



A Study On Impact Of Green Marketing Scepticism Through Social Media Platforms On Consumer Buying Decisions Towards Organic Personal Care Products

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ABSTRACT

Due to environmental awareness and climate changes, businesses are realising the value of integrating sustainability into their marketing strategy. Today, nations all across the world share the objective of sustainable development. The public, governments, organisations, and individuals must all participate in sustainable development, which is an integrated and holistic approach that operates at the local, regional, national, and international levels. Green marketing is the practice of promoting goods and services on the grounds of their positive effects on the environment, such as their ability to avoid environmental degradation and reduce pollution. These goods are produced, packaged, and sold using environmentally responsible methods. Although environmentally friendly production and packaging practices have drawn more attention, more has to be done to focus on environmentally friendly product marketing and distribution strategies. One such technique is social media marketing. Social media platforms have developed into effective tools that help companies communicate with a large audience and convey their message. Social media is essential for promoting sustainable messaging and interacting with eco-aware customers in the context of green marketing. The current research has demonstrated that social networks and network marketing strategies can significantly impact green marketing initiatives. The results of the research will assist marketers in comprehending the significant influence that social media has on consumers' inclinations to make purchases.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Importance, Green Products, Social media marketing, Digital Platforms

Introduction:

The emerging environmental concerns around the world like global warming, industrial air, disposal of hazardous waste, toxic landfills and degradation of vital natural resources due to the dominant growing population are the demanding issues in impending twenty-first century. Due to the environmental problems, the notion of sustainability is now in the forefront (Chua et al., 2019; Quoquab et al., 2019). The consumers around the world are more vigilant about the nature and environment in which they live-in. It is argued that the green purchase behaviour can be considered as one of the foremost contributor to environmental sustainability (Joshi and Rahman, 2016). Sustainability is the term that would direct consumer product marketing in the direction of eco-friendly products, which is named as "green marketing" (Kayalvizhi K et al, 2020). According to Cambridge dictionary, "Green Marketing refers to the advertising undertakings of products that are considered good, packaging process, expressed in the strategies of changing product design, environmentally friendly, advertising activities to meet the green needs of the user". Green marketing includes doing all the marketing activities keeping green or sustainable vision in mind.

Globalisation and economic evolution has led to fundamental changes in consumption behaviour, strategies of production and technology uprising with the wide spread of internet usage and its acceptance amongst consumers. In this situation, social media has appeared as a platform of electronic communication through sharing of information, ideas and user created contents through networking and blogging. Globally, the total

number of social media users is estimated to grow to 3.29 billion users in 2022, which will be 42.3% of the world's population (eMarketer 2018).

As the globalisation process continues its enormous strides across the globe, it has also brought manufacturers' and marketers' attention to some associated problems, one of which is environmental concerns that impact all living beings. Consumers now have worries about the future environment of the world and as a result prefer environment friendly products; in recognition of these concerns of consumers, companies have started to make their marketing strategies more appealing by offering environment-friendly products and promotions. Green marketing has emerged as one of the most important marketing techniques in the current global business environment.

Due to its associations with sustainable development, green marketing has received a lot of attention in the current global context. Social media has emerged as one of the most powerful tools for consumer marketing, and as it becomes more and more integrated into people's daily lives, it is altering the dynamic between consumers and marketers (Ismail, 2017). In this case, social media emerged as an electronic communication platform through user-generated content, ideas, and information shared via blogging and networking (S. Krishnamurthy and W. Dou, 2008). These social media platforms help green marketer to advertise their organic products widely. Customers may easily access an extensive amount of information through the media, compare disparate pieces of information rapidly, and read reviews of products, giving them the ability to make more informed decisions for themselves. Compared to traditional channels, social media offers distinct benefits for interacting with people and learning about their behaviour more quickly and effectively. Since social media platforms are free, it makes sense that using them for personal and professional purposes is less expensive.

Organic personal care products are a necessary and vital part of our society. The understanding that physical attractiveness is connected to both internal and outward well-being has increased as a result of the recent mini-lockdowns that were repeated throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The importance of sustainable consumption is also emphasised in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were created by the UNDP. Goal 12 of the SDGs is to achieve "Sustainable consumption and production patterns." The development of chemistry, materials, and packaging has led to numerous significant technological advances that have coincided with the history of personal care products. Growing numbers of new products are being released annually, which is increasing consumer interest in green cosmetics.

Consumers are primarily looking for high-quality, ecological items that meet their needs in the modern world. In today's cosmetics and personal care industry, sustainability is essential. For this reason, people's preferences for skincare products have grown while those for makeup have decreased. Social media is one of the most widely used channels for public awareness-raising and communication these days. The majority of people use social media to read, talk about, and share their knowledge and experiences, which influences other people's perspectives. Therefore, it's crucial to understand how social media affects customers' purchasing decisions about different organic personal care products. In order to better understand how exposure to different social media platforms affects the entire purchasing process from attitude formation to information search and evaluation of alternatives to final purchase decision the study intends to concentrate on awareness and usage of various organic personal care products.

Theoretical Framework and Research Hypothesis:

Online programmes, platforms, and media that encourage communication, collaboration, and content sharing are referred to as social media (Erkan and Evans, 2016). Social media marketing is defined as "the utilisation of social media technologies, channels, and software to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that have value for an organization's stakeholders" (Tuten & Solomon 2017). Social media, with its attributes of involvement, openness, dialogue, community, and connectedness, is fundamentally human communication (Veil, Buehner and Palenchar, 2011). According to Singh et al. (2012), social media has paved the way for businesses and customers to make connections between green and non-green products, hence incentivizing consumers to purchase more compelling and competitive items. Businesses are looking for increased exposure on several social media channels in order to connect with clients via digital networks.

Wang et al. (2012) claimed that social media interactions have an impact on consumers' decisions to buy products both directly—by encouraging users to reply to their peers—and indirectly—by influencing how much time users spend thinking about and researching a product. Consequently, a product's internet presence is essential to the ultimate purchasing decisions made by customers. So according to the social influence concept, social media use can have a significant impact on a final collaboration.

H1: Social media platforms has significant effect on consumer buying decisions.

According to Ahmetoglu et al. (2014), price is a crucial criterion for making decisions on green purchasing. The high cost of buying green goods may have an impact on customers' willingness and ability to make green product purchases. Many studies have looked into how price consciousness affects consumers' intents and behaviours when making purchases (Ahmetoglu et al., 2014; Arce Salazar and Oerlemans, 2016). Consumers in India are very price sensitive. They don't want to pay premium price for green products unless they are fully known to benefits of green products. Green pricing provides effective productivity while taking into account the needs of people, the environment, and profit. It also protects the health of workers and communities. It can be made more valuable by altering its look, capabilities, customisation, etc.

H2: Price has significant effect on consumer buying decisions.

Word-of-mouth communication is simply a message about a customer's product or service, or about the company itself. It might take the shape of comments regarding the product's success, the level of operation, hospitality, integrity, and certain issues that other people have seen and experienced. Consumers may be significantly impacted by word-of-mouth interactions. According to Wang (2015), customer purchase decisions are influenced by EWOM. According to Lamba et al. (2016), EWOM influenced the purchasing decisions of customers. Customers may be able to interact with other customers much more intimately and receive product information more quickly with the help of EWOM.

H3: E-wom has significant effect on consumer buying decisions.

Configuring promotional resources, including as advertising, marketing materials, signage, white papers, websites, films, and presentations, with people, the environment, and profits in mind is known as "green promotion." Advertising a product or service with the intention of boosting sales, either temporarily or permanently, is known as promotion. Numerous businesses employ various strategies to market their goods using a wide range of communication channels. With so many options available today, it's critical to choose a communication channel that best fits the kind of product you're trying to market. According to Leonidou et al. (2010), "green advertising" is defined as any form of advertising that emphasises environmental sustainability and pleasant messaging while defining the demands and preferences of shareholders who care about the environment. Additionally, Polonsky and Rosenberger III (2001) argue that green promotions should draw attention to ecological information for customers affiliated with the company, as they promote the environmental features of items. Moreover, a number of research revealed occasionally disparate findings. Schuhwerk and Lefkoff-Hagius (1995), for instance, discovered that green advertising only had a favourable impact on customers who were less involved in the environment. In their research, D'Souza and Taghian (2005) have demonstrated the reverse. Consequently, green marketers ought to be permitted to employ green advertising as a means of connecting with prospective clients (Abbasi et al., 2012).

H3: Promotion has significant effect on consumer buying decisions.

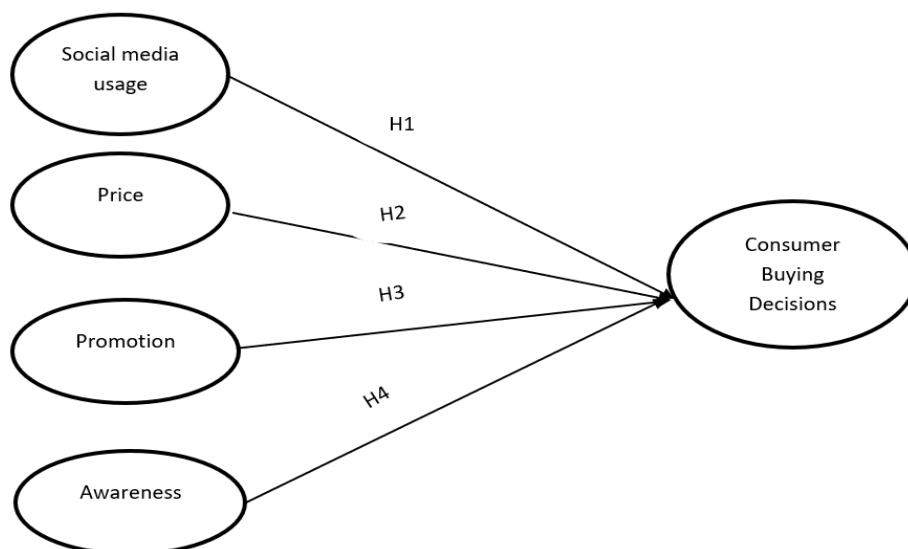
Product awareness is the pinnacle of the rules and information about a product category that are retained in the mind of a consumer (Philippe and Ngobo, 1999). One of the most significant variables influencing consumers' attitudes towards engaging in pro-environmental purchasing behaviour is product knowledge (McEachern and Warnaby, 2008; Cho et al., 2013). It is the responsibility of marketers to provide green product information, eco-friendly labelling by using content through green messages to educate consumers with their green brands. Customers who value the environment when making purchase decisions are motivated by environmentally friendly products and green brand awareness (Tariq, 2014).

H4: Awareness has significant effect on consumer buying decisions.

In order to reduce the environmental impact of resource discovery and increase resource productivity, green buying refers to the process of weighing environmental factors alongside price and function while making purchasing decisions (Schlegelmilch and others). Customers pay attention to product qualities and attributes in addition to environmental concerns. Many studies have been carried out in the last ten years to learn how consumers view green products. According to an initial research, green items were regarded as being of lesser quality than non-green products.

Conceptual model:

This study asserts that green marketing impact through social media platforms positively affect the consumer buying decisions. The antecedent of the research framework is social media usage, price, promotion, awareness and the consequent is consumer buying decisions. The research framework is shown in Figure 1.



Research Methodology

To get the primary data, a convenience sampling strategy was employed. The convenience sampling is a non-sampling method that makes it simple for the researcher to reach respondents. Convenience sampling, according to Emerson (2015), is appropriate when the audience is unfamiliar with the phenomenon and the researchers wish to generate novel ideas.

The respondents were consumers who had experience of purchasing organic personal care products. Self-administered questionnaire were used to collect data from the potential respondents. Before starting filling questionnaire from respondents, they were first asked enquiry question; for instance, whether they had earlier purchased organic personal care products, or not. Respondents with a positive answer were requested to fill in the questionnaire. The questionnaire had two sections. The first section measured different variables of the study. The social media usage 4 items scale was adopted from Jain et al., 2020. The price 4 items scale was adopted from Herrmann et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2011. For promotion, 5 items scale was adopted from Shah, 2019. The awareness 5 items scale was adopted from Chinnasamy et al. (2022). The demographic profile of consumers was gathered in the second portion of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was forwarded to 20 consumers for pilot testing. Factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha values are used to assess the validity and reliability of the data. The questionnaire has been slightly modified in light of the findings of the pilot testing. Five – point Likert scale (1- strongly disagree – 5 Strongly Agree). Respondents first reported their awareness level toward organic personal care products brands. Then, they rated a number of items regarding the scale comprising the consumer buying decisions: social media usage, price, promotion, awareness. Since these are the largest cities in the state of Punjab and where the majority of the population is concentrated, data were gathered from Ludhiana, Amritsar, and Jalandhar. The number of samples needed to achieve a model-fit is based on Tabachnick and Fidell's (2001) guideline that each parameter estimation requires at least 10 samples. As a result, information was gathered from 300 respondents. Because of missing data, 16 questionnaires had to be excluded from further analysis. The Demographic profile of the sample is given in table

Table 1. Demographic profile of the sample

		N	%
Gender	Male	114	40.3
	Female	170	59.7
	Total	284	100
Age	18-30	172	60.7
	31 - 43	60	21
	44 & above	52	18.3
	Total	284	100
Education level	Under graduate	214	75.5
	Post graduate	70	24.5
	Total	284	100

Profile of the respondents

The demographic profile of respondents indicates that a majority 59.7% of the respondents were females and the remaining were males. With respect to age, an overwhelming percentage of respondents 60.7% are in the age group of 18–30 years. There are 21% of respondents in the age group of 31–43 years. 18.3% of respondents were above 44 years of age. The distribution of sample is representative of the overall population distribution in the Kingdom. In terms of educational qualification, 75.5% of the respondents have undergraduate qualification.

Overall model fit

Using the most recent version of AMOS, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and reliability analysis were carried out for all the constructs. The CFA results indicate the good theoretical model fits (see Table 2). The average extracted variance (AVE) of the constructs is greater than the minimal requirement of 0.50. These findings support the discriminant validity of all constructs as well as the convergent validity of each concept. The composite reliabilities for each of the constructs and the reliability estimations for each construct using coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951) were greater than 0.70. Because they are greater than the advised 0.50 threshold, all shared variances collected for each construct are considered acceptable (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Because the AVE is bigger than the square of the discriminant, discriminant validity is also proved. The AVE is bigger than the square of the construct's correlations with the other components, establishing discriminant validity as well (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Overall, the measurement model statistics are consistent with the survey instruments' psychometric qualities.

Table 2CFA of complete measurement model

Scale and item description (N = 284)	Factorloadings	Alpha
Social Media usage		0.808
I am always keen to use social media.	0.858	
I often read posts shared on social media.	0.875	
Social media posts influence my opinions.	0.830	
My purchasing decisions are guided by social media	0.807	
Price		0.857
Their should be Fair price of the product.	0.798	
Provide good value for money	0.873	
I am willing to spend extra money in order to buy organic products.	0.845	
It is acceptable to pay more for organic than conventional products	0.830	
Promotion		0.775
Optimal use of available space.	0.859	
The use of a fleet that is new and environmentally friendly.	0.903	
Provide offers such as price discount, coupons etc.	0.856	
Promotion done by organic personal care product companies explain the environmental features of the product.	0.868	
Promotion done by these companies is trustworthy.	0.890	
Awareness		0.889
Promote a green lifestyle	0.873	
I am aware of the characteristics of organic personal care products X brand	0.845	
I can always remember the logo of organic personal care products X brand.	0.879	
Characteristics of organic personal care X brand come to my mind quickly	0.837	
I can quickly recall the symbol of organic personal care X brand.	0.842	
Consumer Buying Decisions		0.881
I only purchase green products for my daily needs	0.857	
Organic products are part of my daily needs products.	0.842	
My purchasing behavior has been green for the last few weeks.	0.837	
I have had a green buying activity in the last six months.	0.845	

Result of Hypothesis:

Following the validation of the measurement model, hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling (SEM). The structural model’s fit was assessed using the same model fit statistics from the CFA. Scores of the fit statistics of the CFA revealed that all of these are within the cut-off points suggested by Hair et al. (2010). Hypotheses were tested using the criteria of statistical significance of the relationship at the 0.05 level. In addition, AVE (average variance extracted), Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability (CR) were also examined. All of the data exceeded the acceptable levels. Results are presented in Table 3 & 4.

Table 3 Assessment of the measurement model

Factors/Constructs	CR	Cronbach’s Alpha	AVE
Social media usage	0.907	0.864	0.710

Price	0.903	0.857	0.700
Promotion	0.900	0.843	0.762
Awareness	0.900	0.851	0.770
Consumer buying decisions	0.914	0.873	0.727

Table 4SEM output for hypothesised relationships in the proposed model *SEM output*

Hypotheses	Hypotheses paths	Standard Regression weights	Results
H1	Social media usage → Consumers buying decision	0.17	Supported
H2	Price → Consumers buying decision	0.04	Not Supported
H3	Promotion → Consumers buying decision	0.21	Supported
H4	Awareness → Consumers buying decision	0.23	Supported

Discussions & Implications:

The present research study was conducted to elucidate the impact of green marketing attributes through social media platforms in building consumer buying decisions towards organic personal care products. The researchers revealed that out of the four constructs of green marketing, three of them significantly helps in influencing consumer buying decisions. The findings revealed that social media usage,

promotion and awareness, influence the buying decisions of consumers of organic personal care products. However, price did not exert any significant impact on it. Hence, consumers firmly feel that organic personal care products are one of the solutions to ecological challenges since they are beneficial for health and perform better in terms of quality and environmental performance. These products were rapidly and easily accessible to customers. The green brand awareness tools adopted by marketers make customers aware of the ecological benefits of such green products and make them readily acceptable.

Limitations, future directions and conclusion

While the findings of this study are intriguing, a few caveats must be addressed. To begin, future research should take into account more variables as well as the broader green marketing aspect in order to better investigate the factors impacting consumer buying decisions. Second, this study only looked at four aspects of green marketing through social media platforms. It will be fascinating to explore how social media affects scholars and marketers, as well as a full examination of other aspects of social media. Finally, respondents were recruited from a subset of Punjabi's customers, limiting the findings' generalizability. Further research in other regions is necessary. Finally, this study offers preliminary findings in areas of expanding significance to marketers, such as increased worldwide coverage of environmental issues, an emphasis on greener and cleaner options, and cleaner marketing options and innovations, and asks for further study on environmentally responsible marketing in the face of rising competition.

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