Evaluation of Consumer Decision Making Influenced by Ethical and Environmental Advertising: A Study Based on Review of Literature

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Abstract

Ethical and environmental advertising has become increasingly important in influencing consumer decision-making in India. This study examines how ethical advertising such as transparency, honesty, fairness, and responsibility, along with environmental advertising related to sustainability, recycling, green production, and awareness, shape consumer behaviour. in this study we opted descriptive research based on conceptual model. This research is based on review of literature, collected secondary data from various reputed journal and research artical like Scopus, Web of science, JSTOR, Research gate, drawn from various open source data base. Overall, the findings suggest that ethical and environmental advertising plays a key role in promoting informed, responsible, and value-based consumer decisions in the Indian market.

Keywords: Ethical Advertising, Environmental Advertising, Consumer Decision-Making.

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving marketplace, ethical and environmental advertising has emerged as a powerful force guiding Indian consumers toward responsible choices, particularly as environmental degradation and ethical concerns intensify amid urbanization and consumerism. This conceptual framework posits that ethical advertising centered on transparency, fairness, honesty, and responsibility along with environmental advertising focused on sustainability, green production, recycling, and awareness, directly influence consumer decision making by fostering trust and aligning purchases with personal and societal values (Vatsa, 2023). Indian research underscores how consumers increasingly scrutinize brands for genuine sustainability claims, with green marketing driving purchase intentions as eco-consciousness rises among urban millennials facing issues like air pollution and plastic waste (Mohan & Saumya Gupta, 2025). For instance, studies reveal that transparent ethical ads reduce perceived risk, while environmental messaging about recyclability and low-emission production boosts brand loyalty, though greenwashing erodes confidence (Kumar, 2023). Amid India's green transition, ethical consumerism shapes decisions, as evidenced by higher premiums paid for certified eco-products, reflecting a shift from price-driven to value-driven buying. Regulatory bodies like ASCI play a crucial role by enforcing truthful claims, ensuring ads empower informed choices rather than deceive (Awasthi, Kakkar, & Uppal, 2020). This framework highlights the interplay where fairness in ads combats stereotypes, honesty substantiates benefits, and responsibility promotes societal good, ultimately steering consumers toward sustainable behaviors in a market projected to grow green sales significantly by 2030 (Verma & Pushpendra Mourya, 2023). As Indian firms embrace these practices, they not only comply with global standards but also capitalize on the burgeoning demand for ethical brands, making this model vital for marketers navigating ethical dilemmas in a conscious consumer era (Ramasami, 2021).
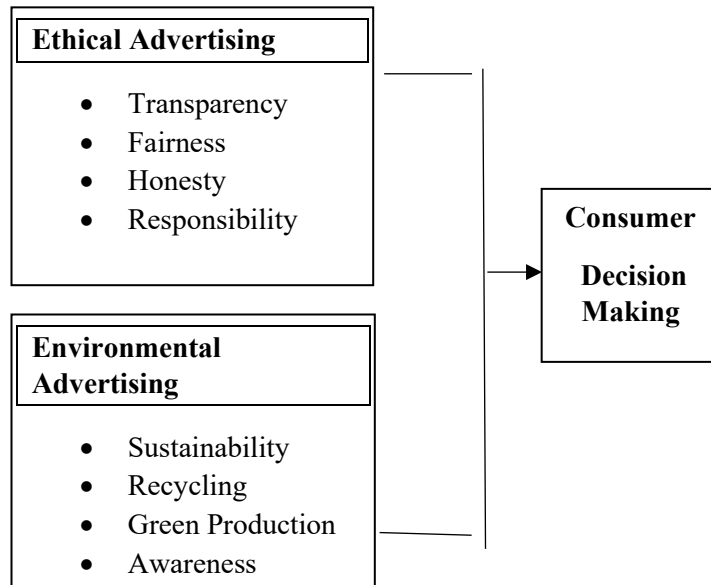
Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the relationship between ethical advertising and consumer behaviour.

2. To assess how environmental advertising influence consumers preference.

Research Methodology

This study uses a descriptive research design to analyse how ethical and environmental advertising influence consumer decision-making. The research relies entirely on secondary data, drawn freom various reputed journal like Scopus, Web of science, JSTOR, Research gate, open access database. In this study we prepared a

conceptual model and variables those influence dependent variable. These credible sources offer comprehensive insights into consumer behaviour and help the researcher interpret how advertisement shape perception and buying decisions. This study consider ethical factors like transparency, honesty, fairness, and responsibility and environmental factors like sustainability, recycling, green production, and awareness only in this research.

Conceptual Framework

(Figure1: Research model develop by researcher)

1. Ethical advertising

Ethical advertising prioritize core values like fairness, honesty, and responsibility to ensure ads communicate truthfully without misleading consumers, as outlined in ASCI codes that demand legal, decent, and non-harmful representations while fostering fair competition. (Vatsa, 2023) These advertising avoid exaggeration or false claims, particularly during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic where unethical promotions exploited fears, emphasizing instead evidence-based information to safeguard public trust and prevent moral degradation. (Vatsa, 2023) In practice, ethical ads uphold honesty by substantiating claims, respect public decency without stereotyping or offending, reject harmful promotions especially for vulnerable groups like children, and promote transparency to build lasting consumer relationships. (Yashmita Awasthi, 2020) Indian research stresses that such responsible messaging counters common pitfalls like surrogate alcohol ads or unsubstantiated health benefits, aligning with self-regulation via ASCI's Consumer Complaints Council to resolve violations swiftly. (S, Ranganyald, & Tejaswini , 2021) Overall, integrating these principles truthful

representation, non-offensiveness, safety, and fairness not only complies with guidelines but enhances brand integrity and societal well-being in a competitive market. (Malhotra, 2022)

1.1 Transparency

Transparency in ethical advertising involves clearly revealing product details, ingredients, pricing, and any sponsorships upfront, allowing consumers to decide wisely without surprises, as mandated by ASCI's transparency code for honest disclosures. (Singh & Tageja, 2025) (Awasthi, Kakkar, & Uppal, 2020) Advertisers must avoid vague claims, ensuring every statement is verifiable to prevent misleading interpretations common in Indian TV and digital ads. (Vatsa, 2023) Research from Indian studies confirms that such openness significantly enhances consumer trust, with surveys showing higher loyalty when brands disclose limitations honestly. (Singh A. , 2022) Transparent labeling of paid endorsements, like #Ad tags in influencer posts, complies with ASCI and legal rules to curb deceptive practices prevalent in social media marketing. (Singh & Tageja, 2025) (Sodawala & Sheikh, 2022) Ultimately, this practice minimizes ethical violations, strengthens brand reputation, and supports self-regulation efforts by bodies like ASCI's Consumer Complaints Council. (S P. S., 2025)

1.2 Fairness

Fairness under ethical advertising means giving all brands and consumers an equal, unbiased treatment, where claims do not exploit social prejudices or manipulate vulnerabilities for competitive gain. (Vatsa, 2023) (Sidhu, Sharma, shainy, & Shivani, 2015) Indian ethical codes, including the ASCI self-regulation code, stress that advertisements must be legal, decent, honest and truthful, and must also observe fairness in competition so that no advertiser gains an undue advantage through misleading or comparative messages. (Sarkar & Ghosh, 2017) Studies on fairness-cream advertising in India show how many campaigns violate this principle by equating lighter skin with success, thereby promoting discrimination and fear rather than fair opportunity for all consumers. (Sarkar & Ghosh, 2017) Such misleading portrayals are treated as unfair trade practices under consumer protection law, and regulators can order withdrawal or corrective ads when fairness in representation and competition is breached. (Rana & Bareja, 2024)

1.3 Honesty

Honesty in ethical advertising requires truthful and accurate claims about products, avoiding any exaggeration or deception that could mislead consumers into false expectations. The ASCI code explicitly mandates truthful and honest representations to safeguard against misleading ads, ensuring all claims are substantiated with evidence. (Vatsa, 2023) Indian studies highlight that dishonest practices, such as unchecked false claims, erode public confidence and lead to loss of credibility, particularly in competitive markets where puffery blurs into deception. (Awasthi, Kakkar, & Uppal, 2020) (Malhotra, 2022) For instance, during health crises, honest ads prioritize verified information over hype, aligning with ethical values like integrity and straightforward dealings as per marketing ethics frameworks. (Sodawala & Sheikh, 2022) (Sidhu, Sharma, shainy, & Shivani, 2015) Self-regulation through ASCI's Consumer Complaints Council enforces this by reviewing complaints and upholding honesty as a core principle to protect consumer rights. (Awasthi, Kakkar, & Uppal, 2020)

1.4 Responsibility

Responsibility under ethical advertising entails advertisers' duty to prioritize societal welfare, avoiding harm to consumers, environment, or public decency while promoting positive values through truthful, non-exploitative content. ASCI's code holds advertisers accountable for legal, decent, honest, and fair ads that do not endorse hazardous products or exploit vulnerabilities like children. (Vatsa, 2023) (Pandey, 2023) Indian research emphasizes corporate social responsibility in advertising, where brands must balance profit with societal good, rejecting immoral tactics that undermine public health or equality. (Singh S. , 2017) (B., 2022) This includes self-regulation via ASCI's Consumer Complaints Council to enforce responsible practices, ensuring ads foster trust rather than deception. (Awasthi, Kakkar, & Uppal, 2020)

2. Environmental advertising

Environmental advertising promote eco-friendly products and sustainable practices to raise consumer awareness about environmental issues, emphasizing recyclability, green production, and reduced ecological impact. In India, these messages focus on green claims backed by evidence to avoid greenwashing, as per ASCI guidelines that require substantiation for sustainability assertions. (Hindol, 2022) (Raj & Sharma, 2024) Research shows Indian consumers, particularly in urban areas, respond positively to ads highlighting recyclability and green manufacturing, influencing purchase intentions when credibility is high. (Fernando, Sivakumaran, & Suganthi, 2015) However, studies warn of deceptive practices like vague "eco-friendly" labels, urging brands to use verifiable certifications for authentic messaging. (Jha, Mr. Sandeep Dongare, Ms Paragati OPallavi, & Ms. Smruti Shelke, 2025) (R, 2024) Overall, effective environmental ads educate on sustainability, driving behavioral change toward greener choices. (Kashyap & Shilpi Sarawat, 2023)

2.1 Sustainability

Sustainability in environmental advertising stresses enduring environmental health by showcasing recyclable packaging and green production techniques that minimize waste and pollution. Indian research highlights how these messages align with SDG 12 for responsible consumption, urging brands to verify sustainability claims to combat greenwashing. (Surjani & Khushwant Dangal, 2024) Studies indicate sustainable ads effectively raise eco-awareness among Indian consumers, particularly youth, by linking product use to broader conservation efforts. (R, 2024) Such messaging promotes behavioral shifts like recycling adoption, though authentic implementation remains key for credibility. (Verma & Pushpendra Mourya, 2023) Challenges include cost barriers, yet long-term benefits drive corporate sustainability strategies. (Komal & Prof. B. Raja Rathnam, 2023)

2.2 Recycling

Recycling in environmental advertising promotes waste reduction by urging consumers to reuse materials through campaigns featuring recyclable packaging and collection programs, fostering a circular economy mindset. Indian research shows these messages significantly boost recycling awareness, with TV and print ads encouraging plastic bottle returns and e-waste disposal. (R, 2024) Studies confirm that ads emphasizing recyclability influence urban consumers to segregate waste, aligning with initiatives like Swachh Bharat for cleaner environments. (Seth & Gupta, 2020) Effective recycling ads use emotional appeals and brand tie-ups to drive participation, though infrastructure gaps limit full impact. (Kautish, Paul, & Rajesh Sharma, 2019) Challenges include low rural penetration, yet sustained messaging enhances sustainable behaviors nationwide. (Surjani & Khushwant Dangal, 2024)

2.3 Green production

Green production in environmental advertising spotlights manufacturing processes that use renewable energy, low emissions, and natural resources to create eco-friendly goods without harming ecosystems. Indian studies note that ads promoting green production educate consumers on clean technologies, aligning with national sustainability goals like net-zero targets. (Dhinesh & Mrs P. Geetha, 2025) Research reveals brands advertising green factories gain consumer preference, as claims of zero-waste production boost trust when certified by bodies like GRI standards. (Kashyap & Shilpi Sarawat, 2023) These messages highlight reduced pollution from sustainable sourcing, influencing purchases in sectors like textiles and FMCG. (R, 2024) Challenges include higher costs, but long-term ads foster corporate responsibility and market differentiation. (Verma & Pushpendra Mourya, 2023)

2.4 Awareness

Awareness under environmental advertising educates consumers on ecological threats like pollution and climate change, motivating actions such as energy conservation and waste segregation through compelling visuals and facts. Indian research demonstrates that public service ads on TV and print effectively heighten environmental consciousness, as seen in campaigns like Swachh Bharat that boosted national cleanliness participation. (Roy & Dr. Kaushik Ray, 2018) Studies reveal urban Indians gain heightened awareness from green ads, leading to preference for eco-products when advertising address local issues like water scarcity. (R, 2024) These ads employ emotional storytelling to inspire behavioral change, with celebrities amplifying reach in diverse demographics. (Maheshwari, 2016) Overall, sustained awareness campaigns bridge knowledge gaps, fostering proactive environmental stewardship. (Hindol, 2022)

Consumer Decision Making

Consumer decision making encompasses need identification, information gathering from ethical and environmental ads, alternative evaluation based on sustainability claims, purchase execution, and post-buy reflection on brand responsibility. In India, green marketing profoundly impacts this process, with eco-labels and transparent advertising elevating purchase intentions among environmentally aware consumers. (Mohan & Saumya Gupta, 2025) Research demonstrates ethical messages foster trust, prompting urban Indians to favor brands promoting recyclability and green production despite higher costs. (Vanishree, Gowtham N, & Dr. Jyoti Mishra, 2025) Studies confirm advertising elements like eco-branding and environmental themes positively influence attitudes, leading to habitual green choices. (Kumar, 2023) Demographic variables such as age and education moderate responses, with millennials prioritizing ethical attributes in FMCG decisions. (Jaju, 2015) ASCI oversight ensures reliable information, empowering informed choices aligned with societal values. (Awasthi, Kakkar, & Uppal, 2020)

Findings

The study finds that ethical and environmental advertising plays an important role in influencing consumer decision-making in India. Advertisements that are transparent, honest, fair, and socially responsible help build consumer trust and reduce uncertainty while making purchase decisions. At the same time, environmental advertising messages related to sustainability, recycling, and green production increase awareness and encourage consumers to prefer eco-friendly products. The findings also indicate that misleading claims and greenwashing negatively affect brand credibility and consumer confidence. Overall, ethical and environmental advertising together promote value-based and responsible consumption, while regulatory oversight by bodies such as ASCI supports truthful advertising and informed consumer choices.

Conclusion

This study highlights that ethical and environmental advertising has become an important factor in guiding consumer decision-making in India. When advertisements are honest, transparent, fair, and socially responsible, consumers are more likely to trust the brand and feel confident about their purchasing decisions. Environmental messages that focus on sustainability, recycling, and eco-friendly production also help consumers become more aware of environmental issues and encourage them to choose greener products. The study further shows that misleading claims and greenwashing reduce consumer trust, making authenticity in advertising essential. Overall, ethical and environmental advertising supports informed and value-based consumption, while regulatory bodies like ASCI play a key role in ensuring that advertisements remain truthful and responsible in the Indian market.

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