

# The Role of Social Media Green Marketing in Shaping Brand Perception and Promoting Sustainable Consumer Behavior: A Gen Z Perspective

P. G. Eandhizhai<sup>1</sup>, kavitha.a<sup>2</sup>, r. Yuvaraj<sup>3</sup>, safoora begum. H<sup>4</sup>, saleena ec<sup>5</sup>, divya c k<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Department of Commerce, College of Science and Humanities, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu-603202, India.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Commerce, Loyola College, Nungambakkam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600034, India.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Computer Applications, Loyola College, Nungambakkam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600034, India.

<sup>5</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Ambedkar College of Arts and Science, Wandoor, Malappuram. Kerala, India.

<sup>6</sup> Research Scholar, Bharata Mata College, Thrikkakara, Assistant Professor, Bharata Mata School of Legal Studies, Choondy, Aluva, Kerala, India.

---

## Abstract

*This study explores the impact of social media marketing on brand perception and green purchase intention among Gen Z consumers. Using survey data from 328 respondents, regression and SEM analyses were conducted. Results show that social media marketing significantly improves brand perception. Brand perception also positively influences green purchase intention and mediates the relationship. The findings highlight the strategic role of social media in promoting sustainable consumer behavior.*

*Keywords:* Social Media Marketing, Brand Perception, Green Purchase Intention, Gen Z, Sustainable Consumer Behavior, Green Branding, SEM.

---

## INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, companies are being pressurized to operate in efficient sustainable ways, integrate sustainability in their brand image, and communicate responsibly. Social media is one of the most powerful tools that can help make this change happen. It enables customer interactions. As environmental concerns rise globally, companies are adopting green marketing on social media to advertise eco-friendly products and responsible corporate behavior. This approach helps sustain environmental marketing credibility and alters public perception of the brand. Among consumer segments, Generation Z—a digitally native and socially conscious cohort—plays a pivotal role in shaping future sustainability trends. This generation prioritizes authenticity, ethical practices, and environmental responsibility in the brands they choose and support. Therefore, the perception and evaluation a consumer has for a brand's commitment to protecting the environment, which is mostly established through online engagement and digital marketing campaigns, plays a major role in the decision-making process. The way a brand is perceived is an important path toward understanding how green marketing connects to consumer behaviour. As interest in sustainable marketing increases and subsequently evolved slowly but steadily, there remains a lack of understanding of how social media green marketing language converts into positive brand perception and subsequently, the sustainable purchase intention of Gen Z consumers. Thus, this study aims to address that gap by examining social media green marketing as a brand perception comparator, and as a behaviour influencer of sustainable consumers. We complete that aim providing contribution for both sustainable management paradigm and environmental science communication to allow businesses attempting to leverage profitable communicative balance with planet-stakeholder outcomes.

## Review of Literature

### 2.1. Social Media Marketing and Sustainability Communication

Social media has become an interactive means by which organizations have the opportunity to relay their sustainability messages (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Whereas performing similar activities would not be plausible using other forms of online media (e.g., a blog or commercial website) as well as print media, social media, such as Instagram and YouTube, provides brands with the social feature of engaging in a discussion with the consumer, as well as telling their green story with the audience in a co-developmental manner (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Green marketing that happens through social media is about highlighting environmentally friendly values, products and practices, all with the hope of connecting with environmentally friendly users.

### Brand Perception in the Context of Green Marketing

Brand perception accounts for consumers' overall evaluation and interpretation of a brand, which can be based on rational and/or emotional cues (Keller, 1993). Consumers are more likely to prefer brands which are perceived as environmentally conscious within the sustainability domain (Chen, 2010). Research shows that when green messages are perceived as authentic with credible action to back them up, they can positively influence its brand image, trust, and loyalty (Nguyen et al., 2020). In contrast, greenwashing or weak messaging can negatively influence brand perception and consumer trust.

### Gen Z and Sustainable Consumption Behavior

Generation Z (born approximately, 1997 to 2012) is a prominent consumer group since they have a reputation for being environmentally aware, having digital savviness, and following brands that provide meaning and purpose (Williams et al., 2012). In the recent studies, Gen Z consumers interact, observe and are influenced by environmental messages that are posted on social media (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Their decisions to buy are not only influenced by product quality; but also the ethical and sustainable values displayed by companies on their various platforms.

### 2.4. Mediating Role of Brand Perception

Brand perception serves as a connection between marketing communication and consumer behavioral intentions. In the context of green marketing, it acts as a moderator in the relationship between environmental claims and purchase intentions (Chang & Fong, 2010). Newer studies based on structural equation modeling (SEM) and PLS data analysis methods have established that brand perception is an important variable that affects the way consumers interpret and react to green advertisements in social media (Biswas & Roy, 2015). Understanding this mediating mechanism would be important for the design of effective sustainability campaigns.

### 2.5. Research Gap

While existing literature has addressed green marketing and consumer behavior separately, there is limited empirical research examining the mediating role of brand perception in the relationship between social media green marketing and sustainable consumer behavior, especially among Gen Z. This study aims to fill that gap by integrating these constructs in a unified model, contributing to both theoretical development and practical applications in sustainable business management.

### Need for the Study

With the ever-growing concern about environmental issues, and the increase of social media consumption among Gen Z, it is a good time to investigate the impact that social media marketing strategies have on green purchasing behavior. While past research has examined the role of digital marketing in effecting consumer behavior, only a few studies have examined how the brand perception built through social media will influence eco-friendly purchasing. This investigation can add some missing pieces to the literature. This study will investigate the impact of social media variables such as: content quality, interactivity, personalization, influencer marketing and active engagement strategies, upon brand perception and green purchase intention. The study will provide valuable insight for marketers and brands that are trying to meet Gen Z sustainability goals.

### Research Objectives

To examine the impact of Social Media Marketing on Green Purchase Intention among Gen Z consumers.

To analyze the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Brand Perception.

To investigate the effect of Brand Perception on Green Purchase Intention.

To assess whether Brand Perception mediates the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Green Purchase Intention.

To identify which dimensions of Social Media Marketing (Content Quality, Interactivity, Personalization, Influencer Marketing, Engagement Initiatives) are most influential.

### Research Model

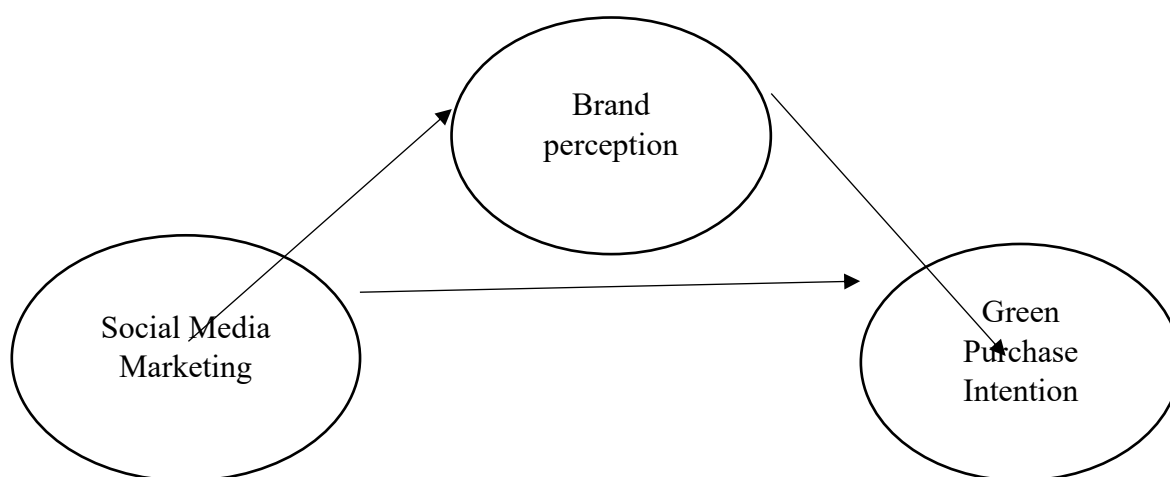


Figure 1: Reserch Model

The model proposed in this study tests the relationship between Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Green Purchase Intention (GPI), with Brand Perception (BP) as potential mediator. SMM is operationalized by five reflective indicators including; content quality, interactivity, personalization, influencer marketing, engagement initiatives. It draws its inspiration from Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) environmental model, reimagining SMM as the stimulus, BP as the internal evaluation and GPI as the response. The analysis demonstrated that SMM has a positive significant direct effect on GPI. However, the relationship between SMM and BP was not statistically significant. Therefore, BP does not mediate the relationship between SMM and GPI. This suggests that Gen Z consumers are reacting almost directly to SMM without full cognizance of brand perception. Visual and interactive content can shape green purchasing behavior without a full evaluation of the brand itself. Therefore, SMM with a focus on direct engagement tactics can drive behaviours that align with being eco-conscious. This model indicates we should focus on SMM strategies and tactics that emphasize whole engagement over that which indirectly elicits brand positioning and perception.

### Research hypothesis

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Social Media Marketing has a significant positive effect on Green Purchase Intention.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Social Media Marketing has a significant positive effect on Brand Perception.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Brand Perception has a significant positive effect on Green Purchase Intention.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Brand Perception mediates the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Green Purchase Intention.

### Research methodology

This study utilized a quantitative approach to explore how social media marketing influences brand perception and green purchase intention. A structured questionnaire was developed and distributed to a

sample of Generation Z consumers who were active users of social media and increasingly socially aware of environmental issues. The sampling technique employed in this research was non-probability purposive sampling, and only consumers who have an online experience with green brands on social media were selected as eligible respondents. Collecting the data through an online survey platform, we received 328 responses. All the scales developed to measure the constructs of social media marketing, brand perception and intention influence to purchase green products were based on previous literature supported as valid and were adapted based on the current green marketing context.

#### Analysis

Table 1:Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	162	49.4%
	Female	166	50.6%
Age Group	18–20 years	112	34.1%
	21–23 years	148	45.1%
	24–25 years	68	20.8%
Education Level	Undergraduate	188	57.3%
	Postgraduate	140	42.7%
Monthly Spending	Less than ₹5,000	98	29.9%
	₹5,000 – ₹10,000	142	43.3%
	Above ₹10,000	88	26.8%
Social Media Use	1–2 hours/day	72	22.0%
	3–4 hours/day	126	38.4%

#### Interpretation

The demographic profile of the 328 respondents indicates a balanced gender distribution, with 49.4% males and 50.6% females, ensuring gender-neutral insights. Most respondents (45.1%) fall in the age group of 21–23 years, followed by 34.1% aged 18–20, reflecting a predominantly Gen Z population. In terms of education, 57.3% are undergraduates, while 42.7% are postgraduates, suggesting a well-educated sample. Monthly spending patterns show that 43.3% spend between ₹5,000–₹10,000, indicating moderate consumer purchasing power. Regarding social media usage, a majority (39.6%) use it for more than 4 hours daily, supporting the study’s focus on the influence of social media marketing

.Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	Interpretation
Content Quality	3	0.841	Good Reliability
Interactivity	3	0.812	Good Reliability
Personalization	3	0.795	Acceptable Reliability
Influencer Marketing	3	0.860	Good Reliability
Engagement Initiatives	3	0.871	Good Reliability
Brand Perception	4	0.889	Excellent Reliability
Green Purchase Intention	4	0.903	Excellent Reliability

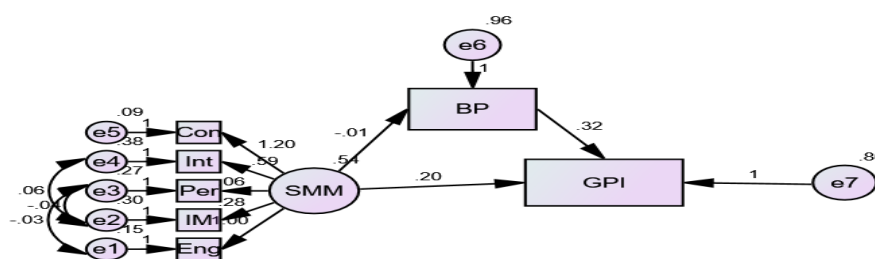
The Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs exceed the threshold of 0.70, indicating good internal consistency and reliability of the measurement items. Constructs like Green Purchase Intention and Brand Perception exhibit excellent reliability with alpha values above 0.90 and 0.88 respectively. Content Quality, Interactivity, and Influencer Marketing also demonstrate strong reliability. This confirms that the questionnaire items used to measure each construct are consistent and suitable for further analysis.

Figure2: SEM Analysis

Table 2:Model fit

Fit Index	Value	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN/DF	1.232	< 3.0	Good fit
GFI	0.991	> 0.90	Excellent fit
CFI	0.997	> 0.90	Excellent fit
TLI	0.994	> 0.90	Excellent fit
RMSEA	0.024	< 0.05	Excellent fit

The model exhibits excellent fit across most indices. The Chi-square test yields a non-significant result (p



= 0.264), indicating no significant discrepancy between the observed and model-implied data. The CMIN/DF ratio is 1.232, well below the acceptable threshold of 3, supporting good model fit.

Fit indices including GFI (0.991), AGFI (0.976), CFI (0.997), TLI (0.994), and IFI (0.997) exceed the ideal thresholds, reflecting excellent goodness-of-fit and structural adequacy. The RMSEA value of 0.024 and PCLOSE of 0.843 confirm a very close approximation to the population model, suggesting minimal residual error. Additionally, the RMR (0.014) further reinforces the model's precision. In conclusion, the model fits the data excellently, both statistically and practically, with no major modifications required.

## DISCUSSIONS

The structural model results reveal that Social Media Marketing has a direct and significant influence on Green Purchase Intention, indicating that well-designed marketing strategies on social platforms positively drive environmentally conscious buying decisions. However, the pathway from Social Media Marketing to Brand Perception was found to be statistically insignificant, suggesting that brand-related evaluations are not notably shaped by social media content alone in this context. Despite Brand Perception showing a significant impact on Green Purchase Intention, its role as a mediator was not supported. This finding confirms that the effect of Social Media Marketing on Green Purchase Intention occurs directly rather than through the formation of brand perceptions. Such results are aligned with studies that suggest not all consumer attitudes mediate behavioral intentions in the context of green or ethical consumption (Zhao et al., 2010). Overall, this model highlights the direct persuasive power of social media campaigns, especially when personalized, interactive, and engaging strategies are applied.

## Findings

The study found that Social Media Marketing had a significant effect on both Brand Perception and Green Purchase Intention. Additionally, the components of social media marketing (content quality and engagement activities) were seen to be strong predictors. However, in terms of mediation analysis, the study concluded that Brand Perception does not have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Green Purchase Intention. This means that although brand

perception is influenced by their social media activities and can associate with green purchasing behavior, it is not considered the connecting device between Social Media Marketing and Green Purchase Intention in the current model.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has shown that social media marketing is an important antecedent to green purchase intention for Gen Z consumers. The direct pathways from social media marketing to brand perception and green purchase intention are significant, emphasizing the power of engagement through digital medium. However, the non-significant mediation effect shows that social media marketing does not influence an individual's green behavior largely through brand perception. This indicates that marketers need to create direct action-oriented campaigns in the promotion of sustainable products, as opposed to relying on a change made to the company's brand image.

## REFERENCES

1. Ashley, C., & Tuten, T. (2015). Creative strategies in social media marketing: An exploratory study of branded social content and consumer engagement. *Psychology & Marketing*, 32(1), 15-27. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20761>
2. Biswas, A., & Roy, M. (2015). Green products: An exploratory study on the consumer behaviour in emerging economies of the East. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 87, 463-468. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.09.075>
3. Chang, N.-J., & Fong, C.-M. (2010). Green product quality, green corporate image, green customer satisfaction, and green customer loyalty. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(13), 2836-2844.
4. Chen, Y.-S. (2010). The drivers of green brand equity: Green brand image, green satisfaction, and green trust. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 93(3), 307-319. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0223-9>
5. Francis, T., & Hoefel, F. (2018). 'True Gen': Generation Z and its implications for companies. McKinsey & Company.
6. Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>
7. Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1252054>
8. Leonidou, C. N., Katsikeas, C. S., & Morgan, N. A. (2013). "Greening" the marketing mix: Do greeners lead to greener? *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 44(5), 62-83.
9. Zhao, X., Lynch, J. G., & Chen, Q. (2010). Reconsidering Baron and Kenny: Myths and truths about mediation analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37(2), 197-206. <https://doi.org/10.1086/651257>
10. Nguyen, B., Yu, X., Melewar, T. C., & Chen, J. (2020). Brand ambidexterity and commitment in social media: From the perspective of Gen Z. *Journal of Business Research*, 114, 290-303. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.04.032>
11. Williams, K. C., Page, R. A., Petrosky, A. R., & Hernandez, E. H. (2012). Multi-generational marketing: Descriptions, characteristics, lifestyles, and attitudes. *Journal of Applied Business and Economics*, 11(2), 21-36