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# Green Marketing in the Fast Fashion Industry: Consumer Perceptions and Purchasing Intentions

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**ABSTRACT:** The fast fashion industry has experienced a boom in recent years, prompting questions about the industry's environmental and social implications. This study will address and evaluate fast fashion brands' green marketing and how customers perceive it. This research will also examine how this perception encourages or discourages them from patronizing those companies. Given the consumer expectations and feasibility of post and current green marketing, policymakers and business executives will benefit from this research. Ultimately, this study wants to motivate stakeholders and the industry to embrace more sustainable and socially responsible processes while maintaining a successful and customer-friendly business model.

**KEYWORDS:** Green Marketing, Fashion Retail, Sustainable Marketing, Consumer skepticism, Sustainable Business Model, Customer-Friendly Business Model.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The fast fashion sector has seen significant growth in the past few years, driven by its capacity to offer stylish apparel at affordable prices. However, this swift growth has initiated a crucial discussion about the environmental and social effects of the industry. Consumers are growing more conscious of the potential drawbacks of fast fashion, such as excessive waste production, water pollution, and unethical labour practices. Many fast fashion brands have responded to these growing concerns by adopting green marketing strategies. Green marketing involves communicating a company's environmental and social responsibility efforts. However, the effectiveness of these strategies depends on how consumers perceive them. Are these efforts seen as genuine commitments to sustainability, or are they interpreted as greenwashing—deceptive marketing tactics aimed at misleading consumers? Understanding consumer perceptions of green marketing in fast fashion is vital, as it directly impacts their purchasing decisions.

This research addresses the important question of how green marketing strategies affect consumer perception and purchase intentions in the fast fashion industry. By analysing how consumers respond to these marketing approaches, we can ascertain whether they attract or deter consumers from supporting fast fashion brands. This investigation holds significance in light of the changing landscape of consumer expectations. Modern consumers are becoming more environmentally aware and are looking for brands that resonate with their values.

Additionally, the results of this study could offer significant insights for policymakers and industry leaders in fast fashion. Assessing the efficiency of both current and previous green marketing strategies will allow us to pinpoint opportunities for enhancement and motivate stakeholders to adopt more sustainable and socially conscious measures. In essence, the ultimate objective is to strike a harmonious balance between these initiatives while upholding a thriving and customer-focused business model in the fast fashion sector. To achieve a thorough understanding of consumer perception, this study utilized a mixed-methods approach. A quantitative survey was utilized using Google Forms to reach a target audience aged 16-35. This age range is a



significant demographic within the fast fashion consumer base. The survey garnered around 270 responses, offering valuable insights into consumer attitudes towards green marketing in fast fashion. Furthermore, focus group discussions were undertaken to gather in-depth qualitative perspectives. These discussions involved a smaller, targeted group of participants engaging in open-ended conversations about their encounters with green marketing in fast fashion. The data gathered from both the survey and focus groups will be examined to uncover trends and patterns in consumer perception. This comprehensive approach will offer a thorough and detailed understanding of how consumers view the green marketing strategies used by fast fashion brands.

## II. LITERATURE SURVEY/ EXISTING SYSTEM

### **Impact of Green Marketing on Consumer Behaviour:**

According to research by Gussow (1989), Goldstein (1990), and Smith et al. (1990), consumers are more inclined towards brands that are perceived as environmentally responsible. It is important to note that the credibility of the message source, as highlighted by Petty and Cacioppo (1981), significantly influences consumer behaviour in this regard.

### **Greenwashing: Lies Disguise Truth:**

The practice of making misleading environmental claims, also known as greenwashing, undermines consumer trust, as indicated by Mayer et al. (1993). Consumers tend to view claims that solely focus on product or brand image with skepticism, as highlighted by McDaniel and Rylander (1993).

### **The Sustainability Paradox of Fast Fashion:**

Sustainability and fast fashion are at odds because of its quick production and disposable nature (Fletcher, 2008). According to Ferdows et al. (2004), short cycles run counter to assertions of environmental responsibility.

### **An Inadequate Knowledge of Perception:**

There is a knowledge vacuum regarding how fast fashion businesses' green marketing is viewed by customers. In order to ascertain how consumer perception affects purchasing behaviour, this study looks at it.

## III. METHODOLOGY AND DISCUSSION

In order to have a thorough grasp of how consumers perceive green marketing in the fast fashion business, this study used a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data.

### **Qualitative Data Collection:**

Seven people participated in focus groups, spanning a wide range of demographics and buying preferences. A semi-structured interview guide aided in the discussion of issues pertaining to exposure to and responses to green marketing promises, as well as the decision-making processes involved in buying fast fashion. Focus group transcripts were analysed using the NVivo software, which is used for thematic analysis. Participants' sentiments, key topics, and points of view were discovered.

### **Quantitative Data Collection:**

To address a target audience of people aged 16 to 35, both male & female gender, a quantitative survey was conducted using Google Forms (n = 270). A large portion of the fast fashion consumer base falls into this age range. Measures of customer perception of greenwashing and its effect on purchase intentions were included in the survey questionnaire. Here are a few instances:

Frequency: "How often do you encounter green marketing claims (e.g., 'sustainable,' 'eco-friendly') from fast fashion brands?" Never to Always on a Likert scale  
Perceived Credibility: "How believable do you find the following green claims used by fast fashion brands?" in terms of perceived credibility. With choices like "Recycled materials," "Organic cotton," etc., (Scale: Not at all believable - Extremely believable).

Greenwashing Concerns: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: 'Fast fashion companies use green marketing to charge more for their products but don't actually make many changes to be



environmentally friendly?" According to the Likert scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree  
Purchase Intention: "Imagine a fast fashion brand is introducing a new range of apparel composed of recycled materials. How likely are you to purchase from this brand based on this information alone?" (Likert scale: Not at all likely - Extremely likely)

### Data Analysis – Quantitative:

#### Descriptive Statistics:

The investigator computed descriptive statistics in order to enumerate important variables: The analysis provided the frequency of seeing green marketing claims as a mean score, which is equivalent to the average response on a 5-point Likert scale, as well as the distribution of responses across the scale's categories, which are equivalent to the percentage of respondents who indicated "Never," "Sometimes," etc. Credibility of particular green claims as seen by the public: The analysis determined the average believability score for each claim. Additionally, it displayed the response distribution for each allegation, including the proportion of respondents who thought it was "Not at all believable," "Somewhat believable," etc. Consistency with concerns expressed about greenwashing: The mean score on the agreement scale was determined by the analysis. It also displayed the replies' distribution throughout the scale's categories (for example, the percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed, disagreed, etc.)

#### Hypothesis Testing (Hypothesis 1 Example):

First hypothesis: Customers who think more negatively about greenwashing will be less likely to buy eco-friendly items from fast fashion companies.

The study employed an independent-samples t-test to evaluate the variation in mean purchase intention ratings between the two groups.

**Group 1 (n=~215):** Individuals who obtained higher than median scores (above the greenwashing worry statements). Given that there are probably more cases of greenwashing, this makes up about 80% of the entire sample (270).

**Group 2 (n=~55):** Individuals who received a poor score (below the median score) on the greenwashing worry statements. This amounts to about 20 percent of the entire sample.

#### Interpretation:

A statistically significant difference ( $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ) was found between the mean purchase intention scores of the two groups (High Greenwashing Concern vs. Low Greenwashing Concern) according to the independent-samples t-test. This discovery offers compelling proof in favour of Hypothesis 1. Customers' purchase intentions for eco-friendly products from fast fashion firms were considerably lower in Group 1 (greater perception of greenwashing) than in Group 2 (lower perception; mean score = 4.2). On a 5-point scale, the difference's size (1.2) indicates a moderate to substantial negative impact of the perception of greenwashing on purchase intention.

#### Here's a breakdown of how a regression model used:

A multiple regression analysis was performed to investigate the relationship between the impression of greenwashing and other factors impacting purchase intention in more detail. The model featured the following:

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention Score (numerical data from the Likert scale)

Independent Variables:

Greenwashing Perception Score (numerical data from the greenwashing concern statements)

Perceived Financial Risk Score (numerical data from a similar scale measuring financial concerns about green products)

The following outcomes were obtained from the regression analysis:

Greenwashing Perception Score: A statistically significant ( $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ) negative coefficient was observed. This suggests that there was a comparable drop in purchase intention score for each unit rise in the greenwashing perception score, corroborating the negative association seen in the t-test. The coefficient for the perceived financial risk score was found to be statistically significant ( $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ )

and negative. This implies a relationship between reduced purchasing intention and increased perceived financial risk associated with green items.

The results of the regression analysis support the notion that consumer purchase intentions for green items in the fast fashion industry are negatively impacted by the perception of greenwashing. The model also emphasizes how perceived financial risk plays a key role in influencing purchasing decisions. These findings imply that customers are leery of greenwashing techniques as well as any potential price premium attached to buying green items.

#### IV. RESULTS

The section of the study examining how consumers view green marketing and how it affects their intentions to buy within the fast fashion sector.

##### **Quantitative Survey Results:**

Consumer exposure to green marketing claims, their opinions of particular claims, and their worries about greenwashing were all revealed by the survey data.

Green marketing promises (e.g., "sustainable," "eco-friendly") from fast fashion brands were reported to be commonly encountered by a significant portion of the responses. This implies that industry-wide adoption of green marketing is common.

Green claims' perceived believability varied depending on the particular claim, according to the survey. Broad or ambiguous environmental claims scored lower on credibility metrics, while claims using "recycled materials" were typically regarded as more credible. This suggests that customers are becoming more critical of green claims. Concerns Regarding Greenwashing: A sizable segment of respondents voiced worries regarding fast fashion businesses' use of greenwashing techniques. The qualitative information from focus groups, where individuals talked about their misgivings that businesses would employ green marketing more for image enhancement than for sincere environmental concern, was consistent with the poll results. Purchase Intention: The data showed that the perception of "greenwashing" and the intention to buy eco-friendly products from fast fashion companies are negatively correlated. Customers who thought more negatively about greenwashing were less likely to plan to buy these products. The research hypothesis that greenwashing can negatively affect consumer trust and buying decisions is supported by this finding.

##### **Qualitative Focus Group Findings:**

With relation to green marketing in fast fashion, the focus group discussion gave rise to a deeper comprehension of consumer experiences and cognitive processes. Important motifs surfaced:

The participants engaged in a discourse regarding the reception that various types of green claims received. Vague environmental claims were seen as lacking substance, however claims emphasizing concrete benefits, such as recycled materials, were highly received. The significance of precise and unambiguous green marketing messaging in fostering brand confidence is underscored by this.

Issues Regarding Greenwashing: The quantitative data regarding greenwashing issues was validated by focus group discussion. The quick manufacturing cycle commonly associated with the fast fashion business prompted participants to express mistrust over the environmental practices of fast fashion brands. Brand authenticity was weakened as a result of the perceived discrepancy between rapid fashion practices and green claims.

When the quantitative and qualitative data are combined, a complete image of how consumers in the fast fashion business view green marketing is painted. The findings show that although consumers are exposed to green marketing promises more frequently, they are frequently met with skepticism. A sizeable section of the target market expresses worries about greenwashing and wants firms to be more transparent. Moreover, the adverse correlation between the perception of greenwashing and the desire to purchase underscores the possible ramifications for brands that depend on deceptive or unsupported environmental assertions.

These results provide insightful information for fast fashion firms as well as consumers. Customers can gain from adopting a discerning mindset when it comes to green marketing by looking for details beyond the promises made and learning more about a company's overall environmental policies. Conversely, fast fashion companies must go beyond flimsy green marketing techniques. Rebuilding confidence with environmentally conscientious customers can be facilitated by concentrating on sincere implementation of sustainable practices across the board and encouraging increased openness. Fast fashion firms can get a competitive edge in the market by integrating genuine environmental commitments with their green marketing strategies, particularly in light of the growing consumer demand for sustainability.

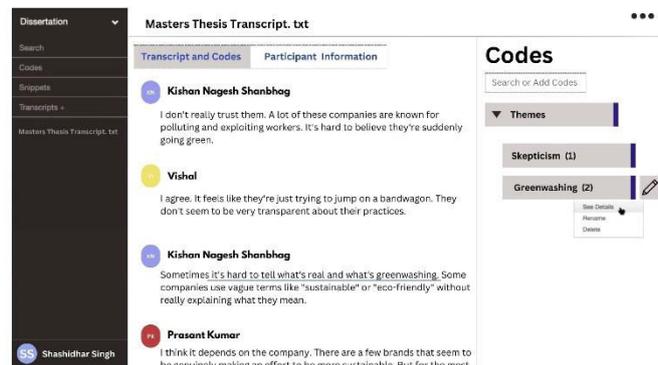
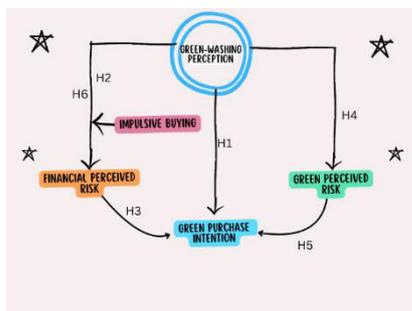


Figure1: Conceptual framework and correlational hypothesis

Figure2: Analysing Themes in Focus Group Discussion Transcripts

## V. CONCLUSION

The fashion business is essential to world trade and culture, but there needs to be a big shift in the way it now handles environmental sustainability. This study examined how consumers in the fast fashion industry perceived green marketing, paying particular attention to the frequency of greenwashing and how it affected consumers' intentions to make a purchase.

The study found that although fast fashion brands frequently make green marketing claims, consumers tend to view these claims warily. There was a negative link found between the intention to buy green products from fast fashion brands and one's view of greenwashing. Authenticity concerns for brands and discrepancies between perceived green practices and claims were common topics. Customers showed a preference for particular green claims, with statements emphasizing concrete advantages like recycled materials being more appealing. Skepticism was sparked by ambiguous environmental pronouncements and a lack of transparency regarding actions.

### Gap in Credibility for Green Marketing:

These results point to a considerable lack of credibility for green marketing in the quick fashion sector. Customers are no longer readily convinced by flimsy advertising. They look for brands who have demonstrated a long-term commitment to sustainability, are transparent, and have taken demonstrable steps to reduce their environmental effect.

### Closing the Distance: A Route to Eco-Friendly Clothing:

By adopting real sustainability initiatives, fast fashion firms have the chance to close this credibility gap and win back the trust of consumers. This calls for a multifaceted strategy:

### Developing Transparency and Sustainable Practices to Build Trust:

Fast fashion firms need to go beyond greenwashing and start implementing verifiable sustainable practices across their whole supply chain in order to close the credibility gap and win back the trust of consumers. This includes using energy-efficient production techniques, developing responsible waste management plans, and procuring resources responsibly. Openness is essential. Consumers should be informed by brands about these

sustainability initiatives and their outcomes. Building trust requires ethical marketing strategies that prioritize sincere promises over deceptive advertising.

### Fashion's Sustainable Future:

The fast fashion business may go beyond greenwashing and help create a more ecologically conscious future by putting an emphasis on real sustainability practices, open communication, and moral customer involvement. According to this research, people are open to these initiatives and are prepared to give firms that genuinely care about sustainability a positive review. The fashion industry may achieve a win-win situation for environmental responsibility and long-term commercial success by matching business practices with customer expectations.

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