



**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

Turku School of
Economics

The Role of Green Marketing in Shaping Sustainable Brand Perception

A systematic literature review

International Business

Master's thesis

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18.05.2025

Turku

The originality of this thesis has been checked in accordance with the University of Turku quality assurance system using the Turnitin Originality Check service.

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Subject: International Business

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Title: The Role of Green Marketing in Shaping Sustainable Brand Perception (A systematic literature review)

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Number of pages: 70 pages + appendices 6 pages

Date: 18.05.2025

This study investigates the contribution of green marketing practices to the development of a sustainable brand image through a systematic literature review (SLR) of contemporary research. The study synthesises previous research from the peer reviewed academic sources in order to identify the most important green marketing strategies that include sustainable packaging, corporate social responsibility (CSR), eco labelling, green advertising, and carbon disclosure and then evaluates how those strategies influence consumers' perceptions of brand sustainability.

The findings are important in demonstrating that the effectiveness of green marketing does not depend solely on undertaking sustainable initiatives but on effectively and honestly embedding them across the entirety of the marketing mix. The major theme to consumer trust is underlined, because only issues ranging from greenwashing, lack of standardization, bad communication; makes it completely dubious. It also uncovers a large attitude-behaviour gap in consumers – their preferences for sustainable practices are well known, but they often fail to act on them because they don't believe the product works or is convenient enough or too expensive. The way green messaging gets received also depends on cultural, generational and contextual factors as Millennials and Gen Z are more sensitive to transparent, tech enabled and value driven communication. The final piece of the study asserts that green marketing can aid in the brand sustainability if it truly addresses the facts of the environment and integrates consumers in a culturally acceptable and scientifically sound manner.

Key words: Green Marketing, Sustainability, Brand Perception, Systematic literature review.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Sustainability has become a central concern for businesses, consumers, and policymakers alike, with increasing emphasis on reducing environmental impact and promoting ethical business practices. The concept of sustainability revolves around meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own, encompassing environmental, social, and economic dimensions (Bhattacharyya 2023, 244). In the context of branding, sustainability implies that a company integrates environmentally friendly processes, ethical sourcing, and long-term resource efficiency into its operations and value proposition (McWilliams & Siegel 2011, 12). Brands perceived as sustainable are those that actively demonstrate their commitment to these principles through tangible actions such as carbon footprint reduction, sustainable packaging, and responsible supply chain management. However, establishing a brand as sustainable goes beyond internal business practices; it requires effective communication with consumers to build trust and credibility (Hur et al. 2014, 75-86). This is where marketing plays a crucial role, particularly in how businesses present their sustainability efforts to consumers through branding strategies.

There is a specific trend regarding purchases from brands dedicated to sustainability. Consumers are increasingly aware of environmental issues, which is evident in their current buying behaviors. Figure 1 illustrates, by demographic, the proportion of consumers who consider sustainability prior to making a purchase

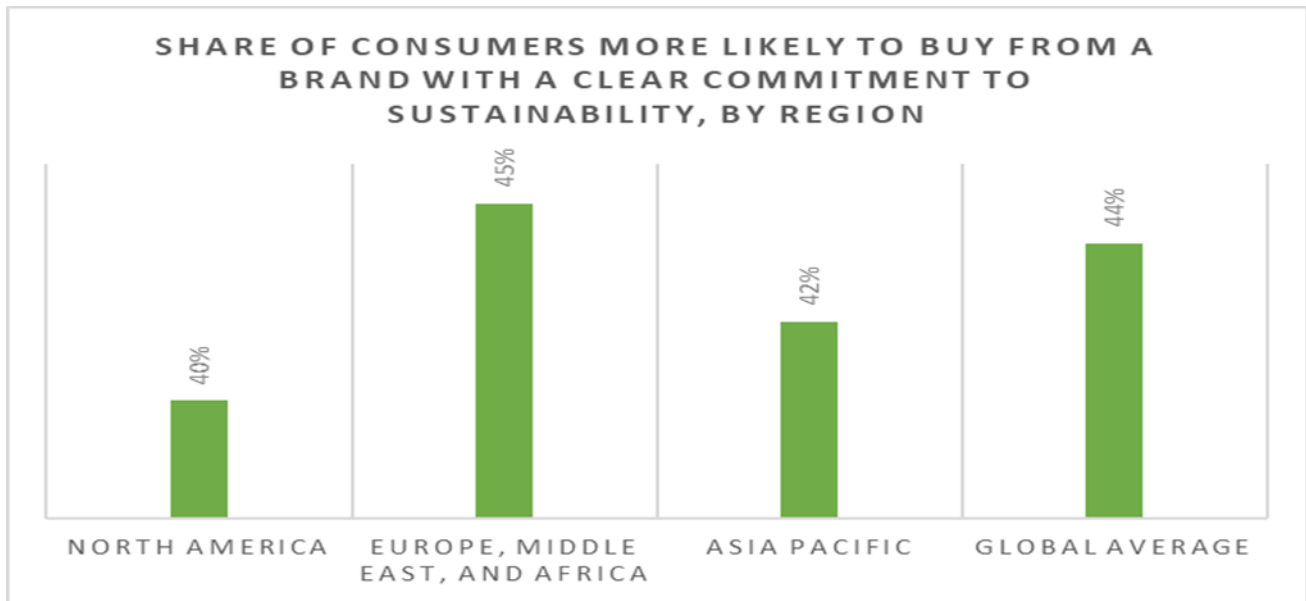


Figure 1 Share of consumers more likely to buy from a brand with a clear commitment to sustainability, by region

Statista (2025) indicated that globally, approximately 44% of consumers say they are more likely to purchase from a company with clear sustainable commitment. In particular, in the EMEA region the action was most important for brands to have actions that match their values that year. Green marketing, a subset of sustainability-driven business strategies, is instrumental in shaping a brand's sustainable identity. Green marketing is the promotion of a product, service and business practice that is environment friendly or environmentally sustainable. Also known as eco strategies it seeks for strategies of minimizing ecological harm and meeting consumer needs (Hasan & Ali 2015, 463-470). Since the 1980's, green marketing has been studied by scholars and it has been considered to serve two important roles: to implement green concerns and create consumer behaviour (Leonidou et al. 2015). Therefore, it involves eco labelling, sustainable brand, as well as green packaging to increase product value and trust for consumers (Henriques & Sadorsky 1996, 381-395). Green marketing is adopted by organizations to enhance the competitive edge, comply with environmental regulations and profit from growing green market (Chen 2010, 307-319). As consumers become more environmentally conscious, green marketing has gained prominence as a means of differentiating brands in a competitive marketplace. Companies that successfully integrate green marketing strategies can position themselves as sustainability leaders, appealing to consumers who prioritize ethical consumption (Leonidou et al. 2013, 18-20).

There are different manners in which green marketing can be achieved including eco labelling, sustainable packaging, reduction of a total carbon footprint, putting up of CSR initiatives and transparent communication about the efforts for 'sustainability' (Papadas et al. 2019, 632-643).

Leading brands such as Patagonia, Unilever, and Tesla have intelligently used green marketing as a tool to be positioned as environmentally responsible businesses (Sharma 2025). Take Unilever's (2019) 'Sustainable Living' brands such as Dove and Ben & Jerry's; these brands have grown 69% faster than the rest of the business bringing the portfolio in at 75% of overall sales growth in recent years. However, challenges such as greenwashing, can undermine credibility and consumer trust (Andreoli & Batista 2020, 32). Greenwashing is broadly defined as engaging in misleading customers with respect to the company's environmental practices or the ecological benefits of its products or services (Yang et al. 2020, 1486-1507). Selective disclosure involves the emphasis of positive environmental actions whilst the negative impacts are kept hidden by the firm (Lyon & Maxwell 2011, 3-41). According to (Delmas & Burbano 2011,64-87), greenwashing is poor environmental performance that is covered up by words of positive communication. (Walker & Wan 2012, 227-242) show the distinction between symbolic and substantive corporate environmental actions. According to some scholars greenwashing is a deliberate corporate strategy that is intended deception (Mitchell & Ramey 2011; Nyilasy et al. 2014). Therefore, an effective green marketing approach must be authentic, transparent, and backed by verifiable sustainability efforts.

A sustainable brand actively works on to reduce the environmental footprint, through circular economy, and ethical labour practices. However, product sustainability is related to factors including recyclability, biodegradability, responsible sourcing and limited environmental footprint during its lifetime. Third party certifications that may lead to recognition of brands for high sustainability performance include such as Fair Trade, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), B Corp certification (National Research Council, 2010). These verifications give the consumers a tangible proof; they have something to believe in and the brand credibility is reinforced.

The concept of sustainable branding is closely linked to green marketing, hence green marketing is the main instrument of conveying sustainability initiatives to consumers. A good green marketing campaign is a combination of a blend of advertising, social media engagement, packaging innovations and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives to tell a brand story (Mehraj & Qureshi 2020, 525). It is observation that the two concepts of sustainability and its association with the concept of green marketing are symbiotic in that each of the two concepts reinforces the other. Green marketing strategies are built upon sustainability thus ensuring that such practices and products align to environmental and ethical standards. On the other hand, green marketing improves sustainability initiatives to the extent that it helps to communicate them to the stakeholders and consumers in an effective and efficient way. Green marketing is crucial because without it, sustainability efforts will

not be noticed and therefore their impact on brand perception and consumer behaviour will be very low (Szabo & Webster 2021, 725).

Furthermore, green marketing contributes to the broader goal of sustainable development by influencing consumer habits and promoting environmentally responsible choices. When companies successfully market sustainability, they encourage consumers to adopt eco-friendly behaviours, such as supporting ethical brands, reducing waste, and prioritizing sustainable alternatives. This shift in consumer behaviour creates a positive feedback loop, where increased demand for sustainable products incentivizes businesses to adopt greener practices. In this way, green marketing not only benefits individual brands but also drives collective progress toward a more sustainable economy.

1.2 Existing Knowledge and Knowledge gaps

Despite the increasing adoption of green marketing, challenges persist in aligning sustainability claims with consumer expectations. Scepticism from consumers about greenwashing or exaggerated or false advertising of a company's environmental efforts (Schmuck et al. 2018, 127-145), has arisen due to this. The reports from European Commission (2023) indicate that 53% of green claims in the EU are vague or misleading, and 40% are made not based on evidence. The problem is exacerbated by loose legislation and unclear standards that create a grey area, allowing for interpretation, and the regulators do not or cannot address what might be considered breaches of false environmental claims. Furthermore, marketers found that consumers expressed interest in sustainable products and their attitude and behaviour towards these products are divided, known as the 'attitude and behaviour gap' (Joshi & Rahman 2015, 128). Such complexities make it important to touch on how the use of green marketing practices affect brand's perceived sustainability. This study will identify key green marketing practices, examine brand sustainability perceptions, and evaluate the impact of these, to help businesses in formulating the effective strategies to increase their sustainable brand image. With a strong concern of environmental sustainability, businesses are also adopting green marketing strategies so as to correspond with the expectations of consumers and regulatory pressures. Consumers are becoming more cognizant of the environmental impact of products and purchase decisions are increasingly influenced by them. As highlighted in an IBM (2022) study, 62% of the consumers are ready to switch to favour of purchasing less environmentally damaging goods.

Despite the growing body of literature surrounding green marketing and sustainable branding, significant knowledge gaps remain that justify the need for a systematic literature review (SLR). While many studies have explored individual aspects of green marketing—such as eco-labelling, CSR communication, and sustainable packaging—there is limited synthesis of how these elements

collectively influence a brand's sustainability perception. Existing research often addresses green marketing practices in isolation or within specific industries and regions, making it difficult to derive universally applicable insights (Dangelico & Vocalelli 2017, 1263-1279). Furthermore, the academic discourse has not yet fully clarified which specific green marketing strategies most effectively enhance brand image from the consumer's perspective. This lack of clarity becomes particularly problematic in an environment where consumers are increasingly sceptical of environmental claims. While studies such as those by (Joshi & Rahman 2015, 128-143) and (Schmuck et al. 2018, 127-145) highlight the prevalence of the attitude-behaviour gap and consumer mistrust, few comprehensive reviews have systematically evaluated the impact of green marketing practices in bridging this gap and fostering trust-based brand relationships.

Additionally, Recent systematic reviews highlight the methodological fragmentation within green marketing research, underscoring the need for integrative approaches (Taktakishvili & Sachaleli 2025, 248-249). This fragmentation and inconclusiveness in the results are artifacts which limit the practical utility of the findings for marketers who wish to put practices involved on the green marketing campaigns. For example, while some of the studies indicate that eco-labels exert a very influential impact over the purchase decisions of consumers (Shama 2020, 91-96), other studies point out that visual cues or storytelling around sustainability might be much more powerful from an emotional point of view (Papadas et al. 2019, 632-643). This further emphasises that there is a need to converge the findings of existing researches to gain a more consistent and coherent picture of the relationship between green marketing and brand sustainability.

This has left gaps to be filled and therefore, a systematic literature review becomes essential to critically review, organize and integrate the available evidence. Because of this, an SLR provides a structured, transparent, and replicable method for identifying and analysing the current studies, mitigating of bias and enhancing the reliability of any conclusions that are drawn (Krüger et al. 2020, 635). In an SLR, predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria are applied so as only high quality, relevant studies are taken into account. The findings will be subjected to thematic synthesis in order to develop patterns arising from the literature and identify emerging themes and areas of consensus/divergence. In the end, knowledge gained by the SLR will eventually help to develop a consolidated base for future research and knowledge-driven decision making in green marketing practice.

This research has practical and academic importance as well. Theoretically, it makes an academic contribution to the body of knowledge on sustainable branding and marketing by systematically

reviewing the literature on the practice of green marketing. For the practically part, the findings will help the marketers to develop effective green marketing strategies that not only make the brand better perceived but also the consumers attached. Businesses can use these insights to develop transparency-driven marketing campaigns that resonate with environmentally conscious consumers, ensuring long-term brand loyalty and competitive advantage in the sustainable marketplace.

1.3 Research Aims, Objectives and Questions

The main objective of the study is to investigate how green marketing practices contribute to sustainable brand image development. The study will synthesize and analyse current findings in this field in order to summarise the current understanding of the relationship between sustainability and marketing mix, specifically focusing on sustainable branding practices and perceptions. To achieve this purpose, this study will use a systematic literature review methodology. The sub-objectives of the study are the following-

To identify and analyse the key green marketing practices used in contemporary marketing.

To examine the factors that contribute to a brand being perceived as sustainable.

To evaluate the impact of specific green marketing practices on consumers' perception of a brand's sustainability.

This study will employ a SLR methodology to achieve the stated objectives. The SLR will involve a comprehensive search of relevant academic databases (e.g., Scopus, Web of Science) using predefined keywords and inclusion/exclusion criteria. The identified studies will be assessed for quality and relevance, and the data extracted will be synthesized and analysed thematically to provide a rigorous and unbiased summary of the existing research on the relationship between green marketing practices and sustainable brand image development.

In the first chapter the purpose and motivation behind the study was outlined, addressing the growing importance of sustainability in contemporary marketing. Chapter 2 provides the conceptual exploration of triple bottom line frameworks to explain the environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainability. Following that, The chapter also looks at how green marketing has evolved as a tactical method for enhancing brand recognition and fostering customer trust, while also addressing the dangers of greenwashing. This theoretical framework is crucial for shaping the following analytical method and ensuring that the study's goals are in harmony with its conceptual foundations. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Chapter 2 contains a discussion of

the central concepts from previous literatures. Chapter 3 outlines the review methodology, including search strategy, inclusion criteria, and thematic coding approach. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the review, structured according to the three guiding research objectives. Chapter 5 concludes the paper by discussing the main insights, elaborating on their theoretical and managerial implications, and identifying limitations and directions for future research. At the end, Chapter 6 presents the summary of all five chapters.

2 Discussion of Central Concepts

2.1 Introduction to Sustainability-The Triple Bottom Line

TBL is a framework for treating the social, environmental and economic aspects of sustainability. It broadens the traditional narrow focus on the financial performance of business by including the broader effects of business actions on people and on the environment. As a way of measuring and evaluating sustainability outside just financial viability, John Elkington created TBL in 1994 (Thabrew et al. 2018, 54). In this TBL model, environmental, economic, and social sustainability are interconnected within the organization, as illustrated in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Triple Bottom Line of Sustainability

Under the TBL's economic dimension, there is discussion of how the organisation maintains its financial health and its stability. From economic benefits and impacts (Janjua et al. 2020), amongst other factors revenue, profitability, costs, investments, and so on are taken into consideration. Organisations operate ensuring economic sustainability by creating value to shareholders and promoting economic growth thereby assuring long time profitability. The TBL's environmental component addresses issues of how the business activities affect the environment. This includes the variety of resource use, waste production, pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental indicators (Okafor 2013, 249-261). Businesses are adopting sustainable practises such as waste reduction, resource efficiency and replacing energy sources with renewables to reduce their environmental impact. The TBL includes a social dimension since it considers how people and society are affected by company operations. This includes worker well-being, conditions of work, the involvement of community, human rights, diversity and inclusion, and relationships with stakeholders. Organizations are trying to established social sustainability (Janjua et al. 2020) i.e.,

social responsibility by providing just working conditions, respecting the human rights, supporting local communities, introducing diversity and inclusivity, communicating with stakeholders in most meaningful manners.

The TBL framework acknowledges that these three elements are all mutually reinforcing and interrelated. Balance between success in the economic and social and environmental wellbeing is emphasised. By integrating the triple bottom line, organisations can assess their total sustainability performance and decide accordingly which adds value to the society, environment and their shareholders. (Purnama 2024, 40-50) asserts that the implementation of the TBL concept in marketing not only includes financial performance but also puts social responsibility and the environmental sustainability at heart. This multidimensional approach fosters stronger consumer trust and long-term brand loyalty. Also, (Gupta & Kumar 2013, 311-320) assert that the sustainability driven corporate culture help the brand to generate business opportunities and achieve superior performance. Relevant research conducted by (Park & Kim 2016, 1-18) in the context of consumer perception shows that consumer perception towards brands that strike the balance between economic, social and environmental considerations leads to stronger brand relationship. Additionally, (Nichols et al. 2023, 908-926) added that, unethical practices do inflict upon brand perception in particular consequences from unsustainable deeds in any TBL dimension harm consumer trust, perceived quality and purchase intentions. According to Hwang (2024, 76-84), from the marketing perspective, the green marketing strategies influence the consumer attitudes, and TBL is a guiding principle for organizations that try to coordinate sustainability with profitability. Green marketing not only increases branding but also affects behaviour of consumers to purchase products based on the sustainability (Fatmawati & Alikhwan 2021).

Another important determinant of sustainability perception is CSR. Brands are expected to exhibit social and environmental responsibility that goes beyond making profits. A result of CSR initiatives made by companies in reducing carbon footprints, ethical labour practices, and community welfare programs leads to the formation of a strong sustainable brand perception (Rather et al. 2022, 1175-1189). More importantly, (Park & Lee 2013, 213-226) stated that brands with long term sustainability programs have a positive reputation and stronger consumer relationships. CSR commitment, additionally, symbolises trustworthiness and ethical responsibility, which form the basis of brand credibility (Baek et al. 2010, 662-678).

2.2 Evolution and Definition of Green Marketing

Alternating between periods of optimism and scepticism, the evolution of green marketing has been marked (Synodinos 2014). Yet even before the twentieth century some environmental issues did exist and only beginning in the late 1960s was there a first major wave of consumer awareness and marketing interest in environmentalism. According to (Kotler & Levy 1969, 10-15), marketing should be considered as a tool for enhancing the broader society and not simply as a business function. The term of 'green marketing' first came to be studied academically during an Ecological Marketing seminar that was held in 1975 by the American Marketing Association (AMA) (Tiwari 2014, 35). Hennidon and Kinnear (1976) published one of the earliest books on the subject, *Ecological Marketing*. The concepts of green marketing achieved great popularity in late 1980s and early 1990s and Ken Pattie (1992) in UK and Jacquelyn Ottman (1993) in the U.S were pivotal in basing the foundation of the work in this area (Tiwari 2014, 35). (Peattie 2001, 129-146) identifies three distinct stages in green marketing development: the 'Ecological' stage which tackled environmental issues; the 'Environmental' stage that introduced clean technology and pollution reduction innovation; and 'Sustainable' stage that promoted eco-friendly products which meet consumers needs whilst maintaining performance, price and comfort.

Green Marketing, play a crucial role in developing a green brand image as well. Hennion and Kinnear, describing it as "concerned with all marketing activities that have served to help cause environmental problems and that may serve to provide a remedy for environmental problems" (Dangelico & Vocalelli 2017, 1264). This includes accepting that marketing has a role to play in creating or assisting in causing environmental degradation but also sees marketing as a force with which to stop or at least slow down environmental destruction. Green marketing is not only a means for advertising, it is a paradigm change, which makes the organization to accept cooperation along the value chain with a purpose of achieving ecological sustainability (Škatarić et al. 2021, 21-36). Furthermore, empirical studies, (Namkung & Jang 2013, 85-95), have revealed that green marketing has a significant effect on consumers' impression about corporation image. Green brand image is enhanced when businesses' marketing strategies won't be contradicted by their environmental values e.g., if businesses used eco-friendly packaging, promoted recycling or emphasized their carbon reduction initiatives. This improved image in turn influences consumer attitudes and behaviour in a positive way. Green marketing and brand image phenomena influence each other in a reciprocal way and knowing about environmentally friendly products increases consumer trust as well as green brand value (Waites et al. 2020, 632-644).

Different definitions have been given to green marketing over time. According to (Saini 2014, 13-34), it is an approach business to integrate marketing activities with environmental conservation. Sarumathi (2014, 777-782) argues that green marketing entails a product development, packaging, advertising, and research that encourage an eco-friendly consumer behaviour. Green marketing aims at the balance between business goals, social demands and environmental sustainability (Polonsky 2011, 1311-1319). Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017, 1263-1279) further refined this definition into three items: it should meet customer's needs, be aligned with organizational goals, and be compatible with the environment. In the end, green marketing has the same objective as normal marketing: satisfy the needs of the consumers, while avoiding any harm to the environment (Singh & Pandey 2012, 22-30). With companies striving to differentiate themselves in an environmentally conscious marketplace, the concept has come to increasingly have strategic business importance.

Green marketing practices of the modern business have now evolved from being regulatory sensitive to strategic initiatives that make brands more reputable and build consumer trust in the brand. Nowadays companies started to include sustainability in its core marketing strategies so that they are incorporating eco-friendly products, sustainable supply chain and ethical business (Miryala & Mennakanti 2016). In today's world, green marketing places a greater emphasis on transparency, eco labels as well as corporate social responsibility (CSR) to enable consumers to make informed choices on the impact a brand has on environment (Shama 2020, 91-96).

2.3 Brand Image

The concept of brand image has long been a central element in marketing literature and business strategy. Initially, brand image was viewed as the perception held by consumers based on their interactions, experiences, and associations with a particular brand. One of the most widely cited definitions is provided by Keller, who describes brand image as the "brand recognition connected with brand connections established in customer's memory" (Keller et al. 2010). This definition states the consumers will form psychological and emotional connections of a brand and will not only derive brand image with visual identity, but also with the associations and beliefs of the brand over time. Building on the above, (Suhartini & Pertiwi 2021, 336-348) further strengthen this by stating that brand image is a platform used by consumers to appreciate, use and remember a service or product, arguing that such application of emotions, and experience, is central for image formation. The brand image concept has evolved in line with shifts in marketing and the behaviour of consumers. Prior to now branding had been focused greater than virtually visual identifiers like logos, names and packaging. Nevertheless, with increasing consumer awareness and the increasing competition,

businesses began to perceive the difference of offering their products through design and values along with the emotional resonance (Jabeen et al. 2023, 503-518). Generally, in the modern world, the brand image has not only covered visual identity but also corporate behaviour, ethical behaviour and practices, environmental responsibility and customer experience. To form a positive brand image in consumer's minds, the businesses have been developed with the strategies such as advertising, corporate storytelling, customer engagement and the marketing which are value driven (Pramono et al. 2021, 881-889).

Green brand image, an extension of the traditional concept, has emerged in response to increasing environmental awareness and shifting consumer preferences toward sustainable and eco-friendly products. The green brand image reflects the environmental credentials and sustainability commitment of a brand, encompassing how customers perceive a brand's green practices, values, and contributions to environmental protection (Maniatis 2016, 215-228). Green brand image aligns with the broader notion of brand image but with a distinct focus on ecological sustainability. It represents how a brand is associated with environmental consciousness, ethical sourcing, sustainable production, and minimal ecological footprints. Martinez and De Chernatony (2004, 39-50) assert that a strong brand image plays a crucial role not only in influencing consumer perception, but also, and more importantly, in determining consumer's purchasing behaviour, thus making it even more realistic in the green branding context. At the same time, as climate change, pollution and resource depletion continue to be of increasing concern to consumers, brands stand to be evaluated on the extent to which they impact the environment. Consequently, companies have to integrate green marketing and sustainable practices in their brand building. As a result of this transition, the green brand image becomes as a valuable intangible asset that raises the customer participation, particularly in green purchasing, through customer behaviour. According to Suki (2013), green brand image very strongly influences green purchasing behaviour by making positive environmental perception in consumers. Effective communication of eco-friendly values by a company can enhance consumer trust, develop long term relationships with them and also give the company a competitive edge.

The green brand image functions as a link between the environmental activities of a company and what people perceive. Recently, there has been a growing influence on a consumer's decision by the environment as well as the importance of a positive green brand image for a company that is looking to enable green purchase intentions. Rahbar and Wahid (2011, 73-83) state that consumers' trust in green brands plays a major role in the perception and buying behaviour of the consumers. When consumers feel environmental integrity of a brand, they tend to have positive attitude and intentions towards buying green products. Furthermore, the theory of planned behaviour provides support for

this dynamic in that, trust and attitudes influence behaviour and, in this case, green brand image thus acts as a critical mediating variable (Joshi 2021, 2550-2557).

Numerous studies have confirmed the mediating role of green brand image in the relationship between green marketing/CSR and purchase intentions. One of examples can be shown by (Joshi & Rahman 2015, 128-143) in which a well-developed green brand image brings great improvement regarding the intended purchasing of products with green aspect. In a similar vein, Teng et al. (2018, 1134-1151) and Wang et al. (2021) also discovered that businesses that are eco-conscious can improve how brand perceptions influence the resulting consumers' loyalty as well as leading to brand credibility. The strategic identity of the green brand is transformed into an asset that not only attracts environmentally aware customers but also functions as a signal to external stakeholders, investors and the general public that the company is serious about its participation in the environmental protection.

The conceptual discussions in chapter 2 outlined a comprehensive framework by analyzing the important components which support sustainable brand perception and green marketing. The frameworks like triple bottom line, the development of green marketing and the importance of brand image established the theoretical perspective to understand the phenomenon. Proceeding from this conceptual framework, Chapter 3 turns to the methodological approach that was applied in this investigation. The following chapter presents the procedures for selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing academic sources and presents the systematic literature review (SLR) methodology. The study's main objective of ensuring a transparent and comprehensive findings from the evidence-based insights between sustainability and brand perception.

3 Methodology

In this study, a systematic literature review (SLR) is employed to determine the part green marketing has to play in sustainable brand perception. When the purpose seeks to aggregate a widely dispersed and theoretically heterodox pool of literature, a systematic review approach best enables the synthesis of theoretical unity and empirical linkage (Denyer & Tranfield 2009). The review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher et al. 2009) to ensure transparency and methodological rigour regarding literature selection and reporting as they offer a structured and replicable approach to such analysis.

3.1 Research Design and Justification

Systematic literature reviews are widely recognised for their ability to synthesise existing knowledge across multiple domains and identify conceptual patterns and empirical gaps (Snyder 2019, 333-339). It is apparent, however, that the SLR is particularly suitable to give a multi-disciplinary scope of the literature across the fields of marketing, consumer behaviour and product development, which overlap to some extent in green marketing and sustainability. This review applied a structured, transparent, and iterative process of identification of articles, their selection, analysis and synthesis according to best practices in management and organisation studies (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic 2015, 161-173).

Specifically, the study pursues three interrelated sub-objectives: (1) to identify and analyse the key green marketing practices adopted in contemporary marketing by conducting a systematic review of relevant studies, (2) to examine the factors that contribute to a brand being perceived as sustainable, and (3) to evaluate the impact of specific green marketing initiatives on consumer perception of sustainability. These objectives are supported by the following research questions: What are the predominant green marketing practices implemented by firms? What attributes or strategies influence a brand's perception as environmentally sustainable? And how do green marketing efforts affect consumers' perception of brand sustainability? The methodological rigor of a systematic approach enhances replicability, reduces selection bias, and ensures that the findings reflect a broad and balanced view of the scholarly landscape (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart 2003, 207-222). In particular, systematic reviews are especially valuable when investigating emerging or conceptually diffuse phenomena—such as consumer perception of green marketing—where existing studies vary in scope, depth, terminology, and disciplinary orientation (Denyer & Tranfield 2009). Marketing of sustainability depends on subjective experiences, cultural contexts, and societal values (Voyer et al.

2017, 399-410), consequently, the nature of sustainability in marketing does not exist as an absolute truth. On the contrary, it changes for consumers attitudes, industry trends and corporate practices. The effectiveness of green marketing strategies may be interpreted differently by different stakeholders (e.g., consumers, marketers, regulatory bodies) and at times differently from one stakeholder to other. For example, one group of consumers believes a particular brand's sustainability efforts are genuine whereas another group finds them green washing (Schmuck et al. 2018, 127-145). Based on this, this research also acknowledges multiple realities inside sustainable branding instead of looking for a single, universally agreed upon definition. Additionally, a relativist ontological position is fitting for a systematic literature review since it involves reviewing existing research on green marketing. The research does not seek to elucidate one fixed, objective reality but to synthesize many positions and patterns of relationship between sustainability and branding. By examining different sources and scholarly debates, this study highlights the constructed nature of sustainability within marketing discourse and explores the various dimensions that shape consumer perceptions of a sustainable brand. Accordingly, this approach was well-suited to assess the subject.

Moreover, this study adopts a configurative review strategy, which is appropriate when the goal is not merely to summarise extant findings but to develop an interpretive synthesis that connects diverse perspectives and reframes understanding (Gough, Thomas, & Oliver 2017). Rather than focusing on aggregating effect sizes or testing predefined hypotheses—as in aggregative reviews—this approach enables the construction of new conceptual insights by examining patterns, tensions, and contradictions within the literature. To simplify, this work does not start from a fixed theoretical framework, instead this work identifies patterns, themes, and relationships that picture out from analysis of previous research about green marketing and sustainable branding.

The research looks into the topics examined in various studies in order to figure out all the constituent factors through which a brand can be interpreted as being sustainable. This way the researcher is able to explore alternative eyes, perceive the emerging trends, and generate conceptual insights for more sustainable branding discourse. This design aligns with the aims of the review, which seeks to advance theoretical understanding. The methodological decisions throughout the review process were guided by principles of transparency, relevance, and rigour, ensuring alignment between the review purpose, research questions, and analytical outcomes.

The research findings are credible and diverse and therefore help to reduce biasness in the study (Linnenluecke et al. 2020, 175-194). In addition, this strategy also enables an analysis of past research

and filling the gap in previous knowledge on how green marketing is used to enhance brand sustainability to lead to new avenues for research in the future.

3.2 Database Selection

For the purpose of obtaining the fullest information available, this review aimed to use both Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus, two of the most recognized and comprehensive academic databases, to get widest possible coverage of relevant literature. Given their complementary strengths which are extensive indexing of peer reviewed research across numerous disciplines of green marketing, branding, and sustainability, which are all important to this paper, decision to employ both platforms were made. In including both databases, a more inclusive and representative sample of studies was used which reduces the likelihood of publication bias and improves the robustness of the review findings (Gusenbauer & Haddaway 2020, 181-217).

The Web of Science was selected because of its strict indexing standards, established reputation for academic quality, and elaborate citation tracking capabilities. The high-impact journals coverage in marketing, organisational studies and environmental management acted as a sound footing for mapping influential contributions and tracing the intellectual development of the sustainable branding practices. In addition, its sophisticated indexing and citation-monitoring features facilitate the systematic detection of significant contributions and the visualization of intellectual frameworks and trends within a discipline (Falagas et al. 2008; Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). To complement WoS, Scopus was also included to include more relevant publications, especially for those from emerging journals or interdisciplinary fields that are still lacking in WoS, but can be helpful. Most people are familiar with Scopus as its scope is very wide, it has a user-friendly interface and it is a reliable source for finding information on recent developments and trends (Mongeon & Paul-Hus 2016, 213-228).

This review integrated the two databases so that the resulting dataset included depth and breadth, containing existing work in the field and developing theoretical work. This dual database approach also ensured a more robust cross verification of sources as well as traceability of key themes and increased methodological transparency of the review (Mongeon & Paul-Hus 2016, 213-228). Such comprehensiveness was necessary to achieve the complete landscape of green marketing practices and the influence of them on the development of sustainable brand image.

3.3 Search Strategy

In this study, a SLR was conducted to identify and synthesize scholarly research on the topic of green marketing and sustainable branding and further concentrate on how consumers perceive and behave towards products and corporate brands that are green promoted. The review was carried out rigorously while the results proved to hold high validity and relevance. As such, having a structured search strategy with Boolean operators and wildcard characters was formulated to acquire credible insights on the existing literature in terms of precision and coverage. For the purpose of reviewing, both Web of Science and Scopus were used, which are famous databases for high quality, peer reviewed literature across all disciplines. The combination of the two allowed for a less publication biased and more robust final dataset. Strategically Boolean operators as AND, OR, ("green marketing" OR "sustainable marketing" OR "eco-marketing") AND ("brand image" OR "branding" OR "brand perception" OR "brand equity") AND (sustainable marketing* OR "consumer perception of green branding" OR "brand sustainability") AND (Consumer behavior or green marketing) were used at crucial points in the search process in order to refine and filter the result appropriately.

The keywords, “green marketing,” “sustainable branding,” and “sustainable marketing” had been used as the core terms of the initial search strategy. As the scope of the research became clearer, more keywords were added to help capture studies on the consumer dimensions of sustainable branding. Secondary terms included ‘consumer perception of green branding,’ ‘branding and sustainability,’ ‘consumer behaviour and green marketing’ as well as supplementary terms of ‘impact of green marketing,’ ‘sustainable branding in retail,’ and ‘effectiveness of green marketing.’ Including these heterogeneous yet interactive terms promoted a richer outlook of the area and permitted tracing research in the conceptual, empirical, and strategic areas.

3.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

For relevance, quality and consistency, inclusion criteria were clearly determined for the selection of articles. This included studies published between the years 2010 and 2025 to ensure more recent, and more effective, accounts of green marketing and sustainable branding. In order to be able to analyse, articles had to be written in English and accessible in full text format. Moreover, for the purpose of reliability and academic integrity of the findings, only peer reviewed journal articles were considered. Studies were prioritised based on their direct relevance to the research topic, and preference was given to those demonstrating methodological rigour, whether through empirical data collection or conceptual analysis. After the initial search yielded a broader pool of studies, titles and abstracts were

screened for relevance. Finally, full text reviews were undertaken and studies meeting all the criteria were accepted for final analysis. By adopting this systematic approach there was a balance of depth, and breadth in the literature reviewed in this study with respect to theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches and practical implications in the green marketing and sustainable branding domain. In Figure 3, the detailed process of defining search criteria begins with selecting databases, outlining inclusion and exclusion criteria, and explaining how the articles were chosen or eliminated before the final selection of 50 articles.

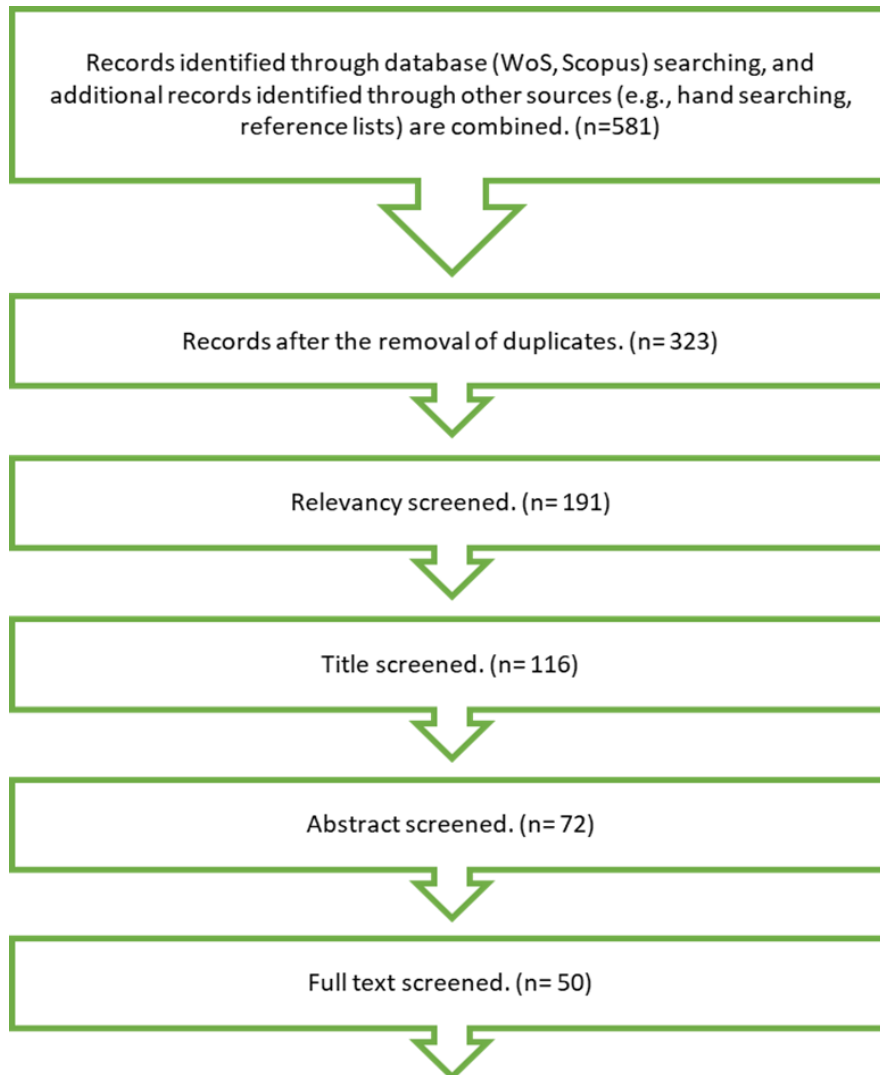


Figure 3 Prisma Diagram

The first part of the search process was a comprehensive search carried out over databases (Web of Science and Scopus) and 581 articles were identified in the first instance. A strategically designed Boolean search strategy to retrieve these articles was constructed, using terms related to green marketing, sustainable branding and the consumer perception of it. Then after the first search, 258 duplicate entries were spotted and taken out, having 323 unique articles. Of the remaining articles,

titles and abstracts were used again to screen for relevance as 132 articles were excluded due to a lack of relevance with the study's research focus. A total of 116 articles were shortlisted out a remaining pool as potentially suitable for in depth analysis. A thorough full-text review was then conducted for each of these articles. Upon detailed evaluation after title and abstract screening, 50 articles were confirmed to meet the inclusion criteria and were therefore retained for the final systematic literature review and thematic synthesis. Therefore, this systematic filtering process resulted in a curated sample of 50 articles, which were deemed to offer sufficient conceptual clarity, methodological rigour, and empirical or theoretical relevance to form the basis of the subsequent thematic analysis. The list of papers is provided on “Appendix 1”.

3.5 Data Extraction and Analysis

The structural aspects of the selected studies are described using a descriptive analysis of the publication timeframe, the methodology of research, and the industry or country focus. Frequency distribution tools and bar charts are used in order to analyse and visually present the findings. The approach involves thematic or content analysis of research findings, so that variations as a function of context such as industry focus, geographical region, publication year and methods used to derive conclusions are considered. For the researcher, this categorisation made it possible to find out patterns and discrepancies between studies and to determine how the perception of green marketing and sustainable branding is affected by different demographic or the contextual factors. The study aimed to explore these variations to understand how factors explain variations in consumer perceptions as well as effectiveness of different sustainable marketing strategies.

An application of six phase framework for thematic analysis has been made to rigorously analyse and interpret findings in the selected literature on green marketing and sustainable branding (Braun & Clarke 2006, 77-101). Firstly, the data was read in depth through an in-depth familiarization of it, most of the chosen articles were read multiple times. The reading in this stage went far beyond the surface but moved to critically reading the content in order to uncover key arguments, underlying assumptions and repeated patterns (Braun & Clarke 2006, 77-101). Particular attention was paid to how researchers defined green marketing, how consumers respond to sustainable branding initiatives, and how these practices are linked to brand perception. Notes were taken during this phase to capture recurring ideas and potential areas of interest.

After familiarization, the generation of initial codes began. The literature reviewed was then systematically annotated at this stage for key phrases, concepts and passages that contain representation of consumer behaviour, marketing strategies, trust builder and sustainability

communication. Eventually these codes were a building block for the analysis which allowed the large amount of data to be organised into smaller, manageable units of meaning (Clarke & Braun 2017, 297-298). For example, terms like “eco-labels,” “transparency,” “greenwashing,” and “brand trust” appeared repeatedly and were flagged as significant. This step was conducted manually, ensuring a deeper and more intuitive connection with the content.

The third phase consisted of theme search where the codes generated from previous phase were grouped into broader categories on basis of conceptual similarity. This step required a level of interpretative analysis to move beyond the explicit content and begin understanding latent meanings.

These initial themes were tested during the reviewing themes phase to see whether they represented the essence of the literature and held across the dataset. The study’s objectives were used to refine other themes and to merge some of them where there was overlap. s iteration of review made sure that the themes were in a coherent shape and that they were representative of the dataset.

The themes were then clearly defined and named afterwards in order to stay clear and comprehensible. For each theme, definitions were written with the specific pattern they characterised and why it was significant.

Finally, the analysis culminated in producing the report, where the insights were woven into a cohesive narrative. The final synthesis highlighted how strategic green marketing practices contribute to shaping consumer perceptions, particularly when they are grounded in transparency, authenticity, and credibility. These findings not only reflect existing knowledge but also provide a framework for future branding strategies in sustainable marketing.

3.6 Evaluation of the Study

This section assesses the methodological robustness, validity, reliability, strength, and drawbacks of the present systematic literature review (SLR) regarding the impact of green marketing on sustainable brand perception, in accordance with established evaluation frameworks for SLRs (Krüger et al. 2020, 635).

Methodological robustness: The decision to utilize the SLR approach was made due to its capacity to offer a structured, clear, and reproducible synthesis of current research (Krüger et al. 2020, 635). Specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were implemented to guarantee that only high-quality, peer-reviewed studies pertinent to green marketing and sustainable branding were considered, thereby reducing selection bias and improving the credibility of the outcomes (Dangelico & Vocalelli 2017,

1265). The search methodology, databases utilized, and chosen keywords were thoroughly documented, thereby enhancing the transparency and reproducibility of the review (Papadas et al. 2019, 634).

Validity and Reliability: The validity of the findings was enhanced by concentrating on research published in credible academic journals, minimizing the chances of including unreliable or biased outcomes (Kumar 2016, 138). Reliability was attained through a methodical coding and thematic synthesis process, enabling the consistent identification of important themes such as sustainable packaging, eco-labelling, CSR, and green advertising (Papadas et al. 2019, 635). Nonetheless, the review recognizes the possibility of publication bias since studies with non-significant results are generally less likely to be published (Kumar 2016, 139).

Strength: The systematic literature review (SLR) incorporates various viewpoints from different sectors and geographic areas, providing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of green marketing on brand sustainability (Leonidou et al. 2013, 19). Thematic analysis allowed for the recognition of both agreement and disagreement within the literature concerning effective green marketing tactics (Papadas et al. 2019, 637). The review underscores ongoing challenges such as the attitude-behavior gap and the potential for greenwashing, which are insufficiently addressed in empirical studies (Joshi & Rahman 2015, 128; Schmuck et al. 2018, 129).

Drawbacks: The review focused solely on English-language, peer-reviewed publications, potentially leaving out important research published in other languages or in grey literature (Kumar 2016, 140). Variations in methodological strategies and theoretical frameworks across the included studies could influence their comparability and generalizability (Dangelico & Vocalelli 2017, 1270). Even with systematic procedures in place, some degree of subjectivity in thematic synthesis and interpretation is inevitable.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

To ensure validity and reliability in the data analysis process, all 50 selected articles were thoroughly reviewed in full. The lead researcher manually coded each study using a set of predefined thematic categories. To strengthen the reliability of the findings and minimise interpretive bias, an independent second coder examined a randomly selected 20% subset of the articles ($n = 10$). Any discrepancies between the two coders were addressed through collaborative discussions, leading to the refinement of category definitions where needed. This approach enhanced inter-rater reliability and contributed to the overall trustworthiness of the analysis. The systematic coding process and verification

procedures ensured that interpretations were both consistent and aligned with the review's research objectives.

This study adhered to ethical research standards by ensuring transparency, integrity, and accountability throughout the systematic literature review process. All sources used were properly cited, with careful attention given to intellectual property and academic honesty. No human participants were involved, which excluded the need for formal consent procedures or ethical clearance. This study used AI for the refining, editing and writing while keeping the university guideline into considerations. Every AI-assisted contribution underwent thorough review and modification by the author to guarantee adherence to academic integrity, originality, and the guidelines set by the University of Turku. No material was taken directly from AI tools without human oversight, analysis, or modification. The prompt used for AI can be found in Appendix 2. However, ethical obligations were still maintained by objectively presenting findings and avoiding misrepresentation or selective reporting of evidence.

The methodological framework clearly outlined in chapter 3, this study now presents the major findings obtained from the SLR. The structured and rigorous PRISMA model and the thematic analysis has facilitated the understanding of notable patterns and recurring themes throughout the selected academic literature. Chapter 4 dives into the main analytical parts that directly address the goals of the study. The platform for additional theoretical and practical consequences is laid by these findings, which serve as the empirical foundation of the thesis and offer crucial insights into the green marketing strategies that influence the perception of sustainable brands.

4 Findings

This section presents the key findings derived from a thematic synthesis of 50 peer-reviewed journal articles. Using an interpretive approach, the results are organised around three core themes aligned with the study's objectives: (1) identification and analysis of key green marketing practices employed in contemporary marketing, (2) examination of the factors that influence consumer perceptions of brand sustainability, and (3) evaluation of the impact of specific green marketing practices on consumers' perception of a brand's sustainability.

4.1 Descriptive and Structural Analysis

The purpose of the descriptive/structural analysis is to offer the reader an understanding of the circumstances in which the researchers of the reviewed papers arrived at their conclusions. This brief section aims to provide the reader with an understanding of the pertinent limitations and methodological constraints inherent in the reviewed papers. The list of papers is provided on Appendix 1. In the figure 4 presented below, there is a time span of 14 years regarding the selection of articles, and beneath the figure, the explanation for choosing papers from 2010 to 2024 is provided.

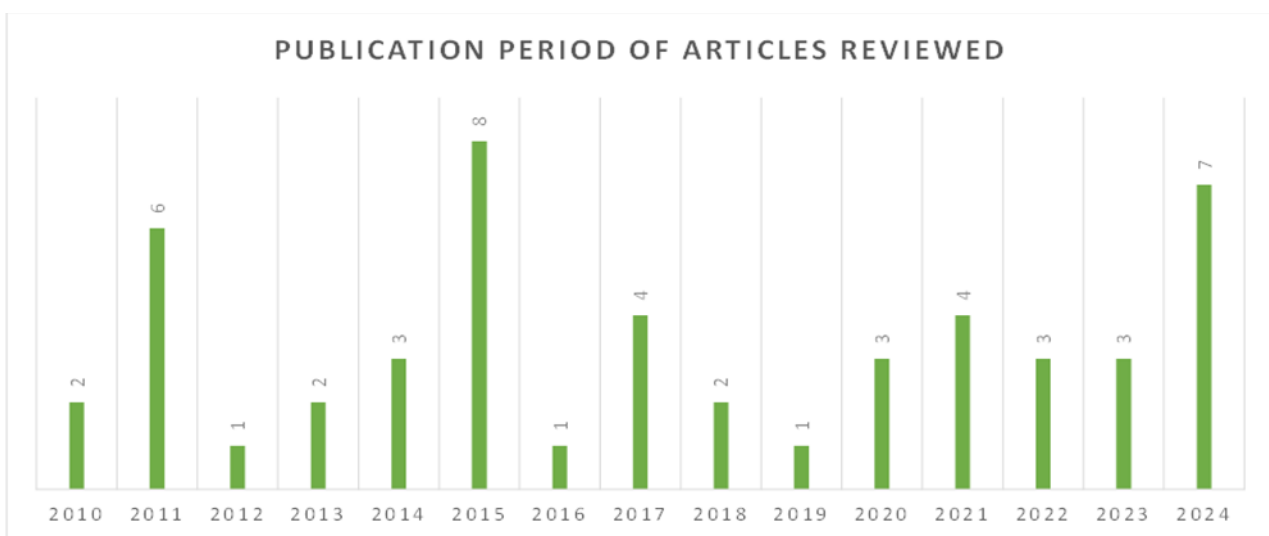


Figure 4 Publication period of Articles Reviewed

The papers were chosen from the period of 2010 to 2024 to ensure a comprehensive and up-to-date review of the literature. By including papers from multiple years, the researcher captured the progression of research over time, identifying any shifts or trends in the understanding of the topic. It also ensured that the review covers both foundational studies from earlier years and more recent advancements in the field. As a result, the selection of papers from 2010 to 2024 ensured that the

literature review reflects the current state of research, incorporates the latest findings, and captures the evolution of knowledge on the topic over time. In figure 5, the methodologies of the examined articles are presented, showcasing a variety of approaches. This diversity in methodologies ensures a broad relevance across the articles.

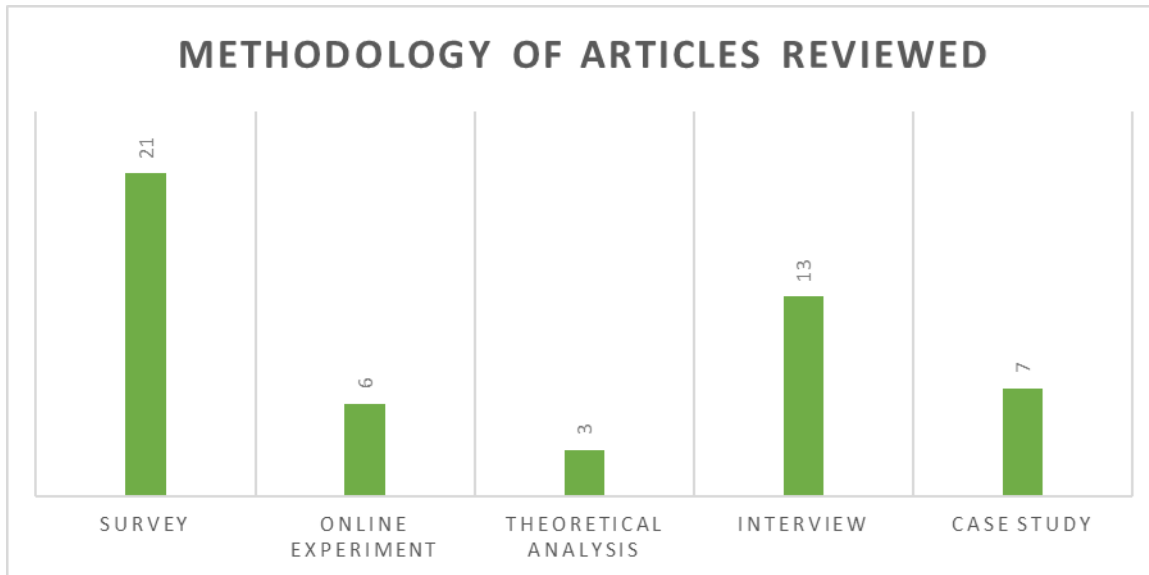


Figure 5 Methodology of Articles Reviewed

The researcher majorly focused on studies that have utilised the primary data collection method in order to maintain the coherence and pertinence of the review. The majority of the reviewed papers utilised questionnaire survey as their primary research methodology. Survey appears to be the most reliable method as it effectively addresses the concerns of suppliers, policy makers, buyers, and manufacturers in these particular cases.

In Figure 6, it is shown that various countries around the globe have an interest in green marketing and sustainability. Below the figure, the rationale for the differences among countries in selecting the articles is provided.

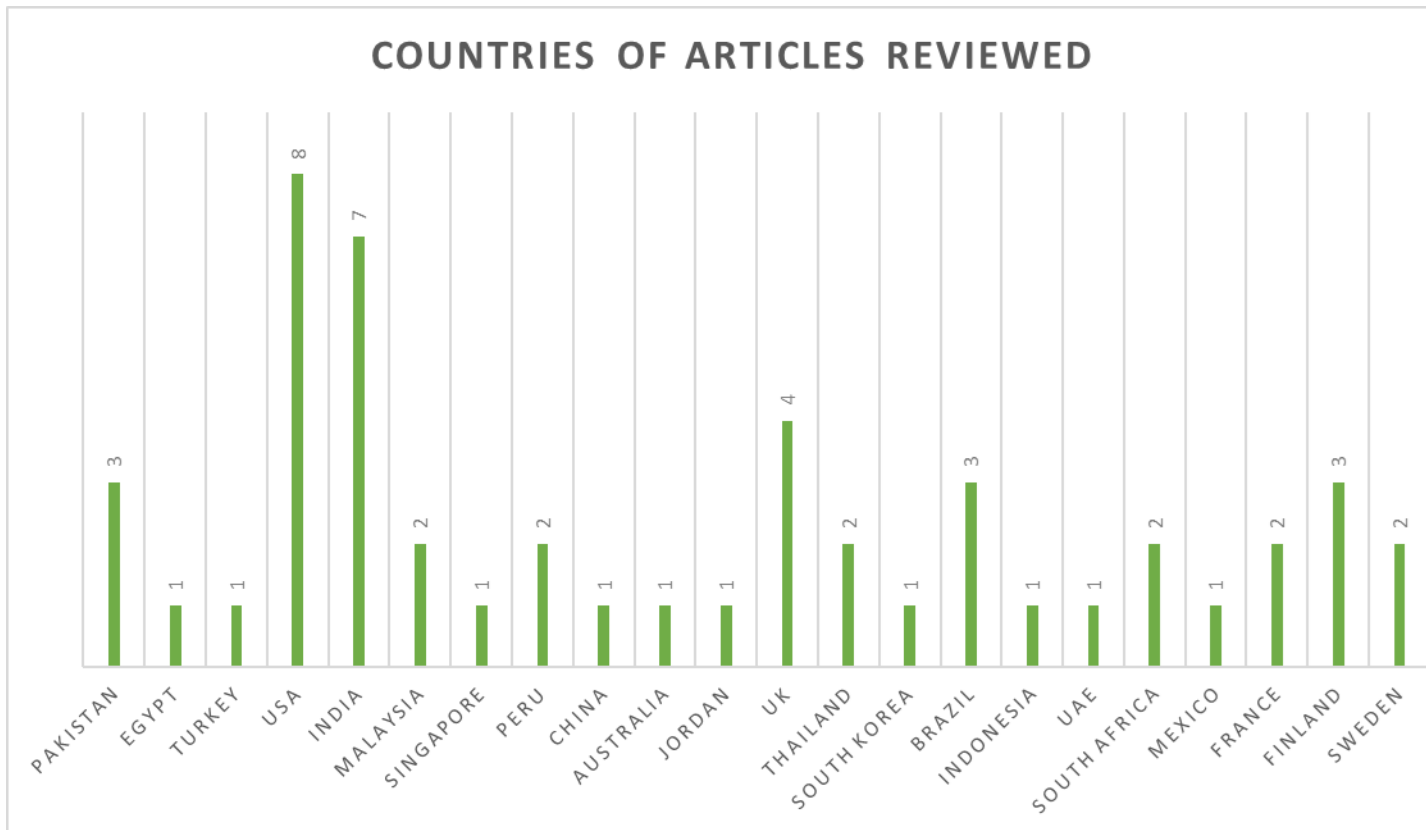


Figure 6 Countries of Articles Reviewed

The reviewed research papers originate from 21 countries, reflecting global interest in green marketing and sustainability. The USA, UK, and France lead in established research, while India, Pakistan, and Brazil highlight emerging market contributions. Growing engagement from Asia, the Middle East, and Africa signifies a worldwide shift toward environmentally conscious business strategies and consumer behaviour.

The descriptive and structural analysis gives primary context that markedly impacts the reliability and care of this literature survey. The review complements the variety of foundational insights and of most recent developments, facilitating the comprehensive overview of the progress of green marketing and consumer perception about sustainability, as the papers were chosen from 2010 to 2024. Studies that use primary data collection, particularly through survey, augment the credibility of findings since surveys invite accuracy in the attitudes and behaviour of various stakeholder groups (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill 2019). The consistency of this methodology makes the comparison of results from different studies possible. Additionally, the literature selected has a global scope and serves as a geographic frame for 21 countries, which offers a valuable international scope. The variety of economic, social and regulatory contexts is included by means of research from developed and emerging markets. This is more important in green marketing in which cultural and regional factors

can determine their perception of sustainability and their response to its meaning in relation to a brand. This describes foundation, therefore, enriches the analysis in strength by having a solid descriptive base that importantly sits on the foundation of a strong, robust, and globally representative body of work. It further guarantees that the conclusions made are data driven and up to date and also applicable to multiple markets, giving a deeper and broader review.

4.2 Green Marketing Practises Used in Contemporary Marketing

In response to heightened consumer awareness of ecological issues, companies are increasingly embedding sustainability into their marketing mix to enhance brand credibility, secure consumer loyalty, and foster responsible consumption. The evolving nature of green marketing practices incorporates multifaceted elements—ranging from product development and eco-labelling to corporate social responsibility (CSR), green advertising, and consumer education. Contemporary literature underscores the strategic significance of these practices while also exploring the psychological and contextual variables influencing their effectiveness.

Table 1 Key Green Marketing Practices Used in Contemporary Marketing

| Theme | Subtheme | Number of Papers Cited | References to the Papers Where the Issues Were Cited |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------|--|
| Sustainable Product Development | Eco-friendly materials and packaging | 2 | Moshood et al. (2022); Sharma & Iyer (2012) |
| | Resource-Constrained Product Development (RCPD) | 1 | Sharma & Iyer (2012) |
| | Technology cobbling and contextual innovation | 1 | Sharma & Iyer (2012) |
| Green Advertising | Authentic and transparent communication | 3 | Nyilasy et al. (2014); Kao (2019); García-Salirrosas & Rondon-Eusebio (2022) |
| | Emotional and psychological framing | 2 | Kao (2019); Nyilasy et al. (2014) |
| | Greenwashing avoidance | 1 | Nyilasy et al. (2014) |
| Eco-Labelling | Certification credibility and clarity | 3 | Bickart & Ruth (2016); Kaur & Gupta (2024); Taufique et al. (2019) |
| | Consumer perception (ECOLSCALE) | 1 | Taufique et al. (2019) |
| | Bridging attitude-behaviour gap | 1 | Taufique et al. (2019) |
| Corporate Social | Ethical sourcing and environmental initiatives | 2 | Jabeen et al. (2023); García-Salirrosas & Rondon-Eusebio (2022) |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Responsibility (CSR) | Green brand image | 2 | Jabeen et al. (2023); García-Salirrosas & Rondon-Eusebio (2022) |
| | Consumer scepticism mitigation | 1 | Jabeen et al. (2023) |
| Consumer Education & Awareness | Digital platforms for environmental education | 2 | Johnstone & Tan (2015); García-Salirrosas & Rondon-Eusebio (2022) |
| | Practical guidance and storytelling | 1 | Johnstone & Tan (2015) |
| | Influencer and user-generated content | 1 | García-Salirrosas & Rondon-Eusebio (2022) |
| Integrated Green Marketing Strategy | Holistic green marketing mix | 1 | García-Salirrosas & Rondon-Eusebio (2022) |
| | Brand image and operational coherence | 1 | García-Salirrosas & Rondon-Eusebio (2022) |
| | Strategic environmental orientation | 1 | Jabeen et al. (2023) |

Sustainable Product Development: One of the foundational pillars of green marketing is the development of environmentally friendly products. This includes adopting sustainable materials, energy-efficient production methods, and recyclable or biodegradable packaging. As Moshood et al. (2022) argue, such initiatives strengthen a company’s environmental credibility and attract environmentally conscious consumers. Complementing this, Sharma and Iyer (2012, 599-608) offer a nuanced perspective through the concept of resource-constrained product development (RCPD). Their work emphasizes that sustainable innovation does not necessarily require abundant resources. Instead, RCPD focuses on affordability, modularity, and efficient resource use, particularly relevant in low-infrastructure and cost-sensitive markets. Companies adopting this approach benefit from extended product lifecycles, minimized waste, and enhanced recycling capabilities, ultimately aligning operational and environmental objectives. Moreover, RCPD practices such as “technology cobbling”—the repurposing of existing and indigenous technologies—show that green product development can be both innovative and contextually adaptive. These practices serve underserved consumer segments with affordable and green options while simultaneously reducing environmental burdens. Strategically, such sustainable product development not only reinforces a brand's eco-credentials but also contributes to competitive differentiation in saturated markets. Internally, this requires coordinated effort across departments, whereas externally, marketers must articulate the value of such products in terms that resonate with eco-conscious consumers.

Green Advertising: Green advertising is another cornerstone of contemporary green marketing. It involves promoting a company’s environmental initiatives to build consumer loyalty and brand trust. However, literature reveals that the effectiveness of such advertising hinges on authenticity,

transparency, and emotional resonance. Nyilasy et al. (2014, 693-707) caution against the pitfalls of greenwashing—deceptive exaggeration of environmental efforts—which can damage consumer trust and brand reputation. To avoid this, green advertising must present genuine, verifiable claims and align with broader corporate sustainability actions. Expanding on this, Kao (2019) investigates how design and environmental emotions affect the impact of green advertising. Using the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), the study finds that advertisements combining self-referential imagery with strong environmental argumentation receive the most favourable consumer responses. This suggests that persuasive content, when made personally relevant through imagery and emotional framing, significantly enhances advertising effectiveness. Importantly, the study highlights those emotions—especially moral and social ones—can either enhance or hinder cognitive elaboration. While positive emotions may reduce attention to detail, leading to less critical ad processing, negative moral emotions tend to trigger deeper reflection and demand for credible, information-rich advertisements. Therefore, green advertisements must balance emotional appeal with factual substantiation to foster both affective and cognitive engagement.

Eco-Labeling: Eco-labelling serves as a key mechanism through which green marketing communicates product sustainability. Labels such as Energy Star, Fair Trade, and USDA Organic allow consumers to make informed choices by signalling compliance with environmental standards (Bickart & Ruth 2016, 44-60). However, the mere presence of eco-labels is insufficient. As Kaur and Gupta (2024, 885-899) observe, effective eco-labelling can help businesses differentiate in competitive markets—but only when perceived as credible and clear. Taufique et al. (2019, 298-314) take this further by introducing the ECOLSCALE, a multidimensional tool for evaluating consumer understanding and perception of eco-labels. The ECOLSCALE comprises factors such as trust, label clarity, design, persuasiveness, and perceived personal benefit. This comprehensive approach reveals that consumers assess eco-labels through a combination of rational (credibility, clarity) and affective (design, perceived relevance) dimensions. Crucially, eco-labelling can bridge the attitude-behaviour gap in green purchasing decisions by enhancing consumer confidence and perceived value. The study's findings underscore that eco-label success depends on transparency, simplicity, and alignment with consumer environmental values.

Corporate Social Responsibility: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved from a philanthropic or regulatory requirement into a strategic green marketing practice. When integrated authentically, CSR enhances green brand image and positively influences consumer purchase intentions. CSR has a direct and significant impact on green purchase intentions, with the relationship partially mediated by green brand image (Jabeen et al. 2023, 503-518). The study finds that CSR

activities—such as ethical sourcing, carbon footprint reduction, or community engagement—create a favourable perception of the brand, which in turn fosters stronger consumer commitment to eco-friendly purchasing. This alignment of CSR with green marketing strategies reflects a broader shift toward a circular economy, where environmental stewardship becomes central to business strategy. Importantly, the study also addresses consumer scepticism by highlighting the importance of transparency and regulatory compliance in CSR initiatives. Without these elements, CSR efforts may be dismissed as opportunistic or insincere. Therefore, for CSR to function effectively as a green marketing tool, it must be deeply integrated into a company's operations and communicated in a manner that emphasizes authenticity, consistency, and measurable impact.

Consumer Education & Awareness: Johnstone and Tan (2015, 804-825) argue, consumers with higher levels of environmental awareness are more likely to make sustainable purchasing decisions. Education campaigns—particularly those leveraging digital platforms and social media—play a vital role in shaping environmental consciousness and guiding informed decision-making. Digital marketing allows companies to disseminate educational content that simplifies green consumption, such as tutorials on recycling, infographics about carbon footprints, or interactive quizzes assessing ecological impact. Moreover, digital tools can help demystify eco-labels and illustrate the tangible benefits of green products. When combined with user-generated content and influencer engagement, these campaigns can amplify reach and credibility. However, consumer education must avoid being overly technical or abstract; instead, it should focus on practical, actionable steps that align with everyday consumer routines. Environmental certifications and digital storytelling can further reinforce these messages by providing external validation and emotional connection.

Integrated Green Marketing Strategy: García-Salirrosas and Rondon-Eusebio (2022, 84-99) provide a holistic categorization of green marketing practices, identifying five key domains: green products and services, green business image, green advertising, green purchasing experience, and green marketing mix. This framework emphasizes that green marketing should be integrated across all facets of business operations—from procurement to customer service. A strong green business image, supported by coherent internal practices and external messaging, is essential for gaining consumer trust and loyalty. The integration of the green marketing mix—product, price, place, and promotion—ensures that sustainability is not an isolated activity but a strategic orientation permeating the entire value chain. Furthermore, the importance of aligning green marketing with broader environmental and social trends cannot be overstated. Consumers increasingly expect businesses to act as agents of change, not just purveyors of green products (Jabeen et al. 2023, 515).

4.3 Factors Contributing to a Brand Being Perceived as Sustainable

The way sustainability is perceived in branding is influenced by a combination of corporate responsibility, open communication, and consumer perspectives. With the rise in environmental consciousness, brands are increasingly assessed not only on their ecological footprint but also on the genuineness, transparency, and cultural significance of their sustainability initiatives. This section explores the key elements that shape the perception of brands as sustainable, including the integration of CSR, green marketing practices, eco-labeling, sustainability education, and demographic factors. To give a clear overview, the primary themes and sub-themes addressed in this section are summarized in the Table 2 below.

Table 2 Factors Contributing to a Brand being perceived as Sustainable

| Theme | Subtheme | Number of Papers Cited | References to the Papers Where the Issues Were Cited |
|---|---|------------------------|--|
| Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) | Integration of CSR into core strategy | 2 | Mazutis & Slawinski (2015); Abd-El-Salam (2020) |
| | Emphasis on environmental and social equity | 2 | Singh & Verma (2017); Abd-El-Salam (2020) |
| | Transparency and measurable impact | 1 | Mazutis & Slawinski (2015) |
| Greenwashing and Perceived Authenticity | Misleading or selective disclosure | 3 | Yang et al. (2020); Lyon & Maxwell (2011); Walker & Wan (2012) |
| | Strategic deception and symbolic behaviour | 2 | Mitchell & Ramey (2011); Walker & Wan (2012) |
| Understanding of Eco-Labeling | Credible eco-labels and third-party certifications | 3 | Putra et al. (2024); Kumar et al. (2021); Minoli et al. (2015) |
| | Clear green brand communication | 2 | Graça & Kharé (2023); Minoli et al. (2015) |
| | Cultural adaptation in marketing messages | 2 | Graça & Kharé (2023); Minoli et al. (2015) |
| Sustainability Education | Enhancing perceived consumer effectiveness | 1 | Graça & Kharé (2023) |
| | Transparency in eco-benefit messaging | 1 | Barber (2010) |
| Consumer Attitudes & Behaviour | Superficial understanding of sustainability symbols | 1 | Scott & Vigar-Ellis (2014) |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | Attitude-behaviour gap driven by price and convenience | 2 | Kim & Lee (2018); Scott & Vigar-Ellis (2014) |
| | Accessibility and affordability of sustainable options | 1 | Putra et al. (2024) |
| Demographics & Cultural Influence | Positive gender influence on sustainability engagement | 1 | Scott & Vigar-Ellis (2014) |
| | Millennial and Gen Z alignment with lifestyle and values | 2 | Kim & Lee (2018); Butt et al. (2017) |
| | Youth demand for emotional/social relevance | 1 | Perera & Hewege (2018) |
| Emotional and Social Resonance | Emotional alignment and brand identity | 1 | Perera & Hewege (2018) |
| | Avoiding negative stereotypes and promoting group identity | 1 | Perera & Hewege (2018) |
| | Connection with health, community, and shared values | 1 | Perera & Hewege (2018) |
| Technological Transparency | Blockchain and real-time traceability | 1 | Flores-Hernández et al. (2020) |
| | Verified ethical supply chain disclosures | 1 | Rueda et al. (2017) |
| Innovation in Sustainability | Investment in sustainable R&D and low-carbon technologies | 2 | Flores-Hernández et al. (2020); Putra et al. (2024) |
| | Translating innovation into tangible benefits | 1 | Flores-Hernández et al. (2020) |

Corporate Social Responsibility: The perception of sustainability in branding has emerged as a pivotal component of contemporary CSR strategies. In today's market, where environmental awareness is rapidly growing, the way consumers interpret a brand's environmental, ethical, and social conduct significantly affects brand equity, loyalty, and purchase decisions. A sustainable brand is typically characterized by ethical labour practices, low carbon emissions, and a commitment to community development (Flores-Hernández et al. 2020, 942). However, consumer perceptions are not shaped by environmental impact alone; they are informed by an intricate mix of communication, authenticity, education, culture, and emotional resonance. A foundational factor influencing sustainability perception is a brand's approach to CSR. Brands that integrate CSR within their core business strategies—rather than treating it as an external add-on—tend to cultivate stronger, more favourable brand images (Mazutis & Slawinski 2015, 137-150). CSR efforts that highlight environmental protection, social equity, and transparent business practices foster consumer confidence and loyalty

(Abd-El-Salam 2020, 275; Singh & Verma 2017, 68). Yet, the mere presence of CSR initiatives is insufficient. As consumer scepticism increases—especially in light of ‘greenwashing’—the perceived authenticity of sustainability claims becomes a central concern.

Greenwashing and Perceived Authenticity: Greenwashing, defined as misleading consumers regarding environmental practices or the ecological benefits of products, undermines trust and damages brand reputation (Yang et al. 2020, 1486-1507). Tactics such as selective disclosure (Lyon & Maxwell 2011, 35) or symbolic but unsubstantial behavioural changes (Walker & Wan 2012, 239) exacerbate this problem. Intentional deception, as noted by Mitchell and Ramey (2011,40-45), is particularly damaging because it represents a strategic rather than accidental misrepresentation. To counteract this, brands must demonstrate transparency, provide verifiable data, and actively avoid overstated or ambiguous sustainability claims (Mazutis & Slawinski 2015, 137-150).

Understanding of Eco-Labeling: The role of green marketing and eco-labelling has also been critically assessed in the literature. Brands that advertise eco-friendly attributes, ethical sourcing, and sustainable packaging often experience higher brand equity (Putra et al. 2024, 210-229; Kumar et al. 2021, 2037-2071). However, this effect is mediated by consumer trust, prior brand behaviour, and the credibility of the certifications involved. Graça and Kharé (2023) emphasize that clear green brand communication, when paired with credible ecolabels (e.g., USDA Organic), significantly enhances perceived sustainability—particularly when aligned with cultural values. In the U.S., messaging focused on individual impact resonates more, while Brazilian consumers are more driven by collective environmental concern. This underscores the importance of culturally adaptive communication strategies in global sustainability branding. Furthermore, eco-label effectiveness depends on four core attributes: transparency, consumer involvement, strategic visibility, and third-party verification (Minoli et al. 2015, 207-216). In sustainable tourism, for example, the limited visibility and self-assessment nature of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program diluted its impact on consumer perception. Minoli et al. suggest that eco-labels need to be embedded within broader policy frameworks, actively promoted, and accompanied by consumer education. This approach not only enhances institutional trust but also ensures long-term consumer engagement with sustainability goals.

Sustainability Education: A crucial extension of green marketing is sustainability education, particularly via digital platforms. Online education not only increases environmental concern but also enhances perceived consumer effectiveness—the belief that individual actions matter. As Graça and Kharé (2023) argue, brands that inform consumers about how their products mitigate climate change

or conserve resources create an empowered consumer base that is more inclined toward green purchases. Barber (2010, 423-444) similarly emphasizes the importance of education and transparency in consumer engagement. When marketing strategies showcase real ecological benefits and address perceptions of inconvenience—particularly for eco-friendly packaging—brands gain credibility.

Consumer Attitudes & Behaviour: Consumer behavioural attitudes also inform how sustainability is perceived. According to Scott and Vigar-Ellis (2014, 642-649), environmentally friendly packaging is generally associated with safety and recyclability, but understanding remains superficial in developing contexts like South Africa. Consumers often rely on logos or third-party certifications without fully grasping their meaning, revealing the need for simplified, educational messaging. Eco-label clarity and consistent marketing can bridge this knowledge gap and improve purchasing behaviour. Their findings also reveal that while many consumers value sustainability, this does not always translate into action—a gap attributed to factors like convenience, price, and habit. While consumer knowledge and attitudes are evolving, the gap between environmental concern and purchasing behaviour persists. Despite widespread awareness, product quality and price remain major decision drivers (Kim & Lee 2018, 107-124). Brands, therefore, must deliver accessible and affordable sustainable alternatives (Putra et al. 2024, 210-229). Failure to do so risks alienating environmentally concerned consumers who may nonetheless opt for convenience or cost-efficiency over green credentials.

Demographics & Cultural Influence: Demographics and cultural influences further complicate the sustainability perception landscape. Scott and Vigar-Ellis (2014, 642-649) note that women and older individuals are typically more proactive in recycling and reusing packaging, whereas Millennials and Gen Z are more responsive to green branding that aligns with values, lifestyle, and community engagement (Kim & Lee 2018, 107-124; Butt et al. 2017, 507-520). Similarly, Perera and Hewege (2018, 754-766) highlight how green-conscious youth, driven by climate change concern, are drawn to brands that support personal and community environmental practices.

Emotional and Social Resonance: The findings also expose a mistrust of institutional campaigns, suggesting that brands must showcase tangible, localized impacts rather than abstract global alignments. These consumers demand emotional resonance, social relevance, and visible commitment. The concept of emotional and social affiliation is gaining traction in sustainability literature. Perera and Hewege (2018, 754-766) argue that young consumers often align with sustainable brands to avoid negative stereotypes and affirm group identity. This phenomenon implies

that brands perceived as emotionally intelligent—those aligning sustainability with meaningful experiences—are more likely to cultivate consumer loyalty. Green initiatives that appeal to a consumer's sense of community, personal health, or shared values are more impactful than purely rational appeals. As such, brands must increasingly connect sustainability with positive emotions, self-identity, and social narratives.

Technological Transparency: Hesse and Rünz's (2022, 232-252) case study on KLM's "Fly Responsibly" campaign reveals that consumer perceptions are influenced not just by content but also by the situational context and brand intent. When a sustainability message is perceived as incongruent with a brand's industry—such as aviation—it can invite scepticism, particularly when the messaging is perceived as self-serving. Transparency, physical setting, and habitual consumption patterns all mediate how such campaigns are interpreted. Thus, authenticity must be matched with strategic placement of green messages, ensuring that consumers see them as sincere rather than performative. The role of technological transparency is becoming increasingly significant. Blockchain-enabled supply chains now allow for greater traceability, offering consumers real-time data on sourcing, production, and distribution (Flores-Hernández et al. 2020, 935-945). In a market increasingly driven by ethical consumerism, the ability to track and verify claims—especially those related to labour practices or carbon footprints—enhances trust. Rueda et al. (2017, 2480-2492) affirm that certifications and transparent disclosure of supply chain practices are critical to being perceived as genuinely sustainable. However, technological tools alone are insufficient without proactive brand engagement and ethical follow-through.

Innovation in Sustainability: Lastly, innovation in sustainability is a defining trait of leading brands. Companies that invest in R&D for low-carbon, zero-waste, or circular economy models are more likely to be perceived as sustainability leaders (Putra et al. 2024, 210-229). Green technological innovations—from biodegradable packaging to carbon-neutral logistics—enhance brand credibility when their benefits are communicated clearly. As Flores-Hernández et al. (2020, 935-945) argue, consumers reward companies that translate technological solutions into tangible environmental progress, especially when such efforts are consistently marketed and substantiated.

4.4 Impact of Specific Green Marketing Practices on Consumers' Perception of a Brand's Sustainability

This section provides exploration of specific green marketing practices and their ability to shape consumers' perceptions of a brand's sustainability. It examines the impact of sustainable packaging, CSR initiatives, eco-labelling, green advertising, carbon footprint disclosure, and the risks of

greenwashing-emphasizing both the opportunities and challenges these strategies present. The discussion draws on related research to show how authenticity, transparency, and effective communication are crucial for building consumer trust and a credible green brand image. For clarity, the main themes and sub-themes covered in this section are summarized in the following Table3.

Table 3 Impact of Specific Green Marketing Practices on Consumers' Perception of a Brand's Sustainability

| Theme | Subtheme | No. of Papers Cited | References |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| Sustainable Packaging | Packaging as signal of corporate responsibility | 1 | Steenis et al. (2017) |
| | Trade-off between sustainability and usability/aesthetics | 1 | Scott & Vigar-Ellis (2014) |
| | Misunderstanding and consumer interpretation | 1 | Scott & Vigar-Ellis (2014) |
| Corporate Social Responsibility | Ethical alignment and authenticity | 2 | Kharabsheh (2024); Fatma et al. (2015) |
| | Influence on brand loyalty and trust | 2 | Fatma et al. (2015); Hermanto et al. (2024) |
| | Negative impact of perceived insincerity (greenwashing) | 2 | Du et al. (2010); Yu et al. (2025) |
| | Emotional bonds buffering negative effects | 1 | Yu et al. (2025) |
| Eco-labelling | Enhancing trust and credibility | 2 | Testa et al. (2015); Rahbar & Wahid (2011) |
| | Confusion due to complex or misleading labels | 2 | Atkinson & Rosenthal (2015); Scott & Vigar-Ellis (2014) |
| | Importance of third-party verification | 2 | Scott & Vigar-Ellis (2014); da Silva & Cé (2025) |
| | Analytical consumers' backlash to misleading labels | 1 | da Silva & Cé (2025) |
| Green Advertising | Environmental messaging building brand credibility | 2 | Leonidou et al. (2013); Chang (2011) |
| | Effectiveness dependent on consumer trust | 1 | Nyilasy et al. (2014) |
| | Risks of vague or inconsistent messaging | 1 | Nyilasy et al. (2014) |
| | Integration with accessible and affordable product offers | 1 | Hermanto et al. (2024) |
| Carbon Footprint Disclosure | Synergy with other sustainable efforts | 1 | Hermanto et al. (2024) |
| Greenwashing Risks | Undermines product quality and brand ethics | 2 | Yu et al. (2025); da Silva & Cé (2025) |
| | Heightened scepticism among environmentally involved consumers | 1 | da Silva & Cé (2025) |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|------------------------------------|
| | Brand loyalty as buffer | 1 | Yu et al. (2025) |
| | Need for consistent behaviour and transparency | 2 | Yu et al. (2025); Du et al. (2010) |

Sustainable Packaging: Sustainable packaging is often the most visible and tangible element of green marketing. Javed et al. (2024) argue that in the fast fashion sector, sustainability claims related to packaging are strongly correlated with consumers' green brand image and purchase intentions. Packaging that is biodegradable, recyclable, or minimalistic not only aligns with consumers' environmental values but also stimulates positive purchase behaviour when these features reflect genuine brand commitment (Magnier & Crié 2015, 350-366). Steenis et al. (2017, 286-298) further emphasize that consumers often perceive sustainable packaging as a reflection of corporate environmental responsibility. However, not all consumers interpret sustainable packaging uniformly. Scott and Vigar-Ellis (2014, 642-649), in a South African context, show that while consumers associate sustainable packaging with positive environmental traits, understanding remains inconsistent. Some consumers rely on vague eco-labels or personal interpretations rather than concrete information, which could lead to confusion. Moreover, practical concerns about the functionality or aesthetics of eco-friendly packaging may override environmental concerns (Scott & Vigar-Ellis 2014, 642-649), highlighting the trade-off between sustainability and consumer expectations of usability and style. Hermanto et al. (2024, 584-612) reinforce the importance of consumer attitude in this equation. Their findings suggest that when green marketing strategies—including sustainable packaging—are clear, accessible, and transparent, they enhance consumers' green attitudes, which in turn positively influence purchase intention. This highlights the necessity for brands not only to adopt sustainable packaging but also to communicate its value effectively to consumers.

Corporate Social Responsibility: CSR is another green marketing strategy that bolsters perceptions of sustainability, particularly when brands align their environmental initiatives with broader ethical commitments. CSR initiatives that are integrated with green marketing efforts foster stronger consumer trust and bolster a sustainable brand image (Kharabsheh 2024, 43-53). Fatma et al. (2015, 840-856) similarly assert that CSR activities enhance brand loyalty when consumers view such initiatives as authentic and consistent with their personal values. Nonetheless, CSR can backfire when it is perceived as insincere. Du et al. (2010, 8-19) caution that CSR efforts may be dismissed as superficial if consumers believe they are deployed primarily for marketing purposes rather than as part of a genuine commitment to sustainability. In such cases, the expected positive effect on brand

perception is either neutralized or reversed. This aligns with Yu et al. (2025, 65-74), who identify greenwashing as a significant threat to consumer trust. When consumers perceive that CSR claims are exaggerated or misleading, green scepticism intensifies, diminishing positive attitudes and intentions toward the brand. Brand loyalty, however, can moderate this negative trajectory. According to Yu et al. (2025, 65-74), even when greenwashing is suspected, loyal customers are less prone to scepticism. This suggests that emotional bonds and brand trust developed over time can buffer some of the negative effects of questionable environmental claims. Still, this does not exempt brands from the need to demonstrate authentic, consistent environmental behaviour.

Eco-labelling: Eco-labelling, as a green marketing tool, has the potential to convey credible and standardized sustainability information. Testa et al. (2015, 252-265) argue that eco-labels play a key role in building consumer trust by providing verifiable claims about a product's environmental credentials. Rahbar and Wahid (2011, 73-83) support this, indicating that eco-labels positively influence consumer perception by signalling environmental responsibility and improving brand credibility. However, the success of eco-labelling depends largely on consumer awareness and comprehension. Atkinson and Rosenthal (2015, 33-45) caution that complex or poorly understood eco-labels can confuse or even mislead consumers, leading to scepticism and potentially eroding trust. In developing markets, Scott and Vigar-Ellis (2014, 642-649) observe that fragmented or ambiguous eco-certifications hinder consumer understanding and limit the impact of eco-labelling. Therefore, simplicity, transparency, and third-party verification are crucial to ensure that eco-labels fulfil their trust-building role. da Silva and Cé (2025, 152-174) reinforce this idea by emphasizing that misleading or exaggerated eco-labels—forms of greenwashing—can negatively influence not only consumers' sustainability perceptions but also their broader evaluation of product quality. For highly involved consumers who engage with marketing content more analytically, the detection of deceptive practices creates a significant backlash. Thus, eco-labelling must be managed carefully to ensure that it reflects genuine sustainability practices and is easily understood by the target audience.

Green Advertising: Green advertising serves as a platform for brands to publicly showcase their environmental efforts, often creating positive brand associations. Leonidou et al. (2013, 798-811) find that brands highlighting renewable energy use, ethical sourcing, and other sustainability claims through advertising are perceived as more responsible and trustworthy. Chang (2011, 19-32) also confirms that such advertisements enhance brand credibility when consumers believe the environmental claims to be authentic. However, green advertising is only effective to the extent that consumers trust the information presented. Nyilasy et al. (2014, 693-707) highlight the danger of overusing vague terminology like “sustainable,” which can dilute meaning and erode credibility.

When sustainability messaging lacks specificity or is inconsistent with actual practices, consumers may perceive it as deceptive, contributing to scepticism and diminishing the effectiveness of the advertising effort. In this context, Hermanto et al. (2024, 584-612) point out that not all promotional channels equally influence purchase intention. While advertising may raise awareness, it is the availability, affordability, and transparency of the products that drive action. Hence, green advertising must be integrated with tangible product offerings and clear sustainability information to be effective in shaping brand perception.

Carbon Footprint Disclosure: An emerging area of green marketing involves disclosing carbon footprint reduction strategies. Gleim et al. (2013, 44-61) show that brands that actively measure and communicate their carbon reduction efforts are perceived as more environmentally responsible. Choi and Ng (2011, 269-282) argue that businesses adopting carbon neutrality as part of their core business model tend to attract climate-conscious consumers and enjoy a competitive advantage. However, transparency is crucial in carbon-related claims. Delmas and Burbano (2011, 64-87) emphasize the importance of third-party verification and the presentation of clear, quantifiable data to support carbon reduction claims. In the absence of such transparency, consumers may interpret these claims as greenwashing, with negative consequences for brand perception. da Silva and Cé (2025, 152-174) underscore the significance of consistent operational behaviour, where companies must align their carbon messaging with actual practice to maintain credibility. Moreover, carbon-related initiatives are often most effective when combined with other sustainable practices and communicated through trusted channels. Hermanto et al. (2024, 584-612) suggest that information shared through various media, if accurate and credible, enhances the effectiveness of green marketing and helps build a strong sustainability image.

Greenwashing Risks: One of the most critical challenges facing green marketing is the risk of greenwashing. As shown in the studies by Yu et al. (2025, 65-74) and da Silva and Cé (2025, 152-174), when consumers identify greenwashing, it does not merely reduce the perception of sustainability—it also creates a halo effect that undermines perceived product quality, brand ethics, and overall credibility. This underscores the necessity for brands to ensure consistency between environmental messaging and operational behaviour. Greenwashing also exacerbates consumer scepticism, particularly among those with higher environmental concern or product involvement. These consumers scrutinize claims more closely and are less forgiving of inconsistencies. Therefore, green marketing efforts must prioritize authenticity and transparency to withstand consumer scrutiny. At the same time, the presence of brand loyalty offers a potential safeguard. Yu et al. (2025, 65-74) find that loyal customers exhibit more resistance to scepticism, preserving brand trust even under

scrutiny. This suggests that building long-term emotional connections with consumers can act as a buffer against the negative repercussions of greenwashing—though it should not substitute genuine sustainability practices.

4.5 Discussion

4.5.1 Key Green Marketing Practices Used in Contemporary Marketing

Companies are shifting away from traditional materials and production processes to eco-friendly ones but those efforts are often resisted from within or face resource constraints especially in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). A notable contribution to address this tension is resource constrained product development (RCPD), which focuses on the development of affordable and adaptable solutions. Yet RCPD democratizes green innovation, but at the same time, it brings with it a paradox. Cost pressure compromises may weaken the actual environmental impact of the product, potentially resulting in ‘green dilution’ where sustainability, though claimed, is not actually achieved. Due to this, to make sustainable product development credible and impactful it must be initiated with lifecycle thinking and robust environmental metrics, rather than affordability or marketability.

In the literature of green advertising, the constant plight is to not over rely on emotional appeals without a solid repeatable sound backing. While emotional triggers such as moral obligation or guilt can be powerful motivators, their power can easily backfire if unbacked with verifiable claims. This corresponds to Kao (2019) finding that if emotional resonance enhances message recall, the positive effect can impair critical thinking and thus leaves the consumers vulnerable to greenwashing. This also means critically that marketers have to be on the tightrope between persuasion and manipulation. Too much of an emotional story overemphasis, even if there isn’t direct evident to back the claim, can leave a long-time bridge of trust gone. If the advertising can be green, it ought to transcend performative storytelling, switching over to evidence-based storytelling, combining emotive realness along with honest facts.

Eco-labelling occupies a unique position in the green marketing mix—providing a tangible, visual symbol of sustainability. However, the literature review reveals that its impact is heavily contingent on consumer literacy and trust. Although tools like ECOLSCALE have enhanced the understanding of label effectiveness, there remains a significant attitude-behaviour gap. Many consumers express positive attitudes toward eco-labels but fail to act on them due to confusion, scepticism, or competing priorities such as price and convenience. This gap suggests that eco-labelling, in isolation, may not be sufficient to drive behavioural change. It also raises questions about label inflation, where the

proliferation of overlapping or unregulated labels undermines credibility. Regulators and marketers alike must therefore focus on standardisation, consumer education, and integration with digital verification systems (e.g., QR code tracking) to reinforce credibility.

CSR initiatives appear to be one of the most visible green marketing practices, yet they also pose one of the greatest risks to brand reputation. The review highlights that CSR's effectiveness is inseparable from perceptions of authenticity and embeddedness. Superficial CSR efforts—particularly those that are seasonal or marketing-driven—are easily interpreted as opportunistic. Jabeen et al. (2023, 503-518) show that genuine CSR enhances green brand image and purchase intention, but only when sustainability is integrated into core business practices rather than presented as a public relations tool. Critically, this points to the need for strategic CSR alignment, where green initiatives are not just communicated but demonstrated through consistent, measurable outcomes. Without this alignment, CSR risks becoming counterproductive, feeding consumer cynicism rather than loyalty.

The overarching theme that emerges from this synthesis is the need for integration. García-Salirrosas and Rondon-Eusebio (2022, 84-99) argue that green marketing must not exist in silos—yet many firms continue to treat sustainability as a discrete function rather than a strategic orientation. This fragmented approach undermines coherence and credibility. For instance, a company may advertise carbon neutrality while failing to ensure sustainable sourcing in its supply chain. The review therefore supports the argument for a systemic green marketing model, in which sustainability is embedded across all elements of the marketing mix—product, price, place, and promotion—and reinforced through operational consistency and cultural alignment. Only then can green marketing transcend short-term campaigns and contribute to long-term brand equity. Simply adopting a checklist of sustainable tactics is no longer sufficient; consumers increasingly scrutinize the authenticity, coherence, and impact of these efforts. The literature reviewed underscores a shift in consumer expectations—from symbolic gestures to substantive action. For marketers, this means moving beyond surface-level engagement to cultivate a truly sustainable brand ethos that permeates all levels of decision-making.

4.5.2 Factors Contributing to a Brand Being Perceived as Sustainable

The literature reviewed unveils how the concept of brand sustainability is multiplex, not only due to a company's environmental performance but also the alignment with how it communicates, substantiates, and aligns its actions with stakeholders' expectations. For instance, sustainability perception goes far beyond tangible factors such as carbon reduction or ethical sourcing; it is rather

a result of congruence of those, consumer values, authenticity, transparency, emotional resonance, and cultural alignment.

This dynamic is based on CSR that has progressed from a peripheral initiative to a strategic tool needed to form brand image. The likelihood is that brands who embed CSR into their operational and strategic framework rather than their marketing appendage, will build enduring consumer trust and loyalty (Mazutis & Slawinski 2015, 145). CSR is perceived as not performative but instead as authentic and credible due to this embeddedness. In line with what Flores-Hernández et al. (2020, 935-945) and Abd-El-Salam (2020, 252-279) propose, consumers tend to see a brand as sustainable if the CSR initiatives expressed a sincere effort to promote social equity, fair labour, and environmental protection. However, scepticism among consumers has also increased as CSR becomes more popular.

This scrutiny brings into sharp focus the issue of greenwashing, which acts as a critical barrier to positive sustainability perception. The literature presents greenwashing not simply as a matter of false advertising, but as a betrayal of trust that can have long-term reputational consequences (Yang et al. 2020, 1486-1507). Intentional misrepresentation—whether through selective disclosure or symbolic gestures—undermines brand credibility and calls into question the sincerity of sustainability claims (Lyon & Maxwell 2011, 3-41; Walker & Wan 2012, 227-242). While some consumers may lack the tools to verify claims, increasing media literacy and digital activism mean that deceptive strategies are quickly exposed. Thus, perceived authenticity has emerged as perhaps the most critical factor in sustainable brand perception. Brands that openly share verifiable data, acknowledge shortcomings, and engage transparently in their sustainability journey are more likely to earn and maintain consumer trust.

Eco-labelling serves as both a facilitator and a test of brand trustworthiness. While it can reinforce green brand identity, its effectiveness is mediated by several conditions: label clarity, third-party verification, cultural context, and consumer understanding (Minoli et al. 2015, 207-216). The literature highlights that while certifications like USDA Organic can enhance credibility, their impact is weakened if consumers do not understand what these certifications entail or if multiple, overlapping labels create confusion. Moreover, trust in eco-labels is culturally contingent. For example, U.S. consumers respond more favourably to messaging that emphasizes individual responsibility, whereas Brazilian consumers are more driven by collective environmental narratives (Graça & Kharé 2023, 246-264). These findings suggest that culturally adaptive communication—tailoring sustainability

narratives to resonate with local values and norms—is a crucial but often overlooked driver of positive perception.

Despite increased environmental concern, the relationship between concern and action remains weak because of a gap between concern and knowledge or perceived efficacy. By filling this knowledge gap through their investments in sustainability education, brands also increase consumers' beliefs of their own impact—that is, perceived consumer effectiveness (Barber 2010, 423-444; Graça & Kharé 2023, 246-264). Brands give consumers the power to relate to the environmental benefits of their product and to get more engaged in a more meaningful way. And this has to be education beyond the technical details, emotionally, to tackle common misunderstandings, to show real results, to have a sense of shared purpose.

While the level of awareness continues to rise, price, convenience and habit continue to have an overwhelming impact on consumer behaviour. This is a challenge of the 'attitude-behaviour gap' (Scott & Vigar-Ellis 2014, 642-649; Kim & Lee 2018, 107-124) where there is an expression of pro-environmental intention but it does not translate into behaviour. This illustrates that action will not follow a positive perception with respect to sustainability. Sustainable alternatives should be available as well as financially accessible, affordable and competitive in quality. Without adequately addressing these practical considerations, the sustainability aware consumer who can find reasons to choose conventional rather than alternative supply will again become marginalized as a choice out of practicality rather than apathy.

Perceived sustainability of a brand is more likely to be higher when a product is consistent with the younger consumers' identity and lifestyle, i.e., Millennials and Gen Z (Butt et al. 2017, 507-520; Perera & Hewege 2018, 754-766). These consumers are not simply looking for ecologically friendly products, but for brands they can identify with, and that have a cause they care about. It is therefore vital to have emotional and social resonance. The more effective sustainability campaigns are those which appeal to community, personal health or social justice in an environmental statistics sense. Based on Perera and Hewege (2018, 754-766), emotional intelligence and cultural fluency in sustainability branding will lead to a deeper affiliation and loyalty.

Another emerging theme is the role of technology in building trust and transparency. From blockchain based traceability systems, they propose that it can substantiate sustainability claims as well as offer a real time data on supply chain ethics and emissions (Flores-Hernández et al. 2020, 935-945). However, the fact that technology alone is not a silver bullet lies in the broader sense of accountability plus ethical follow through (Rueda et al. 2017, 2480-2492). It's good to offer the spirit of transparency

but not in a vacuum. Thus, brands must be communicative rather than preachy on how the technology has the power to empower the consumers and represents organisational values.

In the other side, innovation in sustainability, for instance, investments in the biodegradable packaging or the circular economy models as well as in carbon neutral logistics, is aligned with the broader brand messaging and clearly communicated, contributes to the creation of the brand's sustainability image (Putra et al. 2024, 210-229). Innovation is a leadership signal for a long-term vision and is even more positive when it is a signal of proactivity and not reaction. Innovation must however become tangible to the consumer. Technical superiority, while impressive, needs to be translated into relatable benefits such as waste reduction, cost savings, or health improvements.

4.5.3 Impact of Specific Green Marketing Practices on Consumers' Perception of a Brand's Sustainability

While the literature affirms that green initiatives can enhance a brand's sustainable image, the effectiveness of such efforts is not merely a function of their presence but of how they are executed, communicated, and interpreted by consumers.

The most immediate symbol of a brand's environmental commitment is sustainable packaging. Nevertheless, this could be a double edge sword. Studies, such as Javed et al. (2024) and Magnier and Crié (2015, 350-366), show that eco-friendly packaging is positively related to brand evaluation until now, but the role of context and consumers' interpretation is very contingent. A crucial counterpoint is offered by Scott and Vigar-Ellis (2014, 642-649) who show how limited consumer understanding, especially in a developing region, can result in misinterpretation or indifference. Here, the greenness of the visualization in packaging is being implied as a hollow signal where, without educational cues or clarity, the visual greenness of packages may be a risk connected to the visual 'greenness' of packaging. Additionally, packaging continues to play mediating role in receiving packaging; for instance, if eco-friendly options are perceived as more inconvenient or aesthetically less appealing, consumers will put less priority on sustainability even if they have positive feelings about it. This implies that in packaging innovations, these need to be balanced very carefully between environmental value and user experience, helped by the development of these clear narratives to help consumers shed light on the significance of their meaning.

However, the findings can be interpreted with more caution on CSR. CSR is traditionally indicated as a pillar of sustainable branding, but its influence seems to be much more than expected. Kharabsheh (2024, 43-53) and Fatma et al. (2015, 840-856) attest to the fact that CSR signals consumer trust

provided it is true encroached and by being in sync with the bigger picture of ethics. Yet the one thing that is striking here is the fragility of that trust. Based on Du et al. (2010, 8-19) and Yu et al. (2025, 65-74), one can see that such consumer perceptions can change very easy if CSR initiatives are considered opportunistic or superficial. This echoes the more general refrain that CSR is performative so long as it is not based within corporate strategy. Favourable or not, CSR can differentiate itself in a competitive marketplace, but a close scrutiny demonstrates that the growth of CSR can harm rather than bolster perceptions of sustainability if it lacks supporting consistent operations. On a further note, Yu et al.'s (2025, 65-74) observation that brand loyalty can suppress scepticism is important and of ethically complicated nature, as emotional ties can serve as a shield from immediate backlash of brands, but also as a disguise or excuse for unsustainable practices by brands. This constitutes a normative problem in which green marketing is exploited to take advantage of trust.

Eco-labelling attempts to standardize and be transparent in green marketing, and yet the effectiveness of eco-labelling does not appear to be predicated on its existence, but rather in the amount of effort put into the process of implementation. Testa et al. (2015, 252-265) and Rahbar and Wahid (2011, 73-83) point to the credibility and trust-building potential of verified eco-labels. Both the literature is more sceptical on the broader scene, however. For example, Atkinson and Rosenthal (2015, 33-45) point to a key weakness in that they find that even credible eco-labels do not significantly change perception when they are too complex or not familiar. In situations such as the ones listed by Scott and Vigar-Ellis (2014, 642-649), eco-labels can even paradoxically backfire and create confusion or cynicism. As a result, this introduces a critical insight that, green marketing tools that have been created to make matters simpler, can become backfired when filled to the brim with complexity or diluted with greenwashing. Additionally, da Silva and Cé (2025, 152-174) further criticise misleading labels by stating that not only do they tarnish trust in sustainability, but also in product quality. Therefore, marketers have the challenge not only to adopt the labels but to make them credible, comprehensible, and contextually relevant.

Another level of complexity is added by green advertising. On the one side, Chang (2011, 19-32) and Leonidou et al. (2013, 151-170) discover that highlighting the practice can enhance brand credibility. However, the practice is very prone to consumer scepticism. As has Nyilasy et al. (2014, 693-707) warns, generic claims such as “eco-friendly” or “sustainable” do not engender credibility. It highlights a wider conflict in green advertising: an overlap between the desirably vague and the specifically targeted. Appealing to values and ideals can become a requirement, but backing those appeals up with evidence and being consistent with brand behaviour makes those appeals hit a target. They are deepest embedded in sectors like aviation or fast fashion. When the message is heard in such contexts as those

suggested by Hesse and Rünz (2022, 232-252), it becomes harder to establish sincerity, because the content of the message may be outweighed by the context. Thus, green advertising, while influential, is only as effective as the truthfulness and contextual appropriateness of its message.

One of the most promising yet underutilised green marketing strategies is carbon footprint disclosure. Gleim et al. (2013, 44-61) and Choi and Ng (2011, 269-282) suggest that quantifiable carbon data and reduction efforts appeal to climate-conscious consumers and strengthen brand reputation. However, Delmas & Burbano (2011, 64-87) stress that without independent verification and clear benchmarks, carbon claims risk being perceived as another form of greenwashing. Unlike more general marketing claims, carbon disclosures can be tracked and audited, making them a potential differentiator—but also a liability if misused. What remains underexplored is how well consumers interpret this data or whether they act on it. da Silva and Cé (2025, 152-174) argue that carbon transparency must be tied to consistent operational behaviour to influence perception, reinforcing a broader theme across all green marketing practices: authenticity is paramount, and sustainability claims must be backed by substance.

Finally, the recurring spectre of greenwashing cannot be ignored. The literature converges on the idea that greenwashing not only undermines specific sustainability claims but creates a halo of mistrust that can damage the entire brand. As Yu et al. (2025, 65-74) and da Silva and Cé (2025, 152-174) note, this effect is especially pronounced among high-involvement consumers who are more analytical and less forgiving. Interestingly, while brand loyalty may provide temporary insulation, this is not a long-term solution. If anything, it may delay necessary reforms or mask systemic inconsistencies. Thus, the critical takeaway is that green marketing can only support sustainable brand perception when it is transparently and consistently embedded within business operations. The illusion of sustainability is no longer sufficient; today's consumers demand evidence. As a result, while specific green marketing practices—such as sustainable packaging, CSR, eco-labelling, green advertising, and carbon disclosure—can positively shape sustainability perceptions, they are not inherently effective. Their impact is mediated by factors such as consumer literacy, cultural context, perceived authenticity, and trust.

The chapter 4 outlined the key factors such as sustainable brand perception, green marketing practices and the impact of specific strategies influencing the consumer attitudes towards a sustainable brand image by a systematic synthesis of the literature. The wide range of scholarly studies provided a clear understanding of how green marketing practises and sustainability is communicated and perceived in the branding landscape. Chapter 5 dives into the conclusions from the thematic analysis with the

already established empirical foundation reflecting the theoretical and practical implications, and addresses the limitations of the study. Furthermore, this chapter also discuss about the future research directions and narrow down the loop between managerial and practical implications.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The way green marketing success can be achieved is not based on the implementation of sustainable practices alone, but on the manner of which these practices can have been communicated and integrated not only authentically but also transparently as well as strategically throughout the marketing mix. The green marketing concept has grown beyond mere promotion tools to the current trend of the corporate ethics, environmental accountability and social values. But, as is the case traditionally with green marketing practices, the effectiveness of green marketing practices is highly dependent upon how worthy consumers perceive them to be genuine and in line with a brand's core regard.

Key green marketing practices which were identified were sustainable packaging, CSR, eco labelling, green advertising and carbon disclosure. Each one has the capacity to add to the perception of brand sustainability, but also comes with its own challenges. Sustainable packaging is acknowledged and appreciated by consumers in general, however it is in contradiction amongst the functionality, clarity and communication. It becomes a point of contention not an addition of value if it isn't explained properly or if it's implemented in ways reducing convenience or through an aesthetic compromise. Similarly, CSR initiatives can only be effective if they are deeply embedded into the organisational ethos as if they are surface level campaigns or seasonal initiatives, it can be easily perceived as signs of insincerity and opportunism. Greenwashing was a critical failure, often coming up as the largest impediment to trust, in that exaggerated or vague or misleading environmental claims carried the potential for real jeopardy.

Eco-labelling, despite its potential to build trust through third-party validation, is frequently undermined by consumer confusion, low awareness, or a lack of standardisation across industries. Since the information provided in most of these labels can appear too technical, or not culturally relevant, on one hand, and because the proliferation of labels and competing certification schemes can produce consumer scepticism and fatigue, on the other, labelling initiatives have tended to lead to confusion, leading to consumer scepticism. Green advertising has credibility challenges, too. With today's more sceptical consumers, they are less inclined to accept environmental claims unless they are specific and verifiable evidence. Messages aimed at inducing emotion are incredibly powerful, but in order to meet that goal, they need to be rooted in transparent, fact-based messaging. Yet, carbon footprint disclosure is a promising avenue due to the quantifiable nature of disclosure and it especially

interests if such disclosure is independently verified and provide clear, honest communication about progress or limitations.

The findings make an overarching theme on the gap between the consumer attitude and actual behaviour, otherwise referred to as attitude-behaviour gap. Although many consumers profess strong support of sustainability and desire to purchase green brands, such preferences do not necessarily translate into buying behaviour when the sustainable option is seen as more cost, less convenient, or less effective. What this gap signals is not just that sustainability needs to be communicated well, but that green products need to be priced well, sold to customers, and perform on par with other available products.

The study also finds impact of cultural, generational, and context factors on how sustainability perception is formed. Generally, Millennials and Gen Z have a higher incline towards sustainability messaging, especially when it further ties in with what they stand for or individuals they identify with. In addition to responding to products and services designed to enhance transparency by means of technology such as blockchain for traceability, these consumers demand that the presentation of these tools also be undertaken in a user friendly and contextually meaningful way. This reinforces the need for brands to adopt culturally intelligent, emotionally resonant communication strategies that bridge the gap between intention and consumer engagement.

In conclusion, green marketing plays a critical role in developing a sustainable brand image, but it must be part of a broader, authentic commitment to environmental responsibility. Symbolic gestures or disconnected campaigns are no longer sufficient in an era of heightened consumer awareness and scrutiny. Brands must strive for coherence between their marketing messages and operational practices, ensuring that all green claims are evidence-based, transparent, and culturally relevant. As consumers become more informed and expectations continue to rise, the long-term credibility and success of green marketing will depend on its ability to foster genuine trust, inspire behavioural change, and contribute meaningfully to environmental sustainability.

5.2 Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes meaningfully to the theoretical understanding of green marketing by unpacking the nuanced relationship between specific green marketing practices and consumer perceptions of sustainability. It builds upon and extends established marketing and branding theories—particularly those concerning brand image formation, consumer behaviour, and the theory of planned behaviour—by demonstrating how sustainability initiatives intersect with these frameworks in the context of

evolving environmental expectations. The findings reaffirm that consumer perceptions of a brand's sustainability are not solely driven by what brands claim but how authentically and consistently those claims are aligned with actual practices. This reinforces the conceptual foundations of authenticity theory, which suggests that perceived congruence between brand actions and messaging drives trust and brand loyalty. The review also expands the theory of signalling, which posits that firms convey quality and intent through observable indicators. Green marketing practices—such as eco-labels or carbon footprint disclosures—serve as signals that, when effectively verified and communicated, strengthen brand credibility and reduce consumer uncertainty.

Additionally, the study contributes to the literature on the attitude behaviour gap by providing an explanation on how it is apparent in the context of the green marketing. Consumers can say that they care about environmental issues and have positive attitudes toward green brands but actual behaviours can be short of the mark because some people are very price sensitive, sceptical or simply there is no clear product differentiation. This indicates the need to rethink existing psychological theories about behaviour, taking into consideration emotional elements and environment (cultural environment including generational differences). Besides, it helps to enrich the brand equity theory with the role of emotional branding as well as the value alignment in the sustainability discourse. Sustainability messages, when conducted through emotionally resonant narratives, in which consumers can identify, and that show shared values with the brand, increase consumer brand relationship and loyalty.

Furthermore, the approach stresses the need for the interdisciplinary theoretical approach that integrates the marketing, the environmental psychology, and ethics insights. For instance, CSR and green advertisement are not understood similarly according to the norms and moral expectations of each culture, suggesting that the theories developed in the Western context are not universally applicable. It conforms to arguments for more culturally sensitive branding theories and decentres sustainability from a general population by instead situating it within the context of particular consumer demographics. The concept of greenwashing completes brand trust theory with a paradox by bringing in transparency and green efforts to gain trust, while exaggerated or misleading types of green materials will intensively counteract brand trust. In this way it raises the issue of revisiting traditional branding models by taking scepticism as a mediating factor in the sustainability–brand image link. In summary, this study offers improved theoretical explanations of the numerous intricacies and ties between green marketing tactics and consumer perception.

5.3 Practical Contribution

Finally, the practical implications of this study provide action that are applicable to marketers, brand managers, and business leaders wishing to establish or even improve their brand's sustainability image. Today consumers are highly sensitive of the gap between true participations to sustainability and mere greenwashing. So, organisations must be sure that green marketing, whether by packaging, advertising, or CSR, becomes entrenched in operational reality. For example, biodegradable packaging has a reputational value only if it is part of a broader strategy designed to eliminate responsible sourcing, reduction of food waste, and of course, that clearly communicated to the consumer what to do with the packaging. An overall sustainable approach for brands should adopt integrative environmental values into their marketing mix through the whole, rather than green undertakings being passive approaches.

Transparency is another essential factor. If green marketing is to be truly practical, verifiable data, third party certificates and disclosure of true facts are a must for implementation. For instance, carbon footprint claims should be separated from independent audit stamps and presented in plain English. Using or overcomplicating labels can alienate customers or worse make customers suspicious of greenwashing. The eco-labels can also be simplified and increased cross-industry certification to help the consumer understand and make a well thought out decision. Green advertising must also go beyond buzzwords and emotional appeals equally. While the need for storytelling and emotional connection is critical, backed up with facts, data and their visual evidence of impact, credibility will be maintained.

It also discloses the significance of educating consumers in a way that is meaningful and in context. Generic awareness campaigns won't generate behavioural change unless they sound locally, culturally, and contextually recognizable. Tailored educational content aligned to how sustainability impacts consumers' own identities, lifestyles and values should be branded about by brands. To make up for that knowledge gap, and to build sustainable behaviour around purchasing, interactive or gamified mobile app formats, like those in stores, or social media awareness campaigns are attractive. Also, pricing is still a significant barrier. Consumer friendly, affordable green product are needed to create a successful, legitimate market today. Supply chain partners need to collaborate with marketers to increase efficiency costs so that consumers don't have to choose between sustainability and affordability.

Brand loyalty emerged as a potential buffer against consumer scepticism, especially in cases where occasional inconsistencies or shortcomings arise. But word of mouth is not enough to let brands get

away with mitigating for lack of sustainability. Instead of loyalty, the hiring cycle should be focused on cultivating loyalty through continued transparency, responsiveness to consumer feedback, and an ability to admit limitations and commit towards improvement. Finally, businesses need to take advantage of cutting-edge technologies like blockchain for traceability or QR code that links to Sustainability report so as to effectively prove what they are doing in real time and interactively. If humanised and simplified, these tools provide new possibilities to create trust and greater engagement with environmentally concerned consumers. Therefore, this study suggests that green marketing strategies adopted by brands must be long term, integrated and consumer centric and both should be consistent with ethical standards and market expectations.

5.4 Limitations of The Study

This study has several limitations. First, as a systematic literature review, it relies solely on secondary data, which may be influenced by the original authors' biases, methodological limitations, or contextual constraints. The absence of primary data collection means the findings reflect interpretations of existing research rather than direct consumer insights. Second, while the review aimed to include diverse studies, there may be a publication bias toward positive or significant findings, potentially overlooking contradictory or less-reported perspectives. Language restrictions—limiting the review to English-language publications—may also have excluded relevant research from non-English-speaking regions.

Furthermore, the fast-evolving nature of green marketing practices means some recent innovations or shifts in consumer attitudes may not yet be captured in the academic literature. Lastly, while thematic analysis provided structured insights, some subjective interpretation was unavoidable. These limitations suggest that further research, including empirical studies and cross-cultural comparisons, is needed to deepen understanding and validate the review's conclusions across broader contexts.

5.5 Future Research Directions

Further research should strive to add value to this study by establishing empirical evidence through mixed-method approach; using surveys, interviews and observations of current consumer sentiments towards green marketing. By examining sustainability messaging and, perceived authenticity of brands, across different cultural settings, it is easier to appreciate the impact of generational and cultural influences in consumer perceptions. Further research significance lies in the study of the ways digital techniques of the modern world, including blockchain, augmented reality, or interactive learning materials, help to improve green marketing outcomes. By looking at consumer feedback over

time, it is possible to understand how the effects of enduring marketing campaigns prevail upon the levels of trust, loyalty, and what products they choose to buy. Further, studying the psychological force that underlies the attitude-behaviour split, i.e., emotional reactions, doubts and perceived value fit, can help improve refined branding paradigms. Finally, studying the responses of different income groups to green initiatives could help to find ways of delivering sustainable products at more open- and inclusive-price levels.

6 Summary

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter illuminates the increasing centrality of sustainability in contemporary branding strategies, how green marketing exerts pressure on ecologically aware consumer choices and brand loyalty. From the text, green marketing is defined as purposeful marketing of products or services which is focused on environmental worth hence proving its significance in the guiding of the business efforts towards satisfying the consumer environmental needs. At the core of this is practice such as eco-labelling, ethical sourcing and open communication which are vital in winning trust among consumers. The chapter further reveals that greenwashing is a serious problem for organizations. It clearly outlines the main purpose of the study, which is to examine green marketing's role in promoting sustainable brand growth, supported by three key aims. The chapter ends with the description of systematic literature review (SLR) as the methodology that was chosen to analyze the existing scholarly research.

Chapter 2 – Discussion of Central Concepts

Chapter 2 provides the conceptual framework of the study by examining sustainability in relation to the Triple Bottom Line (TBL), an amalgamation of economic, environmental, and social impacts. In this chapter, the evolution of green marketing is charted and is put in the perspective of corporate responsibility. The chapter reveals that green marketing goes beyond promotional strategies and is, in fact, part of successful brand positioning and consumer confidence development. It describes green brand image as the image that the consumers have towards a firm's environmental commitments. The chapter focuses on the fact that a well-formulated green brand image with sincere and value-based marketing practices leads to higher consumer loyalty and influences purchasing preferences.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This study relies on SLR of literature to explore the relationship between green marketing and sustainable branding with a view of consumer perspective. Peer-reviewed journal articles between 2010-2025 were retrieved from Web of Science and Scopus using a structured Boolean search approach. A pool of 581 scholarly articles was explored and only 50 were selected for inclusion after evaluating their relevance, language, and methodological quality. The interpretation of the data was guided by an analysis of the themes emerged with the help of Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework.

Chapter 4 – Findings

Important elements of green marketing mentioned are sustainable product design, green advertising techniques, eco-label, CSR activities, consumer education, and overall sustainability plans. These strategies are shown to be quite important for influencing consumer perception of a brand's sustainability initiatives through this research. A thematic synthesis revealed that transparent CSR attempts, honest advertising, and credible eco-labels build trust, while greenwashing, vague communications, and poor differentiation diminish effectiveness. Consumers' attitudes, emotional involvement, age generations, and demographic differences also affect the perception. Quality green marketing is the result of honest transparency, respectful emotional involvement, and solid message harmony. Established brands which are showing the relevant efforts in the fulfilment of environmental promises as well as the possessions of shared values, are likely to gain credibility and long-term loyalty.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

The study shows that effective green marketing requires authenticity, transparency, and strategic implementation across all marketing mix components. Though CSR initiatives, eco-labelling and sustainable packaging improve perceptions about brands when done right, they can cause backfiring if not managed appropriately. This study contributes to the development of theory regarding brand equity, signalling theory, authenticity theory, and the attitude-behaviour gap, suggesting the inclusion of emotional and cultural explanations to complement existing models. Actionable suggestions encompass the use of credible certification and the sharing of information openly as well as the education that is consumer friendly according to their values. The research is compromised through the use of secondary data, the possibility of publication bias, and limitations ensuing from language restrictions. Future research may explore the use of mixed method approach, examine the potential of technologies in the form of augmented reality and blockchain and look at the influence of affordability and socio-cultural backgrounds on adopting green products.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Paper

- Abd-El-Salam, E. (2020). Investigating loyalty through CSR: The mediating role of brand image and brand trust. *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, 19(3), 252-279.
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Appendix 2: Declaration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) use

I, Mohammad Al amin Hossain, hereby declare that I have utilized the free version of Artificial Intelligence (AI tool) ChatGPT, during the completion of my master's thesis titled "The Role of Green Marketing in Shaping Sustainable Brand Perception (A systematic literature review)". The main purpose of taking the help of AI was to improve the grammatical clarity, coherence and quality of the academic work, while upholding the transparency and maintaining the values of academic integrity.

Use cases for AI help

Making scholarly frameworks and theories simpler

Chat GPT was used to understand the theories like “triple bottom line” and how it can be linked to my thesis topic.

Prompt: Briefly describe me the “triple bottom line” theory

Prompt: what is triple bottom line and will it be linked to the thesis topic “The Role of Green Marketing in Shaping Sustainable Brand Perception” if yes how and what are the factors and areas which can be used in given topic?

Prompt: What is green marketing and how it can be linked to the sustainability in terms of shaping a brand image as sustainable? Show me logical reasons why it should be linked with each other.

Using the AI assistance to fix the grammatical error

Prompt: Go through the whole thesis and find the grammatical mistakes and suggest the right word or sentences if any error found (after uploading the thesis)

Use of quillbot

Quillbot free version was used vastly to paraphrase for a better and meaningful word in the thesis for the betterment of readability.