

# How Sustainability Claims Affect Consumer Purchase Intentions

**Aniket Kumar**

Master of Business Administration  
Galgotias University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India  
Email: [aniket23301@gmail.com](mailto:aniket23301@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

This paper investigates how sustainability claims—statements by brands about ethical, environmental, or social practices—affect consumer purchase intentions. Through comprehensive literature review and a quantitative survey of 300 Indian urban consumers, the study finds that credible sustainability claims positively influence trust, brand perception, and willingness to buy. However, green-washing and vague messaging can result in skepticism and reduce effectiveness. The findings underscore the importance of authenticity, third-party certification, and demographic targeting for successful sustainability messaging.

**Keywords:** sustainability, ethical practices

## I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainability has become a pivotal element in consumer decision-making as climate change, environmental degradation, and ethical concerns dominate public discourse. Brands increasingly use sustainability claims to appeal to conscious consumers, especially Millennials and Gen Z. These claims include labels such as “eco-friendly,” “carbon neutral,” or “ethically sourced.” However, the impact of these claims depends heavily on their credibility, clarity, and the values of target consumers.

While many consumers express support for sustainable practices, actual purchase behavior may differ due to price sensitivity, skepticism, or lack of clarity. The study explores how sustainability claims influence purchase intention, moderated by factors like environmental concern, claim credibility, and consumer knowledge.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature suggests that sustainability claims can shape consumer attitudes, trust, and behavior. According to Chen & Chang (2012), green trust mediates the effect of such claims on purchase intention. Green-washing—

misleading or vague environmental messaging—can damage brand trust (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). Specific, verified claims are more effective than generic ones (Atkinson & Rosenthal, 2014). Demographic studies reveal that younger, educated, and environmentally aware consumers are more likely to act on sustainability claims (Smith & Brower, 2012). Cultural values and contextual factors also play a significant role.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative, descriptive research design was used. A structured online survey targeted 300 Indian consumers aged 18+, with focus on those aware of sustainability claims. The questionnaire included sections on demographics, sustainability awareness, claim credibility, environmental concern, and purchase intention. Likert-scale items measured attitudes and behaviors.

### *Key tools and techniques*

- Descriptive stats for demographics and awareness
- Reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha
- Pearson correlation and multiple regression for relationship analysis

- Mediation and moderation analysis using PROCESS macro.

#### *Data Analysis & Interpretation*

- High Awareness: 74% were familiar with sustainability-related terms. 58% said such claims often influenced their buying.
- Claim Credibility: Strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.67$ ) between claim credibility and purchase intention.
- Environmental Concern: Moderated purchase intentions significantly; concerned consumers responded more to sustainable products.
- Regression Findings: All variables (claims, credibility, concern) significantly predicted purchase intention ( $R^2 = 0.52$ ).
- Demographics: Younger consumers (18–34), women, and educated individuals showed higher sensitivity to claims.
- Green Attitude-Behavior Gap: Many supported sustainability in theory, but real-world purchase was affected by price and availability.

### **IV. FINDINGS**

#### *Data Analysis & Interpretation*

The study confirms that credible, specific, and emotionally resonant sustainability claims positively influence consumer behavior. However, the green attitude-behavior gap remains a challenge. Green-washing reduces the credibility of claims and affects even well-intention consumers. Third-party certifications, emotional storytelling, and consumer education are essential to bridge this gap. Cultural relevance and demographic targeting further improve messaging effectiveness.

### **V. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Ensure Transparency: Use third-party certifications to enhance trust.
- Educate Consumers: Clearly explain claims using simple terms and visuals.
- Combine Emotional and Rational Appeals: Pair data with compelling narratives.
- Address Price Barriers: Offer incentives or reduce premiums for pre-production.

- Target Specific Demographics: Use platforms like Instagram and YouTube for younger consumers.
- Combat Green-Washing: Regulators and brands must ensure verifiable claims.

### **VI. CONCLUSION**

Sustainability claims significantly influence consumer purchase intentions when they are clear, credible, and aligned with consumer values. Younger, educated, and environmentally conscious consumers are most responsive. However, the gap between intention and behavior persists. Brands that invest in real sustainability and communicate authentically will not only influence consumer choices but contribute to broader environmental goals.

### **VII. REFERENCES**

- Biswas, A., & Roy, M. (2015). Green products: an exploratory study on the consumer behaviour in emerging economies of the East. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 87, 463–468. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.09.075>
- Delmas, M. A., & Burbano, V. C. (2011). The drivers of green-washing. *California Management Review*, 54(1), 64–87. <https://doi.org/10.1525/cmr.2011.54.1.64>
- Dangelico, R. M., & Vocalelli, D. (2017). “Green Marketing”: An analysis of definitions, strategy steps, and tools through a systematic review of the literature. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 165, 1263–1279. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.07.184>
- Peattie, K., & Crane, A. (2005). Green marketing: Legend, myth, farce or prophesy? *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 8(4), 357–370. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13522750510619733>
- Leonidou, C. N., Katsikeas, C. S., & Morgan, N. A. (2013). Greening the marketing mix: Do greener lead to greener? *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 62(3), 126–142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.12.037>