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## Assessing the Impact of Green Brand Image on Gen Z's Purchase Behaviour: The Mediating Role of Brand Trust in the FMCG Sector.

**Nikhil Kumar Kannojiya**

Research Scholar, B.Com (Hons.), Atma Ram Sanatan Dharma College

**Dr. Anu Priya Arora**

Assistant Professor, Atma Ram Sanatan Dharma College

### Abstract

Ethical Consumerism is one of many ways that businesses can demonstrate their commitment towards environmental stewardship (by using a green brand image) while at the same time creating a strong positive brand image for the environmentally conscious Generation Z consumers. Therefore, establishing a framework for this research. A quantitative research method was used to collect primary data from a random sampling of Generation Z respondents located in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) by means of a Likert-type scale digital survey questionnaire designed to measure green brand image and brand trust, as well as purchase intentions with respect to green FMCG products. Further data collection was performed in order to validate the results obtained during the first phase of research. Data analysis was performed using SPSS Version 23, and included reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis.

The results indicate that the perception of a brand in terms of being environmentally friendly impacts purchasing behaviours positively by increasing trust in the brand amongst Generation Z. Trust in a brand can also serve to moderate the relationship between a perceived environmental image and the purchasing habits of Generation Z. Thus, trustworthy brands have a strong influence over the environmentally conscious buyer's decision making and motivation. Therefore, when either of these two key factors is viewed as a truly environmentally friendly product, there is an increase in trust towards the brand resulting in an increased willingness to purchase. This study demonstrates how perceived environmentally friendly brand images shape consumer purchasing behaviours related to fast-moving consumer goods.

**Keywords:** Green Brand Image; Brand Trust; Green Consumer Behaviour; Generation Z; FMCG Sector.

### Introduction

Growing concerns about nature have directly & indirectly changed consumer perception and advertising practices in the past few years. Climate change, plastic garbage, and resource limitations have made both buyers and sellers reconsider their environmental impact in the society. Nowadays businesses have adopted sustainable practices and combined environmental responsibility into their existing marketing strategies. According to Chen (2010), these trends have re-

sulted in the development of new concepts like "Green Marketing" and "Green Brand Images," both of which showcase companies' dedication to environmental protection and sustainability.

Along with that, generational changes have changed the behaviour of buyers. Generation Z, commonly defined as individuals born at the end of 1990s, are emerging as a consumer group with higher awareness about the environment. Compared with other generations, GenZ values transparency and ethical claims while making purchases. Studies indicate that younger consumers are more likely to be involved with climate based content on social media, showing their growing concern for the environment (Pew Research Center, 2021).

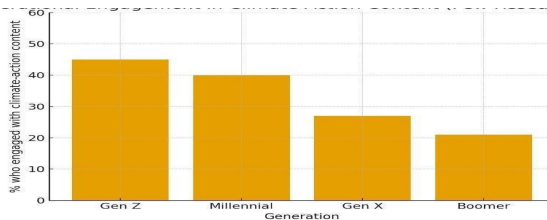


Figure 1: Percentage of Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Boomers Engaging with Climate-Action Content on Social Media (Pew Research Center, 2021)

The consumer products industry holds an important role in the daily life of every consumer group. FMCG products are consumed at a higher frequency and also have a higher environmental impact due to the high quantity of wastage during production and supply chain activities. Because of this, FMCG companies are trying to build a green brand image by promoting eco-friendly packaging material, ayurvedic ingredients, and environmentally responsible production techniques.

This study is essential for both academic research and managerial practice while marketing. Therefore, this study examines the impact of green brand image on purchase behaviour among Gen Z consumers, with brand trust acting as a mediating variable within the FMCG sector.

### 1.1 Research Problem

Nowadays many brands are trying to make their green brand image by promoting eco-friendly packaging material and green appearance. Even Generation Z consumers are becoming highly conscious about the impact of their minor decisions on the environment and they also expect brands to show genuine & reliable claims. However, a gap still exists between green marketing claims and consumer perceptions. Several firms have been criticized for greenwashing, which refers to exaggerating or misleading environmental claims in order to attract environmentally conscious consumers like claiming false carbon emissions (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). Such practices have made consumers more aware of what they are purchasing. Still, the effectiveness of a green brand image in influencing consumer buying behaviour is not fixed. Because brand trust may play an important role in finding whether consumers accept sustainability claims and convert them into actual purchase decisions. That is why it becomes essential to analyse whether a positive green brand image directly influences purchase behaviour among GenZ's or whether this relationship goes through an additional step, including brand trust as a mediator.

### 1.2 Research objectives

The following objectives have been established to reflect the research problem and research questions:

- To assess the level of familiarity and opinion concerning the concept of a 'green' brand image with regard to the Gen Z consumer's perception of brands operating within the FMCG market.

- To investigate if a green brand image has an effect on Gen Z consumers' purchasing decisions for FMCG products.
- To evaluate the influence brand trust has on the relationship between green brand image (GBI) and Gen Z consumers' purchasing behaviours.
- To assess Gen Z consumers' perception of green claims and their sensitivity towards greenwashing practices.
- To identify whether green brand image significantly affects purchase decisions despite price sensitivity among Gen Z consumers.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Green Brand Image**

Green branding has evolved, as brands now increasingly combine environmental responsibility into their marketing strategies. Primarily branding techniques were focused mainly on product performance and symbolic value it provides. But rising sustainability concerns encouraged brands to incorporate green brand image into their identity (Ottman, 2011). Nowadays green branding has expanded beyond simple eco-labels, now it's more about ingredients, material, and true communication.

GBI: The 'Green Brand Image' refers to a number of environmental associations that consumers attach to a brand (Chen, 2010). Green brand image decides how consumers interpret the brand's environmental commitment. A well-developed green brand image increases authenticity, develops trust, and increases the value of products for consumers. Research indicates that a strong green brand image strengthens positive consumer perceptions and enhances brand differentiation in competitive markets (Porter, 1998; Chen, 2010).

Within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector, green branding has become important in the FMCG region because of increasing awareness about eco-consciousness. Zahid et al. (2025) found out that green packaging, sustainable product designing, CSR tactics, and green advertising improve consumer trust & also resulting in increased brand loyalty.

### **2.2 Generation Z and Sustainable Consumption**

Generation Z (those born between 1997 and 2012) is treated as a different group of consumer profiles defined as low attention time, tech savvy, highly educated, and used to media, etc. Although Gen Z's show interest in sustainability, multiple studies report that this generation is highly price-sensitive. There are many constraints behind this, such as financial constraints like early career stage, student status, etc. (Gunawan, G. 2023). It is combined with a culture of price comparison to make Gen Z more responsive to promotions, discounts, and offers. But in FMCG, purchases are more frequent than in other categories, and price/performance comparisons are at every stage of the purchasing cycle. Their higher exposure to digital media also makes them capable of identifying misleading environmental claims or greenwashing practices while consuming advertisements (Haque et al., 2025).

### **2.3 Brand Trust in Green Marketing**

Brand trust is a broadly defined factor that creates belief in the mind of the consumer based on reliability and integrity, that the brand will be loyal and complete promises. In the context of green branding, this involves trusting not just the quality of products but also green claims related to sustainable practices. But when consumers detect that a brand's green claims don't have any relation with actual proceedings, it can lead to serious trust collapse. Xu, Du, Shahzad, and Li (2021) discuss brand green authenticity or how genuine the appearance of a brand's green image actually is. It is important for us to explore the difference between how factual and accurate an environmental claim appears and how legitimate it is actually.

## 2.4 Purchase Behaviour

Green purchase behaviour refers to consumers' willingness to choose products that they believe are green. Research shows that awareness about the environment and positive brand perceptions can increase consumers' intention to purchase green products (Purnama Alamsyah & Hadiyanti, 2017). But many factors such as price sensitivity, product availability, and digital reviews also matter while buying a product. (Pandey & Roy, 2024; Roh & Park, 2024). Despite the fact that some studies suggest that consumers are willing to pay a moderate premium if true sustainability appears, this willingness depends on the authenticity of environmental claims and perceived product value (Riordan, 2019; Rindhia et al., 2024). Therefore, brand trust may play an important mediating role.

## 2.5 Research Gap

Existing research primarily focuses on general attitudes of consumer groups or purchase intentions rather than actually identifying purchasing behaviour in a specific product category.

In addition, many studies examine sustainability across mixed generational groups, which provides limited insights on Gen Z's. Furthermore, as brand trust is widely considered as an integral factor in sustainable marketing, its mediating role has very limited empirical attention, particularly in the FMCG sector. By investigating whether brand trust (BT) mediates the connection between Gen Z's green brand image and how much they are willing to purchase these brands we could help fill the gaps.

## 3. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Based on the reviewed theories and empirical evidence, the conceptual model positions the following constructs:

- Green Brand Image (GBI) as the independent variable
- Brand Trust (BT) as the mediating variable
- Purchase Behaviour (PB) as the dependent variable

This framework is grounded in stakeholder theory, consumer behaviour theory, and mediation logic used widely in sustainability research. It assumes that a green brand image enhances trust, and trust subsequently shapes purchase behaviour especially relevant in the Gen Z FMCG context.

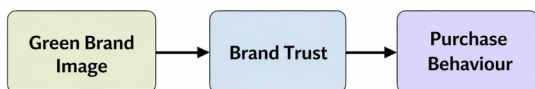


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of the Study

## 4. Hypotheses Development

Based on the literature reviewed and the proposed conceptual framework, the following hypotheses are formulated to examine the relationships among variables:

**H1:** Green brand image has a significant positive effect on brand trust among GenZ's.

**H2:** Green brand image has a significant positive effect on purchase behaviour among Generation Z consumers.

**H3:** Brand trust has a significant positive effect on purchase behaviour among Generation Z consumers.

**H4:** Brand trust mediates the relationship between green brand image and purchase behaviour.

## 5. Research Methodology

### 5.1 Research Design

This current research is an explanatory and descriptive study. The descriptive design is used to understand how Gen Z consumers perceive green brand image, brand trust, and sustainability-related practices in the FMCG sector. The explanatory design has been utilised to examine the relationships between green brand image, brand trust, and purchase behaviour. The analysis relies solely on the primary data collected from the Gen Z consumer group. This design is suitable because the research aims to test consumer purchase behaviour, relationships between variables using measurable data, as supported by prior studies.

### 5.2 Sample and Data Collection

The target population for this study includes Generation Z population aged 18-29 yrs residing in Delhi, Noida, Gurgaon, and the Other National Capital Region (NCR). Data were collected using a structured Google form questionnaire distributed through social media handles. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was adopted due to accessibility. A total of 94 out of 100 valid responses were obtained from respondents who frequently purchase or influence the purchase of FMCG products.

### 5.3 Measurement Scales

Measurement items were adapted from previously validated studies to ensure reliability. Variables were measured on a Likert Scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree), using a 5-point scale. and review/statement/opinion based phrases, as it is easy for respondents to understand and evaluate since they are commonly used in consumer behaviour research.

### 5.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The data has been coded and analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) tool. Descriptive statistics were used first to summarise respondent demographics. The reliability of the constructs was evaluated by using Cronbach's alpha to determine whether or not the constructs were reliable to use in this study. A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between the three variables. Regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses (H1-H4). Multiple regression analyses were conducted to investigate the mediating effect of brand trust on the relationship of green brand image and purchase behaviour.

## 6. Data Analysis and Results

### 6.1 Information About Respondents

This table provides basic information about the people who responded to the survey.

**Table:1**

| DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE |      |        |
|---------------------|------|--------|
| AGE GROUP           | FREQ | %      |
| 18-23               | 68   | 72.34% |
| 24-29               | 26   | 27.66% |
| LOCATION            | FREQ | %      |
| DELHI               | 50   | 53.19% |
| NOIDA/GREATE        | 15   | 15.95% |
| GURGAON             | 14   | 14.89% |
| OTHER NCR RE        | 15   | 15.95% |

This table indicates that around 68% of respondents belong to the 18-23 age under Generation

Z population. As per the table, we observed geographical location. Majority of the respondents are living in Delhi, and a few in other NCR areas like Noida, Gurgaon, and connecting areas from Delhi. It means that the sample is mostly urban Gen Z consumers who are both frequent users of FMCG products and show sustainable marketing behaviours.

## 6.2 Reliability Analysis

Reliability testing was performed to assess the degree of continuity among the respondents' measures. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated based on participant ratings of three constructs used in this study: (i.e., Green Brand Image; Brand Trust; and Purchase behaviour). The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Reliability Statistics**

| VARIABLES  | ITEMS(Q) | CRONBACH ALPHA |
|------------|----------|----------------|
| <b>GBI</b> | 4        | 0.708          |
| <b>BT</b>  | 7        | 0.698          |
| <b>PB</b>  | 5        | 0.738          |

These results show that the Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs are close to or above the commonly acceptable threshold of 0.70, that means satisfactory. Green Brand Image and Purchase Behaviour show acceptable reliability alpha, while Brand Trust is slightly below the limit but still considered enough for explanatory research. The results show that the items on the survey can be used for other statistical analyses.

## 6.3 Descriptive Statistics

These computed data assist in analyzing the main constructs (average of responses and variability). These results can be found in table 3.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables**

| VARIABLES  | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
|------------|--------|----------------|
| <b>GBI</b> | 3.7926 | 0.70008        |
| <b>BT</b>  | 3.7432 | 0.60594        |
| <b>PB</b>  | 3.7319 | 0.73765        |

The dataset shows mean values for GBI, BT, and PB are all above 3.00 (the midpoint of a 5-point Likert scale) and are located closely together and close to 4.00, indicating a general agreement that consumers have positive impressions about GBI, BT, and PB among consumers of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). The standard deviation values represent the overall amount of variability in response.

## 6.4 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis method was used to examine the relationships among the key constructed variables based on the questionnaire: Table 4 presents the correlation matrix with variables GBI, BT, and PB.

**Table 4: Pearson Correlation Matrix**

| VARIABLES  | GBI   | BT   | PB |
|------------|-------|------|----|
| <b>GBI</b> | 1     |      |    |
| <b>BT</b>  | 0.539 | 1    |    |
| <b>PB</b>  | 0.525 | 0.75 | 1  |

The results indicate positive (+) correlations among all 3 variables. Green Brand Image shows an above average positive relationship with Brand Trust ( $r = 0.539$ ) and Purchase Behaviour ( $r$

= 0.525). Also, Brand Trust(BT) shows a very powerful positive relationship with Purchase Behaviour ( $r = 0.750$ ). The R values indicate that a stronger GBI is related to greater levels of BT and PB for Gen Z consumers in the FMCG sector.

### 6.5 Hypothesis Testing

The relationships between the independent variables and dependent variables were tested by means of Linear Regression Analysis and the results from the regression analysis are shown below in Table 5.

**Table 5: Hypothesis Testing Results**

| hypothesis | relationship(IV- R SQUARE | BETA  | SIG=P (P<0.05) | RESULT    |
|------------|---------------------------|-------|----------------|-----------|
| h1         | GBI-BT                    | 0.291 | 0.539 <0.001   | SUPPORTED |
| h2         | GBI-PB                    | 0.276 | 0.525 <0.001   | SUPPORTED |
| h3         | BT-PB                     | 0.563 | 0.75 <0.001    | SUPPORTED |

Supporting H1: The regression results indicate that Green Brand Image has a significant positive effect on Brand Trust ( $\beta = 0.539$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Supporting H2: Green Brand Image significantly influences Purchase Behaviour ( $\beta = 0.525$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Supporting H3: Brand Trust demonstrates a strong positive impact on Purchase Behaviour ( $\beta = 0.750$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

R<sup>2</sup>: It shows that Green Brand Image(GBI) explains 29.1% variance in Brand Trust(BT), while also it explains 27.6% of the variance in Purchase Behaviour(PB), showing coefficient of determination. On the other hand, Brand Trust explains 56.3% of the variance in Purchase Behaviour, meaning trust plays a crucial role when consumers make purchase decisions related to FMCG goods.

### 6.6 H4: Mediation Analysis

Using a Multiple Linear Regression analysis via IBM SPSS to assess whether Brand Trust mediates the relationship between Green Brand Image and Purchase Behaviour (GBI-BT-PB), results showed a Model prediction of Purchase Behaviour would have 56.3% of its variability (i.e.  $R^2 = 0.563$ ) explained for this analysis only ( $\beta = 0.750$ ,  $p < .001$ ) through use of Brand Trust alone. But when both Green Brand Image and Brand Trust were entered one by one into the regression model, the explanatory power increased to  $R^2 = 0.583$ . In this model, our mediator Brand Trust was a significant predictor of Purchase Behaviour ( $\beta = 0.659$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), where Green Brand Image also pointed to a positive effect ( $\beta = 0.170$ ,  $p = 0.031$ ).

These results indicate that Brand Trust(BT) partially mediates the relationship between Green Brand Image(GBI) and Purchase Behaviour(PB), suggesting that green brand image matters when Gen Z goes for FMCG shopping.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper analysed the impact of Green Brand Image on GenZ's Purchase Behaviour in the FMCG sector, with Brand Trust playing as a mediating variable. What we have learned is that there is a significant enough relationship between Green Brand Image (GBI) and Brand Trust and how those variables affect consumers' intention to purchase. A consumer who sees a brand as being truly committed to sustainability is more happening to trust that brand and to demonstrate a higher frequency of intent to purchase the products offered by that brand.

Our research has shown that the component of Brand Trust (BT) positively influences Purchase Behaviour (PB) and acts as a partial mediator in the relationship between GBI and PB. It indicates that although the GBI has a direct impact on buying behaviour of GenZ, it also indirectly affects it through building consumers' confidence in the particular product or brand. To conclude, this study proves that green brand positioning is an important factor in influencing the

purchasing behaviour of Generation Z in the FMCG industry.

## 8. Theoretical and Practical Implications

This research provides two important implications (theoretical and practical) regarding the relationship between Green Marketing, Brand Trust (BT), Purchasing Behaviour (PB), and the development of a green brand image (GBI).

This study has enhanced the theoretical knowledge of green marketing in that it provides an insight into the mediating role of BT in the GBI and PB relationship. The findings support that GBI perceptions have an impact on creating BT, hence creating an incentive to purchase a green product based on environmental initiative image.

Through a practical lens, this study provides recommendations that will help FMCG businesses develop Brand Trust (BT) by creating "Genuine" (i.e., Transparent) green branding messages and strategic decision making. Information that illustrates that the efforts to develop genuine environmental initiatives will likely increase a potential customer's BT while enhancing the extent to which Gen Z consumers exhibit sustainable purchasing behaviour.

## 9. Limitations and Future Research

Besides the contributions of the study, there are limitations to the current research. The sample size was limited, and consisted primarily of individuals in the Delhi NCR area, which could limit how generalizable the findings are to wider populations. Moreover, the research was limited to a limited number of variables in a given product segment.

Future studies by other researchers can involve a larger and more representative population of various regions and segments of products. Other variables that can be incorporated by the researchers include greenwashing, price sensitivity or income constraints to understand more.

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