

DECODING GENERATION Z'S RESPONSES TO GREEN ADVERTISING: A NARRATIVE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The increasing environmental concerns have heightened the significance of sustainable consumption and green advertising, particularly among Generation Z. This study seeks to review and investigate existing research on Generation Z's perceptions, attitudes, and behavioural responses to green advertising. By employing a narrative review approach, relevant peer-reviewed studies on green advertising and Gen Z consumers were systematically examined. The findings indicate that although Generation Z demonstrates a strong orientation toward sustainability, but in certain cases their acceptance of green advertising is highly selective and depends largely on the credibility, transparency, and authenticity of the message. Environmental knowledge, personal values, social norms, digital literacy, trust in brands, and positive digital brand experiences emerge as key drivers of green purchase intention. Additionally, emerging trends such as generative AI, halal-green positioning, and interactive digital content shape Gen Z's engagement with sustainable advertising. Overall, the review suggests that green advertising can effectively promote sustainable consumption among Generation Z only when it is supported by genuine sustainability practices and credible communication, thereby contributing to responsible consumption aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 12.

Keywords: Green Advertising, Sustainability, Generation Z, Green Washing

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, growing concern for environmental sustainability has shifted consumer preferences, resulting in a heightened demand for eco-friendly products. Green advertising, which highlights the environmental advantages of products, has become a significant tool for influencing consumer intentions and promoting sustainable consumption (Dongqin Li, 2025). Diving deeper into its meaning, the term "green" reflects a strong concern for environmental conservation and promotes a lifestyle that minimizes harm to nature, emphasizing the protection of the Earth, human well-being, and animal life (Iyer & Banerjee, 1993). Building on this perspective, green advertising represents an evolving marketing communication strategy through which green values are systematically incorporated into promotional practices. It involves the use of messages that highlight natural and environmentally friendly attributes to appeal to consumers who are increasingly concerned about environmental issues (Zinkhan & Carlson, 1995).

In today's industry, green marketing has become an important trend because consumers are increasingly conscious of environmental issues such as climate change, pollution, and resource depletion. This encouraged companies to adopt green marketing strategies to attract

these environmentally conscious consumers. Instead of manufacturing new products, companies started highlighting eco-friendly features of their products, such as recyclable packaging, energy efficiency, or reduced carbon emissions, to rank their products as “green” in the market. (Mishra & Sharma, 2014). Green marketing is the process of product design, pricing, packaging, advertising, and distributing products that support environmental sustainability. Some call it eco-marketing, environmental marketing, or sustainable marketing

Generation Z, also known as Zoomers, was born between 1997 and 2012. They come after Millennials (Gen Y) but before Generation Alpha. Because technology has been part of their everyday lives since they were little children, they are often referred to as the first true digital natives. Social media, video streaming apps, smartphones, and high-speed internet were essential components of Gen Z's development. Consequently, green advertising has become particularly relevant for engaging Gen Z. The impact of climate change, mental wellness, fairness, and sustainability are only a few of the social, environmental, and political issues that Gen Z is well aware of. They expect that Organizations and brands should do more than simply make statements.

The present study examines how Generation Z responds to green advertising, specifically investigating whether their purchase intentions are influenced by a brand's environmental positioning. It explores the extent to which eco-friendly messaging shapes Gen Z's sustainable consumption choices

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sharouf and Naesae (2022) Green or greenwashed? Gen Z's perception of the credibility of green marketing in the fast fashion industry. This study investigates how Gen Z evaluates the credibility of green marketing in fast fashion brands and whether their shopping choices match these perceptions. A qualitative method was used with three focus group interviews to gather insights: 1. Gen Z who care about sustainability and are doubtful when fast fashion brands make green claims. 2. Gen Z, who doubt fashion brands' green claims, but they still buy from them.

Ewe & Tjiptono (2023) Green behavior among Gen Z consumers in an emerging market: eco-friendly versus non-eco-friendly products. This research explores the influence of combine model of brand familiarity and consumer green consciousness (GC) on consumer attitudes and willingness to pay more for eco-friendly products as compared to non-eco-friendly products among Generation Z consumers. An experiment was conducted with 151 Malaysian Generation Z consumers. The study concluded that awareness of these factors impacts consumer purchase behavior and helps retailers and marketers to design and communicate specific messages that highlight their brand and product eco-friendliness in the market.

Gomes et al.(2023) investigated the 927 Portuguese Gen Z consumers for green products. They used the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method to study the relationships between factors that influence Gen Z's willingness to pay more for green products. The research revealed that Gen Z's consumption is influenced by environmental concerns, expectations of a green future, and perceived quality of green products.

Irfany et al. (2023) examined the features of Muslim Generation Z, and found factors influencing the purchase intentions of halal cosmetic products that were environment friendly. Study surveyed 300 Indonesian Generation Z Muslims using purposive sampling

and analyzed the data using descriptive analysis and SEM-PLS (SmartPLS 3.3.7). Results show that halal labels, eco-friendly labels, environmental knowledge, religiosity, and attitudes significantly influence purchase intention for halal-green cosmetics, though religiosity did not affect halal-green awareness, and awareness did not influence attitudes. The findings highlight the importance of halal-green branding in enhancing Gen Z purchase intentions and offer valuable insights for cosmetics manufacturers entering halal markets.

Aldaihani et al. (2024) inquired into green purchase intention of generation Z consumers through green marketing strategies. The study explores the disconnect between green marketing strategies and green purchase intention among Generation Z, focusing on green attitude as a mediator and generative AI usage as a moderator. Based on PLS-SEM analysis of data from 357 Gen Z respondents, the results show that green packaging alone has a direct positive impact on purchase intention, whereas green advertising and green labeling do not. Additionally, green attitude plays a significant mediating role, and the use of generative AI amplifies the positive influence of green attitude on purchase intention, indicating that green marketing strategies are effective only under certain conditions

Borah & Dogbe et al. (2024) investigated Generation Z's green purchase behavior. The study used an online questionnaire to survey 559 Chinese Gen-Z consumers and found that the green consumer knowledge had a direct effect on green purchase behavior, but this effect was partially influenced by consumer social responsibility. The study concluded that green consumer knowledge is an essential ingredient in enhancing Gen-Z consumers' green purchase behavior, and green advertising will positively moderate the relationship between consumer social responsibility and green purchase behavior of Gen-Z consumers in China. As a result, the pressure groups need to educate Gen-Z consumers more about green issues so that they understand why buying eco-friendly products were important.

Lopes & Rosario et al.(2024) conducted the Systematic Bibliometric Literature Review technique to explain the current condition of advertising and sustainability for the period of publications from the year 2007 to 2024. They examined that there was a weaker connection between sustainability and advertising, with studies on “green advertising”

Schwarz & Helene (2024) investigated Green Marketing: The influence of sustainable digital marketing content on Gen Z. The study conducted qualitative interviews with 13 Gen Z participants (people born between 1995 and 2010). The study revealed that Gen Z places more emphasis on sustainable living. The research found that some social media techniques work better for them like Paid Media, Content Marketing, etc. The study concluded that it is effective to combine fun and educational information as Gen Z tends to lose interest rapidly.

Ghouse et al (2025) investigated green consumer behaviour among Gen Y and Gen Z in India by applying the extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Data was collected from 680 students across northern India. The study examined how attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, environmental knowledge, digital literacy, and eco-friendly behaviour influenced green purchase intentions. It was concluded that Gen Y's intentions are shaped mainly by attitude, digital literacy, eco-friendly behaviour, and perceived behavioural control, while Gen Z is additionally influenced by environmental knowledge and subjective norms. It highlighted key generational differences in sustainable consumption drivers and underscores the importance of digital literacy and eco-friendly practices in promoting green purchasing. The findings are linked to SDG 12, which adds value to existing literature and supports targeted marketing, educational, and policy initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable behaviour among Indian youth.

Theocariss & Tsekouropoulos (2025) examined how key branding dimensions—online brand experience, brand image, trust, loyalty, awareness, engagement, behavioral intention, and brand knowledge—influence Generation Z's purchase intention towards sustainable technological products. Quantitative, cross-sectional design was used; data was collected from Gen Z consumers through convenience and systematic sampling and analyzed using multiple regression. The findings revealed that online brand experience, brand image, brand trust, and brand loyalty were the strongest predictors of purchase intention, while brand awareness and knowledge also had a supportive role. In contrast, brand engagement and behavioral intention show weaker effects. The study highlighted that Gen Z were more likely to purchase sustainable tech products when brands offer positive digital experiences, foster trust and loyalty, and communicate sustainability values effectively.

Ribeiro et al. 2025 examined how different personal values, including egoistic, biospheric, and altruistic values, along with a sense of personal responsibility, influence pro-environmental travel behavior among Generation Z. Using a structured questionnaire, 362 Gen Z tourists in the UK were surveyed, and Smart PLS was used for data Analysis. The findings revealed that personal values and perceived responsibility enhanced environmental concern, shaping attitudes, willingness to make sacrifices, and environmentally responsible travel behavior. Furthermore, positive attitudes and readiness to sacrifice comfort or cost play a crucial role in encouraging pro-environmental travel choices. Overall, the study enhanced understanding of sustainable travel behaviour among young tourists and offers useful insights for promoting environmentally responsible tourism practices.

Prayag et al. (2025) assessed Environmental attitudes, travel behaviours and sustainability practices of international tourists to Canterbury, New Zealand. The New Environmental Paradigm (NEP) was employed as the theoretical lens to determine whether the environmental attitudes toward travel of Generation Z are similar to or different from those of Generation X, Generation Y, and Baby Boomers. The sustainability practices adopted by different generations while travelling were assessed using data from 615 valid surveys of international visitors to New Zealand's Canterbury region. A two-step cluster analysis was applied to group visitors based on generational cohort and their environmental attitudes and travel behaviours. The findings reveal clear differences both between and within generations, with Generation Z are more actively involved in sustainable behaviours such as conserving resources and purchasing local food than other generations. These results offer important insights for destination marketing and tourism management strategies.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To review and integrate existing studies on Generation Z's perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral reactions toward green advertising.
2. To examine the main factors and emerging trends that shape Gen Z's purchase intentions and interaction with sustainable advertising efforts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a narrative review methodology to synthesize extant research on Generation Z's responses to green advertising. A structured literature search was conducted across Google Scholar to capture peer-reviewed empirical and conceptual studies relevant to the domain.

The search strategy utilized controlled keywords and Boolean operators, including: “green advertising” OR “sustainable advertising” AND “Generation Z” OR “Gen Z consumers” AND “consumer perception” OR “purchase intention” OR “behavioral response”.

Inclusion criteria comprised: (i) studies examining green or sustainable advertising, (ii) focus on Generation Z or youth consumer cohorts, (iii) peer-reviewed journal publications, and (iv) English-language articles. Exclusion criteria included non-advertising studies, non-consumer contexts, and conceptual works lacking empirical relevance to Generation Z.

Limitations inherent to the narrative review approach include potential selection bias and lack of replicability inherent in systematic reviews. Consequently, while the study provides a comprehensive synthesis of trends, perceptions, and consumer responses, it does not quantify effect sizes or statistically generalize findings across populations.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Based on the reviewed literature, Generation Z demonstrates a clear interest in sustainability, although their response to green advertising is selective and context-dependent. Prior research indicates that their perceptions of green advertising are strongly influenced by environmental knowledge, underlying personal values, social influence, digital competence, and the level of trust they place in brand communications. While greater green awareness and favourable attitudes generally encourage green purchase intention, Gen Z remains highly cautious of greenwashing (false or exaggerated green claims), especially in industries such as fast fashion. This reflects their preference for green advertising that is transparent, credible, and supported by genuine sustainable actions rather than superficial claims.

Moreover, the literature identifies several important drivers and emerging trends shaping Gen Z's engagement with sustainable advertising and purchasing decisions. Factors such as positive digital brand experiences, strong online brand image, trust, loyalty, and existing eco-friendly behaviour play a central role in influencing purchase intentions. Recent trends, including the use of generative AI, halal-green positioning, sustainability-focused digital content, and interactive online experiences, suggest that Gen Z responds more favourably to engaging, personalized, and informative green advertising.

Overall, Generation Z consumers are more likely to purchase the products which are environment friendly, in certain cases are even willing to pay more for these products.

CONCLUSION

This narrative review shows that Generation Z strongly values sustainability. Their purchase intentions are influenced by environmental knowledge, personal values, social norms, digital literacy, and trust in brands. Positive digital brand experiences, strong brand image, loyalty, and eco-friendly behaviour further enhance the effectiveness of green advertising. Emerging trends such as generative AI, halal-green branding, and interactive digital content indicate that Gen Z prefers personalized, engaging, and informative green communication over symbolic sustainability claims.

Overall, the findings suggest that green advertising can effectively encourage sustainable consumption among Generation Z when it is supported by genuine sustainable practices, credible communication, and innovative digital strategies. This review contributes to existing literature by clarifying the conditions under which green advertising influences Gen Z's purchase intentions and by identifying emerging trends in sustainable marketing. Practically, the findings provide useful insights for marketers, policymakers, and educators to design targeted green advertising strategies that align with Gen Z's values and expectations, thereby

promoting responsible consumption and supporting Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

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