



International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

Green Marketing, Supply Chain Resilience, and Consumer Purchase Behaviour within the FMCG Sector: A Comparative Study of Hindustan Unilever and ITC

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ABSTRACT:

This study explores the relationship between green marketing strategies, supply chain resilience, and consumer buying behavior in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, focusing on two major companies: Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) and ITC Limited. Based on a survey of 61 respondents, the paper looks at customer awareness, brand perception, and reactions during market disruptions. The findings highlight the growing demand for sustainable practices, the role of young people in promoting green consumption, and opportunities for both companies to improve their commitment to the environment and adaptability of their supply chains.

Keywords: Green marketing, supply chain resilience, consumer behavior, HUL, ITC, sustainability, FMCG, brand perception

1. Introduction:

The FMCG sector is experiencing a significant shift, driven by customer demand for eco-friendly practices and resilient supply chains. Green marketing has become a key tool to set brands apart and build long-term trust. This study aims to understand how HUL and ITC respond to these expectations and how consumer behavior aligns with sustainable business models.

2. Objectives:

- To find out how aware consumers are of green products
 - To examine consumer willingness to pay for sustainable options
 - To investigate green labeling and recyclable packaging
 - Green Marketing Practices
 - Recyclable Packaging
 - Eco-labeling
 - Marketing Strategies
 - To study the concept of green marketing
 - To analyze how HUL and ITC use green marketing and supply chain resilience to influence consumer behavior
 - To assess consumer awareness and perception of green marketing
 - To compare the supply chain resilience of HUL and ITC
 - To study consumer buying behavior during disruptions
 - To offer strategic recommendations based on survey findings
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3. Research Methodology:

The study relies on primary data collected through an online survey distributed to a diverse group of 61 respondents. The questionnaire included questions about demographics, awareness of green marketing, buying behavior, brand perception, and expectations regarding sustainability. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic interpretation.

- Secondary Data: Published research papers, industry reports, market analyses, company websites, and news articles related to green marketing in the FMCG sector.
- Case Studies: Analysis of successful green marketing initiatives by leading FMCG companies.
- Expert Opinions: Insights from industry professionals, sustainability experts, and academics focused on green marketing.
- Drivers of Green Marketing in FMCG: Several factors are driving the adoption of green marketing in the FMCG industry:

- Increased Consumer Awareness: Consumers are becoming more environmentally aware and actively seek sustainable products and brands.
- Government Regulations: Governments are enforcing stricter environmental regulations, pushing companies to reduce their environmental impact.
- Competitive Advantage: Companies recognize that green marketing can provide a competitive edge by attracting eco-conscious consumers and improving brand reputation.

Willingness to pay for sustainable products. Quantitative analysis was supported by visual charts and thematic interpretation.

4. Literature Review:

Existing literature on green marketing in the FMCG sector highlights various aspects,

- Consumer Behaviour: Studies have looked at customer attitudes toward green products, their willingness to pay more for sustainable options, and the factors influencing their green purchasing decisions.
- Green Product Development: Research has investigated the challenges and opportunities involved in creating green products, such as using sustainable materials, reducing resource consumption, and minimizing waste.
- Green Packaging: The importance of sustainable packaging in reducing environmental impact and attracting eco-conscious consumers has been extensively studied.

5. Data Analysis & Key Insights:

- Awareness: 71% of respondents are aware of green marketing, mainly linking it to eco-friendly packaging.
- Brand Perception: 50% view HUL as more environmentally responsible, while only 19.4% feel the same about ITC.
- Purchase behaviour: 64% are willing to pay more for eco-friendly products; 76% would switch brands for better sustainability.
- Supply Chain Resilience: 78.7% faced purchasing issues during disruptions; only 58% were satisfied with brand responsiveness.
- Demographics: A majority (64%) were aged 18 to 24 and mostly students, indicating a youth-driven green shift.

6. Strategic Recommendations:

- Expand green communication beyond packaging
- Target youth with eco-education and loyalty programs
- Improve supply chain transparency and local sourcing
- Launch premium sustainable product lines
- Use influencers and digital campaigns to build trust

7. Conclusion

This study provides important insights into consumer perceptions, behaviors, and expectations regarding green marketing, supply chain resilience, and brand responsibility in the FMCG sector, focusing on HUL and ITC. The findings show a noticeable shift in consumer mindset, especially among younger demographics, toward environmentally conscious consumption. With over 70% awareness of green marketing and 64% willingness to pay more for eco-friendly products, the demand for sustainable practices is increasingly mainstream.

Hindustan Unilever (HUL) stands out as a clear leader in environmental perception, brand trust, and product availability during disruptions. However, its green initiatives are still largely linked to packaging, suggesting a need for clearer communication of more in-depth sustainability efforts. Conversely, ITC, despite its strong on-the-ground sustainability practices and investment in green packaging, faces a perception gap. Consumers may be unaware or uncertain about its environmental contributions, highlighting the need for improved storytelling and brand visibility in the green space. Both companies encounter challenges, such as skepticism around greenwashing, supply chain disruptions, and rising expectations for genuine sustainability. However, they also have significant opportunities to:

- Leverage eco-innovation
- Engage the aware Gen Z and student consumers
- Create premium green product lines
- Enhance supply chain agility and climate resilience

In summary, the future of FMCG revolves around a combined approach to sustainability and supply chain strength. Companies like HUL and ITC must go beyond surface-level green efforts and integrate sustainability into their core brand narratives. They should ensure transparency, resilience, and lasting consumer trust in a post-pandemic, eco-conscious world. Their expectations from FMCG companies are changing quickly. HUL currently leads in perception, but both HUL and ITC have considerable room for improvement. An open, well-communicated sustainability strategy paired with strong supply chain management will be vital for securing long-term consumer loyalty and competitive advantage.

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