

A Quantitative Study of Green Marketing Perceptions Among Kathmandu Valley College Students

Sarita Kumari Ayer^{ID}, Puja Shrestha^{ID}, Rojina Karki^{ID},
Rose Kumar Shrestha^{ID}, Sambridhi Gurung^{ID}, Shiwani Tamang^{ID}
BBA 6th Semester

Atharva Business College, Bansbari, Kathmandu, Nepal

saritaayer321@gmail.com / puja.tgl12@gmail.com / karkiroojeena123@gmail.com /
shresthark135@gmail.com / sambridhigurung2077@gmail.com / shiwani lamaa@gmail.com

Satyanarayan Choudhary*^{ID}, PhD

Associate Professor

Tribhuvan University, Nepal

snc.pentagon@gmail.com

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Correspondence Author*

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Abstract

Background: Green marketing is increasingly pivotal in Nepal, particularly in the Kathmandu Valley, as consumer environmental awareness grows. Understanding the perceptions of key demographics like university students is crucial for businesses developing effective sustainability strategies.

Objectives: This study aimed to assess university students' perceptions of green marketing in the Kathmandu Valley and to examine the differences in these perceptions based on gender.

Methods: A quantitative, descriptive, and comparative research design was employed. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire from 205 randomly selected university students. Analyses were conducted using SPSS, utilizing descriptive statistics and an independent samples t-test to compare male and female responses.

Findings: The results revealed overwhelmingly positive perceptions of green marketing among students. A significant majority expressed a preference for eco-friendly brands, acknowledged the influence of green advertisements, trusted sustainability certifications, and were willing to pay a premium for genuine sustainable products. However, skepticism about greenwashing was also prevalent. Crucially, a significant gender difference was found, with

female students demonstrating more favorable perceptions of green marketing than their male counterparts ($p = 0.033$).

Conclusion: University students in the Kathmandu Valley are generally receptive to green marketing. The significant gender gap suggests tailored marketing approaches are necessary. Despite positive attitudes, challenges like consumer skepticism toward greenwashing persist.

Implication: Marketers should develop transparent, credible green marketing campaigns to build trust and bridge the value-action gap. Strategies should be gender-sensitive, with messaging potentially more focused on platforms and values that resonate with female consumers.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Consumer Perception, University Students, Gender Difference, Kathmandu Valley, Sustainability.

Introduction

Green marketing has become a central strategy for businesses aiming to align with the growing consumer demand for environmentally responsible products and practices. In Nepal, particularly within the Kathmandu Valley, this trend is gaining momentum as consumers become more aware of environmental issues and their purchasing power's impact on sustainability. Green marketing encompasses a range of practices, including eco-labeling, green advertising, and sustainable product design, all aimed at promoting products that have a reduced environmental footprint.

The Kathmandu Valley, with its dense population and increasing urbanization, presents a unique context for studying consumer perceptions of green marketing. University students, as a demographic group, are often at the forefront of adopting new trends and are typically more receptive to sustainability messages. Their perceptions and behaviors can offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of green marketing strategies in Nepal.

Previous studies have highlighted the positive influence of green marketing tools on consumer buying behavior in Nepal. For instance, a study by Pradhan (2022) found that eco-labeling, eco-branding, and environmental advertising significantly impacted consumer purchasing decisions in the Kathmandu Valley. Similarly, research by Sharma (2021) indicated that green marketing tools, such as environmental beliefs and green packaging, play a crucial role in shaping consumer buying intentions in Nepal. These findings underscore the importance of effective green marketing strategies in influencing consumer behavior.

Gender differences also play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions of green marketing. Research indicates that women generally exhibit more positive attitudes toward green products and are more likely to engage in pro-environmental behaviors than men. For example, a study by Mostafa (2007) found that women in Egypt had more favorable attitudes toward green products compared to men. Similarly, a study by Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) in Belgium reported that women were more likely to purchase organic food products due to higher environmental concern. These studies suggest that gender differences in environmental

attitudes are not unique to Western contexts but are also prevalent in other regions, including Nepal.

Understanding the perceptions of university students in the Kathmandu Valley regarding green marketing is crucial for businesses aiming to develop effective marketing strategies that resonate with this demographic. By examining factors such as awareness, trust, and willingness to pay for sustainable products, this study seeks to provide insights into how green marketing can be tailored to meet the expectations of Nepalese consumers.

Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative descriptive and comparative research design to investigate college students' perceptions of green marketing. The population of the research included university students enrolled in various colleges and universities located in the Kathmandu Valley. From this population, a total of 205 students were selected using a random sampling technique to ensure fairness and representativeness. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before participation. The responses were coded, processed, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were applied to summarize the data, while additional inferential tests such as t-tests were considered to explore subgroup differences. Ethical considerations were maintained by ensuring voluntary participation, obtaining consent, and keeping the information provided by the respondents confidential.

Results

A floating questionnaire was used to gather data from college students. The demographic profile of the respondents is discussed in this section along with its analysis and interpretation based on the primary data collected through questionnaires. This will improve understanding of the respondents' demographic characteristics. The respondent age, gender, and educational background are all included in their profile.

Table 1: Sample Distribution of Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	90	43.9	43.9	43.9
	Female	115	56.1	56.1	100.0
	Total	205	100.0	100.0	

The results of the study shows that, respondents were inquired as male and female. Out of 205 respondents in the sample, 90 are male (43.9%) and 115 are female (56.1%). According to the sample distribution of gender. The majority of the respondents are female, and there are no missing values.

Table 2: Sample Distribution of Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-20	59	28.8	28.8	28.8
	21-23	102	49.8	49.8	78.5
	24+	44	21.5	21.5	100.0
	Total	205	100.0	100.0	

The results in the table 2 indicates that out of 205 respondents, 59(28.8%) were within age 18-20, 102(49.8%) within age 21-23 and 44(21.5%) within age 24+. The results of the study indicate that 18-20 age range students, who are probably in their middle to late college years, play a significant role in forming perceptions of brands, 21-23 age range students who are becoming more conscious of environmental issues and 24+ age range are with higher levels of analytical skills regarding marketing strategies.

Table 3: Sample Distribution of Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1st Year	37	18.0	18.0	18.0
	2nd Year	37	18.0	18.0	36.1
	3rd Year	90	43.9	43.9	80.0
	4th Year	41	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	205	100.0	100.0	

The results in table 3 indicates that out of 205 students, 37(18%) were 1st year students, 37(18%) were 2nd year students, 90(43.9%) were 3rd year students and 41(20.0%) were 4th year students. 1st year and 2nd year students are most likely, still developing awareness and forming brand preferences. 3rd year students are probably be more familiar with marketing and sustainability ideas. And 4th year students are perhaps getting ready to graduate and becoming less sure of brand authenticity.

Green Marketing

Table 4

I prefer buying from brands that promote eco-friendly products.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	4.9	4.9	4.9
	Disagree	5	2.4	2.4	7.3
	Neutral	28	13.6	13.6	20.9
	Agree	111	53.9	53.9	74.8
	Strongly Agree	52	25.2	25.2	100.0
	Total	206	100.0	100.0	

The findings indicate that a majority of students expressed a positive preference toward purchasing from brands that promote eco-friendly products. Out of the 206 respondents, more than half (53.9%) agreed with the statement, while an additional 25.2% strongly agreed, showing that nearly four out of five participants favor environmentally friendly brands. On the other hand, only a small portion of students disagreed, with 4.9% strongly disagreeing and 2.4% disagreeing. Meanwhile, 13.6% of respondents remained neutral. Overall, the results suggest that students in the Kathmandu Valley hold favorable perceptions of eco-friendly branding, with a significant majority aligning their purchase preferences with sustainability initiatives.

Table 5

Green advertisements influence my purchasing decisions.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	3.4	3.4	3.4
	Disagree	8	3.9	3.9	7.3
	Neutral	41	19.9	19.9	27.2
	Agree	103	50.0	50.0	77.2
	Strongly Agree	47	22.8	22.8	100.0
	Total	206	100.0	100.0	

The results show that green advertisements play a significant role in shaping students' purchasing decisions. Among the 206 respondents, half of them (50.0%) agreed that such advertisements influence their buying behavior, while an additional 22.8% strongly agreed. This indicates that nearly three-fourths of the participants recognize the persuasive impact of eco-friendly advertising. In contrast, only a small minority disagreed, with 3.4% strongly disagreeing and 3.9% disagreeing. Meanwhile, 19.9% of respondents remained neutral, suggesting some level of indecision or lack of influence. Overall, the findings suggest that green advertisements are an important factor in influencing consumer behavior among university students in the Kathmandu Valley, as the majority positively acknowledged their impact on purchase decisions.

Table 6

I trust brands more if they have sustainability certifications (e.g., Fair Trade, Organic, Carbon 3).					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	3.4	3.4	3.4
	Disagree	4	1.9	1.9	5.3
	Neutral	31	15.0	15.0	20.4
	Agree	101	49.0	49.0	69.4
	Strongly Agree	63	30.6	30.6	100.0
	Total	206	100.0	100.0	

The findings reveal that sustainability certifications significantly enhance students' trust in brands. Out of 206 respondents, nearly half (49.0%) agreed that they trust brands more when certifications such as Fair Trade, Organic, or Carbon-related labels are present, while an additional 30.6% strongly agreed. This means that almost four out of five students demonstrate higher trust in brands with sustainability credentials. Only a small proportion expressed disagreement, with 3.4% strongly disagreeing and 1.9% disagreeing. Meanwhile, 15.0% of respondents remained neutral, indicating uncertainty or indifference toward certifications. Overall, the results suggest that sustainability certifications play a crucial role in shaping brand credibility and consumer trust among university students in the Kathmandu Valley.

Table 7

I believe some brands use "green marketing" just for profit (greenwashing).					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	2.4	2.4	2.4
	Disagree	11	5.3	5.3	7.8
	Neutral	32	15.5	15.5	23.3
	Agree	94	45.6	45.6	68.9
	Strongly Agree	64	31.1	31.1	100.0
	Total	206	100.0	100.0	

The results indicate that a large proportion of students are skeptical about the genuine intentions behind green marketing, with many perceiving it as a strategy used primarily for profit, also known as greenwashing. Among the 206 respondents, 45.6% agreed and 31.1% strongly agreed that some brands misuse green marketing for profit-making purposes. In contrast, only a small share disagreed, with 2.4% strongly disagreeing and 5.3% disagreeing. Meanwhile, 15.5% of respondents remained neutral, reflecting uncertainty or mixed views on the issue. Overall, the findings suggest that although students support eco-friendly practices, they also remain cautious and critical, recognizing the possibility that some brands may exaggerate or falsely promote sustainability for financial gain.

Table 8

I am willing to pay a higher price for genuinely sustainable products.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	2.9	2.9	2.9
	Disagree	7	3.4	3.4	6.3
	Neutral	34	16.5	16.5	22.8
	Agree	102	49.5	49.5	72.3
	Strongly Agree	57	27.7	27.7	100.0
	Total	206	100.0	100.0	

The findings show that a majority of students are willing to pay a premium for genuinely sustainable products. Out of 206 respondents, nearly half (49.5%) agreed with the statement, while an additional 27.7% strongly agreed, indicating that more than three-fourths of the participants are open to spending more on eco-friendly options. On the other hand, only a small minority expressed unwillingness, with 2.9% strongly disagreeing and 3.4% disagreeing. Meanwhile, 16.5% of respondents remained neutral, suggesting some uncertainty about paying higher prices despite valuing sustainability. Overall, the results highlight that students in the Kathmandu Valley demonstrate a strong willingness to support sustainable consumption practices, even if it requires paying more.

Table 9

Social media influencers promoting green products affect my brand choices.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	3.4	3.4	3.4
	Disagree	13	6.3	6.3	9.7
	Neutral	37	18.0	18.0	27.7
	Agree	88	42.7	42.7	70.4
	Strongly Agree	61	29.6	29.6	100.0
	Total	206	100.0	100.0	

The results suggest that social media influencers have a notable impact on students' brand choices when promoting green products. Among the 206 respondents, 42.7% agreed and 29.6% strongly agreed, showing that more than two-thirds of the participants are influenced by eco-friendly endorsements from influencers. In contrast, only a small portion disagreed, with 3.4% strongly disagreeing and 6.3% disagreeing. Meanwhile, 18.0% of respondents remained neutral, indicating mixed or uncertain views about influencer-driven promotions. Overall, the findings highlight that social media influencers play an important role in shaping consumer preferences toward sustainable products, particularly among students in the Kathmandu Valley.

Difference between male and female students in their perceptions of green marketing

Table 10

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Green	Male	90	3.8185	.76871	.08103
	Female	116	4.0244	.54430	.05054
Independent Samples Test					
	Levene's Test for Equality	t-test for Equality of Means			

		of Variances								
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Green	Equal variances assumed	8.463	.004	-2.249	204	.026	-.20591	.09155	-.38642	-.02539
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.156	153.706	.033	-.20591	.09550	-.39456	-.01725

The results from the independent samples t-test indicate that there is a significant difference between male and female students in their perceptions of green marketing. The mean score for female students ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.54$) was higher than that of male students ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.77$), suggesting that females tend to have more favorable perceptions of green marketing. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was significant ($F = 8.463$, $p = .004$), which means the assumption of equal variances was violated. Therefore, the "equal variances not assumed" row is more appropriate. Under this condition, the t-test result was $t(153.71) = -2.156$, $p = .033$, indicating that the difference between male and female perceptions is statistically significant at the 5% level.

The mean difference between the two groups was -0.21, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -0.39 to -0.02, confirming that the difference is small but significant.

In summary, female students showed significantly more positive perceptions of green marketing compared to male students.

Discussion

The present study reveals a significant gender difference in perceptions of green marketing among university students in the Kathmandu Valley. Female respondents ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.54$) exhibited more favorable attitudes toward green marketing compared to their male counterparts ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.77$), with a statistically significant difference ($t(153.71) = -2.156$, $p = .033$). This finding aligns with existing literature indicating that women generally

demonstrate more positive attitudes toward environmental issues and are more likely to engage in pro-environmental behaviors.

For instance, a study by Mostafa (2007) found that women in Egypt exhibited more positive attitudes toward green products and were more willing to pay a premium for them. Similarly, a study by Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) in Belgium reported that women were more likely to purchase organic food products due to higher environmental concern. These studies suggest that gender differences in environmental attitudes and behaviors are not unique to the Kathmandu Valley but are observed in various cultural contexts.

In the Nepalese context, a study by Sedhai and Khatri (2023) examined the perceptions of millennials toward eco-friendly products in the Kathmandu Valley. Their findings indicated that younger consumers, particularly females, are increasingly aware of environmental issues and are more inclined to purchase eco-friendly products. This supports the notion that female students in the Kathmandu Valley are more attuned to green marketing messages.

However, it is important to note that while female students exhibit more favorable perceptions of green marketing, this does not necessarily translate into actual purchasing behavior. A study by Mishra and Mishra (2025) found that although consumers in Nepal have positive attitudes toward green products, they are often unwilling to pay a higher price for them. This highlights the existence of a value-action gap, where attitudes do not always align with behaviors.

Furthermore, the concept of greenwashing remains a concern among consumers. A study by Pokhrel (2023) found that consumers in Nepal are skeptical about the authenticity of green marketing claims and are wary of companies that engage in greenwashing. This underscores the need for companies to provide transparent and credible information about their environmental practices to build trust with consumers.

In conclusion, while female students in the Kathmandu Valley exhibit more favorable perceptions of green marketing, translating these perceptions into actual purchasing behavior remains a challenge. Addressing the value-action gap and combating greenwashing are crucial steps in promoting sustainable consumption practices. Future research should explore the factors that influence the willingness to pay for green products and the effectiveness of green marketing strategies in fostering genuine consumer engagement.

Conclusion

This study examined college students' perceptions of green marketing in the Kathmandu Valley, highlighting their attitudes, trust, and behavioral intentions toward eco-friendly products. The findings indicate that the majority of students show positive perceptions, are influenced by green advertisements and social media endorsements, and are willing to pay a premium for genuinely sustainable products. Female students, in particular, demonstrated significantly higher awareness and favorable attitudes compared to male students, consistent with prior research on gender differences in environmental concern. However, students also expressed uncertainty about greenwashing, indicating the need for transparent and credible brand practices. The study underscores the growing importance of green marketing in shaping

consumer behavior, emphasizing the role of gender, trust, and communication strategies in promoting sustainable consumption among Nepalese university students.

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