

Research Article

Green Marketing Practices and Consumer Behavior: A Conceptual Review

Dr. Neha Sabharwal^{1*}, Mr. Kishan Tak²

¹ Assistant Professor, Dept. of School of Menegement Studies, Sangam Universiy, Bhilwara, Rajasthan, MP

Neha.sabharwal@sangamuniversity.ac.in

² Assistant Professor, Dept. of School of Menegement Studies, Sangam University, Bhilwara, Rajasthan, MP

kishan.tank@sangamuniversity.ac.in

*Corresponding Author: Neha.sabharwal@sangamuniversity.ac.in

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Abstract: Growing environmental concerns, regulatory changes, and rising consumer awareness have significantly influenced contemporary marketing strategies. Green marketing—also referred to as sustainable, environmental, or eco-friendly marketing—has emerged as a strategic approach that incorporates ecological considerations into product design, pricing, distribution, and promotion. Consumer behaviour, on the other hand, has undergone a shift wherein environmental consciousness increasingly influences attitudes and purchase decisions. This conceptual review synthesizes existing theoretical perspectives to map how green marketing practices influence consumer perceptions, attitudes, and buying behaviour. The paper presents conceptual linkages, emerging trends, challenges, opportunities, and implications for stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, and industry.

Keywords:

1. INTRODUCTION

The shift from conventional marketing to environmentally responsible marketing has accelerated over the past decade. Climate

change, resource depletion, and waste management challenges have created pressure on industries to adopt sustainable practices. Consumers—especially younger generations—are more inclined towards brands that

demonstrate ethical and eco-friendly behaviour. Corporations now recognize that environmental responsibility is not only a social obligation but also a competitive advantage, enhancing brand equity and long-term profitability.

Green marketing, therefore, seeks to minimize environmental impact while increasing consumer satisfaction. Given the growing eco-consciousness, understanding how consumers perceive, evaluate, and respond to green marketing initiatives becomes essential.

2. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1 Definitions of Key Concepts

Concept	Definition
Green Marketing	A marketing approach that promotes environmentally friendly products, sustainable business practices, and responsible consumption patterns while reducing ecological impact (Polonsky, 2011).
Green Consumer Behaviour	The process by which consumers consider environmental impacts when purchasing, using, and disposing of products (Biswas & Roy, 2015).
Eco-Labeling	Certification that identifies products meeting specific ecological standards, enabling consumers to recognize environmentally superior options (Rex & Baumann, 2007).
Green Branding	Developing a brand identity focused on ecological values, environmental responsibility, and sustainability commitments (Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2012).
Sustainability	Development that satisfies present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet theirs (Brundtland Commission, 1987).
Circular Economy	An economic model prioritizing resource efficiency by encouraging reuse, recycling, and minimisation of waste (Kirchherr et al., 2017).
Environmental Attitude	A psychological orientation expressing favourability or unfavourability toward environmental protection and conservation (Kotchen & Reiling, 2000).

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Understanding green marketing practices and consumer behaviour requires a multi-theoretical perspective. The following theories

offer deeper insight into why consumers adopt (or resist) eco-friendly behaviours and how marketing interventions influence their decisions.

Theory / Model	What the Theory Explains	Contribution to Understanding Green Consumer Behaviour	Relevance to Green Marketing Practices
Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) -	Behaviour is shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and	Explains why consumers form green intentions and how social pressure	Helps marketers design campaigns that strengthen attitudes, highlight social

Ajzen's (1991)	perceived behavioural control.	and control factors influence their eco-friendly actions.	approval, and reduce barriers such as price and availability.
Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Theory- Stern (2000)	Values → Beliefs → Personal norms → Behaviour.	Shows that consumers adopt green behaviour when they feel moral responsibility grounded in altruistic and bio-spheric values.	Guides marketers to use value-based appeals, ethical messaging, and emotional triggers in sustainability campaigns.
Norm Activation Model (NAM)- Schwartz (1977)	Awareness of consequences and responsibility activates personal norms.	Explains how guilt, responsibility, and environmental concern push consumers toward eco-friendly choices.	Supports marketing that highlights environmental consequences (e.g., pollution, climate harm) to activate responsible decision-making.
Attitude–Behaviour–Context (ABC) Model- Guagnano, Stern, & Dietz (1995)	Contextual factors moderate the relationship between attitude and behaviour.	Explains the attitude–behaviour gap in green consumption, despite positive attitudes.	Encourages marketers to improve contextual support—affordable prices, clear labels, easy access—to convert intention into actual purchase.
Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) Model - Mehrabian & Russell, 1974	Environmental stimuli influence internal states, shaping responses.	Explains how green packaging, eco-labels, and ads influence emotions, trust, and cognitive evaluations.	Helps marketers design powerful green stimuli that trigger positive emotional and cognitive reactions.
Green Perceived Value (GPV) Theory- Chen (2013)	Behaviour depends on perceived functional, emotional, social, and environmental value.	Clarifies why consumers choose some green products but avoid others—perceived value must outweigh perceived sacrifice.	Encourages marketers to communicate both environmental and performance benefits, not just eco-features.
Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) Theory- Rogers (2003)	Adoption depends on relative advantage, compatibility, trial ability, observability, and lower risk.	Explains how early adopters influence green product acceptance and market spread.	Helps marketers target innovators and early adopters to accelerate acceptance of green innovations.
Green Trust Framework- Chen, 2010	Trust emerges from credible claims, transparency, performance, and authenticity.	Highlights how lack of trust or green-washing reduces willingness to purchase green products.	Encourages consistent communication, verified labels, certifications, and avoidance of misleading environmental claims.

4. GREEN MARKETING PRACTICES

Green marketing practices have gradually become an essential part of business strategy as organisations confront rising environmental challenges and growing consumer expectations for responsible behaviour. At the centre of these practices lies the commitment to develop environmentally sensitive products. Companies now devote considerable effort to redesigning products so that they consume fewer resources, incorporate recyclable or biodegradable materials, and generate minimal waste during production and disposal. This approach is not merely cosmetic; it reflects a shift toward life-cycle thinking, where every stage—from extraction of raw materials to the product's end-of-life treatment—is assessed for its ecological consequences. By embedding sustainability into product design, firms not only contribute to environmental preservation but also appeal to consumers who see value in purchasing goods that align with their ethical and ecological beliefs.

A second major area of emphasis is environment-aligned pricing. Although green products often involve higher production costs due to superior materials or clean technologies, companies strive to justify these prices by emphasising durability, efficiency, or long-term savings. The intention is to help consumers view the purchase not as a simple economic exchange but as an investment in a healthier planet. Some firms adopt innovative pricing mechanisms—such as reward programmes, eco-points, or differential pricing for recycled packaging—to ease the financial burden on consumers and promote more sustainable consumption habits.

Promotion, too, has undergone a notable transformation. Green communication strategies aim to inform and educate the public about a company's environmental initiatives honestly and transparently. Firms

now highlight their sustainability achievements through credible certifications, responsible advertising, and detailed environmental reporting. The objective is to foster awareness and shape positive consumer perceptions. However, such communication requires caution: exaggerated claims or superficial sustainability messaging can easily be perceived as green-washing. To maintain credibility, organisations must ensure that promotional content is supported by genuine, measurable environmental actions.

Lastly, companies are investing heavily in green branding and strategic positioning. A strong green brand does more than claim eco-friendliness; it reflects a consistent organisational philosophy grounded in environmental ethics and long-term responsibility. When sustainability becomes part of a brand's identity, it resonates with consumers who seek authenticity and alignment with their personal values. This positioning strengthens brand loyalty, enhances reputation, and creates differentiation in markets where traditional attributes—such as price or features—may no longer provide sufficient competitive advantage.

5. CONSUMERS' TAKE ON GREEN MARKETING

Consumers' response to green marketing has grown steadily as environmental issues become more visible in public discourse. Research shows that many consumers now place greater value on brands that demonstrate genuine ecological responsibility, and they often associate green products with ethical behaviour, enhanced well-being, and long-term societal benefit (Biswas & Roy, 2015). Younger consumers, in particular, tend to be more receptive to sustainability-oriented messages because such values align closely with their identity and lifestyle preferences

(Leonidou et al., 2013). At the same time, consumers expect green marketing to be credible and transparent, and their trust increases when companies support their claims with eco-labels, third-party certifications, or measurable sustainability reports (Thøgersen, 2000). However, scepticism remains high due to past instances of greenwashing, and many consumers hesitate to believe environmental claims unless the firm provides clear evidence of ecological performance (Nyilasy et al., 2014). Moreover, although a substantial group expresses strong environmental attitudes, the actual purchase behaviour is often influenced by perceived benefits such as product quality, affordability, and long-term value, which means that green attributes alone may not be sufficient to drive consistent buying decisions (Gleim et al., 2013). Overall, consumers generally welcome green marketing, but their acceptance depends strongly on authenticity, perceived value, and the firm's ability to demonstrate real environmental impact.

CONCLUSION:

The synthesis of existing scholarship makes it clear that green marketing is no longer a peripheral or symbolic gesture but a strategic imperative shaping contemporary business practice. As environmental degradation accelerates and consumer consciousness deepens, organisations are compelled to rethink how products are designed, communicated, and delivered. This conceptual review demonstrates that green marketing practices—when grounded in authenticity, transparency, and measurable environmental performance—have the potential to influence consumer attitudes and foster sustained behavioural change meaningfully. Yet this influence is neither automatic nor uniform. Consumers respond positively only when they perceive genuine commitment, credible

information, and clear functional or economic value in environmentally friendly offerings. Accordingly, the relationship between green marketing and consumer behaviour is mediated by trust, perceived behavioural control, socio-psychological values, and contextual enablers.

At the same time, the implementation of green marketing is characterised by a duality of promise and complexity. The opportunities are profound: firms can stimulate innovation, secure long-term competitive advantage, strengthen brand equity, and contribute to wider ecological resilience. However, the challenges—ranging from greenwashing risks to infrastructure limitations, cost pressures, and inconsistent regulatory standards—underscore that sustainability must be embedded holistically across organisational systems rather than treated as a promotional add-on. Only when firms align internal operations, supply chains, and marketing communication with genuine environmental stewardship can green marketing achieve its transformative potential.

Ultimately, the future trajectory of marketing is unmistakably green. As global policy frameworks, national initiatives such as India's NEP 2020, and societal expectations converge toward sustainability, organisations that embrace transparent, evidence-based, and consumer-centric green strategies will be better positioned to lead in an environmentally constrained world. Green marketing, therefore, stands not merely as a business approach but as a pathway toward responsible consumption, ethical corporate conduct, and long-term ecological well-being. It marks a critical step in shaping markets that are not only economically vibrant but also environmentally coherent and socially accountable.

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