

Over-Consumerism and its Impact on Sustainable Business

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Abstract- The research paper tries to explore the meaning of over-consumerism and questions how consumerism driven by aggressive digital marketing and emerging instant credit services in the digital world, in some ways acts as a barrier to the goals of sustainable business models. The paper discusses various factors that drive overconsumption and their implications for economic growth and environmental sustainability. It uses a mixed-method approach with a few qualitative in-depth interviews followed by quantitative surveys of urban as well as semi-urban parts of India to quantify and explore the relationship between impulsive purchasing, borrowing habits, and sustainable business practices. The findings of the present research thus note that digital marketing serves a dual role: on the one hand increasing overconsumption while guiding better consumption habits on the other. By identifying gaps regarding consumer knowledge of sustainability and responsible consumption, the research provides recommendations and insights for businesses and policymakers that could drive forward long-term economic and environmental well-being which will contribute highly to increase the consumer's awareness regarding the practice of sustainability in responsible consumption.

Keywords: Over-consumption, digital marketing, impulse buying, circular economy, instant credit services, sustainability

1. Introduction

Over-consumerism or overconsumption is the excessive consumption of products and services that may not be necessary. The research paper tries to explore the meaning of over-consumerism and questions how consumerism driven by aggressive digital marketing and emerging instant credit services

in the digital world, in some ways acts as a barrier to the goals of sustainable business models. The paper discusses the psychological, social, and economic factors that drive overconsumption and their implications for economic growth and environmental sustainability.

The paper focuses on the effects of overconsumption in various countries and how this is destroying the environment globally for the coming generations. Even the countries that are trying to provide a healthier environment for their children within their borders are contributing to global environmental destruction.

This over-consumption model increases economic growth but has brought severe environmental and social problems like increased waste generation, resource depletion, and rising debt levels amongst consumers. People are cutting on savings and spending more than what they need to sustain, the increase in consumer spending is more than the increase in per capita income over the years. Few decades ago, only wealthy people with higher disposable incomes used to spend on luxury goods but today even middle-income families are buying luxury goods as a status symbol. Yet at a time like this, linkages between consumerism and sustainability remain poorly discussed, especially in rapidly growing economies such as India. The present study aims to contribute to this research gap by questioning how digital marketing strategies, and credit facilities, such as BNPL (Buy Now Pay Later), affect consumer behavior leading to unsustainable economic growth and environmental degradation. The paper discusses ways in which companies misuse consumers with false sustainability claims and advertisements. The study also tries to find out how modern circular economics frameworks and ethical marketing methods balance the quest for profitability with environmental and social responsibilities.

By identifying gaps regarding consumer knowledge of sustainability and responsible consumption, the research provides recommendations and insights for businesses and policymakers that could drive forward long-term economic and environmental well-being which will contribute highly to increasing consumer awareness regarding the practice of sustainability in responsible consumption. The latter will serve to enforce policies in relation to stricter regulatory frameworks and business adjustments to the principles of a circular economy with full assurance of environmental and economic prosperity.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. Analyze various factors like psychological, cultural, economic, and social influences that affect consumer behavior and ultimately drive consumerism in this digital world.
2. Analyze the effect of marketing strategies in terms of digital marketing, social media, and influencer marketing as well as the availability of modern credit services like BNPL(buy now pay later), No-Cost EMIs, etc. on impulsive buying.
3. Assess the relationship between consumer behavior, impulsive buying habits and borrowing patterns with an aim to determine their implications on sustainable development and economic growth.
4. Understand the positive and negative impact of over-consumerism on environment and find out ways through which companies can fulfill customer demands without compromising on their responsibility to protect environmental conditions.
5. Propose sustainable business practices that can help in reducing the adverse impacts of overconsumption by identifying gaps in customers' knowledge regarding sustainability markers or their own behavior towards the same.

3. Background

Over-consumerism or over-consumption involves excessive and oftentimes unnecessary consumption of products and services but is stimulated through factors like consumer culture, aggressive marketing, easy credit access, etc. This cycle leads to a demand for materialistic goods beyond the actual needs, fueling an unsustainable lifestyle. It leads to huge environmental

challenges in the aspect of exhaustion of resources, pollution, and waste increase, as well as social challenges like rising debt and decreased life satisfaction as people chase material success and neglect more fulfilling aspects of human life creating a vicious cycle that strains both the planet and the society.

Sustainability is a concept that satisfies present needs without compromising the interests of future generations. It looks at environmental protection, social equity, and economic viability, aiming for a balance that ensures long-term well-being for people as well as the planet. Sustainability in consumer behavior shows individuals making conscious choices and choosing products that are good for the environment, minimizing waste, and patronizing ethical firms. It is about shifting from convenience and excess to a rather thoughtful consumption.

Sustainable business models must incorporate environmental and social responsibilities into their core operations and strive for long-term value beyond profit. The key in that respect is the concept of the "circular economy", which suggests keeping resources in use for as long as possible using practices like not 3 but 10R's like reuse, recycling, refurbishing, etc. Apart from this, strategies of ethical and conscious marketing can also play a significant role in changing consumer mindsets from fast consumption driven by desires to a sufficient and conscious consumption approach.

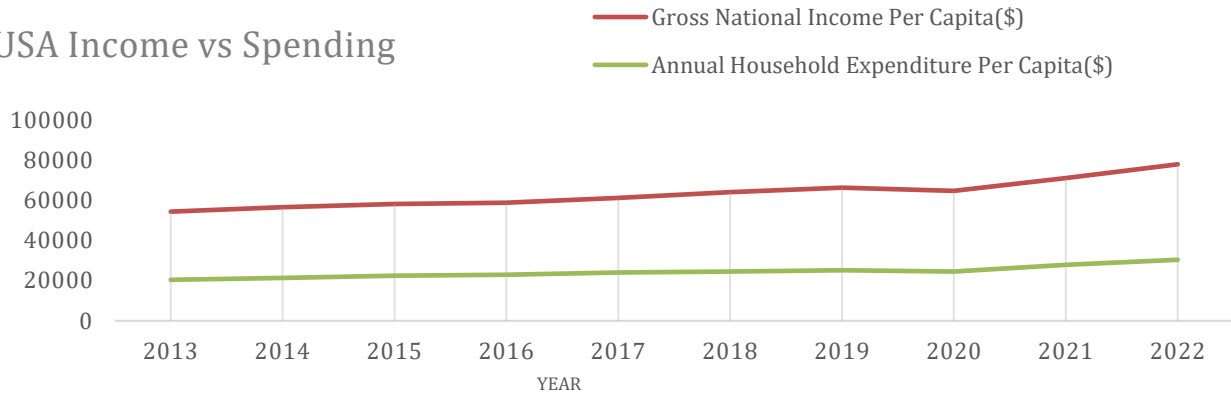
Ethical marketing is a concept of marketing about being honest, transparent, and responsible in the way a brand promotes itself. It is a way of building long-term genuine relationships with customers by staying true to their values and making decisions for the greater good over the short-term profits of the organization.

Overcoming this challenge is important for making inroads toward sustainability and for stemming the adverse effects of overconsumption.

4. Literature Review

Essentially, overconsumption is defined as carrying out the act of using up something more than is necessary. It has emerged as one of the main issues affecting sustainability in business and environment.

USA Income vs Spending

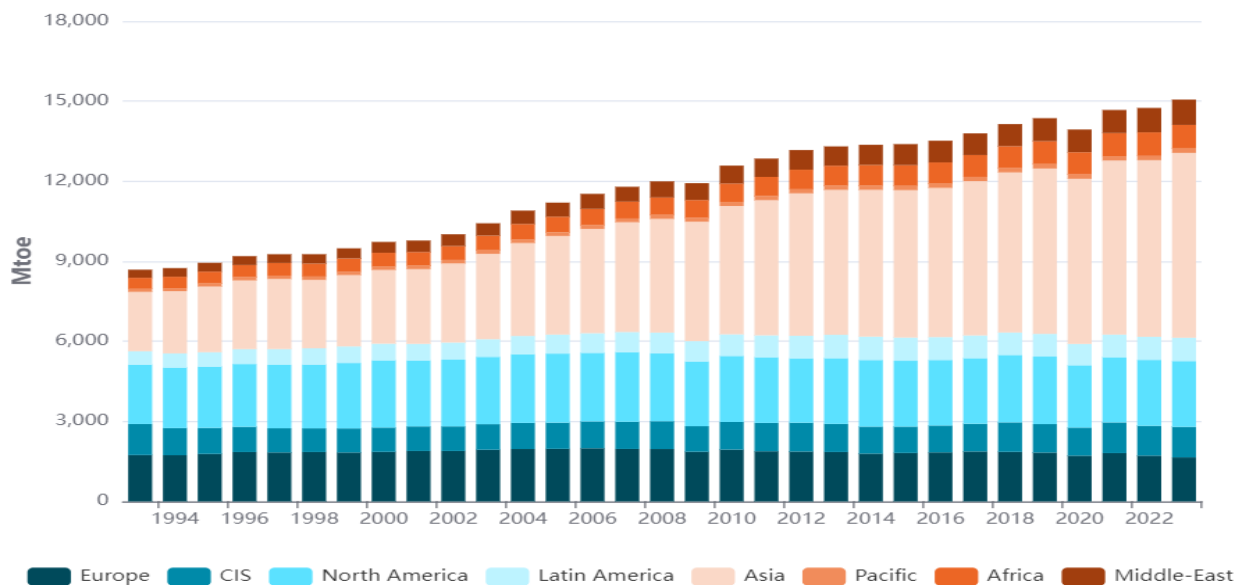


Graph (a)

Source: <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/united-states/annual-household-expenditure-per-capita>

https://datacommons.org/place/country/USA?utm_medium=explore&mprop=amount&popt=EconomicActivity&cpv=activitySource,GrossNationalIncome&hl=en

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Graph (b)

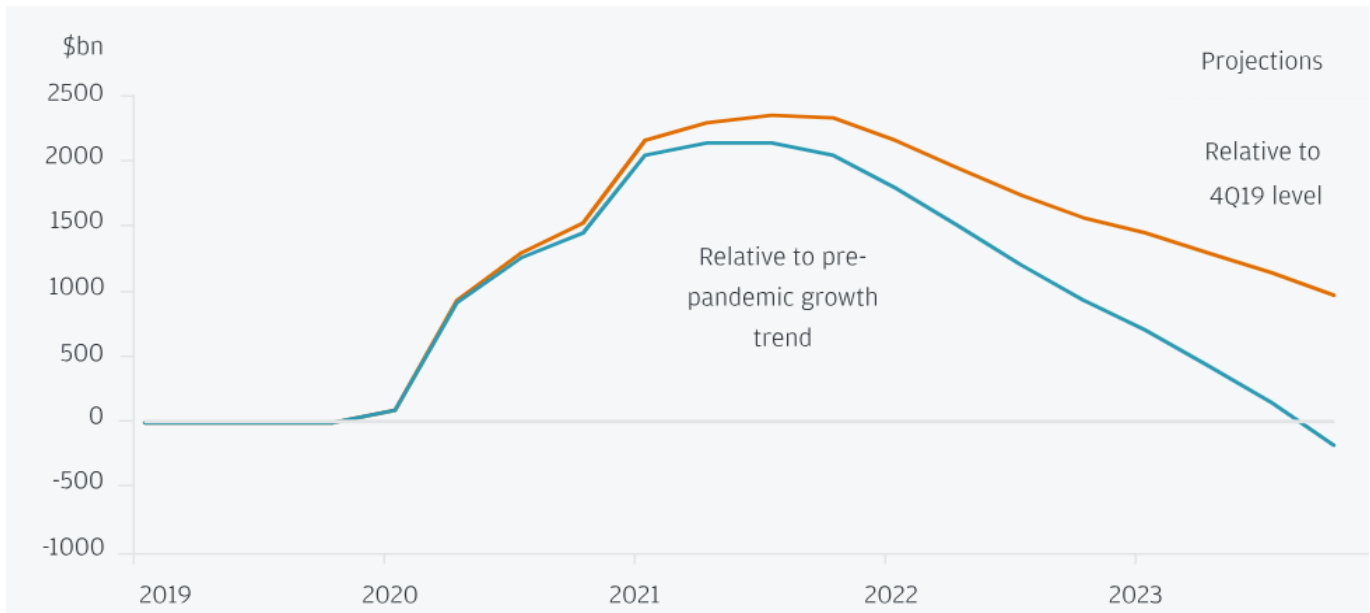
Source: <https://yearbook.enerdata.net/total-energy/world-consumption-statistics.html>

result, scholars across various fields have addressed factors that encourage overconsumption and its consequences to sustainability and have proposed several measures including circular economy, ethical marketing strategies, and regulations that can help minimize these consequences. This literature review incorporates specific findings from various recent studies to give an overall view of the relation between over consumption, consumer behavior and sustainable business models.

Overconsumption is generally defined as the consumption of resources above basic necessity levels.

Overconsumption has emerged as one of the major challenges to sustainable business and ecological sustainability.

In USA, the gross national income per capita (GNI per capita) has increased by 43.34% in 2013-2022 but the annual household expenditure per capita has increased by 48.74%. This shows that people have started spending a larger portion of their income in the past 10 years. Similarly in India, a survey by the statistics ministry says that the per capita consumption spending has increased by 33-40% (33%- urban areas, 40%- rural areas) in 2022-23 from 2011-12. Another survey



Graph (c)

Source: <https://market.us/report/luxury-goods-market/>

by PhonePe in September 2021 showed that Indians spend 25-30% of their monthly income on retail & shopping.

The energy consumption all over the world has increased significantly in the past few years. It accelerated in 2023 with a 2.2% growth rate as compared to its average growth rate of 1.5% per year from 2010-2019. Out of 15,000 Mtoe energy consumed 39% is from oil and 37% is from coal leaving less than 25% of the energy consumption from renewable resources [graph (b)].

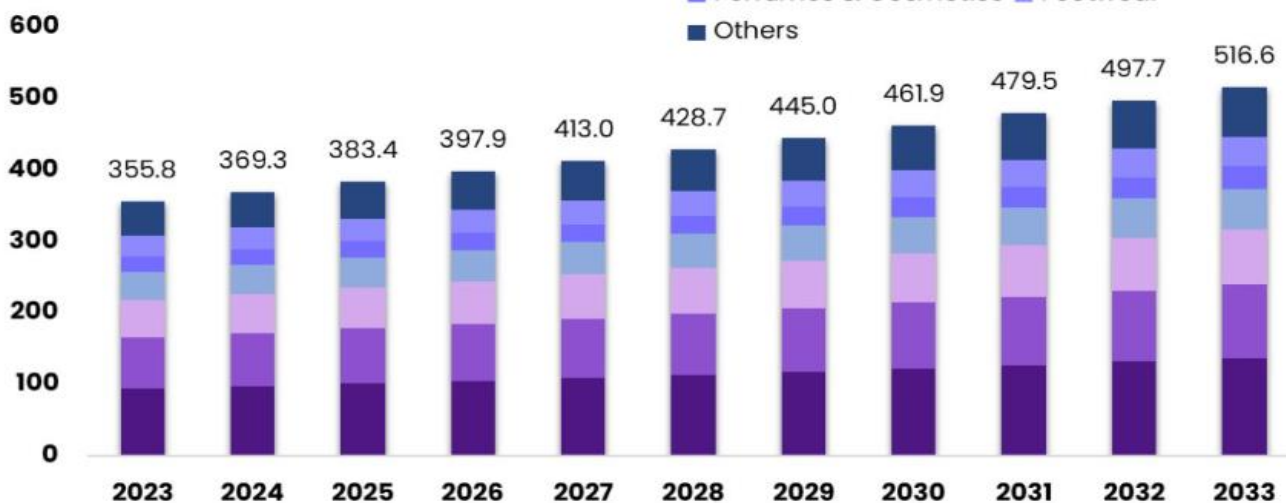
As shown in graph (c), the luxury goods market all over the world is also expected to grow at a CAGR of 3.8% in the coming 10 years.

People all over the world are cutting down on their savings and spending on materialistic things to seek symbols of newfound economic status. U.S. consumers have been depleting their excess savings for the past few years to buy more and more luxury goods [graph (d)].

Scholars from different disciplines have discussed the factors promoting this over-consumption and the important consequences of overconsumption with respect to sustainability and presented a host of

Global Luxury Goods Market

Size, By Product, 2024-2033 (USD Billion)



Graph (d)

Source: <https://www.iomorgan.com/insights/global-research/retail/luxury-market>

solutions-including circular economies, ethical marketing strategies, and regulatory measures, which can help reduce these consequences. The following literature review compiles and pieces together relevant findings from recently published studies to develop a broad overview of precisely how overconsumption is related to consumer behavior and business models for sustainability.

1. Overconsumption and Environmental Impact

Overconsumption is considered to have various environmental implications. It depletes natural resources at a faster rate, increases waste output, and sets the stage for environmental degradation.

A report by UNICEF compares 39 countries in the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) and EU (European Union) on various factors like contributions to climate crisis, consumption of resources, dumping of e-waste, the release of harmful pollutants including toxic air, pesticides, damp and lead, etc. The report says that if everybody in the world consumes resources at the rate of these 39 countries, we will need 3.3 earths to keep up with the consumption levels. It points out that more than 20 million children in these countries have elevated levels of lead in their blood. 1 in 12 children are exposed to high pesticide pollution in Belgium, Czech Republic, Israel, Netherlands, Poland, and Switzerland which can harm nervous, cardiovascular, reproductive, blood, and immune systems and even cause cancer. Mexico has lost 3.7 years of healthy life per thousand children. Children are even exposed to damp and mould in their own houses in various countries. This calls for severe measures to save future generations by creating safer places to live and thrive. According to Marques et al. (2024), industries like fashion add to environmental degradation because of overconsumption. The authors have insisted that the timely need for sustainable business model designs encompassing the principles of the circular economy involves less generation of waste and proper management of resources.

Overconsumption by Pan 2024 is discussed from both an individual and a social point of view. This research has pointed out two main overconsumption types: over-purchasing behavior, which could be induced through easy online shopping and promotion strategies; and over-post-purchasing consumption,

induced by the product's look and psychological factors like self-esteem. Pan also points out packaging as a driver for consumption and shows how the visibility of products could increase or decrease the rate of consumption. These findings give meaning to the importance of developing products and packages aimed at reducing superfluous consumption.

A paper by Finjan (2024) explores the significance of social media activism through sites like TikTok to expose environmental concerns associated with fast fashion and to facilitate more sustainable consumer behaviors. This paper argues that people can become aware of their consumption and therefore consume wisely through internet portals.

Bidabad (2019) provides a critical philosophical and ethical analysis of overconsumption, arguing that it threatens sustainable development by exceeding the Earth's ecological carrying capacity. The paper utilizes principles of Islamic economics in labeling overconsumption as immoral; overconsumption signifies an aggression against future generations because this constitutes an undue stress that the latter are undeserving of. This review is on sustainable development, a concept where the central element is how resources can be used in the way that prescribes long-term ecological sustainability.

2. Consumerism and Sustainable Development

Although consumerism makes for economic growth, the problems it creates for sustainability are massive. Sekhar and Asio (2021) critically analyze the complex interplay between consumerism and sustainability in international business practice. The studies identify various psychological, social, and economic factors that potentially lead to consumerism; these include price inflation, misleading advertisements, and artificial creation of demand. While consumerism accelerates production and employment, it inadvertently encourages environmental deterioration, resource depletion, and waste generation, thus posing a serious threat to sustainability over a longer period. Sharma et al. (2020) discusses the opposition of economic growth and environmental protection. They indicate that this consumerist model of economic development pays less attention to environmental care for the sake of short-term economic growth, which already makes it impossible to provide conditions for

sustainable development. In addition, the paper shows the growth of digital shopping and easy credit accessibility that provokes consumerism.

Nucci and Hibberd (2021) have also observed that the combination of social media and easy credit services stimulates the increase of consumerism through making users buy impulsively particularly among younger generations. As a result, consumption behaviors are shifted towards unsustainable practices that exceed environmental and societal boundaries. Also, the convenience of online purchasing, lower or no tax rates, and the availability of cheap credit facilities have shifted consumption patterns to overconsumption in advanced economies. It sees BNPL services as a product of overconsumption.

Ah Fook and McNeill, 2020, lambasted BNPL services for being able to trigger this impulsive buying, particularly in the youth sector. BNPL services, not as strict as loans, further provided an even simpler form of 'buy now and pay later'. As the study noted, ease with which credit can be acquired encourages impulsiveness to the financier that leads to financial instability and unsustainable modes of consumption. These services have existed for a while, but the new buy now-pay later services take that contribution to overconsumption a bit higher.

The study by Ayu et al. (2022) particularly focuses on how BNPL services have gained popularity among the younger generation. It explains the reasons behind increased impulsive buying behavior among Gen Z in Indonesia, which portrays an ever-rising global trend that intensifies excess consumption.

Selvanayagam and Rehman (2019) have also indicated that Western marketing practices, which have been amplified by television and social media, have led to a transformation in consumer behavior in post-colonial Indian markets leading to materialistic values and consumerism that is contradictory to traditional sustainability-driven practices. Therefore, they need more stringent regulatory measures to check their impact on consumer behavior.

Personal loans saw a growth of 14% in 2023-24 in India and credit card dues increased the fastest among bank loans, reaching approximately Rs. 2.8 lakh crore by July 2024 with a 22% year-on-year growth. This shows how this easy availability of credit is allowing people to spend more than they can afford.

This over-consumption by borrowing not only causes environmental concerns but also questions the sustainability of economic growth achieved by this model. How long will people be able to buy more and more with the money that they don't have? It is only a matter of time before people realize the economic toll caused by this spending. Therefore, there is a need to understand the economic and environmental implications of consumerism boosted by easy credit.

3. Circular Economy as a remedy

The shift to a circular economy from a linear one ensures various effective solutions to the issue of overconsumption.

Deutz (2020) defines a circular economy as an economic setup bound by the maximum functionality of resources and minimal waste produced regarding recycling, repair, and repurposing of goods. A shift in that direction—gradual and away from a linear "take-make-dispose" model to more circular concepts—is of the essence in meeting the increasing challenge of waste. In their place, circular economies are an increasingly supported concept coming from policy circles within regions such as the European Union and China, whose regulation frameworks encourage better and more sustainable business methods.

The textile industry alone uses around 100 billion cubic meters of water every year, which is approximately 4% of the global freshwater withdrawn every year and people annually throw away \$460 billion worth of clothes that are still in wearable condition.

Marques et al. (2024) go into great detail about the relevance of circular economies in the fashion industry, for which there should be changes through traditional business models in such a way as to mitigate impacts on the ecological environment. The investigation also underlines influential participation from the growing population, who are more conscious of environmental questions and look for more green products.

The paper by De Koning et al. (2024) talks about these shifting consumer mindsets, from fast consumption driven by desires to sufficient consumption-driven models which are promising avenues in promoting sustainable consumption in particular for the younger

generation. This transition supports the circular economy by encouraging longer product life cycles. Lehner (2019) further elaborates on the concept of prosumption, where consumers involve themselves in the reproduction and repair of objects, thus promoting a circular economy that diminishes dependency on novel goods and contributes to the mitigation of environmental harms.

We produce 300 million tons of plastic waste annually, along with 54 million tons of electronic waste of which barely 15-20% is collected and recycled. This waste is more than the weight of the entire human population on earth. Around 45% of GHG emissions come from manufacturing, food production, and product use. Circular economy strategies can reduce the use of resources and can cut these global greenhouse gas emissions up to 39%, i.e., 22.8 billion tons.

A report released by the World Bank said that the circular economy policies can reduce Europe's aggregate material by up to 11%. The total material use in the European Union has already gone down by 9.4% over the past two decades and the percentage share of resources derived from recycled waste material has increased by approximately 50%. Every economy can adopt similar steps to reduce the overall toll on the planet due to unsustainable use of resources. Some studies in Europe suggest that moving to a circular economy model can increase competition, stimulate innovation, create jobs, and boost economic growth. It can create up to 700,000 in the European Union and nearly 6 million jobs worldwide by 2030. Though the numbers in Europe are not good enough to reverse or even balance the damage done to the environment in the past few years, it is a step towards a greener and more sustainable future if adopted by all the countries in the world. Research by Accenture strategy shows that there is a \$4.5 trillion economic opportunity by adopting a waste to wealth approach.

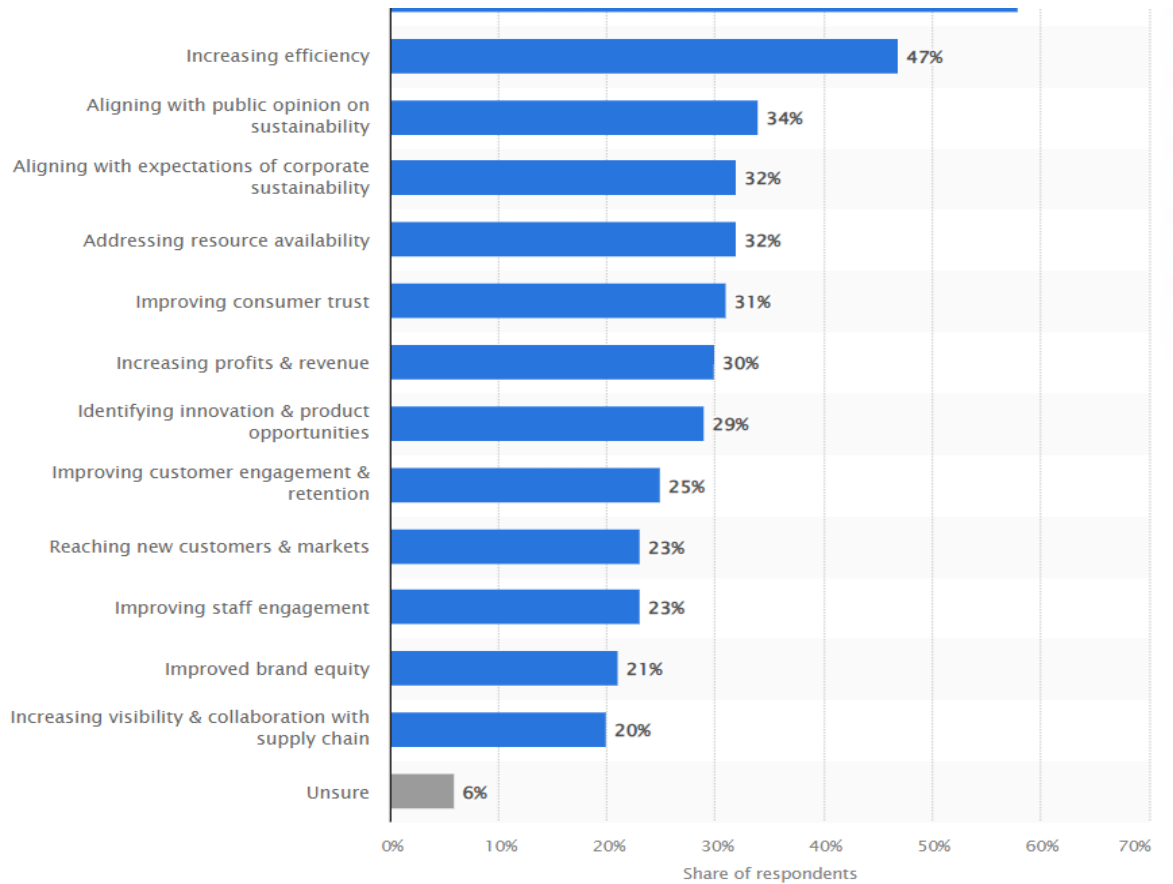
A study conducted in 2023 in Australia where 58% of Australian business decision-makers (including C-level executives, non-executive directors, and senior management) were surveyed indicated that a transition to a circular economy can help them reduce business costs significantly and can help create a potentially positive impact on the minds of consumers regarding their organizations [graph (e)].

4. Ethical Marketing and Consumer Behaviour

The potential of ethical marketing is divided by its potential to help narrow the gap between consumerism and sustainability. Drawing upon Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, Ardley and May (2022) have presented a conceptual framework that has positioned marketers as an agency that connects consumers and the marketplace along with organizational approaches. According to the authors, marketers may affect consumer purchases towards more sustainable patterns by assuming responsible marketing.

Peterson et al. (2020) explore in detail how consumer values and support for sustainable businesses are related. They find that values emanating from the connectedness to nature-for example, environmental concern-are strong predictors of consumer support of sustainable brands. Values attributed to social equity and perceived impact on personal quality of life were much less of a driver on consumer behavior.

Graph (e)
Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1462728/australia-perceived-benefits-of-implementing-circular-economy-principles-among-business-decision-makers/>



This means that organizations can establish customer loyalty more effectively by aligning their operational policies with ecological principles than by using financial incentives.

These strategies of price cuts and promotion for purchasing multiple items of junk foods, sweetened drinks, and tobacco were seen by the study of Greenland et al., 2023, to be a leading cause of over-consumption. Indeed, such intensive marketing, especially with multi-unit pricing promotions, is a good way to increase purchasing and contributes to adverse public health. The results of this study call for stronger regulatory actions aimed at limiting marketing strategies for over-consumption, especially in hazardous product categories.

Shukla (2023) elaborates upon the notion that influencer marketing has a great impact on consumer behavior especially among young women but in real life purchase decisions brand trust and product affordability often outweigh influencer endorsements. The Edelman Trust Barometer report also found similar results when they interacted with various 18-34-year-olds. 63% of them agreed that they trust what

influencers say about brands more than what brands say about themselves.

On another hand Braga and Martins (2020) think of “Conscious Marketing” where marketing strategies are intended to change so that consumption is reduced, and sustainability is enhanced; hence such marketing approaches that are more ethical can lead to sustainable purchasing behavior over time.

Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report found that 67% of people say that a good reputation might make them buy a new product but they won’t continue using it until they trust the brand behind the product. Studies suggest that 81% of consumers say that they must be able to trust the brand they consume to do the right thing. Admitting to your mistakes and being honest can boost consumer trust in the business by 23% and 26% of young consumers decide to purchase a brand solely because they like and support the brand’s values and beliefs. When Nike started a campaign to support Colin Kaepernick’s protest against social injustice and racism, Nike’s online sales grew by 31% and social media engagements went up 1678% in the days following the campaign.

Therefore, ethical marketing and communication has a profound impact on consumer perception and behavior which can be utilized to bring a change for the betterment of the planet and society as a whole.

5. Phenomenon of Green-washing

A thesis by Emma Vega (2024) talks about how companies manipulate consumer perceptions to capitalize on the growing sustainability trend through a phenomenon called greenwashing. Over the past few decades, there has been an increase in environmental awareness among consumers all over the world leading to an increased tendency towards buying environmentally friendly and sustainable goods. This has created a new demand in the market called “green purchasing power”, but the companies are misusing consumer behavior and perceptions towards sustainability for their profits. They have three main motives for adopting CSR activities: contributing to society, higher financial benefits, and meeting the expectations of consumers as well as stakeholders. Research done by Nielsen Media found that 66% of consumers are willing to pay extra for eco-friendly goods and if the consumers feel the firm is socially responsible and cares about society as a whole, consumers are more likely to buy products from such brands. Miriam Webster defines greenwashing as the practice of promoting eco-friendly programs to divert attention from the organization’s activities that harm the environment or society. Though some companies genuinely invest in ethical communications and green marketing researchers highlight that 95% of products that claim to be eco-friendly or green in the U.S. and Canada commit to at least one of “the seven sins of greenwashing” (a term given by an environmental marketing firm called TerraChoice) to mislead the consumers with false environmental claims.

i. Sin of Hidden Trade-off

This involves labeling and marketing a product “green” based on a very small set of attributes, ignoring various critical environmental concerns. For example, a company might source its paper from sustainably harvested forest but the use of chlorine in the bleaching process and greenhouse gas emissions during paper production are often masked. This sin was found to be true for 57% of the products making

such claims in a paper by the University of Saskatchewan (2007).

ii. Sin of No Proof

This sin involves making environmental claims about a percentage or statistic regarding sustainability that do not have any support from reliable certifications or do not provide any method to verify such claims. A study by TerraChoice found that 26% of the examined products had unverifiable eco-friendly claims.

iii. Sin of Vagueness

When companies make very broad and overly defined claims without any clear explanation and can be easily misunderstood by the consumers, it comes under the “Sin of Vagueness”. For example, a product that is claimed as “all-natural” to promote its eco-friendly nature might not really be environmentally friendly as it could have toxic natural ingredients like uranium, arsenic, mercury, etc. TerraChoice found that out of the analyzed products, 11% used this tactic to promote their products.

iv. Sin of Worshipping False Labels

Sometimes products mislead customers into believing that they have a legitimate and reliable certification process to label it environmentally friendly with false images and logos similar to well-known environmental certifications, committing to the sin of worshipping false labels.

v. Sin of Irrelevance

This sin refers to environmental claims that are technically accurate but are not really helpful to consumers looking forward to genuinely using eco-conscious products. For example, brands still state their products as “CFC-free” as a unique environmental benefit, when CFC was banned long ago by The Montreal Protocol in 1987.

vi. Sin of Lesser of Two Evils

This involves marketing a product with factual claims to divert the consumer's attention away from the harm done by the entire product category to the environment. Companies often present their product as a “lesser evil” when compared to the same product category produced by other brands, when the entire category is extremely environmentally harmful. The most common example of this sin is “organic cigarettes” made with unbleached paper and organically sourced tobacco, when the concept of

smoking itself is unsustainable and unhealthy be it any kind of cigarette.

vii. Sin of Fibbing

It is one of the least committed sins with less than 1% of examined products falling into this category. Sometimes brands make entirely false environmental claims, for instance, some shampoo brands claim to be “certified-organic”, with no evidence of such certification or a brand claiming that its packaging is 100% recycled paper, when it is plastic.

These sins are the major tactics used by the brands to influence consumers to buy their brands, various other techniques do not come under the “Seven Sins Framework by TerraChoice”. Brands are using this inclination towards sustainability as a stepping stone to earn higher profits by fooling their customers and there is a need for stricter regulations on ethical marketing and communication strategies to bring an actual change to the environment.

6. Regulation and Policy Interventions

Yet most of the literature elucidates that there is an increasing need for enhanced regulatory measures, in controlling overconsumption and particularly enabling sustainable business.

A study on consumer behavior showed that nearly 65% of consumer intend to buy eco-friendly and sustainable sourced products but less than 25% of them can actually afford the desired environmentally friendly products. According to Bloomberg, sustainably sourced products are still not affordable for the general consumer as most of the branding strategies are tailored to wealthy and elite consumers (Benveniste, 2019). This creates a need for regulations on the pricing of these eco-friendly products apart from regulation testing the claims of sustainability on these products.

Sharma et al. (2020) have pinpointed how regulatory policies will have a balancing effect on economic growth vis-à-vis the protection of the environment. They feel that all current policies do not address the environmental impacts of consumerism and thus urge more strict measures to be taken to promote sustainable consumption. An example of an integrated policy framework that enables the adoption of sustainable business models is the European Green

Deal through setting clear standards environmentally and socially.

In this regard, Kajanová et al. (2022) detail how the European Union has positioned itself as a leader in driving sustainable business conduct through regulatory frameworks. Such policies encourage enterprise owners to make their activities more sustainable and to align consumer behavior consistently with sustainability goals.

Chen et al. (2023) talks about the increasing relevance of regulatory measures in the online credit space, where easy accessibility of credit services has led to overspending. They contended that all these changes make it easier to obtain loans for many individuals and to pay them back later.

In conclusion, literature has consistently highlighted the pressing need for sustainable business strategies that can mitigate the negative effects of excessive consumption on both the environment and society. A circular economy should be embraced as an essential element in attaining long-term sustainability by emphasizing on maximizing resource usage and minimizing waste through recycling, mending and reusing. The adoption of ethical marketing practices may further assist in this concern by aligning buyer behavior with ecological values, thereby enhancing brand loyalty towards sustainability. Moreover, increased digital platforms leading to easy credit services have exacerbated impulse buying thus highlighting the urgency for stricter regulations. Therefore, policies should be developed that prohibit deceptive advertising practices so consumers make informed purchases meant to conserve natural resources. It is important for companies and clients to collaborate in order to strike a balance between economic growth on one hand and environmental conservation funds on the other, thus guaranteeing a more viable future for all concerned parties.

7. Research Methodology

The research aims to understand the relationship between consumerism, credit availability, and environmental implications using a mixed-method approach, i.e., both quantitative and qualitative research tools. After reviewing various past research papers primary research has been conducted in urban

and semi-urban areas of India among various age groups to understand how people are affected by current marketing strategies and credit availability and if it leads to impulsive buying behaviors. It will try to analyze what age groups or genders are affected the most, whether or not consumers understand the environmental effect of consumerism, and what kind of eco-friendly habits they practice in their day-to-day lives.

5.1 Tools for Qualitative Study:

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Objectives

1. To gain insights into consumer behavior and perception of impact of marketing and credit practices on impulsive buying.
2. To understand various sustainable practices that consumers follow in their lives.
3. To understand consumer perception of marketing and communication strategies used by brands to promote environmentally friendly products.

Sampling

Semi-structured interviews with 20-25 respondents across age groups, education levels, and economic backgrounds.

Sampling Method

Non-probability sampling is used to gather broad data for emerging patterns and themes that are related to sustainability and over-consumerism.

The sampling is done using a qualitative sampling technique called purposive sampling which means that the choice of individuals based on some specified criteria of interest to the research for eg. experience related to the use of digital marketing, credit services, or engagement in sustainability practices, will be considered.

5.2 Tools for Quantitative Study

STRUCTURED SURVEYS

Based on the responses from in-depth interviews a standardized questionnaire was designed to quantify various aspects of the responses.

Objectives

1. To understand the extent of impact on the target population's attitudes, and behaviors on overconsumption.
2. To quantify the percentage of people who are aware of the environmental implications of their

actions and follow sustainable practices in their day-to-day lives.

3. To understand the cause-effect relationship of these variables.

Sampling

Survey forms made by analyzing qualitative responses and reviewing existing literature were administered to a larger population sample, and more than 150 survey responses were recorded among various demographic groups.

Sampling Method

Probability sampling is used for measuring attitudes and behaviors toward overconsumption, along with the prevalence of sustainable practices.

The sampling technique called stratified random sampling is used, where a random sample was obtained from each stratum to ensure a fair representation of every sub-group. The demography is distributed among different age, sex, and income group segments.

Data collection and analysis

1. Both online and offline modes were used to collect data to ensure broader participation.
2. Ethical considerations for informed content and data privacy have been made.
3. Qualitative data has been analyzed using thematic analysis which helps in finding and interpreting patterns in the data.
4. Quantitative data has been analyzed using Microsoft Excel, using descriptive, correlation, and regression analysis to test the hypotheses proposed based on qualitative study.

8. Qualitative data analysis

The in-depth interviews investigated three major themes: consumer behavior, sustainable consumption practices, and perceptions of ethical marketing & environmental communication. The analysis is done by focussing on common patterns, how individual perspectives may differ from one another, and how these findings may be useful in understanding over-consumerism and how it affects sustainability in business operations

Theme 1: Consumer Behavior

Convenience and online shopping trends

Most of the people interviewed stated convenience as the most important aspect of online shopping. The respondents highlighted that fast delivery times and ease of shopping were what motivated people the most to use online platforms. Browsing, selecting, and receiving products at home were repeatedly emphasized, which shows how expansive technological advancements and accessibility of platforms influence consumer behavior.

For many respondents, added costs like delivery fees and platform charges - were a repulsion to online shopping, but many people were willing to pay for this added cost if it meant saving time. This is an increase in convenience-driven consumption, whereby time and effort saved can often be worth more than the money paid.

Offers like "buy one get one free" or other discount offers on higher purchases greatly influenced consumer behavior. Most respondents commented that this usually made them to overspend compared to their initial targets. This shows the influence of consumer psychology in online shopping. The perception of cost saving and related overconsumption is what is normally seen here. In the larger scheme of things, this is a critical ingredient of over-consumerism: consumers get drawn to buy more under the guise of discounts and promotions, ultimately fueling unnecessary consumption.

Social Media and Advertisement Influence

The other important aspect of consumer behavior that emerged from the data has to do with the immense influence that social media ads carry. The 18-25-year-olds almost exclusively identify sources of influence via Instagram and YouTube. The products that respondents had never thought to buy before, especially in the spheres of skincare and health supplements, influencers played a very important role in their marketing. Few of the interviewees thought of buying a few items like derma rollers or scalp massagers after seeing them frequently on social media.

This shift proves that mass advertising is being replaced by implicit and more personalized marketing where influences appear to be friendly, trustworthy,

and more relatable than the commercials. However, such marketing greatly enhances impulsive purchases since a person is likely to buy products they had no plan for just because they were constantly being flashed on their social media platforms.

Interestingly, men in the sample seem less susceptible to social media advertising than women, though by no means completely resistant. They both reported buying gadgets or items after they caught an eye while online, which implies that the nature of the products to be advertised may differ significantly with gender.

Effect of Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) Services

Credit has become much more accessible; with services offered through Buy Now Pay Later, which is actually quite popular, all interviewees were aware of such services, with most claiming to have used at least one such service. The youth was especially attracted to services such as LazyPay or Simpl that enable them to buy products they cannot afford to purchase immediately. Such ease of credit access is said to have fueled over-consumption as individuals can buy high-cost items without an immediate strain on their finances.

The interviews showed that BNPL services and credit cards present opportunities for overspending. Respondents agreed to buy goods they would not buy if they had to pay the full amount in advance. So, this creates a cycle of borrowing and repaying since, at any one time, consumers owe money and continue purchasing and, eventually, becomes unaffordable over time. This was further emphasized as having psychological effects on the consumers, most especially the youth, further pointing out that while BNPL services provide better access to buying things, well, it can very well become a source of financial stress and strain in the longer run.

Theme 2: Sustainable Consumption Practices

Awareness and Concern for Sustainability

Awareness regarding sustainable consumption is segmented and different between various generations and educational levels. The younger generation respondents are more aware of the issues concerning sustainability with respect to their choices in consumption. They worry about the deterioration of the environment and are more inclined towards

products that do not harm it. Participants tend to use bags or carriers made from reusable materials, avoid single-use plastics, and prefer fewer packets of a product.

More than once, the cost of eco-friendly products was brought up as a concern when talking about the adoption of environmentally friendly products. Even though young generations are more inclined to conserve the environment, they still argue that these products are very pricey. Many said that if environment-friendly goods were as inexpensive as conventional commodities, they would go for the former. This makes up a bigger challenge to the promotion of sustainability: while an attitude toward the adoption of eco-friendly choices exists, monetary constraints limit the adoption of such practices.

Older respondents also expressed concerns about sustainability and resource use but are more conventional. They had great recycling practices through reuse and decreasing the entire amount of consumption. Their practices are viewed as sustainable but are not necessarily said to be motivated by the present-day ideals of environmentalism. For instance, respondents believed in reusing plastic bags or not wasting food, which is related to sustainability but is a rather limited approach.

Day-to-Day Sustainable Practices

A variety of ways through which respondents said they have been able to incorporate sustainable practices into daily life were described by respondents. Some said carrying reusable bottles and steel straws decreases single-use plastic consumption while others said the incorporation of reduction of energy through, for example, the installation of solar panels in or turning off appliances when not in use while a few had already adopted electric vehicles to reduce their carbon footprint.

Other respondents reported the deployment of some form of composting and proper waste disposal as contributing towards environmental conservation. Surprisingly, respondents with higher education and incomes were the ones to mostly embrace investment in sustainable technologies, like solar panel installments, while respondents with monetary constraints tended to rely on more general, smaller,

and manageable actions like cutting plastic use or waste creation.

Willingness to Pay for Sustainability

Another theme that cropped out through the interviews was the unwillingness to pay a premium for green products. Of course, many respondents did claim to have shopped for slightly more expensive 'greener' items, but only very few expressed willingness to pay a marked price premium for environmentally 'friendlier' alternatives. Thus, this unwillingness to pay a premium has its roots in the perception that sustainability should be accessible and that the premium charged on green products should not prevent its access to all. This makes it challenging for businesses to find a balance between profitability and sustainability. While sustainability remains a secondary consideration for customers who have to make a significant cost investment, if sustainable products are equal in price to non-sustainable ones, most of the respondents said that they would be content to choose the latter.

Theme 3: Perceptions of Ethical Marketing and Environmental Communication

Distrust of Environment-related Claims

Many respondents expressed a low level of belief in marketing campaigns that focus on the environmental benefits of a product. Most of the respondents said they believed companies greenwashed a product to attract customers rather than the truth regarding environmental benefits. Many of the respondents could remember having seen products with labels stating that it is natural or organic, while the contents or package indicated something else. This inconspicuous discrepancy is quite enough to make consumers defensive and not buy into green marketing.

Clear, transparent communication of environmental benefits for a product is a requirement. Respondents reported that they wanted to understand just how a product contributes to sustainability; therefore, claims in that direction should be made clearer. Typically, such claims are viewed with skepticism when not made clear. Certifications, or third-party validations that could guarantee the authenticity of company claims, were called for by respondents. For instance, a

respondent talked about the Delhi metro ticketing system, which displays the amount of CO2 emissions saved by traveling the distance in the metro as compared to a personal vehicle that runs on petrol or diesel, which is an example of clear communication that builds consumer trust.

Factors Influencing Trust in Eco-Friendly Brands

The trust held in brands that market themselves as eco-friendly is relatively dependent on the transparency of their claims and the availability of certifications. According to several respondents, they would not trust a product unless it was validated by an independent third party, such as government certification or a well-known environmental organization. That need for assurance follows the increasing awareness of consumers about greenwashing - the advertisement of products as environmental good; actually, they are not so.

Apart from that, the respondents also suggested that for a company to prove its sustainability, such a firm should clearly declare which ingredients or materials were replaced with sustainable ones. This would be of great comfort to the consumers, as they would appreciate clear detailed information about the environmental merits of the product.

Mostly without such details, the consumers could not believe fully all that the companies wrote on the packages regarding eco-friendliness.

The Government's Role in Promoting Sustainability

Almost all the respondents felt that the government has an important role to play in support of sustainability. Government subsidy of green products, thus bringing them closer to consumer budgets, is one of the recommendations that were expressed by the respondents. Strict regulations on environmental marketing or green marketing were also solicited from the respondents to curb false environmental claims and the enforcement of accountability for green talk.

Among other proposals were heavy taxes on extracting and using non-renewable resources as well as subsidies for products that favor sustainable development goals. Such a policy would encourage the government to motivate both consumers and businesses towards more sustainable practices.

9. Hypothesis Formulation

Based on the thematic analysis of qualitative data hypotheses can be formed, where each hypothesis will reflect a trend or a relationship observed in the qualitative data which will be tested quantitatively through the survey responses.

H1: Digital marketing positively impacts impulsive purchase decisions

H2: Consumers using BNPL services are more likely to spend beyond their means

H3: Cost is a major barrier that hinders people from embracing sustainable consumption

H4: Younger generations are more likely to be concerned with sustainability when making purchase decisions

H5: Products that communicate environmental claims are more likely to be purchased than non-communicative counterparts

10. Quantitative Data Analysis

The study conducted had almost 38% of respondents from the age group of 18-24, 40% from 25-34, 15% from 35-49, and 7% respondents from the age group of 50 and above, with approximately equal respondents from both genders. The data collected shows a fair representation of people from all economic, educational, and geographic backgrounds.

8.1 Descriptive Analysis

The responses are recorded using a Likert scale of 1-5, where 1 indicates no impact and 5 indicates very high positive impact associated with the question.

The responses for the impact of digital marketing strategies and social media strategies on purchasing decisions showed a mean of 3.37 (where 5 indicates very high positive impact), indicating that purchasing decisions are positively impacted by marketing strategies. The standard deviation of slightly greater than 1, shows that more than 60% of the responses lie within one standard deviation of the mean. A mean of 2.89 shows that people do use BNPL services for borrowing money in their day-to-day lives but a moderately high standard deviation of 1.35 indicates that there are people who don't use these services at all along with people who make extreme use of these borrowing platforms.

A mean of 3.39 with a standard deviation of 1 indicates that more than 65% of people quite often make impulse buying decisions in their lives, showing signs of over-consumerism.

T Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances		
	Older generation	Younger generation
Mean	2.848485	3.381356
Variance	0.757576	1.297769
Observations	33	118
Pooled Variance	1.181754	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	149	
t Stat	-2.48925	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.00695	
t Critical one-tail	1.655144	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.013901	
t Critical two-tail	1.976013	

A lot of people also give high importance to sustainability when making a purchase (Mean= 3.25) but very few are likely to buy from companies that sell these eco-friendly products at 7slightly higher prices (Mean= 1.98, standard deviation= 1.03). More than 70% of the respondents follow sustainable practices like reduce, reuse and recycle in their everyday lives with a mean of 3.09.

The responses also indicate a positive impact of marketing strategies promoting sustainable products on consumer perceptions and people are likely to purchase a product if clear communications are made regarding the sustainable aspects of the product.

8.2 Correlation Analysis

A positive correlation value of 0.8 between the impact of digital marketing strategies and impulse buying decisions shows a strong positive relation between the two variables. It shows that as the influence of digital marketing strategies increases, the frequency of impulse buying decisions also tends to increase.

A correlation value of 0.33 indicates a weak positive relationship between BNPL users and impulse buying. It indicates that people who use BNPL (Buy Now Pay

Later) credit services are likely to make impulse purchases to some extent.

Correlation analysis between the extent of importance that people give to sustainability when making purchase decisions and how many are likely to buy if the eco-friendly products are more expensive shows a weak positive correlation indicating that only a few people might be ready to spend more for an environmentally friendly product.

A correlation value of 0.79 indicates a strong positive relationship between the impact of marketing campaigns that emphasize the environmental benefits of a product making a consumer aware of its sustainable nature and how many people are likely to buy if they are aware of the environmental benefits.

8.3 Hypothesis Testing

H4: Younger generations are more likely to be concerned with sustainability when making purchase decisions

This hypothesis needs to be tested using a t-test because we need to compare two groups within the same variable. By grouping the categories into older and younger generations [18-34: younger generation, 35 and above: older generation], the two-sample t-test assuming equal variances suggests that there is a significant difference between the mean of the two groups. The younger generation has a higher mean of 3.38 indicating higher susceptibility to buying sustainable products compared to the older generation.

Null Hypothesis (H0): Assume that there is no difference in the mean of susceptibility to purchasing sustainable products between the two generations.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): Assume that there is a significant difference in the means, which indicates that younger generations are more likely to be concerned with sustainability when making purchase decisions.

t-Statistic (-2.49): The t-statistic of -2.49 suggests the magnitude of the difference between group means in terms of the variation of the sample data. Since this value turns negative, this reflects that the younger generation is more vulnerable and more sensitive as they have a higher mean.

Degrees of Freedom ($df = 149$): This is basically the number of the independent sources that could have been used to calculate the population parameters by taking into account the size of the samples.

P-Values:

One-tailed P-value: 0.00695 Since the one-tailed p-value is 0.00695, which is less than 0.05, we can reject the null hypothesis with a 95 percent confidence level for a directional hypothesis. This, therefore means that the younger generation is statistically more susceptible to buying sustainable products.

Two-tailed P-value = 0.01390. The two-tailed test would still yield rejection of the null hypothesis because its p-value, 0.0139, is smaller than 0.05; therefore, we have a significant difference between groups but cannot specify a direction.

Critical Values: $t_{\text{Critical}} = 1.655$, $t_{\text{Critical Two-tail}} = 1.976$.

These critical values are the thresholds for determining significance. The calculated t-statistic (-2.49) exceeds both the critical values in magnitude, indicating statistical significance.

Findings:

From these results of the t-test above, there is a statistically significant difference between the young generation and the older generation and younger generations are more likely to be concerned with sustainability when making purchase decisions. Therefore, H4 is proved to be correct.

8.4 Regression Analysis

Correlation only indicates the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables but regression will help to quantify that relationship and test the hypotheses.

H1: Digital marketing positively impacts impulsive purchase decisions.

This analysis investigates the relationship between BNPL (Buy Now, Pay Later) usage and impulsive buying behavior using a linear regression model.

1. Regression Statistics:

Multiple R: 0.7936, indicates a strong positive correlation between digital marketing and impulsive purchase decisions.

R Square: 0.6298, suggests that approximately 62.98% of the variability in impulsive purchase decisions can be explained by digital marketing.

Adjusted R Square: 0.6273, accounts for the number of predictors in the model and confirms a robust model fit.

Standard Error: 0.6278, reflects the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line.

Observations: 152 data points were included in the analysis.

2. ANOVA Results:

The model has an F-statistic of 255.17 with a Significance F of 0, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant and that digital marketing has a meaningful impact on impulsive purchase decisions.

3. Coefficients:

Intercept: 0.6956, suggesting that when digital marketing is absent, impulsive purchase behavior is at this baseline level.

Digital Marketing Coefficient: 0.8125, indicating that for each unit increase in digital marketing exposure, impulsive purchasing behavior increases by 0.8125 units.

4. Statistical Significance:

The p-value for the digital marketing coefficient is extremely low ($3.5138E-34$), confirming that the impact of digital marketing on impulsive purchase decisions is highly statistically significant.

2. Confidence Intervals:

The 95% confidence interval for the digital marketing coefficient (0.7120 to 0.9130) indicates that the positive effect of digital marketing on impulsive purchases is likely to fall within this range.

Findings:

The analysis presents strong evidence that digital marketing has a positive and statistically significant effect on impulsive purchase decisions. Strong correlation and very high explanatory power (R^2) suggest a high impact of digital marketing strategies towards influencing consumer behavior in terms of impulsive buying.

H2: Consumers using BNPL services are more likely to spend beyond their means

This analysis investigates the relationship between BNPL (Buy Now, Pay Later) usage and impulsive buying behavior using a linear regression model.

1. Regression Statistics:

Multiple R: 0.3244 shows a weak positive correlation between BNPL usage and impulsive buying.

R Square: 0.1053, meaning that approximately 10.53% of the variation in impulsive buying behavior is explained by BNPL usage.

Standard Error: 1.2787, whereby the value indicates the deviation of the dependent variable from its regression line.

Observations: 152 data points were analyzed.

2. ANOVA Results:

This study established the model F-statistic at 17.65 and its p-value at 4.54925E-05, suggesting a considerable influence of BNPL usage on impulsive buying behavior.

3. Coefficients:

The intercept evaluated at 1.3844, an indication that when BNPL usage is 0, impulsive buying behavior would begin at this level.

The coefficient for BNPL usage was found to be 0.4352, which means that an increase in BNPL usage by a unit would increase impulsive buying behavior by 0.4352.

4. Statistical Significance:

The p-value for BNPL usage was established at 4.55E-05, showing the noteworthy influence it has on impulsive buying behavior.

5. Confidence Intervals:

Using a confidence level of 95%: BNPL usage with confidence limits at 0.2305 to 0.6399 indicates an absence of effects of BNPL on impulsive buying.

Findings:

While this investigation strongly supports BNPL usage as an induced influence on impulsive buying behavior, the associated strength of the relationship tends to be weak. Other factors not included in the model likely contribute to impulsive buying behavior.

H3: Cost is a major barrier that hinders people from embracing sustainable consumption

This analysis examines the hypothesis that cost is a major barrier that hinders people from embracing

sustainable consumption through a linear regression model.

1. Regression Statistics:

Multiple R: 0.4352, indicates a moderate positive correlation between perceived cost and the hindrance to sustainable consumption.

R Square: 0.1894, suggests that approximately 18.94% of the variability in embracing sustainable consumption can be explained by the cost factor. This indicates a relatively weak relationship.

Adjusted R Square: 0.1840, adjusts for the number of predictors in the model, confirming a slight reduction in explanatory power.

Standard Error: 0.9957, reflects the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line.

Observations: 152 data points were included in the analysis.

2. ANOVA Results:

The model has an F-statistic of 35.05 with a Significance F of 2.10087E-08, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant and that cost does have a meaningful impact on the acceptance of sustainable consumption.

3. Coefficients:

Intercept: 2.3429, suggests that when the perceived cost barrier is absent, the baseline acceptance of sustainable consumption is at this level.

Cost Coefficient: 0.4647, indicates that for each unit increase in the perception of cost as a barrier, there is a corresponding increase of 0.4647 in the hindrance to sustainable consumption.

4. Statistical Significance:

The p-value for the cost coefficient is extremely low (2.10087E-08), confirming that the effect of cost on sustainable consumption is highly statistically significant.

5. Confidence Intervals:

The 95% confidence interval for the cost coefficient (0.3096 to 0.6198) indicates that the impact of perceived cost on sustainable consumption is likely to fall within this range.

Findings:

This analysis provides powerful evidence that cost acts as a huge barrier to sustainable consumption. Each of the noted findings indicated significance, even though the R^2 values showed that the model accounts for only a tiny fraction of variance, confirming that

cost perception among consumers constrains them from adopting sustainable practices. Cost perceptions will be vital in promoting sustainable consumption behavior.

H5: Products that communicate environmental claims are more likely to be purchased than non-communicative counterparts

This analysis evaluates the hypothesis that products that communicate environmental claims are more likely to be purchased than non-communicative counterparts through a linear regression model.

1. Regression Statistics:

Multiple R: 0.7854, indicates a strong positive correlation between the communication of environmental claims and the likelihood of purchase.

R Square: 0.6168, suggests that approximately 61.68% of the variability in purchasing decisions can be explained by whether products communicate environmental claims. This indicates a robust relationship.

Adjusted R Square: 0.6142, indicates a minor adjustment for the number of predictors, confirming the strength of the relationship.

Standard Error: 0.6304, reflects the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line.

Observations: 152 data points were included in the analysis.

2. ANOVA Results:

The model has an F-statistic of 241.44 with a Significance F of 0, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant and that the communication of environmental claims has a meaningful impact on purchasing behavior.

3. Coefficients:

Intercept: 0.8212, suggests that when products do not communicate environmental claims, the baseline likelihood of purchase is at this level.

Environmental Claims Coefficient: 0.7304, indicates that for each unit increase in the strength or presence of environmental claims, the likelihood of purchase increases by 0.7304 units.

4. Statistical Significance:

The p-value for the environmental claims coefficient is extremely low (4.7155E-33), confirming that the effect of ecological claims on purchase likelihood is highly statistically significant.

5. Confidence Intervals:

The 95% confidence interval for the environmental claims coefficient (0.6375 to 0.8233) indicates that the impact of communicating environmental claims on purchase likelihood is likely to fall within this range.

Findings:

The findings are compelling and reveal that those items with environmental claims are significantly more likely to be chosen than those that are free of such claims. The high R^2 , indicating that a high percentage of the variance in the choice among the listed products can be attributed to environmental communication, focuses attention on transparency-or, more accurately, the lack thereof in marketing a sustainable product. The brands might, therefore, take advantage of this insight and further focus their environmental claims on boosting consumer appeal and enhancing the purchase intention toward the products.

Therefore, all the hypotheses tested are proved to be right.

11. Conclusion

The data analysis from this research provides a thorough understanding of overconsumption and its considerable effects on sustainability. Both qualitative and quantitative findings underscore key factors that drive overconsumption and the obstacles to adopting sustainable consumption practices.

The qualitative analysis highlights how convenience, the rise of online shopping, and the impact of digital marketing—especially through social media—fuel impulsive buying. Promotional strategies like discounts and Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services play a significant role in encouraging consumers to spend beyond their means, often resulting in a cycle of unsustainable consumption. Psychological triggers, such as the belief that buying in bulk or opting for fast delivery saves money, worsen the overconsumption issue, leading consumers to make unnecessary purchases. Furthermore, younger consumers are more swayed by social media ads, particularly those featuring influencers, compared to older generations, illustrating the evolution of marketing strategies.

On the other hand, the analysis also indicates a growing awareness of sustainability, especially among younger individuals who are increasingly concerned

about environmental issues and more likely to make eco-friendly choices. However, cost remains a major hurdle to adopting sustainable products. Many consumers, despite their environmental concerns, are reluctant to pay extra for eco-friendly options. This gap between sustainability awareness and the financial implications of green products highlights the necessity for businesses and governments to make sustainable choices more accessible and affordable.

Quantitative data backs up these findings, revealing a strong positive correlation between digital marketing tactics and impulsive buying behavior, with regression analysis confirming the significant influence of marketing campaigns on purchasing decisions. While BNPL services have a weaker yet still notable effect on overconsumption, especially among younger consumers, the hypothesis that cost limits sustainable consumption is also validated. The analysis indicates that financial constraints are a key factor hindering the adoption of eco-friendly products. Furthermore, products that communicate their environmental benefits tend to have a higher chance of being purchased, highlighting the importance of transparency in marketing.

The research illustrates that overconsumption is closely connected to modern marketing strategies and technological advancements, which encourage convenience and impulsivity, often at the cost of sustainability. Although awareness of sustainability is increasing, particularly among younger consumers, financial obstacles and skepticism about greenwashing hinder the widespread adoption of eco-friendly practices. To achieve meaningful progress toward sustainability, a collaborative effort among businesses, governments, and consumers is essential to balance affordability with environmental responsibility, promote transparency in marketing, and make sustainable options more accessible.

12. Suggestions for Sustainable Business Practices

Educating Consumers on Sustainability Markers:

Businesses should focus on educating consumers about sustainability markers like eco-labels, certifications, and environmental impact ratings. By improving consumer awareness of what makes a product truly sustainable, businesses can bridge the

knowledge gap and empower consumers to make more responsible choices.

Clear Communication and Transparency:

Companies need to be transparent about their sustainability efforts. By providing comprehensive information about the entire lifecycle of their products—covering sourcing, manufacturing, and disposal—they can build trust and reduce skepticism regarding greenwashing. Third-party certifications from environmental organizations can further enhance consumer confidence.

Price Adjustments and Incentives for Sustainable Choices:

Since cost is a significant barrier to adopting sustainable products, businesses should explore ways to make eco-friendly options more affordable. This could involve government subsidies, strategies for price parity, or offering incentives such as discounts or loyalty points for choosing sustainable products.

Circular Economy Models:

Implementing take-back programs, recycling initiatives, and promoting the reuse of goods can significantly reduce waste. Businesses might also consider practices like providing repair services or offering discounts on future purchases when customers return used products. This approach contributes to a circular economy that lessens the environmental impact of overconsumption.

Ethical Marketing Practices:

Marketing strategies should evolve from encouraging impulsive consumption to promoting sustainable lifestyles. Companies can embrace ethical marketing that emphasizes durability, repairability, and the long-term advantages of sustainable products, rather than just convenience and low prices.

13. Limitations of the Research

Sample Size and Demographic Representation:

The study's sample, although diverse, might not fully capture global consumer behaviors. A larger and more globally representative sample could enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Self-Reported Data:

The dependence on self-reported data could lead to biases, as participants might exaggerate their commitment to sustainability or downplay their impulsive buying habits. Future research could

improve accuracy by monitoring actual purchasing behaviors.

Focus on Digital Consumerism:

While this research focuses on the impact of online shopping and BNPL services, other consumption patterns, such as in-store purchases, may also contribute significantly to overconsumption and should be examined in future studies.

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