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Topic of Research: Impact of Greenwash on Consumers' Green Purchase Intention: An Empirical Analysis

Findings

Green marketing has witnessed a significant rise in recent years as consumers are becoming increasingly environmentally conscious and more concerned about the ecological impact of their consumption choices. In response to this shift, companies are actively promoting green products and adopting sustainability-oriented marketing strategies to appeal to this growing segment. However, the intensifying competition among firms to position themselves as environmentally responsible has also led to the emergence of greenwashing, where companies exaggerate or misrepresent their environmental claims in order to attract consumers.

In this context, the present study aims to examine the impact of greenwashing on green purchase intention, while also considering the role of green word of mouth and green purchase behaviour within a comprehensive framework. Drawing on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model, the study explains how greenwashing acts as a stimulus that influences consumers' internal evaluations, such as green word of mouth, which in turn shape their behavioural responses.

The findings of the study provide important insights into contemporary green consumption behaviour. It was observed that consumers' responses vary across different product categories, with higher acceptance for products that are convenient and easily accessible, such as reusable items and healthcare products, while other categories show relatively inconsistent adoption. It observed that greenwashing had a positive effect on green purchase intention, suggesting that consumers may rely on heuristic cues and surface-level environmental claims, particularly in contexts where critical evaluation of sustainability information is limited. However, greenwashing exerts a negative influence on green word of mouth, indicating that perceived exaggeration or deception reduces trust and discourages consumers from recommending such products to others.

Further, green word of mouth significantly and positively influences green purchase intention, reinforcing the role of social influence and peer communication in building credibility and encouraging environmentally responsible consumption. In addition, green purchase intention strongly predicts actual green purchase behavior, confirming that intention remains a key driver of action in the context of sustainable consumption.

The study also finds that information and knowledge do not significantly moderate the relationship between intention and behavior. This suggests that although knowledge may shape favorable attitudes and intentions, it does not necessarily ensure behavioral consistency. External constraints such as price, availability, and convenience play a more decisive role, reflecting the persistence of the intention–behavior gap.

Theoretically, the study advances the SOR framework by incorporating greenwashing as a complex stimulus capable of eliciting dual and even contradictory organismic responses. It also integrates social influence more explicitly into the decision-making process, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of green consumer behavior.