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A STUDY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN GREEN MARKETING

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ABSTRACT :

In the modern industrial era, green marketing has emerged as a pivotal business strategy driven by rising environmental consciousness. This study explores consumer behaviour in the context of green marketing, focusing on awareness, perception, buying motivations, and trust in environmental claims. Data was collected from 150 respondents using a structured questionnaire and analysed through percentage analysis. The findings reveal that the majority of respondents are aware of green marketing, with social media being the primary information source. Most consumers demonstrate a positive attitude toward eco-friendly products, are willing to pay a price premium, and factor in environmental attributes during purchase decisions. However, a moderate trust gap exists regarding environmental claims and greenwashing practices. The study concludes that businesses must prioritise transparency, credibility, and affordability to effectively leverage green marketing in a competitive marketplace.

Key Words: Green Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Eco-Friendly Products, Sustainability, Greenwashing, Purchase Intention.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern industrial era, the global landscape of commerce is undergoing a profound shift. For decades, the primary objective of any business was profit maximisation, often at the expense of ecological health. However, the rapid depletion of natural resources, the visible impacts of climate change, and increasing environmental degradation have fundamentally transformed the way businesses interact with the environment. This shift has given rise to "Green Marketing," a paradigm where environmental stewardship is not merely a corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative but a core business strategy.

Green marketing refers to the holistic process of selling products and services based on their environmental benefits. It encompasses a broad range of activities including product modification, changes to the production process, sustainable packaging, and modified advertising. Key features such as eco-labelling, recyclable packaging, and carbon-footprint transparency enable a two-way trust mechanism between brands and consumers. Unlike traditional marketing, green marketing segments the market by environmental values, from committed eco-activists to those just beginning to adopt eco-friendly habits.

The effectiveness of green marketing lies in its ability to deliver sustainable value while simultaneously addressing the growing eco-consciousness of modern consumers. Today's consumers have access to information about a company's environmental record at their fingertips, leading to a rise in "ethical consumerism." Furthermore, regulatory pressures such as carbon taxes and extended producer responsibility laws are also driving businesses to proactively adopt green strategies, making green marketing not only a competitive advantage but an emerging business standard.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While green marketing has become a widely used promotional tool, its implementation faces significant hurdles. Many organisations remain uncertain about the actual effectiveness of these strategies in influencing long-term consumer behaviour. A persistent "intention-behaviour gap" remains a major challenge — consumers frequently cite high prices, lack of availability, or perceived lower performance as reasons for not following through on their eco-friendly intentions.

One of the most significant problems facing the industry is the phenomenon of greenwashing, where companies spend more on marketing themselves as environmentally friendly than on actually minimising their environmental impact. The consequences are severe, eroding consumer trust and creating widespread scepticism. Additionally, the price premium associated with green products, the lack of standardised eco-certifications, and the perceived performance risk of eco-friendly alternatives all present major barriers to mainstream adoption. This study, therefore, aims to analyse whether green

marketing effectively creates genuine consumer awareness and influences actual buying behaviour.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the demographic profile of respondents such as age, gender, education, income, and occupation to understand their background.
2. To evaluate the level of awareness and perception about green marketing, including familiarity, sources of information, and understanding of eco-friendly concepts.
3. To examine the buying behaviour and motivation of consumers towards green products, including purchase frequency, influencing factors, and willingness to pay a premium price.
4. To assess the level of trust and credibility towards green marketing claims and certifications, including consumer opinions on corporate practices and greenwashing.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is limited to understanding consumer awareness, perception, buying motivation, and trust toward green marketing practices. The study focuses on respondents across various demographic groups — including students, salaried professionals, and homemakers — and examines their attitudes toward eco-friendly products to support better sustainable marketing decision-making for businesses.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a descriptive research design using both primary and secondary data.

- ▶ **Sample Design:** A convenience sampling method was used to select 150 respondents across diverse demographics.
- ▶ **Data Collection:** Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered both online and in-person. Secondary data was gathered from academic journals, business books, market research reports, and government publications.
- ▶ **Statistical Tools:** Percentage analysis and cross-tabulation were used for data interpretation. Data is presented through tables and charts for clarity.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study is limited to a sample size of 150, which may not represent the entire population.
- Convenience sampling may introduce minor biases in the findings.
- The study is based on respondents' subjective opinions, which may not reflect actual purchasing behaviour.
- Time and cost constraints limited the geographic spread and depth of the research.

REVIEWS OF LITERATURE

1. **Ottman (2011):** Established foundational principles of green marketing, emphasising that sustainable branding requires a whole-system approach beyond mere product attributes.
2. **NielsenIQ (2023):** Demonstrated that sustainability has become a top consumer priority globally, with a growing willingness to pay a premium for eco-certified products.
3. **Harvard Business Review (2023):** Highlighted the elusive "intention-behaviour gap," finding that even environmentally conscious consumers often fail to follow through on green purchases due to price and availability barriers.
4. **Journal of Cleaner Production (2025):** Emphasised that circular economy principles are now central to modern product design and marketing, moving beyond harm reduction to active regeneration.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Table No. 1: Showing the Gender of the Respondents

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	85	56.4%
Female	65	42.3%
TOTAL	150	100%

INTERPRETATION: The above table shows that 56.4% of the respondents are male and 42.3% are female, indicating a balanced gender distribution with a slight male majority. **INFERENCE:** The balanced representation ensures minimal bias, making the study findings applicable to both genders.

Table No. 2: Showing Familiarity with Green Marketing

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Extremely familiar	59	39%
Moderately familiar	54	36%
Slightly familiar	44	29%
Not at all familiar	15	11%
TOTAL	150	100%

INTERPRETATION: The data reveals that 39% of respondents are extremely familiar with green marketing and 36% are moderately familiar, indicating strong overall awareness. Only 11% are not familiar at all. **INFERENCE:** Most respondents possess at least a moderate understanding of green marketing, though targeted awareness campaigns are needed for the remaining segment.

Table No. 3: Showing Primary Source of Information on Green Products

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Social Media	65	43%
Television/Newspapers	41	27%
Point of Sale	24	16%
Friends and Family	21	14%
TOTAL	150	100%

INTERPRETATION: The data reveals that 43% of respondents obtain information about green products primarily from social media, followed by 27% from television and newspapers. **INFERENCE:** Social media is the dominant information channel for green products, suggesting that businesses should prioritise digital marketing strategies.

Table No. 4: Showing Willingness to Pay a Price Premium

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Definitely Yes	57	38%
Probably Yes	36	24%
Only if quality is superior	33	22%
No	24	16%
TOTAL	150	100%

INTERPRETATION: 38% of respondents are definitely willing to pay a price premium for eco-friendly products, while an additional 24% are probably willing. Only 16% refuse entirely. **INFERENCE:** A strong majority of consumers demonstrate willingness to support green products financially, particularly when quality is perceived as superior.

Table No. 5: Showing Trust in Environmental Claims by Corporations

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Highly Trust	51	34%
Somewhat Trust	48	32%
Less Trustworthy	29	19%
Not Trustworthy at all	22	15%
TOTAL	150	100%

INTERPRETATION: The data shows that 34% highly trust and 32% somewhat trust environmental claims made by corporations. However, a combined 34% express low or no trust. **INFERENCE:** While trust leans positive overall, a notable trust deficit exists, underscoring the need for businesses to adopt greater transparency and third-party certifications to combat greenwashing perceptions.

FINDINGS

- ▶ The study is youth-dominated, with the majority of respondents (54.4%) belonging to the 18–25 age group.
- ▶ Gender distribution is balanced with a slight male majority (56.4%), ensuring minimal research bias.
- ▶ Most respondents have basic to moderate education levels, with high school and undergraduate groups dominating (70%).
- ▶ A large portion of respondents (60%) belong to low and middle-income groups, which significantly influences their purchasing decisions.
- ▶ Awareness of green marketing is fairly high, with 75% of respondents being at least moderately familiar with the concept.
- ▶ Social media is the primary source of information about green products, cited by 43% of respondents.
- ▶ Most respondents (80%) are regular purchasers of green products, particularly in the household supplies and organic food categories.
- ▶ Product quality, personal health, and environmental protection are the top three motivations for purchasing green products.
- ▶ Eco-friendly packaging (31%) and price (29%) are the most influential factors in green purchase decisions.
- ▶ A strong majority (62%) are willing to pay a 10–15% price premium for certified eco-friendly products.
- ▶ Recyclability of packaging has a high impact on consumer choice for 48% of respondents.
- ▶ Many respondents (88%) have switched brands at least once for a greener alternative, indicating meaningful behavioural change.
- ▶ Trust in environmental claims is moderate, with 34% of respondents expressing some level of scepticism toward corporate green claims.
- ▶ USDA Organic/Fair Trade is the most recognised certification (34%), while the Recycled Content Seal has the lowest recognition (11%).

SUGGESTIONS

- ▶ Enhance transparency in marketing practices by providing clear, verifiable information and authentic third-party certifications to build consumer trust.
- ▶ Increase consumer awareness through educational campaigns that clearly explain the tangible benefits and measurable environmental impact of green products.
- ▶ Adopt competitive pricing strategies and offer loyalty incentives to make green products more affordable and accessible to low and middle-income consumers.
- ▶ Focus on value-based marketing that highlights long-term benefits such as durability, health improvements, and cost savings to justify the price premium.
- ▶ Leverage social media platforms and eco-influencers to effectively communicate green initiatives and reach the dominant youth demographic.
- ▶ Strengthen credibility through recognised international certifications and actively avoid vague or unsubstantiated environmental claims that risk greenwashing.
- ▶ Broaden awareness of lesser-known certifications such as the Recycled Content Seal and ISO 14001 through targeted consumer education.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that green marketing has become a powerful force shaping consumer behaviour, driven by rising environmental awareness and the growing demand for ethical business practices. Consumers — particularly the youth — demonstrate a positive attitude toward sustainable products, with a strong willingness to pay a premium when quality and authenticity are assured. Instagram and social media platforms are the most effective channels for communicating green initiatives to this demographic.

However, the presence of a trust gap due to greenwashing practices remains a critical challenge. The success of green marketing ultimately depends on the ability of businesses to balance genuine sustainability with affordability and performance. Companies that commit to transparency, clear communication, and substantiated eco-certifications will build long-term trust and customer loyalty. As environmental consciousness continues to grow across all demographics, green marketing will transition from a niche strategy to an essential standard for all businesses, contributing meaningfully to both economic growth and environmental sustainability.

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