Green Marketing Strategies : Enhancing Brand Image and Consumer Trust in Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Purpose : The primary objective of this research was to delve into the influence of green brand image (GBI), transparency (TR), and green advertising receptivity (GAR) on green brand trust (GBT) and their subsequent impact on consumers' purchase intentions (PIs) within the realm of green marketing in India.

Design/Methodology/Approach : Data was collected via a structured survey from 277 Indian consumers and analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0. The research was conceptualized through the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) framework, examining how stimuli like GBI, TR, and GAR influenced GBI as the organism, ultimately impacting the response.

Findings : The results showed that GBT was positively influenced by GAR and GBI, which enhanced PI. TR and non-deception (ND) do not significantly impact GBI. ND strengthens the GAR–GBI link, while TR does not moderate GBI–GBT.

Practical Implications : This study advised Indian green market companies to focus on strengthening GBI and GAR to build consumer trust and boost PIs while maintaining TR and avoiding deceptive practices.

Originality/Value : This study added to the present literature by understanding the aspects inducing consumers' trust in green brands in the Indian context. It also highlighted the importance of TR and ND in building consumer trust and emphasized the need for companies to align their green marketing strategies with consumer expectations.

Keywords : **green brand trust, consumer behavior, green brand image, green advertising receptivity, greenwashing**

JEL Classification Codes : M31, M310, M370

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Growing concern about environmental impact allows companies to respond authentically to demonstrate a good image and commitment toward sustainability, achieve ecological benefits, and appeal to rising eco-conscious consumers (Bothello et al., 2023; Hota, 2022; Tara et al., 2015). Most companies have established goals and business models linked to sustainability in response to environmental challenges. However, many companies claim they are practicing sustainability but fail to provide evidence and reports regarding their promises or commitment toward sustainability, which leads to an accusation of "green-washing" (Bladt et al., 2024). Green-washing is considered a strategy marketing practice that companies follow to showcase their activities as greener than they are, leading to the falsification of sustainability commitment (Volschenk et al., 2022). Multinational oil companies, including Chevron, British Petroleum (BP), Exxon, and Shell, have spent approximately $3.6 billion to establish a business reputation (Santos et al., 2024). Contrastingly, numerous companies have been accused and caught practicing greenwashing, including Zara, H&M, Uniqlo, Volkswagen, Nestle, and Coca-Cola (Rahman & Nguyen-Viet, 2023). Consumers are witnessing how consuming companies' products and services can be harmful or catastrophic for the planet, so customers are very skeptical about some businesses. Consumers are skeptical about businesses' environmental factors (Vangeli et al., 2023; Yadav et al., 2023). Therefore, taking significant marketing strategies is essential for showing sustainability efforts, removing the accusation of greenwashing, and achieving sustainable development. Greenwashing increases consumer distrust of the legitimacy of companies' eco-marketing practices and demands effective marketing strategies (Kumar et al., 2021; Oppong-Tawiah & Webster, 2023).

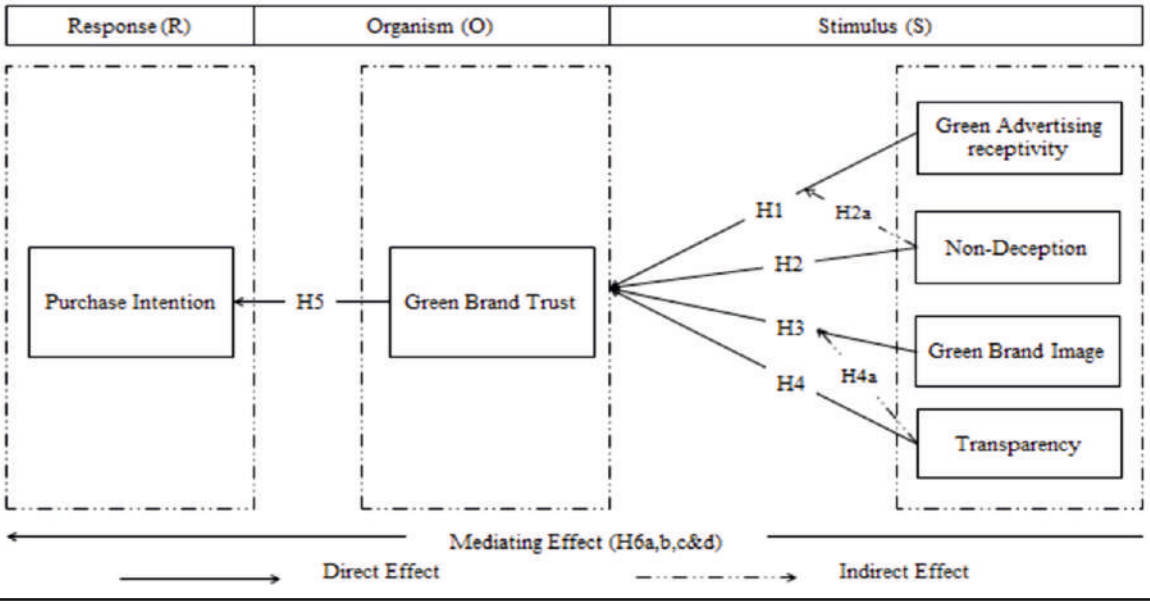
Consumer behavior responses to companies' green initiatives for achieving sustainability need to be thoroughly examined and scrutinized. This will help to understand how they perceive brands and what improvements are needed to appeal to eco-conscious customers (Alam et al., 2024; Premi et al., 2021). However, regarding sustainable development and greenwashing, several studies recognize gaps that demand further investigation due to a need for more focus. First, existing studies thoroughly highlight the consequences of consumer green dust and consumers' perceptions regarding greenwashing toward sustainable development. However, they do not highlight the role of green marketing strategies for avoiding greenwashing acquisition and achieving sustainability with an initiative to appeal to customers and their purchasing behavior (Zaid & Ravi, 2022). Therefore, considering the gaps within the previous studies, these research goals are to highlight effective green marketing tactics for sustainable development, and for that, the variables of the study include non-deception (ND), transparency (TR), green advertising receptivity (GAR), green brand image (GBI) and, how these significantly affect the purchase intention (PI). Huo et al. (2022) stated that trust between the company and its consumers mediates between the mentioned variables and the PI association. In addition, this study focuses on ND and TR as the moderating role within the connection mentioned variables. Based on the practitioners' consideration, this study's findings aim to provide in-depth insights into green marketing strategies for answering green-washing accusations and sustainability commitment.

Literature Review

Theoretical Context

The stimulus–organism–response (SOR) concept would support the research work significantly by explaining different marketing activities and their influence on behavior differences. Companies' green marketing strategies and ways can significantly influence customer behavioral differences regarding purchasing and greenwashing perceptions. By focusing on stimuli and cognitive factors, the SOR framework can explain behavioral differences from various marketing strategies (Suhan et al., 2022). SOR is a practical theory for greenwashing and sustainability development. Previous studies thoroughly explained the factors influencing customer stimulation

Figure 1. ***Hypotheses Design***



and cognitive factors determining their behavior, intention, and perception regarding purchasing or a company's greenwashing (Qayyum et al., 2023). Mogaji et al. (2022) opined that the SOS theory significantly highlighted that an organism's inner judgment is connected through stimulus, which impacts action by determining cognitive function, thus resulting in a response. In this study, green advertising receptivity (GAR), non-deception (ND), green brand image (GBI), and transparency (TR) are all significantly considered factors stimulated through the judgmental mechanism. Besides, green brand trust (GBT) is an organism component, and at the same time, the PI variable is reflected as a SOR framework responsible element (refer to Figure 1).

Hypotheses Development

Green Brand Trust (GBT) and Green Advertising Receptivity (GAR)

Reducing greenwashing behavior is essential for businesses to alleviate consumer confusion and provide authentic information on business sustainability. This empowers customers to make informed purchasing decisions (Mehraj & Qureshi, 2022; Mohapatra et al., 2024).

A green advertisement is an advertisement that profoundly addresses companies' environmental activities to achieve suitability and environmental responsibility (Jinliang et al., 2023; Yadav et al., 2023). Receptivity to green advertising is significantly considered because consumers pay attention to and respond to the green advertisement of the company. GAR influences consumers' purchase decisions, and research has demonstrated the importance of valid information through advertising in building brand credibility (Premi et al., 2021; Us et al., 2023). The green advertisement significantly forms customer feelings and judgments, creating a perception of the brand and purchasing decision (Wang et al., 2022). Green advertisements provide valuable information regarding the environmental effects of business operations, which is essential for businesses (Bothello et al., 2023). GAR improves the significant association between brand trust and green appeal, which affects consumers' trust (Bladt et al., 2024). Based on this, this present paper hypothesizes that:

↳ **H1 :** GBT is positively influenced by GAR.

GBT, ND, and GAR Association

GAR and green brands influence consumer perception. In contrast, greenwashing of a company has demonstrated business responsible behavior toward sustainability and the environment, which negatively shapes consumer perception regarding the specific company (Denyse & Bhagat, 2018; Volschenk et al., 2022). Therefore, green marketing strategies like green advertisement and green brand access build a relationship between customer and brand and showcase green activity, which addresses the acquisition of greenwashing and positively shapes customer perception (Yadav et al., 2024). ND defines customers' significant behavior toward retailers not engaging in manipulative selling practices (Rahman & Nguyen-Viet, 2023). This belief shapes customer perception as consumers believe retailers will not use deceptive practices to persuade people to buy (Santos et al., 2024). Vangeli et al. (2023) discovered the significant role of deception and ND within green marketing research. Deshmukh and Tare (2024) highlighted that ND is pivotal in shaping consumers' perceptions of green retailers' ethics. Very recent research finds that consumer trust in green companies increases considering non-deceptive circumstances (Oppong-Tawiah & Webster, 2023). Existing studies highlight that for shaping customer behavior and perception regarding a brand, deception has the potential of green advertising (Majeed et al., 2022). Dixit et al. (2023) highlighted that deceptive claims regarding green products significantly result in incorrect consumer inferences. Therefore, considering previous preceding literature, the present study hypothesizes that:

- **H2a :** ND positively influences GBT.
- **H2b :** ND plays a moderating role in terms of the GAR and GBT association.

GBT and GBI

Brand image is considered a perception that is an entirely abstract mind of the customer by perceiving activities and initiatives, so it is generally considered a mental image of consumers' minds (Nguyen-Viet & Thanh Tran, 2024). The brand image creates customer loyalty and a long-term relationship, for the customer believes that the company, by having an exceptional brand image, allows customers to purchase their products without thinking twice (Alam et al., 2024). Considering the GBT, a GBI is considered customer participation of a brand based on its commitment and initiative regarding the environment (Esmaelnezhad et al., 2023). For eco-conscious customers and customers with an awareness of the environment, showcasing companies' GBI is essential to protect the environment and appeal to customers (Zaid & Ravi, 2022). By having a GBI, companies can address customer concerns regarding the environment and achieve sustainable development (Huo et al., 2022). Therefore, this showcases an interrelationship between consumer trust and GBI (Qayyum et al., 2023). Existing studies demonstrate the connection between GBI and trust. Therefore, the present study hypothesizes that:

- **H3 :** GBT is positively influenced by GBI.

GBT, TR, and GBI Association

TR determines how a brand explicitly showcases its activities and initiatives regarding green branding and sustainability in the context of the environment to appeal to customers. TR of a business determines that businesses accept their rights and wrong activities in terms of the environment (Nascimento & Loureiro, 2024). In the case of green marketing and creating a GBI to achieve sustainability, transparent green brands focus on their ability to communicate brand practices ethically and responsibly (Free et al., 2024). TR is essential for companies to establish positive customer relationships by showcasing positive business practices through communication

(Venkatesan, 2022). By showcasing TR, a brand can produce a GBI and trust among its customers, as highlighted by a recent study by Tan et al. (2022). Brand TR influences customer perception positively and builds trust between the customer and the brand (Pancić et al., 2023). The research demonstrates that products' sustainability and environmental impact make customers more likely to select that brand and consider brand green, which has TR to assess brands positively. Therefore, TR produces a strong association between the brand and the consumer (El Bordiny, 2024).

Similarly, between GBT and brand image, TR significantly facilitates a strong relationship (Esmaelnezhad et al., 2023). Consumers perceive business TR as authenticity, significantly improving their trust in green brands. Considering that, it is hypothesized that:

- **H4a :** TR profoundly impacts GBT.
- **H4b :** TR plays a moderating role in the GBI and GBT association.

Purchase Intention and Green Brand Trust

Customer purchasing intention is developed by perceiving brands offering their green initiative ability to create trust. Trusting a brand defines customer loyalty to the brand, and high levels of trust suggest that customers are likely to purchase products and services from the brand (Ha, 2022). Brand loyalty, consistency, coherence, competence, integrity, and accountability significantly shape customer trust in the brand (Wu & Liu, 2022). In a greener context, trust in a brand suggests considering the greener perspective and environmental practices that showcase sustainability to determine customer willingness to rely on a brand (Majeed et al., 2022). Green trust determines that the product and services are ethically sourced, do not impact the environment, and responsibly serve the customer to create trust among customers by showing commitment to the environment (Khan & Fatma, 2023). Huo et al. (2022) demonstrated that consumers' green purchasing intention is significantly determined by trust. Khan et al. (2022) demonstrated a significant interrelationship between consumers' purchasing intention for green products and trust in green brands. Considering that, it is theorized that:

- **H5 :** GBT positively influences GBI.

Intermediary Function of GBT

A customer's trust in a particular brand signifies that the brand provides quality and TR. Quality services make emotional aspects of trust (Kumar et al., 2023; Suhan et al., 2022). The company takes a significant fast-building strategy by showcasing green brands to link the reliability and utility of their green products simultaneously to improve consumer trust (Qayyum et al., 2023). The company's service quality and practices for environmental initiatives create GBT, as consumers' trust relies on the company's practices and conduct. That trust determines consumer prioritizing of the firm's products. Consumer trust in green brands is considered one of the driving factors to purchase environmentally friendly products and consider environmental problems (Mogaji et al., 2022). GBT assists in effectively building customer trust by showcasing the company's initiative and creating predictors of purchase goals and purchasing intention (Mehraj & Qureshi, 2022). Jinliang et al. (2023) highlighted that companies establish trust with TR efforts to improve customer rapport and influence customer mindsets and buying intentions. Trust significantly plays a mediator role in building consumers' perceptions (Mogaji et al., 2022). Existing studies have emphasized the strong connection between green advertising and brand trust receptivity that determines customer trust and GBI (Santos et al., 2024). Therefore, based on this, it can be theorized that:

↳ **H6 :** Green trust acts as a pivotal mediator role between (6a) GAR, (6b) GBI, (6c) ND, and (6d) TR and PI relationship.

Research Context

Sustainability within emerging countries allows significant growth of green companies in new geographic regions and assists them in achieving suitability goals (Us et al., 2023). However, many multinational companies engage in greenwashing to achieve short-term profitability, despite competitive pressures and regulations potentially creating hindrances within their activities (Wang et al., 2022). The lack of strict regulations drives developing countries' companies to practice greenwashing to achieve short-term profitability (Volschenk et al., 2022). Only after considering the adverse outcomes of consuming products do Chinese consumers consume products that showcase awareness related to environmental activities, allowing Chinese companies to practice greenwashing (Dixit et al., 2023). Vangeli et al. (2023) highlighted that in Brazil, false claims regarding biodegradability in plastic lead to greenwashing and create significant concerns for Brazilian consumers. India is vulnerable to climate change, which impacts over 12% of the Indian population; this shows a lack of consideration of government, businesses, and customers toward sustainable development. Carbon emissions are a prominent issue of climate change in India. Still, companies are pretending to be environmentally friendly but practicing greenwashing (Bhatti & Negi, 2018; Venkatesan, 2022).

Methodology

Data Collection and Process

A comprehensive field study was conducted to investigate the proposed hypotheses, utilizing online and offline surveys. The study was conducted over six months, from January to June 2023, encompassing various regions of Odisha, India. This time frame allowed for the collection of a diverse and representative sample, considering seasonal variations in purchasing behavior. The geographical focus on Odisha ensured the study captured relevant cultural and regional factors influencing consumer behavior toward green products.

The participants included a diverse mix of urban and rural residents, providing a comprehensive view of the population. The questions asked in the questionnaire were translated into Odia, Hindi, and English and were back-translated by bilingual professionals following the back-translation procedure proposed by Tyupa (2011). The completed survey was distributed by a native Odia speaker who was proficient in Hindi and English to reduce response bias and improve comprehension. The study's representativeness and variety were further increased by offering participants the choice to complete the questionnaire online or on paper, depending on their preference. The study engaged a non-probabilistic purposive sampling method, which is particularly suitable for investigating experiences related to the purchase of green products. Participants were selected based on their prior experience of buying environmentally friendly products, specifically those who had purchased and utilized a product that sustained for at least six months (refer to Table 1). The participants were instructed to recall a brand they had purchased and reflect on its image, statements, and advertising.

The respondents were provided with a detailed clarification of the research purpose and were assured that their data would be kept strictly confidential to minimize potential response bias. Before distributing the primary investigation, an initial investigation was conducted with 50 participants to validate the content and structure of the survey tool. The survey was created using a secure platform, Google Forms, to further ensure the privacy of the participants.

Of the 500 respondents, 277 (55.4%) indicated they were suitable for the study, as indicated in Table 1. The

Table 1. ***List of Sustainable Products Purchased and Its Occurrence***

Items	Occurrence	Rate of %
Purchasing a Green Product		
Clothes	2	0.72
Furniture	3	1.08
Electric motorcycle	3	1.08
Cosmetic	3	1.08
Beverages	5	1.81
Electric appliance	5	1.81
Household item	5	1.81
Do not remember	6	2.17
Organic dairy product	8	2.89
Tapware	10	3.61
Handbag	11	3.97
Toiletry item	14	5.05
Shopping bag	19	6.86
Reusable straw	24	8.66
Food/meal	26	9.39
Misc.	32	11.55
Organic vegetables and fruits	101	36.46
Purchase Occurrence		
Weekly	12	4.33
Usually	3	1.08
More than 20 times	25	9.03
Monthly	2	0.72
Everyday	10	3.61
Do not remember	5	1.81
16 – 20	50	18.05
11 – 15	10	3.61
6 – 10	20	7.22
1 – 5	140	50.54

questionnaire included Likert scale items to measure various constructs related to green advertising, brand image, trust, purchase intention (PI), and TR. The model size exceeded the recommended minimum of 200 for analyzing structural equation modeling (SEM), as Hair et al. (2011) and Bagozzi and Yi (2012) suggested.

Measurement

The questionnaire began by collecting data on various factors, with demographic information gathered at the end. Adapting Tewari et al. (2022), four scale items assessed the reception of green advertising. Lin and Zhou (2022) adopted the four scale items to capture the measurement of the GBI. The level of trust in the green brand was assessed using four different measures. While PI was measured using three questions adapted from Konuk

et al. (2015), TR was assessed using scale items from Lin et al. (2021). A 5-point Likert scale ranging from "*strongly disagree*" to "*strongly agree*" was applied to all scale items in the survey.

Statistical Technique

In this study, SEM has been used to analyze the proposed correlations while assessing the model's adequacy. Partial least squares (PLS) were used for data analysis, supported by SmartPLS 3.0. Hair et al. (2011) have opined that SEM analysis is suitable in cases where numerous constructs and variables are investigated, facilitating simultaneous assessment of associations between the constructs and variables.

Analysis and Results

Demographic Outline

Out of the total participants, 166 were females, and males were 111 in number. A significant majority of the participants fell into the age group of 18 – 35 years, representing 79.78% of the total respondents. At the same time, 37.57% represented married individuals totaling 93 and unmarried respondents stood at 173. In the case of income, 72.92% of the respondents earned above ₹ 105,000, while 52 respondents, representing 18.77%, reported above ₹ 105,000 income per annum. Out of the total respondents, 183 had undergraduate degrees, 37 respondents had a secondary school certificate, and only 2 were doctoral graduates (refer to Table 2 for the details).

Table 2. ***Characteristics of the Respondents***

Gender		
Male	111	40.07
Female	166	59.93
Marital Status		
Married	93	33.57
Unmarried	173	62.45
Divorcee	7	2.53
Widowed	4	1.44
Age		
18–20	121	43.68
21–25	22	7.94
26–30	37	13.36
31–35	41	14.80
36–40	21	7.58
41–45	13	4.69
46–50	11	3.97
51–55	8	2.89
56–60	3	1.08
Income		
<15,000	97	35.02
15,001–25,000	63	22.74

25,001–35,000	42	15.16
35,001–45,000	4	1.44
45,001–55,000	4	1.44
55,001–65,000	4	1.44
65,001–75,000	1	0.36
75,001–85,000	2	0.72
85,001–95,000	2	0.72
95,001–105,000	6	2.17
>105,000	52	18.77
Education		
Ph.D./Doctoral	2	0.72
Master's	22	7.94
Bachelor's	183	66.06
Intermediate	31	11.19
Matric/Secondary School	37	13.36
Middle	2	0.72

Analysis Through SEM

Evaluating Evaluation Tools

We employed PLS-SEM in a two-level analysis to analyze the data, ensuring data integrity by checking missing values, identifying outliers, and addressing normality concerns. To assess the relationships between variables, we conducted Pearson correlation tests. Convergent validity and reliability of our constructs were evaluated using composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha, and average variance extracted (AVE), with factor loadings above

Table 3. ***Internal Consistency, Reliability, Discriminant Validity, and Correlation***

Items	*PI*	*ND*	*GBT*	*T*	*GBI*	*GAR*	α	AVE[a]	CR[b]
PI	(0.934)						0.819	0.867	0.901
ND	0.142*	(0.931)					0.851	0.852	0.922
GBT	0.493**	0.113*	(0.901)				0.811	0.754	0.887
TR	0.614**	0.307*	0.591**	(0.927)			0.848	0.822	0.907
GBI	0.631**	0.237*	0.712**	0.743**	(0.887)		0.809	0.787	0.888
GAR	0.591**	0.137*	0.607**	0.543**	0.642**	(0.881)	0.739	0.739	0.839

Note. *$p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Square root values of AVEs are in parentheses along the diagonal.

Abbreviations: *PI*, Purchase Intention; *ND*, Non-Deception; *GBT*, Green Brand Trust; *TR*, Transparency; *GBI*, Green Brand Image; *GAR*, Green Advertising Receptivity; α, Cronbach's alpha

$$a_{AVE} = \frac{sum\ of\ squared\ factor\ loadings}{(sum\ of\ squared\ factor\ loadings)\ (sum\ of\ error\ variances)}$$

$$b_{CR} = \frac{sum\ of\ squared\ factor\ loadings}{(square\ of\ the\ sum\ of\ the\ factor\ loadings)\ þ\ (square\ of\ the\ sum\ of\ the\ error\ variances)}$$

the recommended threshold of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), indicating convergent validity as satisfactory. The discriminant validity was established to ensure that the square root of AVEs surpasses the correlation coefficients between parallel constructs (refer to Table 3). The study also computed Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratios ranging from 0.128 to 0.878; as Hair et al. (2011) suggested, it is less than the 0.90 cut-off rate. As our data were collected through a one-time survey from respondents within a single country, we conducted a standard method variance assessment following Podsakoff et al.'s (2003) recommendations. To mitigate potential biases, we ensured respondent confidentiality and anonymity, as well as statements and randomized variables in the survey, to prevent participants from assuming cause-and-effect relationships between concepts. Statistically, (Kock, 2015) through a full collinearity test in PLS-SEM, we assessed variance inflation factors (VIFs), with VIF values ranging from 1.090 to 3.169, indicating no significant collinearity issues or standard method bias in our research.

Hypotheses Testing and Evaluation of Structural Models

The initial stage in calculating the structural model is computing the R^2 results, which helps understand the level of the variance in dependent variables described by independent variables. This study suggests that green trust explains 29% of the variance in PI and 57% of the variance in green trust by the independent variables. As per Hair et al. (2011), the above values exceed 10%, i.e., the minimum level in marketing research. Next, we compute the Q^2 value, a crucial indicator of the model's predictability. The result of 0.21 for PI and 0.35 for GBT signifies significant predictability within the model, as revealed by the blindfolding understanding.

For a comprehensive evaluation of the model fit, we calculate the correlation matrix and compare it with the observed correlation matrix. This comparison, along with the computation of the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) to quantify the variance between the two matrices, provides a detailed understanding of the model's performance. Further assessment involves validating the measurement model for accuracy. We use the bootstrapping technique with a 5,000 sub-sample trial at a 0.05 level of significance to consider *t*-values and Path coefficients. This technique ensures the robustness of the study's findings, as it specifies the power of the association between dependent and independent variables and tests the study's hypotheses based on these coefficients.

The indirect effects demonstrate how the mediating variable *GBT* (organism) influences the association between the *TR, GBI, GAR,* and *ND* (Stimulus) as independent variables and the *PI* (Response) as the dependent variable. The model finds that GAR affects GBT significantly, supporting H1, with a value of beta 0.261, which means H1 is accepted. However, H2a is not supported as it is observed that ND hurt GBT, with a value of beta –0.148; hence, we reject H2a. The data supports H3, showing that GBI influences GBT, with a value of beta 0.394, similar to GBT's influence on PI, leading to the acceptance of H5, with a value of beta 0.612, as the *p*-value is less than 0.05. On the other hand, the effect of TR on GBT is not significant, and therefore, H4 is not supported, with a value of beta 0.147 and a *p*-value greater than 0.05, which leads to the rejection of H4.

GBT fully mediates the GAR – PI relationship (H6a), with a value of beta 0.149, and the GBI – PI relationship (H6b), with a value of beta 0.307 and a *p*-value less than 0.05 for both, which helps us to accept both H6a and H6b. However, GBT does not mediate the ND – PI relationship (H6c), with a value of beta –0.047, nor the TR–PI relationship (H6d), with a value of beta 0.071 and a *p*-value greater than 0.05 for both. That leads to the rejection of both H6c and H6d.

The outcomes of the hypothesized relationships are displayed in Tables 4 & 5 and Figure 2. ND effectively moderates the association between GBT and GAR, thus endorsing H2b that helps us to accept H2b. However, the results do not substantiate the moderating effect of TR on the relationship between GBT and GBI, resulting in the dismissal of H4a, which leads to the rejection of H4a. Further details regarding the moderators can be found in Table 5.

Table 4. ***Results of the Hypotheses***

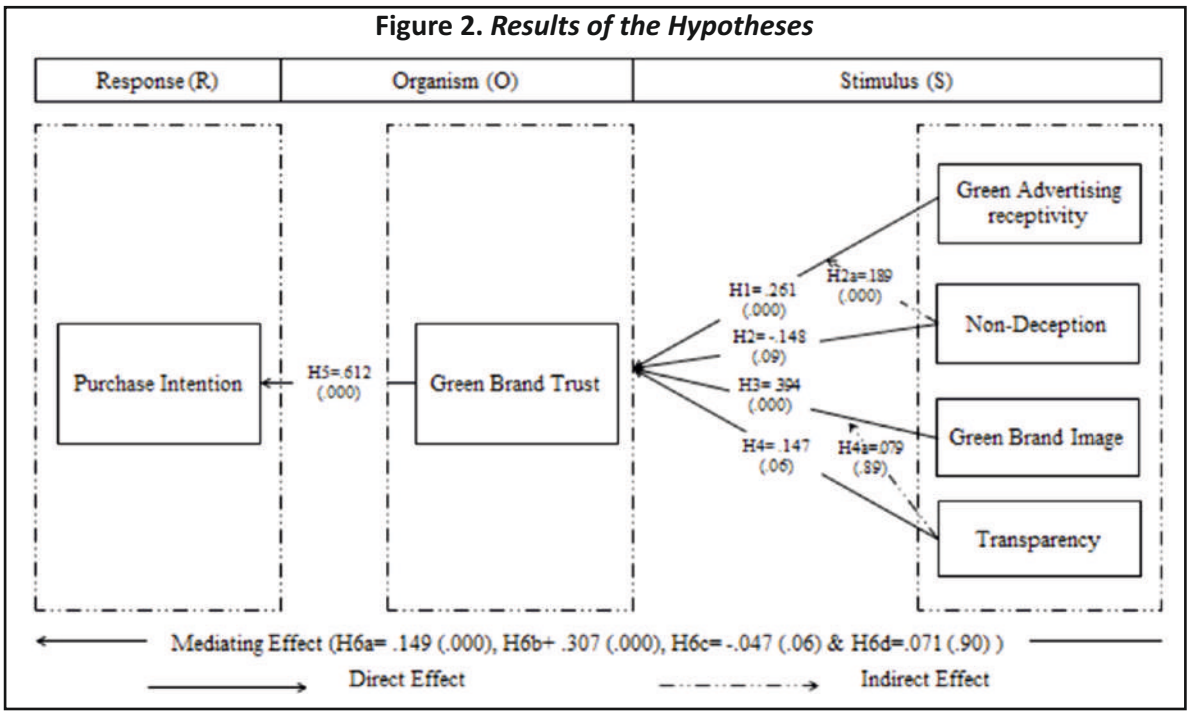
Label	*p*-value	*t*-value	Path Coefficients	Hypothesized Path	Hypotheses
Direct Effects					
Supported	0.00	4.211	0.261	*GAR → GBT*	H1
Not supported	0.09	1.871	–0.148	*ND → GBT*	H2a
Supported	0.00	7.537	0.394	*GBI → GBT*	H3
Not supported	0.06	1.579	0.147	*TR → GBT*	H4a
Supported	0.00	9.637	0.612	*GBT → PI*	H5
Indirect Effects/Mediating Hypotheses Results					
Supported	0.00	3.714	0.149	*GAR → GBT → PI*	H6a
Supported	0.00	5.697	0.307	*GBI → GBT → PI*	H6b
Not supported	0.06	1.737	–0.047	*ND → GBT → PI*	H6c
Not supported	0.90	1.567	0.071	*TR → GBT → PI*	H6d

Note. As per one-tailed and 5,000 bootstrapping; $p < 0.05$.

Table 5. ***Results of the Moderating Effect***

Label	*p*-value	*t*-value	Path Coefficients	Hypothesized Path	Hypotheses
Supported	0.00	3.724	0.189	*GAR × ND → GBT*	H2b
Not Supported	0.89	0.0791	0.007	*GBI × TR → GBT*	H4b

Figure 2. ***Results of the Hypotheses***



Discussion and Conclusion

The study seeks to examine the influence of many elements, such as GBT, affected by TR, GBI, ND, and GAR. In addition, the study investigates how ND influences the connection between GBT and GAR and the influence of

TR on the relationship between GBT and GBI. In addition, the study examines how GBT acts as a mediator between the independent variables and the relationships of the dependent variable. The study's conceptual model is constructed using the SOR outline. The hypotheses were studied by analyzing data obtained from Indian participants. The results suggest that GBI and GAR benefit GBT, subsequently positively affecting PI. Nevertheless, TR and ND hurt GBT. The results confirm GBT's mediating function, as it serves as a mediator between PI, GAR, and GBI but not between PI, TR, and ND. Additionally, the impact of ND on the link between GBT and GAR is determined to be considerable. However, TR does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between GBT and GBI.

The study's findings reveal a positive association between GAR and GBT (H1), consistent with prior research by Sun and Wang (2020), indicating that GAR positively impacts consumers' trust in environmentally friendly brands. Rahman and Nguyen-Viet (2023) stated that consumers perceive advertisements promoting green products as credible. Sun and Wang (2020) mentioned that trades increasingly use strategic positioning to influence consumers' decisions to purchase green products in line with environmental goals. They employ various messaging strategies to highlight potential environmental and societal benefits (Tewari et al., 2022). In addition, the data reinforces the connection between GBT and GBI, aligning with previous research (Bashir et al., 2020; Chen, 2010) that suggests a positive GBI results in increased consumer trust. Consumers view green brands as reliable and dedicated to meeting their environmental obligations, highlighting the significance of effective communication in establishing a positive brand reputation (Lin & Zhou, 2022).

Nevertheless, the study discovered that TR does not have a noteworthy impact on buyer trust in green companies (H4), which contradicts prior studies indicating that TR is pivotal in influencing consumers' decisions to purchase environmentally friendly products and improving their GBT (Copeland & Bhaduri, 2020). The study also suggests the need for better and more open communication from green brands about environmental accountability else it will raise customer skepticism (Romani et al., 2016). The evidence about GBT mediating between dependent and independent factors supports two of the four hypotheses. For promoting connections between GAR (H6a), GBI (H6b), and PI GBT has acted as a critical element. However, it is a statistically negligible case of correlation between Need for Deception (H6c) and Trust (H6d) over GBT. This conclusion is similar to what Lavuri et al. (2022) indicated in their study, thus suggesting green brands can positively impact customer trust by boosting environmental consciousness through their advertisements. This will enhance customer confidence in brands that showcase environmental accountability, resulting in an intention to purchase eco-friendly products. This result is confirmed with previous research findings from Bashir et al. (2020) and Cheung and To (2021).

With the absence of a significant influence of GBT on PI, TR, and ND relationships, customers may not trust green enterprises due to their perception and find a brand image and green advertising failing to match their expectations. Tewari et al. (2022) and Sun and Wang (2020) have opined that there is a chance of green enterprises deceiving consumers with overemphasis on environmental initiatives. The findings have practical implications for the understanding of the relationship between GBT and GAR. For instance, it was indicated that the moderating role of ND lends strength to this relationship in a positive way. The implication is that any TR, especially the sharing of details relating to manufacturing and production, will help increase consumer trust in green products easily. With greater green advertising exposure, therefore, consumers may develop more trust from a perceived TR of the companies' brands.

The findings have practical implications for the understanding of the relationship between GBT and GAR. For instance, it was indicated that the moderating role of ND lends strength to this relationship in a positive way. The implication is that any TR, especially the sharing of details relating to manufacturing and production, will help increase consumer trust in green products easily. With greater green advertising exposure, consumers may develop more trust influenced by their perceived brand TR.

However, TR does not significantly affect the relationship between GBT and GBI. Nguyen and Dekhili (2019) have opined that consumers were not really concerned about TR as a stronger contributor when evaluating the image of green products. That is to say, TR could be a minor factor in bridging the GBT with the GBI. The relation of TR and ND to trust suggests that Indian customers are indeed making informed decisions for purchases in an environment-friendly manner, listing out organizations that use different tactics to deceive or mislead with publicity through ecological footprint. This research emphasizes that the amount of awareness about the environment and greenwashing among Indian consumers can play a decisive role in their purchasing decision of green products, based on the premises that companies in developing countries are more prone to deceptive advertising and most of their consumers are uninformed or less aware about this.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

Sheth and Parvatiyar (2021) extended the green marketing literature by stressing the need to incorporate various environmental and social issues into governance and economic decision-making. Chen (2010) and Shultz et al. (2022) explored how companies may shift from the deception of consumers and maximizing profits to espousing environmental commitments and striding toward a favorable reputation. It also supplements previous literature by giving a clear elaboration of how green marketing strategies can be employed effectively by businesses in the communication of their green initiatives successfully. This is important because consumers are increasingly demanding to know about the eco-friendly activities of organizations (Hwang & Lyu, 2020; Lin & Zhou, 2022; Sun & Wang, 2020).

Indeed, this study helps understand those factors that enable consumers to decide between buying an environmentally friendly product. The SOR framework has contributed valuable knowledge with regard to the effect of ND and TR on PI. It also studied the impact of TR, GBI, ND, and GAR through GBT on PI. Therefore, it can also offer considerable information to other researchers who employ the SOR framework. This study provides new insights into a firm's brand image and green advertising by using TR and ND as moderating factors. Chen (2010), Cheung and To (2021), Lavuri et al. (2022), and Roy et al. (2022) have identified TR, GBI, ND, and GAR as contributing much to developing a customer's trust and their views about eco-friendly companies. The research also includes previous research gaps on positive outcomes of green trust regarding purchase intent improvement along with green marketing tactics. This article significantly contributes to the research community as it brings to light the effect of TR and ND on GBT from the perspective of the social exchange theory (Cheung & To, 2021).

Practical Implications

The results of this study highlight the fact that transparent, clear, and truthful communications are necessary to build ecologically and environmentally conscious brands. Investigations reveal that marketing systems, as well as customers, are responsible to a large extent for promoting sustainability (Wiedmann et al., 2020). From a critical point of view, one very important implication of this research is that it creates demand from businesses to assist consumers in changing their consumption habits toward an environment-friendly livelihood. Thøgersen's (2021) study has pointed out that it is essential to provide reliable and understandable carbon labels along with performance data aimed toward re-orienting and re-educating consumers for making more sustainable choices.

Lavuri et al. (2022) and Nagar's (2015) research indicated that branding and green advertising are important for the establishment of customer confidence in environmentally friendly products. More importantly, this research highlights the role that GBI and GAR are playing in building trust toward green brands. By doing so, this research

indicates that green enterprises should step up and strategically evaluate their positioning and promotion strategies in developing countries as consumers of such countries have become more environmentally conscious and are also willing to pay a premium price for certified green products (Nguyen & Dekhili, 2019; Vuong et al., 2021). Managers have to come out and admit their shortcomings or how they are planning to change their process in today's world of creating environmentally sustainable products (Szabo & Webster, 2021). In order to strengthen the relationship between GBI and GBT, enterprises should provide transparent and clear information. It assists the customer to build an attitude of credibility toward the brands and make rational decisions for purchasing eco-friendly products (Sun & Wang, 2020; Wang et al., 2022). Policymakers are also supposed to promote communication TR and offer education to consumers, which would enable people to act and make responsible, eco-friendly decisions. All kinds of regulatory mechanisms should, therefore, be implemented to bring home better data TR with regard to environmental commitments and further incentivize corporates to show responsibility by implementing policies toward building sustainable business models.

Constraints and Prospective Suggestions

Even with careful deliberation, this research is subject to significant constraints. The study was carried out in India, which could limit the applicability of the results. Other developing countries should replicate the generalizability of the SOR framework in future studies so as to further its generalizability. Since developing nations are highly susceptible to environmental impacts coupled with customers who are poorly aware of misleading environmental claims, it is of paramount importance that the effectiveness of this framework is tested on diverse cultural and national backgrounds. Future investigations could explore different theoretical frameworks, such as the theory of reasoned action or the theory of social exchange, to assess and compare the theories presented.

Furthermore, the impetus behind sustainable consumption frequently revolves around selecting chemical-free products that are advantageous for the environment, society, and health. Integrating supplementary variables might improve comprehension of customers' preferences for sustainable consumption, considering elements such as societal advantages, environmental advantages, symbolic advantages, hedonic advantages, utilitarian advantages, product quality, and perceived value. Finally, this research could be constrained by criteria such as the selection of methodology, the operationalization of constructs, the characteristics of respondents, and the sample size. Future research could overcome these constraints by refining the operationalization of constructs, adopting diverse analysis techniques, examining data about respondent characteristics, and utilizing bigger sample sizes.

Authors' Contribution

Dr. Arya Kumar and Dr. Sweta Leena Hota conceived the idea and developed qualitative and quantitative designs to undertake the empirical study. Dr. Sidar Atalay Şimşek and Ms. Swapna Swarupa Mallick extracted research papers with high reputation, filtered these based on keywords, and generated concepts and codes relevant to the study design. Dr. Asokan verified the analytical methods and supervised the study. The interviews were conducted by Dr. Sweta Leena Hota and Swapna Swarupa Mallick, some in colloquial language and some in English. The same were further transcripted and translated into English by all the others. The numerical computations were done by Dr. Arya Kumar, Dr. Sweta Leena Hota, Dr. Asokan Vasudevan, and Dr. Sidar Atalay Şimşek using SPSS.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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