Role Of Sustainable Marketing In Brand Development And Customer Satisfaction

Dr. Srijib Shankar Jha[1*]

[1*]Associate Professor, Faculty of Management Studies Marwadi University, Rajkot, Gujrat, INDIA, Email ID: srijib.jha@gmail.com

ARTICLEINO	ABSTRACT
	This study explores the area of sustainable marketing activities and their influence on brand development and customer contentment. This research aims to examine the relationship between sustainable marketing practices and their impact on brand perception and customer satisfaction in the Bangalore region in service sector. As sustainability becomes more important in company strategy, this study will assess how sustainable marketing practices affect how customers perceive a brand and how satisfied they are with their experience. The study seeks to analyse several sustainable marketing strategies in different industries in order to uncover recurring patterns and trends that enhance brand image and increase consumer satisfaction. The study utilises a quantitative methodology, integrating marketing indicators with customer feedback insights. This study aims to provide important information for organisations seeking to incorporate sustainability by examining how sustainable marketing activities resonate with customers and contribute to brand equity.
	Keywords: Brand image, sustainability, customer satisfaction

Introduction

Organisations prioritise sustainability to ensure constant and enduring corporate success. When evaluating a company's long-term ability to survive and thrive, it is crucial to prioritise sustainability as one of your primary concerns (Liu et al., 2019). The company showcased in this article demonstrates its long-term sustainability by actively catering to the needs of the community. It is crucial to carry out corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives with a specific emphasis on sustainability. Utilising environmentally-friendly products and engaging in de-marketing efforts are instances of sustainable management practices that a business implements to guarantee environmental sustainability. Organisations undertake numerous sustainability-related initiatives to ensure their long-term viability.

Amid a time characterised by increased environmental consciousness and changing customer values, businesses are increasingly acknowledging the necessity of incorporating sustainability into their fundamental operations. This shift in paradigm has not only transformed business strategy but has also elevated sustainable marketing to a position of utmost importance in organisational priorities. This study aims to thoroughly investigate sustainable marketing activities and their significant impact on both brand development and customer happiness. The convergence of ethical consumerism and corporate social responsibility has resulted in a dynamic environment where corporations are obligated to synchronise their marketing endeavours with principles that strongly connect with socially aware consumers. As customers carefully examine both the products and the values of the brands they support, it is crucial for businesses to comprehend the complex dynamics of sustainable marketing in order to succeed in this changing environment.

In light of this context, the study seeks to analyse the complex connection between sustainable marketing strategies and their impact on brand equity and consumer satisfaction. The objectives involve a thorough analysis of various sustainable marketing projects in different industries, with the purpose of identifying patterns that greatly contribute to a positive brand image and increased customer satisfaction. This research aims to provide a detailed understanding of how sustainable marketing appeals to different consumer groups by using a mixed-methods approach. This methodology combines quantitative analysis of marketing indicators with qualitative insights obtained from customer feedback.

This study holds great importance outside the scope of academic investigation, as its results are positioned to provide significant direction for firms navigating the intricate landscape of sustainable marketing. In today's corporate landscape, sustainability has become an essential aspect rather than just a passing trend.

Understanding the consequences of sustainable marketing operations is crucial for adopting ethical business practices and fostering long-term brand loyalty and customer engagement. This study aims to provide valuable insights that enable marketers, managers, and legislators to navigate towards a more sustainable and consumer-centric future, as firms seek to find a harmonious equilibrium between profit goals and societal well-being.

Literature review

Organisations' marketing efforts strive to fulfil the social and ethical expectations of their target audiences by activities such as promoting cultural values, safeguarding the environment, and providing assistance to victims of natural calamities (Choi & Sung, 2013). Research conducted by Maignan and Ferrell (2001) indicates that implementing sustainability marketing strategies has a positive impact on firm profitability, extends the longevity of the organisation, and enhances brand image. Martínez and Del Bosque (2013) and Prates, Pedrozo, and Silva (2015) argue that corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts contribute to long-term growth by fostering brand loyalty among customers, rather than prioritising short-term earnings. Research conducted by Kandampully and Suhartanto (2003) and Porter and Kramer (2006) suggests that an organisation can gain a competitive edge by developing strong brand equity. This can be achieved by implementing sustainable marketing practices and prioritising customer satisfaction.

An increasing number of individuals are expressing concern about the environment, and corporations are facing pressure to behave properly. Implementing sustainable branding and marketing strategies, along with sustainable management systems, can be beneficial in addressing this issue (Sun et al., 2014). Environmental concerns might motivate consumers to take a more proactive and receptive approach towards green consumption. The Resource-Based View (RBV) hypothesis also assists brands and consumers in making enduring purchasing decisions. A comparative advantage arises when a company possesses distinctive resources in comparison to its rivals.

Companies can leverage their comparative advantage to offer marketing promotions that are either (a) more costly to produce or (b) seen as having greater value. Multiple research have demonstrated that corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies have a beneficial influence on customer behaviour, specifically in terms of product evaluation (Abdeen et al., 2016; Abbas et al., 2018; Huo et al., 2022). One of the research papers focuses on the intention to engage in sustainable shopping. According to Husnain and Toor (2017), customers are more inclined to back businesses that actively strive to enhance society, as opposed to those who show less concern for social issues. The stakeholder theory supports corporate social initiatives, such as sustainable marketing, purchasing intention, and customer relations, in this context (Zhang and Ahmad, 2021). Customers are a significant group of stakeholders that respond to corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). To comprehend the influence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes on consumers, one must have a grasp of stakeholder theory. The CSR policies of an organisation can have an influence on the mental well-being of consumers and the welfare of the community. However, the effect of customer awareness of CSR on their purchasing decisions is still uncertain. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an approach in which a company's activities are aligned with social, environmental, and consumer concerns to optimise the distribution of benefits to the company's owners, stakeholders, and society as a whole (Fernández-Guadaño and Sarria-Pedroza, 2018).

Sustainable marketing enables a company to achieve additional objectives beyond its profit-driven business operations (Min Kong and Ko, 2017). Interpersonal connections can influence the perception of a brand by customers. Customers can establish a link between the company's products and their intended behavioural outcomes by taking part in company-sponsored social activities (Park et al., 2017). Businesses, as active participants in society, are cognizant of and fulfil their social obligations within the community. Businesses have the potential to evolve into social enterprises when we consider the broader perspective. Examples of social contribution activities include distributing food to individuals in need, offering complimentary health checks to the community, and engaging in other forms of volunteerism within the area. To create effective sustainable marketing strategies, it is important to consider all social activities rather than just one aspect of the Triple Bottom Line (Ko et al., 2015).

Brand image has been a central topic of discussion in marketing since the 1950s (Cho et al., 2015). A distinctive and recognisable brand image is crucial for a product to differentiate itself in a highly competitive market. It functions as a symbol of the brand, facilitates the establishment of connections with consumers, and enables customers to evaluate the brand (Ramesh et al., 2019). Therefore, numerous companies continue to believe that brand building is of utmost importance (Cho et al., 2015). Low and Lamb (2000) define brand image as a combination of symbolic, pragmatic, emotional, and rational perspectives towards the brand. The term "brand image" refers to an individual's view of themselves in relation to a brand (Sirgy, 1985). Consumers are more likely to form strong emotional connections with companies when they perceive that these brands are consistent with their self-image, as stated by Sirgy (1985).

Most experts (Abbas et al., 2018) agree that customer engagement (CE) may be described by a complete model that incorporates cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components. The fundamental basis of this strategy is

on the notion that a robust connection between a firm and its clientele is the pivotal factor for achieving success. Consumer engagement (CE) can be understood as a cognitive and affective state that motivates consumers to engage in behaviours that are beneficial for the business. Brand image is essential for effectively engaging customers. Multiple research have investigated the connections between brand perception and customer interaction in this particular environment (Hollebeek, 2011). Van Doorn et al. (2010) conducted an empirical study that examines the relationship between brand attributes and consumer involvement. When a firm is attractive and fosters a positive self-perception among its customers, they are more likely to engage with the company (Godfrey et al., 2009). Prior research has demonstrated that when consumers hold a positive perception of a fashion brand, they are more inclined to engage with that brand (Islam and Rahman, 2016).

Organisations are becoming more aware of the significance of synchronising their marketing endeavours with social and ethical requirements in order to fulfil the expectations of their target customers (Choi & Sung, 2013). Sustainable marketing efforts including promoting culture, safeguarding the environment, and assisting victims of natural catastrophes. The research conducted by Maignan and Ferrell (2001) indicates that these activities not only enhance corporate social responsibility but also have a favourable effect on company profitability, extend the company's longevity, and enhance brand image.

The connection between sustainable marketing and brand image: Research in the field of literature confirms that sustainable marketing actions have a substantial impact on the development of brand image. Sun et al. (2014) contend that sustainable branding and marketing strategies, in conjunction with sustainable management systems, are essential in tackling environmental issues and satisfying customer demands for ethical company operations. Environmental concerns have been demonstrated to motivate consumers to participate in green consumption, as evidenced by Sun et al. (2014). Elkington (1998) highlights that sustainable marketing extends beyond production and sales, embracing the social and environmental ethics of both local communities and consumers.

The literature clearly demonstrates the influence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts on brand perception. Prates, Pedrozo, and Silva (2015) emphasise that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plays a crucial role in promoting long-term growth by cultivating brand loyalty among customers. Various research confirm that corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies have a favourable impact on customer behaviour, namely in terms of product evaluation and the desire to make sustainable purchases (Abdeen et al., 2016; Abbas et al., 2018; Huo et al., 2022). Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) observe that consumers play a crucial role as essential stakeholders who respond favourably to corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, highlighting the impact of CSR on shaping customer attitudes.

Brand image is a complex concept that encompasses consumers' beliefs, feelings, and impressions regarding a product or service (Cretu & Brodie, 2007). The brand encompasses symbolic, pragmatic, emotional, and intellectual perspectives (Low & Lamb, 2000). The affective bond that customers establish with specific elements of a brand plays a vital role in creating their mental representation (Cho et al., 2015). A robust brand reputation has a favourable impact on how a company is regarded, its performance, and its ability to withstand competition (Alexander et al., 2014).

A positive brand image has been linked to improved customer satisfaction. According to Islam and Rahman (2016), pleasant brand interactions and a favourable brand image enhance customer loyalty. Huo et al. (2022) proposes that implementing corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives can enhance the way a brand is perceived, resulting in favourable consumer behaviour and ultimately contributing to a competitive edge. Research has demonstrated that implementing corporate sustainability marketing tactics can enhance the public's view of a company's brand (Jung et al., 2020; Gleim et al., 2023).

Hypothesis:
H1: There is a significant impact of sustainable marketing activities on the formation of brand image.
H2: Brand image significantly contributes to the enhancement of customer satisfaction.

Research Methodology:

This quantitative study employs an exploratory research design to investigate the influence of sustainable marketing activities on building brands and satisfying customers. Data is collected through structured surveys distributed to a representative sample of consumers who avail services from tourist companies. The survey instrument includes questions based on a Likert scale designed to measure perceptions of sustainable marketing practices, brand image, and customer satisfaction. The study employs a random sampling technique to ensure the representativeness of the sample. The target population comprises consumers who have interacted with brands engaging in sustainable marketing practices in tourism industry. The sample size is determined based on statistical power calculations to achieve sufficient precision and generalizability of the findings. Data analysis involves the use of advanced statistical techniques, including structural equation modelling (SEM), to assess the relationships between sustainable marketing activities, brand image, and customer satisfaction. Descriptive statistics and factor analysis are used to assess the factors influencing sustainable marketing activities on brand image.

Results and discussion:

Table 1: Demographics (N=310)

Measures	Items	Percentage
Gender	Female	43
	Male	57
Education	Post graduate	32
	Secondary board/ Equivalent degree	22
	Under graduate	46
Age of the respondents	Less than 25	29
	26 to 35	37
	36 to 45	18
	46 to 55	11
	Above 55	5

Source: Primary survey

The results presented in Table 1 provide an overview of the demographic characteristics of the study participants (N=310). In terms of gender distribution, the majority of respondents were male (57%), while 43% identified as female. Regarding educational backgrounds, the data indicates that 46% of the participants hold undergraduate degrees, 32% have completed postgraduate education, and 22% possess secondary board or equivalent degrees. The age distribution of respondents reflects a diverse sample, with the largest proportion falling within the 26 to 35 age group (37%), followed by those under 25 years old (29%), and individuals aged 36 to 45 (18%). The study also includes participants aged 46 to 55 (11%) and those above 55 (5%). These demographic insights highlight the diversity of the sample, encompassing a broad range of genders, educational levels, and age groups. This demographic diversity is crucial for ensuring the generalizability and representativeness of the study findings across various segments of the population.

Factor analysis:

The items on the scale were pre-tested using a preliminary factor analysis to make sure they loaded correctly (i.e., had a factor loading score greater than 0.5) and that there was no cross-loading. To find out if a sample is big enough for additional research, scientists use the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value. Factor analysis seems to be beneficial for our data due to a high KMO value of 0. 890 and a tiny significance value of less than 0.05 from Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. Using the Varimax Rotation Method Kaiser Normalisation, the 21 elements were put through Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Six factors were identified, accounting for 80.65% of the total variance, using factor extraction criteria with Eigen values larger than 1. A company's marketing efforts can have a positive impact on the environment, society, and culture as a whole through its sustainable marketing initiatives, which are a higher-order dimension.

The reliability coefficient, Cronbach's alpha, was used to determine the internal consistency of the elements that would make up the proposed scale. Alpha values are greater than the cutoff value of 0.70, as may be deduced from the table. Reference: Hair et al. (2010).

Table 2: Factor loadings of variables (N=310)

	Loadings	Mean	Std.	Alpha
Econ1	.809	1.85	.977	0.914
Econ2	.810	1.71	1.000	
Econ3	.829	1.80	.982	
Econ4	.828	1.74	.900	
Social1	.811	1.85	.883	0.878
Social2	.838	1.87	.845	
Social3	.772	1.80	.888	
Envir1	.810	1.96	.932	0.926
Envri2	.840	1.86	.946	
Envir3	.827	1.97	.970	
Envir4	.798	1.93	.929	
Cultur1	.750	1.84	.857	0.923
Cultur2	.874	1.80	.792	
Cultur3	.853	1.83	.817	

CS1	.739	1.81	.916	0.873
CS2	.890	1.80	.830	
CS3	.845	1.79	.828	
CS4	.736	1.71	.897	
BI1	.817	1.71	.838	0.847
BI2	.801	1.97	.928	
BI3	.836	1.78	.845	

4.3 Hypothesis testing using Structural Equation Modelling:

In order to determine whether there is a causal association between the research constructs, the study used SEM analysis with the maximum likelihood approach. First, the study looked at how sustainable marketing efforts including higher-order factors affected brand image, and then it looked at how brand image affected consumer satisfaction. At the 5% level of significance, a p-value less than 0.05 and a critical ratio value of 1.96 provide the criteria for accepting or rejecting a study hypothesis.

The findings of the hypothesis testing and path analysis are detailed in Table 3. For every association, we display the standardised path coefficients, together with their statistical significance and p-value. For Hypothesis 1 (H1), which posits a link between sustainable marketing activities and brand image, the standardized regression weight is 0.533 with a critical ratio (CR) of 10.152 and a p-value of 0.000. These results suggest a statistically significant and positive influence of sustainable marketing activities on brand image as $p<0.05$ and CR (t value)>1.96, leading to the acceptance of H1.

Similarly, for Hypothesis 2 (H2), which suggests a relationship between brand image and customer satisfaction, the standardized regression weight is .0565, the CR is 11.416, and the p-value is 0.000. These findings demonstrate a statistically significant and positive association between brand image and customer satisfaction, supporting the acceptance of H2.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) value is 0.282, indicating that 28.2% of variations in brand image explained by sustainable marketing activities. However, brand image is able to explained 32% of variations in customer satisfaction.
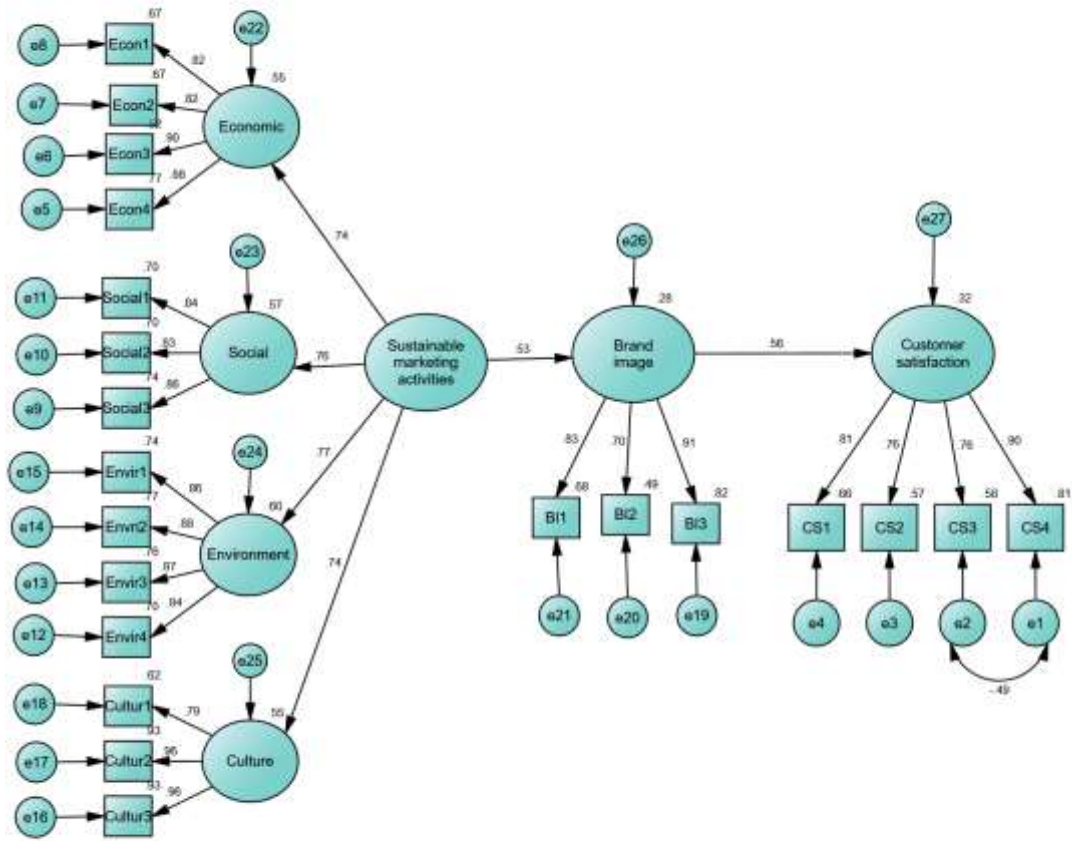
Figure 1: Casual model

Table 3: Path coefficients of the Structural model

Hypotheses	SE.	CR.	P	Standardized regression weights	Result
H1: Sustainable marketing activities→ Brand image	.068	10.152	0.000	0.533	Accepted
H2: Brand image → Customer satisfaction	.052	11.416	0.000	0.565	Accepted

Note: SE; Standard error, CR; Critical ratio, and p: probability of significance.

The results of the structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis offer strong evidence in favour of the hypotheses being investigated. The study reveals a substantial association between sustainable marketing efforts and brand image, as indicated by a standardised regression weight of 0.533. As organisations use sustainable marketing methods, it positively affects the development and improvement of their brand image. The second hypothesis, which investigates the correlation between brand image and customer pleasure, also receives substantial backing. The results from the structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis demonstrate a statistically significant and positive association, as evidenced by a standardised regression weight of 0.565. This highlights the need of fostering a favourable brand reputation to augment total client contentment. Therefore, these discoveries provide useful knowledge to both the academic and business sectors, confirming the essential significance of sustainable marketing strategies in influencing how a brand is perceived and promoting customer contentment. The empirical results from this study highlights the importance of incorporating sustainability into marketing strategies, emphasising its ability to have a beneficial impact on both brand equity and consumer satisfaction.

Table 4: Overall Model Fit

Indices	Recommended criteria	Model values
Normed chi square (χ^2/DF)	1<χ^2/df<3	2.761
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	>0.90	0.898
Adjusted GFI (AGFI)	>0.80	0.873
Comparative fit index (CFI)	>0.95	0.953
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	<0.05 good fit <0.08 acceptable fit	0.064
Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)	0<TLI<1	0.947

(Source: Researcher's calculation based on primary survey). Threshold criteria suggested by Hair et al., (2010) study.

The interpretation of the model fit indices suggests that the structural equation model (SEM) demonstrates a generally good fit to the observed data, as indicated by the recommended criteria and corresponding model values. The normed chi-square (χ^2/DF) falls within the acceptable range (1<χ^2/df<3), with a value of 2.761, indicating that the observed covariance matrix aligns well with the model's estimated covariance matrix. Although the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) falls slightly below the recommended threshold (>0.90), registering at 0.898, it still indicates a reasonable fit. The Adjusted GFI (AGFI) surpasses the minimum threshold (>0.80) with a value of 0.873, further supporting the model's adequacy. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) exceeds the recommended value (>0.95) at 0.953, demonstrating a high level of fit between the proposed model and the observed data. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is well within the acceptable range (<0.08) at 0.064, indicating a good fit. Lastly, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) falls within the acceptable range (0<TLI<1) with a value of 0.947, suggesting a satisfactory fit. Overall, these indices collectively suggest that the structural equation model provides a reasonable and acceptable representation of the relationships among the variables in the study.

Discussion and Implications:
The findings of the study validate the substantial influence of sustainable marketing initiatives on the development of brand perception, hence supporting our hypothesis (H1). Businesses that adopt sustainable practices not only meet societal standards but also foster a favourable brand image among consumers. Aligning marketing activities with ethical and ecological ideals improves a brand's reputation and cultivates a bond with environmentally and socially aware consumers. This discovery aligns with the wider pattern in which consumers are increasingly taking into account a company's dedication to sustainability when deciding what to buy.

In addition, our investigation confirms a substantial correlation between brand image and customer happiness, so validating our second hypothesis (H2). The cultivation of a favourable brand reputation, achieved via the implementation of sustainable marketing initiatives, has a substantial role in enhancing consumer satisfaction as a whole. Consumers who view a brand as socially responsible and ecologically sensitive are more inclined to cultivate trust and loyalty towards that brand. This discovery emphasises the strategic significance of sustainable marketing, which not only influences how customers perceive a company but also directly affects their level of satisfaction.

The consequences of our investigation are diverse and varied. First and foremost, our research highlights the significance of integrating sustainable practices into organisations' marketing efforts. Investing in sustainable projects not only enhances a brand's image but also directly influences customer happiness. This emphasises the necessity for firms to perceive sustainability not only as a statutory obligation but as a strategic necessity that impacts consumer perceptions and behaviours.

Additionally, marketers can utilise the findings from this study to create focused advertising efforts that highlight a brand's dedication to sustainability. Effectively conveying these principles can be a potent strategy for improving brand image and, as a result, increasing customer happiness. In response to the growing demand for businesses that reflect consumers' values, developing ideas that resonate with sustainability can provide a competitive edge.

Policymakers and industry stakeholders can use our work to promote sustainable business practices. The strong association between sustainable marketing, brand image, and customer pleasure indicates that promoting a corporate environment that supports and incentivizes sustainability can result in both financial advantages for enterprises and improved consumer welfare.

Conclusion

The study presents empirical evidence of the complex interconnections among sustainable marketing operations, the construction of brand image, and consumer satisfaction. By acknowledging the crucial significance of sustainability in influencing the connections between brands and consumers, businesses and marketers may purposefully synchronise their actions to generate a favourable influence on both the value of the brand and the satisfaction of customers. Consequently, this has significant consequences for the future of trade, highlighting the essential importance of sustainable practices in establishing prosperous and socially accountable enterprises.

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