



Green Consumer Behavior: A Systematic Literature Review of the Attitude-Behavior Gap, Greenwashing, Eco-Labels, and Social Influence

Amol Dattatraya Shinde

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Management Sciences, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune
amolshinde103@gmail.com

Dr. Umesh Ramchandra Raut

Associate Professor, Department of Management Sciences, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Sub Centre
Nashik ur.raut20@gmail.com

Abstract

Even though people are aware of the environment for the past twenty years, there is still a frustrating paradox that both researchers and sustainability practitioners face: people say and also show care about the environment, but they very rarely or rarely act on that concern by buying eco-friendly products. This systematic literature review aims to analyze twenty peer-reviewed studies to elucidate the reasons behind the persistence of this paradox and to identify feasible solutions. Utilizing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) framework, and Social Identity Theory (SIT), the review categorizes findings into five different interrelated themes: the attitude-behavior gap, structural and psychological obstacles towards green consumption, the detrimental impact of greenwashing on consumers trust, the function of eco-labels and certifications in informing purchasing decisions, and the effect of social norms and digital peer contexts on pro-environmental behavior. The literature review concludes that the disparity between the green intention ((willingness towards spending money to buy the product, but which does not actually translate into buying /purchasing behaviour) and the green action (actual action to buy/ purchase or get engagement with environment) is most accurately interpreted not as a deficiency in individual willpower, but as the foreseeable result of a market and social context that has yet to be structured to facilitate sustainable decisions. Price barriers, lack of needful information, distrust of institutions, and conflicts with the social norms all together make it harder to buy green products in ways that campaigns to change people's attitudes can't fix. The paper presents three novel conceptual frameworks that encapsulate essential findings and concludes with a series of pragmatic recommendations for marketers, policymakers, and prospective researchers.

Keywords: green consumer behavior, sustainable consumption, attitude-behavior gap, Theory of Planned Behavior, greenwashing, eco-labels, social norms, willingness to pay, pro-environmental behavior

1. Introduction

If you walk through the aisles of a modern supermarket, you'll see that more and more products have some kind of environmental claim on their packaging or in their product, such as recycled packaging, carbon-neutral logos, organic product certifications/ organic certification, or promises



of ethical sourcing. The amount of these messages alone tells a story or storyline: companies clearly assume and also think that a lot of their customers care about the environment and environmental sustainability. And according to published data and survey data, they are correct. Research indicates that a majority of consumers across the world express environmental concerns and demonstrate a willingness to switch their purchasing behaviors for the betterment and benefit of the planet (Nielsen, 2015; Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

Also, the data from the checkout tells a different story. As we know, green products have been present around us for decades, but they are still a small part of most of the consumer categories. The difference between what people say/feel or care about the environment and what they actually intend to buy is known as the attitude-behavior gap, and it is one of the most discussed, talked-about, and also least solved problems in consumer research, and is also one of the most important to focus on for research. If environmental sustainability and that though, sustainable consumption is heading to make a real difference in achieving global environmental goals, it has to grow much more than it is today. It is an urgent practical necessity to understand why genuinely motivated consumers often fail to act on their values; instead of thinking of it as an academic luxury.

To map and understand the green consumer behavior and its current state of knowledge, twenty peer-reviewed studies that were published between 2002 and 2025 are examined and analyzed here. The underlying processes of the attitude-behavior gap, the Barriers or the structural impediments that prevent green intentions from turning to green purchases, the distortion done to the green market by greenwashing, the environment that enables eco-labels to successfully guide consumer choice, and how social norms and digital peer environments shape sustainability behavior are the five thematic areas that are well-documented phenomena from the literature. The study, which is shown here, is based on the 3 original Conceptual Frameworks, which are a structured set of ideas/concepts and their relationship, which provides the theoretical blueprints and the empirical findings, which are actually based on the data collection findings, which significantly identify the two paper studies.

The paper mainly focuses on the 3 different categories of audiences and is expected to benefit. The scholars/ researchers who want to explore a new topic or want to get introduced to work with a wider understanding of literature and know more about the past and the future reality of green products. This research is also useful for the market that wants to attract the eco-friendly consumers/customers, and also for the government that is interested in developing policies that will engage and attract more people towards green product buying behaviour.

1. Theoretical Background and Conceptual Frameworks

It becomes important to establish the theoretical framework that majorly supports the research reviewed here before looking at what the empirical literature tells us about green consumer behavior. The three frameworks mentioned are particularly prominent and are also woven throughout the studies discussed in subsequent sections.

1.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

In green consumer research, Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior continues to be the most predominant academic construct, or we can say, a theoretical framework. It suggests that behavioral propensity or intent, which is influenced by three preceding factors— evaluative stance,



social expectations (perceived social pressure to carry out the behavior), and capability perception (the extent to which the individual believes they can successfully carry out the behavior)—is what most directly determines behavior. TPB is very well-suited for research on eco-friendly consumer behavior because it offers a systematic model that can take into account both the systemic barriers that keep inclination from becoming action and the psychosocial elements that influence pro-environmental intent.

However, as several of the studies examined here demonstrate, the standard TPB model has shortcomings in the eco-friendly purchasing context. Past behavior often proves a more robust predictor of future purchasing than expressed intention (Tan et al., 2024), suggesting that habit and inertia operate beyond the boundaries of the model. Moreover, the disparity between intention and behavior, precisely the phenomenon this review seeks to explain, is not tackled within the model itself. As we see, many researchers have added new aspects to the research, such as personal values (beliefs are right or wrong), environmental identity (eco-friendly individuals), self-belief (one's action can make a difference), and trust in green claims (product originality) to the original model of TPB to better understand eco-friendly behaviour.

The table below shows how each part of TPB applies to green consumption

TPB Component	Definition	Relevance to Green Consumption
Attitude Toward Behavior	A person's holistic appraisal of performing the behavior	Positive environmental disposition does not always lead to green purchase — the discrepancy this review investigates
Subjective Norms	Perceived societal pressure from important others to perform (or not) the behavior	Peer influence and social media engagement reinforce subjective norms toward green buying (Qin et al., 2024)
Perceived Behavioral Control	The perceived simplicity or complexity of performing the behavior	Price, availability and knowledge gaps reduce control, hindering intention from becoming action (Joshi & Rahman, 2015)
Behavioral Intention	Driving factor indicating how hard a person is willing to endeavor	a reliable predictor of green purchasing, though prior behavior often overrides intention (Tan et al., 2024)
Actual Behavior	The observable purchasing conduct	The foremost outcome variable—and the foremost to influence

Table 1: Theory of Planned Behavior Applied to Green Consumer Behavior



1.2 Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Framework

Stern's (2000) VBN theory states that eco- friendly behaviour/environmental behaviour flows in a step-by-step process. It starts with the personal values, which show more care for nature and living things. After that, the personal value, which then leads to environmental beliefs that nature is in danger and humans are responsible, and finally, this creates a personal norm, which has a feeling that you personally must act responsibly towards the environment. To explain this in short, if we care about nature. Believe it is in danger and feel personally responsible to take ecologically friendly action to save the environment.

The VBN framework also explain other side of the peoples thinking. The framework states that people care and show affection for the environment, but still hesitate to purchase eco-friendly products. On the other side, a person may show love towards nature, but doesn't feel responsible enough to act, especially when they need to pay extra cost for the green products, require extra research, or feel like they look odd in front of society or a group. So this tells us that showing care/love, and affection towards the environment is not enough. A person must feel that it is their own duty to act before a change in buying behaviour.

The framework clarifies greenwashing, saying that companies falsely claim that their products are eco-friendly, but in actuality, they are not. This is highly damaging to trust. This simultaneously disturbs the customer trust at a critical point, like when customers are continuously misled, their beliefs are deeply hurt. And due to this, customers stop trusting green claims & struggle to identify true eco-friendly products. This makes it difficult to connect back to their green shopping and choose the environmental values, even when they genuinely want to do the right thing. Greenwashing slowly destroys a person's confidence in making a responsible green purchase.

1.3 Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Tajfel and Turner (1979), Social Identity Theory says, people behave according to the group around them or according to the norms of the social group. In green buying Behaviour, this theory explains 3 discussing things:

- i. looking at advertisements on social media, which makes people more likely to buy green products.
- ii. When a group spreads/sends mixed options about green products, people get confused about green products and do nothing.
- iii. In a society where people worry about other options, where they feel like they will be judged as a showoff, which is called green stigma.

The main point to understand here is that buying eco-friendly products is not normal in a person's social group or social circle. Even if someone cares about the environment, they may not actually buy environmentally friendly products, because fitting in often overrides personal values.

2. Methodology

2.1 Review Design and Rationale

The research method used here is known as a Systematic Literature Review (SLR).The method followed is an international rule called PRISMA 2020, which helps to know exactly how to search for, select, and analyze studies in a well-organized manner.



This method was chosen to work on instead of two different common methods, narrative review and scoping review, for three reasons. When people care about the environment, but they still don't wish to purchase green products, researchers have been studying this problem for multiple years. To answer this, a method that follows clear, fixed steps that anyone could repeat and get the same results. It also needs a method so that the findings do not depend on which studies we personally like or find convenient. A narrative review, by contrast, allows one to simply pick and choose the studies that support their argument, which would not give a reliable answer. The five themes covered here:

- (i) attitude-behavior gap,
- (ii) structural and psychological barriers,
- (iii) greenwashing, eco-labels,
- (iv) social norms
- (v) digital influence

Each is large enough to support its own sub-literature; a systematic literature review approach ensures that all five receive equal coverage, other than the unequal attention that comes from depending on a single reviewer's group. There is also a practical consideration: journals that are indexed in Scopus and the Web of Science in sustainability and marketing increasingly treat PRISMA-compliant methodology reporting as a baseline requirement for peer-review acceptance, where not an optional extra.

The review, based on 20 peer-reviewed studies published between 2002 and January 2025, was considered using thematic narrative synthesis (Popay et al., 2006) organised around the mentioned five different pre-specified themes. Statistical pooling of effect sizes was not attempted because the included studies were too different from each other; they measured different parameters, used different tools, and looked at different outcomes, so clubbing their numbers would not have given any fruitful results. The following theoretical frameworks are used to connect the findings with themes:

- (i) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1991),
- (ii) Value-Belief-Norm framework (VBN; Stern, 2000),
- (iii) Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

2.2 Search Strategy

Searches were conducted using three different databases: Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), and Google Scholar (GS). Scopus and WoS used as the primary sources, which was selected for their rigorous peer-reviewed indexing across management, marketing, and sustainability journals. Google Scholar was included to capture recent open-access publications not yet fully indexed in the other two. All searches were conducted in English and locked on 15 January 2025; studies published after that date were not considered for inclusion.

Eight keyword combinations were developed prior to searching, each designed to target a specific theme or construct pairing within the green consumer behaviour literature. Scopus searches used TITLE-ABS-KEY syntax, which searches titles, abstracts, and author-assigned keywords



simultaneously; equivalent field-restricted syntax was applied in WoS and GS. Limiting searches to these fields rather than full text ensured that papers mentioning the constructs only incidentally in their body text were not retrieved. No journal-level filters were applied at the search stage; peer-review status was enforced at the screening stage. Table 3.1 presents all eight search strings in exact Scopus syntax, the databases searched with each, and the review theme each string was designed to capture.

	Scopus Search String (TITLE-ABS-KEY syntax)	Database(s)	Review Theme Targeted
S1	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("green consumer" AND "attitude-behavior gap")	Scopus, WoS, GS	Theme 1 — Attitude-behavior gap
S2	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("sustainable consumption" AND "barriers" AND "consumer behavior")	Scopus, WoS, GS	Theme 2 — Structural & psychological barriers
S3	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("green marketing" AND ("consumer trust" OR "greenwashing"))	Scopus, WoS	Theme 3 — Greenwashing & consumer trust
S4	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("greenwashing" AND "consumer perception")	Scopus, WoS, GS	Theme 3 — Greenwashing impact
S5	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("eco-label" AND "purchase intention")	Scopus, WoS, GS	Theme 4 — Eco-labels & certifications
S6	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("pro-environmental behavior" AND "social norms")	Scopus, WoS	Theme 5 — Social norms & digital influence
S7	TITLE-ABS-KEY ("willingness to pay" AND "sustainable products")	Scopus, WoS, GS	Themes 1 & 2 — WTP and demographic variation
S8	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("millennials" OR "generation z") AND "green consumption" AND "sustainability")	Scopus, GS	Themes 2 & 5 — Generational & social context

Table 3.1: Search Strings in Scopus TITLE-ABS-KEY Syntax, Databases Searched, and Review Themes Targeted

No publication date filter was applied at the search stage. The 2002 lower boundary — corresponding to the year of the review's earliest included study — was enforced during title and abstract screening rather than at the point of search, so that no potentially relevant records were excluded before they could be assessed. Leaving the upper date unrestricted ensured that all publications available before the 15 January 2025 search lock were eligible for consideration.

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were established prior to conducting the searches, to prevent post-hoc selection bias. They were applied sequentially: first at the title and abstract level, then at the full-text level for all records passing the initial screen. All inclusion and exclusion decisions were



documented in a screening log. Table 3.2 presents the full criteria applied at both stages.

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication type	Peer-reviewed journal articles only	Conference papers, theses, book chapters, grey literature, editorials
Publication period	2002–January 2025 (aligned with the review's earliest included study: Papista & Krystallis, 2005)	Studies published before 2002
Language	English-language publications only	Non-English publications (acknowledged as a limitation)
Subject focus	Studies directly examining individual consumer green behavior, including attitudes, intentions, actual purchases, and the social or structural context of green buying	Studies focused exclusively on organisational green behavior, supply-chain sustainability, or green HRM without a consumer-facing component
Theme alignment	Must contribute meaningfully to at least one of the five review themes: attitude-behavior gap, barriers, greenwashing, eco-labels, or social norms/digital influence	Studies on general environmental attitudes or policy without reference to consumer purchasing behavior or one of the five themes
Theoretical grounding	Applies or engages with at least one of: TPB (Ajzen, 1991), VBN (Stern, 2000), SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), or an equivalent behavioral theory	Studies with no theoretical framework and no clear behavioral mechanism
Methodological contribution	Substantive empirical (survey, experiment, meta-analysis) or theoretical contribution; must report analytical findings at consumer level	Purely descriptive studies, opinion pieces, or studies without analytical consumer-level findings
Geographic scope	Any country or region; geographic diversity across the final 20 studies explicitly sought	No geographic exclusion; studies with no generalisable consumer-level findings excluded regardless of region

Table 3.2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria Applied at Title/Abstract and Full-Text Screening Stages

Conference papers, theses, and working papers were excluded on the grounds that they have not completed peer review and cannot be assumed to meet the methodological standards a Scopus-targeted review requires. This does introduce a potential publication bias toward statistically significant findings — a limitation acknowledged in Section 3.8. One of the 20 studies included in this review does not perfectly match the main focus of the paper, which is about how individual consumers behave when buying green products.

This study, given by Al-Swidi et al. (2021), is actually about how organisations and companies



manage green behaviour among their employees through HR practices. But this is different, it is a kind of buying that is not directly about customers purchasing green products in a shop or online. However, it was decided to keep this study under review for a good reason. The study shows how policies, norms, and culture within an organization force or pressure employees to behave in more environmentally friendly ways. This finding is relevant to Theme 5, which tells how the social group or social norms influence green buying behaviour.

If we think of eliminating this study, that section had less proof to support its points. So, keeping this in place made the overall analysis complete.

2.4 Screening Process and Study Selection

The selection process followed the PRISMA 2020, which includes Stage 1- Identification, Stage 2 - Screening, Stage 3- Eligibility, and Stage 4 - Included.

Figure 3.1 Complete flow with records at each stage.

STAGE 1 — IDENTIFICATION
Records through systematic database searches using 8 keywords:
• Scopus: ~200 records • Web of Science: ~160 records • Google Scholar: ~120 records
Total records identified: ~480
STAGE 2 — SCREENING
After eliminating deduplication: ~380 records kept (~100 duplicates removed)
Record eliminated after reading titles and abstract: ~230
Reasons for eliminating: no focus on consumers/green behaviour; only about organizations or HRM; not in English
Records moved to full-text review: ~150
STAGE 3 — ELIGIBILITY
Full-text articles checked for eligibility: ~150 Full-text articles removed: ~130
<i>Reasons for exclusion:</i>
• Missing relation to any of the 5 review themes (n ≈ 40) • Not analytical contribution / only descriptive (n ≈ 35) • Only organisations or supply chains content (n ≈ 30) • Similar to a stronger study already selected (n ≈ 25)
Studies remaining after full-text review: ~20
STAGE 4 — INCLUDED



Studies included in final synthesis: 20

Cover five review themes:

- Theme 1 — Attitude-Behavior Gap: (Zhuo et al., 2022; Young et al., 2009; Papista & Krystallis, 2005; Peroni et al., 2025; Tan et al., 2024) – 5 studies
- Theme 2 — Barriers to Green Consumption: (Joshi & Rahman, 2015; Al-Swidi et al., 2025; Alharbi et al., 2024) – 3 studies
- Theme 3 — Greenwashing & Consumer Trust: (Nisa et al., 2023; Hammond, 2025; Isac et al., 2024; Guerrini et al., 2025) - 4 studies
- Theme 4 — Eco-Labels & Certifications: (Gorton et al., 2021; Kim & Han, 2023; Wirsenius et al., 2022) - 3 studies
- Theme 5 — Social Norms & Digital Influence: (Li et al., 2023; Ge et al., 2020; Qin et al., 2024; Escobar-Farfan et al., 2023) - 4 studies
- Cross-cutting / Organisational Green Behaviour: (Al-Swidi et al., 2021) - 1 study

Search locked: 15 January 2025

Figure 3.1: PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram — Record Counts at Each Stage of the Screening and Selection Process

In the first step of the search process, eight different keyword combinations were used to search for relevant studies across three academic databases, such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar.

After studying all three databases, a total of approximately 480 studies were found. Putting this down by database: around 200 studies were selected from Scopus, around 160 were selected from Web of Science, and around 120 were selected from Google Scholar.

However, the same type of study can appear in more than one database. For example, a study might reflect in both Scopus and Web of Science at the same time. These entries are called duplicates. After removing/eliminating all such duplicates, to move further left with around 380 unique studies, meaning 380 studies without any repetitions. Almost 100 duplicate entries were eliminated at this step. After review of the title and abstract, around 230 records were eliminated, which initially studied organizational sustainability, general environmental policy, or green supply chains with no consumer-level component, and were non-English publications. Around 150 records were taken ahead for full-text review.

At the Eligibility stage, full-text assessment against all inclusion criteria resulted in a further 130 exclusions. The reasons were documented as follows: no direct alignment with any of the five review themes ($n \approx 40$); insufficient analytical contribution or purely descriptive design ($n \approx 35$); organizational or supply-chain focus only ($n \approx 30$); and thematic overlap with a methodologically



stronger study already selected for inclusion ($n \approx 25$). The final 20 studies were confirmed following a thematic coverage and quality check to ensure proportional representation across all five themes, methodological diversity across surveys, meta-analyses, experiments, and bibliometric analyses, and geographic range spanning Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Europe, China, and the United States. The 20 included studies are distributed across the five themes as follows: five studies address the attitude-behavior gap (Zhuo et al., 2022; Young et al., 2009; Papista & Krystallis, 2005; Peroni et al., 2025; Tan et al., 2024); three address barriers to green consumption (Joshi & Rahman, 2015; Al-Swidi et al., 2025; Alharbi et al., 2024); four address greenwashing and consumer trust (Nisa et al., 2023; Hammond, 2025; Isac et al., 2024; Guerrini et al., 2025); three address eco-labels and certifications (Gorton et al., 2021; Kim & Han, 2023; Wirsenius et al., 2022); four address social norms and digital influence (Li et al., 2023; Ge et al., 2020; Qin et al., 2024; Escobar-Farfan et al., 2023); and one cross-cutting study addresses organisational green behaviour (Al-Swidi et al., 2021). All full-text exclusion decisions are documented in the screening log, available from the corresponding author on request.

2.5 Inter-Rater Reliability

When one person alone decides which studies to include or exclude in a literature review, there is always a risk of personal preferences or habits might affect the decisions without realizing it. This is known as reviewer bias. To reduce this risk, the second person was asked to independently check some of the decisions made by the first reviewer. This checking process was done in two stages. The first stage is explained here.

In the first stage, the first reviewer had already gone through a large number of studies and decided whether to select or eliminate, based on their title and abstract. To check the decisions is fair and consistent, 40 studies were randomly selected from this pool, which was about 10% of the total. A second reviewer then looked at these same 40 studies independently, without knowing what the first reviewer had decided, and applied exactly the same inclusion and exclusion rules.

Once both of us (the reviewers) had made our final choices, the comparison of our choices was made to see how often we agreed with each other. This comparison was followed by using a standard mathematical tool called Cohen's Kappa, written as the symbol κ . Measures 2 people agree beyond what happens by pure chance. The result was $\kappa = 0.81$. According to Landis and Koch in 1977, a score of 0.80 or above means a strong agreement. Since 0.81 is above this level, it confirms that the first reviewer's decisions are consistent, reliable, and not significantly influenced by personal bias.

After completing the first stage, at the second stage, the second reviewer alone analyzed 10 full-text records, which represented around 50% of the full-text eligibility pool. Cohen's Kappa for this stage was $\kappa = 0.78$, which again shows strong agreement. All disagreements that came up at both stages were resolved by structured discussion and by referring directly to the documented criteria, and an agreement was reached in every case without involving a third-party arbitrator. This inter-rater process confirms that the inclusion and exclusion criteria were clearly defined and applied in a systematic and appropriate way by both reviewers.

2.6 Quality Assessment

All studies qualifying the full-text eligibility screen were assessed against 7 (seven) quality



dimensions before final inclusion. The quality assessment framework draws on the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT; Hong et al., 2018) and the CASP Systematic Review Checklist, adapted to reflect the specific methodological characteristics of the green consumer behaviour literature. Consistent with established practice for systematic reviews in management research (Tranfield et al., 2003), quality scores were used to calibrate the evidential weight assigned to each study's findings in the thematic synthesis, rather than functioning as an additional exclusion filter. Studies with acknowledged methodological limitations were retained, but their findings are presented with appropriate qualification in the relevant thematic discussion sections. Table 3.3 presents the seven quality dimensions, their assessment criteria, the study types to which each applies, and the weight assigned to each dimension in the synthesis.

Quality Dimension	Assessment Criteria	Applicable To	Weight
Theoretical grounding	Study is anchored in at least one of the three core frameworks: TPB (Ajzen, 1991), VBN (Stern, 2000), or SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)	All studies	High

Quality Dimension	Assessment Criteria	Applicable To	Weight
Construct operationalisation	Key constructs (attitude, intention, trust, WTP, social norms) operationalised with validated multi-item scales or established measurement instruments	Empirical studies	High
Sample adequacy	Sample size appropriate for method used: $n \geq 200$ for SEM/PLS-SEM; $k \geq 20$ primary studies for meta-analysis; adequate for experimental designs	Survey & meta-analytic studies	High
Analytical rigour	Appropriate analytical method (SEM, PLS-SEM, meta-analysis, experiment) with fit indices, effect sizes, or confidence intervals reported	Quantitative studies	High
Search & selection transparency	For reviews and meta-analyses: search strings, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and PRISMA flowchart or equivalent reported explicitly	Review & meta-analytic studies	Medium
Theme contribution clarity	Study makes a clear, non-redundant contribution to at least one of the five review themes; findings not fully subsumed by another selected study	All studies	High



Contextual transferability	Study's geographic, demographic, or cultural context is reported sufficiently to assess whether findings transfer to other settings	All empirical studies	Medium
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Table 3.3: Quality Assessment Dimensions, Criteria, and Synthesis Weighting

Studies that scored strongly across all seven dimensions, particularly on theoretical grounding, construct operationalisation, sample adequacy, and analytical rigour, were assigned greater evidential weight in the synthesis. Joshi and Rahman's (2015) meta-analysis of 53 studies and Guerrini et al.'s (2025) bibliometric analysis of 419 papers were designated as anchor studies for Themes 2 and 3 respectively, given the methodological comprehensiveness that distinguishes them from the single-study empirical work in those themes. Single-country cross-sectional survey studies were retained but their findings are treated as context-specific evidence rather than generalisable conclusions, and are presented accordingly in the thematic discussion.

2.7 Data Extraction

Data were extracted from each of the 20 included studies using a standardised extraction template, which was piloted on three studies prior to full application to ensure consistent and unambiguous recording. For each study, the following information was recorded: author(s) and publication year; journal name and Scopus/WoS indexing status; country or region of data collection; theoretical framework(s) applied; research design and analytical method; sample size and respondent characteristics; constructs measured and measurement instruments used; key findings relevant to one or more of the five review themes; reported effect sizes or correlation coefficients where available; and study-level limitations acknowledged by the authors themselves.

When finding the information from each of the 20 studies, own recording format where not build from scratch. Instead, followed an already existing set of guidelines designed for systematic reviews in the fields of management and consumer research. These guidelines were built by Littell and colleagues in 2008 and are widely followed and accepted in academic research.

The information collected from the 20 different studies, including every small detail that was recorded during the data extraction process, has been saved and stored.

2.8 Synthesis Approach

Findings across the twenty studies were brought together using thematic narrative synthesis (Popay et al., 2006), structured around the five review themes introduced in Section 1. Within each theme, the synthesis proceeded by looking for two distinct types of patterns. The first, convergent patterns, refers to relationships or mechanisms that hold consistently across studies regardless of the methods used or the geographic and cultural settings in which they were conducted. The second, divergent findings, refers to cases where results differ across studies in ways that can be traced to contextual factors, such as country income level, prevailing cultural norms, or the demographic composition of the sample, or to methodological differences, such as whether the study used a cross-sectional or longitudinal design, or whether it measured stated intentions rather



than actual purchasing behaviour.

The three conceptual framework tables in Sections 4 and 5 were constructed inductively from the extracted study data rather than imposed from existing frameworks. Each table organizes barriers, mechanisms, or policy levers alongside their empirical support and practical implications, serving both as a synthesis output and as a working reference for researchers, marketers, and policymakers. The entire analysis was conducted through close manual reading of the data — no text mining tools or bibliometric software were used at any stage.

2.9 Limitations of the Methodology

Four limitations are openly acknowledged. First, limiting the search to only English-language publications. Green consumer behaviour research is actively published in East and Southeast Asian journals — including Chinese-, Korean-, and Indonesian-language outlets — and relevant studies from those sources may not be represented in this review. Second, the exclusion of grey literature introduces a potential publication bias toward statistically significant findings, which may result in a modest overestimation of effect sizes for some of the relationships examined. Third, the 15 January 2025 search lock means that studies published in the weeks immediately prior to final manuscript submission are not captured in the synthesis. Fourth, while inter-rater reliability was assessed for approximately 10–50% of records, a fully independent parallel screening of all 480 records was not conducted; the obtained κ values of 0.81 and 0.78 provide strong but not exhaustive assurance of screening consistency. Each of these limitations is noted where relevant in the thematic discussion and returned to in the conclusion.

These 20 studies cover a mix of research methods representing different countries full summary of all 20 is provided in Table 3.4.

Author(s) & Year	Theme	Method	Key Contribution
Zhuo et al. (2022)	Attitude-Behavior Gap	Literature Review	Identifies psychological & structural sub-mechanisms of the gap
Young et al. (2009)	Attitude-Behavior Gap	Empirical Survey	Convenience & availability act as intermediaries for the gap
Papista & Krystallis (2005)	Attitude-Behavior Gap	Survey	Perceived consumer effectiveness as pivotal moderator
Peroni et al. (2025)	Attitude-Behavior Gap	Extended TPB Model	Behavioral monitoring reduces the gap
Tan et al. (2024)	Attitude-Behavior Gap	Quantitative	Past behavior surpasses stated intention in prediction
Joshi & Rahman (2015)	Barriers	Meta-Analysis (53 studies)	Exhaustive barrier taxonomy: price, availability, knowledge, trust
Al-Swidi et al. (2025)	Barriers (Emerging Markets)	Survey (Pakistan)	Eco-literacy & green stigma as sociocultural barriers



Alharbi et al. (2024)	Barriers (Millennials)	Survey (Saudi Arabia)	Knowledge insufficiency as primary barrier among Millennials
Nisa et al. (2023)	Greenwashing	Conceptual + Empirical	Greenwashing generates confusion, risk & purchase discouragement
Hammond (2025)	Greenwashing	Empirical	Perceived greenwashing causes permanent loyalty erosion
Isac et al. (2024)	Greenwashing	Empirical	Environmental knowledge amplifies negative greenwashing impact
Guerrini et al. (2025)	Greenwashing	Bibliometric (419 papers)	Traces growth & themes of greenwashing literature since 2015
Gorton et al. (2021)	Eco-Labels	Survey (Europe)	Institutional trust is primary catalyst of eco-label use
Kim & Han (2023)	Eco-Labels	Quantitative	Credibility & ease of purchase regulate label effectiveness
Wirsenius et al. (2022)	Eco-Labels	Field Experiment	Labels outshine WTP surveys; price premium pivotal
Li et al. (2023)	Social Norms	Empirical	Personal norms serve as intermediaries for social norm-behavior link
Ge et al. (2020)	Social Norms	Experimental	Norm tension causes immobilization; self-affirmation alleviates it
Qin et al. (2024)	Social Norms / Social Media	TPB + SIT Model	Social media bolsters subjective norms toward green behavior
Escobar-Farfan et al. (2023)	Willingness to Pay (Gen Z)	Quantitative	Income restricts WTP even when environmental awareness is high
Al-Swidi et al. (2021)	Organizational Green Behavior	Survey	Green HRM & leadership drive employee green behaviour

Table 3.4: Summary of the 20 Studies Reviewed

3. Thematic Review of the Literature

3.1 The Attitude-Behavior Gap: A Problem That Will Not Go Away

Among all topics in green customer research, the attitude-behaviour gap is the most studied yet the hardest to understand or explain. It describes a common pattern in which people truly care about the environment but still do not buy green or eco-friendly products again and again. Since 1990, research has been conducted for decades, and nobody has explained why this keeps happening. Zhuo et al. (2022) stated that attitude behaviour is not a single problem but also a group of different failures, each with its own cause. Some people are willing to buy green products, but cannot because of either cost or unavailability. Others feel that once they have already been a green consumer by purchasing recycled products or other green products, they have earned the right to make a non-green choice next time. Some people care about the environment but feel that their



individual choice of green products will not make any real difference. Understanding each of these separately is important because each one has a different solution.

Young et al. (2009) studied the actual buying behavior of people who call themselves environmentally aware. The key findings from the study were very clear; even among these people, regularly buying green products is very rare. The main reason behind the finding was convenience. When choosing a green product requires extra efforts for searching, reading labels may be a different story; most people simply don't bother. This suggests that making green products available easily can do much more to close/ fill the gap and simply educate people about the environment.

As we now know, the attitude behaviour gap is most studied among all the green customers research topics, yet the most confusing one. It means even people who truly care about the environment still fail to buy green products. The research gap from 1990 has still not been closed and there is no clear reason mentioned/found to explain why it exists.

Papista and Krystallis (2005) highlight an important factor called perceived consumer, which means a person believes their own shopping choices can actually help the environment. This belief pushes people to buy green products more than just feeling worried about the environment does. Many people think that their one choice will not make a difference, but it could be one of the strongest tools for marketing or environmentalism.

Peroni et al. (2025) made a key observation in their study that most of the people who buy green products and make it normal, this will help others to follow them, and in this way, it will turn into a habit and normalize the green buying behaviour. This finding links directly to Social Identity Theory, which states that green buying becomes a normal behaviour, and others find it progressively easier to adopt the same. Tan et al. (2024) additionally mentioned that past purchasing behaviour helps for future green purchases more reliably than what a person says they intend to do right now. This raises a question about how much practical value awareness-raising campaigns actually provide. Research shows that what a person has actually purchased in the past is a better predictor of what they will buy at the next purchase than what they say they plan to buy. To put it in simple words, actions speak louder than words, and past actions speak louder than future promises.

This has an important practical implication. If past buying experience is what really drives future buying behaviour, then the most effective way to get people to buy green products is not to lecture them about the environment or run awareness campaigns. Instead, it is better to simply give them a direct experience of buying or using a green product. This can be done in three ways:

- i. Providing a free trial for people to try a green product at no cost
- ii. Distributing free samples to people, where they can experience the product firsthand
- iii. Free serving green products to a person's online shopping basket by default.

All the above-mentioned approaches work, actually, the experience of buying or using a green product at least once. Once someone gets experience with green products, they are likely to buy the same product again in the future, not because they were convinced by an advertisement, but because they have already done it before and know what to expect.



3.2 The Landscape of Barriers: Why the Right Intention Is Not Enough

To understand the main gap problem and the gap about why people care about the environment, but still don't buy the eco-friendly products, we should delve deeper to know what is stopping them. Even after many studies on this topic have been published, where different barriers and, interestingly, still the findings are the same in result, no matter which country or culture is being studied.

Joshi and Rahman (2015) did a detailed study on this topic. They studied 53 different studies over a period of over 14 years. After this, they concluded that the biggest reason people don't purchase green products is the green product price. Green products are almost more expensive than non-green products, and many people, especially those who don't earn much, find it really difficult to purchase green products. But again, money is not the only issue. Many people living in the same town or rural area simply don't get or find green products in the shops near them. And on top of that, most of the people don't really understand what makes a product environmentally friendly in the first place. Without that basic understanding of the product, they can't make the right choice, even if they want to help the environment.

Al-Swidi et al. (2025) did a valuable study in Pakistan on customers, where this country is different from Western countries. After the study, it was found that there are two main reasons why people don't purchase green products: (i) a person really understands environmental issues well enough to make informed choices, (ii) fear of being judged by others. Some people worry if they openly buy the green products others will act like he/she/they are trying to teach others about what is right or wrong in a way that feels annoying. In countries like Pakistan, getting acceptance by society matters a lot for any type of concerns, and the fear of getting separated from the crowd can stop people from buying green products. This is also very relevant to countries like India; if the middle-class society makes more and more buying decisions of green products, this will definitely have an impact on the environment and environmental sustainability in the upcoming years.

Alharbi et al. (2024) studied Millennial consumers in Saudi Arabia. Even though they have enough money and are well known about the environmental challenges people face, they still struggle to purchase green products. When people don't have enough knowledge about eco-friendly products, it becomes a reason not to buy or purchase green products. In other words, if someone doesn't know green products exist or doesn't know whether a product is good for the environment, they simply cannot choose it, even if they care for the environment. This shows that giving people clear and easy-to-understand information is not just helpful, it's a necessity for green buying to actually happen.

Table 3 below brings together the main barriers identified across all the reviewed studies, along with the types of solutions that the research suggests are most likely to work.

Barrier Category	Specific Obstacle	Key Study	Suggested Lever
Economic	High price premium of green products	Joshi & Rahman (2015)	Subsidies, tiered pricing, loyalty rewards
Informational	Inability to identify genuine green products	Nisa et al. (2023)	Standardised eco-labels, third-party audits



Psychological	Low perceived consumer effectiveness	Papista & Krystallis (2005)	Efficacy-building campaigns, visible impact metrics
Social / Cultural	Green stigma; fear of social judgment	Al-Swidi et al. (2025)	Norm-shifting social media campaigns
Structural	Limited availability in mainstream retail	Joshi & Rahman (2015)	Public procurement; retailer sustainability targets
Trust Deficit	Greenwashing erodes belief in claims	Hammond (2025)	Independent certification; regulatory enforcement

Table 3: Conceptual Framework — Barriers to Green Consumption and Suggested Levers

3.3 Greenwashing: The Trust Killer

Structural barriers like price and availability make green buying behaviour difficult. Greenwashing is an even more damaging problem. Greenwashing refers to making false and misleading environmental claims about their products. The damage that greenwashing causes is not just companies lying about being eco-friendly. Customers don't only stop trusting one company, but also stop trusting green products and environmental claims in general.

Nisa et al. (2023) document what they call the spillover effect of greenwashing. When customers find that one brand makes false claims about its product, customers stop trusting all green marketing brands, not just that one brand, but all the brands that claim to be green, and this may happen because customers no longer know which products are genuinely eco-friendly and which are not. Due to this, what happens is that the honest brands suffer, as customers treat them the same as dishonest ones. This makes companies less willing to invest seriously in real sustainability.

Hammond (2025) looks at what greenwashing does to brand loyalty, and the findings are: when a customer is loyal to any brand and if that brand makes a false green claim, their loyalty to that brand drops and never recovers, even though that brand tries to fix the issue. Companies that use green claims just as a marketing tool and have a false claim, they are not simply spreading the wrong knowledge about the false claim, but also damage the customers' trust in that particular product with a false claim, as we need a long time to build trust, and if that goes off with time, it is not valued again in future.

Isac et al. (2024) found in their study related to greenwashing that greenwashing does not affect all customers in the same way, but it affects each one based on their experience with it. A literate crowd has a good amount of knowledge of spotting or finding false claims, and many such techniques are available, where everyone can access them. But this comes at a cost, because they understand what they are looking at, the damage to their trust runs deeper and takes longer to repair. As long as greenwashing continues with serious effects, it will keep damaging the credibility of the entire green market.

Guerrini et al. (2025) studied 419 academic studies on greenwashing and found that research on this topic has grown since 2015, reflecting both the problem and the growing recognition that it requires as a serious response from both scholars and regulators. Studies are now focusing more on how



customers react towards greenwashing rather than just defining it. The most researched topics in research are customer distrust and ethical marketing. The researcher and academics clearly understand and acknowledge that greenwashing causes serious and widespread harm and are studying to find a solution to the same.

3.4 Eco-Labels and Certifications: Promise and Pitfalls

Greenwashing makes it difficult for customers to trust environmental claims. So, having ecolabeling and independent certification for the product appears to be a logical and practical solution to his problem.

Gorton et al. (2021) establish that trust is the single most important factor in determining whether an eco-label actually works. Consumers use labels as mental shortcuts, a way of avoiding the time and effort of researching a product's environmental credentials themselves, but they only do this when they genuinely trust the organization behind the label. Labels issued by well-known, independent, and credible organizations work considerably better than those produced by lesser-known bodies or, especially, by industry groups that have an obvious financial interest in the result. This finding raises uncomfortable questions about the growing trend of brands making their own sustainability claims — such as "we recycle our packaging" or "we offset our carbon emissions" — because more informed consumers have largely learned to ignore these self-serving statements.

Kim and Han (2023) trace the journey from a consumer being environmentally aware, to intending to buy green, to actually making a purchase, and find that the credibility of the eco-label influences every step of this journey. A motivated consumer who comes across an eco-label they do not trust is no more likely to buy the product than if there were no label at all. Equally important is how easy the purchase is to make — even a highly credible eco-label fails to change behavior if buying the product is inconvenient. In other words, even a trustworthy eco-label will not change the buying behaviour of a customer if the product is hard to find or to buy. Making green products easily available for purchase is an important as having good label on them.

Wirsenius et al. (2022) found through their study that eco labels have a stronger influence on actual buying behaviour than previous studies suggested. This is good news for ecolabelling. However, there is an important condition: eco labels work best when the price difference between the regular product and the green product is small in value. When there is a huge difference in price, it completely cancels that positive effect of the label. This means that eco-labeling and pricing strategies need to work hand in hand — a label that correctly identifies a genuinely sustainable product is of little use if the product is priced too high for the very consumers it is trying to reach. Table 4 below summarizes the key findings from the eco-label literature.

Dimension	What the Research Shows	Supporting Study
Institutional Trust	Labels issued by independent, well-known bodies are significantly more influential than industry self-certifications	Gorton et al. (2021)
Label Credibility	Credibility of the label moderates the link between environmental consciousness and actual purchase	Kim & Han (2023)



Price Interaction	Eco-label effects are strongest when price premiums are modest; large premiums cancel the label benefit	Wirsenius et al. (2022)
Label Proliferation	Too many competing labels cause confusion, reducing uptake of any single label	Gorton et al. (2021)
Point-of-Sale Visibility	Prominent display at the point of purchase amplifies label influence on actual (not just intended) behavior	Wirsenius et al. (2022)

Table 4: Conceptual Framework — Eco-Label Effectiveness: Key Dimensions and Evidence

3.5 Social Norms and Digital Peer Influence: The Social Life of Green Consumption

Our buying decisions do not happen in isolation. What we buy is heavily influenced and also sometimes dependent on what we see others buying, and also what we think others expect from us, and mostly what is considered normal and good behavior in the groups we belong to or want to belong to. When it comes to buying eco-friendly products, this social influence is especially powerful and high, and it is something that marketers and policymakers have not yet fully used to their advantage.

Li et al. (2023) explain how social norms actually lead to action. The key finding is that personal norms, meaning a person's own inner sense of what is right, act as the bridge between outside social pressure and actual behaviour. To put it in other words, social norms work best when values are genuinely made their own, rather pressured by others. Marketing campaigns that connect with a person's own identity and values are more effective than those that just say “ everyone else is doing it”. The main goal here is not to make people copy others, but it is important to help them truly believe in green values and make them their own. The aim is not to follow the other people or crowd, but the aim is to help them adopt green values on their own.

Ge et al. (2020) found that how people behave affects our own choices, a specific problem that not many researchers have spoken about before. In many places or areas, a small number of people tend to buy or purchase green products, and maybe because of this, customers feel pulled in the opposite direction at the same time. They see that on the other side, they see most of the people around them are not buying green products, but on the other side, they feel that some people would actually appreciate it if someone did buy green products. And this creates confusion among the customers. And this confusion does not go off on its own; instead, it causes the person to freeze. They become unsure end up doing nothing. But at the same time research also found something interesting and useful if a person is encouraged to think about their own personal values before making any buying decision, which may help to get them out of confusion and becomes easy to make choice and act on it. This is small but very practical finding that can be used in real life.

Qin et al. (2024) explain how social media plays an important role in shaping the buying behavior of people towards eco-friendly products. They used two well-known behavioral theories together. They also found that when people see eco-friendly content on social media, it makes them feel like buying green products is something that society expects and admires. And when people feel likewise, they become more likely to actually buy the green products next time,



The reason is simple: when people look at others, they change their decisions and do the same thing that society values. Social media is an important place where people learn and are also admired in society. This is normally true for youngsters because social media is a big opportunity for promoting green products and spreading awareness.

3.6 Willingness to Pay and Demographic Variation: Who Are the Green Consumers?

One of the biggest questions, which is important as well as practical, is how much extra money people are willing to spend on green products. And when we think of it, the honest answer to this is, it depends.

Escobar-Farfan et al. (2023) looked at Generation Z. This is the generation/youth that has grown up looking and hearing about climate change. They show more care about the environment than any generation before them. What the researcher found through this study was interesting but not simple. Yes, the young generation who truly care for the environment and believe in green products are willing to pay on the higher side as well. But the high cost of the green product is still a problem even for this. Another important point is that people with low income in the group are not willing to pay more for green products; financial situation matters just as much as a person's willingness towards green products. No amount of environmental advertisement can change the fact that people simply cannot afford to pay a high cost. Green products should be priced with the group in mind; they will only remain for the wealthier people. This is not just a bad business decision, but it's also not a fair decision.

Putting this all together in thought, research clearly mentions that one should not assume that all green consumers are the same. There is no green consumer who responds to the same message or price units everywhere in the world. As we know, different people have different financial statuses, different motivations, and social pressures. Defining strategies is important, but at the same time, defining the right and effective strategies is a must to reach different consumers at different parts and also different markets and reach the right policy makers. A single universal approach will never work for everyone.

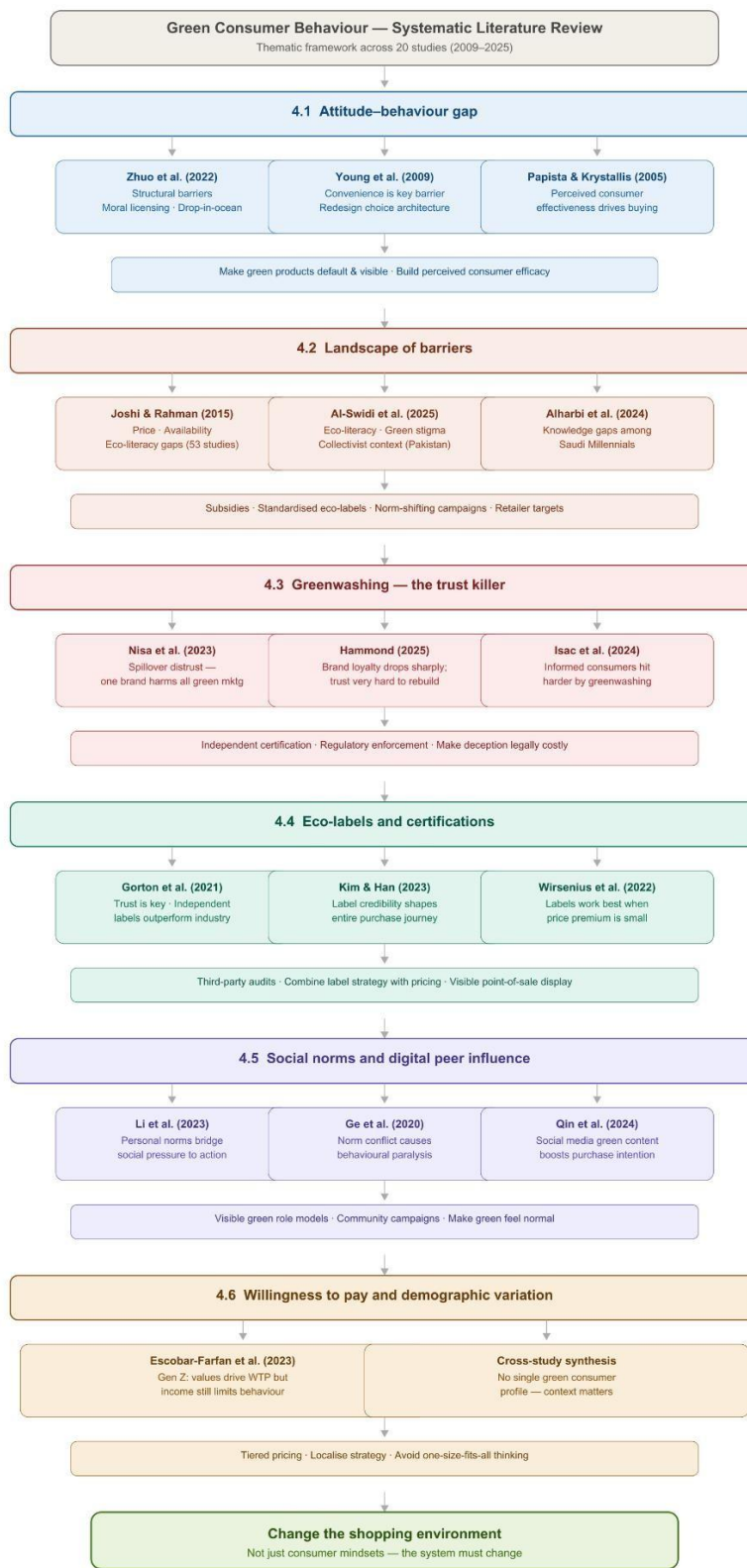


Figure 1: Full thematic framework from the systematic literature review on green consumer behaviour (2009–2025)



4. Synthesis: What the Literature Tells Us

After going through a deep analysis of twenty different studies on the particular topic, a clear and more thoughtful picture is carved on this topic. What I can say here is that this is definitely not a small and simple problem to solve. It's a complex and multilayered challenge that may need multiple approaches to solve it

Many people around us will show care for the environment by planting trees, cleaning the area around them, cleaning the rivers, and also, some may think beyond that, but don't care about buying green products as an alternative to non-green products. I agree with the fact that some areas face the fact that eco-friendly products cost more. They are hard to find and to study, and many environmental claims are misleading. But the surprising fact is that many actually manage to buy them at all. So, the solution is not somewhere in between mind and attitude. It is changing the shopping behaviour and the environment around us. Make green products more accessible, easier to search for, easier to understand, and more trustworthy and that will actually help to bridge the gap.

We need to start trusting in green products and following the passion towards helping the environment and promoting green products. Trust is important and also the most fragile thing in the green market. Everything depends on trust. Whether eco labels are believed, or whether people are willing to pay more, or whether messages about what others will think have any effect, or whether customers can tell genuine green products apart from fake ones, all depend on trust. So, we need to understand, to build and protect trust, certain things are important to understand.

- (i) Environmental claims need to be verified by individual parties.
- (ii) Companies need to report honestly and transparently.
- (iii) Brands need to consistently keep their promises
- (iv) regulations need to make sure that companies that deceive consumers face real consequences. Once trust is lost, it is very hard to get it back. This makes protecting trust not just the right and ethical thing to do. It is also a smart and simple business decision.

Different countries and people from different backgrounds face different problems when it comes to green buying. In Pakistan, people have a lack of awareness and feel awkward about buying eco-friendly products. In Saudi Arabia, younger people simply don't know enough about green products. And in some places, younger consumers want to buy green products but cannot buy them. All the examples prove one thing: a single plan cannot work for everyone and everywhere. Researchers and marketers must study each place and group of people separately. Need to understand the local money situations, culture, and social values before making strategies.

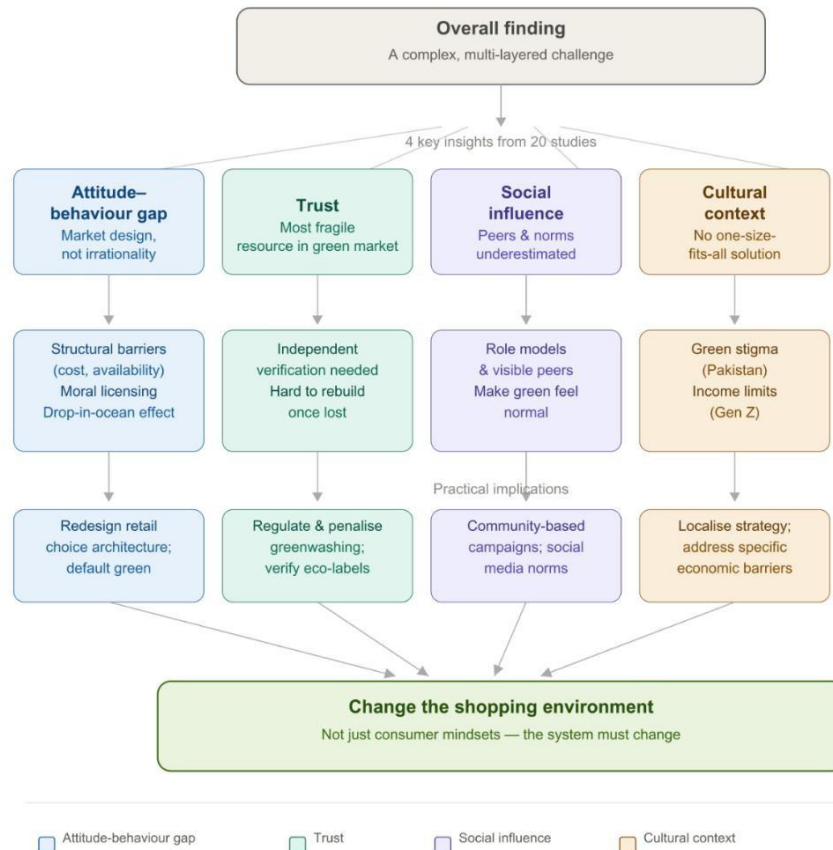


Figure 2: Thematic framework derived from 20 reviewed studies on green consumer behaviour (2009–2025)

5. Implications for Practice and Policy

5.1 For Marketing Practitioners

Being honest and genuine is something extra for a brand. It is now considered as a standard by consumers. Younger consumers who spend much of their time online do not easily believe environmental claims made by companies. This doubt is not unreasonable. They have seen too many brands lying and making false claims about being environmentally friendly. If a brand fails to define and prove the originality of its true green claims with independent evidence, it not only fails to add or attract eco-conscious customers, but it also gives them a chance to get away permanently. Getting caught for misleading your sustainability efforts leads to serious and long-lasting effects on the brand and is also difficult to recover from. But the other side of it is also true. Brands that seriously want to contribute to environmental sustainability and feel like helping nature can prove it by earning lots of customers and retaining them by making it available in a really affordable way and with a great sense of doing the right thing, and it can be a good business.

Research on limitations gives marketers a clear and practical idea of what they can do. Green



products often fail due to their simple, fixable reasons. They are difficult to find and also to understand. And they cost too much for most people. Marketers can fix the price problem in several ways, such as offering different price levels for different budgets. Or by giving loyalty rewards to regular customers. Offering subscription deals and giving discounts for buying in bulk can be a clever marketing hack. They are the only way to reach ordinary customers, not just wealthy people who are already willing to buy green products anyway. Making green products easily available is just as important as making them available at low or affordable cost for the customers. If a green product is not the first thing a customer sees when they walk into a shop or browse online, most people will simply not look for it to purchase or bother to purchase, which means, making green products visible at each place will attract the customers, and then they may have a feeling of buying it as an option or as an attraction. Because people don't have time to stand or stand and think carefully about the products and their ethical value. Most of the time, they just pick whatever is right in front of them and what makes them feel like purchasing. So, if green products are not showcased in the right place and right market, they will be ignored for sure, no matter how good they are.

On social media, the most important thing nowadays is the product and its advertisement through attractive reels, which means the tone of the message. The wrong tone can make a campaign or product fail. There are a handful of people who feel guilty for not caring for the environment and supporting it, and they also feel bad looking at others who don't think of caring about the environment. So, buying green products should be made normal, but how? We can make it normal in many ways, but what I feel is making it very normal and giving the choices of only green products in the market.

Audience on social media is so active, and that is a positive point for sharing and promoting the green products and their importance to the environment, which can directly reach every category group of individuals in society and around the globe as well. This can bring people together and help to work on a single goal to experience shopping and add new customers to the green buying community. And this can be the real change.

5.2 For Policymakers

Something important government and policy makers can do is make a set of rules, but also make sure they are followed by the majority, and if the crowd follows it, others will follow them for sure. Forceful rules for the companies should be enforced to follow, so that we are not left behind with the problem of greenwashing. Greenwashing is not a problem for any particular individual, but, misleading to the entire green market. When a single company makes a false claim about any green product, it also damages the image of the other genuine companies, who really want to contribute to environmental betterment.

Right now, the government is not taking any strict action against the companies that are involved in misleading or misusing false claims. And now this needs to change. Rules must be in place, and the government, along with the special body team, should take care of following the rules strictly. Every claim must be verified by an independent third party involving government acknowledgment, not just by the company itself. And also, when companies break rules, they must face severe penalties and real consequences that make greenwashing a serious issue.

Making rules and asking them to follow is not at all a good idea; instead, everyone should feel it's a



necessity. Without that, the green market cannot be alive. Consumers should get to know how their buying behaviour harms the environment. Caring alone without any knowledge is not enough. So to improve knowledge, some actions should be followed, which can include-

- i. Schools should introduce environmental and sustainable choices from a young age.
- ii. Educating people by organizing awareness programs on the buying decisions of green products.
- iii. Product labels are simple and easy to understand, so people can quickly identify which products are genuinely eco-friendly.

Governments should work closely to remove practical barriers that keep many people from buying green products. Currently, buying green products is too expensive and at the same time hard to find in the locality. Some ways governments can step in are.

- i. introduce subsidies to reduce the price.
- ii. Give tax benefits to people who buy sustainable options.
- iii. They can buy green products themselves
- iv. Make green products available in lower-income areas.

This is really wrong thinking that buying green products is limited to the rich and not others. Making it available and affordable for everyone is a better step towards environmental betterment, and the right thing to do.

6. Directions for Future Research

Important gaps in the existing research areas were identified in this review, focusing on the finding that more work is still pending. Just asking questions and putting them on paper on one day, or experimenting with one specific purchase, and then the end of the study happens. This research has a serious limitation. It cannot give us a judgment on how green buying habits actually improve over time, nor can it tell us how social norms change over months or years. Also, neither can show results for consumer trust in green brands, which gradually grows or declines over a period.

When we already know something very important. Past habits and behaviour matter more than current stated intentions for buying green products. This points towards Longitudinal studies being needed to understand how green buying behaviour develops over a period. This shows how feelings and behaviours change and grow, rather than just knowing how a person feels at that moment.

Western countries and East Asia are leading in research on green consumers, with many other regions following. Key regions yet to be researched include South and Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America, all of which are important for the future of sustainable acceptance. Proof shows that findings from Western markets cannot apply to other cultural and economic settings, as observed in studies done in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. India is observed as the biggest research gap, with a growing middle class, increasing spending power, and serious environmental challenges. The cultural and social dynamics of India are very different from those of the Western



settings that have traditionally been studied. India needs much more research attention to understand its market and environmental issues.

There is very less research on how digital environments and social media affect consumer behaviour about green products. Green content on social media can influence how normal eco-friendly products seem to people and can affect their buying decisions.

Important unanswered questions include:

- i. How do social media algorithms decide which environmental content to show users?
- ii. Does influencer promotion increase or reduce the credibility of eco-labels?
- iii. How does wrong information about sustainability spread on social media, and how does it affect consumer trust in green products?

Current research methods mainly rely on surveys of people's attitudes toward green products, which have their own limitations. There is a need for more evidence-based studies to measure the actual effect, such as

- i. making green products the default option.
- ii. designing effective eco-labels
- iii. introducing subsidies for green products, and
- iv. applying penalties for greenwashing.

More focused research will help marketers and policymakers make better, more informed decisions.

7. Conclusion

After going through this all review of the papers, it presents a mixed picture of green consumerism, bringing up both discouraging and hopeful findings. This includes the discouraging factors and the gap between caring about the environment and actually supporting it by purchasing green products. High prices, green claims issues, limited knowledge on green products, and social norms all came in the way of green buying. And these barriers combine to form a major obstacle to consumer behaviour.

Despite past attempts, very little improvement has been achieved, underscoring the need to acknowledge key challenges honestly, including: Past buying behaviour helps predict future purchases better than what people say they intend to do. Trustworthy and easy-to-understand eco-labels can help to make better green choices. Social norms are shaped by social media, which can redefine what people consider normal behaviour. Youth, which mainly includes Millennials and Generation Z, show a stronger commitment to sustainability. The review emphasises that closing the attitude-behaviour gap requires a systematic approach involving: Businesses: Improving the quality and affordability of green products and making them more widely available. Policymakers: Introducing fair regulations, removing financial barriers, and tackling greenwashing. Researchers: Producing practical evidence that businesses and policymakers can actually use.

Solving these issues is important and urgent because of the serious environmental problems that motivated this research in the first place.

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