

CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE GREEN MARKETING PRACTICES IN THE FAST-MOVING CONSUMER GOODS (FMCG) SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Green marketing has become an essential business strategy in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector as consumers increasingly prefer environmentally responsible products. Sustainable production, eco-friendly packaging, ethical sourcing, and reduced carbon emissions have become key factors influencing purchasing decisions. The study examines consumers' perceptions towards sustainable green marketing practices in the FMCG sector and evaluates how environmental awareness, product quality, pricing, brand image, and promotional strategies shape consumer attitudes and buying behaviour. The study aims to (1) examine consumers' perception towards sustainable green marketing practices in the FMCG sector, (2) identify the factors influencing consumers' purchase decisions for green FMCG products, (3) analyse the relationship between environmental awareness and green purchasing behaviour, and (4) provide recommendations for enhancing green marketing strategies among FMCG companies. The findings are expected to demonstrate that consumers generally hold favourable perceptions of sustainable marketing practices, although concerns regarding product price, authenticity of environmental claims, and product availability continue to influence purchase decisions. The study highlights the importance of transparent communication, credible eco-labels, sustainable packaging, and continuous consumer education in strengthening trust and promoting sustainable consumption. The outcomes provide valuable insights for marketers, policymakers, manufacturers, and researchers seeking to develop effective green marketing strategies that simultaneously enhance consumer satisfaction, environmental sustainability, and long-term business competitiveness.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Sustainable Marketing, Consumer Perception, FMCG Sector, Eco-friendly Products, Consumer Behaviour, Sustainable Consumption and Environmental Awareness.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing concern for environmental sustainability has significantly transformed consumer preferences and business practices across the globe. Rapid industrialization, excessive consumption of natural resources, pollution, climate change, and waste generation have encouraged governments, businesses, and consumers to adopt environmentally responsible practices. Among various industries, the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector plays a vital role because it produces products that consumers purchase frequently, including food, beverages, personal care items, household cleaning products, and packaged goods. Due to high production volumes and extensive packaging requirements, the FMCG industry contributes substantially to environmental degradation. Consequently, organizations have increasingly embraced sustainable green marketing practices to minimize their ecological footprint while meeting the growing demand for environmentally friendly products. Green marketing refers to the planning, production, promotion, pricing, and

distribution of products designed to reduce environmental harm throughout their life cycle. It encompasses sustainable sourcing of raw materials, recyclable packaging, energy-efficient manufacturing, reduced carbon emissions, waste management, and transparent communication regarding environmental initiatives. Modern consumers are becoming more environmentally conscious and are willing to support brands that demonstrate genuine commitment to sustainability. However, consumer perception remains a critical determinant of the success of green marketing strategies. Positive perceptions regarding product quality, environmental benefits, corporate social responsibility, and ethical business practices encourage consumers to purchase green FMCG products. Conversely, concerns about higher prices, limited product availability, misleading environmental claims, and inadequate information may discourage green purchasing behaviour. Digital marketing and social media platforms have further enhanced consumer awareness by providing access to sustainability-related information and facilitating communication between companies and consumers. Governments and regulatory agencies also encourage sustainable production through environmental regulations, eco-certification standards, and awareness campaigns. As competition intensifies within the FMCG sector, businesses increasingly recognize sustainability as a source of competitive advantage, customer loyalty, and long-term profitability. Companies investing in green innovation often experience improved corporate reputation, stronger customer relationships, and enhanced market performance. Nevertheless, balancing environmental responsibility with affordability and product performance remains a significant challenge. Understanding consumers' perceptions towards sustainable green marketing practices is therefore essential for designing effective marketing strategies that align environmental objectives with consumer expectations. This study contributes to the growing body of literature by examining consumer perceptions, identifying influential factors affecting green purchasing decisions, and providing practical recommendations for strengthening sustainable marketing practices within the FMCG sector. The findings will assist marketers, policymakers, manufacturers, and researchers in promoting environmentally responsible consumption while supporting sustainable economic development.

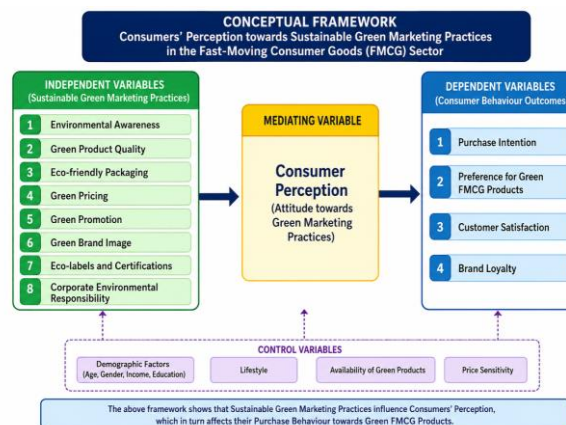
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical foundation of sustainable green marketing is primarily supported by consumer behaviour theory, the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Stakeholder Theory, the Triple Bottom Line approach, and the Green Consumer Behaviour framework. Consumer behaviour theory suggests that purchasing decisions are influenced by individual attitudes, beliefs, motivations, and external environmental factors. The Theory of Planned Behaviour explains that consumers' intentions to purchase environmentally friendly products are determined by favourable attitudes towards sustainability, perceived social expectations, and perceived behavioural control. Consumers who possess strong environmental values are more likely to purchase green FMCG products when they believe their actions contribute positively to environmental protection. Stakeholder Theory emphasizes that organizations should create value not only for shareholders but also for customers, employees, suppliers, communities, and the environment. This perspective encourages FMCG companies to integrate sustainability into their strategic decision-making processes. Similarly, the Triple Bottom Line framework advocates balancing economic performance, environmental protection, and social responsibility, ensuring that business success extends beyond financial profitability. Green marketing practices therefore involve eco-friendly product design, sustainable sourcing, environmentally responsible manufacturing, recyclable packaging, ethical distribution systems, and transparent promotional activities. The Green Consumer Behaviour framework further explains that environmentally conscious consumers evaluate products based on environmental attributes in addition to traditional factors such as quality, price, and

convenience. Consumer trust plays a significant role because credible environmental claims enhance brand reputation and purchase intentions, whereas greenwashing damages consumer confidence. Environmental awareness, education, personal values, lifestyle, cultural influences, income levels, and government regulations collectively shape consumers' perceptions towards sustainable products. Recent advancements in digital marketing have strengthened consumer engagement by allowing companies to communicate sustainability initiatives more effectively through websites, social media platforms, eco-labels, and environmental campaigns. Sustainable innovation, circular economy principles, carbon footprint reduction, renewable energy utilization, and waste minimization have become integral components of green marketing strategies in the FMCG sector. Academic research consistently indicates that consumers increasingly prefer brands demonstrating authentic environmental commitment. However, purchasing decisions continue to be influenced by perceived value, affordability, product performance, and trust in environmental claims. Therefore, sustainable green marketing requires integrating environmental responsibility with superior product quality and customer satisfaction. These theoretical perspectives collectively provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how sustainable marketing practices influence consumer perception and purchasing behaviour in the FMCG industry.

The conceptual framework illustrates the key factors influencing consumers' perception towards sustainable green marketing practices in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector. It identifies the major challenges that affect the effectiveness of green marketing and the factors that shape consumer purchasing decisions. The framework explains how consumers evaluate green products based on environmental, economic, quality, branding, and social considerations. It also highlights the importance of product accessibility and convenience in encouraging sustainable consumption. Overall, the framework provides a systematic understanding of the relationships between green marketing practices and consumer behaviour in the FMCG industry.

Figure: 1



GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE GREEN MARKETING PRACTICES IN THE (FMCG) SECTOR

Environmental sustainability has emerged as one of the most significant concerns influencing consumer behaviour across the world. Increasing awareness of climate change, environmental degradation, plastic pollution, and resource depletion has encouraged consumers to prefer products that are environmentally responsible. Consequently, green marketing has become a strategic priority for FMCG companies operating in developed and emerging economies. Multinational corporations have adopted sustainable manufacturing practices, recyclable packaging, renewable energy, ethical sourcing, carbon emission reduction, and eco-friendly

product innovations to meet evolving consumer expectations. Consumers in countries such as the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, and Australia increasingly consider environmental attributes, eco-labels, and corporate sustainability initiatives while making purchase decisions. International organizations, including the United Nations, have also promoted sustainable consumption and production through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 12, encouraging businesses to integrate sustainability into their operational and marketing strategies. Digital technologies and social media have further enhanced environmental awareness by providing consumers with easy access to information regarding product sustainability, environmental certifications, and corporate social responsibility initiatives. However, despite increasing environmental consciousness, global consumers continue to evaluate green products based on quality, price, convenience, and authenticity of environmental claims. Therefore, companies must maintain transparency and credibility to strengthen consumer trust and long-term brand loyalty.

INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

In India, sustainable green marketing has gained considerable momentum due to growing environmental awareness, rapid urbanization, increasing education levels, and government initiatives promoting environmental conservation. The Indian FMCG sector has witnessed a gradual transformation as consumers increasingly prefer products with natural ingredients, biodegradable packaging, recyclable materials, and environmentally friendly manufacturing processes. Government programmes such as **Swachh Bharat Mission**, **Plastic Waste Management Rules**, **National Action Plan on Climate Change**, and the **Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) Mission** have encouraged both producers and consumers to adopt sustainable practices. Leading FMCG companies in India have introduced eco-friendly packaging, water conservation initiatives, renewable energy usage, responsible sourcing, and waste reduction programmes to strengthen their sustainability commitments. Digital commerce platforms and social media campaigns have further increased consumer awareness regarding green products and environmentally responsible consumption. However, Indian consumers remain highly price-sensitive, and purchasing decisions often depend on affordability, product quality, brand reputation, and product availability. Although awareness of environmental issues is steadily increasing, challenges such as limited availability of certified green products, inadequate consumer education, and concerns regarding misleading environmental claims continue to influence purchasing behaviour. Nevertheless, the growing middle-class population, rising disposable incomes, and increasing environmental consciousness indicate significant opportunities for expanding sustainable green marketing practices in India's FMCG sector. As sustainability becomes an integral part of business strategy, organizations that successfully balance environmental responsibility with quality, affordability, and consumer trust are expected to achieve long-term competitive advantage in the Indian marketplace.

RESEARCH GAP

Although numerous studies have examined green marketing and consumer behaviour, limited research specifically focuses on consumers' perceptions towards sustainable green marketing practices within the FMCG sector. Existing studies often emphasize environmental awareness or purchase intention without comprehensively examining the combined influence of product quality, pricing, eco-labelling, corporate sustainability initiatives, and consumer trust. Furthermore, rapidly changing consumer preferences, technological advancements, and increasing environmental concerns require updated empirical evidence regarding sustainable marketing effectiveness. Differences in demographic characteristics and purchasing behaviour also remain underexplored. Therefore, there is a need for comprehensive research

that integrates multiple determinants of consumer perception and provides practical insights for improving sustainable green marketing strategies in the FMCG industry.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is significant because it provides valuable insights into how consumers perceive sustainable green marketing practices in the FMCG sector. The findings will assist marketers in designing environmentally responsible products, effective promotional campaigns, and sustainable packaging strategies that meet consumer expectations. The research also supports policymakers in developing environmental regulations and awareness programmes that encourage sustainable consumption. Manufacturers can utilize the findings to improve product innovation, enhance corporate sustainability initiatives, and strengthen consumer trust. Additionally, the study contributes to academic literature by expanding knowledge on green marketing and consumer behaviour. Ultimately, it promotes responsible consumption, environmental conservation, long-term business sustainability, and competitive advantage within the FMCG industry.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Growing environmental concerns have encouraged FMCG companies to adopt sustainable green marketing practices; however, consumer acceptance of these initiatives remains uncertain. Although environmental awareness is increasing, many consumers continue to prioritize price, convenience, and product performance over sustainability. Misleading environmental claims, lack of credible information, limited availability of green products, and higher product costs reduce consumer confidence and purchasing intentions. Consequently, businesses face challenges in implementing successful green marketing strategies that effectively influence consumer behaviour. Understanding consumers' perceptions and identifying the factors affecting their purchasing decisions are therefore essential for developing effective marketing strategies that enhance environmental responsibility, customer satisfaction, and sustainable business growth within the FMCG sector.

CHALLENGES IN GREEN MARKETING PRACTICES

Green marketing practices have gained significant importance as consumers increasingly demand environmentally sustainable products and responsible business operations. Despite their growing adoption, FMCG companies face several challenges in implementing effective green marketing strategies. Issues such as greenwashing, consumer skepticism, price sensitivity, limited awareness, and inadequate product availability often influence consumers' perceptions and purchasing decisions. These challenges reduce consumer trust and hinder the widespread acceptance of green products. Therefore, understanding these barriers is essential for developing credible, consumer-oriented, and sustainable green marketing practices in the FMCG sector.

Figure: 2



1. **Greenwashing** : Greenwashing refers to the practice of making exaggerated, misleading, or false claims about the environmental benefits of products or business operations. In the FMCG sector, some companies promote products as eco-friendly without implementing genuine sustainable practices. Such misleading marketing creates confusion among consumers and reduces trust in green products and brands. When consumers discover inconsistencies between promotional claims and actual environmental performance, they become hesitant to purchase green products. Therefore, companies should adopt transparent communication, obtain credible environmental certifications, and disclose accurate sustainability information to build consumer confidence and strengthen the effectiveness of green marketing practices.
2. **Consumer Skepticism** : Consumer skepticism is the tendency of buyers to question the authenticity and credibility of green marketing claims made by FMCG companies. Many consumers doubt whether products marketed as environmentally friendly genuinely contribute to environmental protection. This skepticism often arises due to previous experiences with misleading advertisements, insufficient product information, or lack of recognized eco-certifications. High levels of skepticism negatively influence purchase intention and reduce consumer trust in green brands. Companies can overcome this challenge by providing scientific evidence, third-party certifications, transparent sustainability reports, and consistent environmental practices that demonstrate genuine commitment to protecting the environment and promoting sustainable consumption.
3. **Price Sensitivity**: Price sensitivity refers to consumers' tendency to compare product prices before making purchasing decisions. Green FMCG products are often priced higher because of sustainable raw materials, environmentally friendly production methods, and recyclable packaging. Although many consumers appreciate environmentally responsible products, they may hesitate to purchase them if prices exceed their budgets. This challenge is particularly significant in developing countries where affordability strongly influences buying behaviour. Businesses should therefore adopt cost-effective production techniques, improve operational efficiency, and educate consumers about the long-term environmental and health benefits of green products to justify premium pricing and increase market acceptance.
4. **Green Marketing Practices**: Green marketing practices involve the development, production, promotion, pricing, and distribution of products in ways that minimize environmental impact while satisfying consumer needs. In the FMCG sector, these practices include eco-friendly packaging, sustainable sourcing of raw materials, energy-efficient manufacturing, waste reduction, recyclable materials, and responsible promotional strategies. Effective green marketing not only improves environmental sustainability but also strengthens corporate reputation and consumer trust. Organizations that consistently implement sustainable business practices are more likely to attract environmentally conscious consumers, enhance customer satisfaction, and establish long-term competitive advantages while contributing to environmental conservation and sustainable economic development.
5. **Limited Awareness**: Limited awareness refers to consumers' inadequate knowledge about green marketing, environmental issues, and the benefits of purchasing eco-friendly FMCG products. Many consumers remain unfamiliar with sustainability concepts, environmental certifications, eco-labels, and responsible consumption practices. As a result, they often prioritize conventional products over environmentally friendly alternatives. Increasing consumer awareness through educational campaigns,

social media, digital marketing, environmental programs, and product labeling can significantly improve understanding of sustainable products. Better-informed consumers are more likely to recognize the value of green products, make environmentally responsible purchasing decisions, and support organizations committed to sustainable business practices.

6. **Price and Economic Motivation :** Price and economic motivation influence consumers' willingness to purchase green FMCG products based on affordability and perceived economic value. Consumers evaluate whether environmentally friendly products provide sufficient benefits relative to their cost. Many buyers expect green products to deliver superior quality, durability, health benefits, and environmental advantages that justify higher prices. Discounts, promotional offers, and long-term cost savings also motivate purchasing decisions. Companies should balance sustainability with competitive pricing strategies to increase accessibility and market penetration. Providing value-added benefits and communicating the economic advantages of green products can positively influence consumer perception and encourage sustainable purchasing behaviour.
7. **Quality and Product Attributes:** Quality and product attributes significantly influence consumers' perceptions of green FMCG products. Consumers expect environmentally friendly products to maintain high standards of performance, durability, safety, effectiveness, and convenience. Sustainable packaging, natural ingredients, recyclable materials, and product reliability contribute positively to consumer satisfaction. If green products fail to meet expected quality standards, consumers may return to conventional alternatives despite their environmental concerns. Therefore, FMCG companies should continuously invest in research, innovation, and quality improvement while ensuring that sustainable products deliver superior functional benefits. High-quality green products strengthen customer trust, encourage repeat purchases, and improve brand reputation.
8. **Brand Influence:** Brand influence represents the ability of an organization's reputation, image, and credibility to shape consumer purchasing decisions. Consumers often associate well-established brands with higher product quality, ethical business practices, and reliable environmental commitments. Strong green branding enhances consumer confidence and encourages loyalty toward environmentally responsible products. FMCG companies that consistently communicate sustainability initiatives, obtain environmental certifications, and demonstrate corporate social responsibility build stronger emotional connections with consumers. Positive brand influence also increases customer satisfaction, encourages repeat purchases, and differentiates companies from competitors. Consequently, brand reputation remains an important determinant of successful green marketing strategies.
9. **Social and Psychological Motivation:** Social and psychological motivation refers to the influence of personal values, environmental concern, social norms, family, peers, and lifestyle on consumers' purchasing behaviour. Individuals who believe their purchasing decisions contribute to environmental protection are more likely to choose green FMCG products. Social recognition, ethical responsibility, health consciousness, and environmental commitment further encourage sustainable consumption. Positive recommendations from family members, friends, influencers, and community groups also strengthen consumer confidence in green products. Businesses can leverage these motivational factors by promoting environmental awareness, encouraging responsible

consumption, and highlighting the social benefits associated with purchasing environmentally friendly products.

10. **Convenience and Availability:** Convenience and availability refer to the ease with which consumers can access and purchase green FMCG products through retail stores, supermarkets, and online platforms. Even environmentally conscious consumers may avoid green products if they are difficult to find, inadequately distributed, or available only at selected locations. Wide product availability, effective distribution networks, attractive retail displays, and convenient online purchasing options significantly improve consumer adoption. FMCG companies should strengthen supply chain management and expand product accessibility across urban and rural markets. Improved convenience increases purchase frequency, customer satisfaction, and long-term acceptance of sustainable green marketing practices.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY

The study offers practical and theoretical implications for businesses, researchers, and policymakers. FMCG companies can utilize the findings to improve sustainable product development, pricing strategies, packaging innovation, and environmental communication. Policymakers may formulate stronger environmental regulations and consumer awareness programmes based on the identified determinants of green purchasing behaviour. Researchers can build upon the findings to investigate emerging sustainability trends and consumer preferences across different industries and geographical regions. The study also encourages organizations to adopt transparent environmental practices that strengthen consumer trust and long-term brand loyalty. Ultimately, the research supports sustainable business development while promoting environmentally responsible consumption and contributing to broader environmental conservation objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

FMCG companies should strengthen sustainable green marketing by investing in environmentally friendly product innovation, recyclable packaging, and renewable energy technologies. Organizations should communicate environmental benefits transparently through certified eco-labels and avoid misleading claims that reduce consumer trust. Competitive pricing strategies should be adopted to make green products affordable for a broader consumer base. Continuous consumer education through digital platforms, awareness campaigns, and social media can increase environmental knowledge and encourage responsible purchasing behaviour. Collaboration with government agencies and environmental organizations can further enhance sustainability initiatives. Regular assessment of consumer perceptions will enable businesses to adapt marketing strategies according to evolving consumer expectations while maintaining environmental responsibility and long-term competitive advantage.

CONCLUSION

The growing importance of environmental sustainability has transformed the marketing landscape of the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods sector, making sustainable green marketing an essential business strategy rather than a voluntary initiative. Consumers increasingly recognize the environmental consequences of their purchasing decisions and demonstrate greater interest in products that contribute to ecological conservation. However, consumer perception remains the foundation of successful green marketing because purchasing decisions depend not only on environmental awareness but also on product quality, affordability, availability, credibility, and trust in corporate sustainability initiatives. Businesses that integrate sustainable practices throughout the product life cycle while

maintaining high standards of quality and value are more likely to establish strong customer relationships and long-term competitive advantage. Effective green marketing requires transparent communication, credible environmental certifications, innovative eco-friendly packaging, and continuous consumer education to eliminate skepticism and strengthen consumer confidence. Policymakers, manufacturers, marketers, and environmental organizations must collaborate to create supportive regulatory frameworks and promote sustainable consumption through awareness programmes and responsible business practices. The study demonstrates that sustainable green marketing contributes not only to environmental protection but also to customer satisfaction, corporate reputation, and business profitability. As environmental challenges continue to intensify, organizations must view sustainability as an integral component of strategic management rather than merely a promotional tool. Future research may explore regional differences, emerging green technologies, digital sustainability communication, and changing consumer expectations to further strengthen green marketing practices. Overall, understanding consumers' perceptions towards sustainable green marketing provides valuable guidance for developing effective strategies that balance environmental responsibility with economic growth. By embracing innovation, transparency, and consumer-centred sustainability initiatives, the FMCG sector can significantly contribute to global sustainable development while meeting evolving market demands and ensuring long-term organizational success.

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