

# Green Branding and Its Influence on Youth Purchase Intentions: A Behavioral Study

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## ABSTRACT

*Green branding has emerged as a powerful marketing tool for companies aiming to appeal to environmentally conscious consumers. Among these, the youth segment—particularly Millennials and Gen Z—are increasingly seen as crucial drivers of sustainable consumption. This study examines how green branding influences the purchase intentions of young consumers. Through a behavioral study involving surveys and interviews, the paper explores key factors such as eco-label recognition, brand credibility, environmental values, and emotional engagement. The findings suggest that while youth are positively inclined towards green brands, actual purchase behavior is moderated by factors like price, product availability, and perceived authenticity of brand claims. The paper concludes with recommendations for marketers and policymakers to better align green branding with youth expectations and behavioral triggers.*

### Keywords

*Green branding, sustainable marketing, consumer behavior, youth purchase intentions, eco-labels, Gen Z, environmental consciousness, behavioral study*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing concern over climate change, pollution, and environmental degradation has shifted consumer focus towards sustainable products. In this landscape, green branding—positioning a brand as environmentally responsible—has gained strategic importance. Among various demographic groups, the youth segment, especially Millennials and Generation Z, has emerged as a highly aware and influential group advocating for ecological sustainability.

However, while green branding appears effective on the surface, its real impact on youth purchase intentions is a complex interplay of psychological, emotional, and social factors. This paper aims to analyze how green branding affects youth purchasing behavior, exploring both the intention-action gap and the key elements of branding that influence decisions.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**2.1 Green Branding** Ottman et al. (2006) define green branding as a marketing approach that incorporates environmentally sustainable messages into brand identity. A green brand must go beyond product features and integrate sustainable practices into its values.

**2.2 Youth as Green Consumers** Studies by Kumar and Ghodeswar (2015) suggest that youth exhibit high environmental concern but are also price-sensitive. They value authenticity and transparency in marketing.

**2.3 Intention vs. Behavior** Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991) indicates that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence intentions, which may or may not lead to action. In green branding, intention-behavior gaps are often observed due to competing consumer priorities.

**2.4 Brand Credibility and Emotional Engagement** Delgado-Ballester (2004) notes that brand credibility significantly impacts emotional trust. Emotional branding is found to be a key motivator among young consumers, particularly when linked with identity and values.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a **mixed-methods approach**:

- **Quantitative:** A survey was conducted with 300 college students aged 18–25 across four metropolitan cities in India.
- **Qualitative:** In-depth interviews with 15 participants were held to explore underlying motivations and barriers.  
**Tools Used:** Structured questionnaires using Likert scales; NVivo software for thematic analysis in qualitative interviews.

### Key Variables Studied:

- Awareness of green branding

- Perception of brand credibility
- Purchase intentions and behavior
- Emotional and social drivers

## 4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

**4.1 Awareness and Recognition** 87% of respondents could recognize at least one green-certified brand logo (e.g., Energy Star, USDA Organic). However, only 40% could explain what it signified.

**4.2 Brand Credibility Matters** 62% stated that they only trusted green brands if backed by certifications or third-party endorsements. Youth tended to distrust vague or ambiguous "eco-friendly" claims.

**4.3 Purchase Intentions vs. Behavior** While 78% expressed the intention to purchase green products, only 43% had done so in the last month. The primary reasons for non-action included high cost (55%) and limited availability (28%).

**4.4 Emotional and Identity Engagement** Green brands that aligned with youth identity, such as Patagonia or The Body Shop, saw higher loyalty. Emotional connection and perceived social prestige also influenced buying.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that green branding can be a significant factor in shaping youth purchase intentions, but actual purchase decisions are influenced by perceived brand authenticity, emotional appeal, and practical constraints like price.

The intention-behavior gap suggests that green branding strategies must be accompanied by competitive pricing and transparent communication. Furthermore, emotional branding—linking environmental values with personal identity—was found to be especially powerful in fostering loyalty.

The study also highlights the growing skepticism among young consumers toward "greenwashing," where companies falsely market products as sustainable. This underlines the need for stricter regulatory frameworks for green claims in India.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Transparency and Certification:** Brands must display clear eco-certifications and share measurable sustainability efforts.
- **Affordable Green Options:** Introduce value-based sustainable products for price-sensitive youth.
- **Educational Campaigns:** Increase awareness about eco-labels and their meaning.
- **Emotional Branding:** Build narratives that resonate with youth identity and environmental values.
- **Influencer Collaborations:** Use youth icons or micro-influencers to reinforce credibility.
- **Campus Engagement:** Partner with universities to pilot green marketing campaigns and gather insights.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Green branding has a measurable influence on youth purchase intentions, but for sustainable behavior to follow, brands must overcome credibility, accessibility, and pricing barriers. Understanding the emotional and identity-based motivations of the youth can unlock more effective marketing strategies. This study contributes to the growing literature on sustainable marketing by offering insights into the nuanced ways youth interact with green brands.

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