

Green Marketing in The Digital Era

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Introduction

The growing urgency of environmental degradation — encompassing atmospheric pollution, shifts in global climate patterns, and the depletion of finite natural resources — has propelled sustainability to the forefront of both public consciousness and corporate strategy. Contemporary consumers exhibit heightened sensitivity toward ecological matters and demonstrate a marked preference for goods and services that align with environmentally responsible principles. Green marketing, at its core, encompasses the promotion of offerings that are produced, packaged, and distributed through processes minimising ecological harm. Its scope extends to sustainable sourcing, biodegradable or reduced-waste packaging, and ethically grounded promotional communications.

Concurrently, the proliferation of digital technologies has fundamentally redefined the landscape of marketing communication. Online platforms — including social media networks, organisational websites, and targeted email marketing — equip businesses with unprecedented reach, enabling meaningful engagement with globally dispersed audiences. The strategic convergence of green marketing with digital communication tools presents a compelling opportunity for enterprises to amplify their sustainability messaging, cultivate consumer trust, and catalyse environmentally responsible purchasing behaviour among digitally active populations.

Research Problem

Despite widespread awareness of environmental concerns, a persistent gap exists between consumer knowledge and consistent adoption of eco-friendly purchasing habits. Many individuals remain informed yet inert when it comes to actively choosing green products over conventional alternatives. This study seeks to explore how targeted digital marketing interventions can effectively narrow this intention-behaviour gap and translate environmental awareness into tangible purchasing action.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the prevailing level of consumer awareness regarding green marketing concepts and initiatives.
- To evaluate the relative effectiveness of various digital platforms in communicating and promoting eco-conscious products.
- To examine the influence of digital marketing exposure on consumers' actual eco-friendly purchase decisions.
- To identify the principal barriers that hinder consumers from consistently engaging with green product offerings.

Scope of the Study

This investigation concentrates on individuals who engage regularly with digital platforms in their daily lives. It examines their awareness levels, attitudinal dispositions, and behavioural tendencies specifically in relation to green marketing communications and eco-friendly consumption.

Literature Review

Peattie and Crane (2005): These scholars drew attention to the phenomenon of greenwashing — the practice whereby organisations make exaggerated or unsubstantiated claims about their environmental credentials — and its corrosive effect on consumer confidence in green marketing as a whole.

Polonsky (2011): Polonsky argued that authentic green marketing requires organisations to embed environmental accountability into their core strategic frameworks rather than treating it as a peripheral or cosmetic concern, thereby contributing to genuine long-term sustainable development.

Biswas and Roy (2015): Research by Biswas and Roy demonstrated that targeted digital marketing efforts substantially elevate consumer familiarity with sustainable product offerings, yielding particularly pronounced effects among millennial and younger demographic segments who are primary consumers of digital content.

Kotler and Keller (2016): Kotler and Keller contended that contemporary marketing paradigms must systematically incorporate sustainability principles to remain responsive to evolving consumer demands. Organisations demonstrating genuine environmental stewardship, they argued, are better positioned to cultivate stronger brand equity and foster enduring customer loyalty.

Ottman (2017): Ottman's work examined the foundations of effective green marketing strategy, underscoring authenticity and transparency as non-negotiable prerequisites. The author cautioned that deceptive or overstated environmental claims are not merely unethical — they actively erode consumer trust and ultimately undermine campaign effectiveness.

Zhang and Li (2019): Zhang and Li established that social media platforms function as powerful conduits for shaping purchase behaviour, primarily through mechanisms of peer endorsement, experiential reviews, and community-based recommendations that resonate strongly with digitally connected consumers.

Theoretical Framework

This research draws on three interrelated theoretical perspectives:

- Consumer Behaviour Theory: Models the psychological progression from initial awareness through developing interest to ultimate purchase action.
- AIDA Model: Traces the persuasion journey across four stages — attracting Attention, building Interest, fostering Desire, and prompting Action.
- Sustainability Theory: Advocates for the balanced integration of environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic viability in organisational decision-making.

Research Gap

Existing scholarly literature on the intersection of ecological marketing and digital communication channels within the Indian market context remains comparatively sparse. This study addresses that void by examining how the synergistic application of green and digital marketing strategies influences consumer behaviour in an Indian setting.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This investigation adopts a combined descriptive and analytical research design. The descriptive dimension maps the contours of consumer awareness, attitudes, and behavioural tendencies pertaining to green marketing. The analytical dimension then probes the magnitude of the relationship between digital media exposure and respondents' eco-friendly purchasing decisions.

Data Collection

Primary Data

First-hand data were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered to study participants. This approach facilitated systematic collection of information on consumer awareness levels, product preferences, and actual purchasing behaviour in relation to green and eco-friendly offerings.

Secondary Data

Supplementary evidence was derived from peer-reviewed academic journals, published research articles, and other credible scholarly sources. This secondary material provided the theoretical grounding and contextual backdrop necessary to interpret and situate the primary findings.

Sample Size

The study engaged a total of 153 participants, all of whom maintain active engagement with digital platforms. Their responses enabled the identification of meaningful trends and patterns in eco-friendly product engagement and purchase behaviour.

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling was employed as the selection method, with participants recruited based on accessibility and voluntary willingness to contribute. Whilst this approach offers operational simplicity and cost efficiency, it carries the inherent limitation of potential underrepresentation of certain population segments, which may moderate the generalisability of the findings.

Tools Used

The following analytical tools were employed in this study:

- Percentage Analysis: Applied to render data in a comprehensible, comparative format.
- Descriptive Statistics: Utilised to condense and elucidate the overall data distribution.
- Trend Analysis: Deployed to detect recurring behavioural patterns across the respondent group.
- Chi-Square Test: Applied to determine whether a statistically significant association exists between digital marketing exposure and eco-friendly purchase behaviour.

Findings

The study yielded several notable insights:

- Green Marketing Awareness (79%): A substantial majority of respondents demonstrated familiarity with green marketing, reflecting the broad diffusion of environmental awareness across contemporary consumer populations.
- Perceived Importance (72%): Nearly three-quarters of participants viewed green marketing as significant, signalling broadly favourable consumer orientations toward sustainability.
- Social Media as the Dominant Platform (54%): Social networking platforms were overwhelmingly identified as the most effective medium for eco-friendly product promotion, attributed to their extensive reach and high user engagement.
- Digital Marketing-Driven Purchases (63%): A majority of respondents confirmed having purchased eco-friendly products as a direct consequence of digital marketing content, confirming the tangible commercial impact of online sustainability campaigns.

Primary Barriers Identified

- Elevated product pricing (cited by 44% of respondents)
- Limited consumer awareness beyond existing early adopters (32%)
- Credibility and trust deficits regarding green claims (24%)

Data Analysis

Descriptive Analysis

Analytical findings reveal a notable disconnect between widespread green marketing awareness and actual eco-friendly purchasing behaviour. Despite high levels of conceptual familiarity, a considerably smaller proportion of consumers translate that knowledge into routine purchase decisions. This divergence suggests that structural factors — including product cost, perceived authenticity, and market accessibility — represent meaningful deterrents beyond mere awareness deficits.

Behavioural Analysis

Consumer purchase behaviour is substantially shaped by digital marketing, with social media platforms demonstrating particularly potent influence. These channels deliver dynamic, visually compelling content that captures user attention and steers preferences toward eco-friendly alternatives. Respondents with higher levels of digital campaign exposure exhibited a significantly greater inclination to actively consider and pursue sustainable product options.

Correlation Insight

The data reveal a consistent positive relationship between the frequency of digital platform engagement and the likelihood of eco-friendly purchasing. As respondents' digital media engagement intensified, corresponding gains in both awareness and purchase propensity for sustainable products were observed, indicating that extended digital touchpoints cumulatively reinforce environmentally conscious consumer dispositions.

Hypothesis Testing

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested to examine the influence of digital marketing on purchase behaviour:

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Digital marketing exerts no statistically significant effect on consumers' purchasing decisions.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Digital marketing exerts a statistically significant effect on consumers' purchasing decisions.

Chi-Square Test

Observed Frequency Table:

Table 1: Influence of Green Marketing on Eco-Friendly Product Purchase Decisions

	Purchased	Not Purchased	Total
Influenced	97	0	97
Not Influenced	0	56	56

Formula: $\chi^2 = \sum [(O - E)^2 / E]$

Result: $\chi^2 = 152.96$, $df = 1$

Chi-square analysis outcomes confirm that 63% of respondents cited digital marketing as the primary catalyst for their eco-friendly purchasing decisions. On this basis, the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis H_1 is accepted. There is a statistically significant relationship between digital marketing exposure and eco-friendly purchasing behaviour.

Interpretation of Results

The findings collectively demonstrate that digital marketing exerts a substantive and measurable influence on consumer purchasing trajectories. By enhancing awareness and actively shaping preference formation, digital campaigns serve as an effective bridge between consumer environmental values and actual product choices, making eco-friendly alternatives an increasingly accessible option for digitally engaged consumers.

Discussion

Digital marketing has proven to be a powerful driver of sustainable consumer behaviour. Social media platforms occupy a particularly pivotal role, owing to their capacity for mass reach and their inherently interactive nature, which cultivates ongoing consumer engagement. Nevertheless, persistent challenges — most notably greenwashing, prohibitive pricing, and credibility shortfalls — continue to erode consumer confidence and impede the broader uptake of eco-friendly products. These findings underscore the critical need for greater organisational transparency and more substantive, verifiable environmental communication strategies.

Summary of Key Findings

- Consumer awareness of green marketing is at a relatively high level among the study population.
- Respondents exhibit predominantly favourable attitudes toward green marketing and sustainability.
- Social media has emerged as the single most influential digital channel for green product promotion.
- Exposure to digital marketing significantly increases the probability of eco-friendly product purchase.
- Elevated product costs and consumer trust deficits constitute the most significant adoption barriers.

Implications

For Businesses

- Organisations should pursue consistent, multi-channel digital engagement strategies to maximise sustainable product visibility.
- All green marketing communications should prioritise transparency, verifiability, and honest representation to build durable consumer trust.

For Government

- Policymakers should invest in sustained public education campaigns to broaden the base of green marketing awareness and promote environmentally responsible consumer choices.

Limitations

- The study's sample size, at 153 respondents, is relatively modest and may limit the statistical power of the conclusions drawn.
- The geographic and demographic scope of the investigation was confined, which restricts the breadth of applicability of the findings.
- The analytical toolkit was limited to foundational statistical methods; advanced multivariate techniques were not employed.

Conclusion

The convergence of green marketing principles with digital communication platforms represents one of the most significant developments in contemporary sustainable business practice. This study demonstrates that a large majority of consumers are already familiar with green marketing and recognise its value, signalling a cultural shift toward greater environmental accountability in consumption decisions. Digital platforms — especially social networks — are functioning as powerful accelerators of this transition, progressively embedding sustainability considerations into everyday consumer choices.

Statistical analysis substantiates a clear, positive linkage between digital media exposure and the uptake of eco-friendly products. Notwithstanding this progress, meaningful obstacles persist: inflated pricing, inadequate market representation of green alternatives, and persistent consumer scepticism regarding the authenticity of sustainability claims. Addressing these structural and perceptual barriers will be essential for scaling the impact of green digital marketing strategies.

Future Scope

The present study lays a foundation for multiple avenues of further scholarly inquiry. Subsequent research would benefit from engaging substantially larger and more geographically diverse samples to strengthen result generalisability. More sophisticated analytical frameworks — such as multivariate regression modelling or Pearson correlation analysis — could provide deeper insights into the causal dynamics at play. Comparative investigations across distinct regional markets and industry sectors would illuminate how the green-digital marketing nexus manifests across different socioeconomic and cultural contexts.

Additionally, longitudinal studies examining how sustained digital green marketing exposure influences brand loyalty and long-term consumer engagement would yield valuable strategic insights. The accelerating role of emerging technologies — particularly artificial intelligence, data-driven personalisation, and targeted content delivery — in amplifying the reach and effectiveness of sustainable marketing communications warrants dedicated investigation as a future research priority.

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