lines could stem from consumer research, design development and market innovation. To improve consumer resonance, they have to reshift focus on user-experience, customer support, interesting storytelling and efficient UI.

The study attempted to gather data on consumers' perceived-value regarding Aarong products for sustainability. Future study could incorporate a larger-scale population survey on consumers expectation for new product development from Aarong. A further study also on consumers' purchase power and intention for spending more money on higher quality fashion products would underpin CRM for Aarong.

Accommodating FUMA with consumer involvement would be a new challenge for Aarong. However, this method aligns with their artisan handcraft manufacturing technique, so they would be able to practically implement this in their production for sustainability. In addition, Aarong has to encourage customers to participate in brand campaigns for sustainability by sharing their approach toward textile upcycling. Sustainability mantra activities need to be the center of Aarong's vision and strategic goals to positively impact the fashion and Bangladesh textile industry towards social and environmental equanimity. The CBO of Aarong could take initiatives to overcome customer resonance through digital UX innovation and FUMA. Aarong could transform their brand website with design innovation, retain FUMA for improving

product quality and textile waste reduction process to support sustainability. These approaches would be successful for Aarong to achieve sustainability in fashion.

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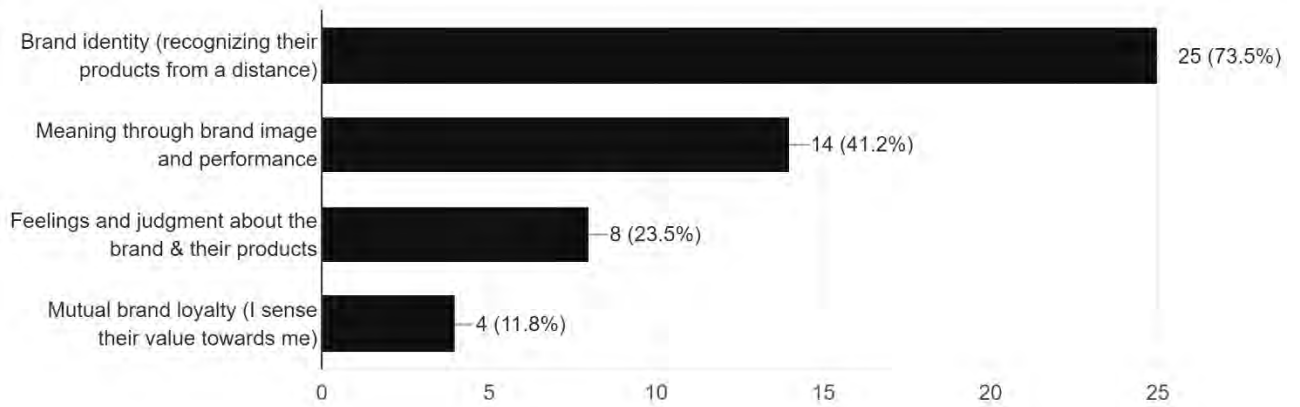
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Appendix A.

Appendix 1

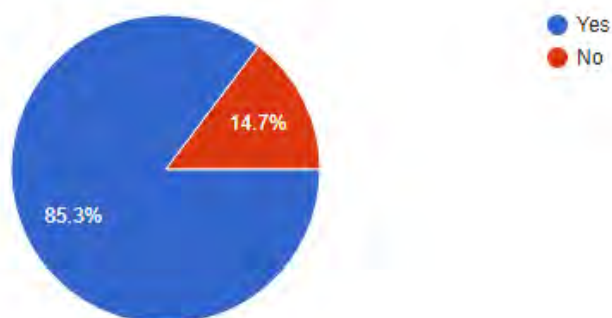
Aarong gives me a strong brand resonance in the form of- (select multiple options if applicable)
34 responses



Appendix 2

Aarong's brand communication are effective to convey their brand ethics and objectives to me-

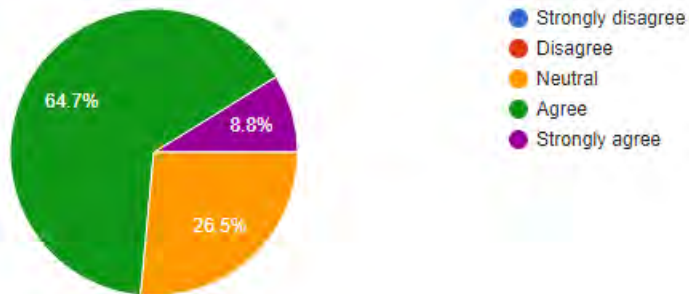
34 responses



Appendix 3

When I visit the physical store or interact with Aarong's product online, I always recognize their products-

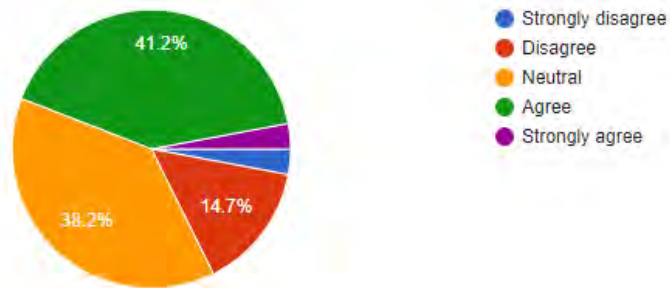
34 responses



Appendix 4

Do you think Aarong gives you better product value for their price?

34 responses



Appendix 5

Aarong has shown consistency in their raw materials sourcing and production method-

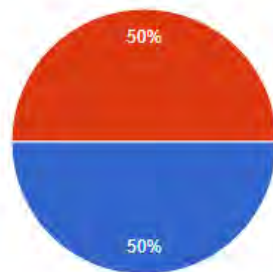
34 responses



Appendix 6

Gender:

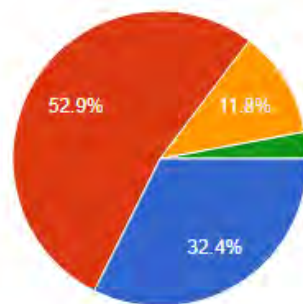
34 responses



Appendix 7

Age Group:

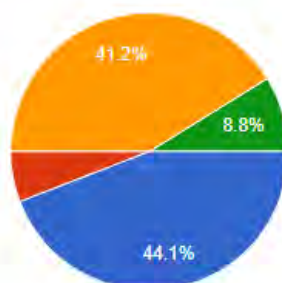
34 responses



Appendix 8

Profession

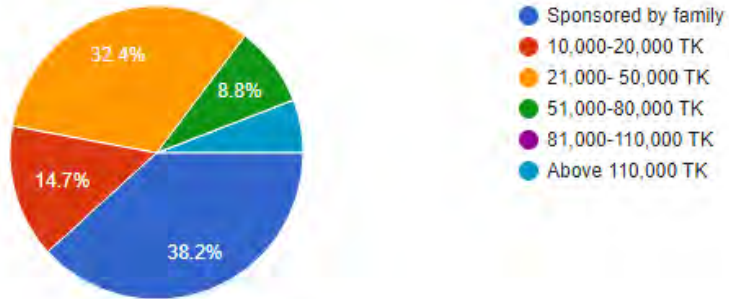
34 responses



Appendix 9

Income range

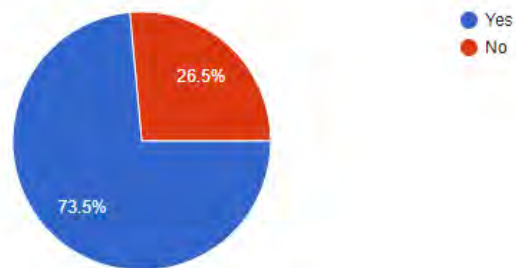
34 responses



Appendix 10

Do you think Aarong's understanding of customers' brand equity is critical to their long-term growth and success?

34 responses



Appendix 11

Do you want Aarong to emphasize on the sustainability brand mantra ?

34 responses

