

A Study On The Effectiveness Of Vegan Marketing In Influencing Lifestyle Choices Among Urban Consumers In Coimbatore

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ABSTRACT

The growing awareness of health, ethical consumption, and environmental sustainability has driven a shift toward vegan lifestyles among urban consumers. Despite this trend, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of vegan marketing in influencing lifestyle choices in Indian urban markets remains limited. This study aims to examine how vegan marketing strategies shape the awareness, perceptions, and lifestyle decisions of urban consumers in Coimbatore. A descriptive and analytical research design was adopted, with primary data collected from 299 respondents using a structured questionnaire, complemented by secondary sources including peer-reviewed literature and industry reports. The questionnaire assessed consumer awareness of vegan products, exposure to marketing strategies such as digital campaigns, social media promotions, influencer endorsements, and ethical branding, as well as resultant lifestyle adoption behaviours. Data analysis using regression techniques revealed that digital marketing and influencer engagement have the most significant impact on consumer perceptions and adoption of vegan lifestyles. Ethical branding, eco-labelling, and packaging further reinforce consumer choices, while price sensitivity and product availability act as moderating factors. More than half of the respondents reported integrating vegan products into their diets and purchasing habits, indicating a growing acceptance of plant-based lifestyles among health-conscious and environmentally aware urban consumers. The study highlights the practical implications for marketers and policymakers, emphasizing the need for targeted, ethically aligned marketing strategies that promote sustainable consumption. These insights can support the expansion of vegan markets in emerging urban centres and encourage environmentally responsible consumer behavior.

Keywords: Vegan Marketing Strategies, Consumer Lifestyle Behavior, Sustainable Consumption, Urban Consumer Behavior, Coimbatore Market

INTRODUCTION

Lifestyle preferences in the twenty-first century are undergoing a significant transformation, largely influenced by health consciousness, ethical awareness, and sustainability considerations. Among these shifts, veganism has emerged as more than a dietary trend; it represents a holistic lifestyle associated with plant-based consumption, animal welfare, and environmental preservation. Globally, the vegan movement has expanded rapidly, with increasing visibility in consumer markets, restaurants, and retail chains. This expansion is not solely driven by consumer demand but also by the strategic efforts of marketers who frame veganism as an aspirational and responsible lifestyle choice.

In India, the acceptance of vegan products is at a relatively nascent stage compared to Western economies. However, rising disposable incomes, urbanization, and digital connectivity have accelerated consumer exposure to global food trends. Urban centers, particularly tier-two cities, are gradually adopting plant-based alternatives in food, cosmetics, and fashion. Coimbatore, a prominent industrial and educational hub in Tamil Nadu, offers an interesting case for examining this shift. The city's young population, growing middle class, and expanding health-conscious consumer base make it a fertile ground for vegan marketing initiatives.

Despite these developments, limited scholarly attention has been given to how vegan marketing strategies influence consumer behavior in Indian urban contexts. Existing literature on green and sustainable marketing highlights consumer interest in eco-friendly and ethical products, yet research specific to vegan

marketing remains scarce. This creates a research gap in understanding how marketing communication—through digital campaigns, influencer endorsements, packaging, and ethical branding—translates into lifestyle choices in emerging urban markets.

This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the effectiveness of vegan marketing in influencing lifestyle choices among urban consumers in Coimbatore.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To examine the level of awareness and perception of vegan marketing among urban consumers.
2. To assess the extent to which vegan marketing impacts lifestyle-related decisions such as diet, consumption patterns, and purchasing behavior.
3. To identify the challenges and opportunities for businesses promoting vegan products in an urban Indian setting.

By analyzing consumer responses to vegan marketing in Coimbatore, this study contributes to both academic and practical discussions on sustainable consumption. The findings will provide valuable insights for marketers aiming to position vegan products effectively and for policymakers seeking to promote healthier and environmentally responsible consumer behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global Perspective on Veganism and Marketing

Veganism has witnessed a remarkable global surge in recent decades, evolving from a niche dietary practice into a mainstream lifestyle choice. Scholars attribute this rise to growing concerns over climate change, ethical treatment of animals, and the health implications of animal-based diets. Marketing strategies have played a pivotal role in this expansion, with brands leveraging emotional appeals, sustainability narratives, and health claims to influence consumer adoption (Smith, 2021). In Western economies, vegan marketing has been particularly effective when supported by digital media and influencer endorsements, which resonate strongly with younger and socially aware audiences.

Indian Context of Vegan Marketing

In India, where vegetarianism has long-standing cultural and religious roots, veganism represents both continuity and transformation. While vegetarian diets are familiar, veganism requires consumers to avoid dairy and other animal by-products, which often poses a cultural and behavioral challenge. Studies highlight that urban consumers in India are increasingly open to vegan alternatives due to rising health consciousness, exposure to global lifestyles, and environmental awareness (Gupta & Banerjee, 2020). However, accessibility, affordability, and limited awareness remain significant barriers. Research on sustainable and green marketing in India emphasizes that communication strategies highlighting wellness, natural ingredients, and ethical values can positively influence purchase intentions (Choudhury & Mehta, 2022). Yet, empirical studies focusing solely on vegan marketing remain limited, particularly in tier-two cities such as Coimbatore.

Consumer Behavior and Theoretical Frameworks

The effectiveness of vegan marketing can be better understood through established consumer behavior theories. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) suggests that an individual's intention to adopt vegan lifestyles is influenced by attitudes (health and environmental beliefs), subjective norms (social approval), and perceived behavioral control (access to vegan products). Similarly, the Health Belief Model (HBM) explains lifestyle adoption through perceptions of health benefits and risks. Recent research also integrates the concept of green consumerism, highlighting how ethical branding and sustainability messages shape lifestyle-oriented consumption (Kumar & Singh, 2023). These frameworks provide a foundation for analyzing how vegan marketing translates into real lifestyle choices.

Digital Marketing and Influencer Endorsements

With the rise of social media, digital platforms have become the most influential channel for vegan marketing. Studies show that visually appealing content, influencer recommendations, and online communities significantly increase consumer engagement with plant-based products (Mahapatra, 2021). In urban Indian contexts, young consumers are particularly receptive to digital narratives that combine aspirational lifestyles with eco-conscious messaging. This trend underlines the importance of social media campaigns and influencer collaborations for promoting vegan products in cities like Coimbatore.

Research Gap

Although veganism is gaining momentum in India, the academic literature remains fragmented. Most studies focus on green or sustainable marketing, while dedicated research on vegan marketing effectiveness is sparse. Moreover, empirical studies in tier-two cities, which represent emerging urban consumer markets, are scarce. This creates a critical research gap, particularly in understanding how vegan marketing strategies influence lifestyle choices beyond major metropolitan centers. Addressing this gap, the present study examines the effectiveness of vegan marketing in influencing lifestyle choices among urban consumers in Coimbatore, thereby contributing to both marketing scholarship and practical business strategies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the effectiveness of vegan marketing in shaping lifestyle choices among urban consumers in Coimbatore. The descriptive aspect provides insights into consumer awareness and perceptions of vegan marketing, while the analytical component tests relationships between marketing strategies and lifestyle adoption using statistical methods.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study comprises urban consumers residing in Coimbatore who are potential or existing users of vegan products, including food, beverages, cosmetics, and fashion. A sample size of 299 respondents was determined as adequate for achieving statistical reliability, based on Krejcie and Morgan's sampling guidelines for social sciences.

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across different demographic groups such as age, gender, income, and education. This approach enhances the generalizability of the findings within the urban consumer segment of Coimbatore.

Data Collection

Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The questionnaire was divided into four sections:

1. Demographic profile of respondents.
2. Awareness and perception of vegan marketing.
3. Influence of marketing strategies (digital campaigns, social media, influencer endorsements, eco-labelling, brand positioning).
4. Lifestyle outcomes (dietary shifts, purchasing behavior, health-conscious choices, and eco-friendly practices).

Secondary data was obtained from peer-reviewed journals, industry reports, and government publications to provide contextual insights into veganism and consumer behaviour trends.

Variables of the Study

1. Independent Variables (Vegan Marketing Strategies):

- Digital marketing campaigns
- Influencer endorsements
- Social media engagement
- Ethical branding and eco-labelling
- Product accessibility and promotion

2. Dependent Variables (Lifestyle Choices):

- Adoption of vegan diet and food habits
- Purchase of vegan/non-animal tested products
- Health and wellness-oriented behavior
- Environmentally responsible consumption

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for testing:

❖ **H1:** Vegan marketing has a significant positive influence on consumer awareness and perceptions.

❖ **H2:** Digital and influencer-based marketing strategies are more effective than traditional approaches in influencing consumer lifestyle choices.

❖ **H3:** Health-conscious and environmentally aware consumers are more likely to adopt vegan lifestyles in response to marketing efforts.

❖ **H4:** Pricing and product availability moderate the effectiveness of vegan marketing on lifestyle adoption.

Tools for Data Analysis

Data was analysed using SPSS for descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing. The following techniques were applied:

❖ **Descriptive statistics** to summarize demographic and awareness data.

❖ **Chi-square tests** to analyze associations between demographic factors and consumer perceptions.

❖ **Multiple regression analysis** to measure the effect of vegan marketing strategies on lifestyle adoption.

❖ **Factor analysis** to identify key dimensions of consumer attitudes towards vegan marketing.

This methodological framework ensures the reliability and validity of findings while enabling a comprehensive understanding of how vegan marketing influences urban consumer lifestyles in Coimbatore.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

A total of 299 urban consumers from Coimbatore participated in the study. The demographic analysis (Table 1) indicates that the majority of respondents belong to the 26–35 age group (35.1%), followed by 36–45 (25.1%). Gender distribution is nearly equal, with males at 50.2% and females at 48.5%. Most respondents were undergraduates (40.1%) or postgraduates (30.1%), reflecting the educated urban consumer segment. Monthly income primarily ranged between ₹20,001–60,000 (60.2%), while occupation was dominated by employees (40.1%) and students (30.1%).

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–25	60	20.1
	26–35	105	35.1
	36–45	75	25.1
	46–60	45	15.1
	60+	14	4.7
Gender	Male	150	50.2
	Female	145	48.5
	Other	4	1.3
Education	High School	30	10.0
	Undergraduate	120	40.1
	Postgraduate	90	30.1
	Professional	45	15.1
	Other	14	4.7
Income (INR/month)	<20,000	45	15.1
	20,001–40,000	90	30.1
	40,001–60,000	90	30.1
	60,001–80,000	45	15.1
	80,001+	29	9.6
Occupation	Student	90	30.1
	Employee	120	40.1
	Business	45	15.1

	Homemaker	30	10.0
	Other	14	4.7

Discussion: The demographic composition reflects a young, educated, and middle-income urban population, which is relevant for studying lifestyle adoption influenced by vegan marketing.

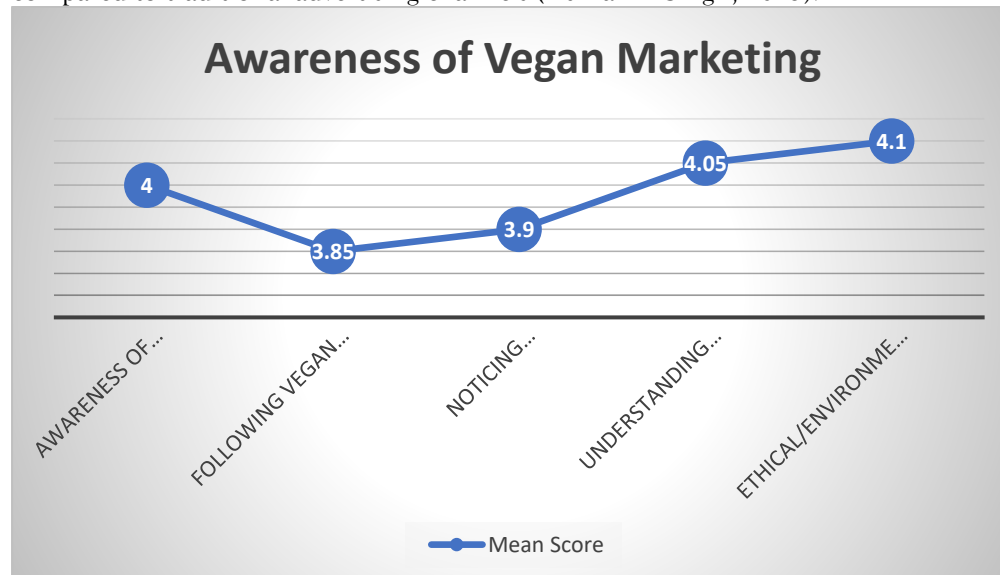
4.2 Awareness of Vegan Marketing

Respondents demonstrated high awareness of vegan products and marketing campaigns. Digital media and social media engagement emerged as the primary sources of information, with ethical and environmental considerations motivating their interest.

Table: 2 Awareness of Vegan Marketing

Awareness Aspect	Mean Score
Awareness of vegan products in Coimbatore	4.00
Following vegan brands on social media	3.85
Noticing advertising campaigns	3.90
Understanding health benefits	4.05
Ethical/environmental concerns motivate me	4.10

Discussion: Awareness levels indicate that urban consumers are increasingly exposed to global sustainability trends. Social media and influencer campaigns have greater reach and effectiveness compared to traditional advertising channels (Kumar & Singh, 2023).



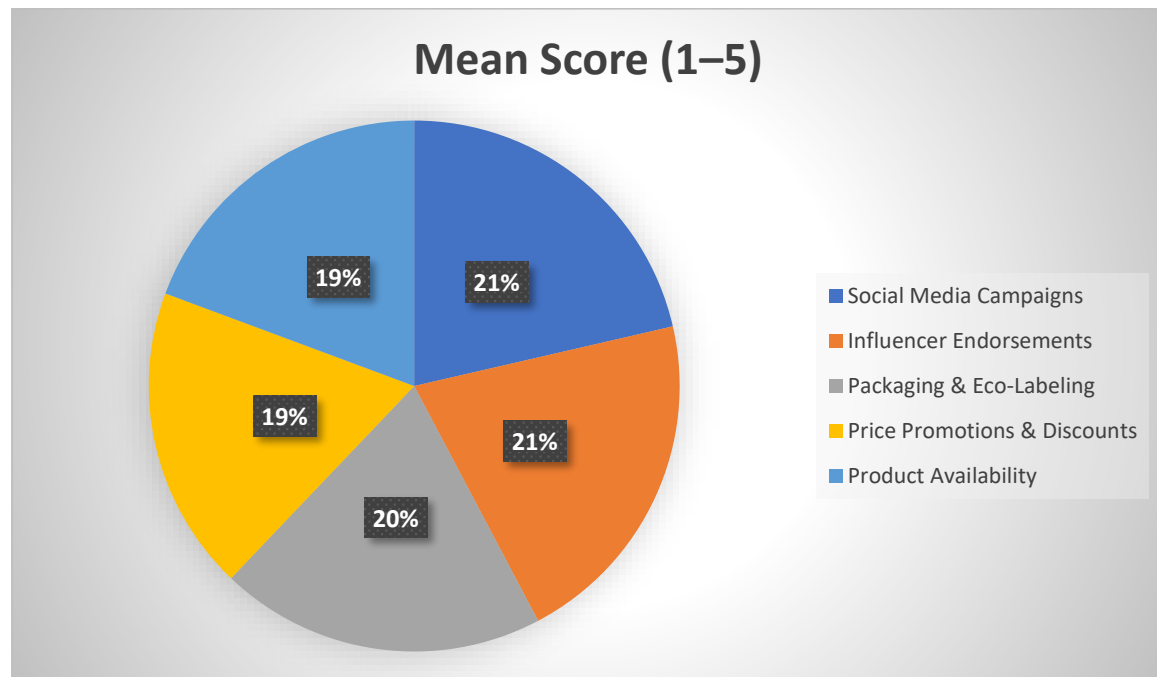
4.3 Influence of Marketing Strategies

The impact of vegan marketing strategies on consumer choices is summarized in Table 2. Social media campaigns and influencer endorsements scored highest (Mean=4.15 and 4.05 respectively), followed by packaging and eco-labeling (3.85). Price and product availability showed moderate influence.

Table 3: Influence of Vegan Marketing Strategies on Consumers (Likert Mean Scores)

Marketing Strategy	Mean Score (1-5)	Standard Deviation
Social Media Campaigns	4.15	0.82
Influencer Endorsements	4.05	0.89
Packaging & Eco-Labeling	3.85	0.91
Price Promotions & Discounts	3.60	0.98
Product Availability	3.75	0.94

Discussion: The findings confirm that digital-first marketing approaches are most effective for influencing lifestyle adoption. Ethical branding and eco-labeling also play a significant role, while price and accessibility act as moderating factors.



4.4 Lifestyle Adoption

Respondents' lifestyle changes related to vegan products are presented in Figure 2. More than half of respondents regularly include vegan products in their diet (55%) and prefer cruelty-free products (60%). About 40–50% discuss or recommend vegan products, reduce non-vegan consumption, or are willing to pay more for ethically branded items.

Table: 4 Lifestyle Adoption

Lifestyle Behavior	Percentage Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
Regularly include vegan products in diet	55%
Prefer cruelty-free and eco-friendly products	60%
Recommend vegan products to peers	40%
Reduced non-vegan products due to health/environment	50%
Willing to pay more for ethically branded products	45%

Discussion: These findings support H1 and H3, suggesting that marketing awareness, health consciousness, and eco-conscious attitudes significantly influence lifestyle adoption. The Theory of Planned Behavior explains this alignment, highlighting the role of attitudes and social norms in guiding consumer behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

4.5 Challenges in Adoption

Respondents identified limited availability, higher prices, and occasional lack of trust in labeling as key challenges. These factors partially moderate the effectiveness of marketing strategies, supporting H4.

Discussion: While vegan marketing successfully raises awareness and motivates lifestyle changes, addressing accessibility and pricing is essential for wider adoption. Marketers and policymakers must ensure availability and affordability to sustain long-term behavioral change.

FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of 299 urban consumers in Coimbatore, the study revealed the following insights:

1. **High Awareness:** A majority of respondents are aware of vegan products and marketing campaigns, particularly through social media and digital channels. Ethical and environmental messaging significantly contributes to awareness.

2. **Effectiveness of Marketing Strategies:** Digital campaigns and influencer endorsements are the most effective tools in influencing lifestyle choices. Packaging, eco-labeling, and ethical branding also have notable impact, while price promotions and product availability moderate adoption.
3. **Lifestyle Adoption:** Over 50% of respondents have adopted vegan-oriented behaviors, including dietary shifts, preference for cruelty-free products, and discussions about vegan lifestyles. Younger, health-conscious, and environmentally aware consumers show higher responsiveness.
4. **Challenges:** Limited availability, higher pricing, and occasional doubts regarding labeling reduce the overall effectiveness of vegan marketing.
5. **Trust and Credibility:** Consumers tend to rely more on brands that provide transparent information about sourcing, production, and certification. Verified eco-labels and third-party endorsements build higher trust in vegan products.
6. **Future Potential:** A significant proportion of consumers expressed willingness to increase vegan consumption if products become more affordable and accessible. This indicates strong future market potential for vegan industries in urban India.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study hold several practical implications for marketers, policymakers, and future research directions. For marketers, the results suggest that greater emphasis should be placed on social media campaigns and influencer collaborations, as these tools are particularly effective in engaging younger urban consumers who are more responsive to digital content. Marketing communication should consistently highlight the ethical, environmental, and health benefits of vegan products to appeal to consumers' values and lifestyles. Equally important is ensuring transparent labeling and informative packaging, as credibility and trust play a significant role in shaping purchase decisions. To address barriers related to affordability, marketers should also consider pricing strategies and promotional offers that make vegan products more accessible to a wider consumer base.

From a policy perspective, there is scope to create an enabling environment that fosters the adoption of vegan lifestyles. Policymakers and urban planners could support initiatives aimed at improving the availability of vegan products across retail outlets, thereby reducing accessibility challenges faced by consumers. Additionally, awareness campaigns that promote sustainable and ethical consumption practices can further strengthen consumer knowledge and motivation to adopt vegan lifestyles. Collaborative efforts that facilitate partnerships between local producers, retailers, and marketers may also help expand the distribution and visibility of plant-based products in urban markets.

In terms of academic contribution, the study opens several avenues for future research. Comparative studies examining consumer behavior in tier-one and tier-two cities of India would provide insights into regional differences in vegan adoption. Similarly, longitudinal studies tracking behavioral changes over time could offer a deeper understanding of the sustained impact of marketing strategies. Moreover, future research could also explore the psychological and cultural factors that shape consumer perceptions and attitudes toward veganism, thereby enriching the theoretical and practical knowledge on sustainable consumption in the Indian context.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that vegan marketing has a significant and positive influence on urban consumer lifestyle choices in Coimbatore. Marketing strategies that leverage digital platforms, influencer engagement, and ethical messaging effectively raise awareness and encourage adoption of vegan behaviors. However, structural challenges such as affordability and product accessibility need to be addressed to ensure sustained impact.

The findings contribute to consumer behavior literature in emerging urban markets and provide practical insights for marketers and policymakers promoting sustainable lifestyles. The study also validates the Theory of Planned Behavior as a relevant framework, demonstrating that attitudes, social norms, and perceived control drive lifestyle adoption.

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