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IMPACT OF GREEN APPAREL ADVERTISEMENTS ON PURCHASE INTENTIONS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF GREEN TRUST

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Abstract

With increasing focus on sustainability, companies are promoting green products through advertising. One of the key contributors to environmental degradation is the apparel industry, due to its overconsumption, large amounts of waste, and fast fashion. In order to overcome this apparel brands are promoting their green initiatives such as sustainable clothing products, ethical production processes, reduced environmental impact among others through their advertising. Hence, this study examines how green apparel advertising influences purchase intentions among Gen Z consumers by highlighting the mediation of green trust. The study is quantitative; a purposive sampling method was adopted, and a structured questionnaire with Likert-scale items was used to collect primary data from 385 respondents. Findings indicate that green apparel advertising has a major influence on purchase intentions, partially mediated by green trust. The study provides valuable insights to marketers and policymakers to enhance and craft effective green advertisements focusing on young consumers and encourage longer sustainable habits.

Keywords: Green Apparel Advertisements, Green Trust, Gen Z, Purchase Intentions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Apparel Industry is one of the major contributors to environmental degradation due to overconsumption, high waste generation, and fast fashion practices. In order to overcome this, most brands have started promoting its green initiatives such as sustainable clothing products, ethical production processes, recycled and upcycled clothing, eco-friendly practices, reduced environmental impact, and other similar initiatives through their advertising. These advertisements, often referred to as Green Apparel Advertising, highlight where the brands often highlight their use of organic products, ethical sourcing, use of recycled and upcycled materials, and low-carbon production processes. Gen Z consumers represent the future of sustainable consumption and are active participants in digital advertising spaces. They exhibit technological savviness and digital exposure, a growing interest in sustainable lifestyles and increasing purchasing power in the apparel sector. Gen Z consumers are defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012. The next consideration is how Gen Z consumers perceive these Green Apparel advertisements—specifically, whether they find them clear, credible, and effective in conveying the green message of the apparel. Higher trust in a brand means consumers feel assured that brands will act responsibly in line with their environmental commitments. Trust in green products instills confidence among Gen Z consumers regarding apparel brands' environmental claims. Also, whether they believe that a brand's promises about sustainability are frank, honest and not just marketing strategy greenwashing.

The higher the trust, the higher the purchase intentions will be—defined as choosing or planning to buy clothing marketed as environmentally friendly. It reflects not just awareness, but also the willingness to take action by preferring sustainable apparel over conventional options. In simple terms, it shows how strongly young consumers are motivated to “go green” in their fashion choices.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This study draws on three theoretical foundations:

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991)– Explains how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control shape green purchase intentions.

Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Model – Suggests that green advertisements (stimulus) influence consumer trust and perception (organism), which in turn drives purchase intentions (response).

Green Trust Theory (Chen, 2010)– Highlights the mediating role of trust in strengthening the relationship between communication and purchase behavior towards green Products.

By integrating these theories, the study examines the the role of green apparel advertisements in influencing purchase intentions and whether green trust mediates this relationship among Gen Z consumers regarding eco-friendly apparel.

Conceptual Framework



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Green Apparel Advertising (IV), Green Trust (MV) and Purchase Intentions (DV)

This Conceptual Framework (Figure 1) is based on the Theories and Constructs that are used in the study concerning the Independent Variable (green apparel advertising), the Mediating Variable (Green Trust), and the Dependent Variable (Purchase Intentions).

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Chen & Chang, 2013) examined the development of consumer trust in environmentally friendly products. The researchers looked at the relationship between perceived quality, risk, and satisfaction and how those elements shape a consumer's trust. The paper concludes that a consumer's belief in a green product's reliability and its low risk strengthens their trust, which is a vital component for promoting sustained purchasing of such products.

(Jain & Mishra, 2022) Gen Z's fashion choices are more than just about style; they are a way for them to express their environmental values and identity, according to Jain and Mishra. Their research indicates that when sustainability aligns with Gen Z's personal beliefs, they are more likely to buy eco-friendly fashion.

(McNeill & Moore, 2015) explored the clash between consumers' love for fast fashion and their awareness of environmental issues. The researchers found that while many people say they care about the planet, their shopping habits show a different story. They often choose clothing based on price and trends rather than on sustainability, revealing a clear gap between what they think and what they actually do.

(Paul et al., 2015), to understand why consumers buy green products, using the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Theory of Reasoned Action. Their research revealed that three psychological factors are key in predicting a person's intention to buy green: attitudes, social norms, and perceived control—these mental drivers are crucial for understanding and forecasting sustainable purchasing habits.

(Ajzen, 1991) introduced the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which helps explain the reasons behind human behaviour. The theory simplifies it to three main influences: our personal attitude toward a behaviour, what others expect of us, and whether we feel we have the ability to do it. This framework is now a primary framework for researchers, particularly when predicting environmentally friendly actions like choosing to buy green products.

4. RESEARCH GAP

While studies have explored green advertising, green trust, and purchase intentions independently, there is limited research focusing on Gen Z consumers in the apparel sector. Moreover, the mediating role of green trust in strengthening the relationship between advertisements and purchase intentions remains underexplored in the Indian context. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence on how trust shapes Gen Z's purchase decisions in sustainable apparel.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess how green apparel advertising influences Gen Z consumers' trust in green apparel brands.

2. To examine the effect of green apparel advertising on Gen Z consumers' intentions to purchase eco-friendly clothing.
3. To evaluate the mediating role of green trust in the relationship between green apparel advertising and Gen Z's purchase intentions for eco-friendly apparel.

Hypothesis:

- H1: Green apparel advertising has a positive effect on Gen Z consumers' trust in green apparel brands.
- H2: Green apparel advertising positively influences Gen Z consumers' intentions to purchase eco-friendly clothing.
- H3: Green trust mediates the relationship between green apparel advertising and Gen Z consumers' intentions to purchase eco-friendly apparel.

6. METHODOLOGY

Sampling & Data Collection: The study employs a quantitative approach, and a purposive sampling method has been adopted to ensure participants belong to Gen Z and have prior experience with apparel shopping. Through Google Forms, primary data was collected for a sample size of 385 respondents by framing a structured questionnaire with Likert-scale items measuring green apparel advertising, green trust, and purchase intentions.

Data Analysis Techniques: The data were analysed using SPSS software. correlation analysis was used to examine relationships among the constructs. To test the hypotheses (H1–H3), regression analysis was used and Sobel test was conducted to confirm the mediation significance.

Measurement of Constructs

All the key study constructs were measured using well-established scales adapted from prior studies rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree). For reliability testing, Cronbach's alpha was used to test internal consistency of all the constructs.

* Green Apparel Advertisements (IV): Adapted from (Rahbar, 2011), a measure of informativeness, credibility, and persuasiveness of advertisements.

* Green Trust (MV): Adapted from (Chen, 2010), a measure assessing the extent to which consumers trust the environmental claims of apparel brands.

* Purchase Intentions (DV): Adapted from (Chan, 2001), a measure focusing on the willingness and likelihood to purchase eco-friendly apparel products.

Ethical Considerations

Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, voluntary participation in the study and confidentiality of their responses. No personal identifying information was collected and the data was used for academic research purposes only.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table Number: 1

Frequency Distribution of Demographic Variables (N=385)

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	204	53
	Female	179	46.5
	Prefer Not to Say	2	0.5
Age Group	18-21 Years	376	97.7
	22-24 Years	9	2.3
Education	Under Graduate	377	97.9
	Post Graduate	8	2.1

Source Note: Primary data collected via a structured questionnaire

Out of the 385 respondents, 53% are males and 46.5% are females and 0.5% did not prefer to state their gender. A majority of the respondents belong to age group of 18 to 21 years. Most of the respondents are undergraduates, which aligns with the focus on Gen Z. (Table 1)

Table Number: 2

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Statistics (Cronbach's Alpha) for Scales Such as Green Apparel Advertising, Green Trust and Purchase Intentions (N=385)

Scale	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items

Green Apparel Advertising	GAA1	2.42987	0.7443	0.773	0.774	4
	GAA2					
	GAA3					
	GAA4					
Green Trust	GT1	2.40909	0.7024	0.799	0.800	4
	GT2					
	GT3					
	GT4					
Purchase Intentions	PI1	2.22987	0.6420	0.728	0.731	4
	PI2					
	PI3					
	PI4					

Source Note: Primary data collected via a Structured Questionnaire

Green Apparel Advertising (Mean= 2.43, SD= 0.74, $\alpha=0.773$), Green Trust (Mean= 2.41, SD= 0.79, $\alpha=0.80$) and Purchase Intentions (Mean= 2.23, SD= 0.64, $\alpha=0.73$). All constructs show good reliability with **Cronbach's Alpha greater than 0.73** for all the three scales, indicating consistent measurement and good central tendency supporting further analysis. (Table 2)

Footnote:

GAA1-I often notice advertisements for eco-friendly or sustainable apparel brands.

GAA2- The environmental benefits of apparel brands are clearly communicated in the ads I see.

GAA3-I feel that green messages in clothing advertisements are relevant to me.

GAA4-Advertisements for green apparel are more attention-grabbing than those for regular clothing.

GT1-I trust apparel brands that claim to be environmentally friendly.

GT2-I believe that apparel brands that advertise as “green” or “sustainable” are honest about their environmental impact.

GT3-I am confident that the eco-friendly claims made by clothing brands in their advertisements are true.

PI1- I intend to purchase eco-friendly clothing in the near future.

PI2- When choosing apparel, I am likely to prefer brands that advertise sustainability.

PI3- I will recommend eco-friendly apparel brands to my friends and family.

PI4- I am willing to pay more for environmentally friendly clothing brands.

Table Number: 3

Pearson Correlation coefficients among Variables

Correlations Matrix

Variable		Green_Apparel_Advertising	Green_Trust	Purchase_Intentions
Green_Apparel_Advertising	Pearson Correlation	1	.607**	.452**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	385	385	385
Green_Trust	Pearson Correlation	.607**	1	.593**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	385	385	385
Purchase_Intentions	Pearson Correlation	.452**	.593**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	385	385	385

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source Note: Primary data through Structured Questionnaire

Green Apparel Advertising is significantly and positively correlated with Green Trust ($r= 0.607$, $p < 0.01$), and Purchase Intentions ($r= 0.452$, $p < 0.01$).

Green Trust is significantly and positively correlated with Green Apparel Advertising ($r= 0.607$, $p < 0.01$) and Purchase Intentions ($r= 0.593$, $p < 0.01$).

Purchase Intentions is significantly and positively correlated with Green Apparel Advertising ($r= 0.452$, $p < 0.01$), and Green Trust ($r= 0.593$, $p < 0.01$). (Table3)

This shows a strong positive relationship among the variables and supports the hypothesis and mediation analysis.

H1: Green apparel advertising has a positive effect on Gen Z consumers’ trust in green apparel brands.

Table Number: 4

Regression Analysis Predicting Mediator Green Trust from Green Apparel Advertising

a. Predictors: (Constant), Green Apparel Advertising

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.6073 ^a	0.3688	0.3672	0.5587

The table provides a summary of the statistical model’s performance. The correlation analysis ($R=0.6073$), indicates a positive relationship between the dependent variable (Green Trust) and the independent variable (Green Apparel Advertising). The R-squared value is 0.3688, suggesting 36.88% of the variance in Green Trust is explained by the model. The Adjusted R-squared, which adjusts for the number of predictors in the model, is 0.3672 with a standard error of estimate of 0.5587. (Table 4, 4.1)

Table 4.1: ANOVA of different variables

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	69.8749	1	69.8749	223.8228	.000 ^a
	Residual	119.5683	383	0.3122		
	Total	189.4432	384			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Green Apparel Advertising

b. Dependent Variable: Green Trust

The ANOVA table presents the results of an analysis of variance for a regression model. The regression sum of squares is 69.8749 with 1 degree of freedom, leading to a mean square of 69.8749. The residual sum of squares is 119.5683 with 383 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 0.3122. The F-statistic is 223.8228 with a significance level (p -value) < 0.001 , indicating that the regression model is statistically significant at 5%. The total sum of squares for the model is 189.4432 with 384 degrees of freedom. (Table 4.2)

Table 4.2: Co-efficients of different variables

Co-efficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.0165	0.0973		10.4424	.000
	Green Apparel Advertising	0.5731	0.0383	0.6073	14.9607	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Green_Trust

Source Note: Primary data using a Structured Questionnaire

The table presents the results of a regression analysis, focusing on the influence of the independent variable (Green Apparel Advertising) on a dependent variable (Green Trust). The constant (inter cept) is 1.0165 with a standard error

of 0.0973, indicating it is highly significant with a t-value of 10.4424 and a p-value of 0.000. The coefficient for the independent variable (Green Apparel Advertising) is 0.5731, with a standard error of 0.0383, with a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.6073. This suggests a positive relationship between Green Apparel Advertising and the Green Trust, significant at the 0.05 level (t=14.96, p-value is 0.000).

H2: Green apparel advertising positively influences Gen Z consumers' intentions to purchase eco-friendly clothing.

Table Number: 5

Regression Analysis Predicting Purchase Intentions from Green Apparel Advertising

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.4517 ^a	0.2041	0.2020	0.5735

a. Predictors: (Constant), Green_Apparel_Advertising

The table provides a summary of Statistical Model's performance. The correlation analysis (R=0.4517) indicates a positive relationship between the dependent variable (Purchase Intentions) and the independent variable (Green Apparel Advertising). The R-squared value is 0.2041, suggesting 20.41% of the variance in purchase intentions is explained by the model. The Adjusted R Square, which adjusts for the number of predictors in the model, is 0.2020 with a standard error of estimate of 0.5735. (Table 5, 5.1)

Table 5.1: ANOVA of different variables

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.3009	1	32.3009	98.1995	.000 ^a
	Residual	125.9806	383	0.3289		
	Total	158.2815	384			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Green_Apparel_Advertising

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intentions

The ANOVA table highlights the results of an analysis of variance for a regression model. The regression sum of squares is 32.3009 with 1 degree of freedom, leading to a mean square of 32.3009. The residual sum of squares is 125.9806 with 383 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 0.3289. The F-statistic is 98.1995 with a significance level (p-value) < .001, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant at the 5% level. The total sum of squares for the model is 158.2815 with 384 degrees of freedom.(Table 5.3)

Table 5.3 Co-efficients of different variables

Co-efficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.2830	0.0999		12.8408	.000
	Green Apparel Advertising	0.3897	0.0393	0.4517	9.9096	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intentions

Source Note: Primary data through Structured Questionnaire

The table presents the results of a regression analysis, focusing on the influence of the independent variable (Green Apparel Advertising) on a dependent variable (purchase intentions). The constant (intercept) is 1.2830 with a standard error of 0.099, indicating it is highly significant with a t-value of 12.8408 and a p-value of 0.000. The coefficient for independent variable (Green Apparel Advertising) is 0.3897, with a standard error of 0.0393 and a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.4517. This suggests a positive relationship between Green Apparel Advertising and the purchase intentions, significant at the 0.05 level (t=9.9096, p-value is 0.000). (Table 6)

H3: Green trust mediates the relationship between green apparel advertising and Gen Z consumers' intention to purchase eco-friendly apparel.

Table 6: Sobel test was conducted to confirm the significance of the mediation

Pathway	Unstandardized coefficient (B) (a)	Std error (SE) (a)	Unstandardized coefficient (B) (b)	Std error (SE) (b)	Sobel Z	p-Value
GAA->GT->PI	0.573	0.038	0.648	0.045	10.17	<.001

A Sobel test confirmed that the indirect effect of Green Apparel Advertising on purchase intentions through Green Trust was statistically significant ($z = 10.17, p < .001$). From these results it is clear that Green Trust partially mediates the relationship between Green Apparel Advertising and Purchase Intentions. Overall, Green Apparel Advertising Influences Purchase Intentions both directly and indirectly through Green Trust. Green Trust partially mediates the relationship.

7. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examines the significance of green advertisements and trust in sustainable apparel in influencing purchase intentions. The findings show that green apparel advertising has an influence on purchase intentions and through partial mediation from green trust among Gen Z toward green apparel. Therefore, trust acts as a critical link between marketing communication i.e., advertisements and sustainable purchase intentions among Gen Z. The study also provides insights for marketers and policymakers to aim at developing effective green campaigns through advertising about sustainable products that resonate with younger consumers and to encourage long-term sustainable habits among them. Thus, this can open a new avenue for the business to go with sustainable apparels which in turn helps in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.

Scope For Further Research

The present study is confined to Gen Z consumers, which may not be generalized to other generations and it is restricted to apparel only and does not cover other green products. The sample is geographically limited to urban Gen Z consumers in Bengaluru. Future research can be initiated by extending to supply-chain or production-related aspects of sustainable apparel and other green products with a wider geographical scope.

8. STATEMENTS & DECLARATIONS

AI Statement: The authors declare that they have not used generative artificial intelligence, specifically ChatGPT, in the writing of this manuscript and/or in the creation of images, graphics, tables, or their corresponding captions.

Authorship Contribution: Goutham S: Carrying out the data collection, data curation, and writing the original manuscript. Sharmila S: Supervision and reviewing the manuscript.

Ethical Standards: All the ethical research standards were followed while writing this conceptual paper.

Conflict of Interest: The authors state that they do not have any conflict of interest.

Informed Consent / Ethical Compliance: As this is a conceptual paper, no consent is requirede.

Human or animal involvement in the article: None

Data Availability

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